



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
May 16, 2025

Lílwat Nation
N'Quatqua Nation

Increased Reconnection Periods for Lílwat and N'Quatqua Nations at Pipi7iyekw (Joffre Lakes Park)

Mount Currie, BC – Lílwat Nation's leadership invited the Honourable Tamara Davidson, Minister of Environment and Parks (Haida name Laanas), to the Nation's traditional territory to visit Pipi7iyekw (Joffre Lakes Park) and witness firsthand the benefits of seasonal Reconnection Periods for both the community and the land. On Friday, May 16th, the Minister and her team met with Lílwat and N'Quatqua leadership at Pipi7iyekw. Together, they hiked to the first lake and engaged in meaningful discussions about the future stewardship of the area, with a shared commitment to protecting and sustaining the land.

Since 2023 Lílwat and N'Quatqua Nations have established Reconnection Periods for Pipi7iyekw (Joffre Lakes Park), during which the park is not open to the public, to allow time for their community members to practice Ntákmén (meaning "our way"). This means providing dedicated periods of time for their community members to reconnect to their land and culture, while also providing time for the land to rest from human impacts.

Community members are getting to utilize areas where they were previously removed or denied access. This reconnection is integral to the well-being of the two Nations' community members as they look for traditional methods to help cope with grief, addictions, suicide and mental health.

The Reconnection Periods for 2025 will occur between April 25th – May 19th, June 13th – 27th and August 22nd – October 23rd. During these times cultural practices will take place, such as hunting, fishing, harvesting medicines and engaging in spiritual activities, which need to be practiced without the presence of park visitors.

Reconnection Periods in conjunction with the Visitor Use Management Strategy (a collaborative project with Lílwat Nation, N'Quatqua Nation and BC Parks that was started in 2018) are already demonstrating tangible differences. "We are noticing the Whiskey Jacks are becoming less conditioned to approach people for food, and the Pikas are being seen in greater numbers without dogs visiting the park" says Casey Gonzalez, Director of Title & Rights at Lílwat Nation.

This partnership allows for continued collaboration in sustainable park management and implementation of the provincial Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA). The Nations would like to see equal prioritization of land use types to ensure that recreational uses are not given preference over cultural land uses. Although efforts are being made to manage the human impacts on the park, such as daily visitor limits and mandatory day use passes during the peak season, there is still much room for

improvement. The high number of visitors annually brings with it other impacts, such as safety concerns with the number of vehicles parking along the highway. “These changes wouldn’t happen if we don’t assert our inherent rights. It’s our responsibility as stewards to protect the land; it’s been overused for too long by too many people” says Lílwat Nation’s Political Chief Kúkwpi7 Skalúlmecw Dean Nelson.

Kukwstumckálap (thank you)

Quick Facts:

- Pipi7iyekw (Joffre Lakes Park) has become one of the busiest parks in the province
- In 2019, the park reached an all-time high of 196,300 visitors, an increase of 222% since 2010
- Over-parking, over-use, litter and campfires have had negative impacts on the park’s biological diversity and sensitive habitats, which include old-growth forest estimated to be more than 250 years old
- A collaborative approach between BC Parks, Lílwat and N’Quatqua Nations is being taken to implement the strategies in the 2021 Visitor Use Management Strategy
- The annual day-use pass system resumes May 17th where users reserve a free day-pass online to visit the park, which will ensure the park is used sustainably
- Pipi7iyekw (Joffre Lakes Park) will not be open to the public during the following times:
 - April 25th – May 19th
 - June 13th – 27th
 - August 22nd – October 23rd



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