



The BC Assembly of First Nations & the BC First Nations Centre of Excellence for Economic Development



External Report on 2023 Canada Wood Trade Mission to Japan

December 8th -16th, 2023

Executive Summary

The Minister of Forests, Bruce Ralston, invited the BC Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) and the BC First Nations Centre of Excellence for Economic Development (CoE) to attend the Canada Wood Trade Mission to Tokyo, Japan, December 10-14, 2023. This relationship is facilitated by the team at Forest Innovation Investment (FII). This marks the third time in the past thirteen (13) months that the Provincial and Federal governments have invited the BCAFN to provide First Nations delegates to attend a trade mission in Japan, including:

1. Canada Wood Trade Mission to Japan 2022 (November 4-9, 2022). The BCAFN was part of a First Nations delegation that attended at the invitation of former Minister of Forests and current Minister of Finance, the Right Honourable Katrine Conroy.
2. In February 2023, BCAFN representatives attended the Canadian Energy Trade Mission to Japan at the invitation of Minister Jonathan Wilkinson of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan).

The First Nations delegates who attended the Canada Wood Trade Mission:

- Chief Lynda Price (Ulkatcho First Nation), Alternate for BCAFN Regional Chief Terry Teegee
- Deputy Chief Harlan Shilling, CEO of the BC First Nations Centre of Excellence for Economic Development (CoE)
- Sarah Behn, Sr. Economic Development Policy Analyst, BCAFN/CoE
- Katie Robertson, Executive Assistant to the CoE
- First Nations Forestry Council (FNFC) representative Mike Kelly, Director, FNFC
- First Nations Forestry Council (FNFC) representative Dan Macmaster, Director, FNFC
- Chief Councillor John Jack, Huu-ay-aht First Nation

The Japan Trade Mission program ran from December 10 to December 14, 2023. It was an opportunity to strengthen relationships with industry executives in the wood sector, Minister of Forests Bruce Ralston, and key contacts in the Embassy. At the conclusion of the Canada

Wood Program, The BCAFN and CoE team travelled to Shiraoi Hokkaido on December 14th - 15th. The BCAFN and CoE team, alongside Sébastien Denault, First Secretary with the Embassy of Canada, and Nobu Araki, Commercial Officer at Trade and Invest British Columbia, were welcomed by Shiraoi Ainu Association representatives Kazuyuki Yamamaru (President),-Ikuko Okada (Vice-President), Masami Takahashi (Executive), and Michihiro Okada (Secretary General). The First Nations delegation, led by Chief Lynda Price and CEO Harlan Schilling, was supported by Sarah Behn, Senior Economic Development Policy Analyst to the BCAFN and Katie Robertson, the Executive Assistant to the CEO.

Special Thank You

Acknowledgement is due to Chief Lynda Price for her leadership and mentorship on the trade mission. Chief Price played an instrumental role in leading our team and offering invaluable insights throughout our engagements in Japan. Her proactive approach, dedication, and knowledge greatly enhanced the mission's success and supported meaningful connections. Her knowledge of the BC wood industry and personal experience with her own Nation's forestry projects were precious to the BCAFN and CoE team. Chief Price's leadership contributed to fostering connections with the Shiraoi Ainu Association.

Overview

December 9, Saturday

Arrive in Tokyo at the New Otani Hotel.

December 10, Sunday

The day commenced with optional guided tours and a chance to network with other delegates and enjoy one of the two tours. The CoE team sent one member to each available tour to best make connections.

Welcome Reception, New Otani Hotel

A welcome reception was held at the New Otani Hotel. Minister Ralston, Chief Lynda Price and the President of Canada Wood provided welcome remarks.

December 11, Monday

Mission Breakfast and Canada Wood Japan Strategy Review, New Otani Hotel Special Attendee: Canadian Embassy Representative Louis-Pierre Émond, Minister Commercial

As the 9th Canada Wood Group Japan strategy review since 2011, this session saw industry and government representative presentations and high-level conversations on the direction of the Japanese market and partnerships with Canada. Through this session, the attendees were provided extensive market research completed by Canada Wood, Japan.

Site Visit: Obayashi Gumi Port Plus, Obayashi Gumi Port Yokohama Shi,

The site visit to Obayashi Gumi Port Plus reviewed Japan's infrastructure landscape. This visit explored operational intricacies, technological advancements, and the role of Obayashi Gumi Port Plus in contributing to Japan's port infrastructure. The delegation sought to explore potential collaborations and glean industry insights, emphasizing the significance of port-related developments and innovations within Japan's economic landscape.

December 12, Tuesday

China Market – Strategy Review Session, New Otani Hotel

Special Attendee: Honourable Representative Jennifer May, Canada's Ambassador to China

Presentations were made by the Canadian Ambassador to China, Jennifer May, Canada Wood, Forestry Innovation Investment (FII) China Country Director, and Centre of Excellence CEO Harlan Schilling. A Canada Wood and FII panel and Q&A followed the presentations. The presentation by Ambassador Jennifer May reviewed some critical factors in China's market:

- With an aging population, China's rural revitalization program makes cultural tourism and wellness sectors attractive to wood farm construction for non-residential projects.
- As one of the significant wood-consuming industries, the downturn in the real estate market will impact domestic wood demand.

Site Visit to Seiwa Multi-Family Residential Project

The Delegation attended a site visit to a Seiwa corporation construction site to see the use of Canadian forest products and provide the delegation with a hands-on experience of how Canadian forest products are used in multi-family construction. Seiwa is a prominent, established developer that aims to optimize land use for property owners. This visit allowed us to view the technical advancements that Seiwa uses for improved strength and acoustic performance with Canadian wood products.

Canada-Japan Wood Forum and Plaque Presentations

Location: Canadian Embassy

As the third Canada-Japan Wood Forum during the 2023 Canada Wood Trade Missions to Japan, this event saw Panel discussions with an audience of 100-120. These panels are as follows:

Canadian Industry Panelists:

Don Kayne, President & CEO, Canfor

Steven Hofer, President & CEO, Western Forest Products

Brad Thorlakson, President & CEO, Tolko Industries Ltd.

Moderator: Derek Nighbor, President & CEO, Forest Products Association of Canada

Japanese Industry Panelists:

Toshiyuki Kurata, President & CEO, Wing Co., Ltd.

Yuichi Shinohara, President, Shinohara Shoten Co., Ltd.

Masafumi Tate, Director, Daito Trust Construction Co., Ltd

Moderator: Shawn Lawlor, Managing Director, COFI/Canada Wood Group

First Nations Partnerships Panelists:

Dan MacMaster, Director, First Nations Forestry Council
 Steven Hofer, President & CEO, Western Forest Products

Chief Councillor John Jack, Huu-ay-aht First Nation

Moderator: Jim Messer, Vice President International Markets, Forestry Innovation Investment

Deputy Chief Harlan Schilling was privileged to introduce the First Nations Partnership Panel. Following the presentations and panel discussions, Minister Ralston presented plaques and gifts to key customers: Elmo Home Inc., Xyence Co., and Tsuda Sangyo.,

Minister Ralston Mission Reception for Key Customers and Stakeholders

Location: Canadian Embassy

Following the forums and plaque presentations, the delegation attended the mission reception, where Chief Price provided a toast to welcome attendees. Minister Ralston and Ambassador Ian McKay provided remarks. In the evening, our team was allowed to network and connect with various Japanese and Canadian industry and government partners.

December 13, Wednesday**Meeting with Daito Construction**

The CoE Team with Daito Construction will connect on potential opportunities for a pilot project using Daito's business model as a first foray into the Canadian housing market. This is an opportunity for the CoE to partner with BCAFN's housing analyst(s) to produce research and recommendations.

Canadian Embassy Meeting with Senior Trade Commissioner Minister Louis-Pierre Émond

The CoE team had the opportunity to meet with Minister Louis-Pierre Émond to introduce the CoE. CoE CEO Harlan Schilling provided an overview of the CoE and outlined potential actions to increase the First Nations' presence in the embassy in Tokyo and representation on incoming trade missions. Our team highlighted the importance of Japan as a critical market for First Nations forestry interests and our eagerness to create opportunities and foster relationships. We discussed the chance of a physical presence for First Nations in the embassy.

Site Visit: Mihashi Showroom

Our delegation had the opportunity to view the use of HUU-AY-AHT lumber for tiles in the Mihashi showroom in Tokyo. Mihashi is the largest moulding supplier in Japan and a major supplier of wood finishing materials. Timber Tiles is a Port Alberni, B.C. manufacturer owned by the HUU-AY-AHT First Nation. This visit provided a great example of an export-ready First Nations-owned product actively marketed by a third-party international partner.

December 14, Thursday

On the 14th, our team departed Tokyo for Sapporo, Hokkaido. The day involved a visit to the Upopoy Ainu Museum and National Park, where the BCAFN and CoE team were provided a tour and reviewed the complex, exciting history of the Ainu People. With Parallels to First Nations in

Canada, the team found this experience valuable in providing our team with a deeper understanding and context before our discussion with the Shiraoi AINU Association representatives the next day.

December 15th, Friday

CEO Harlan Schilling, BCAFN Director, Chief Price, and Senior Economic Development Policy Analyst Sarah Behn met with representatives from the Shiraoi AINU Association to discuss commonalities and engage in shared interests. The conversation explored the history of the AINU and the First Nations in BC. This discussion brought forth opportunities for collaboration and ongoing connection.

Media Coverage

The media covered the introduction and exchange of gifts between the Shiraoi AINU Association and the First Nations delegates. The media links are below:

NHK

[カナダの先住民族がアイヌの人たちと意見交換 白老町 | NHK 北海道のニュース](#)

カナダの先住民族がアイヌの人たちと意見交換 白老町

北海道テレビ

[カナダの先住民族とアイヌ民族 先住民族として...「はっきり言うべきことは言う」課題など意見交換 HTB北海道ニュース](#)

カナダの先住民族とアイヌ民族 先住民族として...「はっきり言うべきことは言う」課題など意見交換

共同通信

[カナダ先住民がアイヌ訪問 北海道「価値観を共有」 | 47NEWS \(よんななニュース\)](#)

カナダ先住民がアイヌ訪問 北海道「価値観を共有」

苫小牧民報 (会員限定)

<https://www.tomamin.co.jp/article/news/area2/126110/>

歴史や文化語り合う カナダ先住民族一行、来町 アイヌ協会と交流 白老

産経新聞

[カナダ先住民がアイヌ訪問 北海道「価値観を共有」 - 産経ニュース \(sankei.com\)](#)

カナダ先住民がアイヌ訪問 北海道「価値観を共有」

Key Outcomes

The 2023 Canada Wood Trade Mission to Japan in December 2023 was a successful mission for the BCAFN and the CoE. The objectives of fostering international relationships, exploring market opportunities, and establishing connections with the AINU people were met. Building upon previous missions, this visit solidified and expanded relationships between the First

Nations delegation and critical stakeholders in Japan's wood industry, governmental bodies, and the Ainu community.

Discussions with the Canadian Embassy and Trade Commissioner Minister Louis-Pierre Émond laid the groundwork for potential future initiatives. They emphasized the significance of First Nations' representation and economic opportunities in international markets.

Chief Lynda Price's leadership, insights, and connections forged during the mission emphasized the importance of continued engagement and exploration of economic partnerships with international Indigenous groups. The connections made with the Ainu in Hokkaido have opened opportunities for projects and initiatives with mutual benefits, such as worker or youth exchanges and forestry partnerships.
