

Wulustuk Times

Wulustuk - Indigenous name for St John River

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The Scenic Pokiok Falls, New Brunswick -Photo by Nick Smith

March 2012 - Table of Contents

THE WINNING JUMP

COMMONS COMMITTEE GIVES FEDS FOUR MONTHS TO DELIVER PLAN FOR FIRST NATIONS

FOURTH LEGISLATIVE ATTACK ON GRAND CANYON URANIUM BAN FAILS

ALDERVILLE FIRST NATIONS TO LEARN NATIVE LANGUAGE

LAST OF NEW HOMES ARRIVE ON ATTAWAPISKAT F.N.

TEACH HISTORY OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS: REPORT

"TALKING DICTIONARY" COULD HELP DYING LANGUAGES SURVIVE

DAN'S CORNER -OUR 20,000 YEAR-OLD WULUSTUKYIEG GRAND COUNCIL

DEAN'S DEN - QUIET

Wulustuk Times:

Each month we gather and publish the latest, most current and relevant native information for our readers. Proceeding with this concept, we feel that a well informed person is better able to see, relate with, and assess a situation more accurately when equipped with the right tools. Our aim is to provide you with the precise tools and the best information possible.

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THE WINNING JUMP

All waterfalls are natural creations of beauty. Pokiok Falls was a spectacular natural creation that could not be duplicated by man. It was a scenic stop on the road from Woodstock to Fredericton, about twelve miles below the old historic Maliseet village of Meductic. It was a narrow gorge in the red granite dropping about 75 feet over which the water of Pokiok Stream leapt and cascaded until it met the water of the St. John River. The Maliseet called their river "Wulustuk," a term that had no equal in English for it included its great beauty, it attracted and supported many varieties of fish, mammals, and plant life. The narrow fissure was no more than twenty feet wide and narrower between promontories. When one looked down, it was like looking into the boiling water and rising spray of a witches' cauldron as Pokiok Stream rushed to the St. John where it would be conveyed to the Atlantic Ocean. It would be certain death for anyone who stepped too close to the edge and fell into the wild thrashing, gurgling white water below. Especially in the high water of spring it was an unforgettable magnificent sight. Two generations have grown up since the rising waters of the Mactaquac Dam have drowned the gurgling voices of the once dramatic waterfall that cut a great gorge through the rocky bank of the St. John River.

Pokiok Falls was in the heart of Maliseet country and like the other unique geographic creations in their land had well developed Maliseet traditions. The waters ran over the falls year after year. The traditional tales were told from generation to the next.

Many years ago before the strangers arrived a provider for his extended family was hunting south east of Meductic. He was following a deer trail when he sensed that Mohawk warriors were on his trail, not far behind him. He was greatly outnumbered. He knew that he could not circumvent them and return to Meductic. There was little time to decide how to outwit them. The young hunter could sense the Mohawks closing in on him in their effort to capture him. He realized that Pokiok Falls was not far. He ran as fast as he could to the Falls. When he arrived at Pokiok Falls he stopped, heard his pursuers close on his trail. For a moment he looked at the Falls and then he made a great effort using every last bit of strength that he completed a gigantic leap over the gap to safety. He quickly hid and waited for his Mohawk pursuers.

The Mohawk warriors stopped at the raging swiftly moving waters concluding that no one could survive a plunge into such an inhospitable stream. They soon disappeared allowing the young hunter to return to the village and warn them of the Mohawk warriors.

I heard the story several times. Once the time changed to setting during the Colonial Wars with the Maliseet hunter escaping from English soldiers. The tale was deeply ingrained in Maliseet culture. The story became the first part of a cycle that urged the listener to see the great gorge and turbulent stream and then return to hear again about the brave young hunter who jumped the gap. The elder used the unique geologic features on Indian lands to inspire and challenge young people to be proud, fearsome, strong and defiant. Unfortunately the changes in the river have left an emptiness in Maliseet traditions for it now lacks such creative stories.

Nicholas Smith

COMMONS COMMITTEE GIVES FEDS FOUR MONTHS TO DELIVER PLAN FOR FIRST NATIONS

Postmedia News

OTTAWA - Federal politicians are giving government departments four months to come up with a comprehensive plan to address the main causes of poor living conditions that plague First Nations.

In a report tabled Monday, a parliamentary committee noted that concerns raised by the auditor general's office about key issues such as housing, drinking water and education are growing.

The committee noted that audits, including a recent status report from the auditor general in 2011, generally found confusion about the level of services, legislation, as well as an inadequate funding mechanism and organization to support the needs of the communities.

Although government officials told the committee that it was making progress with some "concrete actions," the report said there was still a long way to go.

"Like the deputy minister, the committee is optimistic that progress can be made, but it will require significant structural reforms and sustained management attention," said the report,

tabled in Parliament by NDP MP David Christopherson, who chairs the public accounts committee. "The committee intends to monitor the government's progress to ensure that First Nations on reserves experience meaningful improvements in their social and economic conditions."

Last fall, the committee heard from the acting auditor general, John Wiersema, as well as several federal officials as it examined the matter.

The auditor's report had noted that social and economic conditions in First Nations communities were getting worse in many areas because the federal government has not clearly spelled out what types of services it should offer, and because it doesn't have legislation to support programs for key services.

The committee said the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Department should develop a new roadmap by May 31 - after consulting with other relevant departments - that will address all of the major shortcomings with specific actions and timelines.

UN SLAMS CANADA FOR FIRST NATIONS TREATMENT POSTMEDIA NEWS

Canada's international reputation came under fire in Geneva on Wednesday as a UN expert panel delivered scathing criticisms over the government's treatment of First Nations and recent changes to the country's immigration system.

Members on the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, all of them human rights experts, questioned why headway has not been made in resolving the disparities between First Nations communities and the rest of the country.

Speaking to the UN panel on behalf of the federal government Wednesday, a senior Citizenship and Immigration Canada official acknowledged that mistakes had been made in the past.

FOURTH LEGISLATIVE ATTACK ON GRAND CANYON URANIUM BAN FAILS

WASHINGTON - February 16 - The fourth legislative attempt to block the Obama administration's ban on new uranium development across 1 million acres of public land surrounding Grand Canyon National Park died Tuesday night when the House rules committee ruled it out of order. The amendment was sponsored by the same three Republican congressmen who sponsored three previous failed anti-Grand Canyon legislative proposals - Jeff Flake, Trent Franks and Paul Gosar, all from Arizona.

The most recent amendment (#133), which would have modified the energy and infrastructure (H.R. 7) component of the transportation bill now before Congress, sought to overturn a January decision by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar enacting a 20-year "mineral withdrawal" that bans new mining claims and development on existing claims lacking rights-to-mine across Grand

Canyon's million-acre watershed.

"With each new legislative attack, GOP congressmen make a better case for permanently - rather than administratively - protecting the public lands that form Grand Canyon's watershed," said Taylor McKinnon, public lands campaigns director with the Center for Biological Diversity.

In 2010 and again in 2011, Flake, Franks and Gosar sponsored legislation that would have prohibited the Interior Department from enacting the mining ban; in 2011 they attempted to add a rider to a budget bill - their third failed attempt prior to this most recent amendment.

Over the past few years, nearly 400,000 people from 90 countries wrote the Department of the Interior urging it to ban new uranium mining around the canyon after a uranium boom threatened to bring a new wave of destructive mining threatening recreation, tourism, wildlife habitat and waters in Grand Canyon National Park.

The mining ban has won wide support among American Indian tribes, regional businesses, elected officials, hunting and angling groups, scientists and conservationists.

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At the Center for Biological Diversity, we believe that the welfare of human beings is deeply linked to nature - to the existence in our world of a vast diversity of wild animals and plants. Because diversity has intrinsic value, and because its loss impoverishes society, we work to secure a future for all species, great and small, hovering on the brink of extinction. We do so through science, law, and creative media, with a focus on protecting the lands, waters, and climate that species need to survive.

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ALDERVILLE FIRST NATIONS TO LEARN NATIVE LANGUAGE

Northumberland Today

ALDERVILLE - Few people speak the Ojibway language in Alderville First Nation but more will get a chance to learn with new federal funding to expand existing classes for adults and children.

During a media conference Thursday when Northumberland-Quinte West local MP Rick Norlock announced the \$24,652 grant, Alderville First Nation Chief Jim Bob Marsden recalled being told his grandfather hadn't been allowed to speak their native tongue for fear of being sent away to a residential school.

While Marsden said he has attended a few evening class sessions (Alderville has provided these classes for 15 years), Ojibway is a difficult language, and not one he can yet speak himself.

Ojibway is also currently taught to youngsters at the reserve's daycare facility, located next door to its learning centre, as well as in Roseneath Public School where students from Grade 3 onward can choose French or Ojibway, he said. That began after negotiations with the local

school board in 1996. A past principal took part and an area minister, he said.

Marsden noted, however, that the money provided for teaching native First Nation languages is a "drop in the bucket" compared to that provided for French.

Teaching a language helps reinforce history and culture and is especially important for young people, Norlock said.

This funding will "help fill in the gaps," he said.

During the conference both men used the expression "use it or lose it" in reference to speaking the Ojibway language.

A lot of people want to continue learning the language in Alderville, education manager Nancy Marsden said. There are about 20 interested in taking part in weekly sessions.

According to the media release provided by Norlock's office, "funding will enable the Alderville First Nation to undertake a master-apprentice program with weekly sessions between a fluent Elder and an apprentice, and to hold language sessions for parents and their children, as well as weekly language classes for adults and young people."

Classes are open to anyone and not just those at Alderville, Nancy Marsden said.

CDs and DVDs will assist in the learning process.

The grant comes through the Aboriginal Languages Initiatives of the Canadian Heritage's Aboriginal Peoples' Program.

LAST OF NEW HOMES ARRIVE ON ATTAWAPISKAT F.N.

Ottawa Citizen

Trucks bearing the last of 22 long-awaited new homes rolled into the Attawapiskat First Nation in northern Ontario on Thursday morning, according to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

"They're very small, very narrow," Attawapiskat resident Martha Sutherland said of the new homes. "But, they'll be great for a small family, maybe with one or two kids."

The federal government said the homes will be ready for families to move into once the community completes the necessary foundation work and installation of the modular homes on lots, electrical, sewer and water hookups are completed and inspections are performed.

The First Nation is responsible for hooking up power and water lines and performing the inspections, according to Susan Bertrand, a spokeswoman for Aboriginal Affairs.

When asked how the First Nation would pay to make the homes inhabitable, she said the government appointed third-party manager - who is currently in charge of the band's finances - is ready to issue payment for invoices when received.

Many families in Attawapiskat have been living in tents and overcrowded sheds or houses, some with black mould on the walls and ceilings.

Without running water, many families use pails or buckets as toilets and have to haul their drinking water from a central community tap.

"The arrival of these modular homes demonstrates our government's commitment to the residents of Attawapiskat First Nation," Minister of Aboriginal Affairs John Duncan said in a statement.

In December 2011, Duncan announced funding for the purchase of 22 modular homes, which cost \$2.5 million to manufacture and transport to the community on the shores of James Bay.

Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence was not available to comment Thursday.

The First Nation is located approximately 220 kilometres north of Moosonee, Ont., and has an on-reserve population of about 1,865 people.

In January, Spence and Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo urged Canada to start addressing the concerns of First Nations people and move beyond what they described as a paternalistic and colonial attitude. Spence warned then that the situation on reserves, including the high cost of living residents face, will get worse if the government didn't act.

"One day it's going to be chaos in these remote locations leading to loss of lives," she told a lunchtime business crowd. "I see traces of it happening now. It will escalate, resulting in a total embarrassment of our country."

TEACH HISTORY OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS: REPORT

Winnipeg Free Press

THE pending report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission says residential school survivors should have greater access to mental health care and recommends curriculum changes for Canadian public schools that would broaden awareness of the history of residential schools, the CBC reports.

The interim report, which is scheduled for official release in Vancouver today, was leaked to the broadcaster on Thursday.

Residential school information should be available in public schools across the country, the report suggests, with individual schools addressing the implications the residential schools had in specific regions.

The report also advises that the formal apology delivered by the federal government should be framed and distributed to every secondary school in the provinces and territories by Ottawa.

Wellness facilities for mental health should also be established in Nunavut or the Northwest Territories, the report recommends. The CBC quotes the interim report as saying such facilities are "critically needed by residential school survivors and their families and communities."

An "ongoing cultural revival fund" also should be created to finance projects related to the heritage and history of Canada's aboriginal population. Such an effort, the report says, should be funded by Ottawa and the churches involved in the residential schools.

The interim report from the commission, which has a five-year mandate, makes a total of 20 recommendations, according to the CBC.

"TALKING DICTIONARY" COULD HELP DYING LANGUAGES SURVIVE

Inuit in Canada's north are leading the way, meeting hears

VANCOUVER - Bud Lane III is believed to be one of the last few people on the planet fluent in the aboriginal language Siletz-Dee-ni.

His language, spoken by a small aboriginal community in Oregon, is teetering on the brink of extinction.

But it has now been immortalized in Lane's soothing voice in a "talking dictionary" - one of eight unveiled here Friday at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Lane, who spoke to the media briefing Friday by phone from Oregon, said he will never forget the day experts came to his community in the 1980s and labelled the language "morbid." He said the community has been working ever since to revive the language.

The talking dictionaries - one from Siberia even has a smartphone app - are giving the languages unprecedented reach and, it is hoped, a better chance at survival.

The world is facing a crisis of language extinction, researchers said. Of the nearly 7,000 languages spoken today, they predict half may be gone by the end of the century.

The researchers said that the loss to humanity goes beyond the death of a language.

"Linguistic diversity is one of the most important parts of our human heritage," said David Harrison, an endangered language expert at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, who co-leads the talking dictionaries project.

He and his colleagues said languages give invaluable insight into history, culture and how the brain functions.

Many communities are embracing technology - the Internet, YouTube, social media, text messaging - as a way to save their languages.

The Inuit in Canada's north are, in many respects, leading the way. Microsoft programs have been translated into Inuktitut, enabling young and old to flip on their computers and communicate in their language, Leena Evic, executive director of the Pirurvik Centre for Inuit Language in Iqaluit, told the conference.

She said there are also online learning tools and a new smartphone app that now enable people "anywhere on the planet" to access Inuktitut, which is spoken by 30,000 people in the north.

"This is what I like to call the flip side of globalization," said Harrison, pointing to the positive effects of technology now giving small languages global reach and audiences.

His team, which works with National Geographic, has been to some of Earth's most remote corners to find the last speakers of vanishing languages.

So far the talking dictionaries have 32,000 word entries in eight endangered languages, and more than 24,000 audio recordings of native speakers pronouncing words and sentences. They are often accompanied with photographs to help get across the language's nuances.

Three years ago, Harrison said the team headed to a community in Papua New Guinea, where about 600 people speak a language known as Matukar Panau.

When they first arrived, the community had no electricity. But community members knew about the digital world and said they wanted their language to be on the Internet. The team helped them build a talking dictionary. A year later the village got electricity.

"The very first time they went on the Internet, they were able to see and hear their own language spoken," said Harrison.

It sent the very powerful message, he said, that their language "is just as good as any other. It can exist in a high-tech medium."

He said many aboriginal languages in Western Canada and the U.S. are considered endangered - or, as in the case of Siletz Dee-ni, extremely endangered.

The Siletz reservation in Oregon, formed in the mid-1850s, brought together people from many different bands, who spoke different languages and dialects. To communicate, the people began to speak Chinook jargon. That, and the increased use of English, has seen the number of fluent Siletz Dee-in speakers dwindle to just a few.

Lane said technologies such as the talking dictionary are playing an important role in the revival of the language, which is now being taught to youngsters in the community. It will never take the place of people who can speak the language, he said, "but it can bridge the gap."

DAN'S CORNER - OUR 20,000 YEAR-OLD WULUSTUKYIEG GRAND COUNCIL

The governing authority of our people for thousands and thousands of generations, prior to white contact, was our grand council.

Our Grand Chief or Kchi-Saugum, along with the members of the Grand Council, were the individuals who signed the treaties of peace and friendship with those invading europeans on a nation to nation basis back in the 1700's.

At time of white contact in 1604 our four principal communities were still in their same locations

after 20,000+ years. They were at Wigoudy (now St. John), Nerpes, Ek-pa-hawk (now Silverwood) and Medoctic. Each of these communities contained a Grand Council Chamber at its center as the principal structure surrounded by other smaller home dwellings.

Ours was a matrilineal society in which we trace our lineage through the maternal or female line. Our governing system was a matriarchal system in which social organizations were governed through the female line.

This system of governance served our people very well for all of those many thousands of generations prior to European contact. It kept our people strong, united, prosperous and healthy. Living in peace, in harmony and in balance with all of creation.

Here are some quotes from the Jesuit shock troops who were the first to work at assimilating our people in the 1600's:

* From Father Pierre Baird 1610 - "These savages love justice and hate violence and robbery a thing really remarkable in men who have neither laws nor magistrates"

* From Father Marc Laercarbot 1604 - "Our savages do not found their wars upon the possession of land. We do not observe that they encroach upon one another in that way"

Once the population of the European invaders grew to outnumbering our people they, in time, decided to form a government and eventually a country which they named Canada. Once a country was formed the whites began enacting different legislation as a means of managing and controlling the original owners of Turtle Island.

Through these different pieces of legislation they managed to lock us up onto their concentration camps a.k.a. Indian Reservations, force our children into their residential schools and they began sterilizing Indian women. All of this with an eye toward eventually imposing their version of a "Final Solution" to their perceived "Indian Problem".

Prior to European contact our people possessed all of those societal institutions that Europeans say that a People require to be viewed as a civilization. We possessed religious institutions, governance institutions, political institutions, economic institutions, educational institutions, etc. If we did not possess these institutions we would not have survived as a People.

What distinguishes our civilization from that of the European civilization is our world view, our values and our beliefs.

In very plain and simple terms our world view, our values and our beliefs center around love, respect, equality, gratitude and reverence. And that creation, having been created by the loving heart of Great Creator, is sacred and must be treated in a sacred manner.

We have lived this world view for thousands and thousands of generations which means that our way of life and living is contained within our DNA.

All of our institutions, our relationships, our dealings are under that all-encompassing umbrella of the sacredness of Great Creator's creation. For our people there was no separation of church and state, nor separation of Great Creator and human beings, no separation of human beings. We are all one, we are all connected and we are all related.

We are taught that all of life is a ceremony. And all of our daily activities and undertakings are

always accompanied by ceremony. The ceremony could be the laying down of tobacco, the sacred talking circle ceremony, the sacred sweatlodge, the sacred pipe or the fasting ceremony.

What each and every one of our people have to look at and consider in light of these historical facts is this, which form of governance do we wish to have governing our people? The 20,000+ year-old government of the Ancestors or the 170 year-old INAC imposed Indian Act government?

All My Relations, Dan Ennis, -Feb 23, 2012

DEAN'S DEN - QUIET

Quiet is - wordless
In the most common form
No acute conversation
So often the norm,
Quiet is - sweetness
Time treading water
Anxiety at anchor
Tranquility's daughter,
Quiet is - quiescence
Soft silence serene
Subdued pastel phonics
Placid, the mean,
Quiet is - easy
All hush, not a stir
The stillness that let's us
Go back where we were,
Quiet is - whispers
All motion muffled
Rustling restrained
Relaxed and unruffled,
Quiet is - intimate
Undertones, murmurs, sighs
It can come before greetings
Or, after good-byes,
Quiet is - Peace
The plow, not the sword
The leisure of freedom
At ease ... the reward!

- D.C. Butterfield

QUOTES OF NATIVE AMERICAN CHIEFS

When the Earth is sick, the animals will begin to disappear, when that happens, The Warriors of the Rainbow will come to save them. -Chief Seattle

Believe in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you can be successful or be happy.