

Timeline: Treaty No. 8 and our Reserve Land Rights

(Courtesy, Doig River First Nation)

1898	Dane-zaa/Beaver Indians in Fort St. John oppose Klondikers heading north until the government agrees to a Treaty of Peace.
1899	The Crown and Chiefs representing many First Nations sign Treaty No. 8 at Lesser Slave Lake; Treaty Commissioners arrive in Fort St. John after the Dane-zaa have dispersed to summer hunting grounds.
1900	The Treaty Commissioner returns to Fort St. John and some leaders of the Fort St. John Beaver Band, ancestors to our Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations, sign Treaty No. 8.
1914	Following the provisions of Treaty No. 8, the Fort St. John Beaver Band was to be allotted 128 acres for each man, woman and child who was a member of the Band. However, many people were missed, and were not included on Band lists. The Montney Reserve (Indian Reserve No. 172) is surveyed at <u>Gat Tah Kwâ</u> (Montney) for the Beaver Band's exclusive use.
1940	Leaders of the Fort St. John Beaver Band, ancestors to our Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations, surrender mineral rights associated with Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney) to the Crown in trust "to lease" for its benefit.
1945	Without the knowledge of many Band members, some of the leaders of the Fort St. John Beaver Band, ancestors to our Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations, put their marks on a document that surrendered the Montney Reserve to the Crown to sell or lease for the Band's benefit.
1948	The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) transfers the Montney Reserve, including "inadvertently" the mineral rights, to the Department of Veteran's

	Affairs (DVA) for \$70,000.
1948-1956	Former Montney Reserve lands are sold and transferred to individual returning war veterans. Although the DVA did not have valid title to the mineral rights for the lands, those rights were included in the sale.
1949	DIA is made aware that there is valuable oil and gas in the area, but does nothing to inform DVA that they do not hold subsurface rights
1950	Three small reserves are surveyed for the Band close to their trapping areas at Hanás Saahgé? (Doig River), Blueberry River and the Beatton River. These reserves total 6194 acres - one third of the original Montney Reserve's size.
1960	For the first time, Canada's First Nations people are allowed to vote without losing their Treaty rights.
1976	Oil and gas production began on the former Montney Reserve. In that same year, the Fort St. John Beaver Band splits into the Blueberry River and Doig River Bands.
1977	A DIA officer discovers that the Doig River and Blueberry River Bands still retain their subsurface rights to the Montney Reserve; these rights have been held in trust for the Bands by the Crown. The DIA officer reports this to the Bands.
1978	The Band commences legal action claiming damages for the improvident surrender and improper transfer of mineral rights.
1988	Trial Court says that the thirty-year statute of limitations prevents the Band's appeal.
1992	Federal Court of Appeals issues a split decision, particularly regarding the loss of the subsurface rights; The Doig River and Blueberry River Bands appeal.

1995	Supreme Court of Canada finds the Crown breached its fiduciary obligation by selling the Band's mineral rights, and making no effort to correct its error in 1949, when it should have done so. The Court awards damages for royalties from 6.75 sections (of the original 28 sections at Montney) that had not already been transferred to veterans by 1949.
1997	After intensive negotiations, the Bands and government reach an out-of-court settlement for \$147 million as restitution for royalties that should have gone to the Doig River and Blueberry River Bands.
2000	The Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations' Chiefs and Councils begin pursuing Treaty Land Entitlement negotiations with the federal government in order to rectify the difference between the number of people who were allotted land in 1914 and the actual number of people who should have received land at that time, but were left off the Band List. Once negotiations are completed, the Doig and Blueberry Bands will be entitled to select additional lands.