



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 15, 2023

The Tsilhqot'in Nation, Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness & BC Wildfire Service celebrate the success of the Tsilhqot'in Rustic Group Lodging

The Tsilhqot'in Nation, Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness and BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) joined in celebration today to close the Tsilhqot'in Rustic Group Lodging site located in Tsilhqot'in territory for the season.

Last summer, the Tsilhqot'in Nation, British Columbia and Canada renewed the tripartite Collaborative Emergency Management Agreement (CEMA), which commits the Parties to enhancing Tsilhqot'in-led emergency preparedness and emergency management. The partnership was instrumental in the development of the Rustic Group Lodging site. One of the primary purposes of the Rustic Group Lodging site is to ensure that the Tsilhqot'in have a culturally safe environment for members in the event of evacuation during a wildfire emergency.

The Tsilhqot'in Rustic Group Lodging site opened in mid-August to host Tsilhqot'in members and other First Nations displaced due to evacuation orders and alerts. The Tsilhqot'in Rustic Group Lodging site has a capacity to host up to 100 occupants in family-sized tents; increased by the addition of RV sites if needed. The model and flexibility of the site provided the opportunity to host BCWS firefighter crews who continued to fight fires in Tsilhqot'in territory.

Quotes:

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

"The Tsilhqot'in Nation has been ready to step up to help address the wildfire situation in B.C in any capacity that we can. This wildfire season there was a need for shelter for the firefighter crews who have been bravely fighting fires in our territory and across the province. The group lodging site provided a space to host them. In 2017, our Nation experienced wildfires in our communities and so we understand the impact these disasters have and this has been our

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TŚILHQOT'IN NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

opportunity to give back. We have gratitude for our emergency service team, members, the province and partners who came together this wildfire season to support our emergency management efforts. With continued partnership we can address forest management and limit the destruction of future wildfires.”

Bowinn Ma, Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness:

“The Tsilhqot'in National Government and its communities continue to demonstrate that they are true leaders in emergency management in British Columbia. Providing space for their own members and Indigenous Peoples across the province underscores their commitment to keep people safe. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Tsilhqot'in National Government leadership for their role in protecting people in our province.”

Brian Clark, Deputy Fire Centre Manager, BC Wildfire Service:

“It has been a pleasure to partner with the Tsilhqot'in Nation and the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate and Readiness (EMCR) to have fire crews stay at the Tsilhqot'in Rustic Group Lodging site. The use of the facilities here provided critical logistical support to wildland firefighters working in Tsilhqot'in territory. Meals and accommodations are often difficult to come by in this area, especially during busy fire seasons, but the Rustic Group Lodging site allowed crews to be well looked after as they worked long hours on the fireline. I look forward to continuing to build this partnership with the Tsilhqot'in Nation and EMCR on future endeavors in the Cariboo Region.”

Learn More:

For tips on how to prepare grab-and-go bags, visit: <http://www.preparedbc.ca/emergencykit>

To learn about how to prepare for wildfires, visit: <https://firesmartbc.ca/>

To pre-register with ESS, visit: <https://ess.gov.bc.ca/>

Real-time wildfire information can be found on the BC Wildfire Service mobile app, or website: <https://wildfiresituation.nrs.gov.bc.ca/map>

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/29051>

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