



Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc

(Kamloops Indian Band)

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

June 10, 2021

On behalf of Council, I want to provide you an update on what Council has been doing to follow up on the recent, heartbreaking findings at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. This was but the beginning of what will be a long and emotionally challenging process. Chief and Council are committed to providing regular updates to our membership.

For Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Council and I, as well as what we have heard in community, ceremonies, protocols, and justice are top of mind for all. This is only the beginning.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the grief that we have all felt. This is traumatic and each and every one of us have been impacted by residential schools. It is time to be gentle with ourselves as this brings up so many emotions and hurts. I know that I am reaching out to my loved ones and encourage you to do the same. Please note that we have included mental health supports at the end of this letter.

EXTERNAL OFFERS OF HELP

The scope of this situation has reached worldwide and the outpouring of support we have been offered is overwhelming. People across Canada and around the world are learning about the truth of residential schools. Residential School survivors are no longer silenced.

You may have spotted the "How to Support Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc" explainer that we prepared to answer the many offers of help. We are accepting donations- to be clear- donations will be used towards the work that is needed for further investigation (scientific and archival) and later memorialize the children (in collaboration with and shaped by TteS members, home communities and families of the children)

WORK TO DATE:

It has been all about outreach and initial conversations about the tragic findings. We met with the Secwepemc leadership and BC Chiefs to let them know about the finding our children as well as so we could share together in the grief. We also met with former Kukukpi7s, Manny Jules, Bonnie Leonard, Shane Gottfriedson and Fred Seymour, in order to garner support and input on the situation and appropriate next steps.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Special meeting with Chief and Council on Tuesday June 1st. Chief and Council have met internally and will continue to do so, to plan, organize and determine the best way forward. Our Language and Culture department have meet with survivors to give them the

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space to be supported. We have hired communications expert, Racelle Kooy, to support Chief and Council to deal with extensive media questions and interviews.

So far, we have led a series of initial meetings with many political figures including:

- United Nations rapporteur of Indigenous right – Francisco Cali Tzay
- Premier Horgan with NDP Federal leader Jagmeet Singh
- Minister Marc Miller
- Minister Carolyn Bennett
- Mayor Ken Christian and Councillor Bill Sadhu
- MP Cathy McLeod
- MLAs Todd Stone and Peter Milobar
- UBCIC, AFN, BCAFN, Leadership Council
- Bishop Joseph Nguyen

These meetings were each the beginning of what will be a careful and respectful approach to ensuring our community needs and the needs of the lost children in care are met.

Ceremony

- Ceremony was done on site prior to the work being done
- Pipe ceremony June 11, 2021

Finance

- Working on preliminary and comprehensive budget to be submitted to the government for resources to the scope of this project.

Language and Culture Department

- Language and Culture team met with Residential school survivors
- Addressing huge volumes of incoming emails
- Beginning stages of organizing other communities to come in and do their ceremonies
- Museum doing additional research on records associated with the KIRS
- Supporting all cultural ceremonies
- Met with 13 family representatives to discuss findings and next steps
- Need for external parties to respect protocol and work with TteS for ceremony

Natural Resources

- Research being done on what the residential school looked like originally
- Existing human remains policy in place – explanation of how that applies to this situation
- Beginning stages of having the site designated as a significant heritage site under TteS law
- Gathering of forensic archaeologist experts
- Developing budget estimate for archaeological work and preliminary project plan time estimates

Communications

- May 27: first media release
- May 28: first media presser (an online media scrum- where TteS spokesperson speaks, questions are taken within a set period of time- 30 min). 28 local, regional, national and international media outlets in attendance
- May 29-30: interviews with media including international
- May 31: second media release, statement from Kukpi7 Rosanne



- June 4: second media presser. 78 local, regional, national and international media outlets in attendance.
- Organized process for dealing with huge numbers of incoming emails, offers of help, technical expertise
- Combined effort to try to organize external parties that want to come to TteS to do their ceremonies or offer support

Legal

- A very experienced legal team has been hired to support TteS in this matter.

Health and Safety

- First Nations Health Authority Support in place to assist with planning and health and safety protocols
- PPE and sanitization stations set up
- Signage up
- Preparation for the Adams Lake Band “Walking the Spirits Home” event
- Working closely with security and janitorial

General

- Working with Human Resources to get more staff help organized to support the team on the KIRS remains project

There is an event happening this weekend, Adams Lake Indian Band’s “Walking the Spirits Home” which is organized outside of TteS. We thank TteS staff who are working with appropriate departments to ensure health and safety of all. We have asked groups that are planning memorials to please contact TteS so we can be organized to receive their support.

We will be providing weekly updates both by video and written each Friday. Please take care!

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

There are people that can help support you:

24 hours a day, 7 days a week: KUU-US Crisis Line Society: 1-800-588-8717 // A Toll Free Indigenous BC Provincial Crisis Line

7 days a week from 8:30 am - 4:30 pm. FNHA Doctor of the Day: 1-855-344-3800 // Open for all First Nations people living in BC

Mon – Fri schedule varies, call for an appointment.

- Sharnelle Matthew, MSW, Mental Health Clinician: 250-320-5100
- Tracy Davison, Mental Health Clinician at QHS: 250-314-6732