



## NEWS

# Lands near Blue Lake returned to Xats'ull

**DEEP CREEK, B.C., NOVEMBER 1, 2021** - Approximately 102.1 hectares of land near Blue Lake have been returned to Xats'ull First Nation.

The return of this parcel is part of ongoing Treaty negotiations as Xats'ull, the Government of B.C. and the Government of Canada work towards a Final Agreement.

“The return of the lands near Blue Lake represents the continued cooperation between Xats'ull and the provincial and federal governments,” says Kúkpi7 (Chief) Sheri Sellars. “These lands were at the heart of our traditional territory as evidenced by the remnants of pithouses and other archeology artifacts that can be found there today. Furthermore, the area is regularly used by our members for everything from swimming and fishing to pitch harvesting.”

The transfer of Incremental Treaty Agreement (ITA) lands provides transitional economic benefits in advance of a Final Agreement and is in the spirit and vision of a new relationship between Xats'ull, the Government of B.C. and the Government of Canada.

“I offer my sincere congratulations to Xats'ull First Nation. Transferring land of significant cultural importance, like the Blue Lake parcel, is a tangible way for government to show our commitment to advancing our shared vision for reconciliation,” says Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

The lands are held as fee-simple lands by Soda Creek Land Holdings LTD and are not an addition to Reserve lands.

“Congratulations to Xats'ull First Nation on this significant step forward that is the transfer of lands, as part of the Treaty process. It is an important accomplishment and a great example of what we can achieve when we work together in continued collaboration and partnership,” says Marc Miller, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations. Xats'ull First Nation is located roughly 15 minutes north of Williams Lake, B.C. and is negotiating Treaty as part of Northern Secwepemc te Qelmucw (NSTQ) which is made up of Xats'ull First Nation, Williams Lake First Nation, Tsq'escen' (Canim Lake Band) and Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation. NSTQ is currently in Stage 5 of the B.C. Treaty Commissions (Negotiating a final Treaty).

“While Chief and Council have yet to decide on how Xats'ull will use these lands going forward, it may provide expanded economic opportunity, for example, through camping, through its connection with Xats'ull built trails and its proximity to the Xats'ull Heritage Village. Furthermore, for some of our many members looking to move home, it could provide an opportunity to do so,” says Sellars.

She thanks the Treaty Department, the negotiation team of the Northern Secwepemc te Qelmucw and government negotiators for making the transfer a reality.

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