

Honouring The Vision Of Our Ancestors

Who is SSN?

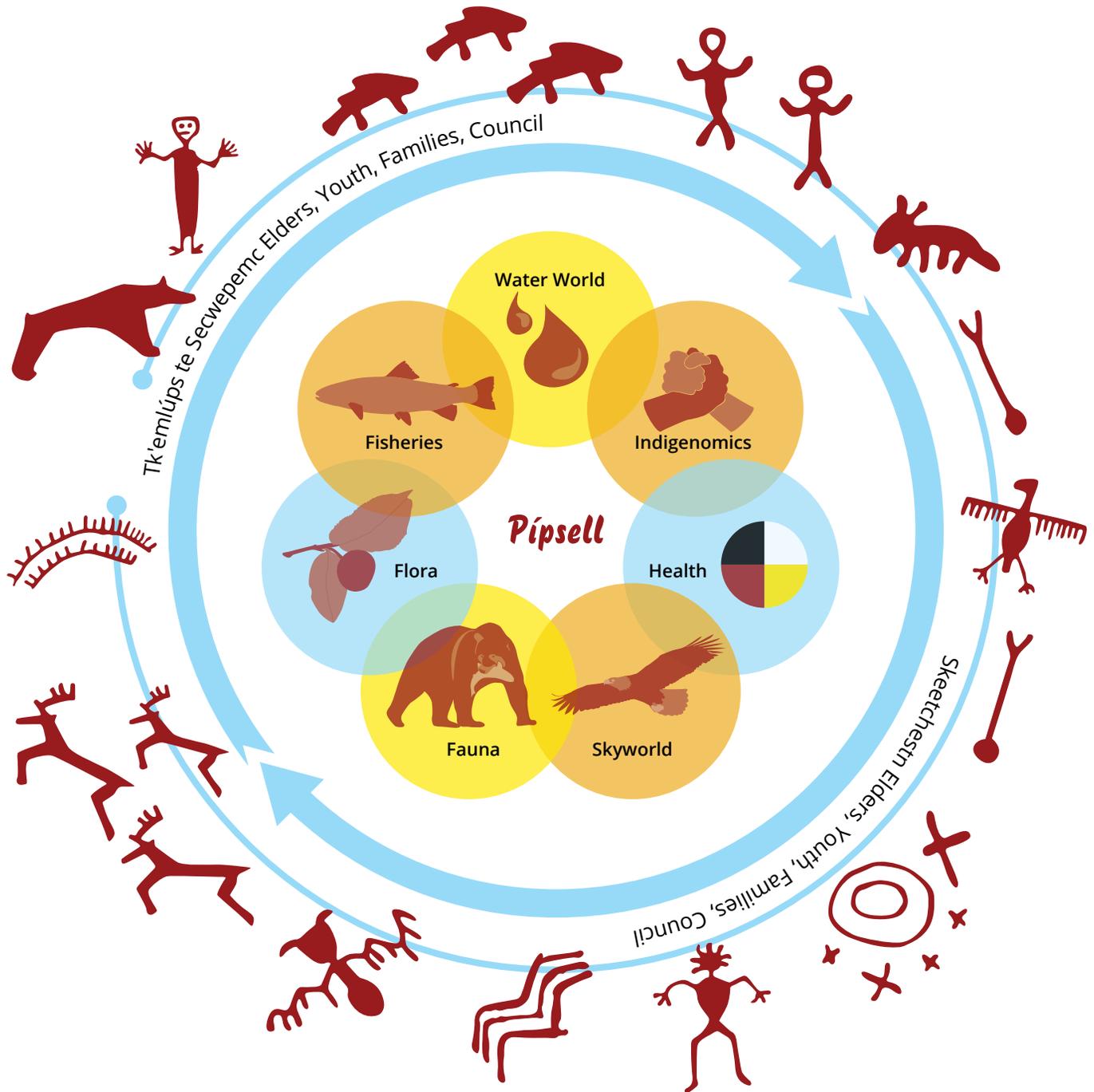
The Stk'emlúpsmc te Secwepemc Nation (SSN) is a governance group of the Secwepemc Nation, situated in our traditional territory around Kamloops Lake. Formalized in 2007, SSN represents the historic shared interests of the First Nation communities of Skeetchestn and Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc.

Our relationship of ownership and caretaking of Secwepemcul'ecw, our homeland, goes back since time immemorial (10,000+ years). That caretaking is based on living Secwepemc laws that guide us in regards to all that we do, with the land, in relationship with outsiders, boundaries of our lands and our reciprocal relationship with all living things.

SSN has constitutionally protected rights to participate in decision-making matters which could affect our rights. We maintain and develop our own Indigenous decision-making institutions whereby we determine priorities, as well as create strategies for the use of our territories and resources.



SSN Project Review Process



Given the current inadequacies of the Canadian and BC Environmental Assessment processes, SSN was required to develop our own project assessment process for the proposed KGHM Ajax open pit mine.

Our objective is to facilitate informed decision-making by the SSN communities in a manner which is consistent with our laws, traditions, and customs

and assesses project impacts in a way that respects our knowledge and perspectives.

We have worked with our communities to appoint representatives from each family to step forward and deliberate on the best decision for the long-term well-being of our people and land. Our panel members have been involved throughout the process, from deliberation to final decision-making.

Walking On Two Legs Process

Balancing world-views and knowledge systems

Although the SSN Assessment Process is based on our laws and principles, its comprehensive nature is such that everyone benefits from the depth with which we study the benefits and impacts of the proposed mine.

The SSN Assessment Process is grounded in our Trout Children Sptékwle (oral history), the 1910 Memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Canadian and international laws such as the United Nation Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People. It is built on the principle of walking on two legs –

Secwepemc and western knowledge, with information provided both in oral and written format.

As stewards of the land, we are knowledgeable about how the land transforms from season to season, what to watch for and what is significantly affected by climate change impacts such as rising temperatures. We delve into the long-term intergeneration impacts as well as the pre-contact past to address the legacy of wrongs that our people have faced since Canada and British Columbia's foundation. We examined the aspects that are currently lost in the BC and Canadian Environmental Assessment process and sought out information to describe the "intangible" impacts to spirit, culture and immeasurable impacts and our story.

The Significance Of This Project Assessment Process

Our comprehensive project assessment process is the best way that we can look after our families, our communities and our guests in Kamloops and the surrounding area.

As Secwepemc, we cannot look at our world in separate parts. The Canadian and BC Environmental Assessment processes are designed on a principle of compartmentalization whereby project impacts are segmented and individually assessed. Our world is not a series of independent "value components" where impacts can be assessed in isolation. An impact on one

part will impact all the parts of our world, as we are all interconnected.

We have intergenerational knowledge about this land that has been passed down. Teaching, practices and knowledge of how to care for the land in a way that it will continue to provide for us. The process is truly based on reciprocity of information exchange and giving voice to collective knowledge held within our families and communities.

Our nation's health depends on the health of our families and communities. The Elders, young people, and many families from our two communities have representatives at our panel table and have been involved throughout the process.



Significance Of The Land – Pípsell

The place that we call Pípsell, more commonly known as Jacko Lake, is situated in the mid elevation grassland and is a sacred place which requires an offering upon entering.

There is a history of wrongdoings concerning historical Secwepemc dispossession and alienation for the area surrounding Pípsell. It is a shameful legacy of Secwepemc being removed from the lands with government policies sanctioning settlers' pre-emptions claims and subsequent crown grants.

We have an irreplaceable historical, cultural and spiritual connection to Pípsell which derives from our Trout Children Sptékwle. It encapsulates and expresses our human connection as Stk'émłupsemc te Secwepemc to Pípsell. It sustains our Indigenous law about our conduct on the land and our reciprocal accountability

to living beings on the land, our social conduct across generations and within generations.

Pípsell continues to support high biodiversity with red and blue listed endangered birds and animals despite 150 years of livestock grazing, homesteads, ranching, mining and recreational use. It is a cultural keystone area of particular importance with 90+ different medicinal plants, 45 distinct food plant species and 39 species of animals.



Helping Each Other To Be Great And Good

We are respectful hosts who are looking for equitable relationships that respect our rights and title as we honour the vision of our ancestors who signed the Memorial to Wilfrid Laurier in 1910. It reflects our continued and consistent traditional concepts around being the hosts in our lands, and the reciprocity that the host-guest relationship entails. Our Chiefs clearly articulated, "With us when a person enters our house he becomes our guest, and we must treat him hospitably as long as he shows no hostile intentions. At the same time we expect him to return to us equal treatment for what he receives.

"These people wish to be partners with us in our country. We must, therefore, be the same as brothers to them, and live as one family. We will share equally in everything half and half in land, water and timber, etc. What is ours will be theirs, and what is theirs will be ours. We will help each other to be great and good."

The grassroots work that we have undertaken by conducting our own project assessment process is an invaluable resource for the review of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Process. In sharing about our process, it is our belief that much more common ground will be found between ourselves and our guests.