



## Chilliwack River Valley Van Tour

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On Friday, January 20, 2006, several individuals from the CRWS communications sub-committee and Sto:lo Nation toured the Chilliwack River Valley together. The purpose of the tour was to provide an opportunity for:

- Informal discussion and relationship building between CRWS project team reps and First Nation reps
- Building an understanding of some of the key challenges/issues in the CRV from a First Nations perspective
- Discussion about how the project team can better engage First Nations as we go forward



**Participants:** Frank Malloway, Marion Robinson, David Schaepe, Graham Daneluz, Larry Commodore, David Barnes, Tom Cadieux, Krista Englund (missing from photo)

## Stop #1: Soowahlie Indian Reserve

The first stop of the tour was an old village site of Th'ewa': li' located on the Soowahlie Reserve adjacent to the gravel operation. This site is strategically located at the top of hill adjacent to Sweltzer Creek to provide good access to sun, water and fish, an excellent view of the surrounding landscape, and good defense. There is evidence of burial mounds and house pit depressions throughout the site.



The growth pattern of moss at this site reveals the likely placement of longhouses (due to the chemical changes caused by building materials (e.g. cedar) decomposing)



These house depressions provide evidence of settlement over the last thousand years.

## Stop #2: Thompson Park

Continuing up the valley, the next stop was at Thompson Park to check some minnow traps set by David Barnes the night before in the newly constructed ponds. Approximately 50 coho fry were found in each trap! The overwintering habitat provided by these new ponds appears to be functioning as planned!



Newly constructed ponds at Thompson Park.



Connection to Lovely Pond/Ryder Crk.



David checking the minnow trap.



Coho fry.

### Stop #3: Allison Pools Forestry Recreation Site

The third stop of the tour was the forestry recreation campsite at Allison Pools. The fact that a present day campsite is located in the same place as this pre-contact settlement, known as Iy'oythel is not surprising and shows that humans have valued the same characteristics for millennia. Unfortunately, several of the house pit depressions at this site have been impacted by recreational use of the area.



Rock wall built into the edge of a house pit depression.



The oldest house depression in the Valley:  
~4500 years old.



Trails running along the edge of a house pit depression.

#### Stop #4: Chilliwack Lake

Archaeological evidence indicates that most pre-contact settlements in the valley were concentrated between Vedder Crossing and Chilliwack Lake, with major villages occurring at each end. Some remnant features including at least one house pit marked the location of the village called Sxo'tsaqel in what is now the campground at Chilliwack Lake.



This level area near the campground is cultural: it indicates the location of a structure of some kind, possibly a longhouse or part of the historic logging camp.



As with many of the other sites in the valley, there are a series of house pit depressions at this site, like this one behind Larry.



The group at Chilliwack Lake.



Marion and Frank.

### **Stop #5: Chilliwack Settlement Site**

This site, located along the bench road, is the location of another traditional settlement. David pointed out the fact that the centennial trail runs right through the cultural site. Unfortunately, no photographs of this site turned out.

### **Stop #6: Chilliwack River Valley Lookout**

The last stop of the tour was at a lookout high above the valley along the bench road. At this stop, we had a great view of the valley, including the Tolmie Slide. The wonderful view and the fact that the sun joined us at this stop for the first time that day was diminished in part by the garbage that had been thrown down the bank at this site.



Looking out across the valley...



Looking down the bank...

## Other Points of Interest



Chipmunk Creek.



Beaver lodge.



Beavers busy at work...

## **Resources Identified During Tour**

Oliver Wells' book "The Chilliwacks and Their Neighbours"

SFU Chilliwack River Traditional Land Use Study. School of Resource and Environmental Management. Chad Day's Dept. 1993? Had a scale model of the Valley.

Mike Watson has a video of Slesse Watershed Traditional Uses

Video – Frank Malloway – "This Land... Our Land..."

Many papers in the bibliography contain info that David described on his tour. There is one that focuses on settlements (e.g. Allison Pool settlement).

## **Interests, Issues and Alternatives Identified During Tour**

- Impacts of trails on cultural sites (e.g. Slesse Park, Chilliwack site, Allison pools, etc). Maybe contact Bill Archibald – Haney Horsemen regarding the centennial trail. Maybe Leon Lebrun?
- Many alpine archaeological sites/settlements have not yet been identified. There could be concerns about impacts to these sites as well.
- Breakdown in passing information on from the Ministry of Forests to contractors regarding sensitive cultural sites and the law (e.g. Allison Pool).
- There are issues about how public you make knowledge of sensitive archaeological sites for fear of encouraging vandalism. Tom suggested that First Nations should have the contracts for the forestry rec sites. That way, knowledge about sensitive sites would not have to be disclosed outside of the First Nations community.
- One suggestion has been to install a toll booth on the road. Residents would get stickers that would allow them to drive through. A small fee would/could be charged at the gate. It would allow us potentially to identified individuals engaging in illegal activity (e.g. dumping)?
- Impact of recreation and other land use activities on caves that have cultural significance. There are a number of caves in the valley, particularly in the Slesse Creek area, that have cultural significance.

- Protocol for dealing with human remains found in the valley. There was an incident where some human remains were discovered in a cave not far from a traditional village/settlement site. This case was investigated by the RCMP before notifying Sto:lo Nation. It was later discovered that this might be the remains from a nearby Sto:lo archaeological settlement. Had Sto:lo Nation been notified about this case before the investigation had started, they could have collaborated with the RCMP and obtained more information.

### **Engaging First Nations in the Future**

The Chi-ihl-kway-uhks are meeting on Thursday January 26. It was suggested/agreed that someone or a group of people come and deliver a presentation about the Strategy.