

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canim Lake Band & Simpcw Renew Relationship Through Agreement

(Secwepemcul'ucw/Green Lake, BC, August 22, 2019) On August 22, 2019, the Canim Lake Band (Tsq'escen') and Simpcw signed an agreement called *Re Spèts'en-kt - Our Bond*. The agreement renews a previous Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between Tsq'escen' and Simpcw in June 2013. *Re Spèts'en-kt - Our Bond* recognizes the familial, historic, and enduring bond between the two Secwepemc communities. The agreement has been updated to reflect the current legal and political landscape, including Indigenous empowerment and resurgence.

Tsq'escen' and Simpcw have stewarded and occupied their respective territories for thousands of years. Each community also represents a historic Division within the larger Secwepemc Nation. Tsq'escen' is part of the Styetemc or Lake Division and Simpcw is part of the North Thompson Division. Each division has autonomous stewardship responsibilities for their part of the territory within the Secwepemc Nation. Each community occupies exclusive territory and also shares a large portion of their territory with each other.

Since the original MOU was signed in 2013, there has been a number of changes in the legal and political landscape. This includes the Supreme Court of Canada's 2014 Tsilhqot'in decision which awarded Aboriginal title for the first time. The Governments of Canada and British Columbia have also affirmed their commitment to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which, among others, affirms Indigenous peoples' right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent in major decisions affecting their lands and people.

"There have always been strong family ties between the Simpcwemc and the Tsq'escenemc," Simpcw Kukpi7 Shelly Loring said, "we look forward to strengthening our relationship and better coordinating our resources to meet modern demands. This includes coordinating resources for major resource projects through our shared territory. Divide and conquer is no longer an option."

"Historically, the Secwepemc held annual gatherings at Green Lake. Tsq'escen' is proud to once again host our Secwepemc relatives here," said Tsq'escen' Kukpi7 Helen Henderson, "together we reaffirm our commitment to strengthen our bonds, protect our rights and title, and lift up our Secwepemc Nation."

"As we embark on this journey together, we hope our neighbours join us in acts of reconciliation no matter how big or small. But we have to start." Both Kukpi7s echoed.

371 words

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