



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 3, 2020

MUSQUEAM INDIAN BAND AND FRASER RIVER DISCOVERY CENTRE SOCIETY
x^wtatəl'ləm ʔə k^w šx^wəlməx^waʔ syəθ ʔiʔ snəwəyət ʔi ʔə tə ʔi ná stal'əw
“Opportunity for governments, the private sector and other potential partners to
invest in Reconciliation and the UNDRIP”

New Westminster - Today the Musqueam Indian Band (MIB) and the Fraser River Discovery Centre Society (FRDCS) announced their intention to develop a *Place of Learning About the Indigenous Heritage and Teachings of the Fraser River* (x^wtatəl'ləm ʔə k^w šx^wəlməx^waʔ syəθ ʔiʔ snəwəyət ʔi ʔə tə ʔi ná stal'əw). The initiative will be the first to come out of a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two parties.

“The x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) people are traditional həńqəmińəm speaking peoples who have been here as long as there has been land to live upon,” said MIB Councillor Nolan Charles. “The concept of x^wtatəl'ləm (*a Place of Learning*) related to the history of the stal'əw (*River*) is consistent with our approach to learning and being sʔi:wəsənəq (*instructors*) by q^wi:l'q^wəl' ʔə k^wθə snəwəyət ct, (*sharing information about our teachings*) with all of those in the community of our traditional territory. This is captured in our concept of nácaʔmat ct (*we are all one*).”

The Fraser River Discovery Centre Society (FRDCS) is a registered non-profit that operates the Fraser River Discovery Centre (FRDC) in New Westminster, B.C. Through interactive exhibits and engaging programming, the FRDC showcases the Fraser River's role in shaping BC's ecological, cultural and economic diversity.

“The idea of expanding our Centre as a *Place of Learning for Indigenous History of the Fraser River* builds on our existing First Nations exhibits and programming and is consistent with our role as the “Voice of the Fraser,” said Mark Rizzo, Chair, FRDCS Board of Directors. “It will also help governments, industry and society continue to meet their commitments to Reconciliation and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The goal of the *Place of Learning* is a permanent exhibit and programming at the FRDC, but what it includes and how it is presented will need to be developed between the MIB, the FRDC and other partners in the community that come on board. Key to this will be ensuring that whatever is developed is consistent with the MIB's “learn/teach/share” approach and that the stories are told from a First Nations' perspective.

“The first steps in pursuing the new Place of Learning will be ná:ńətəl' (*talking together and having a discussion*),” added Councillor Charles. “ná:ńətəl' will involve identifying and meeting with all those in the community who might want to support and be involved in its development.”



Even during this time of the COVID19 pandemic, progress continues to be needed in the areas of Reconciliation and the UNDRIP.

““We understand and accept that fighting COVID-19 is our first priority, but the importance of Reconciliation and the UNDRIP haven’t gone away during the pandemic,” concluded Rizzo. “There are still funds – public and private – that have been budgeted for Reconciliation and the UNDRIP, but aren’t being used.”

“We believe that people and organizations are committed to reconciliation, but are often unsure how to make an impact,” concluded Charles. “Part of that may be a lack of understanding regarding what to actually do. This is an opportunity take action that everyone will be able to see and participate in.”

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