



## **JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION  
&  
SINIXT (SŃŃAYCKSTX) CONFEDERACY

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### **Colville Tribes and sŃŃayckstx (Sinixt) Confederacy to Celebrate Historic Canadian Supreme Court Win**

NESPELEM, WA.— Rodney Cawston, Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT) and the sŃŃayckstx (Sinixt) Confederacy, announced today that a celebration will be held tomorrow, May 28, 2021, at the Round Lake arbor located near Inchelium, Washington. The celebration is being held to honor the landmark decision from the Supreme Court of Canada in *Regina v. Desautel*, which affirmed a constitutionally protected right to hunt for sŃŃayckstx people in Canada, who were declared “extinct” in that country in 1956.

In 2010, Rick Desautel, a resident of Inchelium on the Colville Indian Reservation in Washington State, was charged with hunting elk as a non-resident, and without a license, near Castlegar, B.C., which falls within the heart of sŃŃayckstx traditional territory. Following a lengthy trial held in the fall of 2016, Rick was acquitted of all charges, with the court holding that that sŃŃayckstx trans-boundary hunting rights were protected under the Canadian constitution. Two subsequent appeals by the Crown were dismissed by the B.C. Courts. In dismissing the Crown’s final appeal, the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed that the sŃŃayckstx, having occupied their traditional territory in the West Kootenay or Arrow Lakes area of British Columbia since time immemorial, were an “Aboriginal Peoples of Canada”, and that the Lakes (or Sinixt) tribe of CCT was a modern-day successor of the sŃŃayckstx which continued to hold their rights.

Chairman Cawston says that April 23, 2021 was a historic day for both sŃŃayckstx people and other cross-border tribes across the continent which must be celebrated for years to come:

Rick’s incredible perseverance through the Canadian court system and the many pressures he faced, reflects and honors the struggle of our people to maintain our identity through the history of colonization, displacement and attempts at assimilation. This is a trailblazing decision which at long last recognizes the historic injustices many tribes have suffered for generations, and we are pleased that it will benefit so many on both sides of the “invisible line” well into the

future. We are again reminded on this important day that dispossession is not over, it is not history, and our struggle will continue.

Cawston added that everyone is invited to this special celebration:

We will have an honoring, horse parade, pow wow, bighorn elk shed and ivory show, dinner, live music, and other activities for the entire family on Friday. We will kick the event off Thursday evening with a showing of the documentary film ‘Older than the Crown’, which chronicles the case up until Rick’s final trip to the Supreme Court of Canada. In holding this celebration, we also honor our ancestors on whose shoulders Rick stood throughout his journey, and our descendants who will be able to enjoy the rights that Rick and our ancestors fought so hard for.

A special showing of “Older than the Crown” will take place at the Autoview Drive-in in Colville, WA at **dusk tonight**, with the celebration occurring at the Round Lake arbor, beginning at **11:00 a.m. on Friday**. Covid protocols will be followed.

A further celebration on s̓n̓ʕáyckstx territory in Canada is being planned for September, details will follow later in the summer.

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About the Colville Tribes:

Today, more than 9,450 descendants of 12 aboriginal tribes of Indians are enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of the Colville. The twelve tribes which compose the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation include: ščəlámxəx<sup>w</sup> (deep water) or Chelan; walwáma (Wallowa people) or Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce; s̓x̓<sup>w</sup>y?iṭp (sharp pointed trees) or Colville; šnt̓iyátk<sup>w</sup>əx<sup>w</sup> (grass in the water) or Entiat; s̓n̓ʕáyckstx (speckled fish) or Arrow Lakes; mətx<sup>w</sup>u (blunt hills around a valley) or Methow; škwáxc̓ənəx<sup>w</sup> (people living on the bank) or Moses-Columbia; nspilm (prairie) or Nespelem; uknaqin (seeing over the top) or Okanogan; palúšpam (people from Palouse) or Palus; s̓ənp̓<sup>w</sup>ilx (grey mist as far as one can see) or San Poil, and šnp̓əšq<sup>w</sup>áwsəx<sup>w</sup> (people in between) or Wenatchi.

About the s̓n̓ʕáyckstx (Sinixt) Confederacy:

Formerly known as the Arrow Lakes Aboriginal Society, the Confederacy has been established to represent s̓n̓ʕáyckstx people on both sides of the international border, regardless of tribal or band affiliation, in a manner consistent with Indigenous law and traditions.