

Secwépemc Landmarks | Media Release – Sekmaws (Sicamous)

June 19th 2023

Waytkp!

The Secwépemc Landmarks project team is pleased to announce that the Sicamous Beach Park will be the location of the Sekmaws Landmark sculpture. The first site visit to gather oral histories and knowledge about the Sekmaws area took place in May 2022, with Elders from Splatsín, Adams Lake Band, Skwłáx te Secwepemcú'ecw (Little Shuswap Lake Band), and Neskonlith. In May 2023, the Splatsín Stet'xam had a site visit to the Sekmaws to look at three potential locations for the sculpture, and chose the Sicamous Beach Park as the location for the sculpture. Draft designs for the sculpture are in progress and will be circulated to Secwépemc community members later this summer for input on the designs.

Tania Willard, who is from and lives at Neskonlith, and Kel-c Jules, from Tk'emlúps, were selected as the lead artist and youth mentee for the Sekmaws Landmark sculpture after an expression of interest was released in 2022.

Weyt'k, re skwest Tania Willard, st'ek ke t'e Legwiké ne Secwepemcú'ecw. Re tsétswe7 pell sesqwse7 skwest.s Skyelar ell Leo Adam ell Kevin Adam re sxélwe. Mike Willard re qé7tse, Kelly Muskett re kíc7e. Re kic skwest.s Tara Willard, ell Dustin Willard re síntse. Leonard Willard le slé7e lu7 ell Ethel Jones le kyé7e lu7, Le Ethel m-st'ekwes te Splatsin ell Leonard Willard m-st'ekwes te Nesqénell . Le xpe7e7úy lu7 skwest.s Isaac Willard ell Adeline Willard le qné7e lu7.

Tania Willard is a mixed Secwépemc and settler artist whose research intersects with land-based art practices. Her practice activates connection to land, culture, and family, centering art as an Indigenous resurgent act, though collaborative projects such as BUSH Gallery and support of language revitalization in Secwépemc communities. Her artistic and curatorial work includes Beat Nation: Art, Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture at the Vancouver Art Gallery (2012-2014) and Exposure: Native Art and Political Ecology at the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Santa Fe (ongoing). Willard's work is included in the collections of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Forge Project, Belkin Art Gallery (UBC Vancouver), Kamloops Art Gallery, and the Anchorage Museum, among others. In 2016, she received the Hnatyshyn Foundation's Award for Curatorial Excellence in Contemporary Art. In 2020, the Shadbolt Foundation awarded her their VIVA Award for outstanding achievement and commitment in her art practice, and in 2022 she was named a Forge Project Fellow for her land-based, community-engaged artistic practice.

Kel-c Jules is a Secwepemc and Syilx Okanagan woman residing on the traditional, unceded lands of her ancestors the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. She is an educator for sd73, an artist, and fashion model. She enjoys creating different kinds of artwork, learning about her culture and language and exploring the land around her as well as being a role model for all generations. Kel-c attended Thompson Rivers University for the Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2012 and has been creating artwork ever since. Her focus is mainly around residential school awareness, her culture, and elements of nature in her surroundings. She loves how art can connect her to her culture and wishes to share all of the teachings with those around her.

The sculpture will consist of a cut steel fire surround, carved with designed based on Secwépemc place names, plants, and designs informed by the Elders meetings. As Tania Willard describes, the sculpture

“draws on relational practices, kinship and land-based aesthetics... representing the land and ways in which we draw on family and community for harvesting resources from the land and relational ways of being through fireside discussions”. When active, the fire surround sculpture is a place for people to gather, and when not in use the fire sphere also functions as a sculpture. The sculpture design will be similar to the monument “For Future Matriarchs” by Tania Willard and Krista-Belle Stewart at UBC Okanagan (see photo).

The Secwépemc Landmarks project will be installing 16 sculptures at various locations over the next two years, designed by several teams of Secwépemc and non-Secwépemc artists, that highlight Secwépemc oral histories and place names in each area. These sculptures will be located at the following places: Salmon Arm wharf (Complete); Tsqúqw7e (Chase wharf, May 2023); Little Mountain (June 2023); Fly Hills Skyview Rotary Lookout (July 2023); South Canoe Bluffs (August 2023); Tappen Bluffs (September 2023); Bastion Mountain (October 2023). Phase 2 locations, scheduled to be installed in 2024, are proposed at the following locations: 1) Mara Lake; 2) Sekmáws (Sicamous); 3) Splatsín; 4) Tsutswécw Park; 5) Quaaout Lodge; 6) Skmana Lake; 7) White Lake; and 8) Steglgelxús (Chase Creek Falls).

The Secwépemc Landmarks project team is also working to install 100 trailhead posts carved by almost 200 youth from Secwépemc Child and Family Services, Shihiya, Chief Atahm, and five schools in School District No. 83, by fall 2023. These trailhead posts were carved with the guidance of Kenthen Thomas who designed the curriculum for the workshops, and from Splatsín carvers Hop You and Vern Clemah.

If you have any input, or would like to be notified of future meetings, please contact the Secwépemc Landmarks project team:

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Kukwstsamc, and with respect,

The Secwépemc Landmarks Project Team



Photo 1) "For Future Matriarchs" by Tania Willard and Krista-Belle Stewart at UBCO. Photo credit: Nasim Pirhadi.



Photo 2) Secwepemc Landmarks Sekmaws site visit, May 2022 (Photo by Ash Simpson, Splatsín Title and Rights)



Photo 3) Sek'maws, Photo by Libby Chisholm