



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **'Namgis First Nation and Western Forest Products Announce Launch of Collaborative Forest Management Planning Process**

**September 23, 2021 – Alert Bay, British Columbia** – 'Namgis First Nation ('Namgis) and Western Forest Products Inc. (Western) are excited to announce the launch of the TFL 37 Forest Landscape Plan Pilot project. Through this project, 'Namgis and Western will jointly develop an innovative and progressive plan to sustainably manage Tree Farm Licence 37 (TFL 37) and inform cooperative decision making between them. The pilot will also provide recommendations for joint decision-making between 'Namgis and the Province.

Much of the TFL 37 boundary follows the height of land closely associated with 'Namgis Territory. The three areas covered by the plan include the area-based tenure managed by Western, a replaceable forest licence managed by a 'Namgis-owned corporation, and the operating area of the Danyas Limited Partnership, established by 'Namgis and Western in 2015 with the support of the Province. The plan supports 'Namgis' and Western's mutual objectives of protecting resources for generations to come and providing economic benefits.

"'Namgis look forward to starting the work, with Western, to ensure that our descendants and indeed the descendants of north islanders are able to prosper in a vibrant and sustainable forestry future," said Chief Don Svanvik of 'Namgis First Nation.

"Building on our strong commitment to collaboration, Western is excited to embark on a new approach to joint planning in our area-based tenures," said Shannon Janzen, Western's Chief Forester and Vice President, Partnerships & Sustainability. "We are excited and honoured to be working with 'Namgis to develop a made-in-the-North-Island plan to guide sustainable forest management in TFL 37, which includes the Nimpkish Valley, the heart of the 'Namgis Territory."

The draft plan and recommendations are anticipated to be complete by the end of 2022. As the TFL 37 Pilot progresses, there will be engagement with the 'Namgis community and other First Nations, as well as information sessions with Western employees and contractors, local and regional government, and the Nimpkish Woodlands Advisory Committee. Once complete, the draft plan will be made available for public comment prior to the final review and approval by the Provincial Chief Forester. The draft plan and recommendations are anticipated to inform amendments to the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and strengthen the ongoing relationship between 'Namgis and Western.

'Namgis and Western acknowledge the Office of the Chief Forester, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development which, in conjunction with Western, has provided the necessary financial and in-kind support for the TFL 37 Pilot, to which they are also a signatory.

## **About 'Namgis First Nation**

'Namgis people have occupied the lands and waters they currently live on since time immemorial. 'Namgis Territory encompasses the entire Nimpkish and Kokish River Watersheds on northern Vancouver Island, along with the waters and several adjacent islands in the vicinity of Johnstone Strait and Queen Charlotte Straits. Historically, 'Namgis resided throughout the territory, but currently are concentrated in 'Yalis (Alert Bay, Cormorant Island). There are over 1800 'Namgis members currently living in over 100 communities in North America, as well as members in Europe, and the Middle East.

'Namgis have never ceded their land to any other entity, government, or outside agent, and have owned and managed their land for thousands of years.

## **About Western Forest Products Inc.**

Western is an integrated forest products company building a margin-focused log and lumber business to compete successfully in global softwood markets. With operations and employees located primarily on the coast of British Columbia and Washington State, Western is a premier supplier of high-value, specialty forest products to worldwide markets. Western has a lumber capacity in excess of 1.1 billion board feet from eight sawmills and four remanufacturing facilities. The Company sources timber from its private lands, long-term licenses, First Nations arrangements, and market purchases. Western supplements its production through a wholesale program providing customers with a comprehensive range of specialty products.

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