

Letter to the Editor, Vancouver Friday July 16, 2010

Dear Editor;

The Vancouver Sun article entitled "RCMP wants access to protected watershed to nab poachers" and the accompanying online article unfortunately may leave some inaccurate impressions in readers minds about the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and its activities and relationship with the Indian River watershed and access through the Coquitlam.

The watersheds in question are located in the core of the Tsleil-Waututh traditional territory and we have been leading a coordinated effort to stabilize and restore the environment and its values over the past 15 years.

In 1998, Tsleil-Waututh coordinated the first multi-agency and stakeholder conference in BC aimed at developing new models of sustainable resource planning and management. Over the past 10 years we have systematically acquired, through purchase or negotiation, all of the forest tenures in the Indian River watershed and introduced new sustainable forest planning and harvesting practices.

In 2007, in partnership with the Provincial government, we began a sustainable resource planning process for the Indian river watershed that was led and coordinated by Tsleil-Waututh; a first in BC. In that same year, Tsleil-Waututh and the Ministry of Environment re-established a herd of Roosevelt Elk in the watershed.

The Ministry of Environment, members of the RCMP, BC Parks and Tsleil-Waututh have been working collaboratively for a number of years to ensure that this threatened herd and other wildlife species are protected. Unfortunately, despite these efforts violations of the *Wildlife Act*, including illegal harvesting of Elk has occurred.

The Indian River road stabilization project that is referenced in the article was in fact coordinated and partly funded by Tsleil-Waututh in partnership with Terasen Gas, BC Hydro and the Ministry of Forests and Range.

Access, at a reasonable cost, is a key issue. Tsleil-Waututh is more than willing, as we have been for the past 15 years to work with all interested parties to create workable solutions that maintain sustainable use and protect the natural and cultural values in our territory.

Qut-same
Chief Justin George
Tsleil-Waututh Nation