



Le Estcwicwéy' *(The Missing)*

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Background



Kamloops Indian Residential School

- Built in 1890 (initially as an Industrial School, rebuilt in 1923) and operated until 1969
- From 1969-1978 the federal government took it over as a Residence
- Once the largest Residential School in Canada peaking 500 students in the 1950s
- Original buildings stand today on Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (TteS) – Kamloops Indian Reserve #1 lands

Truths of the Kamloops Indian Residential School

- Oral histories from survivors
- Stories of our ancestors buried at the orchard
- Early 2000's a juvenile rib bone was found by a tourist and brought forward
- Juvenile tooth found in area during an archaeological impact assessment

Background Continued



Why did TteS initiate the Ground Penetrating Radar?

- TteS Language and Culture Department received funding for the Secwépemc Museum and Heritage Park and were unable to use the funds for planned purposes due to Covid-19
- Museum Administrator, Diena Jules, suggested using the funds to “*look for the kids*”
- TteS had no formal plans in place previous to this suggestion to conduct a GPR search

How did TteS begin the Ground Penetrating Radar?

- Engaged Secwépemc Archaeologist Leslie LeBourdais for advice
- Connected with Dr. Eldon Yellowhorn of Simon Fraser University
- Recommendation to engage Dr. Sarah Beaulieu of University of the Fraser Valley

Secwépemc Practices and Protocols

TteS has ensured cultural practices and protocols have been respected and implemented throughout the entire process and has included:

- Proper ceremonial protocols were completed before Spiritual Leaders were asked to conduct ceremony
- Hosting ceremony before the GPR work began
- Spiritual Leaders at the site throughout GPR
- Spiritual supports were in place for Dr. Sarah Beaulieu throughout the GPR and ceremony after the initial work was completed
- Acknowledged and responded to confirmation of the children's burials as our people would with any death and treated the findings as a funeral
- Spiritual ceremony with the other nations who had relatives attend KIRS and ceremonies by Spiritual Leaders is ongoing
- Welcomed all guests to TteS to conduct ceremony, honour the children, and create a safe space for grieving and healing
- Weekly visits to the Sacred Burial Site by the Language and Culture department to drum and sing for the children

May 2021

Key dates



Following the completed GPR, TteS was notified of approximately 215 children buried at the old orchard



With the ease of Covid-19 restrictions Dr. Beaulieu set to begin GPR work May 21-23, 2021



Dr. Beaulieu was confirmed to search 1 acre, but searched just over 2 acres in the Heritage Park



May 27, 2021 TteS publicly announced the findings of the 215+ children



The next steps following the findings were guided by Secwépemc funeral Protocols

Lighting the Sacred Fire

- Following Secwépemc funeral protocols, TteS lit a sacred fire on May 28th, 2021 and kept it burning for four full days
- Every night the 4 children from TteS were at the fire as fire keepers
- TteS invited all guests to go to the sacred fire to pay their respects
- The Secwépemc Nation offered a virtual ceremony to offer a safe space to honour the children with prayers, hand drumming, and emotional supports
- TteS experienced an overwhelming amount of support and influx of guests at the sacred fire

Securing the Sacred Site



- The Sacred Burial Site is located at the Heritage Park (orchard) and upon the confirmation of the findings, is treated as a crime scene
- TteS Language and Culture department outlined a plan to secure the site logistics to prepare for visits and included:
 - Placing barricades to outline designated area for visitors
 - 24/7 Security
 - Leveling gravel and putting in a ramp for accessibility
 - Developing a team of people to plan for site visits and take moderator shifts
- In August, TteS began the 13 Grassroots Family visits so that community would have the space and time to honour the children
- The next step is to plan for other Nations to have access to the sacred site

Incident Command Structure



- Due to the significant response, TteS Chief and Council implemented an Incident Command Structure on June 2, 2021
- The Incident Command Response structure is a coordinated approach between departments and partners (FNHA) for a direct flow of information and decisions
- The Incident Command structure included:
 - Chief and Council Incident Commanders
 - Operations
 - Mental Health and Wellness
 - Finance
 - Language and Communications
 - Communications and Media
 - Natural Resources
 - The First Nations Health Authority
- At the onset, the Incident Command Team met Monday-Friday 8:30-9:00am

13 Grassroots Advisory Council

In 2019, the Language and Culture
department outlined the 13
Grassroots families of Tk'emlups
te Secwépemc

- On June 2, 2021, one representative from each of the 13 Grassroots families met and established the 13 Grassroots Advisory Council to implement a community-driven approach to the findings
- The scope of the 13 Grassroots Advisory Council has been to:
 - Provide recommendations to care for and honour the children
 - Receive updates on progression to share within their families
 - Guide a culturally appropriate response that is rooted in Secwépemc values and practices
 - Advise on various matters
- This has been an essential aspect of the TteS' response to ensure there is an established process for capturing the community's vision

Human and Financial Resources



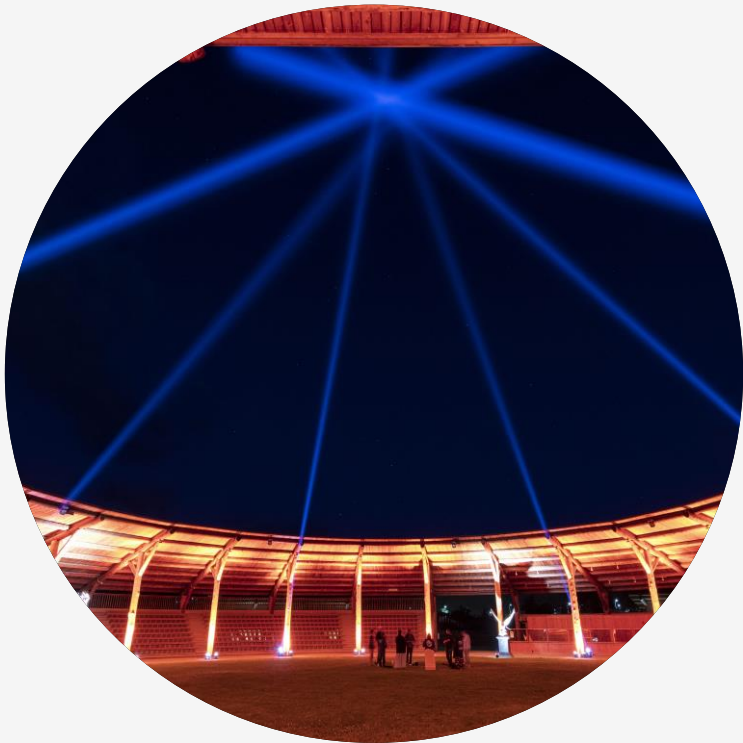
- As TteS navigated the global response, additional resources were identified to support ongoing response
- TteS developed immediate response budgets that included:
 - New positions for the Language and Culture and Community Services departments
 - Resources to host guests, events, ceremonies
 - Mental Health and Cultural Supports
 - Healing initiatives
- TteS worked with the FNHA to secure funding
- TteS Chief and Council proceeded with provincial and federal negotiations to ensure committed resources for long term recovery and healing

Communications and Events



- Due to influx of inquiries for visitors to TteS, a formal event request process was developed and included:
 - Letter to Interior Nations
 - Protocols
 - Event/Visit request form
 - Public Health Notice
- Event Coordination included these important aspects:
 - Notifying local businesses of number of guests expected
 - Coordinating TteS departments to manage event set up, clean up, specific requests, communications, mental health and cultural supports, Covid-19 safety procedures
- Following Secwépemc protocol, it was critical to ensure there was a TteS Leadership representative present at each event to welcome guests
- Events and visits have been held only at the Kamloops Indian Residential School monument and powwow arbour

Where We Are Today



- Implementing 13 Grassroots Advisory Council recommendations
- Engaging international experts to proceed with further GPR, legal services, exhumation, etc.
- Establishing and updating necessary policies and law such as:
 - Intellectual Property and Copy Right Law
 - Ancestral Remains Policy
 - Research Agreements
 - TteS Heritage By-Law 1996 (currently updating to a Law)
 - Non-Disclosure Agreement etc.
- Pre-planning for engagement to outline long-term recovery and healing plan

Kukwstép-kucw

Contacts:

Language and Culture Manager

Ted Gottfriedson

Ted.Gottfriedson@ttes.ca

