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This Annual Report does not create legal obligations, does not alter any rights or obligations described in the Westbank First Nation Self-Government Agreement and is not to be used to interpret the Westbank First Nation Self-Government Agreement. The Westbank First Nation Self-Government Agreement prevails to the extent of an inconsistency with this Annual Report.

Published under the authority of: Westbank First Nation Government and the Government of Canada



The Intergovernmental Implementation Committee (IIC) is pleased to present this 2014/15 Implementation Report on Self-Government.

A significant achievement this year was the signing of a new five year Fiscal Transfer Agreement (FTA) between Westbank First Nation (WFN) and Canada. Four one year extensions were entered into since the first FTA expired in March 2010 while negotiations continued over that period.

Outstanding initiatives still in the works from 2014/15 will be to commence the review process for the Self-Government Agreement (SGA), complete the exchange of lands with the Province of BC for the 4.45 acres given up by WFN for the Westside Road Interchange Improvements Project, finalize the Foreshore Agreement with the Province of BC, and work with Canada on the revised Additions to Reserve Policy.

Westbank First Nation celebrated a significant milestone on April 1, 2015 with the ten year anniversary of the implementation of self-government. The IIC is proud to be a part of this journey.





# MESSAGE FROM CHIEF ROBERT LOUIE



Self-Government Agreement Implementation Report For the fiscal year 2014-15

On April 1, 2015, Westbank First Nation proudly celebrated ten years of self-government. When I reflect back, I remember well where we began. There was little or no opportunity for Members and the Band was financially dependent on the federal government. The Members faced severe social inequities and there was no stable government foundation in place to provide the much needed structure and accountability of being a government.

Self-government, a community driven process, made all the difference and did so in a relatively short period of time. We have progressed to a healthy, vibrant community with employment and education opportunities, a thriving economy, increased housing, and a renewed commitment to language and culture. This is a testament to what can be accomplished when the proper governance tools are in place and when people work together toward a shared vision to implement change.

This is Westbank's eighth Self-Government Report on Implementation. Each report chronicles the progress we continue to make on the path to independence. Two huge accomplishments this year were the finalization of a Fiscal Transfer Agreement with Canada and a successful land exchange with the Province of BC. As well, good government practices are continually being improved upon including new and amended policy and planning tools, improved infrastructure and beautification projects, new partnerships, and increased economic activity and programs and services for Members.

I am honoured to represent Westbank First Nation and bear witness to this amazing transformation. We have much to be proud of and although there is always room for improvement and we do have a ways yet to go, we will continue to work diligently toward health and wellness for our community.

way' limləmt

Chief Robert Louie Westbank First Nation





The Grand Opening of the Sncəwips Heritage Museum

As of 2011, \$80 million in annual fiscal revenue is generated for Canada and B.C. through sales tax, personal income tax and corporate tax on Westbank Lands (Canada-\$50 million and B.C. \$30 million)

# Historically known as stga?tk<sup>w</sup>níwt

# Language:

nsyilxcən

# **Affiliation:**

One of eight member bands that comprise the Okanagan (Syilx) Nation (includes Colville Confederated Tribe from Washington State)

## Location:

South central interior of British Columbia, Canada

## **Government:**

Self-governing First Nation

# Leadership:

1 Chief and 4 Councillors (elected by the membership every 3 years)

## Land base:

5 land parcels totaling 5,340 acres

# **Band membership:**

810

# **Residents:**

Approximately 9,000 non-member residents reside on WFN lands

# **Advisory Council:**

A five member advisory council elected every three years to represent the interests of non-members residing on, or having interests in,WFN lands

# Number of government employees:

180

# Westbank First Nation Lands





# WESTBANK FIRST NATION YEAR IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

## **Ten Year Celebration**

On April 1, 2015, Westbank First Nation reached its ten year anniversary under self-government. To celebrate this milestone, WFN held a community dinner and invited Grand Chief Mike Mitchell of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne to give a keynote address. WFN also premiered a commemorative video production "Looking Back, Moving Forward: Self-Government Ten Years Later."

## **Constitutional Amendments**

Ongoing community Working Group meetings took place over the course of this fiscal year to revisit the Membership Rules set out in Part III of the Constitution. Additional fairly minor revisions are also being contemplated. It is anticipated that a referendum will take place later this year to consider the proposed constitutional amendments.

## **Policies**

No new laws were implemented or revised for the fiscal period 2014/15. Several new policies were implemented including: Rental Rates for Westbank First Nation Rental Housing, Terms of Reference for the WFN Elders Group, Deferred Benefits Specific to Elders, Elders' Emergency Housing Repair Grants and WFN Education Bursary and Scholarship Policy. As well, a WFN Policy Development Project is currently underway to develop, implement and maintain a uniformity in the structure, format, preparation, review, and monitoring of existing and new policies.

# **Strategic Plan**

The WFN Strategic Plan 2013-2016 (the "Plan") underwent a revision in the fall of 2014. The Plan is a detailed review of priorities based on direction and desires of the Membership and sets out specific goals to help achieve results. It is a tool for shaping law, developing policy, allocating resources and measuring outcomes. Each WFN department has the responsibility to develop work plans and budgets that align with the priorities set out in the Plan.

#### Communications

To improve and manage social media communications, a Social Media Coordinator position was created and WFN launched a social media campaign including facebook, twitter, linkedIn, YouTube and Instagram.

# **Special Projects** – Law Enforcement Officers

The three WFN Law Enforcement Officers have taken on the following special projects in addition to their regular law enforcement duties. Employee safety in the workplace was identified as a priority and to address this an Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Committee was formed and their work resulted in the implementation of an OHS program for WFN. Working closely with other local governments, emergency preparedness plans have been put in place for residents and staff. Lastly, the development of a strategic partnership with BC Conservation Service is underway that would advance WFN's title and rights in our traditional hunting areas.

#### **Public Art Committee**

A Public Art Committee was established to promote WFN heritage and culture through support and encouragement of artists and the display of their work throughout the community.

# **Fiscal Transfer Arrangement**

After four one year extensions, a Self-Government Fiscal Transfer Agreement (FTA) between WFN and Canada was finalized. This FTA is for the period April 1, 2014 through to March 31, 2020 and is the first agreement negotiated by the parties since the initial FTA was signed in March 2005.

# Co-Management Agreement

In September 2014, Chief Robert Louie, Steve Thomson, Minister of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, and Robert Hobson, Central Okanagan Regional District Chair announced the creation of the Black Mountain/Sntsk'il'ntən Regional Park. The 518 hectare park includes 129.5 hectares of Crown land over which Westbank First Nation and the Regional District were issued a joint License of Occupation from the Province. A co-management agreement was also negotiated for these lands which gives both parties equal decision-making powers over its management. WFN negotiated these agreements as a way to preserve and protect its traditional territory. WFN retains the right to access the land and resources within the park to continue to practice its aboriginal

rights and title activities and engage in traditional practices. This area is well documented as a place where there is an abundance of flint rock and it is here where our ancestors gathered to make arrowheads and blades for fishing and hunting tools. Loosely translated sntsk'il'nten means "a place where flint/arrowheads are found."

## **Foreshore Head Lease**

Westbank First Nation and the Province of BC completed negotiations for a Foreshore Head Lease for the waters fronting Tsinstikeptum Indian Reserves 9 and 10. The foreshore boundaries will extend 300 metres into Okanagan Lake and covers an area of approximately 126 hectares. This head lease will transfer regulatory and management control of the foreshore to WFN and is considered a first step toward attaining full and outright foreshore jurisdiction. WFN is currently working out the administrative details which will include Membership consultation and the development of a Shoreline Plan to align with the Land Use Plan. It will be signed once these details are finalized.



Sherry Hamilton, School Secretary and Administration Support



WFN Members volunteers help with landscaping projects



Cory Eli, WFN Public Works Labourer



Dave Michelle, WFN Public Works Labourer

# Infrastructure and Utility

The Sneena Road overpass on Tsinstikeptum IR 10 lands was completed with the grand opening taking place in December 2014. This is the third highway improvement project managed by WFN through agreement with the Province of BC and serves to improve the local road network, access to WFN lands, and infrastructure.

WFN continues to improve its community lands with the Installation of sidewalks, streetlights, walking paths, bike lanes and landscaping projects. In the past five years, more than nine kilometers of sidewalks have been installed on WFN lands.

WFN's two water pump stations underwent improvements with the installation of emergency power.

Bulk water meters were installed at eight locations accounting for approximately 1,400 water customers. Upon the implementation of a water conservation plan, customers will be billed on use in the near future.

With funding secured from AANDC, the Coyote Crescent sanitary sewer upgrade was completed with the extension of sewer lines to accommodate connection to municipal sewer of fourteen existing homes that were on aging septic tanks.

Phase two of the Boucherie Road drainage system was completed. In November 2014 a veterans' monument created by Okanagan artist Smoker Marchand was unveiled. This monument is the focal point of a new and improved park space and entrance way to the community core of Tsinstikeptum IR 9.



Lance Abel and Thomas Bonneau, WFN Public Works Labourers



The WFN Veterans' Monument was created by Okanagan artist Smoker Marchand

Other beautification projects included improvements to the IR 10 community beach lot and the design and construction of ten major landscaping projects that incorporate indigenous plants.

Consultation and community feedback is currently ongoing for a Parks and Trails Master Plan for the purpose of defining and enhancing parks, green spaces and trail systems on WFN lands.

## Lands

On March 26, 2015 the Membership approved a land exchange package with the Province of BC. In 2010, WFN agreed to provide 4.45 acres of community held lands to the Province for Highway 97 transportation corridor improvements. In exchange, other lands were identified as suitable replacement lands. This was phase one of a two phase process. Additional lands are being researched to complete the land exchange agreement.

WFN registered 1,679 land registry documents this fiscal year, up from 414 last year.

WFN conducted a short survey and carried out a series of site visits to businesses on WFN Lands where valuable feedback from gained from the business community.

# **Property Management and Housing**

The interior of the Lindley Building, WFN's government office, has now been entirely renovated with the completion of third floor renovations.

Two single family homes and two elder homes were constructed within the community core.

In October 2014, WFN hosted the Aboriginal Peoples Committee of the Senate. This committee was here as part of a nation-wide fact finding mission to examine the challenges and potential solutions relating to First Nations infrastructure on reserves, including housing, and community infrastructure (such as water and wastewater treatment, schools and other community buildings).



WFN Youth Council Member Quentin Scott is the current Youth/Recreation Team Leader.



Jordon Coble, Curatorial and Heritage Researcher and Chris Derickson, WFN Councillor



# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT

# A strong year for WFN Financial Operations

2015 was a strong year for WFN government after posting a reduced surplus in 2014. Surpluses and asset balances increased or improved in almost every area of government operations. In addition, WFN and Canada concluded a second five year Canada/Westbank First Nation Fiscal Transfer Agreement (FTA), effective April 1, 2014. In accordance with the Westbank First Nation Self-government Agreement, it is through the FTA that Canada provides a financial contribution towards the cost of WFN government and to support the provision of certain programs and services. The FTA serves to augment Westbank's own source revenues and is intended to provide stability and certainty with respect to maintaining WFN government operations and the delivery programs and services at levels comparable to other governments of similar size and responsibility.

For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015, Consolidated Surplus (from all operations, including business, and partnerships) was \$4.8 million, an increase of \$2.6 million over the 2014 surplus of \$2.2 million:

Revenues increased by \$7.8 million to \$43.9 million (2014: \$36.1 million). This was primarily due to the receipt of an additional \$5.0 million dollars from the Ministry of Transport (BC) as flow through for road construction. Other increases included: \$630,000 increase in the First Nation Sales Tax; \$823,000 in new FTA funding, and a \$400,000 increase in Property Tax revenues. Additional funding for health services and recognition of Development Cost Charges as deferred revenue paid for capital projects, accounted for most of the rest of the increase.

Expenses also rose in 2014-2015. However, the increase in expenses was \$2.6 million less than the increase in revenues. Expenses increased primarily due to the \$5.0 million flow though for road construction and an increase in wages and benefits of \$831,000. The increase in wages and benefits was offset by a reduction in professional fees of \$696,000. Other small cost variances made up the remainder of the \$5.2 million increase in expenses.

## A Sound and Stable Financial Position

After a decline in 2014, 2015 Net Financial Assets (total financial assets less total liabilities) grew 4% from \$38.6 million to \$40.1 million. This was very positive considering that a further \$5.6 million (2014: \$5.4 million) was spent on new capital assets during the year. Major capital projects included member housing, sidewalks, renovation of the WFN Government Administration building, and the purchase of new vehicles and equipment. While WFN long-term debt increased to \$6.3 million from \$5.9 million during 2014-2015, WFN reserve funds ended the year at \$14.6 million, up \$250,000 from the year previous. These funds are important for maintaining WFN's credit as well as to protect against unforeseen circumstances that may arise. This is particularly important for a self-governing First Nation with increased responsibilities and financial exposure. In total the accumulated surplus at year-end was \$99.7 million, up \$4.9 million from \$94.8 million the previous year.

# **The Upcoming Year**

Priorities for the WFN government are set out in the strategic plan and budget for the year. Capital projects continue to be a priority of the WFN Government as they were in 2013-2014, including member housing, completing the new Youth Centre and a number of other infrastructure projects. In addition, WFN continues to make education, training, and capacity building for its Members a top priority. For its part, the WFN finance department continues to improve its standards and efficiency as it strives to set the standard in First Nation Financial Services for First Nation governments. Strong financial management is seen by WFN as one of the keys to the success of implementing self-government.



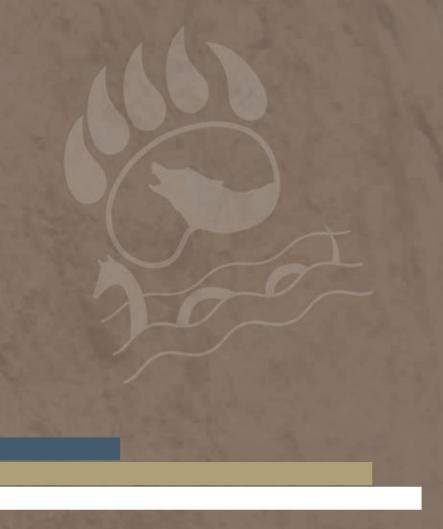
WFN residents attend the Open House and Annual General Meeting hosted by the Advisory Council

Interest and bank charges \$10,288 Member Benefits \$21,025 Access to lands and resources \$63,728 Interest on long term debt \$75,228 Member Grants \$82.300 Honorariums \$107,836 Insurance \$152,329 Appeals and BC Assessment \$157,566 Loss on disposal of assets \$175,961 Community services and recreation \$235,856 Training **\$260,940** Telephone and utilities \$604,436 Bad Debts **\$619,021** Basic needs and adult in-home care \$718,709 Student allowances and tuition \$776,082 Travel and promotion \$786,779 Office and administration \$830,329 Local Education Agreement \$910,804 Materials, supplies and resources \$1,123,281 Fire Protection Agreement \$1,236,958 Repairs and maintenance \$1,385,898 Regional District of Central Okanagan \$1,546,698 Professional fees \$1,563,383 Amortization **\$1,998,376** BC Ministry of Transportation \$9,996,855 Wages and benefits \$13,410,248

Westbank First Nation **Government Expenses 2014 - 2015** 

# Westbank First Nation Consolidated Government Revenues 2014 - 2015

Ottawa Trust Funds \$1,900 CMHC subsidy and additional financial contribution \$181,072 Land registration fees \$185,000 BC Ministry of Education \$213,329 Daycare centre and education services \$229,797 Social housing rent \$292,969 Residents - long term care facility maintenance \$293,771 Commercial rent \$349,867 Other government grants \$558,434 Interest and penalties \$783,040 Water, sewer, development charges, and permits \$1,401,818 Miscellaneous \$1,478,306 Operations, maintenance, parks and public works \$1,640,456 First Nation sales tax \$2.054.283 AANDC Agreement for Federal Programs & Services \$2,867,412 BC Ministry of Health \$3,014,445 AANDC Self Govt Financial Transfer \$5,894,693 BC Ministry of Transportation (Hwys project) \$10,273,135 Property taxation, net of homeowners grants \$11,129,926











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