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### Newsletter:

Each month we try to gather and publish the latest, most current and relevant native news events and top stories for our membership. A well informed and updated clientele is better able to see, relate with, analyze and grasp their situation more effectively when they have the tools to work with. It is our objective to provide as wide a scope as possible for our readership to be as informed as possible. This format of providing news and the disseminating the right information is our top priority. Web access: Not only our local readership is serviced with this format of news production, but the audience that surfs the net can benefit as well. A talented and seemingly tireless worker, Sharon Green, from Ontario helps us to reach our audience and readers around the world by putting our monthly newsletter on her web site. To view her site go to Gathering Place First Nations and search in there to find our newsletter. **Contact:** You can reach us by postal mail at P.O. Box 3226, Perth-Andover, NB. Canada E7H 5K3, or at our US site at P.O. Box 603, Fort Fairfield, ME 04742. By telephone we're at 506-273-6737 in NB, Canada, and via Internet

### WULUSTUK GRAND COUNCIL LOOKING AT SPRING RESTART

p,paul

Woodstock FN, - Plans and preparations are currently underway to kick-start the Wulustuk Grand Council programming during the up-coming months in response to several tribal urgencies that have surfaced in recent months.

A council of Wulustukie Elders and supporters from various first nation communities met on Febuary.1st to discuss the immediate restart plans that would get the Council business back on stream and going in the right direction.

An interim restart coordinator was selected by the group to do the launching proceedings for an early startup scheduled for March 17, and again staged at Woodstock FN.

The plans include the gathering of as many first nations people as possible representing every age group from youth to the elders and coming from all Wulustuk first nation communities to help in designing a full all-nations forum and an all-nations mandate for the Council.

Some discussion revolved around the reproducing a new and updated WGC constitution for the purpose pro,oting wider relations and transacting business broadly and internationally. Timing of this task was questioned by some members which subsequently resulted in rescheduling of the important task to a later date.

The Grand Council has kept a relatively low profile and operated only on marginal baisi since the resignation of its last grand chief a few years ago.

The members considered a restructure necessary to restructure itself to meet and adapt

to the new legal and constitutional challenges it sees in the immediate horizon. For further details of this story we will have more updates in the March issue.

### ABORIGINAL LANDS CLAIMS TO INTERNATIONAL COURTS?

p.paul

It is the general belief of many Native people in this province that New Brunswick was never ceded, sold, surrendered, given away, or compromised in any way, as a whole to the white society.

This is the premise native people will always stand on because there is not a single agency, not a single identifiable authority, nor a single shred of documented evidence that supports native people relinquished their rights and aboriginal hold and/or title to the land.

We can rightfully and honestly declare to the world, New Brunswick (Canada) legally, is still Indian Land.

It is entirely possible and quite probable that one day Native claim, and Aboriginal Right to ownership will be taken to the international forum, tested and adjudicated internationally in World Courts or some other neutral, independent Global Judicial Body or Jurisdiction.

In looking back to past court decisions in Canada, native people, at best, have seen only marginal success or favored decisions in Canadian courts, and this spectra has raised a serious concern for fair treatment or equal justice within.

From that deep-rooted doubt and uncertainty lies the question whether native people in Canada should either trust or risk adjudicating major comprehensive land and resource claims within the Canadian court system, or refer them to the outer community, in the international forum.

### MALISEETS PLAN TO RELOCATE TO ANCESTRAL LANDS AT CARLETON

Maliseets make plans to relocate to ancestral hunting and fishing lands in Carlton Provincial Park at the headwaters of the Tobique River and Fundy National Park on the Atlantic ocean

"Maliseet Nation peoples are finalizing plans to return to their ancestral hunting and fishing territories in the New Brunswick portion of their tribal territories where their Maliseet forefathers have lived, hunted, gathered and fished for more than 10,000 years", said Henry "Hank" Bear, Maliseet lawyer and Member of the Maliseet Nation. It was widely reported the other day that a group of Kalahari Bushmen, one of the oldest tribal societies in the world, have begun the process of returning to their ancestral hunting grounds after defeating international diamond mining companies and the government of Botswana in an historic court decision.

Forty Bushmen managed to return to the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, in the arid heart of southern Africa, despite a heavy police presence and attempts to persuade them to stay in relocation camps. "Today is the same day for us as Nelson Mandela when he won South Africa," said Roy Sesana, as he stepped back on to the land where his forefathers have lived for 20,000 years.

Like the Gana and Gwi Bushmen, Mr. Bear stated, Maliseets have international legal rights and intend to preserve and practice their traditional economies, including a hunter-gatherer lifestyle. In addition, Maliseets have also preserved their commercial fishing lifestyles. But the Canadian provincial and federal governments have historically resisted and then, through RCMP, DNR and then DFO police tactics, denied Maliseets

access to their ancestral hunting grounds in Mount Carleton Provincial Park and ancestral fishing territories at Fundy National Park by forcing Maliseets to live in relocation camps called Indian Reserves, where Maliseets have been penned up on small plots of ground well away from their preferred hunting and fishing grounds; Indian Reserves where there still exists the highest rates of unemployment, alcoholism, drug and domestic abuse, and suicide rates in North America.

The illegal occupation, wrongful possession and wholesale granting of Maliseet ancestral lands to immigrant New Brunswickers, railroad companies, pulp and paper companies and the setting up of two huge land areas of over a million acres each at Mount Carlton Provincial Park at the headwaters of the Tobique River and the other at Fundy National Park on the shores of the Bay of Fundy had everything to do with the removal of Maliseet people from their ancestral hunting and fishing grounds.

Mr. Bear says, "It is clear that it was the intention of Canadian provincial and federal officials and politicians that Maliseets be denied their ancestral modes of living off their land and fishing grounds. The present condition of the Maliseet people, despite recent efforts to improve themselves economically, administratively and politically, remains evidence enough of how badly Canada's and New Brunswick's illegal land grab has hurt the peoples of the Maliseet Nation.

Over the past few years, beginning, perhaps with the Marshall fishing rights case and, most recently, the Sappier and Polchies case, Maliseets have won several court cases where the Supreme Court of Canada have upheld Maliseet rights to fish, hunt and gather wood in our ancestral grounds. These historic court rulings make it clear that it was illegal for Canada or the Province of New Brunswick to deny Maliseets access to these same ancestral grounds, Mr. Bear stated, and Maliseet peoples are now making preparations to leave the small Indian Reserve encampments and begin their return to their traditional way of life in the Mount Carleton Provincial Park as a main Maliseet Nation base to support hunting and gathering activities and in Fundy National Park as a main Maliseet Nation base to support their commercial fishing activities in the Bay of Fundy.

Mr. Bear said, "I am very happy to see this begin to happen after working so long to achieve this goal. Elders in my community began planning this twenty years ago on the floor of my cedar log cabin on the Tobique Indian Reserve. We used the forestry maps sent to us by Alan Graham, the then New Brunswick Minister of Natural Resources, and we determined that a minimum of a million acres of forest land in the Tobique watershed, including the Mount Carleton Provincial Park, would be needed to re-establish an economic base sufficient to support the Maliseet Nations needs for relocation and contiguous hunting and gathering activities in winters, and that another sufficient land area, including the Fundy National Park, would be needed along the Bay of Fundy to support the Maliseet Nation's need for relocation and contiguous fishing activities in the Atlantic ocean." Said Mr. Bear, who has recently served as General Manager of the Maliseet Nation at Tobique's commercial fishing operation presently located on Grand Manan Island in the Bay of Fundy.

"Our forests are being clear cut" said Mr. Bear, past Administrator of the Maliseet Forest Service. "Our salmon rivers have been silted by such forestry practices and choked off by New Brunswick hydro dams. Wildlife habitat has been destroyed and a Maliseet way of life is threatened with extinction all according to Moses Perley's 1840 New Brunswick plan To reverse this, Maliseets are going back into these ancestral lands to protect them and to finally begin the process of protecting all of our lands and resources. We need to

practice our Maliseet way of life fully once again, and, at the same time, expand our Maliseet economies. We need to feed and shelter our peoples on all Maliseet Reserves. We also need to do so for those Maliseet peoples who have been denied space or opportunity to live in a Maliseet community on reserve. We will have the land and economy needed to fully provide for so-called "third generation" Maliseets, and our grandmothers and ancestors will be happy."

### **RUPERT RIVER SOLD- CREE CHIEF TRAPPED**

Article from Boyce Richardson's personal Website.

Hydro-Quebec takes over the Rupert River; a trapped Grand Chief; a cry from the heart of a Cree woman (headline)

If ever I saw a template for the situation of Aboriginals in Canadian society it came last week when the Grand Chief of the Crees of Quebec, Matthew Mukash, reluctantly helped preside over the opening of Hydro-Quebec's impending construction of another \$5 billion project in the Cree territory.

Mukash had to go along with the project, he said, but added "it is a sad day for me."

So here was a man glorying in the grand title of Grand Chief, powerless before the money power of the larger Canadian economy, which is relentlessly imposing itself on these Aboriginal hunters. So the First Nations people are powerless? What else is new?

Mukash had to go along (of course, he could have quit) because his predecessor, Ted Moses, had persuaded the Crees to sell their Rupert river to Hydro-Quebec as part of a new deal with the province, in which the province hands over to the Crees authority to undertake, essentially, provisions of the Northern Quebec and James Bay Agreement signed in 1975, which Quebec had just not bothered to implement! In return for undertaking this noble task, the Crees are promised \$70 million in each of the next 50 years.

Many, if not most of the Crees are against this project, because it means the destruction of their magnificent Rupert River, centrepiece of their history, their perceptions, their culture, and they want no part of it. But the governments have learned something in the last 30 years: now, if they give the First Nations people, or at least their leaders, some say in the process of deciding on these projects, however minimal that say might be, then they can more readily impose themselves on any dissenters by sheer brute force.

As an earnest of the opposition to the project a Cree woman I have known for years, a remarkable woman from Chisasibi, came to my door this week with a poem she has written summing up her feelings about what her nation's leaders have landed them all in.

The author is Nellie Bearskin House, member of a prominent family in Chisasibi, and her poem is a genuine cry from the heart for the world, the culture, they are losing under the onslaught:

An Honor Song to the Waskaganish Sibi (River) (Rupert's River)

A Cree Grand Chief comments; "There is already an agreement in place. Hearings will be done to determine if the Diversion will happen."

But Who is listening?

To Foretell the destiny of a magnificent Masterpiece painted by God's hands.

In the beginning God saw the place,  
A holy sacred ground  
Where the river would Flow  
Forever free,  
A sanctuary for all  
That lived in its waters.

Etched in time are the  
Huge rocks that sit  
Undisturbed in its waters,  
The never-ending dark crevices,  
Like long corridors where  
The ever-changing waters flow.

Along its shores nestle rocks  
That time has forgotten,  
Evergreen spruce trees  
Standing tall paying homage to the  
One that gives them nourishment.

The changing colors of the seasons  
Forever giving a backdrop to the river  
We have forgotten who we are  
Where we came from

From the land, from the waters, And our connection to oneness, to  
Source,  
To God.

We have become a  
Nation of  
Egotism,  
Materialism,  
Power,  
Control,  
Fancy expensive restaurants,  
Fancy expensive hotel suites  
Elaborate Christmas banquets,  
Elaborate Banquets to honor

Past Grand Chiefs.  
Have we ever heard of  
Noble men like

Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr.,

Mahatma Gandhi  
Humble women like Rosa Parks, Mother Teresa and  
What they stood for.  
The struggling traditional,  
People that are still trying,  
To survive from the land,  
From the river.

No, they have been in an  
Fancy expensive restaurant  
Or slept in a fancy expensive,  
Hotel suite.

Just being content out on the land,  
On the river.

For these are the people  
That live who they truly are.  
The rivers spirit will leave,  
Forever searching for  
It's wholeness  
For when we let go of  
Our river,  
We as people, the keepers and  
Protectors  
Of the river  
Will surely lose a little part of  
Ourselves  
Our connection to oneness to source  
To God.  
But in all of us,  
There is a light,  
A light of love  
That connects us to  
Oneness, to source  
To God  
To the River.

Written by Nellie M. Bearskin House  
April 27,2006

Dedication to the people of Waskaganish. the elders, the men. the women, the youth  
and the young ones, especially the old ones that paddled the river since time  
immemorial.

## LISTEN QUIETLY, THE TREES ARE WEeping

p.paul

Several years ago I had the great fortune of spending some precious time with a late, great and dear man who shared with me, many fine stories and teachings about his life and experiences.

The man was Louie, a genuine gentleman, retired businessman, who would gladly bend back wards for any soul in need, and he worked tirelessly for those recovering from addictions. A giant of a man he was.

Seems he knew my hunger and thirst for traditional knowledge and he would be patient enough to tell me, and re-tell me, certain stories and events until I got them straight.

Gotta be patient with a slow learner like me, and he did just that without a hitch.

Anyway, one story he related one of his experiences to me that happened when he was a youngster of 9 or 10, he and a companion (call him Mike for the moment) would casually take long walks through the woods on his reserve in the Quebec province. Louie's reserve was a huge territory in comparison to other reserves in the area. It's dimensions were something like 15 -20 miles deep and almost the same in width. It was mostly wooded with plenty of room to wander.

He said he recalls one day as he and Mike walked quietly among some huge, tall trees in the deep virgin forest, they started hearing some sounds that sounded a lot like someone crying off in the distance. Instinctively, they took special attention and interest in this sound being a bit wary of someone who might be hurt or injured in such deep and distant woods.

They both acknowledged that the familiar sounds they were hearing were sounds of weeping, and scared or not, they just had to investigate the source and reason of these crying sounds.

Timidly, they advanced inch by inch towards the haunting murmurs which became louder and clearer as they approached the area where it was coming from.

Lo and behold, they eventually came to a small knoll in a fairly even area of the woods and to their hair-raising astonishment, witnessed the "weeping of trees" before them.

After several moments of watching this amazing scene taking place, they became actually awe stricken by the next course of events.

The trees began speaking to them in their own native Algonquin tongue which just about buckled their knees from under, in bewilderment

However, a bit shaken, they persevered and were more anxious to hear what the trees had to say.

In short, the trees said they were deeply grieved and troubled of their long-range future.

They said they were weeping for the safety of the places they had called home for thousands of years, and fearful for their brothers and sisters who may one day be mass harvested with gigantic machines.

Continuing, they said they could foresee the day and time when mighty machines of man would invade their sacred territory, even though many people living at the time could not comprehend or conceive of this ever happening. But the trees insisted a definite time in future existed when men and their equipment would come and destroy the ancient forest.

Yes, the youths admitted, men did cut some trees in close proximity to the reserve and use the wood in building houses, for heating purposes, and producing handmade tools and implements, but to cut trees just wildly, indiscriminately, as suggested, and at a scale indicated by the trees themselves, it would seem impossible, the boys thought.

Knowing fairly well how wood-cutting operations went in those times, the boys knew woodsmen used only double-bitted axes and cross-cut saws for cutting trees. Horses yarded the logs out of the bush and also hauled them to the mill, so that produced only minimal strain to the woods. And in no way in hell, thought the boys, could men with such crude equipment, be able to, first of all, negotiate such high mountainous ranges, let alone cut as radically destroying every tree, as the majestic pines suggested. But Louie and Mike listened quietly, patiently and with mesmerizing interest, to the trees as they lamented, likely for hours, their pending drama.

All of a sudden, as if awakened from deep sleep, the kids realized that time was fast slipping by and they must head for home right fast, or be caught half-lost, trying to make their way in darkness. Luckily, things went well and the boys made it home safely and soundly.

Louie confided to me that he always was shy or hesitant in telling his story about the trees, fearing ridicule or unpleasant reaction might follow, simply because, there were not that many people who believed, or admitted in getting into conversation with trees anymore. "And how would people take us if we said anything about that experience?" he said.

So the silence went on for years and years, until one day in the late 1970's, when our man Louie and I were heading south to a healing ceremony in the US, which involved a few hundred miles and many hours of travel. This would be the time Louie would come clean.

On a long journey one of the best ways of staying alert is to get into a lively conversation about anything that comes to mind, and that's how Louie and I conducted this particular trip. Through our lengthy dialogue one of the things Louie related was about his talking with trees as a 10-year-old, and after about 50 years of holding it back. Louie's sudden break from silence happened at about the time when huge night-crawling skidders were coming on the scene in the woods industry. Skidders appeared with other monstrous machinery that literally chewed up and devastated huge acreage in a single day. And worse, the machines ran non-stop, 24/7, year in and year out. And so, as I recollect, the weeping trees had accurately predicted their days of doom and also forecasted the nature and sequence of events that led up to their disappearance. Today I can reflect while putting these thoughts on paper, that it was a great pleasure and privilege and unique honor to have met Louie, and to be able to travel with him on one certain day. God bless Louie and his Nation.

## DAN'S CORNER - ON INDIAN ELDERS AND TRADITIONAL MEDICINE ELDERS

Dan Ennis

Much confusion surrounds the term "Elder" since our traditional teachings and spiritual ways are now being revived, renewed, rediscovered and reestablished. This is due primarily to over 500 years of exposure to a foreign and alien culture which persists in imposing its culture, its religion, its values and its laws on us.

All of our Elders are loved, respected, revered and listened to, but there are distinctions that should be clarified.

I fall into the category of "Elder" or an older Indian person, with another distinction, which needs clarification. I also consider myself as a traditionalist, or to be more accurate, a "transitional traditionalist". This means one who was born of Indian parents and Indian ancestors, born on an Indian reserve, but who was raised in a white culture

as a white person, and who is now returning to the ways of our ancestors and to the traditional teachings.

These are the four distinctions among types of Elders:

1. Traditional Medicine or spiritual Elder - prior to contact.
2. Transitional Traditional Medicine Elder - since contact, who were forced to lay aside their spiritual ways, ceremonies, teachings and understanding during a period of five or four or three or two hundred years and who are now returning to those spiritual ways and the traditional teachings.
3. Transitional Traditional Layperson - one like myself, who is returning to the spiritual ways of our ancestors, but who needs time, understanding, acceptance, teachers, self-respect, self-knowledge, perseverance, dedication, clarity of vision and unconditional love on his or her journey back to the sacred ways of our ancestors, and possibly a journey to becoming a Traditional Medicine Elder.
4. Elders, or older Indian people, or Indian senior citizens - who do not practice, understand, follow or accept the sacred ways, ceremonies, understandings and teaching of our ancestors, but who, as I have already mentioned, are very much loved, respected, revered and listened to.

The Medicine Elders prior to contact were much respected and sought after for their knowledge, understanding, teaching and wisdom, which had been accumulated through life experience, through ceremonies, through self-awareness and through forgiveness. To my understanding the Medicine Elders prior to contact could achieve their Medicine Elder status through different routes. One could be born to it and the family and/or community knew this at the time of birth; or at birth someone, such as an Elder or an immediate family member, would see something different or special in the newborn and begin almost immediately to prepare the child for his or her life's work. As an example of both of the above situations, the Kogi people of South America begin the preparation for the "training" of a Medicine Elder at birth by placing the newborn and his or her mother in a specially-prepared cave where the child will remain for the first nine years of his or her life receiving teaching from other Medicine Elders. Upon completion of the initial nine years the choice of whether to remain for another nine years is left with the child. Either way, the individual is considered to be a full-fledged Medicine Elder and a teacher of the way.

In my "research" of our traditional spiritual ways over the past 25 years, nowhere have I found teachings of our ways that restrict or otherwise show disrespect to the Life-Givers, our grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives, daughters or granddaughters, with regard to their being "allowed" to conduct a ceremony or to participate in ceremonies, or to hold certain positions, or to otherwise be put into a lower position to men simply because they are women. We should all keep in mind that the sacred pipe was brought to our people by White Buffalo Calf Woman, a woman, and that she killed the first man that she came across. We refer to earth as our Mother and to the sweatlodge as the womb of our Sacred Earth Mother. We also refer to Grandmother Moon. This is as the Creator intended it to be - that Medicine Elders should be of both genders. There is no imposing by males of laws, rules, regulations, criteria, etc. which serves to restrict or otherwise limit the powers of Life-Givers.

For one to be considered a Traditional Medicine Elder, he or she must know the language, the culture, the traditional teachings and the sacred ceremonies. He or she walks in balance and is in harmony with all things. He or she is free of all baggage that small and weak human beings are prone to carry during their brief earthwalk - things

like ego, fear, violence, negativity, anger, hatred, greed, guilt, resentment and bitterness.

In this time of "newageism" and a renewed interest in exotic Hollywood red Indians we are presented with a modern problem that serves to prostitute and profane our ancient traditional ways and teachings. This is the making of instant Indian medicine men/women.

In the days prior to contact our people respected our traditional spiritual teachings and our spiritual ceremonies and would never think of taking "short cuts" in order to become instant Medicine Elders. We just had too much self-respect and respect for our traditional teachings, unlike what we have today.

To our people being a Medicine Elder required a lifetime of commitment and the required training meant anywhere from nine to twenty years for the chosen individual. It meant long intense and rigorous training, teaching and sacrifice.

As for non-Indians today conducting any of our ceremonies, where the public is to participate, that cannot and should not happen. In addition to the required time and intense training our people lived a life of spirituality on a moment by moment basis. It has been this way for thousands of generations for our people, except for that brief period of time since contact when we were forced to set aside our traditional spiritual teachings and ceremonies.

Those traditional teachings are in our genes, our blood and so we can now return to them quickly and easily which is what is happening. But this is not so for our non-Indian brothers, our Creator-given ways is not in their genes, in their blood, nor are they passed on from generation to generation, therefore they cannot possess the depth of understanding, love and respect for our traditional spiritual teachings.

But the fact that all of these sacred understandings, Traditional teachings, etc are in our genes, blood, etc does not negate the fact that we as Indian people still require training from other blood Indian Medicine Elders.

For any non-Indian who is attempting to learn the ways of our people and has participated in any of our ceremonies and feels that he is walking on the red road way of our people, if he has acquired that depth of love, understanding and respect for our spiritual ways that will be one of the very first understandings that will appear to him. It will take on the form of...I will not prostitute nor profane these sacred traditional spiritual teachings and ceremonies.

When one of our non-Indian brothers presumes to take on the sacred role of conductor of our sacred ceremonies, after participating in a few of those ceremonies, it demonstrates such disrespect and lack of understanding of our traditional teachings. It is akin to my having participated in or witnessing a funeral, wedding or any other church service and then having the audacity to think that with this one church experience I can now be a priest, minister, preacher, etc. and that I am now able to conduct a religious church service.

I write this so as to share what little knowledge that I have acquired in my 25 years of walking my spiritual red road and in the hopes of helping others like myself who are groping around for knowledge and understanding. Maybe in this way others may avoid some of the pitfalls that I experienced, some of the confusion and dilemmas that I experienced, some of the misunderstanding that I experienced and some of the resentment that I experienced. I also write this so that there will be better understanding, respect and acceptance of our ways by our people and all other people.

All My Relations

## DEAN'S DEN - WHITHER THE SALMON

Whither the salmon  
Of the mighty Saint John  
That once were free running  
That once came to spawn,  
Before there were dams  
And trawlers off-shore  
Whither the salmon  
That come back no more!  
Aquatic marvel  
Most majestic of fish  
Now truly endangered  
Now oft just a wish,  
This most tempting fighter  
This choice of the gods  
Now strives for survival  
Against man - and the odds!  
May it ever be with us  
This work of the wild  
Though ravaged and plundered  
Still enchanting, beguiled,  
May it ever be free  
To enthrall with its charms  
Not completely reduced -  
To the cage ... and fish-farms!  
Whither the salmon  
As time marches on  
Whither the salmon  
Now all but gone,  
Whither the salmon  
To pursue and to hook  
Oh, whither the salmon  
Of our great Wulustuk!  
D.C. Butterfield  
TRACINGS

Footsteps of Man are deep wide and permanent in comparison to the invisible tracings  
of our kin, the winged, the finned and the four-legged Brothers