



August 23, 2023

RE: Pipi7iyekw - Joffre Lakes Park – Harvest Celebration for Lilwat Nation and N'Quatqua First Nation

In this time of reconciliation, Lilwat Nation and N'Quatqua First Nation are asserting our Title and Rights to our shared unceded territory to take this time to harvest and gather our resources within our territories. Our goal is to ensure our well-being for our future. We are asking you to help in honoring us by providing us with sufficient time and space that we require to conduct our N'akmen within our lands.

With the development of the Visitor Use Management Strategy (2021), in support of Visitor Use Management Action Plan (2019), jointly undertaken by Lilwat Nation, N'Quatqua First Nation, BC Parks; with the support of Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development, and the Ministry of Transportation; listed under the goals and objectives of this document it states the following goals.

Goal one: Recognition of First Nations Territories & Increased Lilwat Nation and N'Quatqua First Nation Stewardship

Support Lilwat and N'Quatqua traditional use activities

1.3.3 – Support community access for berry picking, food sustenance, and other traditional use activities.

1.3.4 – Encourage Lilwat and N'Quatqua Nations to utilize park spaces and identify and explore ways to address potential barriers to access.

Goal two: Celebrate First Nations Culture throughout the Park.

Support Lilwat and N'Quatqua Nation's spiritual and ceremonial activities

2.2.1 – Ensure opportunities for Lilwat Nation and N'Quatqua First Nation ceremonial activities to take place within the park.

2.2.2 – Educate park users on respectful behavior when ceremonies are occurring.

Furthermore, Article 18 in the *United Nations Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Peoples* (2007), it states, Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures. The UN Declaration responds to the urgent necessity of respecting the right of Indigenous peoples, as peoples and nations, to make our own decisions about our lives and our futures, through our governments and representative institutions.



Pipi7iyekw - Joffre Lakes Park is located within the shared, overlapping unceded traditional territory of the Lilwat Nation and N'Quatqua First Nation. These lands have been used and occupied by the Lilwat and N'Quatqua since time immemorial.

The Lilwat Nation asserts unextinguished title to its traditional territory, sovereignty over its traditional territory, and a right to self-determination. The Lilwat Nation and N'Quatqua First Nation's aboriginal rights, including title, are protected under s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

Furthermore, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed in the Tsilhqot'in decision that aboriginal title is real and meaningful, territorial in nature, and that First Nation consent is required for the use of its aboriginal title lands and resources. The decision also specifically states that aboriginal title confers:

... the right to decide how the land will be used; the right of the enjoyment and occupancy of the land; the right to possess the land; the right to economic benefits of the land; and the right to pro-actively use and manage the land. (at para. 73).

In keeping with the above stated, Lilwat Nation and N'Quatqua First Nation are jointly shutting down the public access to Pipi7iyekw - Joffre Lakes Park until National Truth and Reconciliation Day, September 30th, 2023.

Kukwstumúhklap, (*Thank you*)

Kukwpi Skalumecw, Dean Nelson

Kukwpi, Micah Thevarge