



Weyt-kp xwexwéyep. **Ryan Day** ren skwekst. Kukpi7 St'uxtewsemc te Secwépemc. Hello everyone. My Name is Ryan Day. I am elected Chief of Bonaparte Indian Band of the Secwepemc Nation. My mother is Anne Day and father is the late Micheal Day. I am a provider; hunter, berry picker, medicine gatherer and hand drummer. I practice ceremony and am a competitive Marathon runner.

I have a BA Economics from Simon Fraser University and a MA Indigenous Governance from the University of Victoria.

I believe, unequivocally, that our peoples are not only the rightful title and responsibility holders to our lands bestowed upon us by Tkelt Kukpi7 (creator) and our ancestors but also deserve justice for the last 150+ years of colonialism heaped upon us by the Canadian State. I firmly believe that this justice and path forward must be decided by the unfettered voices of our people. The freedom of the voices of our peoples, and the execution of the hopes and dreams of our peoples is at the Heart of our self-determination.

My story: In 2005 as a 23-year-old I returned from the World Championships for the Half Marathon and felt that my time as a professional runner served only myself. I decided I needed to contribute to our peoples. I volunteer mentored high-risk aboriginal youth in East Vancouver, which led to full-time work with the same youth, while I continued my aspirations of qualifying for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. This front line work was extraordinarily emotionally taxing so, when I failed to qualify for Beijing I made a change; I realized our peoples lacked depth of knowledge of Economics and I was interested in it. So I decided to get my degree in Economics in 2 years, then my masters degree in Indigenous governance following that.

In my MA program I learned that to get to the root of our struggle I needed to move to my homelands, the source of our strength and power, so I picked up and moved. My return was to contribute through my Masters Thesis work with Arthur Manuel on Economics. During this time, I also sat with my Elders, going to political meetings, community and Nation events, learning language, ceremony and providing meat for Elders. I was recognized for this service two years ago with the honour of being elected Chief by the widest margin remembered. I was subsequently made Secwepemc Spokesperson for the Interior Alliance, Health rep for the Secwepemc Nation and FNHC rep for the Interior Region.

Through my time in my studies of colonization/decolonization, through talks with Elders and mentors, I have learned of our history of political struggle but also a deep understanding of the struggle for freedom of Indigenous peoples around the globe. My passion and intention has always been getting our land back.

The solutions are similar globally. Our peoples need to heal; be on the land; learning their languages and performing our ceremonies; we need to teach our children the ways of our ancestors and their sacred relationship of responsibility to our lands and waters. In order to do this we must have access to and control over the health and well-being of our lands and waters. This requires working on the health and well-being of our peoples. The health of our lands is reflected in the health of our peoples; the health of our peoples is reflected in the health of our lands.

I believe that with my cultural groundedness, training in Economics, Law and Indigenous Governance, I can facilitate taking our struggle from the direction of the Chiefs Council Resolutions to a higher level of effectiveness. I would be honoured to do this work for all of our Peoples in the role of Vice President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. Kukstsemc.