

## Ditidaht Treaty Notice – Upcoming AIP Signing

The Ditidaht Chief and Council and Treaty team is excited to announce the end of Stage 4 negotiations with the official signing of the Ditidaht / Pacheedaht Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) with BC and Canada. The signing ceremony will take place on June 28, 2019 at the Empress Hotel in Victoria.

We would like to take this opportunity to explain what this means, how we got here, and where we are going next.

### *What does the Agreement in Principle mean?*

This does **not** mean we have finalized our treaty; but an AIP is an important step in the treaty process. The AIP has no legal effect. Because of this, Ditidaht members will not be voting on this version of the treaty. However, every eligible Ditidaht member will have a chance to review the final version of the treaty and vote on whether to accept it or not. The treaty explains who is eligible to vote. A number of community meetings were held in to go over the land and cash component of the AIP as well.

A respectful and satisfactory treaty can provide great benefits for Ditidaht. If approved, the *Indian Act* would largely not apply to Ditidaht. The treaty will provide us with more land and cash and it will recognize our right to self-governance by giving Ditidaht greater control over our land, laws and our democratic processes. It also provides economic benefits, and clarifies our rights and our relationship with Canada and BC, especially off treaty settlement land (TSL), through the negotiation of co-management agreements.

The AIP will set the stage for the negotiation of our final treaty. It includes sections on our treaty settlement lands, which are lands that Ditidaht will own and govern, governance, harvesting, culture, environmental protection, federal parks, taxation, funding, forestry relationships with the three levels of Canadian government (federal, provincial, and local government) and other issues. We will also negotiate implementation and related funding. It does not include details on our fishing rights, water, or provincial parks, all of which will be negotiated in the Final Agreement stage. In addition, we have negotiated framework agreements that will give Ditidaht a much greater say over decisions made that occur on lands off TSL but within our Traditional Territory.

We are also negotiating with Canada and BC to take a different approach to how the final treaty will affect our existing rights, including various ways to amend the final treaty. For example, the Parties are exploring an approach that would better strike a balance between a



common and clear understanding of our rights while still allowing for changes to the treaty if a court decides the scope of our rights is different, or if there are aspects of other treaties in the future that Ditidaht could benefit from.

### *Negotiation Background*

The Ditidaht treaty team began negotiations with Canada and BC in 1994. It has taken us a long time to get to an AIP, but we believe we are on the path to a meaningful and strong treaty. Since 1995, we have made significant progress and have seen Canada and BC put more on the table in terms of lands, money, and meaningful self-governance and harvesting rights that are so important to Ditidaht.

As you know, we have been holding community meetings with members of the Nation. The community gave us the approval to move into final agreement negotiations through a series of meetings held in 2017 and 2018 in Malachan, Nanaimo, Port Alberni and Vancouver.

### *What will happen next?*

After the AIP is signed, the Ditidaht treaty team will resume focused negotiations with Canada and BC on the remaining issues and work to quickly finalize our Treaty.

We have left matters like the development of our constitution, and negotiation of fishing rights, water rights and our rights within provincial parks to the Final Agreement stage of negotiations. We have done this because we want to have much more engagement with members of the Nation, given the critical importance of these issues.

We will continue to provide regular updates through bulletins and community meetings and we will engage the community to gather your views and inputs much more often, as we move through the final agreement negotiation stage. In addition, once the AIP is signed, as set out in the Incremental Treaty Agreement we signed in 2013, BC will transfer another parcel of land to Ditidaht, identified as Block A in the attached map.

Thank you to every Ditidaht member for your continued engagement on this important topic.

