



sŃsaŲčkstx

(Sinixt/Arrow Lakes)

i? tŃ sŃaŲ^wíptət ki? səčqɬnúŃtŃ
from our roots, we move forward



Following the Desautel decision, we now return to our northern snilí?Ń (homelands). We seek renewal of our culture and positive relationships that will heal and sustain the land and water for generations to come.

Honoring the Past and the Ancestors who never gave up

Early 1900s: The Christian Family fought hard to be able to stay on their land and protect the burials at kp'it'els. Antoinette Christian and her three children Baptiste, Alex and Marianne did what they could. Baptiste Christian wrote letters to the Canadian Indian Agent. Antoinette wrote to anthropologist James Teit. Alex Christian made a statement to a Canadian Royal Commission of 1914.



Agnes Christian Boyd
Daughter of Baptiste



“...the government sold that land...[and] never [told] me...I was crying every day...I [planted] so many gardens that summer.”
Antoinette Christian, letter to James Teit, 1912

“My place is and always has been an Indian settlement. We have never abandoned it and have continuously occupied it up to the present time...yet I am forced out of my inheritance...evidently quite unlawfully.”
Alex Christian, 1914

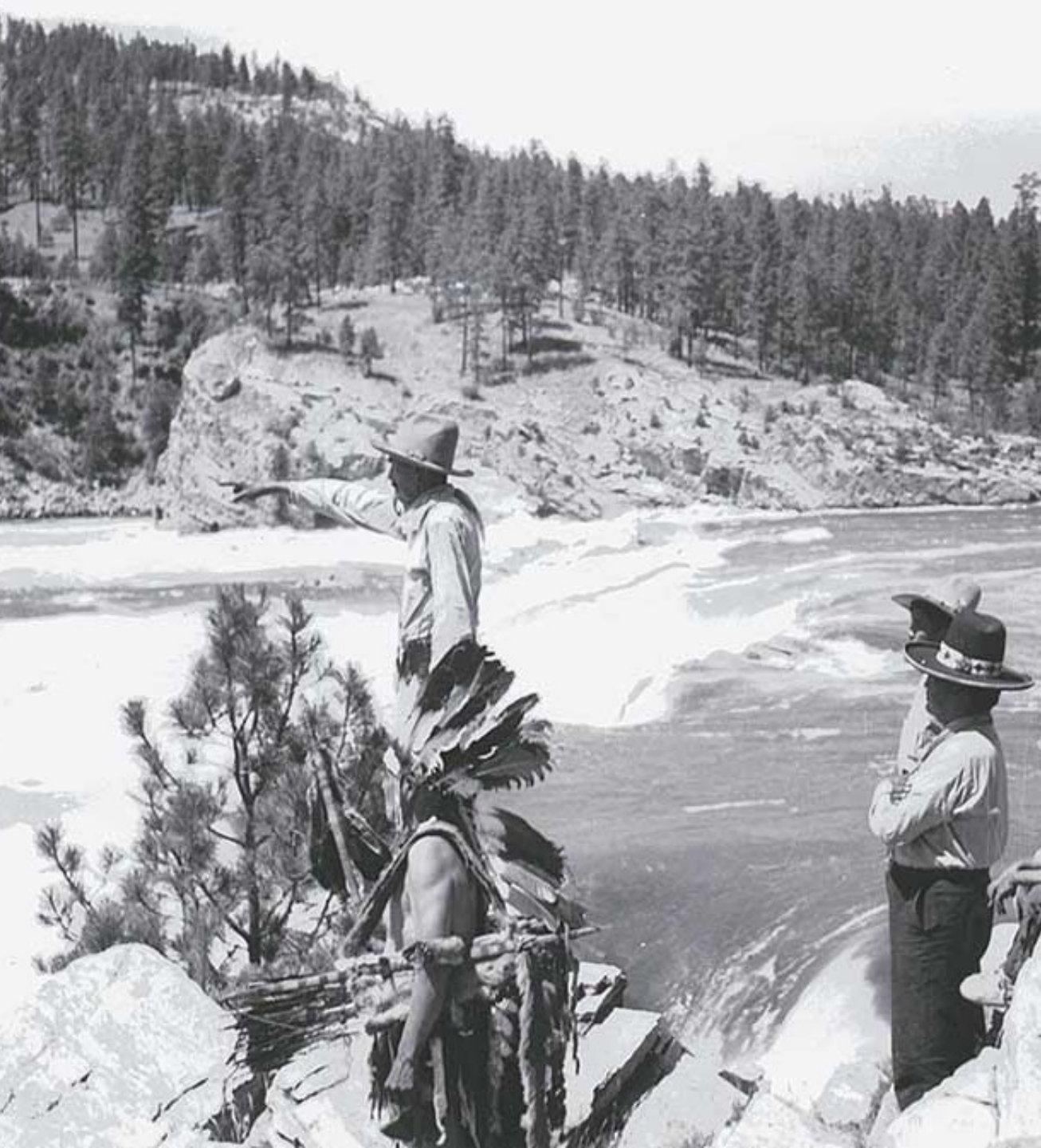


1902-53: When the Canadian government finally established a reserve at Oatscott on the Arrow Lakes in 1902, Annie (Klome) Joseph was one of the 26 people listed on the government band roles. She was born to parents who lived on the Arrow Lakes for many years before that. Annie married Louie Joseph and raised a family of three sons on the reserve.

Annie's husband and sons all died. In the 1930s, she went to the Okanagan Indian Band to live with relations. But she did not forget who she was, or where she was from. When she learned that the government allowed logging on the Oatscott Indian Reserve in 1943 without telling the band, she fought for justice. In two letters to Indian Agent Andrew Irwin in 1944, she wrote:

“I want you to give me the [amount] of the timber and an estimate [of the value]. I think I am the only [remaining] member from that Reserve.... I should [know] if the timber is sold on that reserve.”





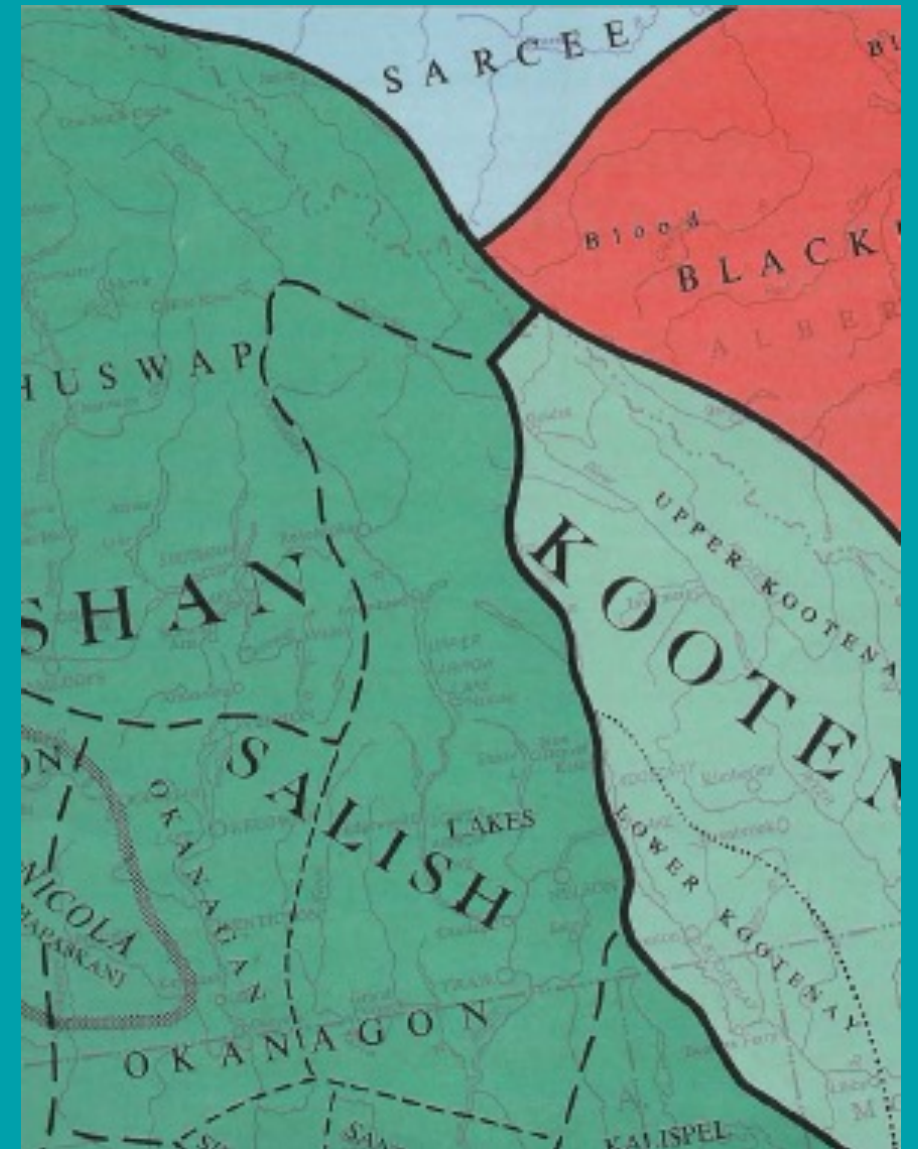
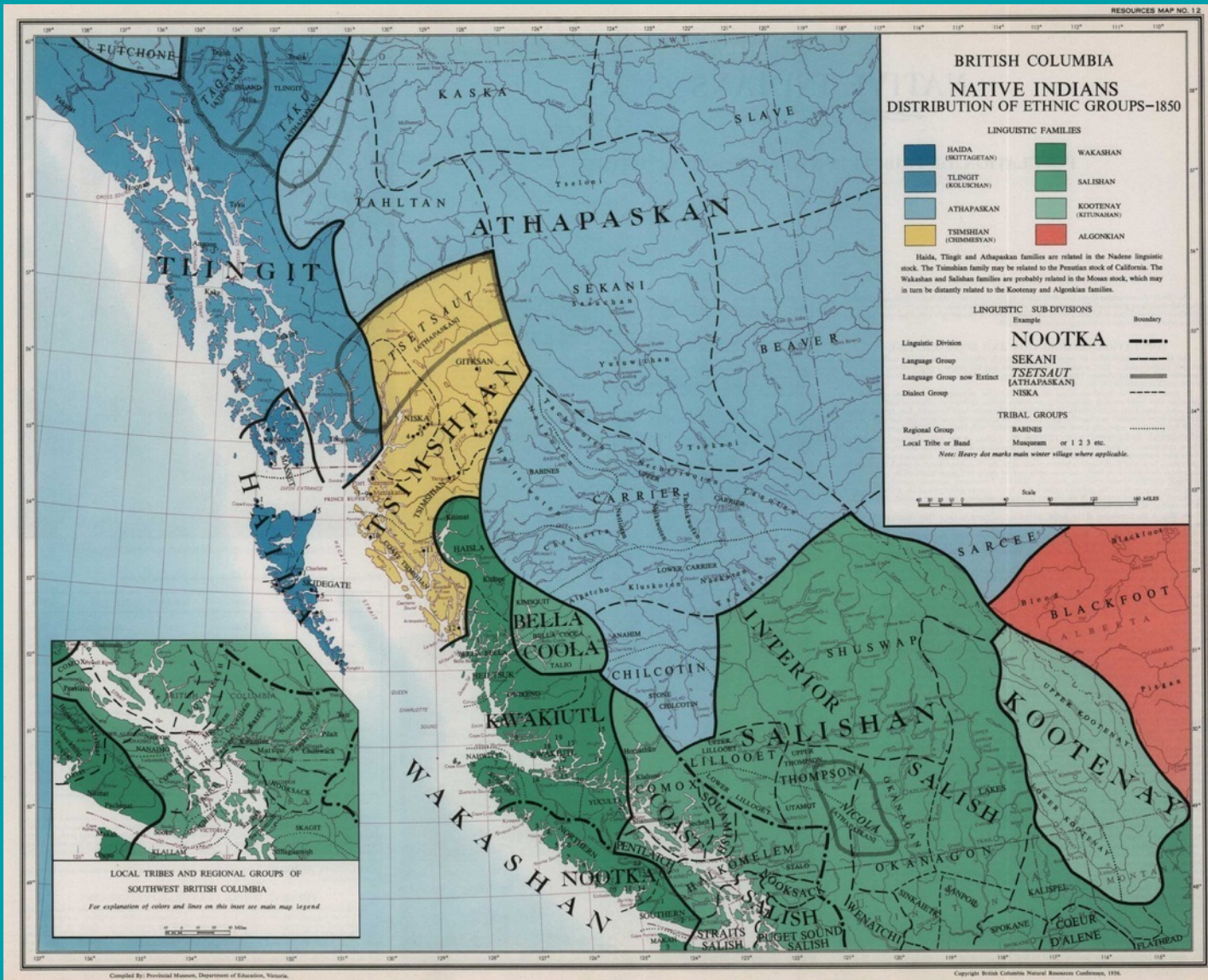
The 1956 Declaration of Extinction: Annie Klome Joseph died in 1953. The last person listed in Canadian government records as a member of the government's 1902 "Arrow Lake Band," her death led to the 1956 "extinction" declaration. At that time, surveying and planning for Columbia River Treaty (CRT) dams in Sinixt traditional territory was underway.

Sx̣ʷnitkʷ - the great fishing falls

After BC Hydro constructed the three treaty dams – Duncan, Mica and Arrow/Keenleyside – storage reservoirs flooded 90% of Sinixt archaeological record north of the international boundary, including burial grounds. The Sinixt were not consulted in any way.

Coyote Rock N'cak^ww'ɬa?wíɬx^w



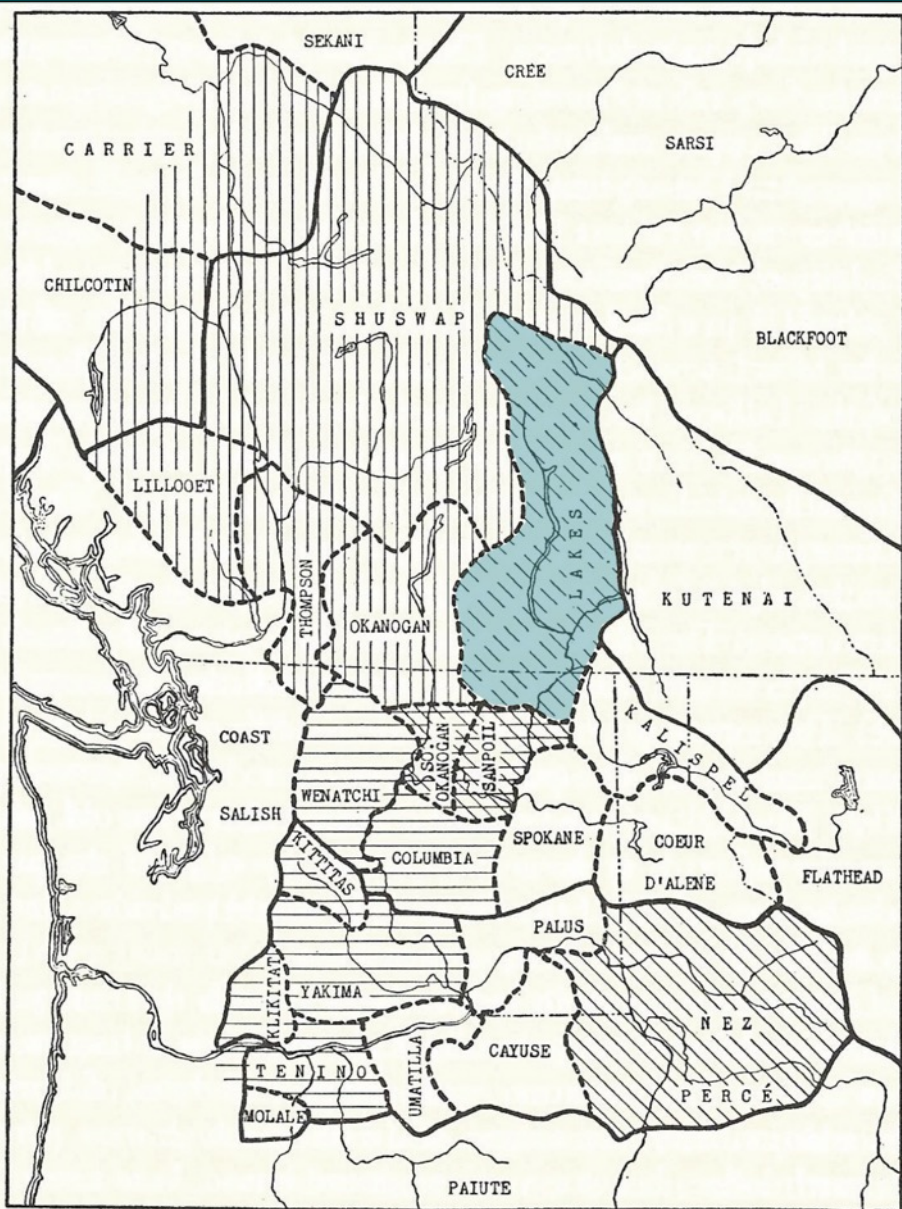


A BC government map published in 1956

1972: After the flooding and extinction, our story was also erased from the region. Charlie Quintasket travelled from the Colville Reservation to the British Columbia capital of Victoria, in an effort to make “the Crown” aware of the existence of the Sinixt. While he was there, he met researchers who collected important and valuable information about the Sinixt, their culture and their history, from the Marchands, the Louie family, and others. He asked the important question: “why is there no reserve set aside for the Sinixt in Canada?”.



Charlie Quintasket



MAP 18. Earth lodges. *Vertical hatching*: circular, with rafters; *horizontal hatching*: circular, roof of radiating poles; *diagonal hatching*: circular, flat roof; *broken hatching*: circular, radiating poles with purlins.



The Sinixt style of $\dot{q}^w\dot{c}i?$ (pithouse) is unique among Salish tribes and bands.



1989: The Sinixt living in the United States as the Arrow Lakes tribe of the Colville Reservation learned of burial remains being disturbed during road building at Vallican in the Slocan Valley, B.C. Sinixt people crossed the boundary to set up a protest camp that was successful in protecting burials and raising the profile of Sinixt rights in Canada.





Photo by Alan Thomson

1990s: Robert Watt, appointed by the tribe as caretaker of the Vallican burial site, contested a Canadian Immigration order of deportation in the early 1990s. He succeeded, but a definitive decision on cross-border aboriginal rights for the Sinixt was not made.

1995 - 2009: Spurred forward by the BC Government's denial of our request to re-bury our own ancestors, we continued to discuss how to restore our rights in Canada. The elected council for the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) created the position of Arrow Lakes Facilitator, to advise on territorial issues and advocate for Sinixt values in their traditional lands in Canada.



Virgil Seymour, facilitator from 2013-2016, Frog Mt. in the distance



Jim Boyd, facilitator from 2009-2012, Arrow
Lakes in the distance

Fish & wildlife staff from the CCT reservation studied B.C. game populations and chose an animal from healthy populations. In 2009, Rick Desautel, a Sinixt descendant and ceremonial hunter, turned himself in to B.C. authorities, after exercising his aboriginal right to hunt an elk.

The B.C. government charged him with hunting without a license.

The Trial and Outcome

In 2010, Rick Desautel pleaded “not guilty” based on his inherent rights. In 2017, he won clearly and decisively in BC provincial court.



Top: Linda and Rick Desautel
Bottom: Sinixt people at the BC Court of Appeal



The government appealed the decision three times and lost. Finally, the Supreme Court of Canada confirmed in a 7-2 majority that the Sinixt are an Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, as defined by section 35 of the constitution.



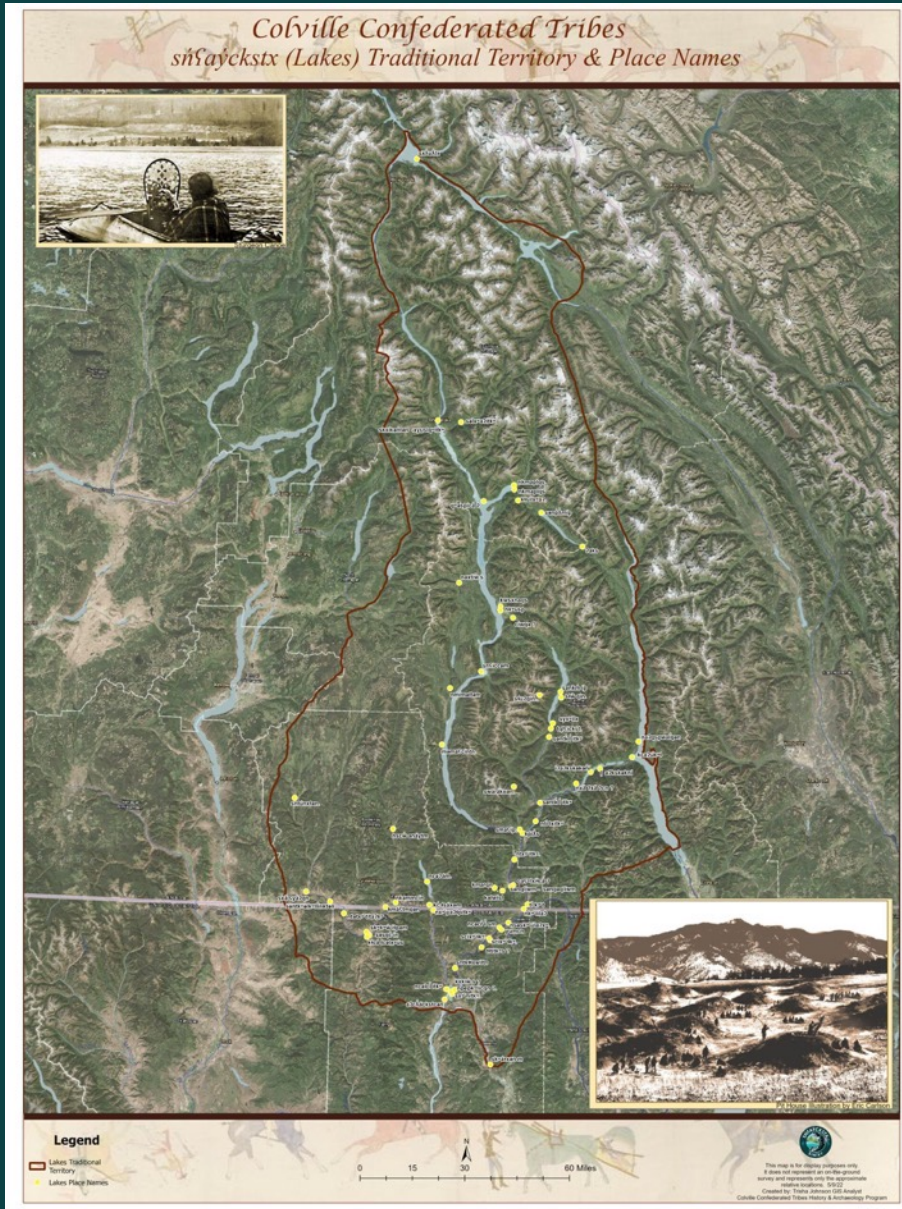
Photo by Mike Graeme

Top: Rick Desautel at the Supreme Court of Canada
Bottom: Shelly Boyd, facilitator from 2016-2023

Implementing Desautel

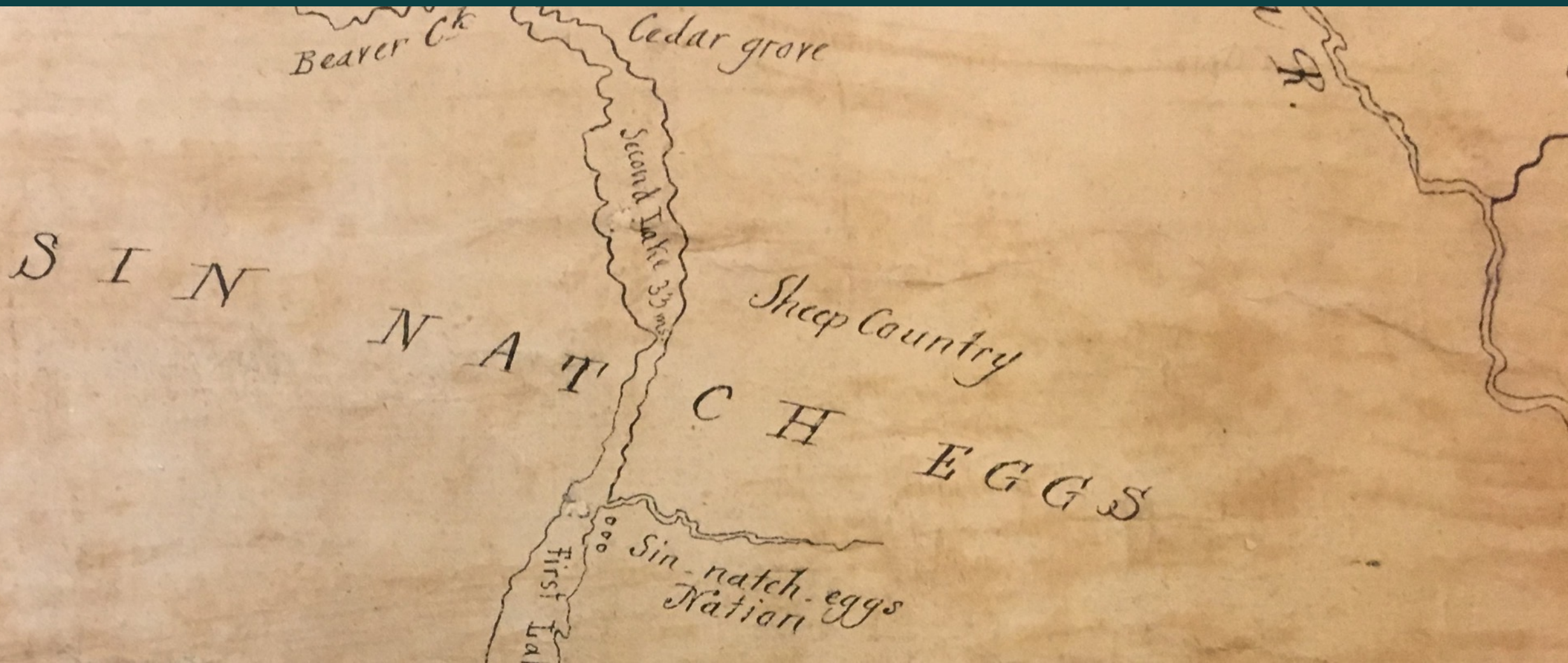
Sinixt advocacy continued through 10 long years in the courts. From 2016 - 2023, Shelly Boyd travelled thousands of miles in the territory, spreading good will.





After the final court victory, we began the process of coming home. As one of 12 Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CTCR), the Sinixt people have developed expertise in managing fish and wildlife issues, both on and off the reservation. We are proud to bring our skills north, and look forward to restoring the health of this heavily damaged ecosystem.

The BC government has for many years put forward the concept that our territory is “shared.” We do not accept this. We know who we are. We know where we have always been.



A call for meaningful consultation and formal recognition

Several CCT staff members now work out of our Nelson office. They are here to build relationships, engage in and advise conservation projects, and communicate Sinixt values.

The CCT has also formed the Sinixt Confederacy, formerly known as the Arrow Lakes Aboriginal Society, to represent Sinixt people on both sides of the international border, regardless of any other tribal or band affiliation, in a manner consistent with Indigenous law and traditions.



CCT Sinixt staff in northern territory: Rick Desautel (Sinixt Fish and Wildlife Outreach Technician); Remey Lacombe (Sinixt Archaeologist), James Baxter (Sinixt Principal Biologist/Senior Manager); Herb Alex (Sinixt Policy Analyst). Also pictured, center: Robert Watt.

Dams and their impacts

Governments and private corporations operate no fewer than 15 dams and generating stations in Sinixt territory. The mountainous landscape of our ancestors is one of the most heavily developed in North America.





While carbon-neutral hydropower has a positive impact on air, it harms the health of water as a habitat. Too little has been done to mitigate the negative consequences of dams:

- fish spawning habitat *destroyed*
- nutrient cycles and natural fish migration *interrupted*
- productive shoreline areas *wiped out*
- shallow water habitat for waterfowl nests *permanently flooded*

What can we do?

Sḥaʔčkstx (Sinixt) literally means “people of the bull trout.” This iconic fish needs healthy, cold, free-moving water to survive.

We call for corporate hydropower companies and government agencies to:

1. Change flows and water storage levels to support local fish, especially during spawning and juvenile passage.
2. Replant and tend damaged or destroyed riparian areas
3. Manage and protect vulnerable species that struggle to survive
4. Restore historic ocean salmon runs of Chinook, sockeye and coho to our territory, from Kettle Falls, Washington to the headwaters of the Columbia River.



Sq̓ítlaʔx̓^w-Inland Temperate Rainforest

Our traditional territory sits within the Sq̓ítlaʔx̓^w- Inland Temperate Rainforest, ecologically unique in the world. Species common to milder coastal areas thrive hundreds of kilometers from the ocean.





One stand of 800 year-old cedars sits at the back end of the Incomappleux (ńkmaplqs) River valley, near a once-populous village of Sinixt people. We are grateful for local settlers, who helped save these trees from the saw in the 1990s.

B.C. government policies have allowed at least 95% of original forests to be logged away. We call for preservation of more old growth in our territory. Enough has been taken. Enough.

Seasonal Wetlands and the Camas

In these narrow valleys, annual spring floods once created seasonal wetlands of all sizes. These ecologically rich areas were important for the careful cultivation of ʔitǰ^wa, the Blue-Flowering Camas (*Camassia quamash*), and other edible roots that sustained our people.



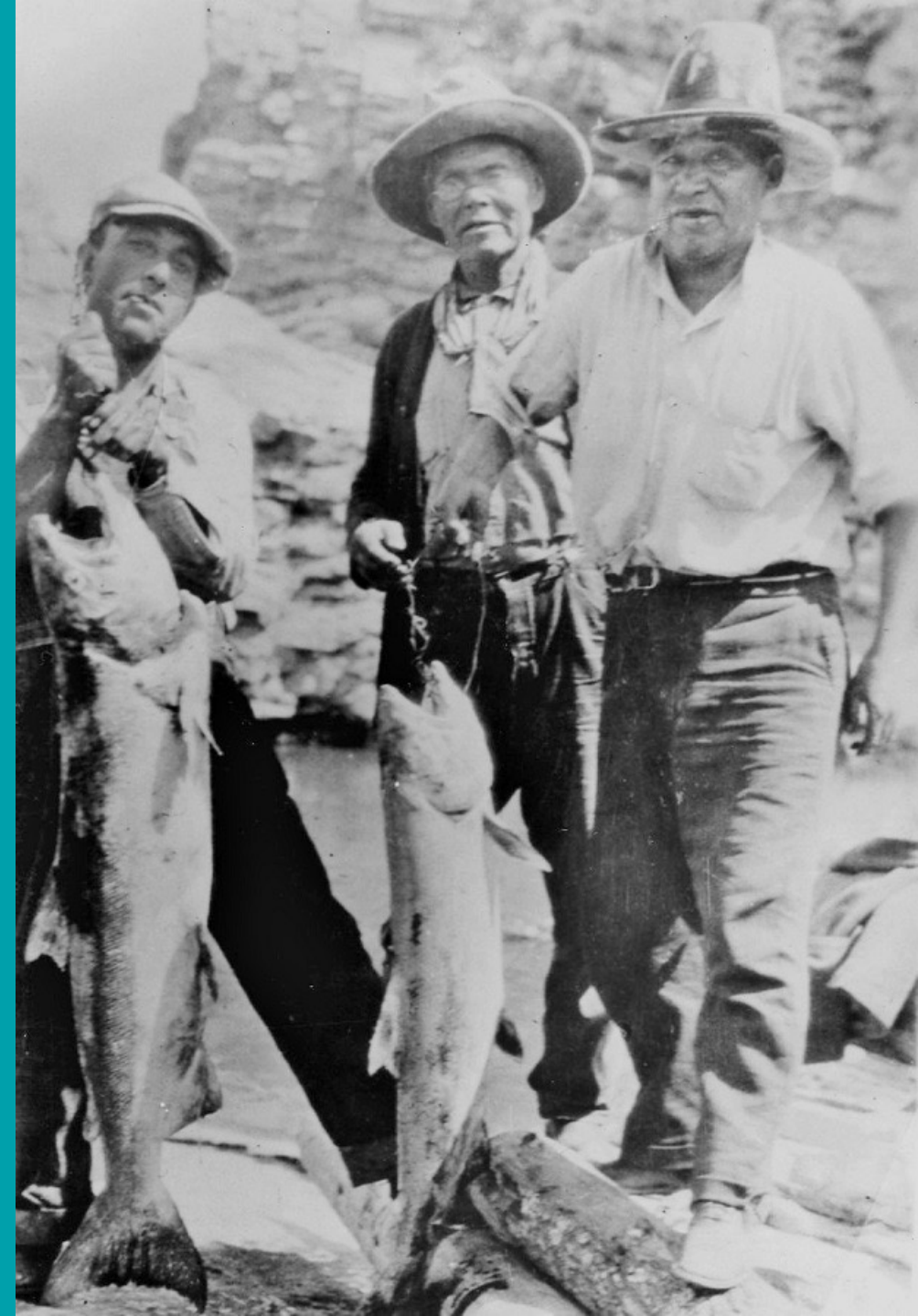


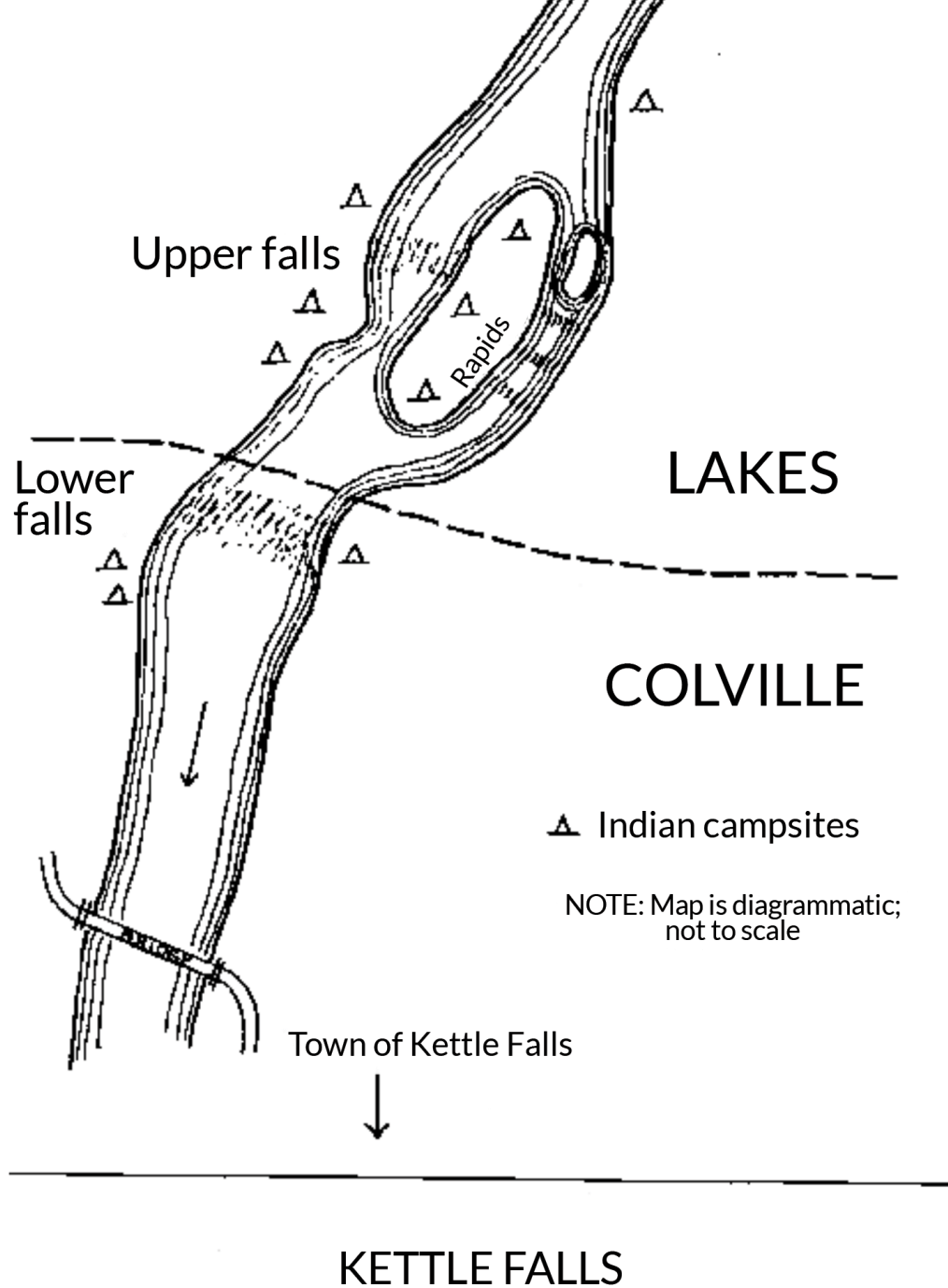
Agriculture and grazing domestic animals crowded out many fields of nourishment as far north as Skxikʷ (Revelstoke). Regulated flows destroyed more. Only vestiges of the Camas survive and bloom in parts of the Castlegar and lower Kootenay River valley. We support restoration of this and other important cultural plants.

Salmon Recovery

All member tribes of the CCT share a deep connection to *ńtýtyix* (salmon) and *x^wmína?* (steelhead), returning from the ocean to spawn in the upper Columbia for thousands of years. These fish inform the culture, spiritual traditions and economies of all tribes in the upper Columbia River basin.

ńtýtyix (Spring Chinook), known as June hogs for their size, caught before the Grand Coulee Dam





In 1941, Grand Coulee Dam blocked salmon and steelhead and inundated Sx̣ʷnitkʷ (Kettle Falls), the second-largest fishery in the entire Columbia Basin basin. Both Canada and the US allowed this to happen.

In June 1940, we gathered at the falls for the K'c̓q̓^waq̓^wm̓ (Ceremony of Tears), to say goodbye to the fish. But we have never given up hope that they will return. We are salmon people.





Grand Coulee Dam, photo by Gregg M. Erickson

We have reason to be hopeful for the future. The US government recently granted significant financial support toward salmon reintroduction. A renegotiated Columbia River Treaty may include ecosystem-function, supporting better flow of water for the fish.

Fish & Wildlife Management

The CCT budget for Wildlife Management is exceeded only by Health and Human Services. We have a long tradition of caring for the land and the fish and wildlife who inhabit it.

A CCT cultural release of salmon into Grand Coulee Dam's reservoir, 2019





In the US, we engage in many conservation efforts:

- Invasive Northern Pike removal from Lake Roosevelt Reservoir and the Pend Oreille River
- Preservation of native $x^w\text{ə}x^w\text{m}í\text{n}a?$ (rainbow trout) and $k\text{ək}h́i?$ (kokanee)
- Management of the fish hatchery at Chief Joseph Dam
- Reintroduction of $wapw'pxh́$ (lynx) below the boundary

Archaeology

“We are very concerned about impacts on Sinixt archaeological resources. Most of our village sites and graves have been inundated or built on, without any effort of relocation or consultation with the Sinixt. To this day, our ancestors continue to be uncovered without acknowledgement of that history, and a steadfast refusal to let us take the lead in the repatriation of remains.”

--Jarred-Michael Erickson, Chairman of the Sinixt Confederacy and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CTCR).





Pictographs, unique burial practices, q̣^wci? (pit house) remains and stone tools of all shapes and sizes confirm thousands of years of Sinixt inhabitation.

Visit
Sinixt.com
to learn more



Photo credit: Mike Graeme

kʷu sᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ (we are Sinixt)
púti? kʷu alá? (we are still here)

We are a transboundary Indigenous Tribe in the United States and an Aboriginal People of Canada. We have rights in both countries.

