

British Columbia News

shíshálh Nation, B.C. renew landmark reconciliation agreement

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/31941>

shíshálh Nation and the Province are reaffirming their shared commitment to long-term reconciliation by renewing an agreement that will strengthen economic, cultural and environmental initiatives.

“We have deepened and strengthened our relationship with the Province over the last six years,” said lhe hiwus Yalxwemult (Chief Lenora Joe) of shíshálh Nation. “We are continuing through this renewal to develop our approaches to collaborative decision-making and planning. We must address the challenges of this era together and plan for future generations using new and innovative approaches. Following in the footsteps of our ancestors, we are working to restore our swiya to its natural state and protect it for future generations. Only by working together can we enable a better future for everyone who makes the swiya home.”

In 2018, shíshálh Nation and B.C. signed a landmark long-term, phased reconciliation agreement focused on strengthening government-to-government relations, recognizing shíshálh Nation inherent rights and title and formalizing decision-making structures between the Province and shíshálh Nation.

“The renewal of the Foundation Agreement with new mid-term milestones will support the ongoing relationship between the Province and shíshálh Nation in the years ahead,” said Christine Boyle, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. “It will help us continue to build strong partnerships founded on mutual interests and support the regional economy.”

The renewed agreement builds on work completed since 2018 and lays out a path for the Province and shíshálh Nation to continue to meet their shared commitments. This includes:

- identifying and transferring six square kilometres of Crown lands within shíshálh swiya to shíshálh Nation for both cultural and economic use;
- exploring future decision-making opportunities;
- providing ongoing funding to support the Nation’s economic development, culture and language; and
- supporting environmental and cultural restoration work, collaborative monitoring and enforcement, and environmental and ecological studies in the shíshálh swiya.

“This shared commitment between B.C. and shíshálh Nation will benefit our entire region economically, culturally and environmentally, while also reaffirming our work together on the Dock Management Plan, which was developed through a robust community engagement process,” said Randene Neill, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship.

Building off the meaningful engagement between shíshálh Nation and other residents of the Sunshine Coast, the agreement renewal reaffirms changes to the Dock Management Plan announced in August 2024. The agreement also reinforces B.C. and shíshálh Nation’s shared commitment to completing joint work in the foreshore and helping to provide predictability and transparency for dock owners.

“As work to implement each component of the Foundation Agreement renewal begins, the Province and shíshálh Nation continue to be committed to engagement with local governments, interest holders and Sunshine Coast residents so that everyone is informed about the work between the Province and shíshálh Nation,” Boyle added.

The Province and shíshálh Nation’s shared commitment to land-use planning and stewardship in the shíshálh swiya is also expressed in the renewal through the ongoing development of the Shíshálh-B.C. Joint Land Use Plan, which has been underway since the Foundation Agreement was signed in 2018. Significant progress has been made and engagement on the plan will start in 2025.

Learn More:

To learn more about the shíshálh Nation, visit: <https://shishalh.com/>

To learn more about the 2024 Foundation Agreement renewal, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/consulting-with-first-nations/first-nations-negotiations/first-nations-a-z-listing/sechelt-sh-sh-lh-first-nation/sh-sh-lh-nation-british-columbia-foundation-agreement>

A backgrounder follows.

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Backgrounders

What people are saying about the shíshálh Nation Foundation Agreement renewal

Patrick Weiler, MP for West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country –

“The shíshálh Nation and the Province of British Columbia chose a new path in 2018 to work together on the process of reconciliation. I’m excited to see this shared commitment renewed and updated, and I look forward to collaborating to plan for the future and bring positive outcomes to the entire Sunshine Coast.”

Ravi Parmar, Minister of Forests –

“True, lasting and meaningful reconciliation will only be achieved through honouring the commitments we’ve made and building trusted partnerships by working side by side with First Nations. In renewing the Foundation Agreement, shíshálh Nation and the Province are helping build a strong, robust and sustainable forest sector for the next 100 years.”

Alton Toth, chair, Sunshine Coast Regional District –

“This update to the Foundation Agreement is a tremendous step forward for the shíshálh Nation when it comes to self-determination and reclaiming rights that were previously suppressed. The Sunshine Coast Regional District is honoured to work with the shíshálh Nation on numerous projects and services on an ongoing basis. We look forward to strengthening these partnerships and exploring new opportunities as we continue our shared journey toward meaningful reconciliation.”

Jef Keighley, director, Sunshine Coast Conservation Association –

“I heartily applaud and join in celebrating the shíshálh Nation’s second five-year update of their historic Foundation Agreement. The Nation has proven that true reconciliation works to the mutual benefit of both shíshálh and non-shíshálh people living within their spectacular swiya. British Columbians should also thank the Province for demonstrating the courage, vision and wisdom in working with the shíshálh Nation to help build a more co-operative path to our future.”

Kelly Matheson-King, chief operating officer, BluEarth Renewables –

“The renewal of the Foundation Agreement between shíshálh Nation and the Province clearly signals an ongoing commitment to advancing the journey to reconciliation. It is exciting to see the renewed commitment of these governments to shared decision-making in relation to land, environment and economy. BluEarth deeply values walking in partnership with shíshálh through our joint implementation of renewable energy technologies within their swiya.”

Kent Stuehmer, vice-president and general manager, Heidelberg Materials –

“Heidelberg Materials is pleased to continue building on our long-standing and successful relationship with the shíshálh Nation, as we celebrate yet another milestone in this historic agreement with the provincial government. We look forward to the growth and opportunities that this progressive and collaborative approach provides to the people of Sechelt and to all those who live and work in B.C.”

The B.C. Public Service acknowledges the territories of First Nations around B.C. and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands. We acknowledge the rights, interests, priorities, and concerns of all Indigenous Peoples - First Nations, Métis, and Inuit - respecting and acknowledging their distinct cultures, histories, rights, laws, and governments.