



Cowessess First Nation #73

Office of the Chief

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March 22nd, 2021

To: Citizens & Community Members, Cowessess First Nation

Re: Launch of Cowessess First Nation Eagle Woman Tribunal

Hi, it is with great honour to share the launch of Eagle Woman Tribunal. This tribunal will play a historic and important role in helping Cowessess First Nation to achieve self-government.

Eagle Woman Tribunal will be our own justice system, one which will reflect our laws, our values, and what is important to the citizens. It will be different from the Provincial and Federal courts in many other important ways.

First, Eagle Woman Tribunal will be accessible and respectful to our people, not intimidating. If someone has a complaint about a decision that affects them, Eagle Woman Tribunal staff will help them with the steps they need to take to have Eagle Woman Tribunal review the decision.

Secondly, there will be an emphasis on helping the parties in a dispute find their own resolutions, rather than having a decision by the Tribunal imposed on them. Very often disputes arise through simple misunderstandings. Through the use of talking/sharing circles, healing circles, mediators and other facilitators, the parties in a dispute will have a chance to talk to each other, understand each other's point of view, and arrive at a mutual agreement. This is important to Cowessess First Nation, we all need to get along with each other as much as possible.

Finally, if matters cannot be resolved informally, and a hearing is required before the Tribunal, the process will be different from the Courts. Specifically where it involves the best interests of a child, it will be an inquisitorial process (part of

investigation) , not an adversarial one (only referee) .

In an adversarial process, each part has the burden of bringing forward its own evidence and making its own arguments. The judge takes the passive role and just listens, mostly. So whoever does the best job of presenting evidence and their argument usually wins the case.

That's fine when the parties are evenly matched, but in child welfare matters the Director has much more experience and resources than the families and children the Director serves.

The Tribunal itself will be responsible for gathering the evidence, and making sure it has all the information it needs to make a decision. It will ask the questions it needs to get the whole story. This will eliminate the power imbalance, and should result in better decisions in the best interest of our children.

In conclusion, Eagle Woman Tribunal is a step forward to self government. This approach will empower us from Cowessess to have a deep and thorough understanding of our laws. It is also direction from the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action as well the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls to Act to create our own judicial system based on our laws and healing approach.

On behalf of Council, congratulations Cowessess First Nation on the official launch of Eagle Woman Tribunal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cadmus Delorme". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and "D".

Chief Cadmus Delorme