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Plain Facts

On Land and Self-government



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Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim

What's it all about?

In April, 1992, the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement was finalized and signed by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the NWT Government Leader, and representatives of the Gwich'in Tribal Council. An implementation plan to accompany the Agreement was also signed.

What does it mean?

The following are highlights of elements negotiated under the Agreement, for the Gwich'in people in Aklavik, Inuvik, Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic:

Gwich'in-owned land

The Gwich'in own 22,331 square kilometres of land in the Northwest Territories, and 1,554 square kilometres in the Yukon. This includes subsurface (mineral) rights to 6,158 square kilometres of land in the Northwest Territories.

Economic benefits

The Gwich'in receive a tax-free payment of \$75 million (1990 dollars) paid over a 15-year period, a share of resource revenues from development in the Northwest Territories, and a 15-year subsidy of property taxes on certain Gwich'in municipal lands.

Land and environmental management

The Gwich'in participate in land use planning and in the management of renewable resources, land, water, and Gwich'in heritage resources.

Hunting and fishing

The Gwich'in obtained exclusive rights to be licenced to conduct commercial wildlife activities on Gwich'in lands and preferential rights in the whole settlement area.

Self-government

The Land Claim Agreement provides for negotiation of self-government which will be brought into effect through legislation.

What's in it for other northerners?

The Agreement clarifies who owns and has rights to the land and resources in the Gwich'in settlement area. This certainty will encourage economic development in the area. The Gwich'in will be able to use their resources, including money, to stimulate regional economic growth.

More background

Web pages:

Federal Policy Guide - Aboriginal Self Government: www.inac.gc.ca/pubs/selfgov/policy.html
Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement: www.inac.gc.ca/pubs/information/info22.html
Comprehensive Claims in Canada: www.inac.gc.ca/pubs/information/treaty.html
Comprehensive Claims Policy & Status of Claims: www.inac.gc.ca/subject/claims/comp/briem.html

Fact sheets:

Aboriginal Self-government in the NWT
Advantages of Land and Self-government Negotiations
Beaufort Delta/Inuvialuit Gwich'in Self-government
Comprehensive Land Claims in the NWT
The Negotiation Process
Status of Land and Self-government Negotiations

Publications:

Federal Policy Guide - Aboriginal Self Government
Backgrounder - Aboriginal Self Government
Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement Volume I

Fact sheets and publications are available by contacting

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