



TSAWWASSEN FIRST NATION
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Backgrounder

TFN Signs Long-Term Leases with Local Farmers

Tsawwassen, BC. – Tsawwassen First Nation’s vision of building a sustainable community took another major step forward today with the signing of 25-year agricultural lease agreements with three local farmers.

1) The Area

- The total amount of land in the three 25-year leases is 156.2 hectares, representing 2/3 of the 217 ALR hectares acquired under Treaty.
- The agricultural leases, with the exception of one, have been renewed on one-year terms since TFN acquired these lands on Treaty Effective Date (April, 2009).
- The three leases cover:
 - 77.6 ha (191.8 acres) to Felix Farms.
 - 18.9 ha (46.8 acres) to Bow Chong Farms (organic).
 - 59.7 ha (147.6 acres), to owned within the Corporation of Delta, to Fraserland Farms (organic).

2) The Agricultural Plan

- On April 3, 2013, TFN’s Executive Council approved TFN’s first Agricultural Plan, which describes TFN’s agricultural vision and is supplemented by a strong implementation plan.
 - The Agriculture Plan noted that for land “not currently required by TFN Members, negotiate appropriate terms with area farmers under provisions that will encourage land stewardship to enhance productivity (of the land)...”.
 - This Plan was adopted with significant TFN Member consultation, and was strongly supported by the Membership.
- The Agricultural Plan is consistent with TFN’s Land Use Plan, which sets out how development of our lands will create a sustainable community for future generations.
 - All of TFN’s developments – commercial, industrial, residential and agricultural – work together to support this vision.

3) The Leased Land

- In the summer of 2013, TFN retained an agricultural consultant to assist with developing an approach to lease renewals that would obtain higher lease revenues and lead to more sustainable land stewardship practices in accordance with the Agricultural Plan.
 - TFN identified large blocks of TFN government-owned agricultural land that would be appropriate for long term leases and went through a request for proposals process to partner with local farmers.
 - TFN reviewed the proposals according to the criteria set out in the RFP. Overall, the proposals offered higher than current lease revenues, and many of them included a more sustainable, thoughtful approach to farming as part of the TFN community, in alignment with TFNs Agricultural Plan vision.
- The chosen tenants are entering into 25-year agricultural leases with TFN that protects the land for ALR / agricultural related purposes.
- The tenants have made strong commitments to building agricultural knowledge, skills and appreciation for agriculture within the TFN community.
 - They are also committing to making substantial land improvements during the lease term, including things such as laser leveling, tile drainage, drainage improvements, and transitioning unfarmed land into production.
 - Two of three tenants will be fully organic operators. The third tenant will have organic buffers.
- This process also involved removing some tenants who were not using the lands for agricultural purposes, and consolidated larger lease areas to improve efficiency of farming for tenants.
- Note that in addition to these major items, all preferred proponents rotate crops to build up soil quality, have Environmental Farm Plans, and work with the Delta Farm and Wildlife Trust to establish grassland set asides, cover cropping, and other programs that assist with bringing some wildlife habitat to agricultural lands. They also work on an Integrated Pest Management Program.

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