



The Farmlands Trust Society Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Tsawout First Nation

Co-Written by Natasha Caverley (FLT) and Gwen Underwood (Tsawout First Nation)

SAANICHTON – On April 28, 2011, The Farmlands Trust Society (FLT) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tsawout First Nation. This partnership agreement was signed by FLT Chair, Ed Johnson, and Tsawout First Nation Chief, Allan Claxton witnessed by Gwen Underwood (Lands Officer, Tsawout First Nation), Don Caverley (Special Advisor, FLT) and Natasha Caverley (Board Secretary, FLT).

The MoU marks a first for Tsawout First Nation in terms of having a formal community-based working relationship with a local not-for-profit society. This agreement recognizes the mutual respect and interest that the FLT and Tsawout First Nation have in bringing together both First Nations and western approaches to food security on the Saanich Peninsula. Specifically, the agreement outlines the need to integrate First Nations' interests and knowledge about food security in the current and future management of Greater Victoria farmland through initiatives such as public awareness, education and outreach.

“As an elected official for Tsawout First Nation, I am pleased to work with Ed Johnson and the FLT Board of Directors in implementing our partnership agreement as the FLT genuinely honors our Nation's heritage, wisdom and engagement in food security” said Chief Allan Claxton.

Likewise, FLT Chair Ed Johnson shared with Chief Claxton that “...FLT has and will continue to remain a firm supporter morally of Tsawout First Nation as a member of the Saanich Nation and the historical, social and cultural contributions the community has made from pre-contact to present day in protecting local food security on the Saanich Peninsula to benefit current and future generations of Greater Victoria citizens.”

To date, the FLT has worked with Tsawout First Nation by assisting with the revitalization of their community garden and the utilization of the Newman Farm Park Boathouses for culturally significant events and activities. FLT also participated in the 3rd Annual Traditional Foods of Vancouver Island Conference co-hosted by Tsawout First Nation in April 2010 and the June 2010 and 2011 Tsawout Seafood Festivals.

The partnership-based MoU will aid the FLT and Tsawout First Nation in continuing their working relationship on the enhancement of local food security as neighbours on the Saanich Peninsula.



(Left Photo): FLT Chair Ed Johnson (sitting) and Tsawout First Nation Chief Allan Claxton (standing) signing the FLT/Tsawout First Nation Memorandum of Understanding

(Right Photo): FLT Chair Ed Johnson (left) and Tsawout First Nation Chief Allan Claxton (right) shaking hands after the signing ceremony.

About the Farmlands Trust (Greater Victoria) Society

Established in 2008, The Farmlands Trust (Greater Victoria) Society is a community-based not-for-profit charitable society dedicated to the preservation of farmland and the enhancement of food security in Greater Victoria. Specifically, the FLT is committed to promoting agriculture by acquiring, managing and leasing land for farmland; educating farmers and the public on the benefits and practices of locally produced agriculture; and relieving poverty in the Greater Victoria region by operating and supporting programs that provide food from local farms to persons in need.

About Tsawout First Nation

Tsawout First Nation is one of five Bands that constitute the Saanich Nation. Although Tsawout holds property throughout the Southern Gulf Islands (Saltspring, Pender, Saturna and Mandarte Island) and Goldstream, the main village is located in the Saanichton Bay area on the Saanich Peninsula. Tsawout First Nation focuses on providing a safe, open and fair environment for its community members to be empowered in exercising their spiritual, intellectual, social, cultural, ecological and economic rights to the land and surrounding resources.