

Stó:lō Collective – 21 Communities

February 13, 2025 | 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Fraser River Lodge

Meeting Notes

Present:

Cheam	Chief Darwin Douglas Councillor Lisa Douglas Councillor Michael Victor EA, Nicholas Point
Chawathil	Fisheries Dept, Shane John
Kwaw-Kwaw-Apilt	Councillor Sandra Hudson EA, Nicola Bourgeault
Seabird Island	Councillor Rod Peters
Shxwha:y Village	Chief Robert Gladstone
Skwah	Councillor Eddie Gardner
Skowkale	Councillor Tiffany Silver
Sumas	Councillor Troy Ganzeveld
Tzeachten	Councillor Hayden Guilderson
Yakweakwioose	Hereditary Chief, Elaine Malloway

Stó:lō Service Agency (SSA)

Executive Director	Willy Hall
Executive Assistant	Kelly Willmets
Administrative Support	Abby Duncan

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at: 10:05 am.

1.0 Opening Song by Chief Darwin Douglas

2.0 Agenda accepted as presented. Meeting hosted by Cheam First Nation

3.0 Introduction

Chairperson Chief Douglas welcomed an open discussion regarding the reserve lands.

- Inquiries about the St. Mary's Demolition
- Hopeful to create a sacred spot on the property for survivors to visit.

SSA Executive Director provided some background information regarding the St. Mary's site for participants information. The St. Mary's residential school is (1960-2025) 65 years old where

construction methods in the late 1950's included hazardous materials. The roofs are starting to leak resulting in water damage that is difficult to repair due to the presence of asbestos.

- SSA is a neutral party and simply overseeing the properties day to day maintenance/upkeep on the properties on behalf of the collective.
- There was a consensus within the room that the school needs to come down.
- If federal funds are made available, it is in everyone's best interest to utilize those funds for demolition.
- SSA programs and services space will be satisfied utilizing modular/portable structures, no permanent/ fixed buildings.
- The process of terminating the leases has started and is to be completed by 2027.
- Demolition has been approved, but no secured funding.
- In a previous meeting, Helen Joe expressed the importance of notifying each survivor of the St. Mary's Residential School that the building will be coming down.
- Over 2025 and 2026 Cultural work will be planned and accomplished for all who wish to do so.
- Two requests for land use have come to the SNCC.
 - Coqualeetza Cultural Center
 - Xyolhemeylh – requested lot for a new building
- A permanent spot for an interpretive kiosk will need to be identified at St. Mary's. We want to ensure our history is never forgotten.

Discussion Q&A:

How many buildings and acreage are at St. Mary's? A: Acreage is 25.55 Acres.

Action #01: Email map of St. Mary's properties – SSA administrative staff member

Q: Is there a Coqualeetza Advisory Board? A: No, there is not a Coqualeetza Advisory board.

- Suggestion for a ceremony for the 21 bands to celebrate the Coqualeetza land acquisition and invite the Elders.
- Offer hybrid option allowing better participation.
- Asked for the notes from today to be distributed to the 21 communities.

Action #02: Distribute meeting notes to the 21 communities – SSA administrative staff member

- Suggestion to invest in a Project Manager / Coordinator for Coqualeetza. Nominate Val Sam to visit designated contact at communities.
- Create an Organizational structure chart.
- Form a Technical Working Group (TWG).
- Develop Land Use plans.
- Agree with other members present to creating a space at the St. Mary's property for a formal Memorial piece.
- What to do with existing buildings.
- The 21 communities received an email from the ED of SSA with the signed Ministerial order on November 11, 2024 (21 communities listed – Aitchelitz, Chawathil, Cheam, Kwantlen, Kwaw-kwaw-Apilt, Leq'a:mel, Matsqui, Popkum, Seabird Island, Shxw'ow'hamel, Skawahlook, Skowkale, Shxwhá:y Village, Skwah, Soowahlie, Sq'ewlets, Squiala, Sts'ailes, Sumas, Tzeachten, Yakweakwioose)
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) held monies in trust of \$600,000 to be distributed amongst the 21 bands for compensation of the Utility and Statutory Rights of Way (ROW) along Knight Road, Chilliwack.
- Patricia Adair has spoken about the Coqualeetza Cultural Centre moving back on to the Coqualeetza grounds, near the corner of Wells Rd and Vedder Rd.

- The Stó:lō Collective “decision making mechanism” is unclear. What number will be used for quorum? 75% is 15 community votes /50% +1 is 11 communities.
- Agree with suggested potential consultant, Val Sam for a 6 month – 1 year contract.
- There needs to be structure and process, or decisions will not be made.
- This Stó:lō Collective group requires 1 Council member representative and 1 Administrative representative as a main contact so the group can conduct surveys on important topics related to the Lands.
- These contacts will be responsible for distributing meeting material and informing the community of the progress going forward.

Action #03: Send a request to the 21 communities asking them to appoint a Council member and an administrative person to be the main points of contact - SSA administrative staff member

- Suggesting pooling the Right of Way seed money to help with the budget rather than splitting amongst the bands.

Chairperson:

- Recommended the Stó:lō Collective meet once a month.
- Draft Governance Terms - does not have to be a Society, simpler the better.
- Who will be Management?
- Executive Group? E.g. Tribal group, Pilalt, Tit, TTML, Scowlitz, St'sailes, Matsqui
- Develop Terms of Reference (TOR)

RECOMMENDATION: SSA staff to continue as Administration lead.

Closing remarks

- 10/21 bands in attendance today.
- Illustrative artist to create a visual for the future of the properties.
- Allow for Hybrid meetings.
- Agenda distributed in advance.
- Create a budget.
- TWG to develop TOR and timeframe.

Scheduling

Shxw̓ha:y Village Chief offered to host the next Stó:lō Collective meeting at their Cultural Centre. More details to follow.

Meeting concluded at 10:50am