

File No.: 6500-20-First Nations
relationship building

DATE OF REPORT: October 20, 2016
TO: Saturna Island Local Trust Committee
FROM: Gary Richardson, Island Planner, and
Fiona XETXÁTTEN Macraild, Senior Intergovernmental Policy Advisor
Victoria Office
SUBJECT: Long term relationship-building program with local First Nations

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Saturna Island Local Trust Committee (SILTC) embark on developing an annual plan of constructive actions that demonstrate a commitment to improving respectful relationships between residents and visitors of Saturna Island and the local First Nations with asserted interests in Saturna Island.
2. That the Saturna Island Local Trust Committee direct staff to organise a public event focused on having SENCOTEN-speaking elders of knowledge-holders talk about how the WSANEC (Saanich) people view and connect historically and culturally with the waters and land of Saturna Island and its surrounding area.
3. That the Saturna Island Local Trust Committee direct staff to draft a project charter for the First Nations relationship-building project.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report identifies the recent acknowledgement from SILTC that there is little that is known about the local First Nations' historical and current connections to the waters and the lands of the Saturna Island area. The report suggests an initial approach that focuses on knowledge sharing on place names, significant stories and language assumptions/pronunciation of the geographically closest First Nations to Saturna Island (WSANEC, or Saanich, Nations).

The report explores how this initial cultural approach can lead to more meaningful political discussions as well as broader engagement with other First Nations and other agencies who are also interested in improved relationships between residents and visitors of Saturna Island and First Nations.

BACKGROUND

The 2015 logging plans of Tsawout First Nation and Tseycum First Nation for the Reserve lands on Saturna Island have elicited mixed reactions from the local residents. The Saturna Island Local Trust Committee made First Nations relationship-building a top work program priority at its September 16, 2016 Local Trust Committee meeting. Staff has moved \$3000.00 into a budget to facilitate this project.

Although Local Trust Committee recognizes they have no jurisdiction over these lands, the new Senior Intergovernmental Policy Advisor was engaged to explore possible topics of conversation with leadership from both Nations.

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From these discussions came a sincere desire from the Local Trust Committee to focus – not on the logging project per se – but rather on building an enduring friendship with the all First Nations who have asserted interests in Saturna Island as part of their traditional territory.

ANALYSIS

As this is the first phase of building a relationship, taking the time to understand the philosophical lens through which local First Nations view their connection to the land and waters of Saturna Island is a wise approach. Taking this early culture-based approach may also mitigate possible cynicism that this effort is an indirect attempt at influencing the controversial logging project on the Reserve lands. As a starting point, there is a map of “Special Places” that was made public by Tsawout First Nation in the *Tsawout Marine Use Study 2015* with 10 SENCOTEN¹ place names identified on Saturna Island and Tumbo Island (see excerpt from map below).

Increasing a public awareness is also important. The Local Trust Committee could host a public event and invite two or three SENCOTEN-speaking elders or knowledge-holders to talk about the Special Places, what the place names mean, how to pronounce them or other Indigenous stories about the island and its surrounding area.

From this stage, a more formal Community-to-Community meeting could take place between elected officials from local First Nations and the Local Trust Committee². Having first met with elders and made some effort to understand the historical and cultural connections that First Nations have with the island speaks strongly of a respectful approach to building a sincere relationship.

Subsequent stages of relationship building after this could include broadening the engagement to First Nations of other language groups (such as Hul’quimi’num) with interests in Saturna Island, or engaging with other agencies (such as Parks Canada or the Capital Regional District) to explore innovative ways to acknowledge the First Nations history on the island such as signs, annual events, visitor brochures, etc.

Policy/Regulatory:

2014-2018 Strategic Plan. Goal D: Effective, Efficient and Collaborative Governance

- Priority 6.1: Improve engagement with first Nations
- Priority 6.2: Improve protection of archaeological and First Nations cultural resources

Issues and Opportunities:

The following phases are built upon public documents on the Tsawout First Nation website and other internet sources of SENCOTEN and WSENAC (Saanich) historical perspectives on the south Gulf islands (see attached documents and website links).

¹ SENCOTEN is the language spoken by First Nations occupying lands from Sooke to White Rock (approximately) and is one of many Coast Salish languages.

² If C2C funding application is submitted by October 28, 2016, then a meeting between the LTC and the elected officials of the local First Nations can take place anytime between November 2016 and the end of March 2017.

Phase 1: Understanding the Basis of First Nations' Connections to Saturna Island

Seeing the Islands as Ancestors

The Indigenous way of viewing the Gulf Islands differs significantly from the mainstream Canadian culture reflection of the Gulf Islands values. Local First Nations believe that the islands were people before they became islands and the “Great Spirit” has always instructed them to take care of their “ancestors of the deep”. In turn, they believe the islands take of the people who depend on them.

A Unique SENCOTEN Dependence on the waters of the Gulf Islands

SENCOTEN-speaking people of the Saanich peninsula and the San Juan Islands are referred to by other First Nations as “island people” as they have no major river they depend on for sockeye or pink salmon returning to spawn (although there are small returns of coho and chum salmon to the local creeks). As sockeye and pink salmon have always been of great importance to these First Nations due to oil content, taste and value in trading, they have learned to fish differently than “river” First Nations with reef nets and other fishing techniques. This is why the SENCOTEN people are often called the Saltwater People. Their knowledge of tides, currents, and island places where resources are found is acknowledged by other First Nations as significant.

Place names are more than just geographical markers. They have a strong spiritual and social currency due to their importance in sustaining the First Nations who have depended on them for their survival for more than 10,000 years.

“Special Places” and how they belong to Communities and Families

Throughout these islands and particularly with south-facing bays, reef net sites, other seafood harvesting sites and hunting grounds were family “owned”. In fact, many SENCOTEN people today are named after important places throughout the Gulf Islands. These names are given in ceremony as young adults and – unlike their birth names – are considered a sort “deed” to the care, stewardship, history and rights associated with that place.

The following SENCOTEN terms help with understanding the basis of local First Nations’ connection to Saturna Island and the lens of authority and use through which specific places are viewed. SENCOTEN-speaking elders and knowledge-holders can help with understanding and properly pronouncing these terms:

- **ÁLENENEC TTE** means Community Land (formerly Band Land or Reserve Land, but historically was understood to be the Nation’s entire territory)
- **CELÁNEN** means the body of Indigenous laws, customs and traditions that the Saanich (WASANEC) Tribes (Tsaywut, Tseycum, Pauquachin, Tsartlip and Malahat First Nations)
- **SCÁLECE** means the traditions and laws of individual families

- **S,HI,WEK** means the head of the family according to the Saanich Tribal Indigenous Laws
- **TENEW TTE NE SCÁLECE** means “customary allotment” and is widely understood among members of the Saanich Tribes to be the customary right of an individual family to use or occupy a particular parcel or area of Community Land (N.B. this is regarded as having a higher authority than any confirmation of land interest under the *Indian Act*)

Phase 2: Understanding the “Special Places” Specific to Saturna Island

It is through this lens of a different value systems and connection to Saturna Island that we could embark on understanding the 10 “Special Places” on and around Saturna Island (in alphabetical order) that have been recently published in the Tsawout Marine Use Study of 2015. This will also require consultation with SENCOTEN-speaking elders or knowledge-holders from the Saanich Tribes to share the meaning and proper pronunciation of these places (see Appendix A for the full map):



ÁKEUWEWEC (generally, west shoreline of Tumbo Island)

- **TIU,IL,ES** (literally means Tumbo Channel)
- **TEMOSEN** (literally means Tumbo Island)

ÁM,MECEN (literally means Bruce Bight): near Murder Point

SAKETES (generally, Taylor Point)

SNEUES (generally, Monarch Head)

TEKTEKSEN (East Point): possible insight - “TEKTEK” means red snapper

TIELES (Hunting camp; Indian Reserve): possible insight - “TÍEL” means go upstream

TILES (generally, Narvaez Bay)

WTEKEK, KIEM (generally, Lyall Harbour)

WTITKIEM (generally, Boot Cove)

XIXYES (Winter Cove): means “Boat Passage”

Phase 3: Identifying and Protecting “Special Places” of historical significance to local First Nations

Identifying “special places” of significance for First Nations on and around Saturna Island may be as simple as writing stories down (assuming a review and explicit permission to share publicly by the First Nations), designing brochures for visitors or publishing on a website. It could also be activities that involve more resources such as new signs (or amending established signs) or inviting SENCOTEN speakers to share information at events. What is important is the sharing of information that identifies the “special places” on Saturna Island for SENCOTEN people and encouraging a public respect for these historically significant places.

Other ways of showing respect for the First Nations’ connection to the waters and land of Saturna Island could include encouraging places of business or meeting spaces to acknowledge activities taking part on Coast Salish territory. It could be inviting an elder to give a prayer or a song in their Indigenous language before an important event. Perhaps the gesture of placing First Nations art or welcome signs would be appreciated. Even something as simple as a residents’ book club that focuses on Indigenous-themed literature or a celebration on National Aboriginal Day can help build relationships.

Protecting “special places” is a bit more challenging and is a combination of information sharing with residents and visitors as well as technical tools of protection. Using tools of land-use protection such as a Heritage Conservation Area, Designated Use Area or land covenants requires developing criteria to determine levels of significance to these areas of historical value. This would be a longer term objective and would require staff resources to develop appropriate options for specific sites.

Consultation:

October/November 2016:

1. Invitation to John Elliot (head SENCOTEN high school teacher at ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School in Central Saanich) as he has recently been a part of the Islands Trust all-staff field trip on Sept. 21, 2016 to the Tsawout Reserve on Salt Spring Island. Being one of the most respected SENCOTEN-speakers in the five WSANEC (Saanich) Nations he, in turn, could extend an invitation to the appropriate elders or knowledge-holders for a public event during the month of November 2016.

All information that will be allowed to be recorded from this event will be shared with all five WSANEC (Saanich) Nations as a courtesy correspondence.

2. Submit a proposal for the SILTC to host a meeting with elected First Nation officials before March 31, 2017, to be included in Islands Trust Fall 2016 application for funding to the Regional Community to Community Forum Program (UBCM). Current application deadline is Oct. 28, 2016.

All information that will be allowed to be recorded from this event will be shared with all five WSANEC (Saanich) Nations as a courtesy correspondence.

The timing, content and scope of consultation with other First Nations and interested agencies will be developed from the understanding gained from these preliminary activities.

Rationale for Recommendation:

As the SILTC considers developing a plan of constructive actions that demonstrate a commitment to improving respectful relationships between residents and visitors of Saturna Island and the local First Nations with asserted interests in Saturna Island, they should do so with care.

The prerequisite to any meaningful relationship building is understanding the philosophical lens through which the other person understands their environment. It is a prudent first step to take the time to understand the fundamental connection between Saturna Island and the local First Nations, including gaining an understanding of the meaning, relative significance and the proper pronunciation of the many “special places” with SENCOTEN names on Saturna Island and Tumbo Island.

This show of respect at a cultural, linguistic and spiritual level will soften the ground and allow for a sincere political dialogue between elected First Nations officials and the SILTC. This, in turn, can lead to a broader discussion with other First Nations and interested agencies in the development of an annual plan of activities to foster a relationship of mutual respect.

ALTERNATIVES

1. **A first step that is not a public event.** The SILTC could invite two or three SENCOTEN-speaking elders or knowledge-keepers for a low-key shared meal where knowledge-sharing takes place and the SILTC could, in turn, share that information more publically afterwards.
2. **Request further information.** A more comprehensive plan of approach may be desired that includes preliminary discussions with other agencies such as Parks Canada, the Capital Regional District or others before approaching First Nations.
3. **Receive for information.** Timing for the First Nation relationship building may be best to wait until after the logging project for the Reserve lands has been completed so as to be seen as not trying to influence the logging activities.

NEXT STEPS

The Senior Intergovernmental Policy Advisor will assist the LTC in drafting a letter of invitation to John Elliot and others he feels would be appropriate for an initial event of a shared meal and information-sharing on SENCOTEN place names and SENCOTEN concepts of land and water connections to Saturna Island.

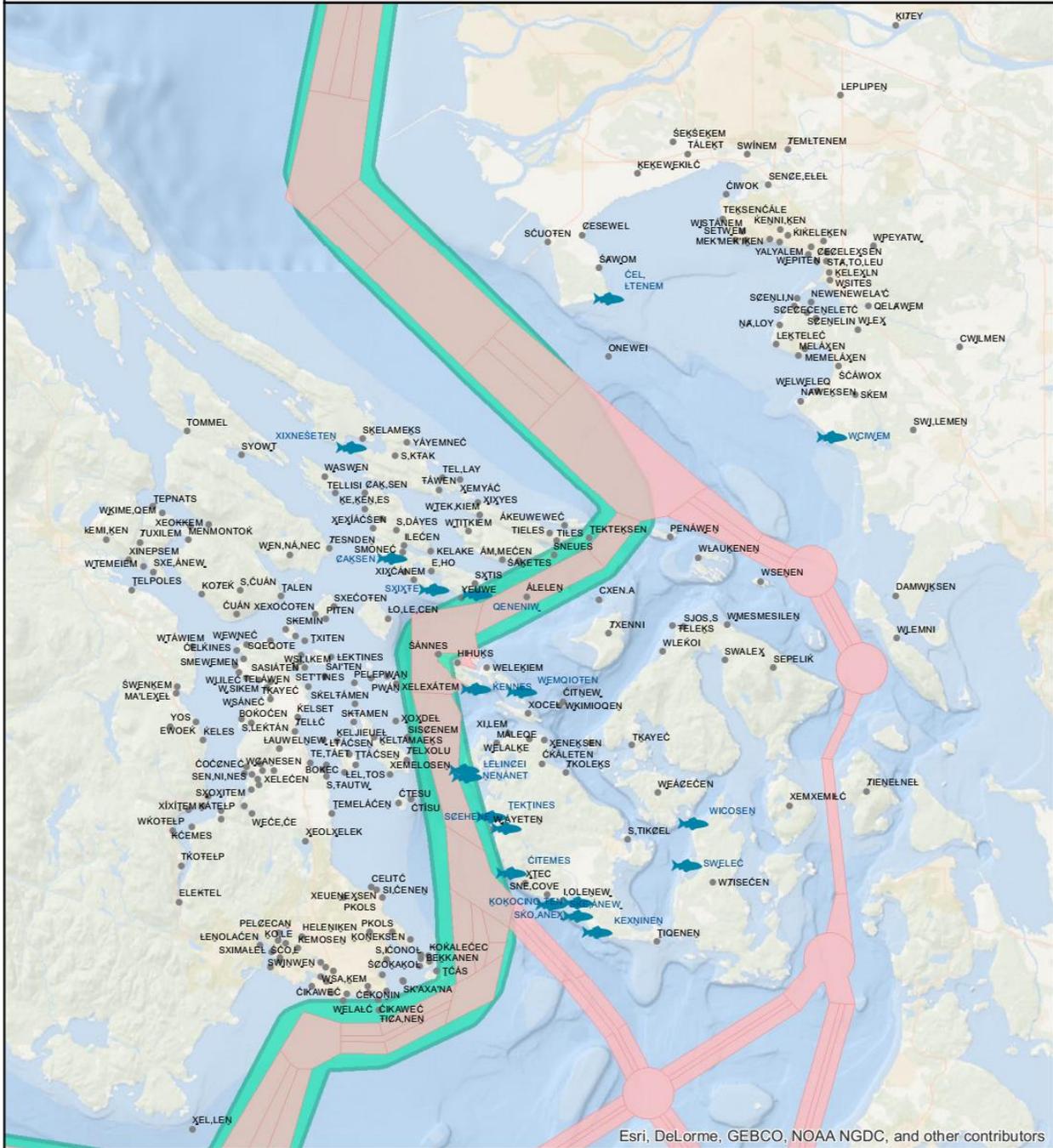
The Senior Intergovernmental Policy Advisor will draft a proposal for Islands Trust application for C2C funding for October 28, 2016, with the approval from the SILTC.

Submitted By:	Gary Richardson, Island Planner Fiona XETXÁTTEN MacRaild, Senior Intergovernmental Policy Advisor	October 20, 2016
Concurrence:	Robert Kojima, Manager, Regional Planning Manager, Southern Team	October 20, 2016

ATTACHMENTS

1. Map 2: SENCOTEN Place Names and Reef Net Sites in LSA. Excerpt from the *Tsawout Marine Use Study 2015*.
[https://docs.neb-one.gc.ca/ll-eng/llisapi.dll/2786339/C355-15-18 - Tsawout First Nation Marine Use Study \(MUS\) Part 1 of 4 - A4Q1F5.pdf?func=doc.Fetch&nodeid=2786339](https://docs.neb-one.gc.ca/ll-eng/llisapi.dll/2786339/C355-15-18 - Tsawout First Nation Marine Use Study (MUS) Part 1 of 4 - A4Q1F5.pdf?func=doc.Fetch&nodeid=2786339).
2. Excerpt from Tsawout Lands Disposition Law:
<http://www.tsawout.com/files/Lands/lands-disposition-law.pdf>
3. Link to an online John Elliot interview on WSANEC peoples connection to the Gulf Islands:
<http://maps.fphlcc.ca/node/218>

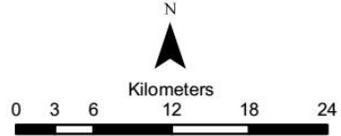
Map 2: SENĆOTEN Place Names and Reef Net Sites in LSA



Esri, DeLorme, GEBCO, NOAA NGDC, and other contributors

Produced By: CloverPoint Cartographics
 For: Evernorth
 Authors: Dr. Earl Claxton, Ray Sam,
 Gabe Pelkey, Philip Pelkey, Lou Claxton,
 and numerous Tsawout Elders and
 members of the WSANEC Nation

-  Reef Net Sites
-  Place Names
-  Shipping Routes
-  LSA



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 Projection: NAD 83 UTM Zone 10N
 Printing Date: Nov 25 2014

Document Path: P:\Projects\Traditional Use Studies (TUS)\13029_TUS_Other_Support\06_EverNorth\03_MXD\PlacenamesMap2.mxd

Excerpts from the Tsawout Land Disposition Law (approved and enacted by Tsawout Chief and Council July 13, 2016):

PART 3 - INTERPRETATION

Definitions

3.1 For the purposes of this Law, the following definitions apply:

“ÁLEÑENEØ TFE” means Community Land (formerly Band Land);

“Application” means an application made under Part 8;

“Briefing Note” means the Briefing Note prepared by the Lands Manager under section 8.5;

“ĆELÁNEN” means the body of WSÁNEĆ laws, customs and traditions, and includes the traditions and laws of SĆÁLEĆE (individual families);

“S,HI,WEK” means the head of the family, according to ĆELÁNEN;

“SĀUTW” means the Tsawout First Nation; and

“TENEW TFE NE SĆÁLEĆE or Customary Allotment” means a widely-held understanding among Members as to the customary right of an individual or family to use or occupy a particular parcel or area of Community Land, which right has not been confirmed by an allotment under section 20(1) of the *Indian Act* or a location ticket under section 20(3) of the *Indian Act*, nor by the creation of a Permanent Interest under the Land Code.