



# The RELAW Project:

Revitalizing St'át'imc Law for  
Land, Air and Water



**St'át'imc Legal Traditions Summary Report:  
What We Learned from the Stories and our Elders**



ST'ÁT'IMC CHIEFS COUNCIL



**WEST COAST**  
Environmental Law

## RELAW:

This summary report on St'át'imc legal traditions related to land, resources and environmental decision-making was developed as part of the RELAW (Revitalizing Indigenous Law for Land, Air and Water) project, under the direction of the St'át'imc Chiefs Council. The full RELAW *St'át'imc Legal Traditions Report* may be found online at: [statimc.ca](http://statimc.ca)

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### St'át'imc RELAW Team Members:

- Dean Billy
- Helen Copeland  
(*St'át'imc Chiefs Council*)
  
- Lindsay Borrows
- Jessica Clogg  
(*West Coast Environmental Law*)

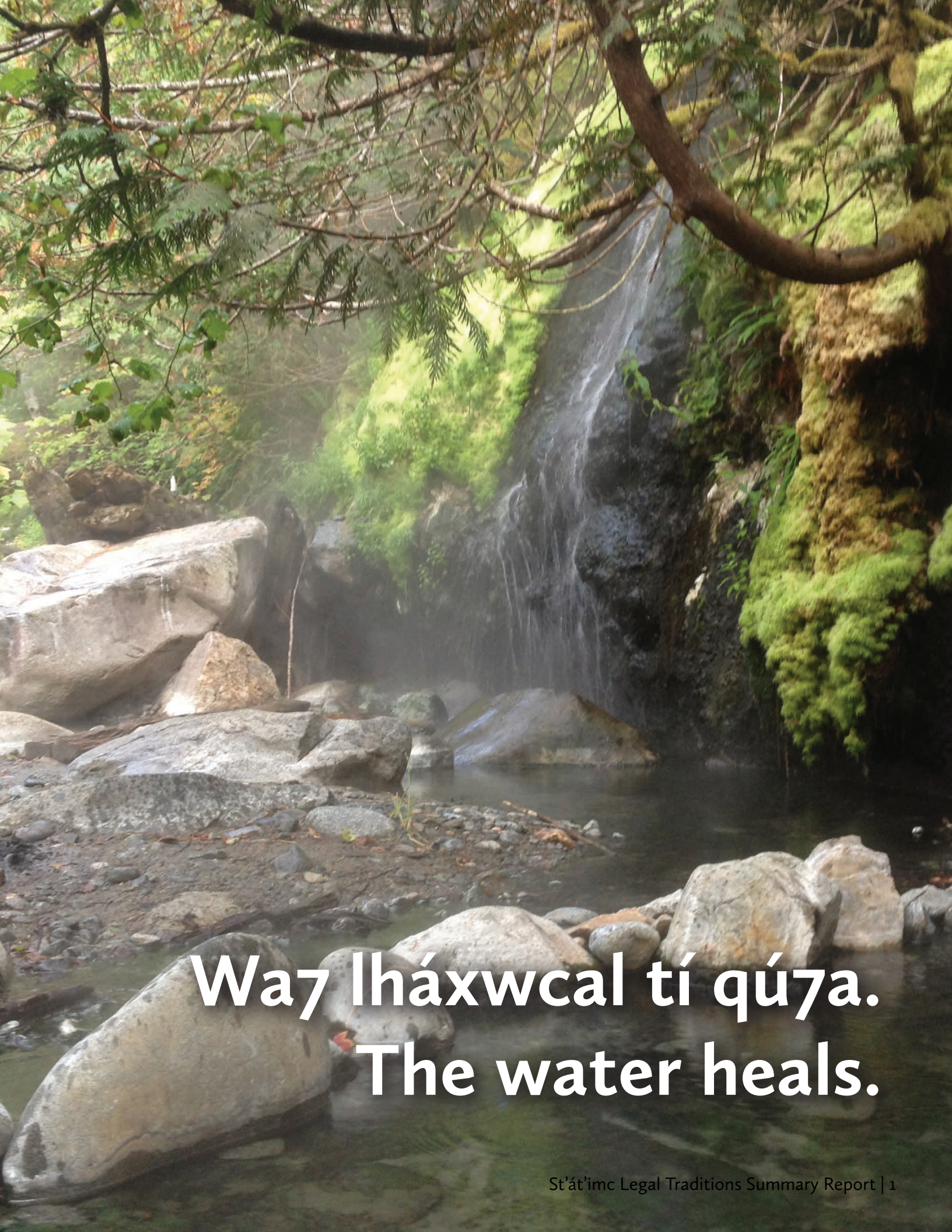


### Acknowledgements

We express deep gratitude to the almost 300 *Úcwalmicw* (citizens of the St'át'imc Nation) who were involved in the St'át'imc RELAW project over the course of one year from June 2016 to May 2017. People generously attended workshops, read stories, shared their insights into St'át'imc law about lands and resources (particularly as it relates to water) and gave input on how the project should be conducted. We express our deep gratitude to them. The St'át'imc RELAW project brought together the young and the old from every corner of the territory to work towards a common cause. We especially thank the elders who gave so generously of their time to share their wisdom, experience and knowledge.

**Cover photo:** St'át'imc elders at a RELAW story workshop, August 4th, 2016 in T'ít'q'et. Clockwise from top left: Yvonne Scotchman, Linda Redan, Ida Mary Peter, Marie Barney, Albert Joseph, Doreen Copeland





**Wa7 lháxwcal tí qú7a.  
The water heals.**



A large, moss-covered rock formation in a forest under a blue sky with white clouds. The rock is the central focus, with various shades of green moss and lichen growing on its surface. The background shows a dense forest of evergreen trees and some deciduous trees with yellowing leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds.

**Wa7 tí7 utszímalh tí qú7a.**

**“Water is a transformer  
– ice, clouds, liquid, rain, fog –  
all life depends on water.”**

*Clarke Smith (QaLaTKu'7eM – Tenas Lake)*



# Foundational Principles

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**The natural features of the St'át'imc world and human relationships to that world came into being through the work of the Transformers.**

- Transformations by Coyote, the four black bear brothers and their sister, and Mink were an essential element of preparing St'át'imc territory and its natural features so that people were able to thrive.
- St'át'imc territory has been occupied and managed by the St'át'imc since the time of the Transformers.
- St'át'imc ancestors are both part of and present in the natural world through features on the land created through the work of the Transformers.
- The St'át'imc learned to live on the land and how to do things properly from the Transformers.
- Some human characteristics arise because of their close relationships and history that are connected to the natural world.

See stories: 1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 33, 36, 56, 59, 63, 65, 87, 89, 90, 91, 93, 94 in bibliography.



**“Whenever I’m under that robe, the spirits of our ancestors come through. I know I’m here but also connected to them. Never believed I’d be able to say out loud. I’ve kept spiritual practices to myself – today is a time to let you know it is alive and well. I pray that there is someone among our generations who will pick it up. Because it is a way of life, a good way of life. All you have to give up are your bad habits and grab on to the good ones. That’s what the story tells me.”**

*Malihatkwa (Gwen Therrien) (Xáx'tsa/Samáhqum)*





# Foundational Principles

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The relationships between humans and animals of the territory define who the St'át'imc are, and are essential to our survival.

- The St'át'imc today are descended from the marriage of our ancestors with the “animal people” of mythical times.
- The origins of the animals we know today are recounted in the stories and arose from transformations in ancient times.
- The St'át'imc actively brought the animals of the territory back after the great flood by drawing on our animal guardian spirits.
- Transformation and spirit animals give humans *áxa7* (power) and allowed for alliances to be made between human and non-human worlds.
- The St'át'imc relationship to certain key species, particularly salmon and mule deer, is part of what makes us St'át'imc.
- The St'át'imc require access to staple foods of the territory (e.g., dried salmon, dried berries and salmon oil) in order to thrive and to maintain relations through trading with other nations.

See stories: 2, 7,11, 16, 18, 19, 22, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 40, 49, 52, 66, 67, 68, 74, 75, 82, 83, 86, 93, 94.





# Foundational Principles

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## The water shapes the land and the St'át'imc.

- Wa7 tí7 utszímalh tí qú7a. Water is a transformer.
- Spiritual practice with water (e.g., dipping in the creek, ceremony) transforms our spirit to be strong in connection with the water; it transforms our bodies and mind; it cleanses and purifies; it heals.
- All life depends on water. Without water, you don't have land. You don't have animals. You don't have human beings. The animals, birds, salmon and medicines of the territory come from the blessings of our mountains and glaciers.
- There is a relationship between people and the waterways. Some waterways were transformed to make them more passable, and they should be maintained today so that they benefit all.

See stories: 7, 15, 20, 35, 48, 50, 57, 60, 61, 72, 82, 83, 84.

**“Water is life itself. Over 90% of our body is water. We drink the animals, they all drink water. When I was young I used to creek and drink the water. It was clean and healthy water. No not clean. You don't know what's in the creek.”**



water and live on water. So does everything else – the trees,  
go out and hunt and any time I wanted a drink I'd go to a  
nowadays you go out there and when you drink the water it is

*Carl Alexander (Xwísten)*



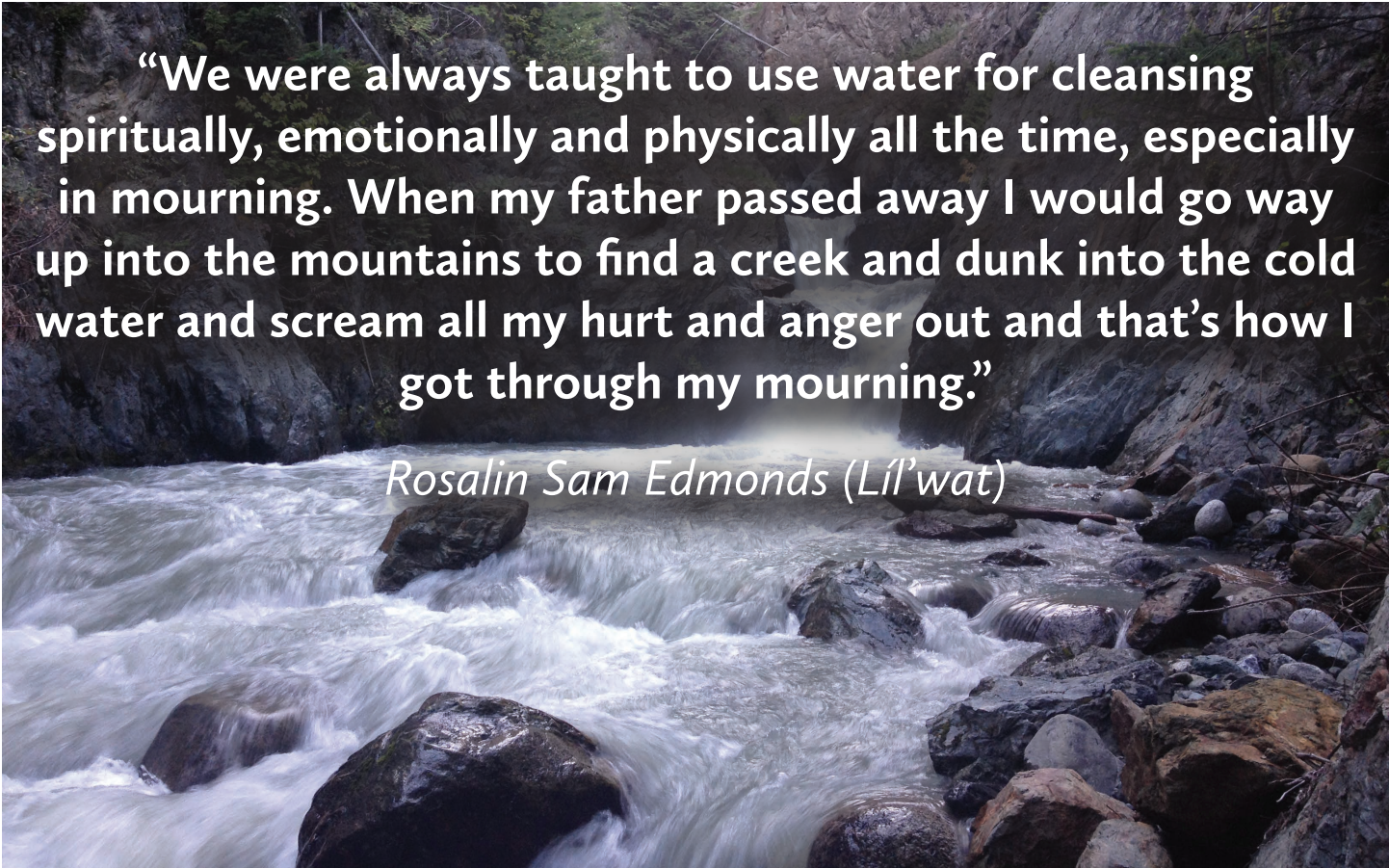


**“At home the boys every morning, they had to go and dip in the creek every morning to transform our spirit to be strong in connection with the water. To transform our bodies and mind.”**

*Clarke Smith (QaLaTKu’7eM – Tenas Lake)*

**“In spiritual ways I’m always thanking the water when I go in the sweat lodge. This invites the spirit physically, mentally and spiritually. Learn how to respect the water. Respect water and everything here on Mother Earth. Understand what water is to us and every living thing here on Mother Earth.”**

*Gerald Dick Sr.*



**“We were always taught to use water for cleansing spiritually, emotionally and physically all the time, especially in mourning. When my father passed away I would go way up into the mountains to find a creek and dunk into the cold water and scream all my hurt and anger out and that’s how I got through my mourning.”**

*Rosalin Sam Edmonds (Líl’wat)*



**“We are the last bastion of wild water, because the Lower Mainland has expanded from Harrison to the Mount Currie Pemberton area. That comes from our mountains and glaciers. That’s why water is one thing that we really need to protect and look after.**

**We all share the DNA from our mothers and grandmothers. Each of us carry that within our lives, which gives us life. Water is the magic here. Any time we’re doing a ceremony, water plays an important role of cleansing and purifying purposes.**

**We were blessed for thousands of years to have the animals, birds and salmon and the medicine plants to take care of our needs. All of it comes through the blessings of our mountains and glaciers. That is what gives us the strength we have, as it lets us survive through everything we’ve come through. In this way, water connects the generations too.”**

*Malihatkwa (Xáx’tsa/Samáhqum)*







**“The Transformers always  
had their way”**

*Albert Joseph (Xwísten)*



# Foundational Principles

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The St'át'imc looked to different places and beings in the territory to learn how to live there and how to relate to the natural world.

Important sources of St'át'imc rights and responsibilities in relation to St'át'imc territory include:

- The Old Man, who wanted to make the world a better place
- The Transformers
- Animals and other beings that provide instructions or power
- St'át'imc individuals with deep training who provide guidance down through the years
- The mountains, forest and water that permit St'át'imc individuals to undergo spiritual training to gain knowledge and power

See stories: 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 20, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 44, 49, 55, 59, 63, 64, 74, 75, 76, 83, 89, 90, 93, 94.



# How We Make Decisions

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## Who needs to be involved? What is their role?

### Chiefs:

- **Hereditary leaders:** Before elected chiefs you were born into a chieftainship. The skills were passed between the generations (for example Tommy Jack followed his father Hunter Jack). They were born powerful leaders. But even if you are a descendent of a chief you still have to exercise discipline and train in order to learn to provide for yourself and others.
- **Chiefs with specific areas of leadership:** The St'át'imc had warrior chiefs, as well as chiefs for hunting, chiefs for fishing, chiefs for gathering and other particular responsibilities. You were trained from the get go to become either a warrior, a runner, or a person who knows about plants. You were picked and developed the leadership through training. The hunter is the same way. If you wanted to be a chief you had to start training from when you were young.

**Matriarchs:** Leaders within the home and within the communities. When a matriarch spoke everybody listened. She was the one to tell you what to do around the community.

**Elders:** Elders have responsibilities of providing instruction and guidance to younger generations.





**Grandmothers:** Grandmothers are wise and they carry all of this knowledge because it's the responsibility of women to learn and keep this going. When asked, they can provide instructions and guidance to help an individual on his or her journey, which must be followed very carefully and exactly.

- By following the teachings of the grandmothers, people can learn to live on the land and gain power to be providers for their people.

***i Scwenázema* (Indian doctors):** Individuals with extensive training; powerful healers.

**Guardian spirits or other wise and powerful beings:** Guardian spirits are acquired by asking for guidance from wise elders and through spiritual training in the mountains and exercising personal discipline.

***Skésen* (Runners):** Specially chosen messengers with qualities suited to the task.

**Look-outs or watchmen:** The St'át'imc maintained a network of 'look-outs' and 'communicators'—people who kept watch and people who lit signal fires to send messages to other groups of people to allow rapid communication.

**Family members:** The stories also speak to the special roles of different family members, e.g., older brother, sister, husband, in particular circumstances.

***Úcwalmicw* (all St'át'imc):** On important matters the people should come together to make a decision.

See stories: 7, 16, 17, 20, 30, 35, 37, 38, 45, 46, 47, 48, 56, 67, 74, 75, 82, 83, 84, 96.







**“Matriarchs controlled the social laws in the community. Someone says ‘grandma wants to see you’ and you knew you would be disciplined for something you did wrong. Laura is the matriarch now because she’s the eldest and took over mother’s position.”**

*Clarke Smith (QaLaTKu’7eM – Tenas Lake)*



**“Before elected chiefs you were born into a chieftainship. The skills were passed between the generations.”**

*Carl Alexander (Xwísten)*

**“You’re trained from the get go to become either a warrior, a runner, a person who knows about plants. You’re picked and develop the leadership. The hunter is the same way.”**

*Albert Joseph (Xwísten)*

**“Chiefs were responsible for taking care of areas off the reserve. They had chiefs for hunting, chiefs for fishing, chiefs for gathering. You’d go and talk to that one person.”**

*Anonymous Elder (Xwísten)*

**“Certain families were trained in certain ways, some were good with political things, other people were good with other things. There would be a canoe chief, not called a chief but a head man of that canoe. ...We didn’t have chiefs. The head man of each of the families also had people who looked after them spiritually who helped and advised them.”**

*Malihatkwa (Xáx’tsa/Samáhquam)*

**“The unsaid in the story is that the brothers had leaders training them, we just don’t hear about those leaders. No one becomes great on their own.”**

*Marie Barney (T’ít’q’et)*



# How We Make Decisions

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## What are the processes and procedures?

### 1. Preparation

- Asking for help and guidance from a wise grandmother and/or another powerful being
- Training in the mountains
- Training in the sweat lodge/ceremony
- Asking permission (e.g., before hunting or camping in an area, before entering house pits)

### 2. Acquiring needed knowledge through:

- Journey/exploration
- Experimentation
- Observation

### 3. Deliberation & Action

- When there is an important matter to be discussed, the chief should gather all the people
- Messengers (*Skésen*) with the proper skills, experience and power (*áxaʔ*) should be sent to engage the people and prepare the way for their arrival
- Individuals may volunteer for the roles they feel they are most suited to but the chief and the people must agree
- Through deliberation between leaders and members of a group, consensus may be reached on the best person (the person with the most appropriate abilities) to take action to protect or to access natural resources
- People's guardian spirits or other power acquired during training may assist in bringing a problem to resolution

See stories: 3, 16, 20, 21, 24, 26, 29, 30, 34, 35, 38, 42, 44, 49, 50, 61, 63, 64, 67, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 81, 82, 83, 84, 86, 89, 90, 96.





Matriarchs Annie Jim and MA Peters



“Grandmothers are wise and they carry all of this knowledge because it’s the responsibility of women to learn and keep this going.”

*Ida Mary Peter (Tsal’álh)*



# St'át'imc responsibilities in relation to the natural world

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“Seven Sacred Values” express St'át'imc responsibilities in relation to the natural world and each other:

- 1. Health:** The St'át'imc have a responsibility to maintain balance in life through keeping healthy physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Keeping the land, air and water healthy is essential to maintaining holistic health of human and non-human beings.
  - Ensure that salmon and other healthy foods are available from the land and water.
- 2. Happiness:** The St'át'imc have a responsibility to maintain happiness as individuals and for their relations.
  - When work has to be done, it is wise to perform your tasks with happiness. It is good training to start young for roles later in life, like parenthood or leadership, because not everything is fun. Mindset affects what you can accomplish.
- 3. Generations:** The St'át'imc have a responsibility to honour the seven generations before, and the seven generations after.
  - Adults and elders have the responsibility to focus on and train upcoming generations.
  - St'át'imc look to their ancestors and/or elders when deciding how to act today.
  - Includes the responsibility to care for our precious resources/not to 'gamble' them away.
- 4. Generosity:** The St'át'imc have a responsibility to be generous, and help one another.
  - Those who manage a resource needed by others shouldn't be greedy. Share when you have an abundance of a resource.
  - Responsibility to apply skill, courage and ingenuity to care for loved ones, sharing what the land and water can provide.
  - Theft (taking what doesn't belong to you) is not tolerated.
  - Family members and others have a responsibility to come to the assistance of a person in need if they are asked, even if that person's own actions may have contributed to their problem.



**5. Pity/Compassion:** Have compassion for yourself and others.

- The St'át'imc have the responsibility to look after the animals, fish, birds, water and other living beings with compassion. Other beings and elements of the environment must not be killed indiscriminately or in anger.

**6. Power:** Extend honour and respect to all beings, be responsible and accountable for your actions.

- Power is developed through discipline, training, and following guidance from the grandmothers. It should be used with humility for the good of the people; it is not about individual greatness.
- People gain power to access the natural world through their diligent personal efforts, not necessarily through their 'born' position in society.
- Some St'át'imc had a special knowledge and relationship with water/water power.

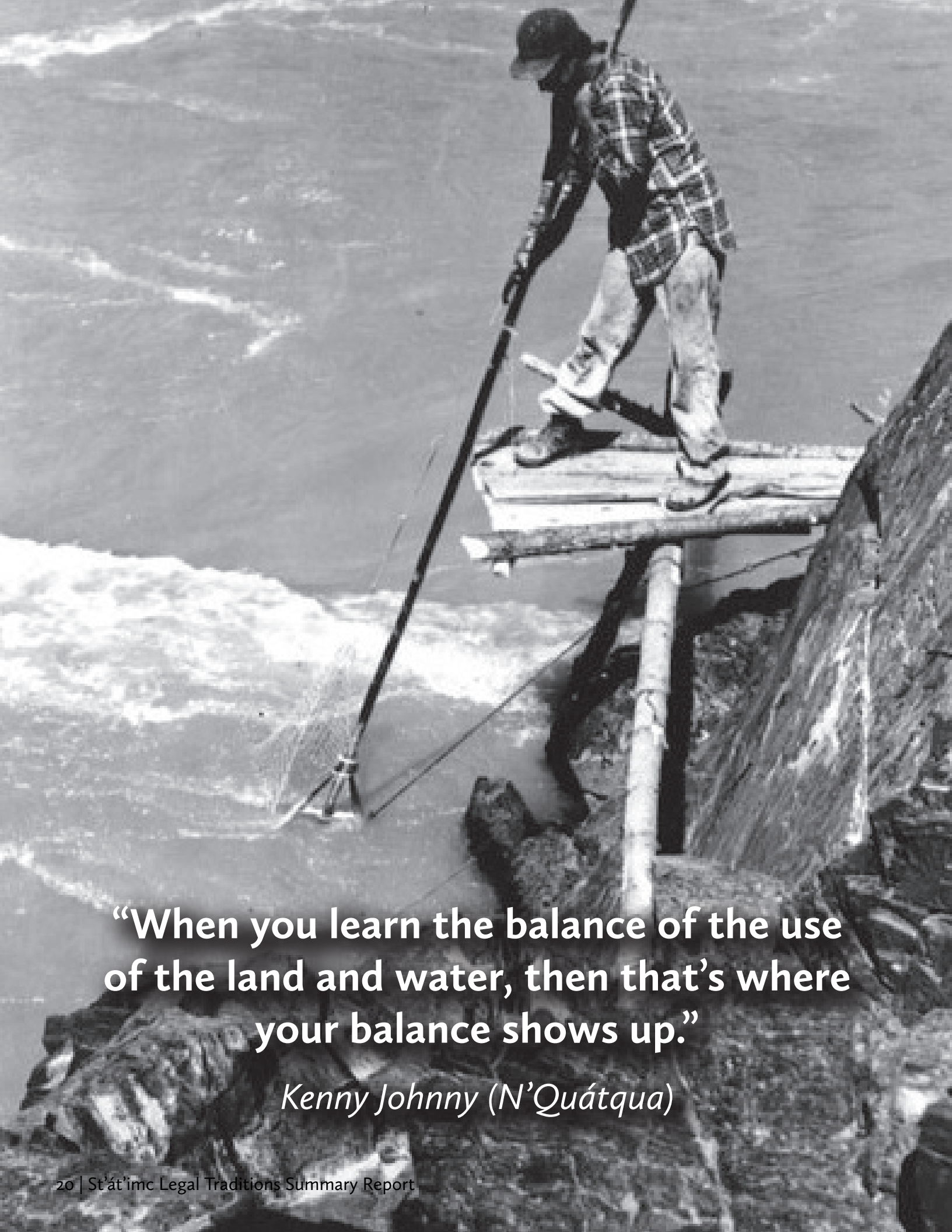
**7. Quietness:** St'át'imc have a responsibility to maintain periods of quietness to hear messages for how to act in a good way.

- St'át'imc can train (usually in the mountains) to gain power through visions and spirit help.
- Responsibility to listen allows you to be aware of problems or danger.

See stories: 3, 9, 10, 13, 16, 20, 29, 30, 43, 44, 47, 49, 51, 56, 58, 63, 64, 67, 71, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 82, 83, 85, 89, 90, 92.







**“When you learn the balance of the use of the land and water, then that’s where your balance shows up.”**

*Kenny Johnny (N’Quátqua)*



“**Hunters, and fishers have something they have to do before take a life. First, you have to say a prayer. You say thanks to whatever you’re taking for giving its life. Second, you make sure you use the whole thing, or put back what you don’t use. Third, you share it all and cook it in a good way. Then there will be teachings for you. If you don’t do these things, you may not get more next year.**”

*Fidele Henry*





# Rights

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## Some important St'át'imc rights to access, manage and use the natural world are:

- The right to have solitude in a healthy natural world for spiritual practices, including access to appropriate sites in the mountains to train for power and teachings
- The right to access staple, healthy St'át'imc foods, medicines and water from the territory
- The right to ask for assistance from human and non-human helpers
- The right for young people at the age of maturity to choose the role they wish to play in relation to acquisition and preparation of natural resources/ the work they wish to do in life
- The right to make decisions about the land and water according to St'át'imc law

See stories: 1, 3, 9, 10, 11,13, 16, 20, 37, 42, 47, 63, 67, 75, 79, 83, 87, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 97.

## In St'át'imc law, rights of plants, animals, land and water include:

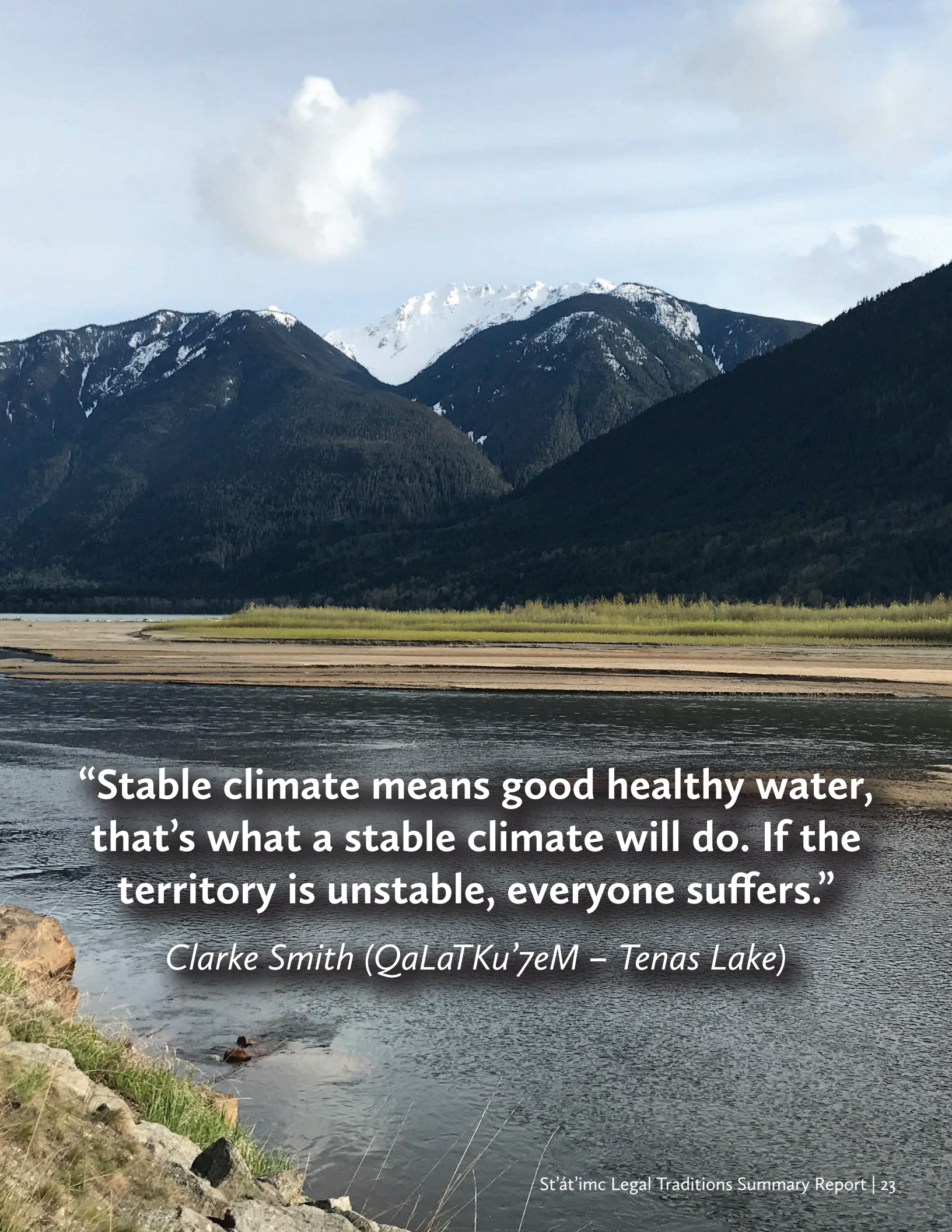
- The right to live throughout the territory in their proper habitats
- The right to be taken care of, and not 'gambled away'
- The right to be approached with respect and proper training
- The right to a stable climate and predictable seasons that allow all beings to survive and thrive

See stories: 13, 15, 16, 20, 26, 29, 30, 38, 44, 49, 64, 73, 76, 83, 84.

**“The salmon can only keep us healthy if  
it’s healthy itself.”**

*Norah Greenway (T'ít'q'et)*





**“Stable climate means good healthy water,  
that’s what a stable climate will do. If the  
territory is unstable, everyone suffers.”**

*Clarke Smith (QaLaTKu’7eM – Tenas Lake)*



## Standards

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**What are the ecological conditions that need to be maintained in order for the St'át'imc to thrive?**

In ancient times the land and water of the territory were shaped by the Transformers to make them good for the St'át'imc, and so that they could sustain the root people, the winged people, the finned people, the four-legged people and two legged-people.

Our ancestors survived major ecological shifts in the territory, including the great flood and the ice age, using their knowledge, power and ingenuity to ensure the continued survival and well-being of the land, water, animals and people.

**“We have what’s called an ecosystem-based land management plan and in there it talks about everything; not just water but the land. Everything works together, the whole ecosystem.”**



*Herman Alec (Xáxli'p)*



The work of the Transformers and our ancestors created the ecological conditions that all beings in St'át'imc territory need to thrive. St'át'imc law requires that these conditions be maintained or restored in the territory, such that:

- The ecosystem continues to function fully as a whole to sustain all beings and to ensure water quality, quantity and timing of flow
- All species have their habitat needs met
- Healthy St'át'imc foods and medicines are available from the territory
- The St'át'imc can drink water from the land safely
- Salmon have the right amount of water, at the right temperature, at the right time, in the right places
- Waterways continue to flow without obstruction
- Quiet undisturbed areas are available in the mountains for training
- Clean, cold water is available for spiritual uses
- Cultural heritage is protected

See stories: 1, 15, 16, 20, 37, 38, 50, 57, 83, 89, 90, 84.

**The St'át'imc actively managed the territory to maintain these conditions, for example:**

- By burning to maintain berry areas and deer habitat
- By hunting only in the right season, taking only those with antlers and not the does
- By clearing and cleaning the waterways

See stories: 12, 50.





# Inter-community and International Relations

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The northern and southern St'át'imc have been united as one people since the time of the Transformers, who said that they should visit and trade together.

- North of Squahit (Poole Creek) – a stream created by the Transformers that flows west from Tsekalnath (Birken Lake) toward Pemberton – the land and climate are different from the southern part of the territory, and thus there are some differences in how the people live and the resources available.
- A Transformer marked this “boundary” between the northern and southern St'át'imc with an imprint of his foot.

The families who make their home in different St'át'imc communities have their origins in the ancient relationship of their ancestors to particular “animal-people” or elements of the environment near that place, but we are all one people.

All St'át'imc are linked together through time to St'át'imc territory in an interconnected web of relationships with each other, the natural world, and other beings, based on:

- The language
- Our ways (nt'ákmen) and laws (nxékmen)
- Family ties (i.e., having relatives in other parts of the territory)
- The cycle of the water and of animals, like salmon and mule deer, through the territory
- The presence on the land of ancestors through the work of the Transformers

The St'át'imc's neighbours are the Tsilhqot'in, Secwepemc, Nlaka'pamux, Sto:lo and Squamish peoples.

- The salmon and the need to maintain them connect the interior and coastal peoples: the salmon need both the ocean and the river water to be healthy and strong.

See stories: 1, 11, 17, 33, 34, 35, 38, 57, 66, 67, 69, 74, 80, 82, 83, 89, 90, 93, 94.






**“The Transformers, our ancestors, helped Mother Earth to replenish everything at all times. We’re not paying attention to our own ways, how our ancestors used to do. We are depending on colonial way of thinking. We’re getting divided within our nation. This makes it hard for us to understand the fish and water. The longer we go on like this, the harder it will be for our people.”**

*Gerald Dick Sr.*







A photograph of a lush, moss-covered forest. The trees are heavily draped in vibrant green moss, and the forest floor is a dense carpet of moss and small, leafy plants. The lighting is soft and dappled, creating a serene and ancient atmosphere.

**“Everything is connected. All these stories are trying to connect the wolf, to the fish, to the bear, to the frog and they are all connected to the waters and the forest. Finally, in each story there is an animal and a plant because you cannot live without the other.”**

*Rosalin Sam Edmonds (Líl'wat)*



# Inter-community and International Relations

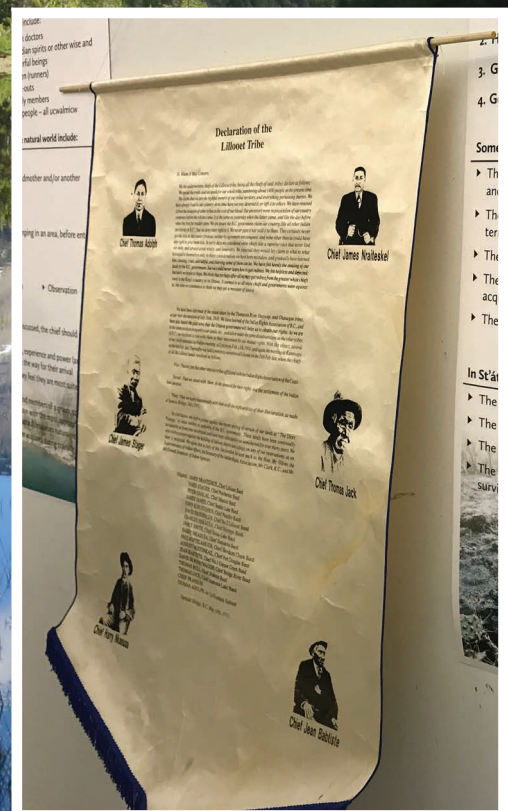
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Processes that govern relations between communities and with other peoples in St'át'imc law include the following:

- **Decision-making (internal):** Important decisions should be made by all St'át'imc talking together at a gathering.
- **Knowledge acquisition (internal/external):** Travelling to observe and acquire knowledge from another people may be required to meet St'át'imc needs.
- **Trade (internal/external):** Important resources and knowledge may be obtained through trade with other peoples or beings with each providing what is plentiful for them.
- **Feasting, intermarriage and gifting** are important ways in which relations are maintained within a nation and with other peoples (internal/external):
  - A chief who has accumulated wealth has the responsibility to feast neighbouring peoples and to offer gifts.
  - People should visit and maintain ties to their territory of origin even if they marry outside of their nation.
  - Indian doctors may gather to discuss matters among themselves.
- **Warfare (external):**
  - We have retained St'át'imc tribal territory and everything pertaining thereto from the invasion of other tribes at the cost of our blood (*Declaration of the Lillooet Tribe, 1911*).
  - By making a decision to act quickly, having a plan, working together, and making sacrifices a fair fight may be secured and a strong enemy defeated.
- **Peace-making and alliance building (external):** By helping another people find a solution/cure for a problem they face, the foundation for close relationships/alliances between people(s) may be established.

See stories: 2, 7, 16, 17, 35, 38, 55, 69, 79, 80, 83, 84, 95, 96, 97, *Declaration of the Lillooet Tribe*.







# Consequences, Enforcement, and Teaching

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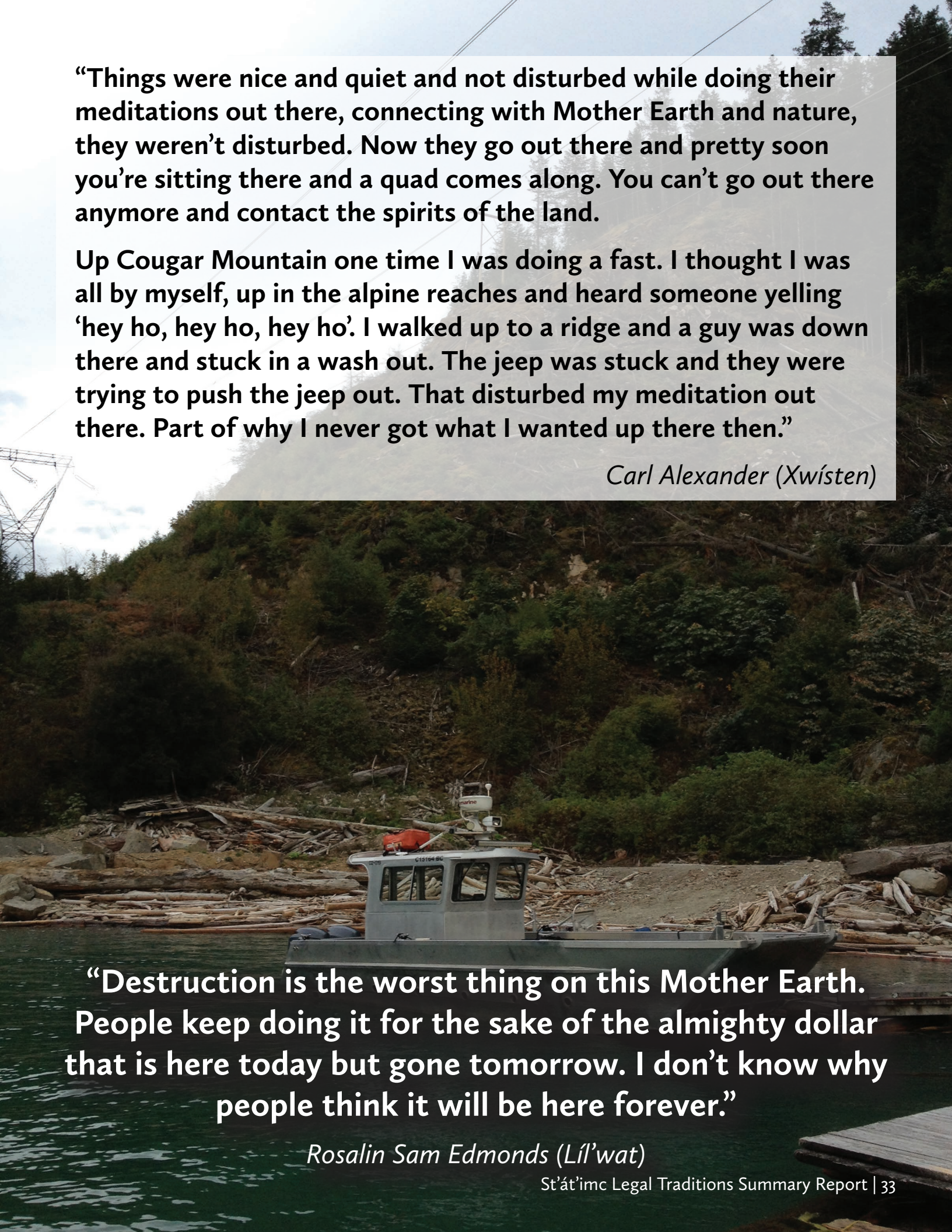
## What are the natural, spiritual and human consequences of not following proper St'át'imc legal principles and processes?

- Consequences may be prevented through gentle guidance and training, including observation and learning by doing.
  - Parents enforce rules and provide consequences to their children.
- The severity of the consequences increase proportionate to the severity of the harm:
  - Shame, fear (internal): You know the right thing to do, but you don't do it → External warning → Voluntary separation (the person choses to leave) → Being left behind (until you learn) → Temporary banishment → Permanent banishment
- Those who have done wrong can still become good providers/leaders by listening to elders, getting proper training and applying themselves.
- There are natural consequences to our actions.
  - If quiet, isolated, undisturbed places are not available in the mountains, then St'át'imc may not be able to get the power or teachings needed from training and meditation.
  - If the St'át'imc do not live up to our responsibility to other beings and the environment, we will lose access to it and become sick.

See stories: 6, 12, 16, 20, 24, 27, 30, 45, 46, 47, 53, 63, 77, 83, 97.





A background image showing a river with a boat in the foreground. The boat is a small, light-colored motorboat with a cabin and a radio on top. The riverbank is covered in dense green forest and has a large pile of driftwood. In the distance, a power line tower is visible against a cloudy sky.

**“Things were nice and quiet and not disturbed while doing their meditations out there, connecting with Mother Earth and nature, they weren’t disturbed. Now they go out there and pretty soon you’re sitting there and a quad comes along. You can’t go out there anymore and contact the spirits of the land.**

**Up Cougar Mountain one time I was doing a fast. I thought I was all by myself, up in the alpine reaches and heard someone yelling ‘hey ho, hey ho, hey ho’. I walked up to a ridge and a guy was down there and stuck in a wash out. The jeep was stuck and they were trying to push the jeep out. That disturbed my meditation out there. Part of why I never got what I wanted up there then.”**

*Carl Alexander (Xwísten)*

**“Destruction is the worst thing on this Mother Earth. People keep doing it for the sake of the almighty dollar that is here today but gone tomorrow. I don’t know why people think it will be here forever.”**

*Rosalin Sam Edmonds (Líl’wat)*



**“There were all different kinds of training. When you go out there and ask for these special powers, we’ve all heard ‘be careful of what you ask for because you’ll get it’ and anything else attached to that is what you’ll get.”**

*Ida Mary Peter (Tsal’álh)*

**“I’m so happy that when I came back from residential school I went to live with my grandparents because they taught me the importance of the land. Not just gardening or fishing, but knowing it and when to use it and how not to abuse it.”**

*Rosalin Sam Edmonds (Líl’wat)*



**“As St’át’imc we learn from everything. Our ancestors watched the bears, and learned how to catch fish. They learned how to teach the young ones, and always fished in the same spot. People at one time wondered how frogs could heal, so they followed them, saw them eating a plant called frog plant, and learned how to gain those healing properties. The stories teach us that we are learning from each living thing. For example, you can look at the salmon. Some make it and some don’t. It’s the same with us. We all have our place in the family of things.”**

*Fidele Henry*



# Consequences, Enforcement & Teaching

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## How do we learn and teach St'át'imc Ways?

- Learning from and training on the land, both by yourself and with the help of others
- Elders or knowledge keepers tell stories and give guidance as a way of teaching and building knowledge. You also need to practice and do it for yourself to really learn
- Bravery and willingness to explore the unknown may be required to learn
- Observation and experimentation may be required to acquire new knowledge and ways of doing things, which are practiced and replicated when it is demonstrated that they work
- Ceremony (i.e. sweat lodge, dreams, training practices, dipping in cold water etc.)
- Knowledge of the landscape's original state is beneficial in order to measure and assess impacts of environmental change
- Transformed land forms and beings remind us of:
  - the teachings/stories
  - the consequences of disrespect
  - the boundaries and relationships between peoples
- Important knowledge required for people to survive/thrive may be acquired from relations in compensation for past harms to a family/community

See stories: 1, 3, 9, 10, 20, 25, 29, 31, 35, 42, 44, 47, 49, 55, 64, 75, 76, 78, 83, 84, 89, 90, 93, 94.



## General Underlying Principles

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St'át'imc stories embody St'át'imc law, and our stories are written on the land.

**“That Charlie Mack story about Coyote, wakes you up after a few hours and makes you realize what is the most important. Makes you know why you're alive.**

**If you don't listen properly, you won't understand. Charlie would always start off ... using words in our language that are three feet long. Had to go back and ask what he meant. Might take a whole paragraph to explain one word. Great story tellers each had their way to help you listen properly and understand. There is meaning, more than you understand.”**

*Albert Joseph (Xwísten)*







**“Things that we have forgotten to do are what hold us back... Stories are relevant to help us remember the simplest teachings of our life: the respect, love, honor, and courage.”**

*Malihatkwa*



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

RELAW is a project of West Coast Environmental Law, supported and advised by the Indigenous Law Research Unit at the University of Victoria, Faculty of Law (ILRU).

*This document was produced for educational purposes and to deepen understanding of St'át'imc law amongst all peoples. It is a contribution to the ongoing process of learning and revitalizing St'át'imc legal traditions and does not purport to be comprehensive or conclusive.*

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**ST'ÁT'IMC CHIEFS COUNCIL**

**St'át'imc Chiefs Council**  
PO Box 1420  
Lillooet, BC VoK 1V0  
Tel: (250) 256-7523  
[www.statimc.ca](http://www.statimc.ca)



**WEST COAST**  
**Environmental Law**

West Coast Environmental Law  
200-2006 West 10th Avenue  
Vancouver BC V6J 2B3  
Tel: 604-684-7378  
Toll-free: 1-800-330-WCEL  
[www.wcel.org](http://www.wcel.org)