

NATION BUILDING

Malahat Nation purchases 525 hectares of land, tripling the size of their Nation Purchase includes lands formerly known as Bamberton

July 16, 2015, Malahat Nation (Coast Salish Territories), BC – The Malahat Nation, located next to the Vancouver Island town of Mill Bay, BC (40 Km north of Victoria, BC), has announced the purchase of approximately 525 hectares of land adjacent to their property, the area formerly known as Bamberton and including Oliphant Lake, more than tripling the size of their lands.

The land purchase is unique in British Columbia, with the Malahat Nation's Chief, Council, Chief Executive Officer Lawrence Lewis and Chief Legal Officer Nicole Hajash undertaking the negotiations between the sellers and First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA). The purchase negotiations took more than 13 months to complete and is part of a larger Malahat Nation building plan, endorsed by the Nation community, Chief and Council.

"Today marks a monumental moment for the future of the Malahat Nation as this land purchase helps to restore more of our traditional lands into our stewardship," says Chief Michael Harry, Malahat Nation. "We are moving forward to develop and protect the long-term viability of our people and our lands, while respecting our relationship with the neighbouring communities of southern Vancouver Island."

The Malahat Nation plans to explore long-term opportunities for the newly acquired lands, including marine and terrestrial development, which align directly with its existing zoning and purpose. In consultation with Chief and Council, the Malahat Nation, through its Business Development Corporation plans to pursue a number of possible business development opportunities and joint ventures, including tourism, light industry, housing, and maritime development opportunities throughout the core of its land holdings. The land expansion opportunity was identified as part of the Malahat Nation Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP), which was first conceptualized in 2013 and officially came into effect earlier this year. The CDP created a vision for the Nation that focuses on long-term economic goals to improve the well-being of the Nation and its people.

The land purchase will also help to expand the Malahat Nation's relationship with Quantum Murray, an industrial and environmental management services company with operations across Canada. In 2014, the Malahat Nation and Quantum Murray formed a joint venture to help pursue industrial service opportunities. Quantum Murray is currently employing members of the Malahat Nation as part of its development site on Malahat Reserve Lands.

"We are excited to be able to explore both short-term and long-term economic development initiatives," says Lewis.

In addition to the CDP, the Malahat Nation developed a Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) in 2012 to act as the Nation's governing plan and guiding principles and values. It is designed to help the Malahat Nation further exercise their sovereignty and make progress toward a future that incorporates social, economic, political, cultural growth, and wealth. As part of the CCP, the Malahat Nation identified the need for improved housing, helping to encourage members to return home and enhance the well being of their residents. In the last three years, nine new residences have been constructed, with four under construction, and plans for five to be built each year for the next five years. The Kwunew Kwasun Cultural Resource Centre was completed in 2014 and provides a place for the community to learn, share their values, re-build the strengths of their culture and have a space to gather.

About the Malahat Nation

The Malahat Nation is located adjacent to the town of Mill Bay, BC, 40 Km north of Victoria, BC. With close to 300 members in total – and 135 living on the Malahat lands – the Malahat Nation is a small First Nations community. Its Chief & Council are committed to improving the livelihood of their people through a series of initiatives based on comprehensive community and development plans that are focused on Nation building. For more information, visit www.malahatnation.ca and www.nationbuilding.ca.