
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2026ECS0011-000494
May 1, 2026

Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions

B.C., Treaty 8 First Nations build new partnerships to advance restoration

Province, seven Treaty 8 Nations sign restoration agreements that support land, communities, jobs

VICTORIA –

Summary

- *The Province has signed restoration agreements with seven Treaty 8 First Nations to advance critical restoration works, while supporting local economies across the northeast region*
- *The agreements will fund projects that will help heal the land and heal the people, providing opportunities for people in the northeast region, while ensuring historic Treaty Rights are upheld*
- *The restoration work will help to restore and protect the environment, while creating and supporting a vibrant and sustainable regional economy*

The Province and seven Treaty 8 First Nations have taken a next step toward creating a thriving and community-centered local economy in northeastern British Columbia.

Restoration agreements will restore and protect the environment, provide predictability and stability to existing industries, as well as establish new business opportunities in the region, while ensuring historic Treaty Rights are upheld.

“The restoration agreements will build on the strong partnership that we have with the Treaty 8 First Nations, which is a First Nations led approach,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Energy and Climate Solutions. “This work is guided by the belief that healing the land and healing the people are inseparable. Through restoration activities, community members are reconnecting with ancestral knowledge, reinforcing language, and strengthening cultural practices tied to the land. This partnership approach to land and resource management will help to uphold constitutionally protected Treaty Rights, while supporting a vibrant economy.”

Restoration work

These agreements provide a combined investment of \$283 million to the seven Treaty 8 First Nations over the next 10 years to support projects that will help restore and enhance ecosystems including:

- species-at-risk recovery and habitat restoration
- post-wildfire restoration

- wetland and fish habitat restoration
- creating and implementing cultural burn plans
- enhancing the restoration of historic industrial sites (where no legal obligations exist)
- adopting climate change mitigation strategies

The funding will also support projects that will help protect and revive the culture and well-being of Treaty 8 First Nations. This includes language revitalization, cultural education, community programming and events, and reviving cultural land-management practices.

Restoration plans will be developed by individual Treaty 8 First Nations, and will include projects that reflect each Nation's unique priorities and values. The Nations will work collaboratively with the provincial government and each other to co-ordinate, monitor and report on restoration activities.

Creating a sustainable economy

Treaty 8 First Nations will continue to partner with qualified businesses and workers to implement restoration projects, generating new business and employment opportunities for the people in these communities. This keeps economic benefits in the local communities, strengthens local businesses and creates meaningful, year-round employment opportunities.

For example, Fort Nelson First Nation is proactively partnering with local educational institutions, including Chalo school, to develop culturally relevant curriculum centred on restoration, land stewardship and Indigenous traditions. Mentorship initiatives are being developed to connect youth with restoration practitioners, providing hands-on experience in the field, guided by experts within local communities. These efforts aim to build career paths in environmental stewardship and natural-resource management for community members.

“Fort Nelson First Nation is proud to lead this restoration work that supports our lands, our people, and our Treaty Rights,” said Chief Archie Harrold, Fort Nelson First Nation. “By investing in youth through partnerships with Chalo school and mentorship opportunities, we are helping build the next generation of land stewards, while supporting a sustainable local restoration economy.”

This co-ordinated approach to restoration planning will help reduce uncertainty for industry, while strengthening environmental outcomes for the benefit of local economies and future generations. This balanced method, done in partnership and respectful of Treaty Rights, supports continued economic activity and growth, while accelerating meaningful restoration across the region.

Treaty 8 is about partnership, respect, and shared land stewardship, helping to build a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

Quotes:

Mary McKanachaa, Prophet River First Nation –

“To understand how Dane-zaa people think, you have to understand the symphony of the trees. It is out on the land we know our place.”

Chief Harley Chingee, McLeod Lake Indian Band –

“Our members are the strength of our Nation, and these restoration agreements invest directly in our people. By creating local jobs and supporting intergenerational knowledge sharing, this work strengthens the economy, while restoring the land for future generations.”

Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship –

“Building respectful and mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations is a cornerstone of our government’s approach to reconciliation and economic growth throughout the province. The agreements signed with these Treaty 8 First Nations will support employment opportunities in their communities and enhance how the Province is already working with First Nations on environmental stewardship and natural resource management.”

Spencer Chandra Herbert, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation –

“Together, the Province and Treaty 8 First Nations are advancing projects that focus on restoring ecologically important landscapes and waterways, and preserving sites of cultural significance. This is about leaving the land in a good way for future generations and ensuring Treaty 8 First Nations members can meaningfully exercise their rights, all while building a healthy, stable and secure future for everyone in the region.”

Ravi Parmar, Minister of Forests –

“Together, we are forging powerful partnerships by ensuring conservation, habitat restoration and responsible stewardship are at the core of how we manage our forests. This is what coming together looks like. Led by First Nations, these agreements will create more local jobs, build healthier, more resilient forests that better protect communities from wildfires and ensure First Nations have a meaningful role in stewarding their lands as we build a working forest together.”

Quick Facts:

- In 2021, in *Yahey v. B.C.*, the Supreme Court of British Columbia ruled that the Province breached its Treaty 8 obligations by failing to account for the cumulative effects of Crown-authorized industrial activities and past regulatory regimes.
- In 2023, the Province and Treaty 8 First Nations developed a set of initiatives for how to evolve the management of lands and resources together, which is a critical part of B.C.’s work to meet the declarations of the court in the *Yahey Decision*.
- A Treaty 8-B.C. government stewardship forum has been formed to provide a venue for all participating Treaty 8 Nations to engage in restoration planning, collaboration and tracking with the Province.

Contact:

Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions
Media Relations
energymedia@gov.bc.ca

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect