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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 17, 2009

### NAIG SOCIAL LEGACY CONTINUES

Social Planning Cowichan has created a new Cowichan Cultural Connections Council. The purpose of the new Council is to continue to build and encourage cultural relationships in the Cowichan Region. The Council will be carrying forward the vision of the Cowichan 2008 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) – to serve as a catalyst for reconciliation by building new and meaningful relationships among families, communities and governments.

The Cowichan Cultural Connections Council honors that vision by pursuing opportunities to build bridges between cultures with a spirit of “Nuts’ amat Shq waluwn”: Hul’q’umi’num for “One Mind, One Heart, for the Good of All”.

“The vision to bring the North American Indigenous Games to Cowichan had much to do with the desire for reconciliation. In the end, I believe that the Games unified the community through our collective efforts to stage the largest event ever held in the region.” said Rick Brant, Cowichan 2008 CEO. “While delivering the ‘Best Ever’ NAIG was a focal point, leaving a positive and last imprint on the region was our corporate mantra. Its reassuring to see that Social Planning Cowichan has established the Cowichan Cultural Connections Council and brought together community leaders committed to furthering the meaningful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people that were established through Cowichan 2008.”

The Council is comprised of key leaders in the Cowichan Region representing local government, including Aboriginal government officials, organizations, agencies, associations and businesses. The Council members have strong commitment to community and to the value of building bridges between all cultures in the Valley.

Council’s key work involves education, facilitation, and communication of cultural activities and programs in the Cowichan Region. Currently, the Council is developing a comprehensive plan and has identified two major initiatives: the second annual “Walk of the Nations” and an online Community Cultural Calendar.

Building on the success of last years “Walk of the Nations” the committee is anticipating some very interesting changes for this year’s event. Under the leadership of Jenn K. George and Ryan Bruce, the Walk of the Nations Committee is planning a two-day festival. The Festival and Walk will be an

opportunity for everyone on the Island to come together and celebrate acceptance, understanding, respect, and reconciliation of all peoples.

Proposed dates for the “2009 Walk of the Nations Festival are October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. "It's a positive reason for everyone in the community to come together and, in the process continue to build on relationships that were formed during last summer's North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) and also to support the work of the newly formed, Cowichan Cultural Connections Council.” Says Chief Lydia Hwitsum.

If you would like to join the Walk of the Nations Sub-Committee or find out other ways you can help, contact Jenn K. George at 250.701.8381. You can also check out the newly improved website, [www.walkofthenations.ca](http://www.walkofthenations.ca)

The second initiative is a community calendar which will be a way to highlight and share information about cultural events, gatherings, meetings and celebrations in the Cowichan Region, including those that are ongoing. If you have information about any such initiatives we would like to hear from you! To contact Social Planning Cowichan, call 250.746.1004 ext.250 or e-mail [info@socialplanningcowichan.org](mailto:info@socialplanningcowichan.org)

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