



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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T̂silhqot'in Nation Releases Heritage Strategy

Williams Lake, B.C.: Today, the T̂silhqot'in National Government (TNG) released a broad heritage strategy that outlines its goals and priorities to advance cultural protection, education, research and issues of jurisdiction. This strategic plan takes a holistic approach to heritage that recognizes the interconnectedness of physical spaces and objects with spiritual and mental well being.

TNG is calling on the Government of British Columbia to overhaul the current *Heritage Conservation Act* (HCA), to create a more responsive and inclusive legislation, and to honour its agreements with TNG to negotiate innovative arrangements grounded in recognition of T̂silhqot'in rights, Title and jurisdiction. The HCA has failed to be effective in addressing the needs of the T̂silhqot'in. Heritage and cultural protection must prevent destruction and desecration of both the physical and cultural aspects of T̂silhqot'in history. The HCA has not been successful in this basic need. The release of the *Strategic Plan for the Management of T̂silhqot'in Cultural Heritage* is a first step in showing how conservation should be accomplished.

Quotes:

Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, Tribal Chair, T̂silhqot'in National Government

"Why is it that our history has been put in the hands of a government that does not carry the same value system as us? Something that Indigenous people may view as an ancient grave site is, at the same time, viewed as a place for resource extraction. Our land holds our oral history and is like our library system. Destroying our lands would be like destroying the library system in the mainstream. It is important that we preserve our lands for the current and future generations as it holds our history, culture, language and ways of being and knowing. The way that we understand the land must act as a guide for the management of that area. The Heritage Conservation Act has never worked for us. It has no teeth and needs to be overhauled. We must protect sites, repatriate artifacts, and commemorate our history."

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Nits'il?in (Chief) Otis Guichon, Vice-Chair, Tsilhqot'in National Government

“Our elders will often go to special sites and tell stories about that area. These stories go back to the beginning of time for us as a people. We gather our strength from our history. It's high time that a heritage strategy is made by us. It is up to us to ensure physical and spiritual connections to our past are maintained. Healing and the well being of our people is directly connected to these protections.”

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More Information:

[*Strategic Plan for the Management of Tsilhqot'in Cultural Heritage Heritage Conservation Act*](#)

Tsilhqot'in Heritage: www.tsilhqotin.ca/landsresources/heritage

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