

AUGUST 2019

Northern Secwepemc Cultural Society



Securing our future - a new cultural centre

“Our culture will save us in a world that has turned upside down.”



Who we are

The Northern Secwepemc Cultural Society was constituted in July 2006, and comprises as its voting members, representatives of the five Northern Secwepemc First Nations, namely

- Tsq'escen (Canim Lake Band)
- Stswecem'c/Xgat'tem (Canoe Creek Indian Band)
- Esk'temc (Alkali Lake Indian Band)
- Xat'sull (Soda Creek Indian Band) and
- T'exelc (Williams Lake Indian Band)

Each of the five Bands is represented by two voting members who are joined by two non-voting members appointed by the 100 Mile House & District Historical Society.

If you require additional information about this initiative, please contact:

**Graham Leslie, Director and Secretary
Northern Secwepemc Cultural Society**

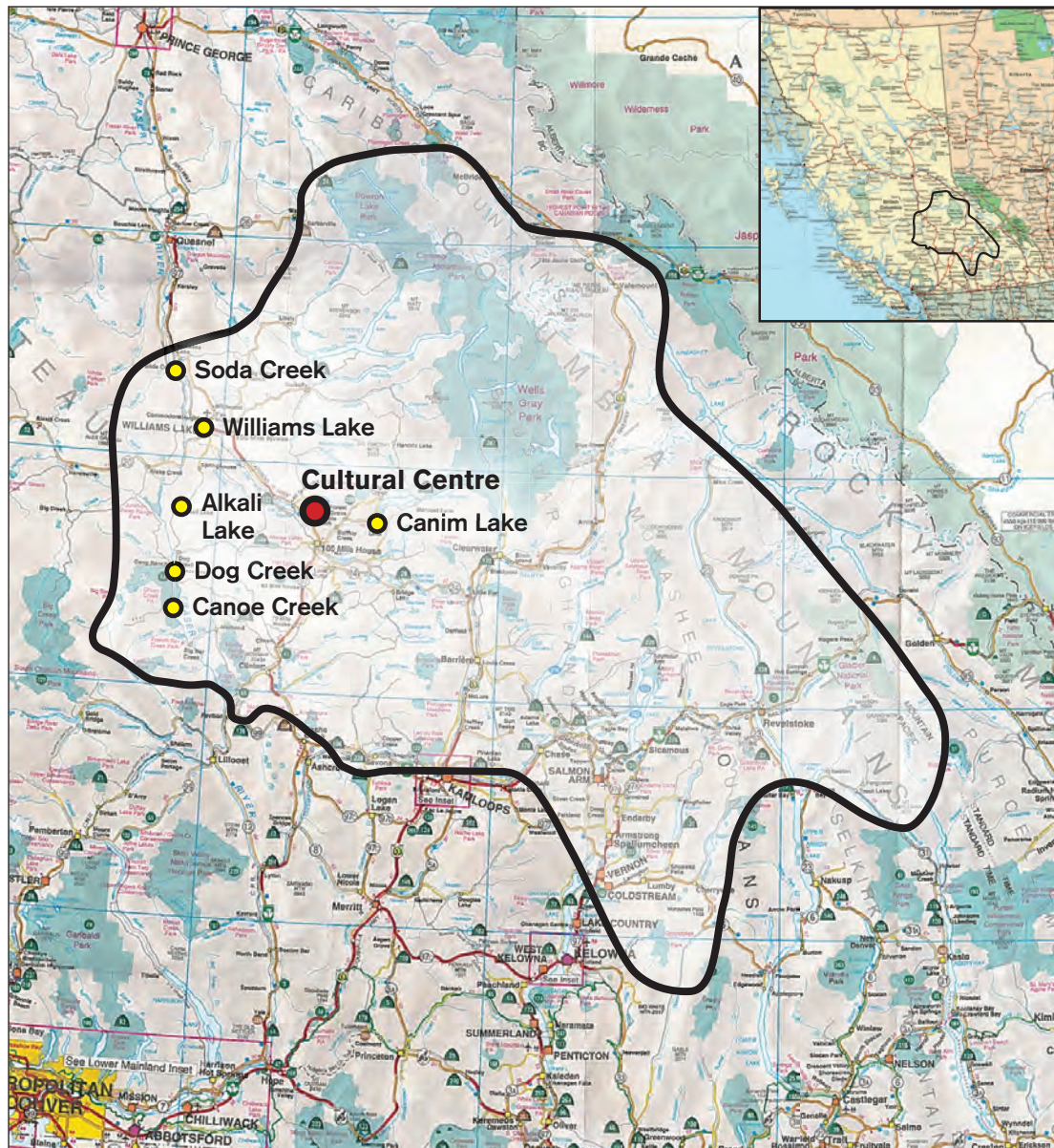
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Map from: Kootenay Rockies – KOOTENAYROCKIES.COM – HELLO BC.COM

“We are directly connected to the land and everything in it.
We are derived from a speck of dust; Mother Earth, Father Sky,
Grandmother Moon, Grandfather Sun.”



“People have to start seeing
the other side [of the story].
We have to show the true story.
We have to educate people.”

What we need

The Northern Secwepemc Cultural Society and its five participating member First Nations are seeking the funding to construct a medium-sized cultural centre and museum in the traditional territory of the Secwepemc people in the South Cariboo region of British Columbia.



The total amount required for the site development, landscaping, construction, exhibits and ancillary expenses, is estimated at \$6.5 million, including a modest contingency to cover anticipated escalation in costs at the time of actual construction.

The opportunity for the Society's participating member First Nations to make a significant contribution towards the funding will be covered by their commitment to fund the annual operating deficits that are projected to amount to \$125,000 in the first year of operations, and are certain to run close to that amount in subsequent years.

Elsewhere in this brochure we will note the financial contributions that our member First Nations have already made, and that, together with generous grants from numerous external sources, have enabled our project to reach its current stage.

“We are surviving and we'll continue to survive if we stay within our culture.”



“Language is your identity,
a direct line to your lineage.
Without your language,
you don't have a lot.”



Why we need it

The constitution adopted by our Society in July 2006 includes as the Society's purposes the following.

- to gather and preserve information, records and objects of educational, historical and cultural value associated with the participating Indian Bands, and without limiting the generality of the foregoing, and
- to establish and maintain a museum for the purpose of preserving, recording and exhibiting such material for the education and enjoyment of the general public and for the general benefit of the members of the participating Indian Bands.

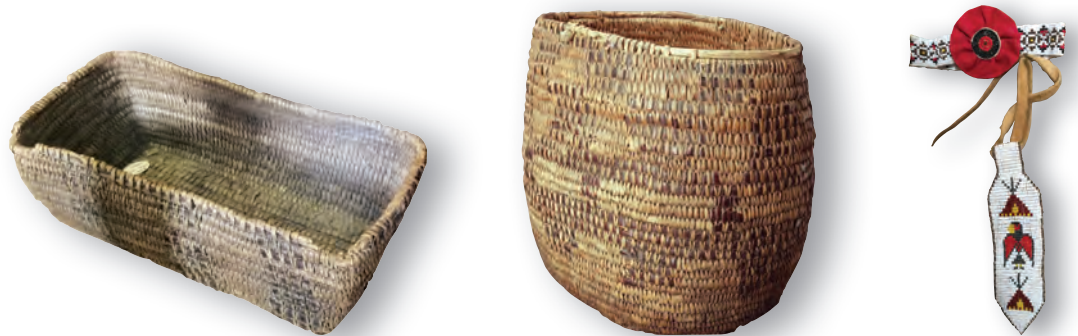
“True-blue Shuswap culture. Things are getting spread out and the real history isn't being taught.”




Since 2004, two years prior to the incorporation of the Northern Secwepemc Cultural Society, the sole aim of the First Nations representatives has been to take all necessary steps to achieve the goals set out in what became the Society's purposes as stated in its constitution. Those steps are outlined in a subsequent section.

In common with many other First Nations in Canada, The Northern Secwepemc Bands are extremely concerned about the potential loss of their language and about the desirability of maintaining pride in their culture and their history among Band members and most particularly among their youth. It is the aim of the cultural centre project to assist in the preservation of the language and in the enhancement of the pride that the Elders feel with regard to their history and culture.

A secondary but extremely important objective is to educate the non-indigenous population about the history and the culture of our Northern Secwepemc Bands and their members. Indigenous stories contain valuable lessons for us all on conservation, stewardship and human values.



A landscape photograph showing a field of tall, green and yellow grasses in the foreground. In the background, there is a dense forest of green trees under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. A small, light-colored building with a brown roof is visible on the right side of the image.

“We are powerful people
because we do things
from the heart.”

What we have accomplished, so far

After 15 years of continuous effort, our Society has everything in place to start construction and to prepare the exhibits and programs that have already been designed.

We have acquired the land which is appropriately zoned and otherwise suitable for construction.

We have a business plan prepared in July 2014, the major conclusions of which remain valid in 2019, but which in all likelihood will need updating with minor modifications nearer the time of construction.

We have the construction documents ready to go to tender for the construction phase, prepared as the result of meticulous work carried out by the renowned firm of **McFarland Marceau Architects Ltd.**

Finally we have an Exhibit Design Road Map prepared by **D. Jensen & Associates Ltd.**, one of Canada's leading exhibit design consulting firms, which paves the way for the actual production of the exhibits and programs that will be featured in our cultural centre.



A chronological listing of the numerous steps we have taken since 2004 follows.

- 2005 Topographic Survey
- 2005 Archaeological Impact Assessment
- 2009 Feasibility Study
- 2013 Architects' Conceptual Design Report
- 2014 Environmental Site Assessment
- 2014 Land Acquisition completed
- 2014 Business Plan
- 2016 Architects' Design Development Report
- 2018 Architects' Construction Documents
- 2019 Exhibit Design Road Map Report

As can be understood from the above listing, the progress made towards the Society's eventual goal has been slow but steady, and reflects the perseverance and determination of successive Band Councils that have supported the project consistently throughout the past 15 years.

Momentum is building



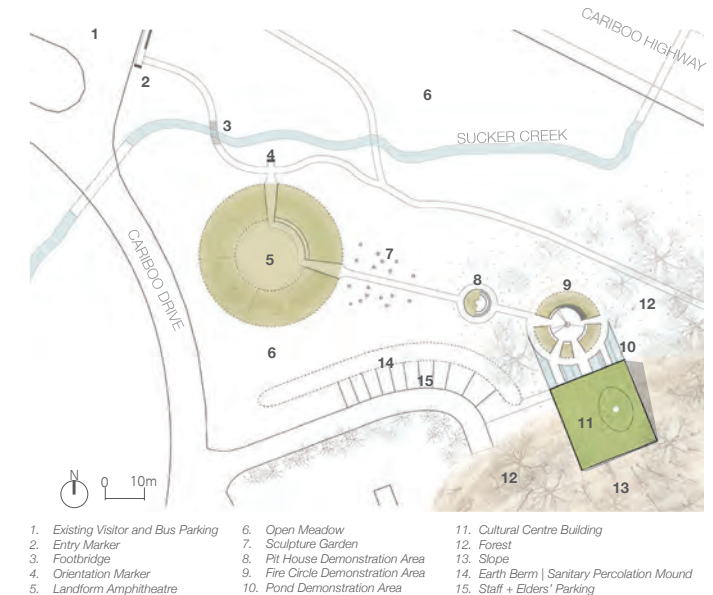
McFarland Marceau | Architects

Architectural approach

This is a joint project, by five small First Nations of limited means, residing in the interior plateau of British Columbia. Their intent is to create a local facility to preserve and exhibit their history and cultural traditions for the general public – and for their own peoples. The design proposes a modest and achievable concept to return the story of First Nations' history to its local community, and foster a visible and engaging relationship between local First Nations and broader Canadian society.

The land is of particular cultural and practical relevance to the Northern Secwepemc people. The tradition of migratory habitation, in close contact with the land, where built form was basic and transitory, suggests the need for a land-driven design response. Commensurately, the site available for the project is difficult. Located on an irregular parcel of land at the side of the Cariboo Highway, the site is not pristine: and although it has the advantages of visibility to highway travelers and adjacency to a popular heritage site, a floodplain and underground utility right-of-way constrain the front half of the site; limiting the building to an obscured position at the rear.

With a modest budget, the design solution embraces these difficulties and objectives with an integrated response: the creation of a cultural landscape that encompasses both site and building, amplifying the program's area and visibility in a culturally appropriate and cost-effective manner.



A series of landform sculptures and site interventions are devised along a pathway that transitions from open meadow to a semi-submerged building in the forest; The visitor must navigate this series of waypoints through the landscape to reach the building. The elaborated pathway provides a framework for interpretation and places for reflection. The building, set into the forested slope, blends with the land and defers to the cultural program within.

Lacking the display area and resources of a larger museum, the cultural centre emphasizes an active experience through first-person interaction with story-tellers and demonstrations, and a limited display of key artefacts. Flexible spaces and display systems host a changing series of exhibits and stories – and provide important teaching, meeting and reception space for the local community.

“Native spirituality – people think it is complex.
Natural laws are our religion, the environment
is our church.”



We believe that flexibility is key in creating a space that will address the many uses and requirements of the five communities. Building flexibility into the exhibits will allow the main gallery space to be transformed from a interpretive Centre in the summer to workshops or rental venues in the winter months.



Exhibit design approach

We listened

Community members from each of the five communities were invited to attend a series of engagement meetings to inform the Concept Exhibit Design Plan for the planned Northern Secwepemc Cultural Centre at 108 Mile location. Attendance varied and included Elders, youth, administrators and elected and hereditary Chiefs. All were asked to contribute their ideas, thoughts and priorities. Input from the communities was key.

Their answers were clear. They wanted:

- to engage and attract youth
- to see and hear our people
- to respect the story and the storyteller
- to be authentic, real, honest
- to show not just the past – the present and future
- to show their sense of humour
- to share their history without guilt, shame or blame
- to show that everything is interconnected
- to be more relaxed, no need to rush – it doesn't have to be complex
- to use interactives, new technologies

“Teach about the hardships, but show our inner strength to survive.”

Our flexible approach



Logic Exhibit System is a unique system of interchangeable components that can create walls and cases designed to be reconfigured, dismantled and stored flat when not in use.



The Storyteller Reusable Graphic System is reconfigurable, economical, easy to use and modular. Storyteller will allow this Centre to engage the community in developing and presenting many different stories over time at minimal cost.



Tall walls are flexible elements that can be used to divide spaces, create rooms or add additional wall space for exhibiting artwork or graphics.

The five communities have many wonderful, significant, stories to tell. Some are common throughout the five communities, like language and the seasonal round, others are unique and specific to individual Bands. Space is required to tell these stories and **flexibility** is required to ensure that new stories can also be told, from time to time and so that the space can adapt to the changing needs of the communities and other user groups.

A photograph of a dense forest of birch trees. The trees have characteristic white bark with dark, horizontal lenticels and vertical fissures. The foliage is lush green, and the background shows a hazy, mountainous landscape. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

“We are the evidence
of what is almost gone.”

Who have helped us

Over the course of the past 15 years, the Society's five participating member First Nations have made financial contributions exceeding \$220,000, and have also supported their respective representatives by financing the time, travel and other expenses relating to their volunteer work as Society members.

The Society has also benefited from financial grants from numerous private and public organizations whom we are pleased and proud to list below. Without their contributions we could not have come close to the point we have now most happily reached. In alphabetical order they are

- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada/Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
- Aboriginal Tourism BC/Indigenous Tourism BC
- ArtsVest and numerous local business sponsors
- BC Rural Dividend Program
- Canadian National
- Cariboo Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition
- Cariboo Regional District
- Community Futures British Columbia
- Heritage Canada
- New Pathways to Gold Society
- Northern Development Initiative Trust
- Union of BC Municipalities
- Western Economic Diversification Canada

We are grateful beyond what words can express for more than \$660,000 received from those entities during the course of the past 15 years.





District of 100 Mile House



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF WILLIAMS LAKE



Williams Lake & District
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
"THE VOICE OF BUSINESS"



100 MILE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Project support

Over the past 15 years, the following entities amongst others have provided resolutions or letters of support for the project – several of them on more than one occasion.

Cariboo Regional District
District of 100 Mile House
City of Williams Lake

South Cariboo Chamber of Commerce
Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce

Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association
Indigenous Tourism British Columbia

100 Mile House & District Historical Society

Kinder Morgan





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