



MEDIA RELEASE

Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation (SSN) says No to KGHM Ajax Mine and Yes to Healthy People and Environment

March 4, 2017 (Kamloops), Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation (SSN) does not give its free, prior and informed consent to the development of the lands and resources at Pípsell (Jacko Lake and Area) for the purposes of the Ajax Mine Project.

The Ajax Mine Project in its proposed location at Pípsell is in opposition to the SSN land use objective for this profoundly sacred, culturally important, and historically significant keystone site which significance is fundamental and undiminished.

The Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation, representing the communities of Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc and Skeetchestn Indian Band, has an irreplaceable historical, cultural and spiritual connection to Pípsell. This connection is deeply rooted in one their oral histories: the Trout Children Stseptékwll. The Trout Children Oral History is inseparably connected to the place of the proposed Ajax mine site. It encapsulates and expresses the human connection of Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc, to Pípsell. It sustains Secwepemc law about Secwepemc conduct on the land and the reciprocal accountability to living beings on the land, social conduct across generations and within generations.

The SSN Joint Council, composed of the elected leadership of Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc and Skeetchestn Indian Band, made this decision in accordance with SSN's laws, traditions, customs and land tenure systems supported by the evidence and assessments as presented in the Pípsell Report and SSN Panel Recommendations Report.

QUOTES

"We say no to this project in order to say yes to the health of our community members and our neighbours in Kamloops and surrounding area. For our two communities united through SSN, it does not make sense to sacrifice for all time all that we have in Pípsell to obtain limited benefits which will last for only 25 years. Many impacts were not and cannot be monetized including the adverse impacts on our cultural heritage as well as impacts on the environment." – Fred Seymour, Chief, Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc

"It is our duty to our future generations to hold the provincial and federal governments accountable regarding any proposed development that will impact the territory that we have the sacred obligation of being stewards of since time immemorial. We want to protect and share in the wonder of the place known as Pípsell. Our decision to preserve and sustain Pípsell is for the long-term benefit of all Canadians, ensuring the future enjoyment of this special place serves to further reconciliation, so that we may all be great and good." – Terry Deneault, Acting Chief, Skeetchestn

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BACKGROUND

The Stk'émłúpsəmc te Secwépəmc Nation Project Assessment Process for KGHM Ajax was:

- Founded on SSN laws and traditional governance structures that transcend time.
- Centered on SSN rich cultural perspectives, collective knowledge and history that goes back millennia.
- Built on the principle of Walking on Two Legs- Secwépəmc and Western support. Information was provided both in oral and written format.
- A long view that delved into the long-term intergenerational impacts as well as the precontact past to address the legacy of wrongs that Secwépəmc people have faced since Canada and British Columbia's foundation.
- In-depth, examining aspects that are currently lost in the BC and Canadian Environmental processes and inclusive of information regarding the "intangible" impacts to spirit, culture & immeasurable impacts.

The Review Panel is comprised of the elected Chiefs and Councillors as well as 26 individuals made up of Elders, youth and individuals who are appointed by their family. They were provided the very best information from SSN Elders, Knowledge Keepers such as hunters and medicine people, as well as Western science experts

The SSN's Project Assessment Process was developed to:

Facilitate informed decision-making by the SSN Communities in a manner which is consistent with our laws, traditions, and customs and assesses project impacts in a way that respects our knowledge and perspectives.

The SSN Panel identified Pípsell as uniquely situated to serve as a place of sharing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as what makes it stand out – its abundant fish, wildlife and grasslands, its proximity to Kamloops, are inviting to all who frequent the area.

SSN's overarching land use objective for Pípsell and the surrounding area is:

Pípsell is a cultural keystone area that must be preserved in a state consistent with the traditional importance of the site to the Secwépəmc people. Pípsell must only be used in ways which preserve and sustain the area, and which allow for the culture of the Secwépəmc people to be exercised and maintained.

The following activities consistent with the land use objective may include:

Designation of the area as a cultural heritage site	Restorative purposes, which allow for the lands
Educational uses	and resources to be revitalized and restored to its
Non-destructive resource uses	historical state prior to any non-Indigenous uses.
Cultural uses	

Stk'émłúpsəmc te Secwépəmc Nation's decision to preserve and sustain Pípsell is for the long-term benefit of all Canadians; ensuring the future enjoyment of this special place serves to further reconciliation, so that we may all be great and good.