



St'k'emlúpsemc te Secwepemc (SSN)

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SSN making massive strides

The St'k'emlúpsemc te Secwepemc Nation (SSN) consists of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and Skeetchestn Indian Band, one of the seven historic "Divisions" of Secwepemc Nation. The St'k'emlúpsemc te Secwepemc Nation are responsible for Aboriginal Title and Rights on their Territory.

Over the past year, the SSN has been extremely busy and is starting to see major successes. One of the primary responsibilities of SSN is to engage with industry proposing projects in the territory. SSN ensures that proponents complete cultural heritage studies, project assessments, and negotiate benefits agreements. SSN has just completed negotiations on several major agreements. These agreements not only ensure SSN has a major say in environmental and cultural heritage protection, but propel SSN into a whole new era of business, training, and employment opportunities.

Further, SSN continues to pursue its title case, develop its own laws, secure new lands, negotiate a protected area at Pipsell, and maximize training and employment opportunities. SSN is working on so many more initiatives and will provide regular communications to SSN members and is organizing an Annual General Assembly.



SSN finalizes agreement to review HVC 2040 Project

SSN has developed its own Project Assessment process to review major projects within its traditional territory. This process was deployed for the Ajax Mine and led to the rejection of the proposed mine. The SSN has reignited the Project Assessment process to review the HVC 2040 Expansion Project.

Operating since the early 1960s, the current Teck Highland Valley Copper Partnership (HVC) mine has had a significant impact on the SSN territory. HVC now proposes a major expansion by way of two proposed projects, referred to as the "Bethlehem Extension" and the "2040 Project". This mine expansion is considered a major project and triggers SSN's project assessment process. SSN is pleased to announce that it has completed the negotiation of a Capacity Agreement with HVC to conduct an Indigenous-led Assessment of this expansion. The SSN Family Panel has already begun the review process and has successfully transitioned to conducting its deliberations virtually due to Covid 19.

Further, the SSN has completed a Cultural Heritage Study of the Highland Valley area, highlighting the significant cultural and spiritual importance of this area, as well as information on the Secwepemc use and occupancy of the area for thousands of years. SSN intends to coordinate with the Province of BC as it undertakes its own environmental assessment of the project, as well as other Indigenous entities that assert title and rights within the Highland Valley area.

The SSN continues to fulfill its mandate by utilizing its own Project Assessment process to review major projects proposed in the territory. SSN acknowledges the hard work of the Family Panel, comprised of family heads of Tk'emlups and Skeetchestn, during a major pandemic and the discovery of children at the residential school.

SSN Negotiates Cooperation Agreement with New Gold

The Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc (SSN) have finalized a comprehensive Cooperation Agreement with New Gold. Building on a decade-long relationship, New Gold and the SSN have updated and amended the previous Participation Agreement that guided their relationship. The new Cooperation Agreement is truly precedent-setting in its recognition of SSN title and decision-making authority.

The SSN and New Gold will officially sign the finalized Cooperation Agreement on October 28, 2021. This agreement enhances the financial benefits to SSN, will see the creation of major business opportunities, recognize SSN's decision-making authority, implementation of SSN legal orders, and a host of other benefits. It can be confidently stated that SSN has once again negotiated one of the most advanced mining agreements in Canada. A more detailed breakdown of the Cooperation Agreement will be provided after the upcoming signing ceremony. This is a major accomplishment and will provide major benefits to SSN members while positioning SSN to make key decisions to protect the environment.

SSN secures land from Government of Canada



The SSN is very proud to announce that it has acquired a 140 acre parcel of land with buildings adjacent to the Kamloops airport. This parcel of land was used as an agricultural research station for 80 years and closed its operations in 2013. Since that time, the SSN has been engaged with the federal government over the disposition of this land and indicated its interest in having the land returned to its original owners. The federal election slowed these negotiations, but in early October, representatives from the federal government gave verbal confirmation that the land will be returned to SSN. SSN acknowledges Canada's commitment to reconciliation through the return of this beautiful parcel of land and buildings that can still be used and occupied. The SSN has retained a design firm to develop a conceptual land use plan and is excited to engage SSN members in determining the future land use & signing ceremony (details to follow as no public announcement has been made yet).

Major Court victories drive SSN success

The SSN is not afraid to challenge decisions made by the federal and provincial governments that impact its title and rights. Some of the major court cases SSN have initiated are the Tree Farm License 35 (TFL 35) case, Trans Mountain pipeline (federal Court of Appeal), and several other challenges related to water use & disposition of SSN land. The SSN recently challenged Canadian National Railway (CN) and the Province of BC (Minister of Energy and Mines) on its operation of the McAbee Quarry. This quarry is owned by the CN, and is regulated by the Province of BC (Mines Act) for the production of ballast for the railway.

SSN sought a judicial review to stop the quarry, citing a failure to consult by the Crown. On October 12, 2021 Justice Gomery found that the Crown's consultation was a failure and it must redo its consultation, with costs in SSN's favor. The court also upheld BC's obligations under the Mining and Minerals Agreement. One of the big successes for SSN was that the Inspector must hold CN to progressively reclaim the Quarry, increase their reclamation security bond, and highlighted that these types of permits are not perpetual.

Although the judge stopped short of shutting down the Quarry, these decisions reinforce the Crown's duty to consult when issuing any type of permits in Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc territory. The SSN is also seeking title to its traditional territory and has filed a title case to the BC Supreme Court. This one of the most significant legal actions a Nation can pursue, and SSN continues defend its title and rights through legal action and provide leadership throughout the Secwepemc Nation by launching a title case against the Crown.