

July 17, 2023



***Recent media stories on MLIB logging at Kerry Lake East are “inaccurate and misleading” says Chief Harley Chingee***

McLeod Lake Indian Band Chief Harley Chingee today posted the following statement on media coverage critical of the Band’s logging of its treaty lands:

Some community members have expressed concerns to me about a newspaper and television news story this past week which raised serious and disturbing questions about our Band’s logging practices at Kerry Lake East and other parts of our treaty lands.

I have read the newspaper story and watched the TV news story and am outraged by the one-sidedness of their reporting and the inaccuracy of so much of what they said. The coverage has simply been unfair and lazy. It is typical of stories we have seen in the past which are driven by political opponents and outsiders.

As many of our people know, the spruce beetle infestation which hit Kerry Lake East and other areas of our lands was vast and widespread. Unlike pine stands which can retain some value for up to fifteen years after beetle attacks, spruce stands have only two or three years of value after a beetle attack.

Tse’khene people have lived on these lands in a sustainable way for thousands of years and understand that sometimes we need to take action when the environment becomes hostile. In this case, an insect infestation was destroying our resource. Rather than remain idle, we took action. We could move quickly and harvest this timber while it had value for MLIB or we could stand still and watch it decay, lose value, and become a giant tinder box for future wildfire.

We chose to act.

The \$137 million in revenues from this harvesting have been dedicated to the Band. Our members were employed in the harvesting. The area has been replanted with more than 10.5 million seedlings, and we would not have it any other way. Our forestry work is guided by our own forestry professionals and those of our industry partners.

Meantime, forestry through our Band-owned companies is part of the McLeod Lake economic lifeblood. Our forestry and logging practices will always consider the long-term future and value of our forests for the MLIB people.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Harley Chingee".

Chief Harley Chingee

McLeod Lake Indian Band