

Coming Home to ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ



The primary goal of the ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ Revitalization Project (TRP) is to support the reconnection of the ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ People with their traditional Homeland in the Southern Gulf Islands — ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ — their “relatives of the deep.” Over the last 18 months ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ Elders, community members and youth returned to Pender/S,ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ, Mayne/S,ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ and Saturna/ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ to reconnect with ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ — Homeland — to share traditional stories and practice sacred ceremonies including the First Salmon ceremony.

Extensive video footage from these visits have been masterfully woven together by Raincoast videographer Alex Harris into two 10-minute films focused on ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ presence on S,ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ and S,ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ and a 37-minute film — ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ — documenting the 5000 + year ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ presence in ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ and sharing ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ — ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ world view/birthright. The films feature ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ history and culture through the eyes of the Elders with portions of each film in ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ with subtitles.

The fourth film, a short animation video, created by ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ artist and ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ language revitalization teacher ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ (David Underwood), tells the story of the creation of ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ. In the creation story ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ (the creator) established the reciprocal obligation for the ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ People to look after ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ, their relatives of the deep, and in exchange the Islands, their relatives, would look after the people. The impacts of colonization in the last two centuries severed that sacred relationship. The TRP supports the revitalization of this important relationship.

The films were presented by Elders and the TRP planning teams at two community forums at S,ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ and S,ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ in August 2022. At both events ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ members shared traditional dance, drumming and song and Elders shared their history and heritage. The Blanketing Ceremony was especially moving as the ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ recognized islanders for their contributions toward reconcili-action. Many ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ, ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ — good feelings — were shared at these forums.

After the films forum participants identified reconciliation initiatives that would provide greater recognition of W̱SÁNEĆ rights in their unceded traditional Homeland and more respect for W̱SÁNEĆ CÉLÁNEN. These initiatives have been compiled and distilled and will be shared with all forum participants and other islanders.

A planning workshop, co-hosted by the TRP coordinating committee and the Pender Truth and Reconciliation Circle is scheduled for November 19th on S,DÁYES to prioritize the key reconciliation initiatives and determine how best to move forward together. The S,KƆAKƆ forum initiated a Truth and Reconciliation Circle on Mayne to explore reconciliation initiatives on their Island.

The four films are now being shown to W̱SÁNEĆ community members and W̱SÁNEĆ Tribal School students. When these showings have been completed, the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board, who owns the films, will determine their further distribution. The films and footage from island visits will also be used for curriculum materials for the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board.

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The W̱SÁNEĆ remind us — ÁŁE ŁTE U, TU,E ÁŁE — “We are still here!”

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