

4.0 First Nations

4.1 Introduction

Indigenous people have lived in the South Cariboo Area for thousands of years prior to the arrival of settlers and gold seekers in the mid 1800s. The original people of the South Cariboo are the Secwepemc, or Shuswap Nation, an Interior Salish group whose larger traditional territory ranges from the eastern Chilcotin Plateau and the Cariboo Plateau southeast through the Thompson Country to Kamloops and beyond. Southern Secwepemc territory spans the Selkirk Mountains and includes the northern part of the Columbia Valley region. There are five principal Secwepemc communities with traditional territories in the Lac La Hache area:

- Tsq'escen' (Canim Lake)
- Stswecem'c Xgat'tem (Canoe Creek/Dog Creek)
- Xats'ull/Cmetem' (Soda Creek/Deep Creek)
- T'exelc (Williams Lake)
- Esketemc (Alkali)

Tsq'escen' (Canim Lake Band) and Esketemc (Alkali) are the only First Nations with reserves in the Plan Area. Canim Lake IR #4 is a 16 hectare site along the south-east shore of Lac La Hache. Windy Mouth IR #7 is a smaller reserve located along the north-central shore of Lac La Hache.

Tsq'escen' (Canim Lake), Stswecem'c Xgat'tem (Canoe Creek/Dog Creek), Xats'ull/Cmetem' (Soda Creek/Deep Creek), T'exelc (Williams Lake) are all part of the Northern Shuswap Tribal Council (NSTC) and a related Treaty Association, Northern Secwepemc te Qelmucw (NStQ). NStQ has been in treaty negotiations since in 1994. After completion of an Agreement in Principle in 2014, a referendum was held in each of the NStQ communities in February and April of 2016, with a narrow membership majority positively voting to move forward into Final Negotiations (Stage Five) of the six-stage treaty process. The Agreement in Principle was signed by representatives of Canada, British Columbia and the NStQ on December 15, 2016. The remainder of the Stage Five negotiations can take anywhere from three to five years to complete. Once a final agreement is negotiated, NStQ membership will conduct a final vote on whether to accept the negotiated treaty, before its implementation or Stage Six can begin.

Esketemc began negotiations in 1994, Esketemc signed on to begin negotiations and since 1998 Esk'etemc has been negotiating an Agreement-In-Principle.

4.2 Objectives

- 4.2.1 Improve communication and collaboration between the Cariboo Regional District and Tsq'escen' (Canim Lake) and other Northern Shuswap Tribal Council (NSTC) members on land use, transportation, natural resource management, and environmental planning matters of joint concern in the Plan Area.
- 4.2.2 Seek opportunities to work with First Nations within the Plan Area to recognize, protect and, where appropriate and feasible, facilitate the interpretation of important cultural sites and features in the Plan Area.

4.3 Policies

The Cariboo Regional District Board will:

- 4.3.1 Support the establishment of Protocol Agreements with Plan Area First Nations communities to address issues of mutual concern including the referral of development applications.
- 4.3.2 Consult with Tsq'escen' (Canim Lake) and other Northern Shuswap Tribal Council (NSTC) members through referrals on development proposals within the Plan Area and other appropriate planning avenues.
- 4.3.3 Support information sharing with Tsq'escen' (Canim Lake) and other Northern Shuswap Tribal Council (NSTC) members related to establishing recreation areas and trails, and their operation.
- 4.3.4 Encourage and support the Province to work with regional partners, including Tsq'escen' (Canim Lake), to improve safety of Canim Lake Road.
- 4.3.5 Recognize and celebrate the rich Northern Secwepemc cultural and cultural features that exist in the Plan Area.
- 4.3.6 Support the Province and other interest groups in identifying and protecting features and sites of Indigenous and archaeological significance within the Plan Area.