



PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

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Regional District Passes Historic Resolution Recognizing the Sinixt

Nespelem, WA— Dr. Michael E. Marchand, Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and Shelly Boyd, Arrow Lakes Facilitator for the Tribes, are applauding an historic resolution passed by the Regional District of Central Kootenay on November 16, 2017.

In a near unanimous decision, the District directors voted not to send a letter of support for the establishment of a Westbank reserve in Fauquier, located in the middle of Sn̓ɬay̓ckstx (Arrow Lakes) traditional territory, and instead called on the Canadian government to suspend the granting of any reservations to other First Nations within Arrow Lakes territory, and to reverse the “error” of the 1956 declaration of extinction.

“This is yet another historic day for all Sinixt people, building on the landmark *Desautel* decision, where, for the first time since 1956, a government in Canada has formally recognized the existence of the Arrow Lakes people and our traditional territory” Chairman Marchand said today. “This is a very important step in the reconciliation process, and we commend the courage of the Regional District for passing this resolution”.

On March 27, 2017, Justice Lisa Mrozinski found Richard Desautel not guilty of hunting for elk as a non-resident of British Columbia and without license, ruling that he was exercising a constitutionally protected right to hunt in Sinixt traditional territory in Canada. The Crown’s appeal to the B.C. Supreme Court was argued in early September in Nelson, and a decision is expected in early 2018.

“The truth prevailed over fear and division at the Regional District meeting,” Shelly Boyd said today. “As the judge confirmed in the *Desautel* case, the truth is that Sn̓ɬay̓ckstx people were never extinct and we have never left our traditional territory and the waters that are its lifeblood. We look forward to building cooperative relationships with First Nations and government, and to

continue working with the local community to make sure that everyone is aware of the truth of our history and existence.”

The Colville Tribes have written multiple letters to the Westbank First Nation, along with the Canadian and British Columbia governments, asking to engage in consultation on the establishment of the Westbank reserve, and also attended a public meeting on October 4, 2017 to make that request in person. To date, the Colville Tribes have not received a substantive response.

“We hope that Westbank and other governments will now follow the lead of the Regional District and reach out to us to begin a dialogue,” Chairman Marchand said. “While we are disappointed at the lack of a response to date, we remain hopeful that legal proceedings can be avoided, and a more traditional and effective approach can be followed to resolve any differences we may have.”

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 Lake, 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.