



SPUZZUM FIRST NATION

Our Land. Our Future. Our Success. Forward Focused Nation Building.

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Re: Northern Spotted Owl (Species & Risk) and proposed logging of Old Growth Forests in Spô'zêm Traditional Territory, notably cutblocks or road infrastructure in the Spô'zêm Creek Watershed (Inkawthia, Spô'zêm, Mt. Urquhart watersheds within the Chilliwack Forest District)

Today Spô'zêm First Nation and the provincial government announced all logging within our Fraser Canyon forests that are home to the last known wild Spotted Owls in Canada will be held in abeyance for one year for further discussions on preserving the *Strix occidentalis caurina* species.

Since time immemorial the Nłe?kepmxcín speaking people of Spô'zêm Nation have lived as part of the ecosystem that defines us as much as we define it. We have words that create images, feelings, connections, and relationships to all that is around us, we have no words for extirpation but above all "extinction", we live harmoniously within our surroundings. As much as we need the land, the land needs us as its caretakers and protectors. Our traditional practices put sustainability at the forefront for future generations. Taking only what we need, respecting and maintaining our traditions.

In 1971 a Spô'zêm matriarch was called upon by our Ancestors to tell the story of our much-loved relatives, the skelúle? otherwise known as the Northern Spotted Owl (as named by the settlers of Canada). Our messengers are extremely powerful beings: they are the messengers to our spirit world and of our physical world. They are an indicative species of the health of an environment. They are the stoic beauty in our Spô'zêm matriarch, Hrome'Tik'Inquakosen's, artistic portrayal of our cherished relatives. Our matriarch's artistic documentation of skelúle? was instrumental in the preservation of our old growths in the Spô'zêm creek watersheds.

For years the Province systematically swathed throughout our Nation extracting major old growth forests while desecrating any chances of livelihood for the Spotted Owl. The old growths, also home to many precious medicines, is a another relative that will require the same efforts of sustainability and preservation for our future generations.

In 2009 the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) report was released with sustainability recommendations for the Northern Spotted Owl, the lack of Indigenous inclusion, consultation, and contributions was evident in the reports section of Aboriginal traditional knowledge whereby it reads; "The authors were unable to find any

Aboriginal traditional knowledge specifically referring to the Northern Spotted Owl." An action reiterating the generational lack of acknowledgment given to our Nations history in Canada as well as our matriarchs 1971 artistic historical documentation of our precious relative.

While our own stewards lost our sustainable practices as a result of colonialism, we are grateful that the Wilderness Committee reached out to our Nation for support in the effort of preserving our remaining elders, reminding us of our traditional practices and empowering us to return to our teachings for guidance. Spô'zêm Nation is a small yet powerful nation. Our traditions, our history, our sense of pride enabled us to stand up and unite our common goals with Joe Foy, protected areas campaigner with the Wilderness Committee alongside Eco Justice lawyers, Kegan Pepper-Smith and Andhra Avezedo.

Today we celebrate with pride as the true stewards of our nation and take back our traditions, teachings, land and promote our title and rights as a sovereign nation. Spô'zêm First Nation was proud to host a collaborative discussion last week which included Chiefs from across the province to witness the work. Special K'uk'stemc to Chief Ken Hansen Yale First Nation, our closet neighbor to the East, Chief Larry Nooski from our sister village of Nadleh Whuten who stood united with our nation and to Chief Byron Louis, Okanagan Band, an avid Indigenous voice for the Species at risk in BC who brought his expertise and historical knowledge to the discussions. Further acknowledgements by our Nation's Capital goes to Crystal, Spô'zêm Nation Administrator and to our amazing letter writer Lenore Baker, Squamish First Nation.

This monumental step forward in assertion of our title and rights could only have been achieved with the support of our Guiding Principles author/writer Gordon Mohs. It is with complete acceptance and acknowledgement by all those involved in this project that our nation feels confident we are on a new path forward setting the engagement standards and expectations in future endeavors with provincial ministries. We would like to acknowledge Kevin Chisholm, First Nation Relations Manager, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, for his commitment to our nation's interests around transparency and inclusion at all levels of government within this effort to save the Northern Spotted Owl.

Our Nation also recognizes government representatives who defied the status quo, regaining trust in government to government relationship building by being true to their word of the BC initiative set forth by Premier John Horgan and the NDP. Only a short time ago the province unanimously approved legislation to implement the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in its entirety.

With this new beginning we look forward to the day we can recognize this day in ceremony where we can rightfully honour all those who have made this day a reality for our Nation, our relatives, our future.

Húmeł

Hromtik'en kwakosen, Chief James Hobart