



Pulling Together for COVID-19 Safety in the Quw'utsun Community

Joint Commitment Letter: Cowichan Tribes Big House Leaders and other Spiritual Leaders and Chief and Council

Introduction

Quw'utsun Big House Leaders from S-amuna', Kwa'mutsun and Lhumlhumuluts', and spiritual leaders from the Shaker Church and St. Anne's Church, are working together with Cowichan Tribes Chief & Council and staff. They are working to ensure that safety measures are in place so that Quw'utsun Mustimuhw can practice culture and spirituality safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The communicable disease known as COVID-19 has been declared by the World Health Organization ("WHO") to be a global pandemic. In British Columbia, it poses a serious threat to the health, safety and lives of Quw'utsun Mustimuhw.

Cultural activities are important to Quw'utsun culture and well-being. Our Snuw'uy'ulth (teachings) say that we must help one another and work together for the good of all Cowichan people.

Activities that involve gathering in groups can significantly increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Elders, especially those with chronic health conditions, are very vulnerable to COVID-19 and developing more severe illness or complications related to Covid-19, including death. Cowichan people also face other risk factors due to colonization, such as overcrowding in homes and systemic racism in provincial health facilities.

Commitments

As a self-governing nation, it is critically important that we implement measures to protect the health and safety of our community. Under Cowichan Tribes COVID-19 Community Protection Bylaw, Cowichan Tribes can enforce laws and health orders on its territory in accordance with Quw'utsun values and authority, alongside the public health orders of BC and Canada.

Like a canoe journey, we know that paddling together as one is needed to reach our destination. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our end destination is a healthy community, free of COVID-19 cases, and the efforts of everyone are required to make this possible.

Together, we commit to upholding COVID-19 safety protocols and measures for cultural and spiritual gatherings on Quw'utsun Tumuhw. These include:

- Gatherings will not exceed 50 people. Major events of more than 50 people will be postponed until at least 2021.
- Gatherings of any size will only occur when proper safety procedures have been implemented and communicated to attendees.
- Physical distancing (2 m/6 ft) during gatherings will be required for people outside their household groups.

- When physical distancing is not possible, attendees will be required to wear masks.
- Additional distance (3 m) or a barrier will be maintained for singers and speakers.
- Cleaning and sanitization procedures will be followed before, during and after gatherings (having hand sanitizer available, routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces).
- Appropriate signage will be placed at each gathering place with safety procedures.
- Organizers of events will maintain lists of all attendees and phone numbers or emails.
- Organizers of events will refuse entry to anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 or who has travelled internationally within the last 14 days, or been in contact with someone infected.
- Owners or operators of the facility must feel confident that the organizer is aware and will follow all the public health regulations.
- Cultural and spiritual leaders will help encourage members and their families to practice culture or spirituality safely during the pandemic.
- Cowichan Tribes staff will provide education materials and signage upon request to support leaders in developing their own safety plans and member education.
- All parties will promptly inform Ts'ewulhtun Health Centre staff of any known risks or deficiencies that arise that could impact the safety of other members of the community.

By signing this document, we commit to upholding the safety protocols and guidelines listed above.

Signatures

<i>Stephanie Affeo</i>	<i>Sept 28/20</i>	<i>Allie Charles</i>	
Chief and Council	Date	S-amuna' Big House	Date
		<i>[Signature]</i>	
<i>Johnny Crocker</i>			
Kwa'mutsun Big House	Date	Lhumlhumuluts' Big House	Date
_____	<i>Sept 28/20</i>	<i>Herbert A James</i>	<i>Sept 28/20</i>
St. Anne's Church	Date	Shaker Church	Date

