



## **JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

&

SINIXT (SŃŃayĳkstx) CONFEDERACY

**For Immediate Release  
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### **Sinixt Representatives Call for Protection of Sacred Cultural Site and Burial Ground**

NESPELEM, WA— kp'itl'els, or Brilliant Flats, is located at the confluence of the Kootenay and Columbia Rivers, immediately adjacent to the City of Castlegar, B.C., in the heart of SŃŃayĳkstx (Sinixt) traditional territory. kp'itl'els is of tremendous cultural, ecological, and archaeological significance to the SŃŃayĳkstx (Sinixt) people, and was the ancestral home of the Christian family for countless generations.

Yet kp'itl'els is presently under attack - again. There are widespread reports of “mud bogging” by large off road vehicles, camping, squatting and garbage dumping that threaten to destroy this sacred site, including, most importantly, the burial sites of the Christian family.

Sinixt representatives are calling for immediate action. Rodney Cawston, Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT) in Washington, and the Sinixt Confederacy in British Columbia, says it is time to act:

"All of us have a responsibility to protect the sacred sites and the remains of our ancestors, whether these burial sites are native or non-native. The Christian family, whose direct descendants include the late Jim Boyd, our former Chairman, deserve better than this. Our SŃŃayĳkstx (Sinixt) ancestors and notably the Christian family suffered the indignity of displacement by the Doukhobors in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and now further indignities are being visited upon their burial sites in this century. Can you imagine “mud boggers” in the cemetery where your family is laid to rest? We hope all British Columbians will join us in calling for immediate action.”

Kp'itl'els is also home to a rich diversity of plants and wildlife. The traditional SŃŃayĳkstx (Sinixt) plant food called Itwa (black camas) has been found at the site, and there is evidence of cultivation dating back thousands of years. Meadow larks, golden eyes, bears, eagles, river otters and sturgeon can be found on the land and in the adjacent rivers.

Cawston says there are short and long term steps that must be taken:

“First, barriers must be immediately erected to stem the tide of destruction, which is a simple and inexpensive solution. In the longer term, the site needs formal protection under the BC Heritage Conservation Act. The BC government must step up now.”

The Sinixt Confederacy encourages all concerned parties to immediately contact the Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development at [Katrine.conroy.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Katrine.conroy.mla@leg.bc.ca), to encourage her to act NOW to protect this important site.

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About the Colville Tribes:

Today, more than 9,460 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; sǎ<sup>w</sup>yʔilp (sharp pointed trees) or Colville; šntiyátk<sup>w</sup>əx<sup>w</sup> (grass in the water) or Entiat; snʔáyckst (speckled fish) or Lakes; mətx<sup>w</sup>u (blunt hills around a valley) or Methow; škwáxčənəx<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; sənpʔilx (grey mist as far as one can see) or San Poil, and šnpəšq<sup>w</sup>áwsəx<sup>w</sup> (people in between) or Wenatchi.