

REVITALIZING INDIGENOUS LAW WITH THE LOWER FRASER FISHERIES ALLIANCE



LEGAL TRADITIONS OF THE
PEOPLES OF THE LOWER FRASER

VOLUME 1
FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

THE LOWER FRASER FISHERIES ALLIANCE (LFFA)

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LFFA

During my eleven-year tenure as the operational lead for the Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance, I have observed a complete organizational shift from harvest-focused directives to an urgent emphasis on conservation, habitat restoration, science, Indigenous knowledge and inherent law as key components to maintaining and saving what is left of our salmon, water and habitat they rely on.

Indigenous peoples have been displaced from managing resources within the Lower Fraser territories and watersheds for over a century and a half. Our ancestor's responsibilities to the salmon, water and associated resources to maintain standards of health and well being, have been replaced by the decisions of local entities, government and laws that are fragmented in nature. The peoples of the Lower Fraser are losing access to the *Stó:lō / s̓q̓w̓a n̓l̓il̓əl stál̓w̓*, 'Fraser River' and fish each passing day. Individual and corporate stakeholders now enjoy greater access and ability to access fisheries and the watersheds - much to the detriment of our Nations. One of the consequences of losing access to our significant cultural practice of harvesting and stewarding fish is the lack of sturgeon, eulachon and fresh salmon in our modern diet.

We find ourselves in a fisheries resource crisis driven by siloed management and decision-making based on socio-economic factors that often do not reconcile with conservation, water or habitat restoration. Political and management decisions based on monetary or commercial needs are regularly in conflict with baseline conditions needed for fish to thrive.

Our Indigenous governance world view is holistic and respects that all things are connected. Nations and their leaders must live in two governing worlds today: one that recognizes the 'inherited' Canadian Constitution and the other that works to maintain our inherent laws and obligations to all living beings.

Lower Fraser First Nations remain hopeful that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and respective reconciliation commitments can bridge the gap between our Indigenous world view, the laws of Canada and the province of BC. The Revitalizing Indigenous Law for Land, Air and Water (RELAW) project captures our inherent laws and principles in a way that can play a

key role in the inclusion of our governance processes alongside commercial and government bodies.

Presently, no one government or nation can address our fishery crisis alone. We must act quickly in collaboration and in unity of *letse'mó:t / n̓áca?mat*, 'one heart and one mind'. Revitalizing our Indigenous laws can be one of the ways forward to harmonize the true nation to nation relationship that is necessary to address the current fish and water resource crisis for present and future generations.

Kwilosintun, Murray Ned,
Sema:th
Executive Director, LFFA

PREFACE

We learn through our oral stories that we have been here since time immemorial. Our stories go way back and speak of the old ways: the powers of earth, air, fire, water. The waters that come through our territories were abundant and provided life for many plants, animals, birds, and of course the abundant fish that used to freely travel through our territory to nourish the body, mind and spirit of our people. We continue to recognize our important relationship with fish through ceremony and sharing throughout the Lower Fraser. Respect for the past by learning our oral stories and coming to understand and respect our laws will collectively carry us forward to a much better place than we find ourselves in today.

Since colonization, we have been asked to prove our existence on these territories. The teachings of our eternal ancestors are powerful and form the foundation of our laws. Our stories tell us so. I would hope that one day our laws are respected by all who live or participate in the decision-making of our territories --to the extent that various levels of government recognize our laws and incorporate them into decision-making processes. This is one way that we may reconcile and move forward together in the decisions made on the uses of our lands and resources, especially for fish. The LFFA-RELAW project amplifies our legacy, our governance, rights and responsibilities for fish and the watersheds they depend on.

Lemxyaltexw, Chief Dalton Silver,
Sema:th
Host Nation of the LFFA



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful for the guidance shared by the knowledge holders who taught us about the true meaning of *xóhmet te mekw'stám it kwelát/ xá?Həmət ct mək'w scék'w'al'ʔə k'wə swé?ct* 'we have to take care of everything that belongs to us'.

We acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the LFFA, the Delegates and Executive Committee, who continue to represent the voices of the Lower Fraser communities in looking after the fish and water.

We give thanks to the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre and the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre for sharing their abundant collections of published stories.

With Special Thanks to all for sq'wewelwel and 'breathing life' into the LFFA-RELAW reports through the review and invaluable feedback to strengthen the accuracy of the full legal synthesis report:

- Peer Reviewer Julie Malloway from Chi'yaqtel;
- Peer Reviewer Naxaxalhts'i, Albert (Sonny) McHalsie from Shxw'ow'hamel;
- Artist Shkweñ, Ocean Hyland from Səililwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh);
- Language review of downriver həńqəmíhəm, Cheyenne Cunningham from Q'ets;i;
- Language review of upriver halq'eméylem, Kelsey Charlie from Sts'ailes;
- Layout and Design, Francine Douglas from Sts'ailes;
- Photography, Sharon Desnomie from Sts'ailes.

LANGUAGE

Halkomelem, in the dialects of upriver halq'eméylem and downriver həńqəmíhəm are used in the LFFA-RELAW reports. The LFFA seeks to promote the use of the Indigenous languages and dialects of the members of the Lower Fraser First Nations within the written and oral work completed by LFFA, to support and respect the diverse cultures and spiritual traditions of the First Nations of the Lower Fraser River. LFFA recognizes that there are also N'laka'pamux dialects spoken in some of the upriver Lower Fraser First Nations that are not reflected in the reports.

DISCLAIMER

In publishing this report, the LFFA member nations acknowledge shared legal principles that guide their work together on fisheries governance and watershed management. However, the discussion and analysis supporting these principles is not intended to be comprehensive or final. Rather, it reflects the wisdom and voices of the many knowledge holders who were able to participate, and the published materials that were available to the RELAW team.

LFFA affirms that Lower Fraser First Nations recognize and respect each other's autonomy and support each other in exercising their respective title, rights and jurisdiction. With this in mind, LFFA hopes that the LFFA-RELAW reports will provide a basis for ongoing learning and dialogue among the peoples of the Lower Fraser in the process of revitalizing and living their legal traditions relating to fisheries governance and watershed management, and offer a foundation for dialogue on applying the principles in this report to ongoing work of LFFA and member communities.

Indigenous laws continue to be practiced by the peoples of the Lower Fraser, with the diversity of the peoples and landscape reflected in their stories, making up various tribes with halkomelem language dialect and sub-dialects who hold jurisdiction over their own watershed territory.

All information or knowledge disclosed herein remains LFFA members' and knowledge holders' intellectual property.

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VOLUME 1 FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES



What are the sources of human rights and responsibilities to the natural world? What are the fundamental relationships between humans, other beings, and the natural world?

This is Volume 1 of 7:

- Volume 1** Foundational Principles
- Volume 2** Legal Processes & Decision-Making
- Volume 3** Responsibilities
- Volume 4** Rights
- Volume 5** Standards
- Volume 6** Inter-community and International Relations
- Volume 7** Consequences, Enforcement & Teachings

VISIT WWW.LFFA.CA/INITIATIVES/RELAW FOR THE OTHER 6 VOLUMES AND THE SUMMARY REPORT

ARTIST INTERPRETATION: VOLUME 1 COVER ART



Volume 1 Foundational Principles

"When we had gone over this one and I read over the document it was kind of about, and some of the elders talked about it tonight, it was the origin stories and that beginning of time of our people's connection to the territory, how we came to be, and how we grew to learn about the animals and the plants and the territory and the land.

In this image I wanted to create some fish, and a magical being sharing and connecting. And all are intertwining in front of the moon and the stars. And those teachings come down to us from the spirit world and from our ancestors, and just trying to represent those kinds of stories of the long long long ago, almost out of mind, it was so long ago, as some of the elders shared tonight. To think of how long we've been here. That is for Volume 1. I added in a salmon, an eulachon and a sturgeon."

Shkweñ, Ocean Hyland
səlilwətaʔt (Tseil-Waututh) / Xwchíyò:m (Cheam)

VISIT WWW.LFFA.CA/INITIATIVES/RELAW FOR THE OTHER 6 VOLUMES AND THE SUMMARY REPORT

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FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

What are the sources of human rights and responsibilities to the natural world? What are the fundamental relationships between humans, other beings, and the natural world?

1.1 The peoples of the Lower Fraser hold profound relationships with the waters that connect them, based on countless generations of interaction, with a responsibility to pass ancestors' traditions and sustainable territories on to future generations.

The peoples of the Lower Fraser's profound relationship with their waters and watersheds throughout time has enabled them to:

- 1.1a** Gain significant expertise of their local waters while nourishing themselves holistically (physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally) through the abundance of fish and other species.
- 1.1b** Travel without limit throughout the territory and to each other in order to:
 - Create & sustain kinship networks;
 - Participate in the economy (i.e., trade).
- 1.1c** Build spiritual power, strength and knowledge from the water and land, including engaging with **stl'áleqem / s̓l̓əl̓'ələqəm** 'supernatural beings' / 'fierce beings', and spiritual beings.
 - **Stl'áleqem / s̓l̓əl̓'ələqəm;**
 - Spiritual beings.

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 Joe, *Koohlak*
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 Joe, *Training a Doctor*
 Joe, *Underwater People*
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 Milo, *Skwiy-Kway Mask*
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 Pierre, *Eulachon Story*
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1.1b

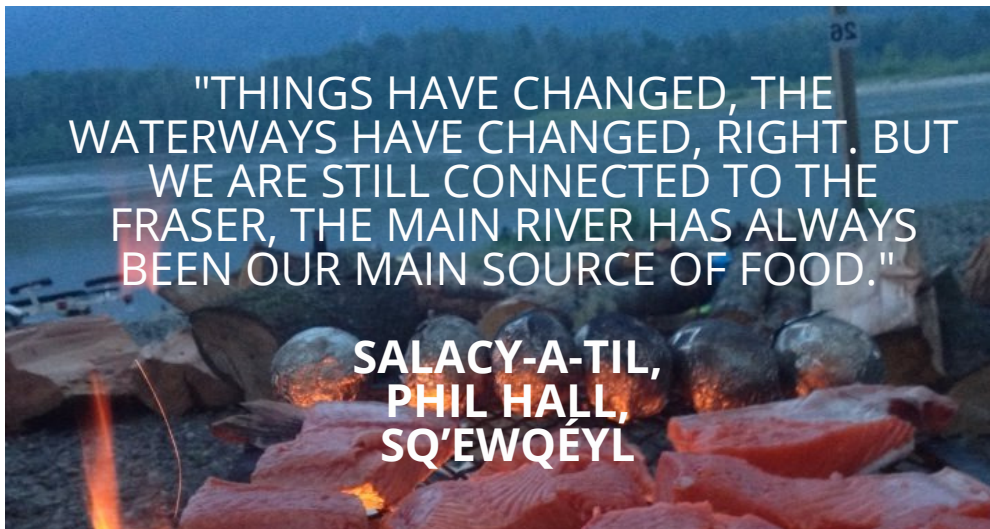
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"THINGS HAVE CHANGED, THE WATERWAYS HAVE CHANGED, RIGHT. BUT WE ARE STILL CONNECTED TO THE FRASER, THE MAIN RIVER HAS ALWAYS BEEN OUR MAIN SOURCE OF FOOD."

**SALACY-A-TIL,
 PHIL HALL,
 SQ'EWQÉYL**

1.1 The peoples of the Lower Fraser hold profound relationships with their local watersheds and the waters that connect them, based on countless generations of interaction, with a responsibility to pass ancestors' traditions and sustainable territories on to future generations.¹

The **Stó:lō / s̓q̓w̓a** **n̓l̓il̓əl stáləw̓**, Fraser River, known as the “river of rivers”, connects the waters, animals, beings and the peoples of the Lower Fraser to each other.² There are at least 24 sub-watersheds in the Lower Fraser that house lakes, rivers, creeks, and streams, which flow into the **Stó:lō / s̓q̓w̓a** **n̓l̓il̓əl stáləw̓**.

The water has played a significant part in shaping the territories we see today. **Salacy-a-til**, Phil Hall explains:

Our people also had a connection to the river, as June has said, a lot of our communities are connected to a stream. Those streams now have dried up or are smaller than they used to be, so little Chilliwack River, which means “going back up stream” used to be connected through the valley here, now today it is polluted. Things have changed, the waterways have changed, right. But we are still connected to the Fraser, the main river has always been our main source of food.⁴

Although all peoples of the Lower Fraser are related to the **Stó:lō / s̓q̓w̓a** **n̓l̓il̓əl stáləw̓** they also hold direct and distinct relationships with the watersheds that are closest to them. Their stories, both **s̓xw̓óx̓wiyám / s̓x̓w̓əx̓w̓əyém**⁵ ‘oral histories from the distant past / tell stories’ and **sqw̓élq̓wel / sq̓w̓elq̓w̓əl**, ‘true stories / oral stories’ reflect these relationships.

This profound relationship is ancient, as the peoples’ connection to these lands and waters goes back to time out of mind, including a time when the lower Fraser Valley was deep beneath the ice and when there was no **sth’óq̓wi / scé** **l̓t̓ən** ‘salmon’ in the river. This relationship is central to the identity of the peoples. **Naxaxalhts’i** explains who his people are, identifying them as both “of” the land and river:

Rosaleen George, again she's the one that talked about that saying we can't just call ourselves Stó:lō, where it limits us to just being the river people. She said we're people of the land too. She said we have to use both. We are Stó:lō and we are xw̓élmexw [people of the land].⁷

These relationships have made way for expertise to be built over time, providing self-sustenance and access to their own territories and to neighbouring territories, and the ability to travel and build spiritual power and strength from the waters and the beings within them.

1 Commodore, *Thunderbird*; Commodore, *Underwater People*; Commodore, *Cultus Lake and the Underground River*; Cooper, *Origin*; Douglas, *The Underwater People and the Sxwó:yxwey Mask*; James, *Mink 2*; Joe, *Kootlak*; Joe, *Story of Cultus Lake*; Joe, *Training a Doctor*; Joe, *Underwater People*; Kelly, *Sxwóyxwey*; Kollerher, *Flood Story*; Louis, *Legend of Cultus Lake*; Milo, *Skwi-y-Kway Mask*; Naxaxalhts’i, *Contact-Era Seasonal Rounds*; Naxaxalhts’i, *St’álegem Sites*; Pierre, *Salmon Story*; Pierre, *Eulachon Story*; Point Bolton, *Xéyteleq*; Point Bolton, *Xweliqwiya*; Splockton, *About this Tribe*; The Stee’lis’, *Qāls III*; The Stee’lis’, *The Stee’lis*; Unknown, *Origin of the .sxw’exo’e Mask*; Unknown, *The Abandoned Boy*; Unknown, *The Fish Man*; Uslick, *The Drouth*; Uslick, *Underwater People*.

2 Carlson, *Expressions of Collective Identity* at 28.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Salacy-a-til, Phil Hall (Coqualeetza Focus Group, July 17, 2019).

5 The **s̓x̓w̓əθk̓w̓əyém** (Musqueam) refer to their ancient history as **s̓x̓w̓əyém**. See: **s̓x̓w̓əθk̓w̓əyém** website <https://www.musqueam.bc.ca/>.

6 Wileleq, Ken Malloway (Ch’iyaqtel Focus Group, August 14, 2019).

7 Naxaxalhts’i (Peer review Zoom call, February 26, 2021).

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The peoples of the Lower Fraser's profound relationship with their waters and watersheds throughout time has enabled them to:

1.1a Gain significant expertise of their local waters while nourishing themselves holistically (physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally) through the abundance of fish and other species.⁸

S'ólh téméxw te íkw'elò Xólhmet te mekw'stám ít kwelát ⁹ / *sʔa* ¹⁰ *táməxw tə ʔi k'wəhá xáʔəmət ct mək'w scék'wəl'ʔə k'wə swéʔct*, 'This is our Land. We have to take care of everything that belongs to us' is a foundational principle that is inclusive of everyone and everything throughout the Indigenous territories of the Lower Fraser.

Distinct relationships with local waters are part of what determines each people's responsibility to their territory. Naxaxalhts'i says, "as Coast Salish peoples, we identify our territory by our watersheds. You'll notice that wherever we live, we claim the watershed."¹⁰

In the Lower Fraser, there are two main language dialects that are connected to the *Stó:lō / s'q'wə* ¹¹ *n̓l̓ilət stáləw̓*. These are upriver Halq'eméylem and downriver Həh̓əqəmiñəh̓.¹¹

From the lower Fraser Canyon down to Leq'á:mel territory east of Mission, subdialects of upriver halq'eméylem are associated with the Tiyt, Sts'ailes, Sq'éwlets, Pilalt, Ts'elxweyeqw, Leq'á:mel and Sema:th peoples, also referred to as tribes, each with their own connections to particular waters and watersheds.¹²

Language maps for the Tiyt tribe subdialect area in the upper Fraser Valley and lower Fraser Canyon encompass the present day First Nations communities of Chawathil, Seabird Island, Shxw'ōwhámel, Skawahlook, Peters, Popkum, Yale and Union Bar.¹³ The Pilalt tribe includes the Kwaw-kwaw-Apilt, Skwah and Xwchíyò:m in the Agassiz – Rosedale area.¹⁴

The Sts'ailes are the people of the Harrison River and Harrison Lake, as well the Chehalis River, and refer to it as "our river".¹⁵ At the mouth of the Chehalis River is the home of the Sq'éwlets First Nation.¹⁶

The Ts'elxweyeqw are the people of the Chilliwack River watershed on the south side of the *Stó:lō / s'q'wə* ¹⁷ *n̓l̓ilət stáləw̓*. The Ts'elxweyeqw tribe includes the First Nations of Áthelets (Aitchelitz), Sq'ewqéyl (Skowkale), Shxwhá:y, Th'ewá:li (Soowahile), Sxwoyehálá (Squiala), Ch'íyáqtel (Tzeachten) and Yeqwyeqwí:ws (Yakwekwioose).¹⁷

Changes in the flow and nature of water connections can also lead to linguistic and political shifts. At one time, for example the Ts'elxweyeqw were said to have spoken a different language, but adopted Halq'eméylem, as *Naxaxalhts'i* explains:

The Chilliwack River actually used to run down into Cultus Lake down Columbia valley

8 Commodore, *Cultus Lake and the Underground River*; Commodore, *Thunderbird*; Kolleher, *Flood Story*; Pierre, *Salmon Story*; Pierre, *Eulachon Story*; Point Bolton, *Xéyteleq*; Splockton, *About This Tribe*; James, *Mink 2*; Joe, *Koothlak*; *Story of Cultus Lake*; Joe, *Training a Doctor*; Joe, *Underwater People*; Kelly, *Sxwóyxwey*; Louis, *Legend of Cultus Lake*; Louis, *The Wealick Family*; Milo, *Skwiw-Kway Mask*; Unknown, *Origin of the .sxo'exo'e Mask*; Uslick, *The Drouth*; Uslick, *Underwater People*.

9 See Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw Treaty Association website: <https://www.sxta.bc.ca/>.

10 Naxaxalhts'i (Peer review Zoom call, February 26, 2021).

11 Two of three dialect groups of the Halkomelem language with a third being huíqumíñuñ, Island Halkomelem. Naxaxalhts'i (Peer review Zoom call, February 26, 2021).

12 For a map of Halkomelem dialect groups and dialects see Carlson et al, *Stó:lō Atlas* at 22-23.

13 Carlson et al, *Stó:lō Atlas*, Naxaxalhts'i (Peer review Zoom call, February 26, 2021). There are also Nlaka'pamux dialect speakers in the Fraser Canyon area.

14 Naxaxalhts'i (Peer review Zoom call, February 26, 2021).

15 Kelsey Charlie (Sts'ailes Focus Group, November 11, 2019).

16 See Sq'éwlets website: <http://digitalsqewlets.ca/index-eng.php>.

17 See Ts'elxweyeqw Tribe website: <https://www.ttml.ca/about-us/our-vision/>.

*and was a tributary of the Nooksack, it ran into the Nooksack. They were more closely aligned with the Nooksack.... Then when the river, like Bob Joe says, when the river broke through the mountains-- I think when the river broke through the mountain there at Vedder Crossing. I think Vedder mountain and Sumas mountain were one big mountain range. Then the river washed through that somehow. Must have been a low area in there. Washed through and then around going into the town of Chilliwack. Bob Joe talks about that but 200 to 400 years ago and I think Billy Sepass talks about it as well.*¹⁸

Sema:th tribal territory includes Sumas mountain, the now drained Sema:th lake, and the drainage of the **stat'lo**, 'streams' that flow into it. It also extended south across today's international border. Some of the halq'eméylem names of Sema:th waterways include: "**Stótelō** or Sumas River, translating to 'little Creek', **Sel:tslehōq**' or Marshall Lonzo Creek, translating to 'Sand Drifting;' and **Q'élem** or Saar Creek, translating to 'came' or 'rest'.¹⁹

The water that holds the fish brought the people together.²⁰ **Wileleq**, Ken Malloway from Ch'iyaqtel explains how there was a fish weir where the Sema:th River enters the **Stó:lō / sǫ'wa nǫlǫl stǫlǫw** that was looked after by both the Ts'elxwéyeqw and Sema:th. "They'd work togethǫer." Thus the relationship and responsibility were dependent on the ties held to that local territory and resource site, as the Sema:th were on one side of the river and the Ts'elxwéyeqw (Ch'iyaqtel part of the Ts'elxwéyeqw tribe) were on the other. There were longhouses and smoke houses on both sides.²²

Leq'á:mel, meaning "the level place where people meet" lies at the borderline of the upriver and downriver dialects and was once an important trading stop for the peoples of the Lower Fraser. It is said to be "the birthplace of Halq'eméylem" as "the word itself stems from the dialect spoken by the Nicomen/Leq'á:mel."²³ Nicomen slough, which flow into the **Stó:lō / sǫ'wa nǫlǫl stǫlǫw** is one of the important waterways in their territory. "That's where the word "Nicomen" comes from. Nicomen is



18 Naxaxalhts'i (Peer review Zoom call, February 26, 2021).

19 See Sumas First Nation website: <http://www.sumasfirstnation.com/about-us/>.

20 Salacy-a-til, Phil Hall, Sq'ewqéyl (Coqualeetza Focus Group, July 17, 2019).

21 Wileleq, Kenneth Malloway (Ch'iyaqtel Focus Group, August 14, 2019).

22 *Ibid.*

23 See Leq'á:mel website: <http://leqamel.ca/discover-leqamel/arts-culture-heritage/>. The story of the origin of the language at Leq'á:mel is also told by Sloh-kwih-LAH-loh, Dan Milo. He was born at Sq'ewqéyl in 1867. See Milo, *Origin*.

actually the downriver Hə́h̓qə́mihə́m pronunciation of Leq'á:mel".²⁴

On the south shore of the **Stó:lō / s̓q'wə́n̓x̓n̓l̓ilə́ł stáləw**, the first tribal group speaking a subdialect of downriver Hə́h̓qə́mihə́m are the Matsqui. Matsqui territory is “anchored around (but not restricted to) the system of creeks and trails that linked the Fraser River through Matsqui Prairie to Sumas Lake and to the Nooksack River,” including Kwaa-chem Creek ‘Matsqui Slough’ and other waters.²⁵ “The Fraser River and its tributaries are central to Matsqui identity, as are the fish and animals that live in, and migrate through, those waterways. Salmon in particular, remain at the heart of Matsqui social, ceremonial, and economic life.”²⁶

Travelling west, Kwantlen territory stretches to New Westminster and is connected to Mud Bay in the south. Kwantlen Chief **Stakwsan**, Marilyn Gabriel speaks of their water connections, emphasizing that the **Stó:lō / s̓q'wə́n̓x̓n̓l̓ilə́ł stáləw** and its tributaries, such as the Pitt River and Salmon River, “have truly been the lifeblood of our culture, and it is indicative of their importance to our community that our villages were allocated along such rivers. She notes:

*When our people go fishing on the river, for instance, I know that many experience an intense feeling of belonging and of rightness, and a sense of connection to place because our identity as a people and as Kwantlen individuals is rooted in our respectful use of the territory that has sustained our people for generations.*²⁸

In turn, the Nicomekl-Salmon River portage system links the **Stó:lō / s̓q'wə́n̓x̓n̓l̓ilə́ł stáləw** to Boundary Bay. At one time occupied by the Snokomish people, who were devastated by smallpox, this portage system connected their village on the **Stó:lō / s̓q'wə́n̓x̓n̓l̓ilə́ł stáləw** at Snakwaya to Mud Bay/Boundary Bay,²⁷ and was a travel corridor between Halkomelem and Straits Salish territories. Today, it connects the Kwantlen with the Semiahmoo, a transboundary Straits Salish nation with strong ties to Lummi and Nooksack.

Moving west from Leq'á:mel on the north side of the Fraser, speakers of distinct subdialects of Hə́h̓qə́mihə́m also occupied territories closely linked to their local waters and watersheds, beginning with the Xat'seq in the area around Hatzic Lake, the “Skayuk” connected to the Stave River watershed and Stave Lake, and the Q'ó:leq' connected to Whannock Lake and creek.³⁰ These tribes were dramatically impacted by smallpox.

Moving further west, and associated with the large north-south watersheds of the Pitt, Coquitlam, and Indian Rivers/Indian Arm fjord system,³¹ are respectively the Q'ets:i (Katzie), Kwikwetlem, and sə́lilwə́təʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples, each of which historically spoke a distinct subdialect of Hə́h̓qə́mihə́m and is involved in language revitalization today.

Q'ets:i (Katzie) territory includes Pitt Lake and Pitt River on the north side of the **Stó:lō / s̓q'wə́n̓x̓n̓l̓ilə́ł stáləw**. It takes the **sth'óqwi / scé́łtan** ‘salmon’ about six hours to travel up to from x̓wə́məθk̓wə́yəm (Musqueam) to here. Stories shared by knowledge holders emphasized their relationship with their local watershed of Pitt Lake and Pitt River. At the focus group, they shared their pride in Pitt Lake and Pitt River and different facts about the lake's significance, such as it being a tidal lake—one of few tidal lakes in the world where water flows back into the lake. Cyril Pierre from Q'ets:i said “all year round, our people

24 Naxaxalhts'l (Peer review Zoom call, February 26, 2021).

25 Carlson et al, Matsqui People at 11.

26 *Ibid* at 9.

27 Stakwsan, Marilyn Gabriel, Statement of Evidence at para 31.

28 *Ibid* at para 49.

29 Carlson, *Power of Place* at 200.

30 Carlson, *Power of Place* at 200; Carlson et al., *Stó:lō Atlas* at 23, Suttles, Katzie Ethnographic Notes, Memoir No. 2 (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, Anthropology in British Columbia, 1955) at 12.

31 And Burrard Inlet.

32 Bryant Duncan (Q'ets:i Focus Group, August 15, 2019).

33 Harry & Ed Pierre (Q'ets:i Focus Group, August 15, 2019).

34 *Ibid*.

used to live by these foods in this river, in the Pitt Lake and River". Rick Bailey goes on to share that:

*The area near Q'ets:í used to be all marsh land with small communities throughout the territory. This change with the diking of the land which has impacted the flow, health and vitality of the water, including important food sources for the Q'ets:í People.*³⁵

Growing up along the **Stó:lō / s̓q̓'w̓a n̓íl̓əl stáləw̓**, and the rivers and lakes that flow into it, enables individuals, families and communities to understand, over time, the voice and warnings related to the water's health, as they still have vivid memories of the waters being full of life. Knowledge of this water is as important today as it was in the past. Rick Bailey explains, "the condition of Pitt Lake as dangerous in itself. There are winds, salt water tides, frigid water temperatures, and the Q'ets:í people knew these perils and respected the lake."³⁶

Rick shared a story about Pitt Lake they know about, in which someone was fishing from a canoe in the lake, and they fell overboard and started to swim. The person was overcome by the water and drowned. The lake is deep and tidal, and the body of the fisherman was found in the Semiahmoo months later. He explains that this lake is an interconnected lake with an underground river connection much like the one found at Cultus Lake.³⁷

The name Kwikwetlem "refers to a 'small red salmon' or unique sockeye salmon that once ran in large numbers in Coquitlam River and Coquitlam Lake," and applies to the people, their lands, and "the river and lake at the heart" of their watershed territory.³⁸ Today, Kwikwetlem members reside in the locations of two ancient village sites: slakəya'nc near the confluence of the Coquitlam and **Stó:lō / s̓q̓'w̓a n̓íl̓əl stáləw̓**, and setłama'kmən about 2 km further up the Coquitlam River.³⁹

Səl̓ilwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh),⁴⁰ means 'People of the Inlet'. Indian Arm and Burrard Inlet are at the heart of the territories that they have governed, stewarded and used since time out of mind, which extend over a much broader area⁴¹ and include important connections to the **Stó:lō / s̓q̓'w̓a n̓íl̓əl stáləw̓**.

At the Fraser River estuary, where the fresh waters of the **Stó:lō / s̓q̓'w̓a n̓íl̓əl stáləw̓** meet the Pacific Ocean waters of the Salish Sea, the north arm of the Fraser River is part of the territory of the x̓w̓məθk̓w̓əy̓əm (Musqueam),⁴² who's traditional responsibility is to guard the entrance of the river, thereby protecting their relatives up the **Stó:lō / s̓q̓'w̓a n̓íl̓əl stáləw̓** from coastal raiders.⁴³ The Tsawwassen are at the south arm of the **Stó:lō / s̓q̓'w̓a n̓íl̓əl stáləw̓**, including waters of the Strait of Georgia, with territory extending into Washington state.⁴⁴

The way in which peoples identify themselves has been impacted by the imposition of the *Indian Act*, but connection to the land remains. **Naxaxalhts'i** shares:

In 1839, our ancestors were still thinking about which tribe they came from, not which Indian band. So, 1839, way before the Indian reserves were established. That's how we know and that's why we agree with that, is that our ancestors thought about us as being tribes. Nowadays, we think about, "First thing, where are you from, Sonny?" "Well, I'm from Shxw'ōwhámél," when I should be saying, "I'm from the Tiyt Tribe." We've been set on these reserves now, the first thing you think about is what Indian

35 Rick Bailey (Q'ets:í Focus Group, August 15, 2019).

36 *Ibid.*

37 *Ibid.*

38 See Kwikwetlem First Nation website: <https://www.kwikwetlem.com/about-us.htm>.

39 *Ibid.*

40 See Tseil-Waututh Nation website: <https://twnation.ca/about/>

41 See Tseil-Waututh Nation website: <https://twnation.ca/about/our-departments/treaty-lands-resources/>.

42 See Musqueam Declaration here: https://www.musqueam.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/musqueam_declaration.pdf

43 Point Bolten, *Xéyteleq*.

44 See Tsawwassen First Nation website: <http://tsawwassenfirstnation.com/governance-overview/treaty-and-constitution/>

*band that we come from rather than the tribe that we come from.*⁴⁵

These expanding circles of relationship enabled by waters throughout the Lower Fraser and the broader Coast Salish world ground rights to access and harvest resources. Generations of interaction with their local territories have not only impacted their relationships with each other but it has also impacted the physical characteristics of the people. Being on these waters and walking through the mountain terrain for countless generations, the physical characteristics of the people are shaped by their engagement with their territory. As **Wileleq**, Ken Malloway describes at our Ch'iyaqtel Focus Group:

In the old days, the Stó:lō people mostly lived in canoes. They traveled everywhere by canoe and most of the time they were kneeling down in a canoe and paddling it. Most of the Stó:lōs looked like me. They had huge bodies, short little bow legs and they were really strong, and they lived in a canoe.

Well, Ts'elxwéyeqw people, they lived up at Chilliwack Lake and they had to walk everywhere because the Chilliwack River's not navigable. Everywhere they went, they walked. The people from Ts'elxwéyeqw tribe were tall. They were tall, they had short backs and long legs. They walked everywhere. While the people on a river, Stó:lō people they lived in canoes, they were short, had long powerful bodies, short little legs.

*That's the way I am. My legs are this long, and I might look like I'm six-foot-four when I'm sitting down, but I stand up on my own, I just barely reach the ground. The Ts'elxwéyeqw people, they were tall people. My Dad was tall. My grandpa was tall. They were Ts'elxwéyeqw clan.*⁴⁶

At our Coqualeetza Focus Group, there were elders from various Lower Fraser communities with stories about the **Stó:lō / sǫ́wa nǫ́lǫ́l stǫ́lǫ́w** and the fish that sustain them, which connects them all to each other. **Salacy-A-til**, Phil Hall, from Sq'ewqéyl said:

*[W]hen you go through it all in terms of Cultus Lake, being one of the head lakes that ran into the Little Chilliwack River and down through to the Vedder and all the way up to the Fraser. And the Fraser ran up all the way to Yale. Again, that's where all our people, all of our fishing spots are, right down from Bowman's Mill all the way up to Yale.*⁴⁷

Although there has always been abundance in fisheries in the Lower Fraser and throughout the **Stó:lō / sǫ́wa nǫ́lǫ́l stǫ́lǫ́w**, they are now scarce. In the focus groups, sharing **sxwōxwiyám / sǫ́wǫ́wǫ́yém** and **sqwélqwel / sq'welq'wəl** of their local waters brought up how these relationships have been impacted by colonial decision-making, such as the drainage of Sema:th Lake in the 1920s⁴⁸ which had drastic impacts for everyone and everything that is still felt today, explained further in Volume 7: Consequences, Enforcement & Teaching. The peoples' profound relationship with the waters that connect to each other is based on countless generations of interaction. Significant expertise in understanding warning signs, patterns and seasonal rounds of the territories is both inherited through story, as well as through life experience. The territories have physically shaped the people over time, while providing an abundance of fish, which encouraged more relationships to be made throughout the Lower Fraser. The waters and fish have enabled everyone to one another, sustaining their relations through kinship networks and trading.

45 Naxaxalhts'i (Peer review Zoom call, February 26, 2021).

46 Wileleq, Ken Malloway (Ch'iyaqtel Focus Group, August 14, 2019).

47 Salacy-A-til, Phil Hill, Sq'ewqéyl (Coqualeetza Focus Group, July 17, 2019).

48 See Chad Reimer, *Before We Lost the Lake: A Natural and Human History of Sumas Valley* (Toronto: Caitlin Press, 2018) for a detailed history of Sema:th Lake.

The peoples of the Lower Fraser's profound relationship with their waters and watersheds throughout time has enabled them to:

1.1b Travel without limit throughout the territory and to each other in order to:

- **Create & sustain kinship networks**⁴⁹

A desire to share in the abundance in fish encouraged tribes to join one another. For example, in Sts'ailes territory, the *sth'óqwi / scéłtan* 'salmon' did not come up the Chehalis river to K-ulk-E'mEhil's people. In response, the son of *K-ulk-E'mEhil* travelled down Chehalis river to find out why the *sth'óqwi / scéłtan* were not coming. It turned out the people further down the river had built a weir across the entire channel, which caught ALL of the *sth'óqwi / scéłtan*. The two villages decided to unite through marriage becoming one tribe, both benefitting from the abundance of the *sth'óqwi / scéłtan*.

Explained further in Volume 2: Legal Processes and Decision Making, s 2.2.d. *Wileleq*, Ken Malloway from Ch'iyaqtel explains the role of intermarriage in solidifying access to resources for his ancestors:

*There was a woman from Q'ets:í who owned or was the caretaker of the biggest cranberry fields in Q'ets:í. And Wealick my ancestor, he went down there, and he married her, not because she's exceptionally beautiful but that she had access to the best Q'ets:í cranberries. He wanted access to them, so he married her. He had seven wives. He married each one for a particular reason. For the wife from Q'ets:í, it was the cranberries that she owned. For a wife from the Nooksack, it was to cement the relations between our two tribes. The wife from the Lummie, same thing, Port Douglas wife, same thing. He had different wives. Mostly, they were political marriages. Hereditary chiefs in those days often had several wives. The wives are normally chosen by the elders. In the old days, the elders would have chosen the wife for you.*⁵¹

Sometimes these decisions to cement relations were done to make peace, as the conflicts between the Ts'elxweyeqw tribe and the Sema:th tribe were settled in this way, resulting in sharing of fish. *Wileleq*, Ken Malloway goes on to say:

*That was one of the ways that we decided to work together and try to figure out how we are going to sort out our differences because we didn't want to be enemies anymore. Our people were marrying each other to cement our relations. One of the things that we had was that fish-- the other thing they allowed us to fish in was the Sema:th Lake, it belonged to the Sema:th tribe, but they let us share it. They also shared with Nooksack people too, so they shared it with us.*⁵²

"THAT WAS ONE OF THE WAYS THAT WE DECIDED TO WORK TOGETHER AND TRY TO FIGURE OUT HOW WE ARE GOING TO SORT OUT OUR DIFFERENCES BECAUSE WE DIDN'T WANT TO BE ENEMIES ANYMORE. OUR PEOPLE WERE MARRYING EACH OTHER TO CEMENT OUR RELATIONS."

WILELEQ,
KEN MALLOWAY,
CH'IYAQ'TEL

49 Cooper, *Origin*; Point Bolton, *Xéyteleq*; Splockton, *About this Tribe*; The Stee'lis', *The Stse'lis*; Uslick, *Drouth*; Unknown, *The Fish Man*.

50 The Stee'lis', *The Stse'lis*.

51 Wileleq, Ken Malloway (Ch'iyaqtel Focus Group, August 14, 2019).

52 *Ibid.*

The peoples of the Lower Fraser’s profound relationship with their waters and watersheds throughout time has enabled them to:

1.1b Travel without limit throughout the territory and to each other in order to:

- **Participate in the economy (i.e., trade).**⁵³

The peoples’ ability to travel because of their relationship to their waters has enabled them to participate in the trade economy and accumulate wealth through their bountiful resources.⁵⁴ Autumn, (**Temhilálxw**, meaning “time when the leaves fall”) was the time to travel and trade.⁵⁵ The stories recount how the watersheds throughout the Lower Fraser connected the peoples to each other through trade with their kinship and family connections.⁵⁶ **Wileleq**, Ken Malloway shared how gatherings of people were fed from the territory:

*Our people used to be amongst the richest people in the world because we could work our butts off for two months and then we could live for the rest of the year on what we accomplished. We would smoke fish and we would dry fish, we had enough to store away, not only that, we had enough to trade too.*⁵⁷

Everyone had their own ‘currency’ to trade in with neighbouring tribes and with the broader Coast Salish world. The people at Sts’ailes were well-known for their smoked salmon, called **sq’éyle** or, **pókw’**⁵⁸ described by Kelsey Charlie as “our currency, so people came here just for that.”⁵⁹ The Fraser Canyon peoples (further up the Fraser River, past Hope where the landscape transforms into a canyon) traded their dried saskatoon berries, soapberries, and wind-dried salmon; while the people of the west, who had access to the salt water, traded their smoked clams and other seafood.⁶⁰ **Wileleq**, Ken Malloway explains how his people had sockeye or chinook to trade, saying, “when I was a kid, we’d travel all over the place. We’d go visit our family, we’d bring them fish, and they’d give us seafood. Fish is the biggest part of our life.”⁶¹

Not only did these good memories of travelling around as children bring smiles upon the knowledge holders faces, but it also brought up the loss of so much. **Skemookw**, Henry Ned from Sema:th stated that as a child they “had an abundance of fishing. Now there is like say 100 times as many people, and 100 times less fish.”⁶² Kelsey Charlie shared how the people are now going fish hungry and the fisheries are in dire straits.⁶³

The waters throughout the Lower Fraser are all connected, which strengthens relations between the beings (fish), communities and nations and allows them to partake in the trading of resources. Although trading is not as prevalent as it once was, it is still being done between communities and nations today. Although there’s a lot of grief for such loss of fish in the Lower Fraser, there is a lot of compassion for those who live up the river because they have it worse with regards to scarcity of **sth’óqwi / scéłtan** ‘salmon’.⁶⁴ William Charlie Sr. from Sts’ailes shared how he and others brought fish to the people’s territory at Williams Lake, and in return they would hunt in that territory.⁶⁵

The waters have also strengthened spiritual power amongst the peoples and particular relations with the beings that live within the waters, such as the **stl’áleqam / sál’élaqam**, discussed below.

53 Naxaxalhts’i, *Contact-Era Seasonal Rounds*; Point Bolton, *Xweliqwiya*; The Steē’lis’, *Qāls 3*; Unknown, *The Abandoned Boy*; Point Bolton, *Xéyteleq*.

54 *Ibid.*

55 Naxaxalhts’i, *Contact-Era Seasonal Rounds*.

56 Wileleq, Ken Malloway (Ch’iyaqtel Focus Group, August 14 2019).

57 *Ibid.*

58 Kelsey Charlie (Sts’ailes Focus Group, November 11, 2019).

59 *Ibid.*

60 Point Bolton, *Xéyteleq*.

61 Wileleq, Ken Malloway (Ch’iyaqtel Focus Group, August 14, 2019).

62 Skeemookw, Henry Ned (Sema:th Focus Group, July 19, 2019).

63 Kelsey Charlie (Sts’ailes Focus Group, November 11, 2019).

64 *Ibid.*

65 William Charlie Sr. (Sts’ailes Focus Group, November 11, 2019).

The peoples of the Lower Fraser's profound relationship with their waters and watersheds throughout time has enabled them to:

1.1c Build spiritual power, strength, and knowledge from the water and land, including engaging with *stl'áleqem* / *słal'élaqam* 'supernatural beings / fierce beings' and spiritual beings.⁶⁶

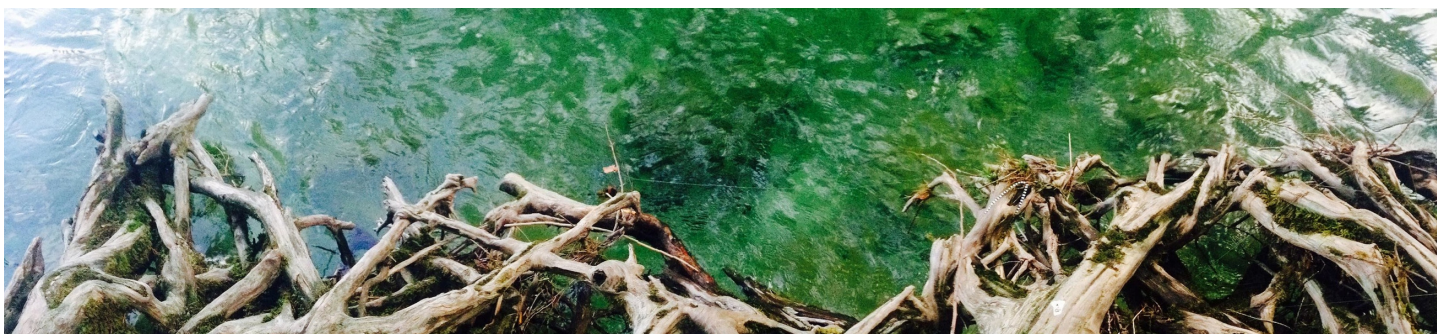
The waters throughout the Lower Fraser house many different beings, from those we are well aware of, such as fish, to beings that we are less aware of. The water and land are full of magic. The water connects people to people while being a source of healing⁶⁷ and power. The importance of clean, clear, unpolluted⁶⁸ water is needed for many life-sustaining reasons, including for spiritual practices.

Stl'áleqem / *słal'élaqam*⁶⁹ or supernatural beings "are an integral, common part of the Stó:lō world."⁷⁰ As discussed further in Volume 2: Legal Processes and Decision-Making, s 2.2.g on roles and responsibilities in decision-making:

*Stl'áleqem play an important role in protecting family resource locations and in enforcing legal rights to access or deny access to resource locations. Power comes from co-existence with other beings not power over them. Indian doctors obtained their power by demonstrating that they could co-exist with the Stl'áleqem.*⁷¹

Some "spiritual beings" in the territories of the peoples of the Lower Fraser are considered real and not supernatural:

*Some spiritual beings – such as the hair giant *sásq'ets* (sasquatch); the *s'ó:lmexw* (water babies) who live at the bottom of certain lakes and at deep spots in rivers; the *mimestiyexw*⁷² (little people) who inhabit remote mountain regions and assist spirit dancers; and the majestic *shxwexwó:s*⁷³ (thunderbird) whose flapping wings make thunder, whose blinking eyes make lightning and whose urine is rain – are all thought to be just as real as bears, chipmunks and sturgeon, and yet are not considered *stl'áleqem*.⁷⁴*



66 Commodore, *Thunderbird*; Commodore, *Underwater People*; Commodore, *Cultus Lake and the Underground River*; Douglas, *The Underwater People and the Sxwó:yxwey Mask*; Joe, *Story of Cultus Lake*; Joe, *Training a Doctor*; Joe, *Underwater People*; Kelly, *Sxwóyxwey*; Milo, *Skwiy-Kway Mask*; Naxaxalhts'i, *Stl'aleqem Sites*; Point Bolton, *Xweliqwiya*; Unknown, *Origin of the .sxo'exo'e Mask*; Uslick, *Underwater People*.

67 See, Point Bolton, *Xweliqwiya*. Xweliqwiya was Point Bolton's great-great-great grandmother, Xweliqwiya and her husband were both instructed by Xweliqwiya's brother, a shxwla:m to plunge into cold snow waters of a creek, among other things to support in getting pregnant.

68 See Volume 5: Standards.

69 See, Naxaxalhts'i, *Stl'áleqem Sites*, for a map of the Lower Fraser of known Stl'áleqem sites.

70 Naxaxalhts'i, *Commentary on Stl'áleqem*; See, also Volume 2: Legal Processes and Decision-Making, s 2.2.g.

71 *Ibid.*

72 málíməstéyəx^w in həh'qəmíhəm.

73 s'x^wəx^wá?as ~ šx^wəš^wá?as in həh'qəmíhəm.

74 Carlson, *Stó:lō Atlas* at 8-9.

The peoples of the Lower Fraser's profound relationship with their waters and watersheds throughout time has enabled them to:

1.1c Build spiritual power, strength, and knowledge from the water and land, including engaging with *stl'áleqem* / *słá'éléqam* 'supernatural beings / fierce beings' and spiritual beings

- *Stl'áleqem* / *słá'éléqam*⁷⁵

Naxaxalhts'i shared a story of a woman from Xwchíyò:m who married a man from Vancouver Island. The woman's family would go to Cheam Lake to access its resources, but her husband was not allowed to visit that lake; if he were to go there, the *stl'áleqem* / *słá'éléqam* would cause him harm.⁷⁶ A well-known waterbody that houses *stl'áleqem* is Cultus Lake.⁷⁷ Aspiring medicine men would attempt to "conquer" the lake by going into the water, and those who would survive through co-existence with the *stl'áleqem* / *słá'éléqam* would live on to be good medicine people.⁷⁸ They also have their own distinct responsibilities to the watersheds, which will be further discussed in Volume 3: Responsibilities, and in decision-making, which is discussed further in Volume 2.⁷⁹

The people are able to have a connection to *stl'áleqem* / *słá'éléqam* because of their ancient relationships with and expertise of their watersheds. For example, there is "a family of the Ts'elxwéyeqw tribe who actually feeds the *sílhqey* [double-headed serpent], mainly because of their spiritual connection to the *sílhqey* through one of our traditions."⁸⁰



75 *Naxaxalhts'i, Stl'áleqem Sites; Joe, Story of Cultus Lake; Joe, Training a Doctor; Wallace, Seel-kee and the Shlah-lah-kum; Milo, Seel-kee of Koh-kwah-puhl, Two headed Serpent; Malloway, The Seel-kee and the Shlah-lah-kum; Joe, Seel-kee of Koh-kwa-puhl.*

76 *Naxaxalhts'i, Commentary on Stl'áleqem* at para 2356.

77 *Joe, Koothlak; Louis, Legend of Cultus Lake; Commodore, Cultus Lake and the Underground River.*

78 *Commodore, Cultus Lake and the Underground River.*

79 See Volume 2: Legal Processes and Decision-making, s 2.2.g.

80 *Naxaxalhts'i, Commentary on Stl'áleqem.*

The peoples of the Lower Fraser's profound relationship with their waters and watersheds throughout time has enabled them to:

1.1c Build spiritual power, strength, and knowledge from the water and land, including engaging with stl'áleqem / səl'éləqəm 'supernatural beings / fierce beings' and spiritual beings

- **The Underwater People** ⁸¹

The spiritual beings that live in the waters are referred to in English as water babies or underwater people.⁸² The peoples' connections with their waters over time has enabled relationships with the underwater people. These beings are recognized as real and have offered significant teachings to some tribes of the Lower Fraser, including the significant gift of the *sxwó:yxwey* / *sx̣'áyx̣'əy* mask. *Wileleq*, Ken Malloway shares both a *sxwōxwiyám* and a personal story:

Our people believe there are people and creatures that live in lakes and bodies of water. The first sxwó:yxwey mask on Harrison Lake came from people that lived in the water of the lake. They literally lived in the bottom of the lake. The underwater people gave that mask to a guy who was dying and he had some kind of disease and his skin was literally melting away. They gave him the mask and the mask saved his life. The man was supposed to use the mask for good, to help people. And it was a gift from the underwater people who can live down at the bottom of the lake.

It's the same thing up at Chilliwack Lake. There's what they call the underwater people the "water babies" that live in the lake. There's pink ones and white ones. Chilliwack Lake is a really sacred place there. I'm sitting there and I'm wondering who the hell is looking at me and I'm looking around and looking around, maybe there's deer, maybe there's bears or something, I couldn't see anything anywhere. Then I looked at the water and there were these water babies, they call them, there. They were about two to three feet tall. They were down there in the water, the water is crystal clear, they were waving their hands, beckoning and inviting me into the water. They were standing there, behind the rocks and they came out and they'd look at me and they would wave their hands... I'm thinking, "No, I'm not going down there." ⁸³

The peoples of the Lower Fraser maintain a profound relationship with their watersheds, which throughout time has enabled them to gain expertise of their local territories and maintain relationships between communities and nations/tribes. Travel promotes caring and sharing between peoples, fish, and water. Economic trade and continual engagement with supernatural beings are traditions that are crucial to the peoples' physical and spiritual health. These traditions are passed on through the generations and allow the peoples of the Lower Fraser to maintain their profound connection with their waters, receiving strength and power from their territories. The ancient connection between the peoples and their territories was originally established by the eternal ancestors ⁸⁴ and is the basis for their jurisdiction.

81 Commodore, *Underwater People*; Joe, *Underwater People*; Naxaxalhts'l, *The Underwater People and the Sxwó:yxwey Mask*; Uslick, *Underwater People*.

82 Joe, *Underwater People*; Uslick, *Underwater People*; Commodore, *Underwater People*; Naxaxalhts'i, *The Underwater People and the Sxwó:yxwey Mask*".

83 Wileleq, Ken Malloway (Ch'íyaqtel Focus Group, August 14, 2019).

84 Carlson et al use the term "Immortal Ancestors": Expressions of Collective Identity at 25. The term "First Ancestors" is also used, see sources reviewed by Brian Thom in Coast Salish Senses of Place: Dwelling, Meaning, Power, Property and Territory in the Coast Salish World, unpublished PhD Thesis (Montreal: Department of Anthropology, McGill University, 2005), on-line at: <http://www.web.uvic.ca/~bthom1/Media/pdfs/senses_of_place.pdf>. We have used the term recommended by our peer reviewers: "eternal ancestors".

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

What are the sources of human rights and responsibilities to the natural world? What are the fundamental relationships between humans, other beings, and the natural world?

1.2 The inherent jurisdiction and title of the peoples of the Lower Fraser can be traced back to the time of the eternal ancestors who established the ancient connection between the peoples and their territories.

Tel Swayel / talswéyalemāx ‘sky born people’ and ancestors established the original title and inherent jurisdiction of the peoples of the Lower Fraser, and their relationship with cultural keystone species.

- 1.2a** Indigenous peoples of the Lower Fraser can trace their lineage to common eternal ancestors in their respective territories, who established relationships and processes to be followed by their descendants.
- 1.2b** Origins of transformed land features and animals connect the peoples to their local watershed territories.
- 1.2c** **Tel Swayel/ talswéyalemāx** and transformed ancestors established core relationships between the people and cultural keystone fish species, including:

- **Sth'óqwi / scéłtān** ‘salmon’;
- **Swí:we / swí?wā** ‘eulachon’; and,
- **Skwó:wech / qʷtá'yθān** ‘sturgeon’.



Story teller and swōxwiyám / s̄xʷəxʷəyém

1.2a

George, *Creation Story*
 Pierre, *Salmon Story*
 Pierre, *Eulachon Story*
 The Peters, *The Goat Legend*
 The Steē'lis', *The Pā'pk'um*
 The Steē'lis', *The Mā'çQui*
 The Steē'lis', *The Nek-ä'men*
 The Stsee'lis', *The Stsee'lis*
 Naxaxalhts'i, *Origin of Sturgeon*

1.2b

George, *Story of Waut-salk*
 Joe, *The Sockeye*
 Naxaxalhts'i, *Making the World Right through Transformations*
 Pierre, *Katzie Book*
 Point Bolton, *Xweliqwiya*
 The Steē'lis', *The Mā'çQui*
 The Stee'lis, *Qāls II*
 The Steē'lis', *The Nek-ä'men*
 The Steē'lis', *The Pā'pk'um*
 The Stsee'lis, *The Stsee'lis*

1.2c

Sth'óqwi / scéłtān 'salmon'

George, *Beaver & Women Changing the Men*
 George, *Raven & Women Changing the Men*
 James, *Story about Sockeye*
 Joe, *The Sockeye*
 Joe, *Women Changing the Men*
 Milo, *How the Sockeye learned to come up the River*
 Milo, *Women Changing the Men*
 Milo, *Sockeye*
 Naxaxalhts'i, *Contact-Era Seasonal Rounds*
 Naxaxalhts'i, *First Salmon Ceremony*
 Naxaxalhts'i, *St'áleqem Sites*
 Pierre, *Salmon Story*

Swí:we / swí?wā 'eulachon'

George, *Beaver Story*
 Milo, *Women Changing the Men*
 Pierre, *Eulachon Story*
 Uslick, *Women Changing the Men*

Skwó:wech / qʷtá'yθān 'sturgeon'

Kolleher, *Flood Story*
 Pierre, *Katzie Book*
 Naxaxalhts'i, *Origin of Sturgeon*

1.2 The inherent jurisdiction and title of the peoples of the Lower Fraser can be traced back to the time of the eternal ancestors who established the ancient connection between the peoples and their territories.⁸⁵

The jurisdiction and decision-making power exercised by peoples of the Lower Fraser over their territories is affirmed through the *sxwōxwiyám / sǎwǎǎwǎyém*, which recount the ties of ancestry and language that connect the people to particular watersheds. The stories show us that the ancestral names and their teachings are still living in the people today, connecting the peoples of the Lower Fraser to their territory and ancestors in a distinct and powerful way. **Wileleq**, Ken Malloway from Ch'iyáqtel stated "our people are all connected and you can trace our names back for thousands of years."⁸⁶ This significant connection to these territories is inherited by present and future generations.

Their jurisdiction arises from their ancient common descent from particular ancestors who were transformed by **Chichelth Siyám / Cicǎł si?em** 'the Creator' or **Xexá:ls / ǎe?ǎeǎls** who are the four children, three sons and one daughter of the Red-Headed Woodpecker and Black Bear, who set out on a journey along the **Stó:lō / sǎwǎǎnǎilǎł stǎłǎw** in "making the world right" through transformations.⁸⁷

Those who came from the sky, **Tel Swayel / tǎlswéyǎlemǎx** 'sky born peoples' are also eternal ancestors in which some tribes descend from:

Like Xexá:ls, sky-born people carried special knowledge and caused transformations that brought order to the world. In some stories, sky-born people and Xexá:ls confront one another and do battle.⁸⁸



85 Carlson, *Stó:lō Atlas*; Cooper, *Mt Cheam*; George, *Story of Waut-salk*; James, *Story about Sockeye*; Joe, *Reunion*; Joe, *The Sockeye*; Kolleher, *Flood Story*; Louis, *The Wealick Family*; Milo, *How the Sockeye Learned to come up the River*; Milo, *Women Changing the Men*; Milo, *The Black Bear*; Naxaxalhts'i, *Contact-Era Seasonal Rounds*; Naxaxalhts'i, *First Salmon Ceremony*; Naxaxalhts'i, *Origin of Sturgeon*; Naxaxalhts'i, *St'áleqem Sites*; Pierre, *Eulachon Story*; Pierre, *Salmon Story*; Pierre, *Katzie Book at 10*; Point Bolton, *Xwellqwiya*; The Peters, *Mountain Goat*; The Peters, *Xaiytem*; The Stee'lis, *The MǎçQui*; The Stee'lis, *Qǎls II*; The Stee'lis, *The Nek-ǎ'men*; The Stee'lis, *The K-ě'etsē*; The Stee'lis, *The Pǎ'pk'um*; The Stee'lis, *The K-oǎ'antEl*; The Stee'lis, *The Tc'ileQuē'uk*; The Stee'lis, *The Sk-au'élitsk*; The Stee'lis, *The Siji't'a*; The Stee'lis, *The PEIǎ'tlQ*; The Stee'lis, *The MǎçQui*; Unknown, *The Origins of Sq'ewlets Skyborn and Sturgeon People Sxwoxwiyam*.

86 Wileleq, Ken Malloway (Ch'iyáqtel Focus Group, August 14, 2019).

87 Naxaxalhts'i, *Making the World Right through Transformations*.

88 *Ibid*.

Tel Swayel/ talswéyalemáx 'sky born people' and transformed ancestors established the original title and inherent jurisdiction of the peoples of the Lower Fraser, and their relationships with cultural keystone species.

1.2a Indigenous peoples of the Lower Fraser can trace their lineage to common eternal ancestors in their respective territories, who established relationships and processes to be followed by their descendants.⁸⁹

There are many **sxwōxwiyám / sǎwǎǎwǎyéem** that describe how eternal ancestors came to particular watershed territories, thereby passing on jurisdiction in many forms, including relationships and processes to their descendants, who continue to engage in these practices. As discussed above, these "tribal watersheds" encompass historic towns and villages sharing a common sub-dialect of Halkomelem.⁹⁰ Tribes may be made up of more than one descent group, each with its own first ancestors.⁹¹

In the *Katzie Book of Genesis*, Old Pierre recounts how the **Chíchelth Siyám / Cicəł siɛm** created groups of people in various places and assigned each a special leader, including the following:

- One group he settled at **xʷməθkʷáɣəm** (Musqueam), and gave it a leader **c'simle'naxw** whose name means 'He who grows and multiplies.'
- At Point Roberts, a few miles to the south, he created a second group under a leader named **sma'k'wəc**.
- At Port Hammond, a mile above Q'ets:í (Katzie), a third group lead by **xʷθɛ'pactən**.
- A fourth, under **Swaneset**, the 'Supernatural Benefactor,' was planted on Sheridan Hill (formerly it was the highest mountain in the whole country, before Swaneset shattered it).
- A fifth group was created at Pitt Lake and most Q'ets:í people are descended from **θɛ'łactən** (clothed with power), who ruled this group. **θɛ'e'łactən** was Old Pierre's name.⁹²

In sharing the Tsleil-Waututh *Creation Story*, Gabriel George recounts how **Chíchelth Siyám / Cicəł siɛm** transforms a wolf into the first Tsleil-Watt man, and, with the help of the cedar tree, brought the first Tsleil-Watt woman to life from earth, rock, and sediment beneath the salt water in Burrard Inlet. In this sense Burrard Inlet is the "womb" of Tsleil-Waututh. This intimate connection is both a source of jurisdiction and authority, as well as giving rise to an obligation of stewardship and respect.⁹³

The deep relationship the peoples hold with local animal species holds reason as well. Some ancestors are understood to have originally been animals but were transformed into human beings, such the Wolf people of Sema:th (the Steqó:ye),⁹⁴ Beaver for Matsqui;⁹⁵ black bear for the Wealick family;⁹⁶ sturgeon for Leq'á:mel⁹⁷ and Chawathil⁹⁸ as well as Sq'éwlets. John Williams, who is from Sq'éwlets explains:

The deep part of that is it doesn't matter where you go, all of our people, Xwélmexw people in Canada go back to a certain point and the origin of that people always come back to something from the land...

89 George, *Creation Story*; Pierre, *Salmon Story*, *Eulachon Story*; The Peters, *The Goat Legend*; The Steē'lis', *The Pǎ'p'k'um*; The Steē'lis', *The Mǎ'çQui*; *The Steē'lis*, *The Nek-ǎ'men*; The Stseē'lis, *The Stseē'lis*; Naxaxalhts'i, *Origin of Sturgeon*.

90 As Keith Thor Carlson et al note: "Each *Halq'eméylem* dialect group is further subdivided into what linguists call sub-or microdialects. These smaller language groups almost perfectly correspond with the Xwélmexw subwatershed ;tribal groups": Carlson, *Expressions of Collective Identity* at 24.

91 Ts'ǎ'tsEmiltQ was sent down from the sky and is an ancestor of the Stseē'lis; K-ulk-E'mEhil was also an ancestor who was from K-oǎ'IEqt (likely on upper Chehalis River). The two then united in marriage so the people of Sts'ailes have more than one 'eternal ancestor': The Steē'lis, *The Stseē'lis*.

92 Pierre, *Katzie Book*.

93 George, *Creation Story*.

94 Point Bolton, *Xweliqwiya*.

95 *The Steē'lis*, *The Mǎ'çQui*.

96 Louis, *The Wealick Family*.

97 The Steē'lis, *The Nek-ǎ'men*.

98 Naxaxalhts'i, *Origin of Sturgeon*.

For us in Sq'ewlets, our connection is through the sturgeon. We are known as sturgeon people. We are not the only ones who identify with that.

*You can almost hear it in our name, Sq'ewlets. In Halq'eméylem, the sturgeon is skwó:wech. So, there's a connection within that and there's origin stories of where it comes from and how it came to be.*⁹⁹

The origins of the Xwchíyò:m 'Cheam' people are recounted by Edmund and Mary Peters' in the Mountain Goat Legend which tells how a hunter encountered two girls who were mountain goats at a small lake up Lhílheqey, 'Mount Cheam', taking the youngest as his wife. According to the Peters' the ancestor's name was **Syewà:ls**. Their descendants are the Xwchíyò:m people that live at the foot of Lhílheqey.¹⁰⁰

At Sts'ailes, **Tsatsemelhxen**¹⁰¹ was sent down from the sky by the Creator and is an original ancestor of the Sts'ailes people. On the Harrison River, one of his descendants built a weir not allowing any fish to pass. Up river, in K-oā'lEq, **K-ulk-E'mEhil** and his people (whose ancestors were originally mountain goat and marten) suffered without any fish.¹⁰² His son went to investigate why the fish weren't coming up the river which resulted in his whole tribe being invited to **Tsatsemelhxen's** territory. The origins of the Sts'ailes people arise from the union of **Tsatsemelhxen's** people and the people of **K-ulk-E'mEhil's**.¹⁰³ Kelsey Charlie spoke about his and other families' connections to this time and these ancestors in this way:

Tsatsemelhxen, he had a son and his name was Xwemyatel. Our origin is—Franz Boas says it's from the Mountain Goat and the marten—but through the stories, from this deeper part of that, was the actual otter. He was the otter.

*So, because he was from the otter family, he was able to shapeshift. He was the one—that if you get deeper into the story—they say, jumped in the water and transformed into an otter and was able to go down the river. That's sort of how we're connected to that [time], is through names. The names have that piece in them. That's where my uncle Gerald gets his name, from Sonny, Xwemyatel.*¹⁰⁴

He goes on to explain:

*The village up there was called Tselqoleqtel¹⁰⁵ and the man that ran down, his name is Xwemyatel. So, people still carry those names and because they carry those names, they carry the story, and as you said, there's a lot more detail. Gerald Phillips carries the name of Xwemyatel, and in our language, the root of that word is xwem, which means 'he's fast'. He's fast, he is a foot runner- and the families that come from up there are the Leon family, so that's where these guys come from [referring to elders in the room]. They're all descendants, the Leon family.*¹⁰⁶

The other family is the Philips family, which we come from. That's where Xwemyatel comes from, that's our family. Then the other ones are the Francis family, so that's my wife's family.

Connection to local territory is so vital that ancestors are brought back home to be buried, shown through burial grounds near pit houses from the late 1800s. **Naxaxalhts'i** explains:

When I look at the pit houses up in Yale, at our village called Xelhalh, the old pit

99 John Williams (Sts'ailes Focus Group, November 1, 2019).

100 The Peters, The Goat Legend; See also: The Steē'lis', The Pā'pk'um.

101 This is the name shared by Kelsey Charlie. In the published story, this ancestor's name is spelled 'Ts'ā'tsEmiltQ'.

102 The Stsee'lis, *The Stsee'lis*.

103 *Ibid.*

104 Kelsey Charlie (Sts'ailes Focus Group, November 11, 2019).

105 This is also the name of Chehalis Lake (Kelsey Charlie).

106 Kelsey Charlie (Sts'ailes Focus Group, November 11, 2019).

houses that were abandoned back in the late 1800s, you can see what we are certain are burials. I think that the people that lived in those pit houses, when they moved downriver and they passed away, they were brought back home. Rather being buried in the cemetery, they're buried on the edge of their pit house, because there's about three pit houses up there that actually-- big rock cairns on the edge of them. I think that was the people that were raised in that pit house, who were brought back home. That's really an important principle of bringing their ancestors home.¹⁰⁷

The importance of ancestors being home is practiced today through repatriation, **Naxaxalhts'i** goes on to say:

*Then, we're involved with repatriation of our ancestral remains from UBC or the Museum of Anthropology, and also, from the Vancouver Museum, and other places.*¹⁰⁸

As described further in Volume 2: Legal Processes and Decision-making, jurisdiction of a tribe in the Lower Fraser is exercised over local watershed territories.¹⁰⁹ This jurisdiction is based on ties to ancestry and language that trace back to the eternal ancestors, who were placed on these territories by **Chichelth Siyám / cicəl siʔém**, sky-born, or transformed by **Xe'xá:ls / ʔeʔXe'ls**. The peoples of the Lower Fraser are descendants of these ancestors, as exemplified by Kelsey Charlie's **sqwélqwel**, and these ancestral ties are key in understanding the connections to the watersheds and the jurisdiction they hold with their territories. Important decision-makers such as **sí:yá:m / səyém ~ sí-ʔém**; the family, including matriarchs; **shxwlá:m / ʃxʷnéʔem** "Indian doctor(s); caretakers of particular resources or resource harvesting locations; **stl'áleqem / səl'áleləqəm**; transformed ancestors; fish and other animals are described in Volume 2: Legal Processes & Decision-Making, s 2.2.a-g.



107 Naxaxalhts'i (Peer review Zoom call, February 26, 2021).

108 Naxaxalhts'i (Peer review Zoom call, February 26, 2021).

109 See: Carlson, *Stó:lō Atlas* at 24; Joe, *Reunion*; Louis, *The Wealick Family*; Milo, *The Black Bear*; Pierre, *Katzie Book*; The Stee'lis', *The Stee'lis'*; The Stee'lis', *The K-oā'antEl*; The Stee'lis', *The Nek-ā'men*; The Stee'lis', *The Tc'ileQuē'uk*; The Stee'lis', *The Sk-au'ēlitsk*; The Stee'lis', *The PElā'tIQ*; The Stee'lis', *The Pā'pk'um*; The Stee'lis', *The Sijit'a*; The Peters', *Mountain Goat*; Unknown, *The Origins of Sq'ewlets Skyborn and Sturgeon People Sxwoxwiyam*.

Tel Swayel/ talswéyalemáx ‘sky born people’ and transformed ancestors established the original title and inherent jurisdiction of the peoples of the Lower Fraser, and their relationships with cultural keystone species.

1.2b Origins of transformed land features and animals connect the peoples to their local watershed territories.¹¹⁰

Xwelixweltel, Steven Point has said: "Our Constitution is set in stone," referring to the interconnection between the laws of his people and the transformations of **Xe'xá:ls / xe?xé?ls**.¹¹¹ The presence of transformed ancestors in the landscape shows the history that took place in the Lower Fraser watershed, connecting the peoples to their territories in a significant and distinct way. Long ago, when the world was "mixed up", when people and animals could talk to one another and transform one another,¹¹² Red-Headed Woodpecker and Black Bear had four children, three sons and one daughter. The children eventually became orphans and partook on their own journey in "making the world right" through transformations.¹¹³ These four siblings are known collectively as **Xe'xá:ls / xe?xé?ls**. **Naxaxalhts'i** explains these significant beings:

It was at that time that those four children were given special powers and given the responsibility to travel through the land to make the world right.

So they started here at the top of Harrison Lake and made their way down to the Fraser River. They went upriver towards the sunrise. When they reached the sunrise they travelled to the sky, to the sunset, and then they travelled back upriver again to the sunrise and were never seen again.

But all through their travels they are doing different transformations, transforming ancestors into stone, transforming ancestors into mountains, transforming our ancestors into some of the resources that we have today.¹¹⁴

Iyeselwet, Edna Denise Douglas describes how the connection and responsibility of the Pilalt people to their territory can be traced back to the time of **Xe'xá:ls / xe?xé?ls**:

The Xe'xá:ls story is more telling of our origin, and we need to lay Xe'xá:ls out better, because they come down the lake. Woodpecker is married to a grizzly bear and a brown bear, and grizzly doesn't like brown bear and their kids. She has three sons and a daughter.

Grizzly expels brown bear to the-- and there's an island in the middle of the lake, where she goes and I suggest brown bear as well, and grizzly. So, Grizzly didn't like brown bear, she sends her down this way, brown bear comes down and she's got lots of places to choose from. She brings her kids and Xe'xá:ls, the three boys plus their sister.

The four of them create an entity, and they go around and they start peeing on the land and doing different things. They make landmarks and they leave their claw marks, and we have our origin stories, and I say that Xe'xá:ls is more true, because of the decline of the ice sheets. That Xe'xá:ls started coming down, and used to live there, melting the ice sheets... All these things

111 Quoted in Boiselle, *Our Constitution is Written in Stone* at 1.

112 Naxaxalhts'i, *Making the World Right through Transformations*.

113 *Ibid.*

114 *Ibid.*

Tel Swayel/ talswéyalemáx ‘sky born people’ and transformed ancestors established the original title and inherent jurisdiction of the peoples of the Lower Fraser, and their relationships with cultural keystone species.

Ancestors were instrumental in the establishment of relationships with cultural keystone fish species, either through their role in bringing the fish to the territories, or because the fish are themselves ancestors transformed. The Ancestors then set relationships and processes to follow, thereby informing the following generations on how to respectfully harvest, prepare, and share the fish. The peoples of the Lower Fraser continue to honour these relationships based on reciprocity and respect. The origins of these species in these territories further exemplifies the fact that the inherent jurisdiction and title of the peoples of the Lower Fraser can be traced back to this time, where connections were made between the peoples and the fish that sustains them.

Tel Swayel/ talswéyalemáx ‘sky born people’ and transformed ancestors established the original title and inherent jurisdiction of the peoples of the Lower Fraser, and their relationships with cultural keystone species.¹²⁵

1.2c **Tel Swayel / talswéyalemáx and transformed ancestors established core relationships between the people and cultural keystone fish species.**

- **Sth'óqwi / scéłtán** ‘salmon’.¹²⁶

There are **sxwóxwiyám / sǰwǰǰwáyém** that recount how **sth'óqwi / scéłtán** came to these territories. These **sxwóxwiyám / sǰwǰǰwáyém** tell of a time where there was no **sthéqi / sθaqay** ‘Sockeye Salmon’ in the **Stó:lō / sǰwałnłiləl stáləw**, just steelhead salmon.¹²⁷

Dan Milo's¹²⁸ **sxwóxwiyám / sǰwǰǰwáyém** *Women Changing the Men* tells of people who lived at Cultus Lake who went to fish near Glendale. They left the women at home with nothing, who were starving. A boy who was with the men ran home with **sth'óqwi / scéłtán** tied to his leg, and told the women about the men withholding their abundance of fish. More on the consequences of not sharing in the abundance of fish is explored in Volume 7: Consequences, Enforcement and Teaching, s 7.3,¹²⁹ **Naxaxalhts'i** summarizes how the **sth'óqwi / scéłtán** were brought to the watersheds of the Lower Fraser, based on what he was taught by Tillie Gutierrez and late Agnes Kelly:

*... the men were transformed into birds and they hooked up with Beaver and Rat – some elders say Mouse – but they went down to the ocean where the salmon people are and captured the sockeye baby and brought the sockeye baby up. They threw the diapers in different places, like Coquitlam and Pitt River, the Harrison River, the Chilliwack River. Wherever they threw the diapers, that's where there are a lot of salmon. Then, they brought the sockeye baby all the way up to Yale, and the sockeye baby went in the pools up in Yale, and that's why the salmon return each year.*¹³⁰

125 George, *Beaver & Women Changing the Men*; George, *Raven & Women Changing the Men*; James, *Story about Sockeye*; Joe, *The Sockeye*; Joe, *Women Changing the Men*; Joe, *How the Sockeye learned to come up the River*; Milo, *Women Changing the Men*; Milo, *Sockeye*; Naxaxalhts'i, *Contact-Era Seasonal Rounds*; Naxaxalhts'i, *First Salmon Ceremony*; Naxaxalhts'i, *St'áleqem Sites*; Pierre, *Salmon Story*.

126 Joe, *The Sockeye*, *Women Changing the Men*, *Story about Sockeye*; James, *Story about Sockeye*; Milo, *Women Changing the Men*, *Sockeye*, *How the Sockeye Learned to come up the River*; Naxaxalhts'i, *First Salmon Ceremony*; Naxaxalhts'i, *Contact-Era Seasonal Rounds*; Naxaxalhts'i, *St'áleqem Sites*; Pierre, *Salmon Story*.

127 George, *Beaver Story*.

128 Dan Milo or (Shah-kwih-LAH-loh) told this story to Norman Lerman in 1950/51.

129 Milo, *Women Changing the Men*.

130 See stories that describe the transformation of these men in Naxaxalhts'i, *First Salmon Ceremony*; Joe, *The Sockeye*.

Sxwōxwiyám / sǎwǎǎwǎyém such as this support understanding why certain practices are followed today, such as the First Salmon Ceremony, which is done to ensure the sockeye salmon continue to return, explored in Volume 2: Legal Processes and Decision making, s 2.1. The First Salmon Ceremony is practiced by holding gatherings to share in that first salmon of the year. This process is discussed further in Volume 2: Legal Processes and Decision making, s 2.3.e. The story *Women Changing the Men* speaks to the significance of honouring this relationship. **Naxaxalhts'í** explains:

And so, because of that story, that's why we have the First Salmon Ceremony – or that's one of the reasons why we have the First Salmon Ceremony – and that's because when we have the first salmon, we have to return the fish to the water.¹³¹

There are many communities throughout the Lower Fraser who continue to host this ceremony. The Kwantlen ceremony has it every year with about 800-1000 people,¹³² Xwchíyò:m usually has one, sometimes with other communities of the Pilalt tribe, but didn't have one for the season of 2019 as of July, because there was no fish.¹³³ Other communities we were told that host it include Shxwhá:y and Skwah.¹³⁴

Other **sxwōxwiyám / sǎwǎǎwǎyém** describe the origin of **sth'óqwi / scéłtǎn** in other parts of the Lower Fraser. Old Pierre from Q'ets:í, tells **sǎwǎǎwǎyém** of Swanaset, an eternal ancestor of the Q'ets:í people, who went on a journey in his canoe and came to the village of the Sockeye salmon (who were humans during this time), and **Swanaset** married the daughter of the Chief of the Sockeye Salmon people.¹³⁵ While in her territory, she explained to him the importance of following respectful processes when harvesting the sockeye due to their life cycles, and she taught him how to catch and cook them to continue that life cycle.¹³⁶ After several months **Swanaset** became lonely for his old home so he asks his wife to tell her father. The chief agrees that they may go when summer comes to **Swanaset's** country. Old Pierre shares:

When the proper season arrived, Swanaset and his wife embarked in a canoe that her father provided for them. Some of her people went with them to paddle the canoe; a few others changed themselves into salmon and swam alongside the boat. When the inhabitants of the Humpbacked Salmon and Dog Salmon villages saw their masters pass, they decided to follow. The Dog Salmon followed immediately, but the Humpbacked spent a day in making their canoe and so did not appear in the Fraser River until a year later.

On reaching Boundary Bay, Swanaset's salmon companions said to him: ' From here you can paddle to your home alone. We will return to our village, but next year, and every year thereafter, we will come to visit you.' And his wife's father added: 'Next year, my daughter, all your brothers and friends will come to see you. They will follow a short route to Katzie, travelling from Boundary Bay via the Serpentine and Nicomekl Rivers.'¹³⁷

Once they returned to **Swanaset's** territory, the Salmon Wife shared the harvesting teachings and processes with the Q'ets:í people, which included returning the bones to the water,¹³⁸ and taught them about their responsibilities to pass on these teachings, or regulations.¹³⁹ Greater detail about the

131 Naxaxalhts'í, *First Salmon Ceremony*. See stories that describe the transformation of these men in Naxaxalhts'í, *First Salmon Ceremony*; Joe, *The Sockeye*.

132 Salacy-a-til, Phil Hall, Sq'ewqéyl (Coqualeetza Focus Group, July 17, 2019).

133 June Quipp, (Coqualeetza Focus Group, July 17, 2019).

134 Pilalt Knowledge Holder (Coqualeetza Focus Group, July 17, 2019).

135 Pierre, *Salmon Story*.

136 *Ibid.*

137 *Ibid.*

138 *Ibid.*

139 See Volume 2: Legal Processes and Decision-Making, s 2.2.i for more on processes taught by fish and animals that continue to be practiced today.

the stewardship practices ('regulations') is further explained in Volume 5: Standards, s 5.3, which also describes the ecological conditions established by the work of eternal ancestors and **Xe'xá:ls / ǵe?ǵéǵls** that need to be maintained.

Tel Swayel/ talswéyalemǵ 'sky born people' and transformed ancestors established the original title and inherent jurisdiction of the peoples of the Lower Fraser, and their relationships with cultural keystone species.

1.2c Tel Swayel / talswéyalemǵ and transformed ancestors established core relationships between the people and cultural keystone fish species.

- **Swí:we / swí?wǵ** 'eulachon'¹⁴⁰

Another **sǵwǵǵayém** shared by Old Pierre describes how Swanaset travelled to the sky world where the **talswéyalemǵ** 'sky people' are and married a woman there, and she returned home with him.

Before they left, her father gifted her food in a box.¹⁴¹ Upon their return, Swanaset led his people to Q'ets:í (Katie) on the **Stó:lō / sǵwǵǵnǵílǵ stǵlǵw** and walked to neighbouring peoples to tell them about this box from the sky. In the box, there was **swí:we / swí?wǵ** 'eulachon', which were an offering from Swanaset's Sky Wife and her father. The Sky Wife gave the people particular instructions on how to catch and harvest the eulachon to ensure that the fish do not die nor rot. With her eulachon offering, the Sky Wife taught the peoples of the Lower Fraser to share in both the processes of caring for and harvesting the **swí:we / swí?wǵ**. She told **Swanaset's** people that these fish would come for one month every year.¹⁴²

In some versions of *Women Changing the Men* told by Mrs. Louis George, Dan Milo, and Mary Uslick, the women who transformed the men into birds afterwards transformed into **swí:we / swí?wǵ** themselves.¹⁴³



140 George, *Beaver Story*; Milo, *Women Changing the Men*; Pierre, *Eulachon Story*; Uslick, *Women Changing the Men*.

141 It was after this when Swanaset decided to shatter Sheridan Hill so no one from the Sky world would descend. He went to the head of Sturgeon Slough, gathered large round boulders and used his sling to knocking off pieces of the mountain that became an island and many hills around the area. Pierre, Katie Book at 16.

142 Pierre, *Eulachon Story*.

143 George, *Beaver Story*; Milo, *Women Changing the Men*; Uslick, *Women Changing the Men*.

Tel Swayel/ talswéyaleməx ‘sky born people’ and transformed ancestors established the original title and inherent jurisdiction of the peoples of the Lower Fraser, and their relationships with cultural keystone species.

1.2c Tel Swayel / talswéyaleməx and transformed ancestors established core relationships between the people and cultural keystone fish species.

- **Skwó:wech / qʷtáꞥyθən** ‘sturgeon’¹⁴⁴

Eternal ancestors’ interactions with the land, water, and beings created kinship relationships with fish. One of the most prominent relationships described in the stories was with the sturgeon. As told by Old Pierre, the leader **θε’lactən**, who was placed near Pitt Lake by **cicəł siʔém**, had a son and daughter who never ate any food and spent their days in the water.¹⁴⁵ **θε’lactən** gathered the people and decided that the daughter was to remain in the water forever “for the benefit of the generations to come.” He turned her into the sturgeon, and because she is **θε’lactən’s** daughter, she didn’t die after spawning but continued to live.¹⁴⁶

In another **sxwōxwiyám** from Shxw’ōwhámél told by **Naxaxalhts’i**, everyone ran out of their dried salmon and smoked salmon during a famine, and there was no **sth’óqwi / scéꞥltən** ‘salmon’ left in the river, just the steelhead. **Chíchelh Siyá:m** felt sorry for the people, so he told one of the men of the community to go down to the water and dive in. The man was transformed into the male **skwó:wech / qʷtáꞥyθən**. His wife missed him so much, so **Chíchelh Siyá:m** told her to go to the river, and she was transformed into the female **skwó:wech / qʷtáꞥyθəh?**

In discussions at our focus groups on the **sxwōxwiyám / sxʷəǰwəyém** *Origin of Sturgeon*, reflections and comments revolved around memories of fishing with grandparents on the river and how the grandparents loved eating sturgeon.¹⁴⁸ **Sts’mieleq**, Melvin Williams Sr. from Ch’iyaqtel analogized this story of famine with what is unfolding today saying,

*We better take care of the river, take care of the resources that are out there. If we don’t do that, we’re going to be going through the story again and there’s just not going to be anything left.*¹⁴⁹

The peoples of the Lower Fraser have not been able to keep them since 1999. Pilalt Knowledge Holder June Quipp shared how “it’s been such a long time, so long that my son, he figured that we never ate sturgeon.”¹⁵⁰ She went on to share how sports fishermen are allowed to catch and release sturgeon, while the Indigenous peoples of the Lower Fraser are not allowed to fish the sturgeon at all.¹⁵¹

As the **sxwōxwiyám / sxʷəǰwəyém** illustrate, the ancestors of the peoples of the Lower Fraser brought the **sth’óqwi / scéꞥltən** ‘salmon’, the **skwó:wech / qʷtáꞥyθən** ‘sturgeon’, and the **swí:we / swí?wə** ‘eulachon’ to the territory. Through the creation, transformation, and use of these fisheries, the ancestors established significant relationships and processes for future generations to follow. The peoples’ ancestral histories deeply connect them to the land and waters and are the basis of the jurisdiction they exercise over their territories. The origins of relationship with the different fish people (cultural keystone species) go back to the time of **sxwōxwiyám / sxʷəǰwəyém** where the world was mixed up – animals and humans could talk to one another.

144 Kolleher, *Flood Story*; Pierre, *Eulachon Story*; Naxaxalhts’i, *Origin of Sturgeon*; Unknown, *Origin of Sturgeon*.

145 *Ibid.*

146 *Ibid.*

147 Naxaxalhts’i, *Origin of Sturgeon*.

148 Sts’mieleq, Melvin Williams Sr., Ch’iyaqtel (Coqualeetza Focus Group, July 17, 2019).

149 *Ibid.*

150 June Quipp, (Coqualeetza Focus Group, July 17, 2019).

151 *Ibid.*

These relationships bring up both responsibilities and rights of both parties, people and fish, which are explored further in Volume 3: Responsibilities, s 3.1 and 3.2; Volume 4: Rights, s 4.1 and 4.2. The importance of teaching these stories to the younger generations is introduced in Volume 7: Teaching, s 7.4.



"WE BETTER TAKE CARE OF THE RIVER, TAKE CARE OF THE RESOURCES THAT ARE OUT THERE. IF WE DON'T DO THAT, WE'RE GOING TO BE GOING THROUGH THE STORY AGAIN AND THERE'S JUST NOT GOING TO BE ANYTHING LEFT."

**STS'MIELEQ,
MELVIN WILLIAMS SR.,
CH'IYAQTEL**

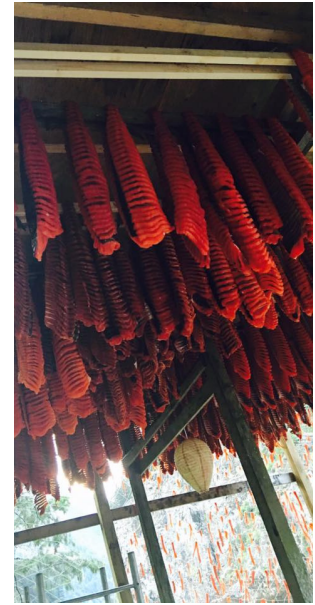
FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

What are the sources of human rights and responsibilities to the natural world? What are the fundamental relationships between humans, other beings, and the natural world?

1.3 All beings in the Lower Fraser hold *shxwelí / šxʷəlí*, a life force that connects them to each other, *Chíchelth Siyám / cicəł siʔé́m*, ancestors and the territories of the Lower Fraser.

We are reminded of *shxwelí / šxʷəlí*, and the interconnectedness of all beings, by *sxwōxwiyám / sǎʷəǎʷəyém* about ‘spirited’ beings and landforms such as:

- 1.3a** Mountains.
- 1.3b** Rocks which hold abilities to communicate with the wind and fish.
- 1.3c** Cultural keystone fish species, who were brought to these territories by the ancestors long ago, or are ancestors transformed.



Story teller and *sxwōxwiyám / sǎʷəǎʷəyém*

1.3a

Cooper, *Mt Cheam*
 Jim, *Cheam Peak*
 Milo, *The Flood*
 Naxaxalhts'i, *The Work of Xe'xá:ls*
 Pierre, *Katzie Book*
 The Peters', *Mountain Goat*
 Uslick, *Flood Story*

1.3b

George, *Transformer II*
 Naxaxalhts'i, *The Work of Xe'xá:ls*
 Naxaxalhts'i, *Making the World Right through Transformations*
 Peters, *Xá:ytem*
 Pierre, *Pé'íexən*
 The Stee'lis', *Qáls III*
 The Stee'lis', *Qáls XVI*
 The Stee'lis', *Qáls XVII*;
 Unknown, *[Doctor Rock]*
 Unknown, *Qeqals*

1.3c

Milo, *How the Sockeye Learned to come up the River*
 Milo, *Women Changing the Men*
 Naxaxalhts'i, *Origin of Sturgeon*
 Pierre, *Eulachon Story*
 Pierre, *Salmon Story*
 The Stee'lis', *Qáls VII*
 The Stee'lis', *Qáls X-XV*
 The Stee'lis', *The Nek-á'men*
 Unknown, *Qeqals*
 Uslick, *Women Changing the Men*

1.3 All beings in the Lower Fraser hold *shxwelí / šxʷəlí*, a life force that connects them to each other, *Chíchelth Siyám / ciəł siʔém*, ancestors and the territories of the Lower Fraser.¹⁵²

The connection between all beings throughout the Lower Fraser is that of *shxwelí / šxʷəlí* which is a life force or spirit. When we recognize that *shxwelí / šxʷəlí* is in all beings (including lands, waters, animals, and spiritual beings), a particular world view based on gratitude arises, as described by *Sts'mieleq*, Melvin Williams Sr.:

*When you talked about spirits, you're talking about thankfulness or gratitude for everything that you have. Every day one of our Elders used to tell us, 'you get up and you say a prayer' for even just waking up that day, they told us that 'you give thanks every day when you wake up, give thanks every day before you go to sleep. You thank Mother Nature for all the bountiful gifts that it gives to us.' It's always been a teaching of our Elders that we always give thanks to the spirit because we are spirit people. That's who we are and every day we must give thanks for that. We're not just out there existing. We're part of the land, we're part of everything around us. It's always been important for people to acknowledge that, that we are a spirit people.*¹⁵³

Shxwelí / šxʷəlí is in the natural features of the land transformed or shaped by the work of the Creator, *Xexá:ls / ʔeʔʔéłs*, and the ancestors. Origins of these land features are explored above in s 1.2. There are many examples of transformation sites, which are often land features or beings that still hold the spirit of ancestors.¹⁵⁴ *Naxaxalhts'i* recounts that the journey of *Xexá:ls / ʔeʔʔéłs* started at the top of Harrison Lake; from there, they made their way to the *Stó:lō / sǫʷałnłiləł stáləw*, carrying out their work of transforming¹⁵⁵ then they travelled east towards sunrise, then back west towards sunset.¹⁵⁶

The *sxwōxwiyám* of *Xá:ytem* illustrates this principle. Bertha Peters (George) from Seabird Island recounts that *Xe'xá:ls* met three *sí:yá:m / səyéəm ~ síłʔém* 'respected leaders', just east of present-day Mission:

*Xe'xá:ls gave them the knowledge of the written language and told them to share that written language with the rest of the Stó:lō people. But when Xe'xá:ls came back, he found out that those three leaders were keeping the written language to themselves. They weren't sharing it. And so Xe'xá:ls heaped them into a pile and transformed them into stones. So that's what that rock [Xá:ytem] represents, is those three Chiefs transformed to stone.*¹⁵⁷

Naxaxalhts'i remembers Aggie Victor from Xwchíyò:m saying, as she pointed at *Xá:ytem* one day in 1992: "I want you young people not to forget that the spirit of those three Chiefs is still inside that rock." In seeking to understand this teaching more deeply, he asked Rosaleen George, or *Yamalot*:

She said, "Shxwelí is inside you here. It's in your parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents, your great-great-grandparents, your great-great-great-grandparents. It's in the rocks, it's in the trees, it's in the grass, it's in the ground."

152 Cooper, *Mt Cheam*; George, *Transformer II*; James, *Story about Sockeye*; Jim, *Cheam Peak*; Joe, *The Sockeye*; Kelleher, *Volcano*; Kelleher, *Flood Story*; Milo, *The Flood*; Milo, *Sockeye Story*; *Naxaxalhts'i, First Salmon Ceremony*; *Naxaxalhts'i, Making the World Right through Transformations*; *Naxaxalhts'i, Origin of Sturgeon*; *Naxaxalhts'i, The Work of Xexá:ls*; *Naxaxalhts'i, St'áleqem Sites.*; Pierre, *Eulachon Story*; Pierre, *Salmon Story*; Pierre, *Katzie Book at 33*; Point Bolton, *Xweliqwiya*; The Peters', *Mountain Goat*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls I*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls II*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls III*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls IV*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls VII*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls X*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls XI*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls XII*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls XIII*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls XIV*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls XV*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls XVI*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls XVII*; The Stee'lis', *The K-ə'tsə*; The Stee'lis', *The Nek-ä'men*; Unknown, *Doctor Rock*; Unknown, *Qeqals*; Uslick, *Flood Story*; Uslick, *Thunderbird*.

153 Sts'mieleq, Melvin Williams Sr., Ch'iyaqtel (Coqualeetza Focus Group, July 17, 2019).

154 See *Naxaxalhts'i, St'áleqem Sites* for a detailed list of transformation sites.

155 *Naxaxalhts'i, The Work of Xexá:ls*; *Naxaxalhts'i, Making the World Right through Transformations*.

156 George, *Transformer II*; The Stee'lis', *Qäls III*.

157 Peters, *Xá:ytem*.

He goes on to say:

*So when you look at that belief system that we have about our shxwelí and you look at our s̄xwōx̄wiyám and you look at our sqwélqwel, you'll see the unique relationship that we have to the land. We have our s̄xwōx̄wiyám, we have our sqwélqwel. We believe that we have shxwelí. We believe the shxwelí of our ancestors resides throughout the whole territory as well.*¹⁵⁸

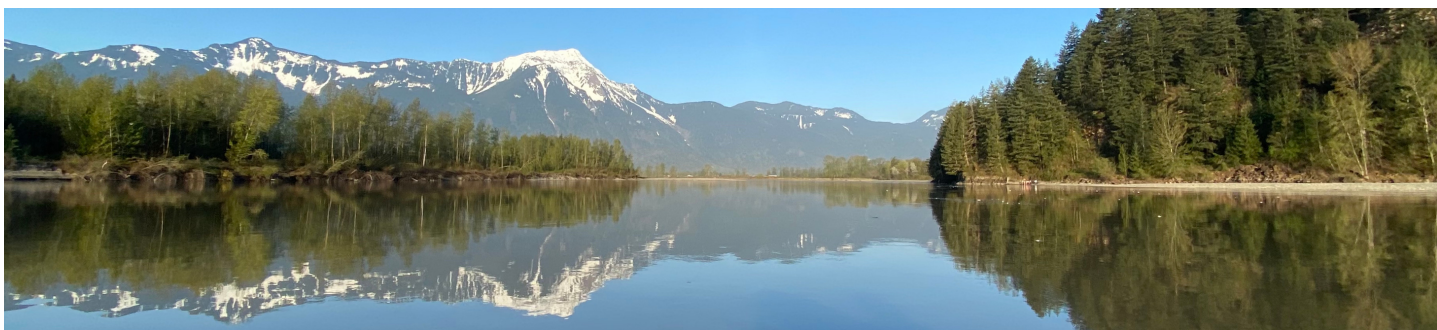
We are reminded of **shwxelí / šxwəlí**, and the interconnectedness of all beings, by **s̄xwōx̄wiyám / s̄xwəx̄wəyéḡm** about 'spirited' beings and landforms such as:

1.3.a Mountains¹⁵⁹

Some mountains are transformed ancestors, such as Lhílheqey 'Mount Cheam'. Amy Cooper's version of the **s̄xwōx̄wiyám / s̄xwəx̄wəyéḡm** about Mount Cheam includes Lhílheqey's husband, who we know as Mount Baker in Washington State, who, when they were human, married and had three sons and three daughters. She eventually decided to return to her territory, where she was then transformed into what we know as Mount Cheam. Mount Baker and their three sons (including Mount Hood and Mount Rainier) remained in his territory.¹⁶⁰

Lhílheqey chose to be transformed into a mountain to be able to look after her people, the fish and the **Stó:lō / s̄q̄wa n̄x̄l̄l̄əḡ stáləw**. Her responsibility to her people and territory called for her to stand guard over the people of the **Stó:lō / s̄q̄wa n̄x̄l̄l̄əḡ stáləw** so no harm comes to them or the fish that feed them. Her everlasting impact on the people is still strong today and the responsibility continues to be honoured. Pilalt knowledge holder Denise Douglas says, of her people's relationship with Mount Cheam: "We are Lhílheqey, Lhílheqey is us."¹⁶² **Naxaxalhts'i** shares the names of ancestors who were transformed:

*Mount Cheam or Lhílheqey is referred to as the Mother Mountain. She's the one that was transformed into that mountain to watch over us. Her three daughters, Séyewòt, Ó:yewòt and Xomó:th'iya, were transformed into smaller peaks in front of her. Her three sisters were transformed into mountains behind her. Her half-sister was transformed into a mountain up around Wahleach Lake, and she's the tallest mountain on the Fraser River. Her husband was transformed into Mount Baker. Her three sons were transformed into Mount Shasta, Mount Hood and Mount Shuksan.*¹⁶³



158 Naxaxalhts'i, *NEB Transcript at paras 2344-2345* [with corrections to word spelling].

159 Cooper, *Mt Cheam*; Jim, *Cheam Peak*; Milo, *The Flood*; Pierre, *Katzie Book at 33*; Naxaxalhts'i, *The Work of Xexá:ls*; The Peters', *Mountain Goat*; Uslick, *Flood Story*.

160 Cooper, *Mt. Cheam*.

161 *Ibid.*

162 Iyeselwet, Edna Denise Douglas (Xwchíyò:m Focus Group, November 5, 2019).

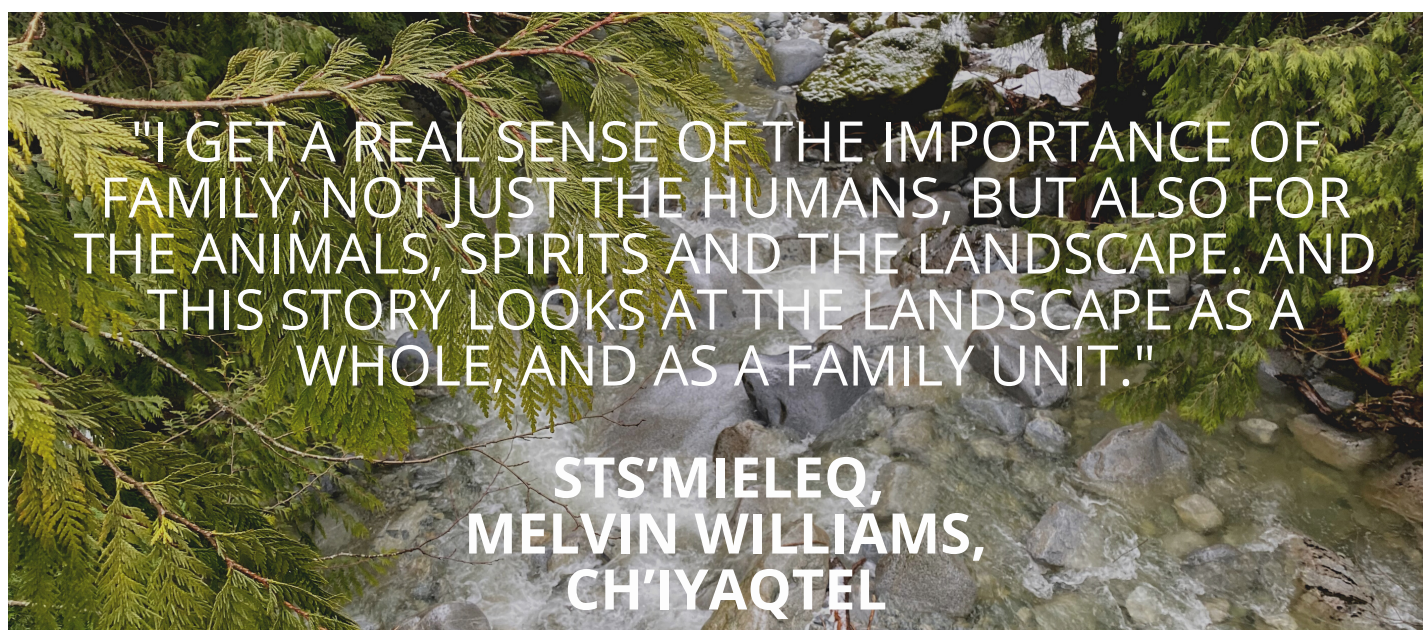
163 Naxaxalhts'i, *The Work of Xexá:ls*.

The mountains tell us about the peoples' relationships with family, as described by **Sts'mieleq**, Melvin Williams from Ch'iyaqtel, at the Coqualeetza focus group in response to the story of Lhilheqey:

*I get a real sense of the importance of family, not just the humans, but also for the animals, spirits and the landscape. And this story looks at the landscape as a whole, and as a family unit.*¹⁶⁴

The stories go way back, showcasing the age of these mountains and the peoples' memory. **Sxwōxwiyám / s̓x̓wə́x̓wəyém** about Mount Baker date back to when it was an active volcano.¹⁶⁵ **Wileleq**, Ken Malloway shares that, there is a mountain up at Yale, where the people lived when the glaciers melted, and up there, "they were fishing day and night. People would always fish.¹⁶⁶ The mountains looked after the peoples in extreme situations. For example, Sema:th Mountain was so high¹⁶⁷ it allowed the people to connect themselves to the mountain using cedar rope during the flood.¹⁶⁸

The mountains looked after everyone. As the peoples of the Lower Fraser know, mountains are more than just beautiful landforms to look at, climb, and hike through; they are "protectors, learners, [and] teachers".¹⁶⁹ The mountains in the Lower Fraser have been walked through for generations. Local and visiting nations travel through the mountains and valleys to partake in the sharing and trading of food of these territories.¹⁷⁰ Throughout the years, the mountains were home to the people, especially in the winter,¹⁷¹ and have impacted the physical appearance of the peoples depending on their lifestyle.¹⁷² The mountains provided bounty of hunting game¹⁷³ and training grounds to become a **shwalá:m / šx̓w̓né?em** 'Indian doctor' with their crystal-clear and cold waters.¹⁷⁴



164 Sts'mieleq, Melvin Williams, Ch'iyaqtel (Coqualeetza Focus Group, July 17, 2019).

165 Kelleher, *Volcano*.

166 Wileleq, Ken Malloway (Ch'iyaqtel Focus Group, August 14, 2019).

167 Sheridan Hill was the highest mountain in the whole country that was able to connect the sky world with this world. See, Pierre, *Eulachon* Story.

168 Uslick, *Flood Story*.

169 June Quipp (Xwchi'yo':m Focus Group, November 5, 2019).

170 Bryant Duncan (Q'ets:i Focus Group, August 15, 2019).

171 Cyril Pierre (Q'ets:i Focus Group, August 15, 2019); Lavern Victor (Xwchi'yo':m Focus Group, November 5, 2019).

172 Wileleq, Ken Malloway (Ch'iyaqtel Focus Group, August 14, 2019).

173 Pierre, *The Deer Queen*; The Steē'lis', *Sun and Moon*; The Peters', *Mountain Goat*.

174 Joe, *Training a Doctor*.

We are reminded of *shxweli / šxwəlí*, and the interconnectedness of all beings, by *sxwōxwiyám / sšwəšwəyém* about ‘spirited’ beings and landforms such as:

1.3.b Rocks which hold abilities to communicate with the wind and fish.¹⁷⁵

Xexá:ls / xeʔxéʔls transformed people, including children, adults, elders, as well as animals into stones.¹⁷⁶ The *shxweli / šxwəlí* –the ancestors’ life spirit—is held in these stones. These stones with *shxweli / šxwəlí* have witnessed the landscape change and the peoples of the Lower Fraser fish, hunt, and travel for generations. They have witnessed the settlers settle and the fish travel through the waters in both abundance and scarcity. A stone at K-’oä’lEts (below Yale), for example, is an ancestor who was once a chief that was abandoned by his people as a boy, who met the Sun and traded capes. Lady Franklin Rock, also around Yale, was once an old ‘Indian doctor’ named *Xéylxélamós*.

An ancestor, who was once a warrior that guarded his people against Khaals (*Xexá:ls / xeʔxéʔls*), is now found on the side of the mountain near Pitt Lake and reminds the people to look after their territory. Khaals (*Xexá:ls / xeʔxéʔls*) transformed the watchman/warrior into a rock called “Shining Face”, saying “Here you shall stand and wait as long as the earth endures.”¹⁷⁹

These ancestors that were transformed into stone often remind us to be respectful. They remind the peoples that: *S’ólh Téméxw te íkw’elò. Xólhmet te mekw stám ít kwelát / sʔáʔ táməxw tə ʔi kʷəńá. xáʔlamət ct məkʷ ʔə kʷə swéʔs* ‘This is our land. We have to take care of everything that belongs to us.’

Transformed ancestors also sometimes hold abilities to influence and communicate with the wind, water,¹⁸⁰ or fish¹⁸¹ demonstrating their connection to other elements and beings. At Harrison Lake, there is a rock known as “Doctor Rock”, where the intention of someone passing on the water is felt by the rock, and safe passage will be given if their heart is in the right place.¹⁸² There is also a rock named *pe’lexan* at Davis Pool on the Alouette River in Q’ets:í territory who can communicate with the fish, where the fish would hide if the fisherman is not respectful to him.¹⁸³

The spirit that connects the peoples to these rocks and to spiritual beings gives rise to responsibilities as well. These rocks require protection, as *Lemxyaltexw*, Dalton Silver explains:

Someone else relayed that story to them about Lighting Rock¹⁸⁴ and about him being a shwalá:m at one time and being struck by lightning from the Thunderbird. My grandpa said he knew of the story, but he didn't know exactly where the place was. He said it was over Sema:th lake but the lake had been drained and gone for a long time, but he had gone and seen the place and he said, "Yes." He was someone that-- people considered him a shwalá:m like a doctor-type person himself and so he said, "Yes, you folks need to protect that place."¹⁸⁵

As the mountains and rocks remind the peoples to be good relatives and hold the people accountable to their actions, key fish species also hold similar prestige.

175 Naxaxalhts'i, *The Work of Xexá:ls*.

176 George, *Transformer II*; See, Naxaxalhts'i, *Making the World Right through Transformations* for map on known transformer sites, and lists of different types of transformations.

177 The Steē'lis', *Qäls III*.

178 Naxaxalhts'i, *The Work of Xexá:ls*.

179 Pierre, *Katzie Book* at 30.

180 Unknown, *Qeqals*.

181 See The Steē'lis', *Qäls XVI*; The Steē'lis', *Qäls XVII*.

182 Unknown, *Doctor Rock*.

183 Pierre, *Pe'lexan*.

184 Dalton was told this story by his uncle who was told the story by his great grandfather Richie Malloway who was told the story by “Catholic Tom”, a Sto:lo Sí:yá:m known as “Katask”.

185 Lemxyaltexw, Dalton Silver (Sema:th Focus Group, July 19, 2019).

We are reminded of *shxwelí / šxwəlí*, and the interconnectedness of all beings, by *sxwōxwiyám / sǎwǎǎwǎyém* about ‘spirited’ beings and landforms such as:

1.3.c Cultural keystone fish species, who were brought to these territories by the ancestors long ago, or are ancestors transformed.¹⁸⁶

As ancestors transformed, their *shxwelí / šxwəlí*, or lifeforce, remained within or connected to gifts to the people in the form of keystone species of fish such as sockeye, sturgeon and eulachon.

As discussed above, in Old Pierre’s *Salmon Story*, he recounts *Swanaset’s* journey to the village of the Sockeye salmon, and his marriage to the Chief’s daughter. While living with the salmon people he witnessed how the people there would feast on salmon and return the bones to the water. In the water, the bones would transform into a little boy, but without all of the bones the boy could not emerge from the water. *Swanaset’s* Salmon Wife explained to him:

I and my people are different from all other beings on this earth. We are Sockeye Salmon. During the greater part of the year we are human beings and make our home in this country, but at a certain season we change into salmon and travel in the sea.¹⁸⁷

During the right season, *Swanaset* and his Salmon Wife returned to his territory, and her salmon people told them they would visit every year, explaining why the salmon return each year. Other key fish species, like the sturgeon, were also once ancestors before they were transformed. Thus, the *shxwelí / šxwəlí* of the ancestors remains within and connected to these cultural keystone species. As discussed above, one transformed ancestor was the daughter of the leader *θε’factan*, who was placed in Pitt Lake by Creator. He turned her into the sturgeon and because she is *θε’factan’s* daughter she didn’t die after spawning but continued to live.¹⁸⁸ As noted above, another *sxwōxwiyám* based in Shxw’ōwhámél explains how *Chíchelh Siyá:m* transformed a man and a woman into sturgeon during a time of famine.¹⁸⁹ Also, the eternal ancestor for Nek-’ä’men (Nicomen) was named *lāIÉpk-ē’IEm* and was transformed into a sturgeon by *Xexá:ls / ǎeǎǎéǎls.¹⁹⁰*

All beings in the Lower Fraser hold *shxwelí / šxwəlí* a life force that connects them to the Creator, ancestors, and these territories. When we remember this, we will treat the landscape, the people, and the beings that sustain us more respectfully. These stories illustrate the unique and significant relations between the peoples of the Lower Fraser and their territories. Through interactions with *Xexá:ls / ǎeǎǎéǎls* and the Creator, their ancestors established traditional practices of the peoples and formed the landscape as it is known today. These ancestral ties are foundational to the identities of the peoples of the Lower Fraser, as well as their connections to the land, water, and beings.



186 The Stee’lis’, *Qāls VII*; The Stee’lis’, *Qāls X-XV*; The Stee’lis’, *The Nek-’ä’men*; Unknown, *Qeqals*; Pierre, *Eulachon Story*; *Salmon Story*; Naxaxalhts’i, *Origin of Sturgeon*; Milo, *Women Changing the Men*; Milo, *How the Sockeye Learned to come up the River*; Uslick, *Women Changing the Men*.

187 Pierre, *Salmon Story*.

188 *Ibid.*

189 Naxaxalhts’i, *Origin of Sturgeon*.

190 The Stee’lis’, *The Nek-’ä’men*.



ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

LFFA

The Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (LFFA) is a voice for First Nations of the Lower Fraser River. The First Nation communities, members and leadership of the 30 First Nations from the mouth of the Fraser River to the Canyon are the foundation of LFFA's governance, with Fishery Representatives holding delegated authority representing their First Nation at LFFA forums on fisheries and aquaculture.

RELAW

The Revitalizing Indigenous Law for Land, Air and Water (RELAW) Program of West Coast Environmental Law began in 2016. Through RELAW projects, lawyers from West Coast work collaboratively with Indigenous nations to apply their own teachings and laws to an environmental issue. Guided by the Indigenous Law Research Unit (ILRU) Methodology, RELAW amplifies the stories and the wisdom of elders to support in developing written expressions of law and strategies for implementation and enforcement.

THE LFFA-RELAW PROJECT PARTNERSHIP CONTINUES

This Volume of the Legal Synthesis Report was drafted in 2020-21, and consolidates a two-year process of learning what stories, both *sxwōxwiyám / s̓x̓wə́x̓wəyém* and *sqwélqwel / sq̓wəlq̓wəl*, as well as Elder's knowledge teaches us about Indigenous laws related to watershed management and fisheries governance in the Lower Fraser.

The LFFA-RELAW partnership originated in the winter of 2018. The LFFA-RELAW team began researching, reading and discussing stories together on zoom from early to mid-2019. Beginning in the summer of 2019, we travelled and held 'focus groups' with knowledge holders of Lower Fraser First Nations to discuss stories relating to fish and water. When Covid-19 happened, this delayed further focus groups, so quote verification happened on the phone or zoom.

Moving forward, the intention is for the LFFA-RELAW Legal Synthesis Report to inform processes for developing an Indigenous-led Fish Habitat Restoration Plan and Climate Adaptation Strategy ("Strategy") for the Lower Fraser. The Strategy will be led by LFFA and its member nations, in collaboration with interested stakeholders and allies.



Left to Right: Leah Ballantyne, Naxaxalhts'i, Albert (Sonny) McHalsie, Rayanna Seymour-Hourie, Jessica Clogg

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This report was drafted by Rayanna Seymour-Hourie, Jessica Clogg and Leah Ballantyne: the LFFA-RELAW team. This work is not meant to be static in time, rather it is intended to grow, be added to, and reflected upon.

We come to this work as legal allies amplifying the words and work of the peoples who have taken care of these territories for millennia. Rayanna Seymour-Hourie is Anishinaabe from Anishinaabeg of Naongashiing, Treaty 3 Territory in Ontario; Jessica Clogg is a settler who grew up in Mission, British Columbia; Leah Ballantyne, Mikisew Iskewew, is Nehithaw ota from Pukatawagan/Highrock in Treaty 6 Territory, northern Manitoba.

Most people only see the 'product' of work, such as this Report, but the magic really happened in the 'process' of coming together.

This learning experience enabled us to better understand the spirit of these territories we call home. Creating this report involved many people and we offer our sincere gratitude to all. Our personal experiences in reading stories, discussing stories, sitting and listening to elders share their origin stories, family history, and their lived experiences while eating some good food made by aunties was a profound learning journey for us all.



The RELAW Project
REVITALIZING INDIGENOUS LAW
FOR LAND, AIR & WATER

LFFA-RELAW PROJECT KNOWLEDGE HOLDER PARTICIPANTS

We are grateful to the 60+ knowledge holders who participated in our 6 focus groups. We are also grateful to rely on previously published materials from Gabriel George; Stakwsan, Marilyn Gabriel; Naxaxalhts'i, Albert (Sonny) McHalsie; Xwelíqwiya, Rena Point Bolton and many others named in the Story List below.

Audrey Phare, Sema:th	Julie Giroux, Xwchíyò:m
Bea Silver, Sema:th	Julie Malloway, Ch'íyaqtel
Bernice Graham, Sema:th	June Adams, Q'ets:i
Beverly Ryder, Xwchíyò:m	June Quipp, Xwchíyò:m
Bradley Charlie, Sts'ailes	Kelsey Charlie, Sts'ailes
Bryant Duncan, Q'ets:i	Kevin Charlie, Sts'ailes
Catherine Ned, Sema:th	Kwa:l, Lester Ned Sr., Sema:th
Cathy Malloway, Ch'íyaqtel	Lemxyaltexw, Dalton Silver, Sema:th
Charles Moody, Q'ets:i	Mary Tommy, Skwah
Cyril X. Pierre, Q'ets:i	Nancy Malloway, Ch'íyaqtel
David Graham, Sema:th	Patricia Louis, Ch'íyaqtel
Della Victor, Xwchíyò:m	Pilalt Knowledge Holder
Dianna Herrling, Sema:th	Planelmelh, Kelly Douglas, Xwchíyò:m
Dianne Kelly-Anderson, Soowahlie	Qwahonn, Johnny Williams, Sq'ewlets
Ed Pierre, Q'ets:i	Salacy-a-til, Phil Hall, Sq'ewqeyl
Eileen Pierre, Q'ets:i	Sema:th Knowledge Holder
Fred Quipp, Iwówes (Union Bar)	Sharon Phare, Sema:th
Frieda Malloway, Yakweakwioose	Skemookw, Henry (Lester Jr) Ned, Sema:th
Genevieve Douglas, Xwchíyò:m	Sts'mieleq, Melvin Williams Sr., Ch'íyaqtel
Gloria Williams, Ch'íyaqtel	Theresa Leon, Q'ets:i
Greg Commodore, Soowahlie	Troy Ganzeveld, Sema:th
Harry R. Pierre, Q'ets:i	Valerie Joe, Ch'íyaqtel
Helen Johnson, Q'ets:i	Wey-ileq, Melvin Malloway, Ch'íyaqtel
Iyeselwet, Edna Denise Douglas, Xwchíyò:m	Wileleq, Ken Malloway, Ch'íyaqtel
James Charlie, Sts'ailes	William Charlie Sr., Sts'ailes
John Kelly Sr., Sema:th	Xwexwoywelot, Brenda Malloway, Ch'íyaqtel
Julie Giroux, Xwchíyò:m	Yvonne Joe, Ch'íyaqtel

We also want to acknowledge the cultural coordinators who helped make these focus groups happen: Julie Malloway, Ch'íyaqtel; Lennie Herrling, Sema:th; Lori Kelly, Sema:th, and participant allies Peter Tallio from Nuxalk, Reuben Ware and Ken Cropely.

LFFA-RELAW LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

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UPRIVER HALQ'EMÉYLEM

DOWNRIVER HƏ́NQƏMÍ́NƏ́M

ENGLISH

STORIES

sqwélqwel

sqwəlqwəl

'true stories' / 'true news' / 'family history' / 'oral stories'

sxwōxwiyám

sǰwəǰwəyém

'oral histories describing the distant past' / 'tell stories'

LAW / TEACHINGS

s'í:wes

'teaching(s)'

slha:éywelh ~ snoweyelh snə́wəyət

'law' / 'teachings in your mind that command you to be good'

swá:lewel ~ sqwálewel

'breathing life into your words' / 'breath and sacredness of passing on oral tradition' / (literally) 'words/talk inside the head' / 'works/talk in the inside'

sqwà:ls ta'syuwá:lelh

'words of your ancestors'

xə:xə

'sacred/secret'

xwlalá:m ~ xwlalám

'listen to'

CEREMONY

sxwó:yxwey

sǰwáyǰwəy

'mask'

LFFA-RELAW LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

UPRIVER
HALQ'EMÉYLEM

DOWNRIVER
HƏ́ŃŃƏMÍŃƏM

ENGLISH

CEREMONY CONTINUED

xwelmexwáwtxw		'Longhouse' / 'smokehouse' / 'great ceremonial house'
xwlalámstexw		'call to witness'
lheqqwóqwel ~ lheq qwóqwel	šqʷiqʷéí	'speaker at a gathering, announcer at a gathering' / '(hired) speaker'

LAND / WATER

Lhemqwó:tel		'you can get anything you need off the land, but you have to look after it' (Sts'ailes place name)
S'ólh Téméxw	sʔáʔt tэмəxʷ	'our land' / 'it's our land'
s'ólh téméxw te íkw'elò	sʔáʔt tэмəxʷ tə ʔi kʷəhá	'this is our land'
stó:lō	stáləw	'river'
Stó:lō	sqʷaʔnəliləʔ stáləw	'Fraser river' / 'river of rivers'
téméxw	tэмəxʷ	'earth' / 'land' / 'ground' / 'the earth' / 'the world'
xólhmet te mekw'stám ít kwelát	xáʔtəmət ct məkʷ scékʷəl'ʔə kʷə swéʔct	'we have to take care of everything that belongs to us'

SPRITUAL, PHYSICAL AND LINGUISTIC CONNECTION

lets'emó:t ~ lets'emót	nə́caʔmat	'we are one small part of a whole with our thoughts, feelings, and hearts' / 'one heart, one mind'
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LFFA-RELAW LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

UPRIVER
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HƏ́ŃŃƏMÍNƏ́M

ENGLISH

SPRITUTAL, PHYSICAL AND LINGUISTIC CONNECTION CONTINUED

syesyewálelh	syəwenəʈ	'all one's ancestors' / 'collectivity of the spirits of those who came before us, the ancestors, all beings that share the earth with us today'
áxwestel	ʔax ^w əstəl'	'reciprocity' / 'reciprocal giving'
shxwelí	šx ^w əlí	'life force' / 'spirit/soul'
xwélməxw	x ^w əlməx ^w	'people of the land' / 'human beings who speak the same language'

TIME

temhilálxw	təmhaylénəx ^w	'time when the leaves fall' / 'autumn' / 'time of falling and rolling leaves'
temkw'ó:kw'es	təmk'wálək ^w əs	'hot time' / 'summer'
temqw'íles ~ temqw'éyles	təmq'wíləs	'when everything comes up' / 'spring' / 'time to sprout up'
temxéytlí' ~ temxé:ytl'thet	təmxéy'ł	'cold time' / 'winter'
xets'ô:westel		'put away paddles for winter'

FISHING / HARVESTING FISH

hóliya/húliya	hu:n	'Pink'
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LFFA-RELAW LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

UPRIVER
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DOWNRIVER
HƏ́N'QƏMÍ'NƏ́M

ENGLISH

FISHING / HARVESTING FISH CONTINUED

kw'ekw'e'liqw		'head sticking up or facing up' / 'original name of Sumas Mtn because of sturgeon in the mud during flood story and when they drained the lake'
Kw'ó:lexw	k ^w aləx ^w	'Chum'
kwǝxweth	k ^w əx ^w əθ	'Coho'
pókw'	p ^k wé ^ʔ nx ^w	Upriver: 'Sts'ailes spring salmon' / 'Harrison River spring salmon' / 'smoked salmon' Downriver: '(as salmon) smoke fish' / 'smoked salmon'
Qéywx	Qiwx	'Steelhead'
skwó:wech ~ skwówech	q ^w tá ^ʔ yθən	'sturgeon'
Sq`eptset Syoyes Sth`o'th`equwi	yá·yástəl' nəx ^w scəlscé·tən	"fishers working together"
sq'éyle		'preserved fish or meat (usually fish)' / 'wind-dried or smoked salmon' / 'what is stored away'
Sthéqi	sθəqəy	'Sockeye salmon'
sth'óqwi	scé ^ʔ tən	'salmon' / 'salmon any kind, not trout or sturgeon'
swí:we	swí ^ʔ wə ~ swíwə	'eulachon'
tl'élxxel	st' ^θ aq ^w əy	'Spring salmon'

LFFA-RELAW LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

UPRIVER
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ENGLISH

ROLES

éliyá		'he knows it' / 'he knows everything' / 'person who predicted salmon runs and how other natural foods like berries or game would be so the people could prepare' / 'to dream, to have a vision'
skwí:x ~ skwíx	šk ^w él'əx	'names'
shxwlá:m	šx ^w néʔem	'Indian doctor'
si:ateleq		'individual who is responsible for knowing about the genealogy of those who were permitted to fish, when it was appropriate to fish and for providing opportunities for family members to fish and hang fish to dry'
sí:yá:m	səyém ~ síʔém	'respected leader'
smelá:lh	smənaʔaʔ	'elite families' / 'respected person' / 'high class person'
selsí:le	səlsílə	'grandparents', 'grandfathers, great uncles', 'grandmothers, great aunts'

BEINGS

Chíchelth Siyám	cicəʔ siʔém	'Creator'
mimestíyexw	məlíməstéyəx ^w	'little people'
sásq'ets		'sasquatch'

LFFA-RELAW LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

UPRIVER
HALQ'EMÉYLEM

DOWNRIVER
HƏ́N'QƏMÍNƏ́M

ENGLISH

BEINGS CONTINUED

shxwexwó:s	sǰwəxwáʔas ~ šxwəšwáʔas	'thunderbird'
sílhqey		'two-headed serpent'
s'ó:lmexw		'water babies' / 'underwater people'
stl'áleqem	sǰəléləqəm	'supernatural beings' / 'fierce beings'
tel swayel	təlswéyələməx	'sky born people'
χe'χá:ls	χeʔχéχʌls	'transformers' / '3 sons and 1 daughter of Red Headed Woodpecker and Black Bear'

LFFA-RELAW LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

HALQ'EMÉYLEM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

shared by Naxaxalhts'í, Sonny McHalsie (hánqəmínəm courtesy of Cheyenne Cunningham)

UPRIVER
HALQ'EMÉYLEM

DOWNRIVER
HÁNQƏMÍNƏM

ENGLISH

Ewe chexw qelqelilt
te mekw' stam loy
qw'esli hokwex yexw
lamexw ku:t

ʔəwəteʔ čx^w
qelqeliltəx^w tə
mek^w. stem čx^w
k^wənət ʔə wə
hak^wexəx^w ʔal'

'Don't ruin (waste, destroy)
everything, you just use what you
take.'

Eyem mestiyexw
kwo:l te shxweli
temexw

ʔəyám məstəyəx^w
k^wan tə šx^wəlí

'strong people from birth to spirit
life.'

Ma:mt' lam te mekw
wat

nem mək^w
ʔex^weʔtəl'

'share with everybody' /
'everybody share with each
other'

S'iwes Toti:lt Q'ep

syəθəstəl' ʔəy səlíq
tátələt

'teaching each other and learning
all together.'

S'ólh Téméxw te
ikw'elò.

sʔá[ɬ] tэмəx^w tə ʔi
k^wəhá.

'This is our Land.'

Xólhmet te mekw
stám ít kwelát

xáʔəmət ct mək^w
ʔə k^wə swəʔs

'We have to take care of everything
that belongs to us' / We have to take
care of everything that belongs to
everyone.'

Shxw'eywelh
mestiyexw

ʔi x^wíləq məstiyex^w

'A generous person'

Ts'í:tem te Yewál
Sth'óqwi

ʔi cí[ɬ]təm ʔəy
yéwtəm tə
scé[ɬ]tən

'Thanking and praising the
Salmon'

Wiyóth kw'ses ikw'eló
kw'es stá tset

ʔiʔətə syəwáháʔct
weyaθ

'We have always been/lived here'
'our ancestors before us have
always been here'

Xaxastexw te mekw'
stam

x^wəlíwənstəx^w tə
mek^w

'respect for all things' /
'he/she respects/honours
everything'

Xw'éywelh

wəháwə
x^wʔéyíwən tə
məstəyəx^w

'good-hearted, kind-hearted,
kind, generous, helpful, easy-
going, good-natured'

'a very good-hearted person'

STORY LIST

The LFFA-RELAW Project: Revitalizing Indigenous Law for Land, Air & Water with the Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance

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14. Commodore, Steelhead Salmon in the Spring: "Steelhead Salmon in the Spring (Kilgard)", told by Mr. Gus Commodore, in Lerman, Lower Fraser Indian Folktales at 99.
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STORY LIST

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STORY LIST

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169. Unknown, *The Cannibal: "The Cannibal" (Lower Fraser River)*, storyteller unknown, in Teit et al, *Tales from the Lower Fraser River* 129 at 132-33.

170. Unknown, *The Deluge: "The Deluge" (Lower Fraser Valley)*, storyteller unknown, in Teit et al, *Tales from the Lower Fraser River* 129 at 132.

171. Unknown, *The Face-Changer: "The Face-Changer"*, storyteller unknown, in Jenness, *The Corn Goddess* at 83-87.

172. Unknown, *The Fish Man: "The Fish Man" (Hope)*, storyteller unknown, in Teit et al, *Tales from the Lower Fraser River* 129 at 131.

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180. Unknown, *Zalock: "Zalock"*, storyteller unknown, in Jenness, *The Corn Goddess* at 89-91.

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184. Uslick, *Flood Story: "Flood Story I (Kilgard)"*, told by Mary Uslick, in Lerman, *Lower Fraser Indian Folktales* at 243-244.

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