



## **Nation Building: File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council Governance Restructure**

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The File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council (FHQTC) is a non-profit organization that delivers 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> level services and programs. FHQTC is uniquely situated on collective reserve land that are also the lands in which Treaty 4 was entered into in 1874 in southeastern Saskatchewan. FHQTC is a political, economic, and service driven organization that has eleven member First Nations with approximately 15,000 citizens.

### **History**

Throughout its 30 year history, the mission of the FHQTC has always been to continually unify its confederacy of the eleven-member First Nations and to support the individual nations and their citizens to grow and prosper. The FHQTC acts as an advocate under direction by its member nations to promote their Treaty and Inherent Rights. From entering into Treaty 4, and likewise with the creation of the Indian Act, First Nations across Canada including the FHQTC have continually had the Canadian government's foreign systems. These structures can include public policies, legal framework, reporting measurements, and rules for eligibility/ineligibility of government programs and services. The spirit and intent of a Nation-to-Nation Treaty for the sharing of resources is not followed by the Canadian government.

Indigenous Nations are recovering from 150 years of colonization and are rebuilding our Nations to live in contemporary times. FHQTC and member First Nations have continued to work in their own capacity to assert their Treaty and Inherent Rights, natural laws, spiritual practices, and connection with culture and language. Perhaps today these values are not what they once were due to a history of enforced assimilation, but they are not gone. We can take the best principles of our traditional forms of governance and use them to guide us as we build contemporary forms of governance to serve our needs with our priorities. The FHQTC's perspective on nation building is a process of (re)discovery, healing, and reconditioning First Nations and our citizens to a traditional, spiritual, and cultural way of life/thinking and self-governance practices.

### **Governance Restructuring/Transition Project**

The idea began in 2014, the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council (FHQTC) were to undergo a complete reorganization of their governance structure to divide the program and service delivery organization from its advocacy and rights activities. The idea became a reality in 2015 with an official Tribal Council Resolution mandate to put into effect a governance restructuring of the organization. Today, the FHQTC governance restructuring process has advanced with great success. This change will see the structure move from it's current incarnation to both a more inclusive, traditional structure that will greatly assist in the advocacy and protections of our Inherent & Treaty Rights of our lands, Nations, citizens and ways of being; and to simultaneously streamline and focus the programs and service delivery.

The objectives of the governance restructuring during the Transition for FHQTC are manifold. FHQTC engages the community and gains consensus in the development and implementation of a renewed governance structure based on traditional governance. Develop a distinct and effective advocacy vehicle and process to represent the collective member nations specific interests. Finally, develop a programs and services structure to best serve our members that serve our priorities and needs.

FHQTC is determined to continually engage, inform, and educate its members of their laws and policies. The FHQTC is working to support nation building within the tribal council itself, as well as with the eleven member nations it serves. The traditional governance model is based on The Iron Nations Confederacy, *Nehiyaw-Pwat*, which predominantly existed in the early 1800's between the Cree, Nakota and Ojibwe Nations during what is also known as the "Horse Wars". This tri-tribal alliance existed between the nations to gain dominance over trade routes for fur and iron goods. The alliance also existed for military and defense purposes. Creating alliances is a sovereign action and since our sovereignty continues to exist so does our ability to create and (re)form our alliances.

Utilizing traditional governance within the contemporary will set the foundation for a stronger culture, a stronger organization, and a stronger future for FHQTC and citizens, and others on an individual, organizational, regional and national level. Nation (re)building will strengthen our capacity of the individual, First Nation and organization.

Our goals are for the future for governance restructuring is to:

- Focus on support for First Nations to re- build nations through capacity building
- Focus on the rights agenda: Treaty and inherent rights through independent action
- Build FHQTC as a significant player in regional economy and social programming
- Build trust and respect amongst the First Nations and the general society

FHQTC will also provide for lessons learned along this journey and is committed to this journey to do it right and in a good way.

## Organization Structural Changes Charts

