



DRAFT Issues & Alternatives Document

Stó:lō Cultural Heritage Resource Management

July 15, 2008



Pit house depressions
in old Soowahlie
village site



Traditional
bathing site at
Tamihi Creek



Sto:lo Display at
Thompson Park

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Chilliwack River Watershed Strategy Issues & Alternatives: STÓ:LŌ CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

1.0 General Description of the Issues

“S’olh Téméxw te ikw’elò. Xólhmet te mekw’stám ít kwelát.”

The Stó:lō (‘People of the River’) have lived in and have called home the Lower Fraser River Watershed for thousands of years. The Stó:lō homeland is called S’ólh Téméxw – ‘our world.’ The Stó:lō, as a ‘tribe of tribes,’ are represented by numerous tribal groups, like the Ts’elxweyeqw Tribe, most of whom are associated with a tributary watershed connected to the greater cultural region. Stó:lō heritage is a part of the landscape of this region in many ways. Taking care of Stó:lō heritage – including ancestral relations to land and resources – is governed by the *halq’eméylem* statement (above) meaning “This is our land. We have to take care of everything that belongs to us” (Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual 2003).

The introduction to the Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual (2003) provides a synopsis of Stó:lō history and relations between the land and people in *S’olh Téméxw*:

We were put here by the creator, Chichelh Siya:m, but the world was chaotic. So, Xexá:ls (the Transformers) and Tel Swayel (Sky-Borne people) came to make the world right and transform it into its present form.

In their travels through our territory Xexá:ls punished many of the hurtful and inconsiderate people responsible for the chaos affecting our world. Some of these people were turned into stone and remain, to this day, in this form. To complete their work Xexá:ls changed some good people into valuable and useful resources like the cedar tree, salmon, beaver, and black bear. Some, like Lhílheqey (Mt. Cheam), were transformed into mountains. We have depended on these and other resources for our survival and prosperity. These resources were used in a way that was consistent with the special bond that exists between them and us. Due to the way our family tree connects the past and future generations, we regard these transformed ancestors as still living with and amongst us. In today’s world, as in the distant past, their shxwelí – spirit or life force – inhabits the resources in our territory. Before we change or alter our environment we must consider the way our actions will affect these resources – the living spirits of our ancestors. The way we use the landscape must be consistent with our beliefs, our relations, and our world view.

Our heritage stems from our occupation and use of S’olh Téméxw since the beginning of time, as the first inhabitants of this land. Our world, unlike that of many of our present-day neighbours, includes inseparable spiritual and material realms. The transformation events of Xexá:ls and Tel Swayel created places that prove our direct link to Chichelh Siya:m. We view our place and actions in the world as the centre of a continuum extending seven generations past and seven generations forward. We live today in the world of both our

ancestors and relatives yet to come. Our heritage – including our land, resources, people and ancestors – is ultimately all that we are. Our heritage must be treated with respect.

A significant contemporary issue, fueled by the significant rise in land alteration and multiplicity of uses of land and resources with the region, is the need to recognize Stó:lō cultural heritage resources and to develop ways of treating them respectfully. Long-standing Stó:lō teachings, many of which are drawn from the landscape itself, serve as principals guiding the respectful treatment of cultural heritage resources. Some general themes of these principals include:

- don't waste, take only what you need
- don't ruin
- don't destroy what belongs to us
- think of the future generations.

2.0 Specific Examples/Locations

Significant and wide ranging heritage resources are located within the Chilliwack River Valley – ancestral home of the Ts'elxweyeqw ('Ch-ihl-kway-uhk') Tribe of Stó:lō – after whom the river and valley were named. Archaeological evidence of Ts'elxweyeqw occupation of their watershed extends back in time at least 4,000 years, and likely much longer. While many important cultural heritage sites, features, and places of use are currently known, a comprehensive inventory of heritage resources in the area is far from complete.

Many of the archaeological sites in the valley were located and mapped in 1997 (Schaepe 1998). The Archaeological Inventory Study of the Chilliwack River Watershed, funded by Forest Renewal British Columbia (FRBC), was initiated as a pilot study for archaeological inventory in Stó:lō traditional territory. The rationale for the study was to broaden the knowledge base concerning the types and distribution of archaeological sites within the watershed, and to gather data that would allow better decision making with regard to managing development, land use, and activities that impact the landscape and threaten archaeological sites.

The need for this work is driven by a demonstrated lack of recognition of and respect for Stó:lō – Ts'elxweyeqw cultural heritage resources in the Chilliwack River Watershed, as elsewhere. In some cases, cultural heritage sites have been damaged as a factor of not being recognized. Sacred bathing sites at a number of locations in the valley have been impacted by alteration of the landscape and/or increasing recreational uses around them, impacting on Stó:lō religious practices. Archaeological sites have been disturbed or destroyed by development associated with the wide range of user activities. In the past ten years alone, a number of sites including a pithouse settlement and burial mound complex have been respectively disturbed and destroyed within the valley – despite efforts to increase the profile of cultural heritage resource management.

Since 2003, the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council have developed and implemented a Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual and related Heritage Resource Management Plan. Major elements of this ongoing work involve defining Stó:lō heritage resources, inventorying heritage sites and places, and

developing a management framework for the respectful treatment of Stó:lō cultural heritage within S'ólh Téméxw. Much of this information is compiled in a GIS database as a means of facilitating information sharing with resource managers (e.g., forestry, parks/recreation, fisheries) in the region.

3.0 Contributing Factors/Causes

The following factors have been noted as potentially contributing factors to the concerns expressed about Stó:lō cultural heritage resource management within the Chilliwack River Watershed:

- A lack of understanding and awareness of Stó:lō cultural heritage and its importance to the Stó:lō peoples
- The fact that when heritage sites are destroyed they cannot be replaced or recovered
- Due to the interconnectedness between the culture and landscape, impacts to the landscape are prone to affecting integral aspects of Stó:lō lifeways that are dependent upon access to the land and resources -- causing cultural stress, loss of cultural knowledge, and loss of the places necessary for a wide range of cultural practices
- A lack of knowledge leads to a loss of knowledge
- Conflicting interests regarding landscape use
- Increasing pressure across a wide range of industrial sectors and user groups can affect heritage sites as a result of actions including land alteration, habitat alteration, pollution (air, noise, water), population pressure and infringements on privacy. For example:
 - Forestry activities can affect heritage sites (e.g., removal of vegetation=changing cultural landscapes)
 - Urban and rural development can affect heritage sites (e.g., use of water, re-routing, pollution, reduction in wildlife habitat, loss of hunting, fishing, gathering places)
 - Recreational activities can affect heritage sites (e.g., trampling, erosion).

Examples of all of these factors contributing to unmitigated, adverse impacts on Stó:lō and other non-aboriginal cultural heritage values can be found within the Chilliwack River Watershed.

4.0 Overall Level of Community Concern

A high level of Stó:lō community-based concern, particularly among the Ts'elxweyeqw Tribe, applies to the cultural heritage resources of the Chilliwack River Valley. A relatively high level of non-aboriginal community-based concern appears to exist among the local valley residents and the local proponents of 'pioneer' or 'settler' history for the non-aboriginal heritage resources within the watershed. On the contrary, a relatively low level of concern exists among the majority of non-aboriginal community-based users regarding the cultural heritage resources in the Chilliwack River Watershed. This apparent lack of concern seems largely attributable to: (1) a lack of understanding or knowledge among user groups and resource managers; and (2) a lack of legal protection for a full range of cultural heritage resources.

5.0 Past/Current Actions or Strategies to Address the Issue

A number of actions taken to address these issues have been initiated since 1996 by the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council, the Ch-ihl-wkay-uhk Tribe, and the Ministry of Forests, among others. These actions take the form of various studies (e.g., archaeological inventories, archaeological impact assessments, traditional use studies, place-names studies, and landscape feature inventories) aimed at: (1) raising awareness of cultural heritage sites and places, (2) documenting their locations, and (3) establishing management strategies with the broader intent of developing a more effective and comprehensive cultural heritage resource management program for the watershed and the broader region. The Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual, Stó:lō Heritage Management Plan, and Stó:lō Cultural Heritage Overview and Impact Assessment Process were developed and moved into practice over the last ten years. Efforts to share these management tools and develop relationships with non-aboriginal resource use / management agencies has increased since the late-1990s.

6.0 Relevant Policies and Legislation

Primary legislation for cultural heritage resource management is the Provincial Heritage Conservation Act (HCA).¹ The HCA protects against the disturbance (removal, attempted removal, damage, desecration, alteration, covering, digging, or excavation) of any “heritage site” or “heritage object,” except as authorized by a permit issued (under Section 12 – Site Alteration Permit - or Section 14 – Heritage Inspection Permit - of the Act). Non-compliance with or defiance of the HCA resulting in an unpermitted impact to an archaeological site carries stiff penalties with fines of up to \$50,000 for individuals or \$1,000,000 for corporations, and jail time.

The HCA attempts to protect the material culture remains, as the material remains of past human activity generally limited to remains pre-dating 1846 AD, that constitute archaeological sites. As the material evidence of past human activity represents only a small sample of what constitutes past human land use, the HCA does not protect the full range of cultural heritage sites recognized by the Stó:lō.

To compensate for the lack of recognition of the majority of Stó:lō Heritage resources and values either in provincial legislation or among resource extraction and management agencies, the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council Chiefs adopted the current Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual in 2003. The ‘Heritage Policy’ provides an informative, functional policy document that can be used by the public, government, and/or industry to guide decision making and outline the necessary process steps for the respectful consideration and protection of Stó:lō cultural heritage in relation to land use and development within *S’ólh Téméxw*. The vision of the Policy is to “promote better understanding between peoples in order to create a better and healthier way of life for all living within *S’ólh Téméxw*” (Stó:lō Nation 2003).

The Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual is understood by the Stó:lō Nation / Tribal Council to work in conjunction with, and in addition to, the policies and protocols of other Stó:lō First Nations that share a collective interest protecting and preserving Stó:lō heritage (Stó:lō Nation 2003).

¹ RSBC, 1996

The spectrum of sites identified and protected under the Stó:lō Heritage Policy (2003) is outlined below as per Schaepe (2007):

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Sxwóxwiyám Sites | sites, objects and/or features of that period of the distant past “when the world was out of balance” accounting for Stó:lō origins, including: |
| | Transformation Sites – features of the landscape created by <i>Xexá:ls</i> (‘the Transformers), or any other agent(s) of Chichelh Siy:ám (‘the Creator’) |
| | Xá:xa Sites – powerful, spiritual places on the landscape including places where people interact with the spiritual realm (questioning places), Stl’áleqem sites, habitat of spiritual beings (stl’áleqem or s’ó:lmexw), and Sxwó:xwey sites, places associated with the origins of ceremonial regalia, songs, and dances. |
| Ceremonial Regalia Sites | sites where ceremonial regalia was stored, or ‘put away’, which may be spiritually potent. |
| Material Culture Sites | material remains of past human activity (e.g., archaeological artifacts, features, sites) |
| Traditional Activity Sites | places where Stó:lō traditional cultural activities were, or are, carried out. |
| Halq’eméylem Place Names | places in the landscape with recognized Halq’eméylem names |

Other issues and considerations covered in the Stó:lō Heritage Policy include language, intellectual properties and cultural practices. Full details of the types of sites and aspects of heritage protected by the Policy are provided in the Policy Manual (2003).

The guidelines for the treatment of heritage sites and objects are drawn from Stó:lō teachings and fall under five core concept areas:

1. Determine ownership and caretaking responsibility

As Stó:lō belief states, material, and objects belong to those who made them. Stó:lō maintain ownership of and jurisdiction over all Stó:lō heritage sites and objects.

2. Respect all things

Stó:lō heritage sites and objects must be treated with respect.

3. Remember the future generations

The management of heritage sites, objects, and information must reflect ancestral Stó:lō values for the purpose of protecting and preserving our way of life into the future. We must consider our heritage accordingly and be respectful of our relatives.

4. Don’t ruin, waste, destroy everything; just take what you need

Resource and land use must be planned such that they conflict as little as possible with Stó:lō heritage interests. Mitigation and/or compensation is required where impacts to Stó:lō heritage are unavoidable or otherwise occur. Conflicts with and impacts to Stó:lō heritage must be justified as well as minimized.

5. Know your history

Knowing your history is tied to knowing your identity and knowing how to behave properly in today's world. We must make efforts to respectfully and accurately learn about and share our history with others.

7.0 Vision & Goals

7.1 Vision

All individuals with ties to the Chilliwack River Watershed respect First Nations' concerns pertaining to heritage, the land, and its treatment. First Nations' heritage is shared with everyone and a better understanding between peoples promotes a better and healthier way of life for all living within S'olh Téméxw.

7.2 Goals

1. To protect, preserve, and manage Stó:lō heritage – in all its forms – in a manner consistent with Stó:lō values, beliefs, and traditions.
2. To encourage cooperation amongst organizations – both Stó:lō and non- Stó:lō – in the protection, preservation and management of Stó:lō heritage.
3. To promote healthy relationships between the contemporary Stó:lō community and Stó:lō ancestors – past, present, and future.
4. To help maintain the integrity of Stó:lō history and heritage through the respectful treatment of Stó:lō knowledge, heritage objects, and sites.
5. To advance knowledge and understanding of Stó:lō heritage.
6. To help maintain continuity in Stó:lō heritage and in the practice of cultural traditions in forms both old and new (Stó:lō Nation 2003).

7.3 Measures

Specific measures that can be used to monitor progress towards these goals include:

1. Involving the Stó:lō (e.g., Ts'elxweyeqw Tribe, Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council) in resource management decision-making processes.
2. Facilitating and engaging in effective First Nations consultation.
3. Increasing compliance with the Stó:lō Heritage Policy Manual applications (100% development compliance with policies).
4. Increasing the application of and compliance with the Stó:lō Heritage Resource Management Plan, re: development-related assessment requirements and land use planning.

5. Provide better enforcement of regulations and in-field monitoring of activities within the watershed.
6. Increased investment of funds and resources aimed at inventorying Stó:lō cultural heritage sites and places.
7. Increase collaboration between Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō organizations on projects affecting the watershed.
8. Work to raise awareness, recognition, and appreciation of Stó:lō cultural heritage uses, resources, and values within the watershed among the general populations of users (e.g., interpretive programs) as well as among resource managers and land use planners (e.g., workshops).

8.0 Recommendations

There are a number of ways in which a greater respect for Stó:lō –Ts’elxweyeqw cultural heritage resources can be promoted in the watershed, including:

1. Providing First Nations involvement in shared decision making processes
2. Implementation of Stó:lō policies and management programs
3. Funding research and in-field monitoring programs
4. Celebrating cultural diversity/respect and facilitating cross-cultural education/awareness

The following represent the primary recommendations of the CRWS Project Team to address Stó:lō cultural heritage resource issues in the watershed:

1. Directly involve Stó:lō agencies (e.g., Ch-ihl-kway-uhk Tribe, Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council) in decision-making processes and in facilitating and engaging in effective First Nations consultation.
2. Increased profile and funding allocated for heritage research funding aimed at increasing cultural heritage inventory and management capacity.
3. Encourage FVRD and local government to assist in asserting policy compliance and collaboration with First Nations, under the guidance of Stó:lō agencies.
4. Support in-field monitoring of activities (e.g., ‘watershed rangers’).
5. Support cross-cultural education / awareness within the Chilliwack River Watershed.

9.0 References

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