



## Statement

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May 31, 2021

### Islands Trust Council Statement to the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Community, Residential School Survivors, and Families

Lək'wəŋən, METULIYE/Victoria, B.C. – Today we hold in our hearts the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc community and all the families and survivors of Canada's residential schools. On Thursday, May 27, 2021, we heard that 215 lost children had been found on the Kamloops Indian Residential School site, as Chief Rosanne Casimir confirmed, "an unthinkable loss".

The legacy and history of residential schools is lived each day by mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers of the loved ones lost, taken from their First Nation communities, from their homes. This horrendous finding is a reminder of the ongoing and shameful legacy of colonization. We stand with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc community, residential school survivors and their families, and we respectfully acknowledge the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Leadership and their role as caretakers of the 215 lost children.

"At this time, words have little meaning," shared Peter Luckham, Chair, Islands Trust Council. "The finding of this mass grave has reverberated around the world. The pain and grief for these lost children and their families is shared, but we will never experience the full magnitude of your pain and loss. The discovery of the 215 children is a historic wrong."

During this time of mourning, we hope that all communities come together to light candles and honour the lives of the 215 children lost to genocide. Islands Trust Council recognizes that more must be done to address the generational effect of residential schools. We commit to the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action](#) and the education, awareness, and advocacy needed for healing and reconciliation.

Islands Trust Council acknowledges that the history and legacy of residential schools is a history and legacy that all Canadians must learn and understand. To learn about the history and legacy of residential schools, read the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Report](#) and visit the [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#). To donate to residential school survivors, visit the [Indian Residential School Survivors Society](#). We acknowledge this news is very painful for residential school survivors and their families, and for First Nations community members, and Indigenous Peoples living on the islands. We offer the reminder that the Indian Residential School Survivors Society Emergency Crisis Line is available 24/7 for those that may need counselling or support. Call 1-800-721-0066 or the 24-hr crisis line 1-866-925-4419.

The Islands Trust is located within the treaty and territorial lands and waters of the BOKÉĆEN, K'ómoks, Lək'wəŋən, Lyackson, MÁLEXEL, Qualicum, Quw'utsun Tribes, scəwəθən məsteyəxʷ, Scia'new, səilwətaʔt, SEMYOME, shíshálh, Skwxwú7mesh, Snaw-naw-as, Snuneymuxw, Spune'luxutth, SʔÁUTW, Stz'uminus, ʔəʔəmen, toq qaymıxʷ, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Wei Wai Kum, We Wai Kai, WJOLELP, WSIKEM, Xeláltxw, Xwémalhkwu/ʔop qaymıxʷ, and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm Nations.

Peter Luckham,  
Chair, Islands Trust Council

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***Preserving and protecting over 450 islands and surrounding waters in the Salish Sea***

Bowen, Denman, Gabriola, Galiano, Gambier, Hornby, Lasqueti, Mayne, N. Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, S. Pender, Thetis

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