

## More Negotiations for Local Treaty Group

By Aaron Bichard  
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The chief negotiator for Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group wants to support fellow Tsawwassen and Maa-nulth First Nations in the recent initialing of treaties, but can only do so in principle: too many questions remain unanswered for outright backing.

B.C.'s first urban treaty with the 350-member Tsawwassen First Nation and the province's first multi-party treaty with the Maa-nulth First Nations (a five-band group representing about 2,000 people living in Bamfield, Ucluelet, Alberni Inlet and Kyuquot Sound) were initialed earlier this month.

Both groups share territory claims with the traditional lands of the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group, which represents six First Nations: Chemainus, Cowichan Tribes, Halalt, Lake Cowichan, Lyackson and Penelakut.

"We're certainly supportive of the communities for moving closer to resolution and reaching a point where they can initial off," Robert Morales said. "However, there has been no resolution as of yet to the issues of overlap or shared territories. Until we reach resolution, we can't support the government signing the treaty."

The way the treaty process is structured, the individual nations are responsible for meeting with others who share territory and coming to an agreement.

Such issues as land and territory management and rights to harvesting resources need to be agreed upon, Morales said.

"The Tsawwassen line of intent comes right through the Gulf Islands into Cowichan Bay, which is clearly an overlap with our territory," Morales said.

"Then there's the issue of the Fraser River."

"Traditionally Hul'qumi'num territory extended right up the Fraser as far as Tl'qutinus (lak-TEEN-us) Island (also called Lulu Island). At one point a settler described seeing 500 Cowichan canoes coming down the river."

The Tsawwassen agreement adds to its 660 hectares of land a dedicated share of the Fraser River fishery.

"We're going to have to meet with the Tsawwassen soon and figure out what exactly they feel this means and how we can resolve the overlap issues," Morales said.

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