



# Simpcw First Nation

*"People of the Rivers"*

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 5, 2018

**Chu Chua, British Columbia** - The North Thompson Provincial Park Campground will be closed to the general public from July 6 – 9, 2018 to accommodate the Indigenous Traditional Tattoo Action and Gathering.

The event is being held in solidarity with the Secwepemc Land Defenders, an independent advocacy group that, the Chief and Council of Simpcw First Nation wish to make clear, is not affiliated with Simpcw: "While we support the use of our parklands by Secwepemc People and events to promote the protection and preservation of local Indigenous lands and cultural sites, this event is not associated with our Nation". Chief Loring went on to clarify that "SimpCW First Nation was not involved in the planning or organizing of this event, and while we have been in contact with BC Parks, we were not involved in the decision to close the park".

Chief and Council also wish to make clear the distinction between Simpcw First Nation, the Secwepemc Nation and the Secwepemc Land Defenders. Chief Loring explained that Simpcw First Nation is a division of the Secwepemc (or Shuswap) Nation: "Traditionally, the Secwepemc collectively protected the territories of the Shuswap, however, each Secwepemc Nation was and is separate and independent, with its own territory boundaries within the larger Secwepemculecw." With respect to North Thompson Provincial Park, Chief Loring clarified that the park is located right in the heart of Simpcw Territory, making Simpcw the proper Titleholders to the lands: "only Simpcw has the authority to assert title and rights to the parklands", clarifying that "as an independent advocacy group, the Secwepemc Land Defenders do not have any authority to claim rights to our lands ... in fact, in our view, the Secwepemc Land Defenders ought to have obtained Simpcw's consent to hold the event on our lands."

The North Thompson Provincial Park is well established and confirmed as an important traditional site for Simpcw First Nation. Chief and Council intend to engage in government to government discussions with the Province towards developing a joint agreement with respect to the management of the parklands in Simpcw Territory: "It's one of our priorities as a Nation" explained Chief Loring, "Such agreement will be based on the recognition of Simpcw's Aboriginal Title and Rights to its parklands, and in doing so, will confirm Simpcw's role in the management and protection of our lands and resources".

For more information on the event, please contact the organizers directly, or BC Parks for details around the closure.