

# MEDIA RELEASE

June 2, 2008

---

## First Nations and Environmental Advocates Team Up for Peace Valley Research Project

The West Moberly First Nations and the Peace Valley Environment Association are sponsoring a research and outreach project to communicate the rich ecological, First Nation, agricultural, and cultural values of the Peace River Valley.

Funded by the Vancouver Foundation and conducted by Chillborne Holdings, the project includes both research and communication components.

"We are bringing together information about what makes this valley special," comments Nadine Lefort, the project's researcher. "We are including hard scientific data, for example: the unique ability for farmers to grow vegetable crops on class 1 land, and the importance of the Peace Valley for wildlife habitat. We're also including cultural information and stories, which are of equal importance, about the First Nations people, farmers, ranchers and rural residents who make this valley their home."

Communications consultant Arnica Rowan is creating outreach tools so the results of the project will be accessible to the public.

"Our research efforts will be published formally in a public report," shares Rowan, "but we will also be creating presentations, a website and other media tools so the Peace Valley Environment Association and the West Moberly First Nations can share this information with schools, other environmental groups and First Nations, and the public at large."

The goals of the project are to

- Compile the ecological, agricultural, First Nation and cultural knowledge about the Peace Valley
- Make this knowledge widely available and accessible to the public
- Enhance the public's participation in decision-making about land and resource use

The two Chillborne consultants were conducting interviews with local residents throughout the Peace River area last week. Preliminary research findings will be shared at the Paddle for the Peace on July 12, 2008. The completed printed report on the comprehensive values of the Peace River Valley will be available in the fall of 2008.

-30-

### **For more information:**

**Brian Churchill, Chillborne Holdings, Project Manager: 250-787-5518**

### **BACKGROUNDER ATTACHED**

Pictures: (TIFs available on request)

- Chillborne Environmental consultant Nadine Lefort surveys the Peace River Valley from an Old Fort viewpoint. Lefort is conducting research on the ecological, First Nation, agricultural, and cultural values of the valley for a West Moberly First Nations and Peace Valley Environment Association joint project.
- Chillborne Environmental consultants Arnica Rowan (left) and Nadine Lefort (right) are conducting a research and outreach project for the West Moberly First Nations and Peace Valley Environment Association.
- Children playing along the banks of the Peace River are dwarfed by the steep banks behind them. The river valley provide key wildlife habitat, agricultural land and recreational opportunities for Northern residents.
- The Peace River is the only waterway to cross the Rocky Mountain trench. The valley is of key importance for wild animals' winter and calving habitat.

# BACKGROUND

June 2, 2008

---

## **West Moberly First Nations**

The West Moberly First Nations (WMFN) is a vibrant, engaged indigenous community headquartered at Moberly Lake in Northeastern BC. Moberly Lake is 125 km west of Fort St. John, British Columbia. An autonomous First Nation, WMFN strives to preserve its culture and lands while providing governance and services to its members. WMFN identified the Peace River Valley as a culturally critical bioregion. WMFN has made it a priority to preserve the environment and culture in the important Peace River Valley and is working with the PVEA and other local first nations to identify cultural and environmental values; and inform and educate both First Nation and non-aboriginal audiences about the best management of the valley.

## **Peace Valley Environment Association**

The Peace Valley Environment Association (PVEA) is a group of citizens concerned with protecting the natural and historic values of the valley. This diverse group of farmers, sportsmen, guide-outfitters and rural residents was formed to in 1975 in successful opposition to the BC Hydro proposal to dam the Peace River at a third location (Site C). 30 years later, the group is a strong and active protector of the valley, with members from urban, rural and First Nation communities. [www.peacevalley.ca](http://www.peacevalley.ca)

Together, the West Moberly First Nation and the Peace Valley Environment Association are working to foster broad community engagement with respect to the preservation and conservation of the Peace River valley through research, public education and stewardship activities.

## **The Peace River**

Designated as a BC heritage river, the Peace River in Northeastern British Columbia has a deep cultural history of First Nations use, historic travel and homesteading activity. The valley is also one of British Columbia's richest biological areas, providing habitat for great and distinctive diversity and bounty of wildlife and birds and extensive Agricultural Land Reserve Lands. At the narrowest point of the Yellowstone to Yukon system, the Peace River Valley forms an essential connective link between the mountain park complexes to the south and the Muskwa-Kechika landscape to the north. The valley supports traditional First Nations use, farming and ranching, and provides recreational opportunities for Northern residents from nearby Fort St. John and Hudson's Hope.

## **Paddle for the Peace**

The West Moberly First Nation and the Peace Valley Environment Association's original joint project, Paddle for the Peace, is being launched for the third year on July 12, 2008. For more information, visit [www.paddleforthepeace.ca](http://www.paddleforthepeace.ca).