



PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

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Colville Confederated Tribes Files Legal Case Seeking Consultation on Creation of Westbank Reserve in Sinixt Traditional Territory

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Nespelem, WA— The Colville Confederated Tribes filed a court case in Vancouver, British Columbia, seeking consultation on the proposed creation of a reserve for the Westbank First Nation in the heart of sn̓ɬay̓ckstx (Sinixt) or Arrow Lakes traditional territory.

The Canadian government is considering a proposal to convert a property in Fauquier, British Columbia to a Westbank reserve, but to date has ignored multiple written and oral requests for consultation with the Sinixt people, 3591 of whom are members of the Lakes Tribe of the Colville Confederated Tribes.

“We have filed this court case because our repeated requests for a proper and respectful dialogue with Canada and Westbank have been completely ignored, and we believe that the Sinixt people have a right to be consulted about such an important development in their traditional territory in British Columbia,” Dr. Michael E. Marchand, Chairman of the Tribes, said today. “Consultation is required by Canadian law and policy and to date those laws and policies are not being respected”.

On March 27, 2017, Judge L. Mrozinski handed down Reasons for Judgment in *R. v. Desautel*, in which she acquitted Richard Desautel of charges under the provincial *Wildlife Act* on the basis that, as a sn̓ɬay̓ckstx or Arrow Lakes person, he had established an aboriginal right to hunt in Sinixt traditional territory in British Columbia (The Crown's appeal from that acquittal was dismissed on December 28, 2017, and a further leave application is pending before the B.C. Court of Appeal). That territory encompasses the area in and around Fauquier.

“The duty to consult is grounded in the honor of the Crown, and the Crown is not living up to that solemn obligation by refusing to acknowledge the court rulings which have held that the Sinixt are not extinct and have aboriginal rights in Canada”, Marchand said, “The area around Fauquier has been described as the “headquarters” of the Sinixt, and we will not stand by and

allow the Canadian government to create a reserve for another First Nation without appropriate consultation.”

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About the Colville Tribes:

Today, more than 9,520 descendants of 12 aboriginal tribes of Indians are enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of the Colville. The tribes, commonly known by English and French names, are: the Colville, the Nespelem, the San Poil, the Arrow Lakes, the Palus, the Wenatchi (Wenatchee), the Chelan, the Entiat, the Methow, the southern Okanogan, the Moses Columbia and the Nez Perce of Chief Joseph's Bands.