



SH̓ŋÁY̓CKSTX (SINIXT) CONFEDERACY
&
CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

October 7, 2021

Astrid Heyerdahl
502 Vernon St.
Nelson, BC V1L 4E7, Canada
Sent via email: director@touchstonesnelson.ca

RE: Letter of Support for Touchstones Nelson

The Sh̓ŋáy̓ckstx (Sinixt) Confederacy would like to say limlmtx (thank you) to the Nelson Museum, Archives and Gallery (Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art and History) for its continued leadership and support as we all move forward following the historic *Desautel* decision at the Supreme Court of Canada. The museum has shown great strength and fortitude in following the hard truth about our history and who we are, and, importantly, who we are not. Touchstones holds a space for authentic Sh̓ŋáy̓ckstx voices and for the recognition of the many obstacles we have faced.

In this tumultuous era, Indigenous voices are rising across North America, challenging assumptions related to cultural sovereignty, resource use, land ownership and the best way to build a healthy future for the land and people of the continent. We, the Sh̓ŋáy̓ckstx, express our sovereignty and right to speak for ourselves. But these are not only Indigenous issues. In advancing salmon restoration, sustainable forest practices, and returning health to water, we work for the benefit of *all* people living on the land. It is more important than ever that we *all* stand TOGETHER, Indigenous and settler, to secure the health of our children and their children.

To clear up any recent confusion, the Sh̓ŋáy̓ckstx Confederacy was formed to speak on behalf of Sh̓ŋáy̓ckstx people on both sides of the border, including the over 3600 Sh̓ŋáy̓ckstx or Lakes members of the Colville Reservation. Given our forced dislocation, other individuals and tribal organizations have sought to speak on our behalf and represent our rights and interests. This is an unfortunate result of the decisions of the federal and provincial governments to ignore our rights and very existence for decades. Decolonization is challenging, and perhaps especially in the upper Columbia River or Arrow Lakes region - our tr̓nx̓w̓úla?x̓w̓, the home of our ancestors.

We raise our hands in gratitude not only to Touchstones Nelson, but also to the other museums, galleries, educational institutions and other entities in the region,

such as the Capitol Theater in Nelson, who have shown us unqualified support and understanding in our journey to recognition as an Aboriginal Peoples of Canada with constitutionally protected rights. We look forward to continuing our relationship of mutual respect and support with the broader community on both sides of the "invisible line". We appreciate your support as the healing continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew C. Joseph, JR." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a distinct 'J' at the end.

Andrew C. Joseph, JR.
CHAIRMAN