

# Highlights

## Winter 2016

The NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) continues to make steady progress. We are stronger and prouder as a people and as an organization. It is not always easy to measure or define progress but, yet, we can point to areas where our progress has manifested itself. Overall, we have advanced financially, economically, administratively and programmatically, as well as socially, culturally and politically. Some of the more tangible and demonstrative examples of where and how we have moved forward are in this highlights document.

### LAND CLAIMS



Figure 1: President Russell chats with Prime Minister Trudeau on the NCC Claim

NunatuKavut is positioned extremely well politically and availed of the recent federal and provincial elections to advance its priorities, with the Land Claim being number one.

We received unprecedented support for the acceptance and

negotiation of our Land Claim during both elections. This support did not come by accident. It is the result of our relentless efforts to keep our claim top of mind politically. It is the right thing to do.

President Todd Russell and Vice President Jim Holwell attended meetings with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett, her Parliamentary Secretary Yvonne Jones and Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Dwight Ball, to specifically discuss implementation of their respective governments' commitments.

We strongly believe that we are witnessing an important, long overdue and significant shift in the approach and position of both governments. While NCC must prepare and ready itself for any eventuality, we look forward with hope and optimism.

We have also held an inaugural meeting with our Land Claims Advisory Committee and had a great discussion on how to ready ourselves for the eventual acceptance of our Land Claim.



Figure 2: Land Claim Advisory Committee Meeting

### FISH HARVESTING

NCC has made steady advancements and strengthened its fishery. We have seen this from both a food, social and

ceremonial (FSC) and commercial perspective. We increased access to salmon in Lake Melville and cod on the south coast and improved our community freezer program.

We have successfully implemented a multi-pronged five-year Aboriginal Fishing Strategy and have begun discussions on renewal. As part of FSC, NCC is seeking additional salmon access in Lake Melville and cod tags for its south coast fishery. We are also looking for additional financial resources for a more robust science program and greater engagement in science work.



Figure 3: Fishing vessels in Charlottetown. Photo courtesy of Nunacor

Commercially, this was our most successful year on record. We have invested more time and energy in this sector and have developed a strategy with specific proposals. We recognize how important the fishery is to our fishers and plant workers, as well as to communities and the region as a whole.

President Russell, along with Vice President Jim Holwell and Environment and Resource Manager George Russell Jr, attended a meeting with federal Fisheries and Oceans Minister Hunter Tootoo in January. This was a historic joint meeting with all other Indigenous leaders and groups from the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Figure 4: NL Indigenous Leaders meeting with Minister Tootoo

## IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS

NCC has improved its communications capacity, which has been an important component in helping us keep in close contact with our people and the issues that are important to them. It has contributed to a more engaged membership, particularly at the community level and at our Annual General Assemblies.

Improved communication is vital in terms of our external relations and, here too, we have had more visibility. Increased capacity allows us to manage communications and do more outreach. For example, NCC and Nunacor were present at the Northern Lights Conference and Tradeshow in Ottawa the end of January and our participation noticeably increased our profile among government representatives and our partners in the north.

## MEALY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK RESERVE

The contribution agreement for the \$700,000 flowing from our Shared Understanding Agreement has been signed and implementation has begun.

NCC will be seeking and appointing members to a new Consensus Board that will provide advice on the management of the Park as it relates to our Shared Understanding Agreement. The Board will include two representatives each from NCC and Parks Canada, along with a jointly-appointed chairperson.

President Russell, along with a number of staff from NCC and Nunacor, attended a best practices mission to the Pacific Rim National Park in BC. They met with



Figure 5: Pacific Rim Best Practices Mission

other Indigenous peoples and Parks Canada personnel who have a history of involvement in parks development on Indigenous lands. It was a tremendous learning experience. The lessons learned have and will inform NCC's approach to the Mealy Mountain National Park Reserve development.

## GENERAL ELECTION

**VOTE** 

Preparations are well underway for NCC's general election on April 26, 2016. For the first time ever, voting for the position of President has been extended to

Full Members Non-Resident. Provisions were also made for a mail-in ballot process to accommodate this extension and those who would require such an option. This is a sign of the increased capacity of the organization and the greater engagement of our people.

Betty Sampson has been appointed as the Chief Elections Officer. For further details or questions on the upcoming election, please contact Betty by telephone at 709-896-3029 or by email at [election@nunatukavut.ca](mailto:election@nunatukavut.ca).

## NEW HEAD OFFICE BUILDING

NCC celebrated the opening of its new head office building at 200 Kelland Drive in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on January 15. Well over 100 people joined us for food, music and a ribbon-cutting ceremony where Elder Barb Wood led us in the lighting of the Kullik. Many were impressed by the cultural elements and the wellness room, which contributes to a healthy workspace.

The new building is more than a physical structure, it is a sign of progress and our ability to avail of new assets. It also allows us to further our work and deliver on the priorities of our people and communities. There was a great team of people involved in the purchase and renovation of the building, which was led and managed by our own company, Komatik Real Estate. Komatik, along with NCC staff, renovation contractors Greens Construction and all those involved, have done a great job and are commended for their work.



Figure 6: NCC new head office ribbon-cutting ceremony

## CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE-HOLDER INVENTORY

As part of our research efforts, NCC is developing a cultural knowledge-holder inventory.

The information gathered will be an important resource in identifying traditions and skills that may be at risk of disappearing. The inventory will safeguard and promote our cultural heritage.



Figure 7: Researcher Eva Luther

As a first step, researcher Eva Luther will be contacting Elders and other practitioners over the next few weeks to learn about traditional craft skills.

## GIVING BACK

NCC is committed to the health and well-being of its communities and supports various community service organizations and events. We have announced funding totaling up to \$10,000 for registered NCC communities taking part in the Labrador Winter Games. The Games will take place in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, March 13-19. Each eligible community will receive \$500 for costs related to their participation in the Games. Nunacor also made a significant contribution as a gold sponsor.

We also contributed \$5,000 to the Canadian Cancer Society for Air Daffodil – Air Travel Assistance Program. It provides much-needed financial assistance to cancer patients in Labrador who have to travel by air for medical treatment.

The George Roberts Community Grants Program provides grants of up to \$2,500 available to eligible non-profit or community groups to celebrate our culture while improving the economic, social, physical, mental and spiritual well-being of our members. Please see our website for a list of successful applicants and our call for proposals.

## PROVINCIAL ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In fall 2015, NCC joined the Provincial Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee with other Indigenous groups in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Its purpose is to evaluate and make recommendations on Aboriginal content into our provincial curriculum. We continue to ensure that curriculum content accurately reflects and includes who we are as the Southern Inuit of NunatuKavut.

## ABORIGINAL SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY (ASETS)

Our ASETS Program, along with our Community Employment Program on the south coast, continue to provide employment counselling services through three service delivery points: Happy Valley–Goose Bay; Cartwright; and Port Hope Simpson. Funding through ASETS has assisted 108 individuals this year in college and university training as well as a number of individuals in short-term safety training. Funding of \$1.259 million has been secured for 2016-17. We continue to negotiate for additional long-term resources.

## MUSKRAT FALLS AND LABRADOR ISLAND TRANSMISSION LINK (MF/LITL) PROJECTS

The MF/LITL projects are a priority for NCC and profound challenges remain. Although NCC lost its court case this past summer, we continue to raise serious issues affiliated with the projects. NCC has supported the efforts of the “Make Muskrat Right” campaign launched by the Nunatsiavut Government. The MF/LITL projects were also raised in a meeting with Minister Tootoo.

The projects were a major topic of discussion in two January meetings with Premier Ball as well. We indicated our disappointment that the Province of NL’s comprehensive review of the projects was not broader and asked that the Premier set about addressing our issues through a high-level meeting between the Province, Nalcor and ourselves. He acknowledged our concerns and there was agreement that more work is required. It was suggested that our issues could be addressed through other processes.

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT SURVEYS

NCC’s natural resource and environment staff continue to collect information on the Migratory Bird Harvest, which is critical for ensuring a sustainable harvest in the future and establishing what the need levels are for NCC members. We encourage harvesting members to complete a survey during the spring migratory bird season, which can be found online at [www.nunatukavut.ca](http://www.nunatukavut.ca). Participants who fill out a survey will be entered for a monthly prize draw of a can of gas during the season.

There is also a survey available for collecting Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge on the Ivory Gull, which is currently listed as endangered under the Species-at-Risk Act and the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. It is estimated that only 840 Ivory Gulls remain in Canada. Participants will receive a \$20 honorarium for completing this survey, which can also be found on the NunatuKavut website.



Figure 8:  
Ivory Gull

**Have a question or concern?  
Contact us!**

[admin@nunatukavut.ca](mailto:admin@nunatukavut.ca)  
1 (877) 896-0592 (toll free) or 1 (709) 896-0592  
[www.nunatukavut.ca](http://www.nunatukavut.ca)  
[facebook.com/nunatukavut](https://www.facebook.com/nunatukavut)  
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