

TETÁCES Revitalization Project

Building a community to community relationship with the WSÁNEĆ People

The WSÁNEĆ Elders are coming to S,DÁYES!

“Whose Land is it?” documentary premiere co-hosted by the WSÁNEĆ School Board and the SGI Community Resource Centre

Wednesday, August 17th 3:00pm – 6:00pm

Pender Island Community Hall.

Tickets required, available at Talisman Books. Attendees will be invited to provide a donation at the door.

This documentary explores the long history of the WSÁNEĆ People in the Southern Gulf Islands – TETÁCES which translates as their “Relatives of the Deep” in the SENĆOFEN language.

Over the last eight years the WSÁNEĆ People and Pender Islanders have worked together to build a stronger community to community relationship. This engagement has included a range of events presented by WSÁNEĆ Elders and knowledge keepers organized by the South Pender Historical Society and supported by CRD grants including presentations on the WSÁNEĆ 13 moon calendar, the traditional reef net fishery, ethnobotany tours, and a SENĆOFEN language workshop.

In consultation with Elders we installed a 13 moon calendar at the Church of the Good Shepherd and one at the ancient village site QENEN,IW, where Poets Cove Resort is now located. On Canada’s 150 birthday the Historical Society and WSÁNEĆ leadership held a traditional pit cook and salmon bake for 150 islanders who participated in the Kairos blanket ceremony to explore the roots of colonization.

In 2017 the Historical Society in partnership with the Pender School, the Tsawout Learning House and St Peter’s Church, co-sponsored an eight-week education immersion program for six Pender and six Tsawout grade 7 students to explore WSÁNEĆ cultural history and special heritage places to provide presentations at their respective schools and also at the 2018 conference of the BC association of School Trustees.

In early 2020 the SGI Community Resource Centre in partnership with the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council and the WSÁNEĆ School Board and with funding support from the Real Estate Foundation of BC and the Capital Regional District held three 5-day climate action courses at Poets Cove Resort. The TETÁCES Climate Action Project included both WSÁNEĆ and island participants with presentations that braided traditional WSÁNEĆ knowledge with current climate science to develop culturally sensitive climate action plans.

The success of the TETÁCES Climate Action Project led to the TETÁCES Revitalization Project to support reconnection of the WSÁNEĆ people with their traditional homeland in the islands. The Community Resources Centre in partnership with the WSÁNEĆ School Board, WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council, Raincoast Conservation Foundation, and UVIC's Living Lab Project supported a series of trips for WSÁNEĆ Elders and youth to explore cultural heritage and to reconnect with their traditional homeland that was disrupted by colonization.

The project involves production of five videos including a video on WSÁNEĆ historical presence on each of the outer islands -- S,DÁYES (Pender), S,KFAK (Mayne), and TEKTEKSEN (Saturna) through the eyes of WSÁNEĆ Elders. A fourth animation video tells the story of TETÁCES and the creation of the islands. The primary video is "Whose Land is it?" which explores the long history of the WSÁNEĆ People and their connection with their traditional homeland in the Islands that was disrupted by colonization.

The videos will provide valuable curriculum materials for WSÁNEĆ youth in the WSÁNEĆ Tribal School and will be shared with Islanders at community forums to support the reconnection of the WSÁNEĆ People with their traditional homeland.