



The Foundation Agreement is Being Signed on September 18, 2020!

Chief Gordon Alec is signing the Foundation Agreement today in Woyenne. Minister Scott Fraser is signing it on behalf of British Columbia, in Victoria, and Minister Carolyn Bennett is signing on behalf of Canada, in Toronto. A description of the Foundation Agreement and the immediate benefits that it will provide to Lake Babine Nation starts on page 2.

This Agreement was built with guidance from the Lake Babine members. Dialogue in each of the 5 communities and with members in Smithers, Prince George and Vancouver has been taking place for over three years. The final round of meetings took place between December 2-7, 2019, where the negotiations team presented the draft Foundation Agreement, distributed a detailed booklet summarizing each part of the Agreement, and heard feedback.

On February 19, 2020, the Lake Babine Council voted to approve the Foundation Agreement. The full Council voted in favour except for Chief Gordon Alec: he confirmed his support but was still on personal leave. Canada had already confirmed its willingness to sign the Foundation Agreement, leaving only British Columbia to approve it.

This Wednesday, Minister Fraser informed Chief Alec that British Columbia was ready to sign the Agreement. The signing is happening quickly because a provincial election may be called shortly.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 makes it impossible to hold an in-person signing ceremony so we are hosting a digital signing. In the future, when it is safe to do so, Lake Babine will celebrate the Foundation Agreement by hosting an event with appropriate cultural protocols.

Securing the Foundation Agreement took strong leadership from two Lake Babine Chiefs and Councils, hard work and persistence by Lake Babine's staff and negotiators, and input from members to identify the Nation's priorities and the challenges that we must overcome in order to finally achieve the well-being and prosperity that every Lake Babine member deserves.

Now that the Foundation Agreement is signed, our Nation is ready to seize the opportunities that it provides to transform our reality. We now have funding to do Nation-building work in the areas of governance, lands and resources, social programs and services, and economic development. This is work that only Lake Babine can undertake, with the guidance of our Hereditary Chiefs, all 5 communities, and our urban members.

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Betty Patrick
Foundation Agreement Manager

Background Information on the Foundation Agreement

What is the Foundation Agreement?

The Foundation Agreement is a 20-year agreement between Lake Babine, BC and Canada that provides immediate benefits to LBN and a high-level roadmap to achieve this Vision:

- ⊕ ***recognize and implement LBN's Aboriginal title and rights including LBN's inherent right of self-government*** (not extinguish or replace LBN's existing rights)
- ⊕ ***re-establish self-government for LBN***, and put control over programs and services for key social matters back in LBN's own hands: e.g. child and family protection and well-being, education, Nat'oot'en language, and justice. This will be a government developed *by* Lake Babine, *for* Lake Babine
- ⊕ ***help build a strong LBN economy in LBN Territory***, with a focus on forestry and tourism, and help the regional economy prosper
- ⊕ ***transform LBN's relationship with Canada and BC into a true Nation-to-Nation relationship*** that is respectful of LBN and its inherent rights, and in which LBN and the Crown collaborate effectively on issues of mutual interest/concern
- ⊕ help implement the ***United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples***
- ⊕ ***finally support LBN, its communities, its families, and members – including urban members – in achieving a high level of social and economic well-being.***

Immediate Benefits Under the Foundation Agreement

Lake Babine Nation will receive the following benefits in the first 5 years of the Agreement:

- ⊕ 20,000 hectares of land in core Lake Babine Territory coming back to the Nation to support economic development (valued at about \$150 million)
- ⊕ Additional forestry tenures to be managed by LBN Forestry, the Nation's growing forestry business
- ⊕ \$43 million in cash to support building Lake Babine governance capacity and economic development, make immediate improvements to social programs and services, and support ongoing implementation of the Foundation Agreement
- ⊕ *Canada's financial contribution for the first 5 years of the Agreement remains to be confirmed. This should happen in 2021.*

Road Map for Implementing Lake Babine title and rights, including self-government

In addition to providing Immediate Benefits, the Foundation Agreement sets out a Vision for LBN's future, to be achieved within 20 years, and a high-level road map consisting of short, medium, and long-term Milestones that LBN, BC and Canada need to complete to make the Vision a reality.

Many of the Milestones require further negotiations with BC and Canada and additional funding. Because they are high-level, almost all the Milestones require significant further visioning, planning, and implementation by LBN. Here are just a few examples of the work that LBN will undertake:

- ⊕ develop and, with the approval of the membership, establish, a new LBN government that will be grounded in the inherent right of LBN to self-government
- ⊕ identify the lands that need to come back to LBN as Aboriginal title lands, and decide how to manage those lands and resources in accordance with LBN laws and values
- ⊕ set up shared decision-making with the Crown for natural resource decisions of mutual interest or concern (e.g. moose management; environmental assessments for proposed projects that would affect both LBN and Crown lands)
- ⊕ grow the LBN Forestry business into one that provides year-round jobs to LBN members
- ⊕ grow successful community businesses so that each community has an economic base
- ⊕ develop new programs and services to support LBN children and families and establish a new child and family organization to exercise LBN jurisdiction over LBN child and family matters
- ⊕ plan for and build a Healing Centre and an Elders and Disability Centre to deliver culturally appropriate and effective programs and services to LBN members
- ⊕ plan for and develop Old Fort and Donald's Landing/Pinkut into serviced, year-round communities.

Help Build Lake Babine's Future!

Advisory Teams

Hereditary Chiefs, members from all 5 Lake Babine communities, urban members, elders, youth, LBN Council, and staff will all help guide the work under the Foundation Agreement. Each topic area will have an Advisory Team to lead the work. The Advisory Teams will lead topic-specific community consultations to keep members informed and gather their feedback.

Lake Babine's Advisory Teams for Children and Families, Wildlife, and Governance are already running. The call-out for the Fisheries and Justice Advisory Teams happened in August and those Teams will be appointed soon. Call-outs for additional Advisory Teams will happen in the coming months.

Employment

Although Covid-19 is making recruitment challenging, LBN will soon hire more staff to help implement the draft Foundation Agreement. Stay tuned for postings on the LBN website and on the LBN Facebook page.

How to Learn More about the Foundation Agreement

The Foundation Agreement team will be doing small in-person and virtual meetings to give all members a chance to learn about the Agreement and the opportunities for participating in the work ahead. Councillor Cheyene Dennis will continue to lead engagement with Hereditary Chiefs. Because of Covid-19, she will be doing multiple, small, meetings rather than full clan meetings.

There will be small in-person meetings for members 14-45 years old in Woyenne on September 21-23, from 5-7pm. Members in that age group who want to attend should contact Roxane Alec to reserve a spot. Space is limited to respect Lake Babine's Covid-19 policy. Roxane can be reached at roxane.alec@lakebabine.com or 250-692-2014.

Mesiy for your interest!

Betty Patrick, Foundation Agreement Manager, and the Foundation Agreement Negotiation Team.