

DSS Annual Report 2014 - 2015

January 15, 2016

Denisiqi Services Society
240B Mackenzie Ave.

Williams Lake BC
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Mission Statement

By honoring Tsilhqot'in and Ulkatchot'en traditional values, DENISIQI strives to regain responsibility for the lives of our children and families through a holistic approach to health and wellness.

Philosophy

DENISIQI is based on the philosophy of families helping each other within the community. We, as Aboriginal people, are responsible for our future, and that means it is important for our children to have a safe, caring and loving environment.

Board of Directors

Marilyn Baptiste –
President
Xeni Gwet'in
Chief Francis Lacey –
Vice President
Tl'esqox
Agnes Haller
Treasurer
Yunesit'in
Marvin Alexander
?Esdilagh
Chief Percy Guichon
Tsi Deldel
Vacant
Tl'etingox
Judy Cahoose
Ulkatcho

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Board of Directors welcome to the Denisiqi Services Society (Denisiqi) Seventh Annual General Assembly, and thank you for taking the time to attend. We give thanks to each and every staff member of our great team here at Denisiqi – including those who have moved on. It was our expectation that Denisiqi would be at the C4 Guardianship Delegation by March 2015 due to the compliance rating we received from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCF), and submitting all the required documentation to the federal government. However, as often happens coordinating such an undertaking with federal and provincial government our new timelines have been rescheduled to April 1, 2016. Denisiqi is committed to working with the Joint Advisory Committee to get back on track as well as the MCF Chilcotin Team on a more collaborative practice to serve our children and families.

We have had a self-evaluation performed by Carden Consulting and the recommendations were on track for implementation in the fall of 2014. Our finance department has instituted a streamlined budgeting system whereby the departments meet on a monthly basis to check their spending against the budget, job descriptions and salaries have been aligned with the funding contracts, checks and balances for spending have been fine-tuned, a timeline has been scheduled for monthly meetings between the finance manager and the program managers. These measures will contribute to the financial accountability and transparency of Denisiqi. Program Managers and Staff Meetings are regularly scheduled to align with integrated service and collaboration to make every attempt to meet the needs of the children and families.

The Program Managers and individual program staff will outline in more detail their activities here in the central office, and in the communities. I expect their reports will not only speak to the successes

they have achieved but also the challenges they have encountered, and the solutions that have been developed in a team environment. They will be present all day and be ready to respond to any questions or suggestions you may have.

Denisiqi and the communities are continually challenged with the ability to fund the Family Support Workers on a full time basis. This is a historical issue that has never been resolved, and will need some political advocacy to achieve this goal to assist with the prevention services to benefit our children and families.

A power-point has been developed that outlines the federal and provincial government funding we receive for each of the MCF provincially funded programs and services, and the federally funded child and family delegated services. This power-point will be used by Denisiqi staff at information sessions that will be scheduled for each of the communities, and is available for presentation today. Please stay and enjoy a review of the services we have been delivering.

Denisiqi is committed to renewed relationship building with the communities we serve, achieving the Guardianship Delegation, coordinating and conducting the family group conferences, providing the child and youth mental services centrally and within community, continued service for early childhood programs, and making the Family Support Worker contracts a priority. Thank you again for coming to the Denisiqi Society's 7th Annual General Assembly. We look forward to this year ahead and many more!

Marilyn Baptiste
President
Denisiqi Board of Directors

Vision Statement

We envision a future where the true meaning of DENISIQI is valued, honored, and practiced. Our children are our future leaders.



Staff of Denisiqi

Executive Director
Nancy Sandy

Family Care Manager
Joan Charleyboy

Finance Manager
Linda Hillegeist

Administrative Assistant
Elaine Yablonski

Voluntary Services

VS Supervisor
Jo-Ann Ronnenkamp

VS Social Workers
Brenda Cahoose
Dolly Wycotte
Charlene Smythe

Cultural Enhancement Worker
Orrie Charleyboy

VS Administrative Assistant
Francy Elkins

Aboriginal Supported Child Development
Vacant

Aboriginal Infant Development Program
Stella Stump

Early Childhood Development
Grace Cahoose

Aboriginal Family Group Conference
Kerry Chelsea

Child and Youth Mental Health Team
Neil Burrows
Carmen Mutschele
Tracy Davison
Terri Smith
Traveena Alexis

Wellness Coordinator
Jessica Doerner

Restoring Balance Program
Carolyn Charleyboy

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Denisiqi Services Society Annual General Assembly. My message will be very short since I just started with the Society on December 7, 2015 at three days per week until the 21st. I am Secwepemc from T'exelc (Williams Lake Indian Band). My parents are the late Anastasia and Frank Sandy. My maternal grandparents are the late Felicia and Tommy Wycotte, Sr. My paternal grandparents are the late Elena and Eneas Johnny. I am a mother and grandmother.

I have worked with the Dakelh and Tsilhqot'in as a former legal counsel for the Nenqay Deni Yajelhtig Law Centre and was also their legal representative during the 1992-93 Cariboo Chilcotin Justice Inquiry (commonly known as the Sarich Inquiry). I graduated from the University of British Columbia Faculty of Law in 1987 and was called to the bar in 1989. In 2011 I graduated from the University of Victoria Faculty of Law with a Masters of Law degree. My thesis topic was titled "Reviving Secwepemc Child Welfare Jurisdiction and it has been accepted for publication by the University of British Columbia Press. Most recently I have been jointly appointed by the First Nations Leadership Council (Assembly of First Nations BC Region, First Nations Summit, Native Courtworker's Association of BC, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs) to the BC Aboriginal Justice Council. One of the mandates for the BC Aboriginal Justice Council is to challenge the approaches that contribute to the growing over-representation of Aboriginal children and youth in care.

I have twelve years of experience in the field of Indigenous child safety as a former program manager and as a

consultant to many of the First Nations Delegated Agencies in the province. I also have legal and political experience as a former Chief and advocate for Indigenous peoples promoting the rights of children, families and community. I have taught at the college and university level as an instructor for Indigenous studies and developed curriculum that tells the story of Indigenous peoples from an Indigenous perspective. I recognize and maintain Indigenous knowledge, laws, values and principles are vital to revitalizing and strengthening all sectors of Indigenous nationhood, and especially in building a strong family foundation.

I have met with the Program Managers and Staff on two occasions and attended two Board Meetings to date. I presented the Board with a draft work plan for their approval and as a reporting mechanism to track my progress. My first impressions are that we have a very strong team here at Denisiqi and I am excited about the potential for the Society and look forward to working in partnership with the communities of ?Esdilagh, Tsi Deldel, TI'etinqox, Xeni Gwet'in, Yunesit'in, TI'esqox and Ulkatcho.

Respectfully,

Nancy Sandy, LLB, LLM
Executive Director

Denisiqi Timeline

June 2009 TNG the six Tsilhqot'in Bands submitted BCR's stating they fully support the continuation of development of a Child and Family Services Agency under 20 -1 of INAC.

July 15, 2009, the three employees returned by contract to Desniqi. A new Acting Executive Director and Finance Manager were brought in on contract. Ministry contracts were renegotiated.

September 15, 2009, Desniqi restructured and employees were rehired.

December 2009, Desniqi applied, as per the *Society Act*, to change the organizations name from Desniqi to Denisiqi Services Society. "Denisiqi" means "people's children"; "Deni" means people and "siqi" means "children"

May 28, 2010 Desniqi received their Certificate of Change of Name, as per the *Society Act*.

February 21, 2011 Denisiqi received a letter from MCFD, Aboriginal Policy and Support Service, Ray Bronson, which stated in January 2009 an Operational Readiness Assessment, was conducted at Denisiqi, the assessment conducted "identified a number of outstanding items, and following the assessment it was understood that the agency would address these items."

March of 2011 Denisiqi submitted documents to be reviewed for the unofficial Audit and received a list of items to complete.

March 18, 2011 the Chief and Council of the Ulkatcho (Ulkatchot'en) passed a Band Council Resolution which stated they were in support of Denisiqi obtaining funding from INAC, in order to provide Child and Family Services to the membership of the Ulkatcho Nation.

October of 2011 Denisiqi submitted documents to be reviewed for the unofficial Audit and received a list of items to complete.

December 7, 2011 the Chief and Council of the Ulkatcho Band passed a Band Council Resolution "that the Ulkatcho Indian Band Chief and Council fully support the continuation and development of a child and family services agency under 20-1 of INAC".

December 2011 Denisiqi submitted documents to be reviewed for the unofficial Readiness Criteria for Voluntary Services Audit and received a pass. The Ministry scheduled an Official Readiness Criteria for Voluntary Services Audit for February of 2012.

February 7th to 10th, 2012, Denisiqi underwent the formal Audit for the Readiness Criteria for Voluntary Services. Denisiqi was provided with feedback and was asked to revise some documents which Denisiqi did and resubmitted to the Ministry.

April 27, 2012, Denisiqi received a letter from MCFD, Office of the Director of Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, Ray Bronson, with regards to the result of the Operational Readiness Review/Program Review for Voluntary Services. Denisiqi "has met most of the criteria essential to delivery Voluntary Services. The Voluntary Services Delegation designation is contingent upon: securing adequate operational funding from AANDC.

November of 2012, Denisiqi, MCFD Aboriginal Services Branch and AANDC signed Denisiqi's Delegation Confirmation Agreement, which gives Denisiqi the authorization to provide Voluntary Services to Member Bands who reside on reserve.

December of 2012 AANDC released Denisiqi's funding to provide Voluntary Services. Denisiqi worked from July 1, 2005 to April 20, 2012 to complete the Operational Readiness Criteria for Voluntary Services (6 years and 9 months).

March 31, 2013 obtained access to the MCFD ICM/MIS

May 16, 2013 received approval from the **Joint Advisory Committee** to provide the Extended Family Program service to Member Bands who reside on reserve.

June 20, 2013 became fully qualified to complete **SAFE – Structured Analysis Family Evaluations** on perspective foster parent applicants, as per MCFD and Consortium for Children Society requirements.

February 11 - 14, 2014 completed the **pre-audit for Operational Readiness Criteria for Guardianship Services** and received a 95 % completion. Aboriginal Agencies need to pass the pre-audit before MCFD Aboriginal Services Branch will book a formal audit, as formal audits are time consuming and costly.

The Voluntary Service Program was fully operational as of June 2013. All Voluntary Services employees were fully trained as per *AOPSI* and Ministry standards and policies.

September 2014 MCFD Interior provided feedback on Denisiqi's Guardianship Services Delivery Plan.

December of 2014 MCFD Aboriginal Services provided feedback on Denisiqi's Guardianship Services Delivery Plan. Denisiqi was provided with a list of items to complete prior to MCFD Aboriginal Services approving of Denisiqi Guardianship Services Delivery Plan.

Delegated Services Program

The Delegated Services Team is federally funded through Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) under the First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) program to provide the services of delegated social workers to children and families in our member communities. Denisiqi Services Society and the Delegated Social Workers must deliver all services in accordance with Provincial legislation; the Child Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA), while meeting or exceeding Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) service standards and meeting Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators (AOPSI). MCFD Aboriginal Services Branch sets three levels of delegation, Voluntary Services C3, Guardianship C4 and Child Protection C6 for Delegated Aboriginal Agencies and Denisiqi Services Society is delegated for Non-Protection C3 while working to meet the Operational Readiness Criteria to be approved for C4; Guardianship of children under a Continuing Custody Order and Youth Agreements. Member communities continue to receive Child Protection Services from the Ministry of Children and Family Development staff at the Williams Lake office.

The 2014/2015 fiscal year has shown Denisiqi Services Society offering many well attended community programs, cultural activities, workshops and "in house" programs. The Delegated Services social work team has successfully implemented the Extended Family Program, the Foster Parent Program and Family Support Program of Voluntary Services/Special Needs Agreements to ensure the children are receiving culturally safe services where appropriate.

While full delegation for Child Protection at C6 for the Tsilhqot'in and Ulkatcho people is the primary goal, existing services must remain permanent and a core function of Denisiqi Services Society. These include activities related to education, advocacy, family strengthening and support, Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing, support to individuals reporting child protection concerns, in-home supports, use of respite/relief supports, recruitment and development of culturally safe foster homes and out of care kith and kin

homes, foster parent and caregiver education and training, and monitoring of child placement.

Denisiqi Services Society Delegated Services Team will continue to strengthen meaningful and effective partnerships with our member communities and the MCFD Tsilhqot'in Team. This includes the honouring of policy and protocol agreements and developing strategies for improved service delivery. All activities and goals will include documentation required to meet the Operational Readiness Reviews for Guardianship and Child Protection Delegation.

Achievements and Challenges

Denisiqi Services Society underwent an informal Operational Readiness Review for Guardianship Services in February of 2014. The Agency received feedback from MCFD Aboriginal Services Branch in November of 2014, which stated we received a 95% pass on the documents and the Agency was provided with a list of items that needed to be completed in order to move forward.

Denisiqi Services Society has not achieved the goal of obtaining Guardianship and Child Protection Delegation within the initial timeframe outlined in the 2012-2013 Work Plan. The Pre-Audit and Formal Practice Audit have now been completed and the Agency continues to move forward in achieving these goals. The Delegated Social Workers have all attended Guardianship Training through Indigenous Perspectives Society and successfully completed their Field Work under the Supervision of Jo-Ann Ronnenkamp during her term of employment with the C6 Delegated Aboriginal Agency Knucwentwecw Society. SW Ronnenkamp accepted the position of Supervisor of Delegated Services with Denisiqi Services Society in June 2015 so all Delegated staff are prepared to increase their Delegation to C4 Guardianship as soon as the C4 Delegation Agreement is signed between MCFD and the Agency.

Community involvement in planning is primarily occurring through Chief and Council meeting of each respective member community with Denisiqi Services Society Executive Director and Supervisor/Management Team. The Agency continues to make every effort to enhance our programming ability through grant requests

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and proposal writing. Denisiqi Services Society was honoured at the Victoria Museum for a curriculum project that was developed through a language and culture grant. Denisiqi Services Society was also awarded a grant to deliver four Culture and Language Camps in 2015.

Denisiqi Services Society is working to improve culturally safe services in an ongoing basis. Denisiqi Services Society continues to actively recruit Foster Parent Resource Homes in each of the member communities as well as in Williams Lake and surrounding area. The Delegated Services Team has completed multiple “Out of Care” home assessments in support of MCFD lesser intrusive planning for children under Protection Response. MCFD collaborated with Denisiqi Services Society to host a BC Federation of Foster Parents Association Forum in May 2015 and joint ventures in training opportunities for Aboriginal Foster Parents is ongoing.

On June 26, 2014, the Supreme “Court of Canada rendered its unanimous decision in the Tsilhqot’in case, recognizing Aboriginal Title on territory of the Xen

iwet’in First Nation, one of six communities within the Tsilhqot’in Nation. Tsilhqot’in Nation and the Province of BC are now tasked with working together to begin the immediate work of implementing the Court’s decision in a meaningful way and moving into the future with longer-term reconciliation initiatives that explore economic opportunities and improve the health, education and socio-economic well-being of the Tsilhqot’in people. There is an expectation that this work will have an impact on the delivery of child welfare services in the future.

Denisiqi Services Society hosted a strategic planning session with program employees, Elders, and Board of Director members in an effort to identify the unique goals and objectives necessary for continual improvement to service delivery to the Ulkatcho and Tsilhqot’in member communities. Denisiqi Board of Director’s meets monthly and as needed with Executive Director and Program Supervisors. Denisiqi Service Society welcomes community members to the Annual General Meeting where program updates and Financial Audits are reported and distributed.

Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing

This report presents a comprehensive breakdown of the Denisiqi Services Society’s (DSS) Aboriginal Family Group Conferencing (AFGC) program. The main focus of the report is the number of AFGC meetings planned for and facilitated in the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Due to DSS’s strict confidentiality policy, no names, dates or communities have been identified.

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
1	2	2	2	2	3	3	1	3	3	1	1

For those not familiar with the AFGC process, the purpose of an Aboriginal Family Group Conference (AFGC) is to better enable families to have a voice in developing and implementing plans to ensure the emotional and physical safety and well-being of children through increasing the creative use, integration and mobilization of formal and informal resources using an AFGC. Denisiqi Services Society has been able to create an atmosphere that is rich with cultural ceremony and Aboriginal tradition. Including these practices has given Aboriginal children and families comfort and ownership of the entire Family Group Conferencing process.

Many AFGC meetings conducted consist of pre AFGC preparations such as:

- Meetings and consultation with Denisiqi Services Society Voluntary Services Manager
- Meetings with MCFD Social Workers
- Meetings and consultation with Williams Lake Professionals
- Individual interviews with all participants involved (6-25 participants)
- Optional cultural family preparation (smudging and/or sweat lodge)

The AFGC program has also collaborated with DSS’s Wellness program through the following:

- Denisiqi Drumming and Singing program
- Enhanced Services (Denisiqi Wellness Team and First Nations Health Authority)

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Early Childhood Education

- EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES CHILDREN 0-5
- ABORIGINAL INFANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SERVICES CHILDREN 0-5
- ABORIGINAL SUPPORTED CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SERVICES 0-19

Our team works with children and families about their child(ren)'s development to increase the families knowledge about their child(ren)'s development. This is done with a kit called the Ages and Stages questionnaire where families answer questions and also children participate in different activities to see where they are developmentally. We go out with a team of professionals from Williams Lake to help us support the areas that our program is not specialized in. The ASQ's are done at the beginning of the school year in October. Our program then does referrals for children who need extra support such as speech and language etc.

We also refer clients to other family and child programs in Williams Lake such as the Child Development Centre, Pregnancy Outreach Program and Denisiqi Services Society programs. We also support families with documents that may need to be filled by some of the agencies.

We also provide Infant Massage training in the communities. Infant massage helps parents to bond with their newborns. It is also a way for parents to help them recognize their child's needs through their different que's for example, cries etc.

We have also provided Traditional Parenting courses in the past. MCFD requests that parents participate in a parenting course, which is offered by Denisiqi Services Society programs, in the community, or on an individual basis in their home where they may feel more comfortable.

Aboriginal Child & Youth Health & Wellness Team

It would be fair to say that 2014-15 was a difficult year for the ACYMH Program. Fiscal deficits remained unaddressed for the fourth consecutive year, so unearned revenue (funds that will be recovered by MCFD) grew to almost \$300,000. From a service delivery perspective, this meant that only about half of the clinical work Denisiqi was paid to deliver to the communities actually got delivered, and outreach to the communities was practically zero.

MCFD became aware of the gap caused by ACYMH not having its own Team Leader. In addition to the mounting financial debts, "program drift" had started to occur, meaning that services were becoming disconnected from one another, and from other services both in and outside of Denisiqi. New funding was granted for the Team Leader position, and this was filled in May 2015.

It must be noted, however that the staff in the positions did excellent work, and essentially self-directed themselves to areas they believed would bring the best outcomes to the communities of Denisiqi. Our Clinicians (both of whom have since left following wage corrections) delivered strong trauma-informed clinical work that had the respect of our partners at hospitals, treatment centres, etc. Our Restoring Balance Worker and Ulkatcho School-based Worker worked tirelessly connecting with those who needed help the most. Our Rural Wellness Coordinator ensured that Denisiqi had some profile and would have been in a position to create meaningful partnerships with other community providers.

Going into the 2015-16 fiscal year (as of May 1st) the program has gone through a difficult wage correction process. This process unfortunately cost us yet another 8 months of financial unsustainability,

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as well as the resignation of both of our clinicians. We have created an additional Outreach position through re-establishing priorities, and have since filled both clinical positions, as well as embarked on a number of creative projects.

Moving forward, we can confidently say the "ship has been righted" and with careful financial management and principled leadership the program is now perhaps the best it has ever been.

Strategic Objectives 2015-16:

1. Strong financial management and oversight, develop a balanced budget for 2016-17;

2. Rigorous recruitment to fill positions with qualified applicants with special attention to recruiting Tsilhqot'in and Carrier people;
3. Overhaul of our Intake and client tracking processes to reduce unnecessary exposure and align with generally-accepted principles of confidentiality and ethical practice;
4. Increase level of partnerships and intra-departmental cooperation to maximize our human and financial resources;
5. Ensure that all programs and the way we accept the responsibility to serve the communities is consistent with the vision of Denisiqi.

Family Support Workers Program

I have been out in the communities hosting the Family Support Worker (FSW) meetings. We had meetings on April 15, 2014 in Tl'etingox, May 13 2014 in Xení Gwet'in, and in June 2014 we had it at Denisiqi. We cover different topics at each of our FSW meetings. I usually ask what the FSW's want to know or learn from each of our meetings. For June 2014 we had the adoption worker Linda Barnes from MCFD in 100 Mile House do the presentation. Our meetings will be held on a quarterly basis after September 2014.

Stone (Yunest'in) hired Beverly Quilt as the new FSW worker. Beverly brings a lot of knowledge to the position of FSW as she worked as a Native Court Worker. She has a working knowledge around court procedures and how to apply for lawyers which is a problem for clients.

DSS had a two day Administrative Retreat with the staff on November 6 and 7, 2014 at Pioneer Complex in Williams Lake. This was a very productive retreat.

On November 20 and 21, 2014 we had the Administration meeting with the DSS Managers at Quaaout Lodge in Chase, BC.

The DSS Managers went over some of the Policy Manual, and roles and responsibilities of the DSS Managers. On Friday, November 21 some of the Board of Directors came and joined the meeting.

My role as the Family Care Manager is supervising the Family Support Workers who work out in the communities, and we also have quarterly meetings.

On November 14, 2014 we had a quarterly meeting and we had two (2) presenters:

The first presenter was MCFD Social Worker Amy Sandy. She did a presentation on the Child and Family Service Act (CFSA). This was a very informative presentation. The Family Support Workers' realize that they have to become more familiar with the CFSA and Family Law Act.

The second presenter was from the Legal Services Society Family Advice Lawyer Rhea Bailey. Rhea provides Legal Aid Family Advice Clinic for Aboriginal individuals and families in the Williams Lake area.

Since January 2014 Family Support programs have had 2 meetings that was held at Denisiqi Service Society and one at MCFD office. There are 7 Family Support workers who work out in their communities. The meetings for FSW's are for updates on upcoming trainings and the changes in the Community Service Act. The FSW workers attended a meeting at MCFD with the Team Leader and Tsilhqot'in Social Workers. Thank you to Kelly Culbert who hosted the meeting. It is great to host meetings to keep in contact with the workers in the communities.

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- For the new year of 2016, looking forward to working with the community FSW's to get new ideas on the type of workshops needed to address issues regarding the Child and Family Services Act regulation and Children's rights and advocacy.
- Also increase awareness of, and support of, clients and communities that Denisiqi provides services too.
- My goal is to address and communicate the importance of language and culture to Tsilhqot'in children in care.
- To also have better communication with the local MCFD Social Workers the importance of knowing children that are in Continuing Care as well as the temporary custody cases of the Tsilhqot'in children.
- Ensure preventative services and supports are available for children and families (e.g. prevention before apprehension).

Family Support Workers in the communities are:

Brenda Lulua, Family Support Worker
Xeni Gwet'in First Nations
Phone: 250-394-7023

Beverly Quilt, Family Support Worker
Yunesit'in Government (Stone)
Phone: 250-394-4295

Shirley Grambush Johnny, Family Support Worker
Tl'esqox First Nation (Toosey)
Phone: 250-659-5655

Alice Johnny, Family Support Worker
Tsi Deldel First Nation (Redstone)
Phone: 250-481-3335

Graylin Johnny-Jobin, Social Development Worker

Dorothy Alphonse, Social Development Worker
Tl'etingox-t'in Government Office (Anaham)
Phone: 250-394-4212

Yvonne Lowen, Family Support Worker
Ulkatcho Indian Band
Phone: 250-742-3260



Director Agnes Haller and Director (Chief) Francis Lacease signing the Delegation Enabling Agreement



Director Marvin Alexander signing the Delegation Enabling Agreement