



## PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

*Media Contact:*

Meghan Francis

[meghan.francis.cbc@colvilletribes.com](mailto:meghan.francis.cbc@colvilletribes.com)

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### **Colville Tribes Teams with War Pony Pictures to Tell Sinixt story**

Nespelem, WA-- The Colville Business Council has approved a contract with the documentary production company, War Pony Pictures for a film about the Colville Sinixt (Arrow Lakes) people and their struggles to regain their rights and territory in British Columbia.

"We hope this film will capture the essence of our struggle for the restoration of Sinixt rights, lands and culture in Canada," CBC Chairman Dr. Michael E. Marchand, a direct descendant of the last hereditary Sinixt chief, said today. "The story of the Sinixt on both sides of the international border is, at its core, about how we were dispossessed of much of our traditional territories, even declared "extinct" in Canada, and separated from our families and cultures by artificial boundaries. But it is a story of hope, because we are going to right that wrong."

Marchand said the Colville Tribes has long pressed for Sinixt recognition in Canada, and in recent years has focused on the Rick Desautel hunting case, which led to the historic victory in March of 2017, establishing a Sinixt right to hunt in Canada, and reversing the infamous declaration of extinction in 1956. The case is now on its second appeal, set to be heard later this year in Vancouver, after the Tribes successfully defended the first appeal by the BC government.

Marchand said this case is a major step forward in the journey to establish Sinixt rights and land claims in the future:

"We can't thank Rick Desautel enough for his tenacity and bravery on behalf of the Sinixt and the Colville Tribes," Marchand said. "But this is only part of the long story of our struggle to be recognized and restored to our homelands in Canada."

"So many Colville tribal members played a key role in putting our Arrow Lakes people back on the map in British Columbia," Marchand said. "They have protected sacred sites across the border, often at great personal risk, and continue to practice our ceremonies in the area. We intend for this documentary to capture the larger history of Sinixt people and our struggles, and our perseverance and determination over the years to reclaim our lands and reunite with all our relatives in British Columbia."

War Pony Pictures created the 2018 documentary “United By Water” about the importance of the Columbia River to Tribes in that region. War Pony’s Derrick LaMere is a member of the Rocky Boy Band of Chippewa Indians and a Colville descendent.

“This story is very close to my heart and I am truly honored to work for The Colville Confederated Tribes, the tribal bloodline of my mother’s family, to produce a film on such an important subject,” LaMere said. “As a director and producer I have spent the past 10 years documenting native communities and the issues they face every day. I believe these experiences have led me back to my people and I am happy to use my strengths as a filmmaker to focus on the issues at the heart of both our history and our future.”

LaMere said his company is in the early stages of pre-production for the documentary film. In the coming weeks, War Pony will be setting up websites and social media pages on this project. These sites will be used to provide updates on the film and will provide a way for the production crew to contact anyone who would like to contribute or share their Sinixt story.

LaMere said he is looking for other informational resources which people may have about the Sinixt band and the Colville Tribes as a whole, including documents, maps, photographs, home movies and videotapes. War Pony will respond to any and all offers of stories or other resources, LaMere said, and will return all documents, photos, and film to the owners in its original form as well as in digital copies.

“We hope to hear from Colville members and others who would like to help us tell this important story,” LaMere said. “We believe this will become a community effort to celebrate the Sinixt community, past, present and future.”

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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.