

Resiliency Through Fire – Prescribed Fire and Indigenous led Cultural burning

Presented by:

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Who are the Esk'etemc?



Esk'et, formally Alkali Lake band, is part of the Secwepemc Nation and has about 1300 band member of which 600 live in the village.

The Esketemc are traditionally a hunting, fishing and gathering society and are most proud of leading the sobriety movement in the 1970's. The people have recently revived their traditional form Hereditary governance which is important for self determination and managing the land.

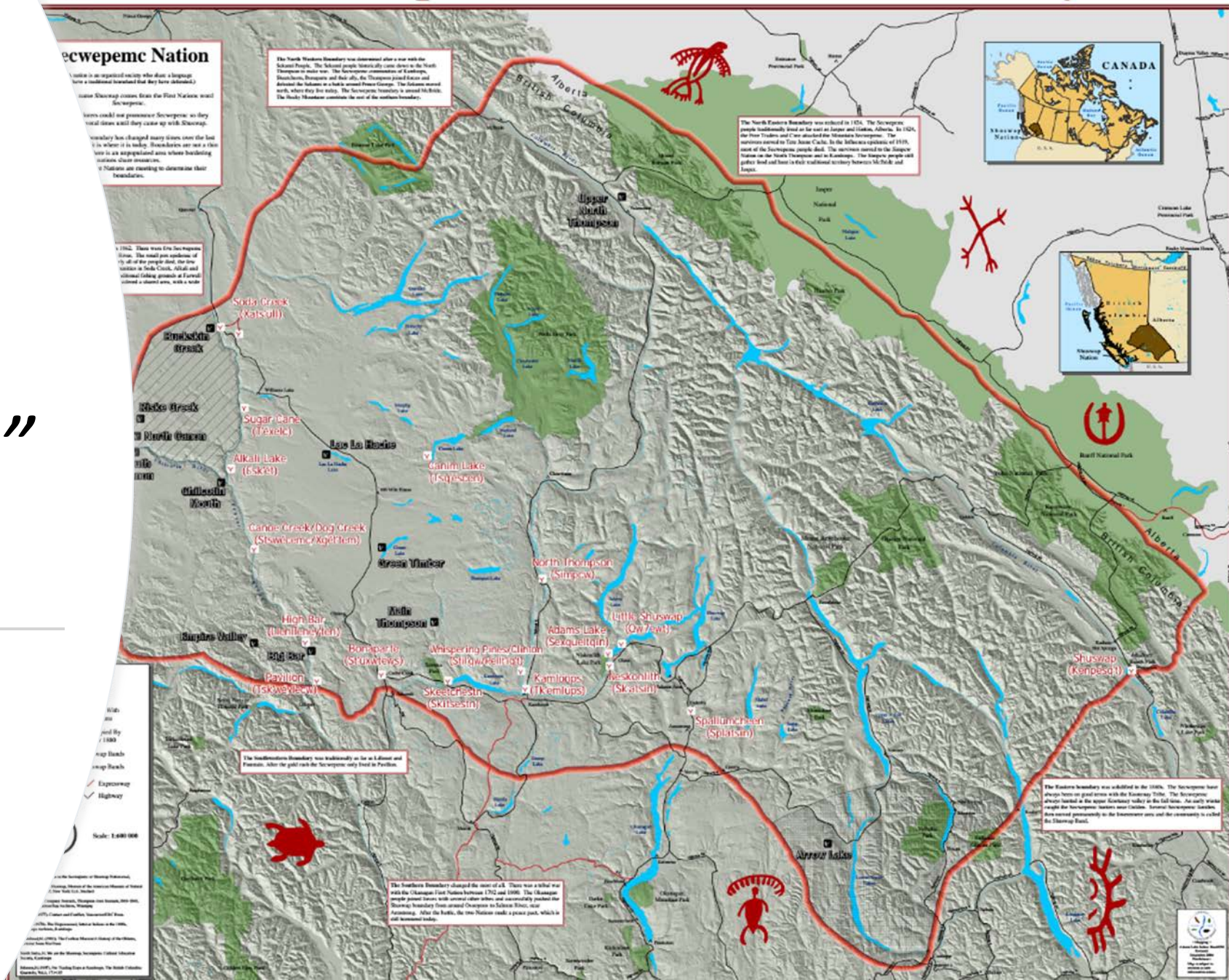


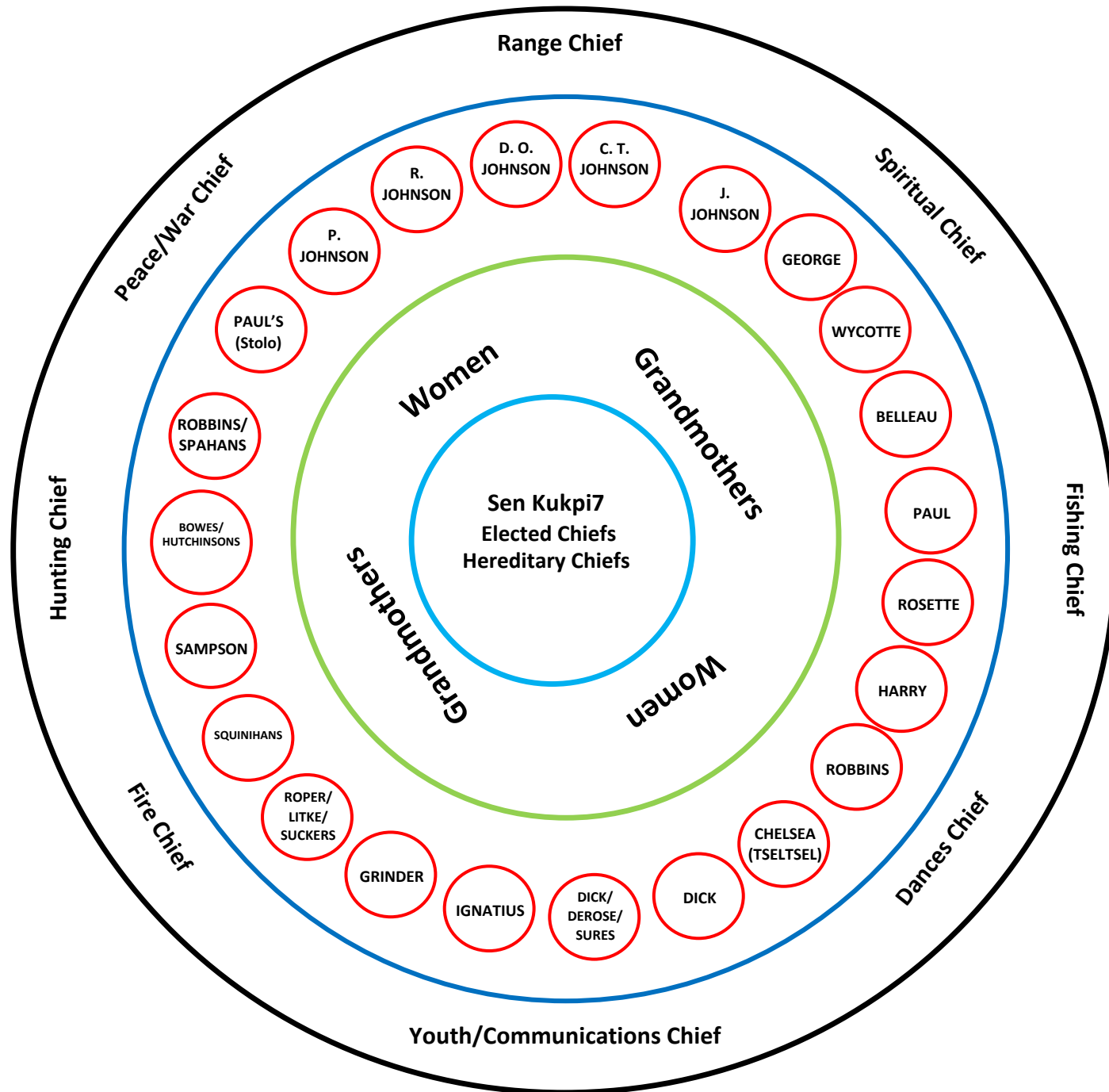
Shuswap Nation Territory



*Secwepemc –
“People of the
wide-open land”*

Consists of 17 bands and 7 divisions within the Nation





Traditional Fire Chief (Headman)

- Fire was a major tool to manage the land
- Ceremony and prayer were used when putting fire on the land
- The role was appointed by Matriarchs and was often a spiritual person who had expertise in fire



Indigenous values are based on their individual unique culture, language, governance and history.

Keepers of the land – many FN's believe it's their responsibility

Managing for 7 generations into the future

First Nation Natural Laws of the land (Tsinme7iple7), Morals and history are past on by oral history

Historically, intensive land management in diverse ecosystems required

Spiritual connection to Mother Earth through language and cultural ceremonies



Working together towards resilient forests and landscapes

- Arthur Dick – Esk'et Elder
- Gord Chipman – Past ARM Forest Manager
- Peter Holub – BCWS Wildfire Prevention Officer
- Cariboo Ministry staff



Ceremony for Cultural burning

- Asking God/Creator for help
- Community and Elder support for cultural burning on the land
- Esk'et Fire Keeper, Spiritual leader and BCWS participate in ceremony prior to burning
- Reconciling and building understanding and trust





Resilient Forest Stands

Photo By: Andrew Innerd

Photo by: Marcel Paul

Combining Indigenous knowledge and Western Science in Adaptive Management Research

- Oral History for past Forest conditions
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge on how burns were completed and relearning skills
- Western methods of research to answer traditional questions – eg Managing for traditional plants and plant ecosystems.



Adaptive Management for Resilient Forests

Top 5 Questions:

1. How will understory vegetation species respond to treatment(s)?
2. How will wildlife species respond to treatment(s)?
3. How to set up the stands to reintroduce low intensity fire as a maintenance tool?
4. How to begin to build back a landscape mosaic of stand types across the treatment areas?
5. How will the economics of each treatment vary?



Cultural burning

Objectives

- Maintaining ecosystems for hunting
- Cultivating medicinal and food plants
- Burning grasslands and meadows for hay production
- Decolonization, re-connecting as stewards of the land and practicing culture and ceremonies
- Forest resilience
- Safety of communities



Understory burning of Juvenile Spaced stands for resiliency



Examples of working together

- Sharing Knowledge and combining Traditional Fire Knowledge with Western Science
- BCWS Bootcamp (8 ARM employees in training)
- Yearly Cultural and Archeology training between ARM and BCWS
- Cultural burning ceremonies – Prior to burning, Firesticks, and using sage and eagle feathers for blessing and brushing off
- Initial Attack Type II local contract with BCWS and training
- Adaptive Management project between ARM, Ministry staff and BCWS



“Fire is Medicine for the land”

