



TSESHAHT FIRST NATION

5091 Tsuma-as Dr. Port Alberni, BC V9Y 8X9
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For immediate release June 23, 2022

Re: Tseshaht Re-awakening of λuuk^watquuʔis

On Tuesday June 21st, 2022, on National Indigenous Peoples Day, for the first time in over a century, Tseshaht welcomed invited guests, surrounding Nations, and the broader community to our λuuk^watquuʔis (pronounced Tlu-kwat-kuu-is)-Wolf Ritual Beach. In partnership with the City of Port Alberni, we have worked hard to carry out the important business of appropriately marking this village site in the heart of our ɥaɥuuli (territory). On behalf of Tseshaht hereditary chiefs, elected Council, and community members we were honoured to share the significance of our historic village site, our language, song, dance, and so much more.

Tseshaht Indigenous oral histories and laws, as well as several published ethnohistories, are very clear that λuuk^watquuʔis lies entirely within Tseshaht ɥaɥuuli. Prior to and at the assertion of Crown sovereignty in 1846, Tseshaht exclusively occupied and asserted effective control over our ɥaɥuuli through an economic and cultural cycle of seasonal movement. Tseshaht wintered at the head of the Alberni Inlet and along the lower Somass River. Tseshaht's principal winter village site was λuuk^watquuʔis, where important winter ceremonies occurred, such as λuuk^waana or the wolf ritual. λuuk^watquuʔis lies entirely within Tseshaht ɥaɥuuli. Two earlier tribes, Hach'aaʔath and the Hikwuulhʔath amalgamated with Tseshaht at or around the turn of the 19th century and their territory became part of the ɥaɥuulhi of Tseshaht as a matter of Indigenous law. Hach'aaʔath and the Hikwuulhʔath obtained their territories in the Alberni valley and along the Somass River by hisʔukt (warfare). These territories included λuuk^watquuʔis. In 1860, Tseshaht was coerced by armed non-Aboriginal settlers to relocate from λuuk^watquuʔis to make way for construction of a mill and



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associated structures. ʕuukʷatquʔis has never been returned or properly restored to Tseshaht.

We honour the many Nations, as well as Indigenous and non-Indigenous guests who joined us to bear witness and mark this momentous occasion. We want to acknowledge Willard Gallic Jr. whose artwork eloquently brought life to commemoration of this site. We also want to acknowledge the staff, Council and the many people whose hard work and dedication made this day possible.

The cultural significance of this site has brought people together historically and continues to be a place of gathering and sharing to this day. On Tuesday, we welcomed the broader community to celebrate with us and embrace the connections forged in honouring our history and sharing our culture. We reawakened ʕuukʷatquʔis, unveiled the Wolf Tower and shared our truth in a historic day for not only Tseshaht but all people who joined us in our territory.

On behalf of Tseshaht Haʷwiih, Elected Council and all our 1200+ membership,
ʔuušʔakšičeʔicuu



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