

# Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh (*Taking Care of our Children*): Residential School Missing Children and Unmarked Graves Investigations in the Fraser Valley

Stó:lō Nation Chiefs' Council and Stó:lō Research & Resource Management Centre  
*in collaboration with:*

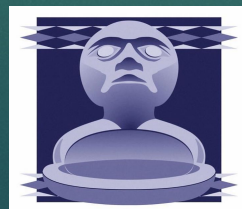
Stó:lō Tribal Council

Sqwá and Sts'ailes First Nations

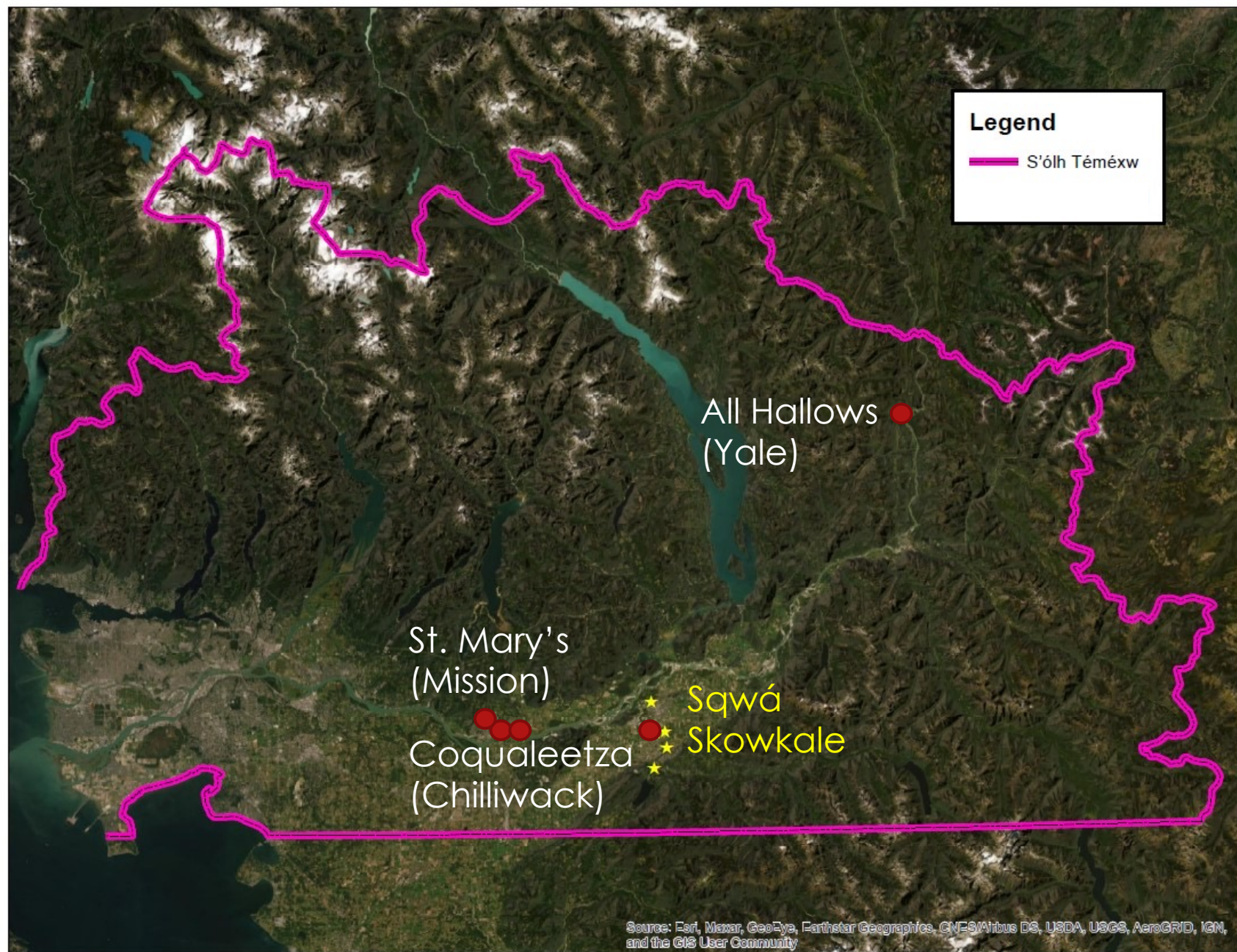
REMEMBERING THE CHILDREN: A COMMUNITY AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH GATHERING / NCTR,  
WINNIPEG

OCTOBER 24, 2022

DR. DAVID SCHAEPE, DIRECTOR, STÓ:LŌ RESEARCH AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CENTRE /  
XYS PROJECT LEAD







## S'ólh Téméxw – Stó:lō Traditional Lands

Three residential schools in the eastern part of the territory are the subject of this work:

**Coqualeetza, St. Mary's (x3), and All Hallows**

Also part of the subject area, are multiple **Stó:lō First Nation cemeteries** with graves associated with Coqualeetza residential school and hospital



# Overseeing the Work

Our Steering Committee is a multi-First Nation / Organizational group made up of the following members:

Chief David Jimmie, Stó:lō Nation Chiefs Council / Project Political Lead

Grand Chief Clarence Pennier, Stó:lō Tribal Council

Chief Alice McKay, Matsqui First Nation

Councillor Chris Silver, Sumas First Nation

Councillor Darcy Paul, Skowkale First Nation

Chief Alice Thompson, Leq'á:mel First Nation

Chief Lara Mussell-Savage, Sqwá First Nation

Chief Robert Gladstone, Shxwha:y Village

Councillor Nikki LaRock, Yakweakwioose First Nation

Chief Ralph Leon, Sts'ailes First Nation

Further cultural guidance is being provided by the Stó:lō House of Respect Caretaking Committee. We are receiving input from First Nation-specific advisory bodies at Sqwá and Skowkale First Nations.



# Project Team

## **Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre – Core Research Team for SNCC**

**Dr. David Schaepe** (Director and Senior Archaeologist) - Project Lead

**Amber Kostuchenko** (Manager, Language, Archives, Cultural Education and Tours) – Project Manager

**Dr. Naxaxalhts'i (Albert “Sonny” McHalsie)** (Cultural Advisor/Historian)

**Cara Brendzy / Lisa Dojak** (Heritage Stewardship & Archaeology / GPR)

**Kathleen Bertrand / Remy Benoit / Kristina** (Project Coordinators/Researchers)

Additional support will also be provided by other SRRMC staff, including the Archivist/Librarian, Genealogist, Geographic Information Systems Analyst, and additional archaeological staff.

## **- Partners include the University of the Fraser Valley**

**Dr. Keith Thor Carlson**, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous and Community-Engaged History, and Director of UFV's Peace and Reconciliation Centre

## **- Additional technical advisors:**

**Dr. Andrew Martindale** (University of British Columbia)

**Dr. Kisha Supernant** (University of Alberta)

**Dr. Bill Angelbeck** (Douglas College)

**Dr. Colin Grier** (Washington State University)

**First Nations BC-based Caretaking Community Technical Working Group**

The **Canadian Archaeology Association** will provide further technical advisory and other support.



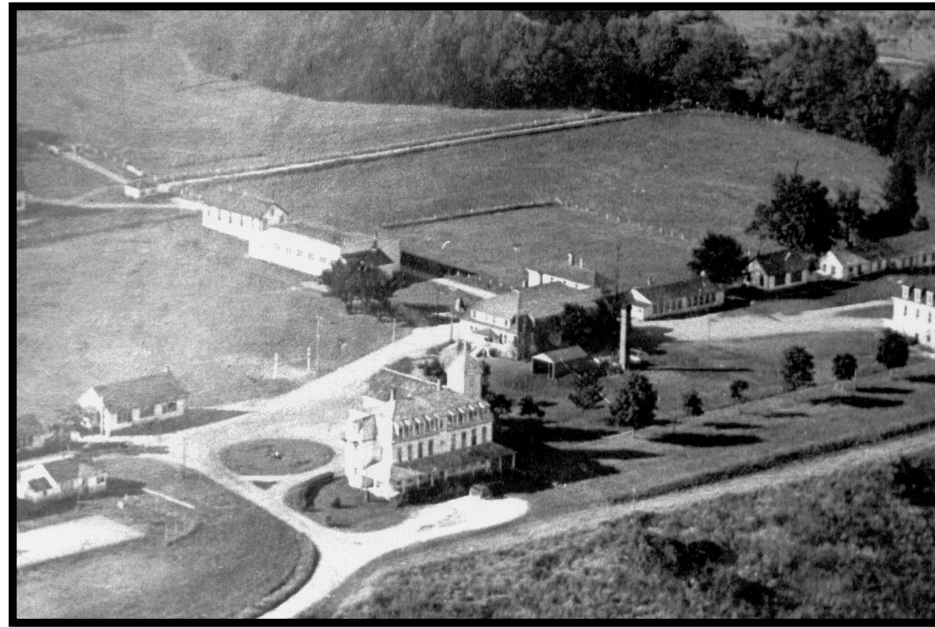


**Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh (*Taking Care of our Children*): Our Scope of Work**



# St. Mary's

- ▶ Mission, BC
- ▶ 1863-1984 (relocated 1882 and again in 1962)
- ▶ Catholic Church
- ▶ Longest period of operation in BC.
- ▶ The substantial remains of the second St. Mary's institution is located within the City of Mission's Fraser River Heritage Park and includes the still-active Oblate Cemetery.
- ▶ The last residential school grounds are held in trust for 21 Stó:lō Bands and operated by the Stó:lō Service Agency.



Buildings at the second location for St. Mary's institute, now currently part of Fraser River Heritage Park in Mission, BC.  
Photo: Stó:lō Library and Archives



St. Mary's "New School" built 1963.

Photo: Stó:lō Library and Archives



# Coqualeetza

- ▶ Chilliwack, BC
- ▶ 1886-1940
- ▶ United Church of Canada (initially Methodist Church)
- ▶ After the school closed, the buildings were converted into the Coqualeetza Indian Hospital (1941-1969).
- ▶ The school cemetery was removed in the 1940s and the remains reinterred in cemeteries located on local reserves, including Skwá, Skowkale, Tzeachten, and possibly also Soowahlie First Nations.
- ▶ Currently held in trust for 21 Stó:lō Bands and operated by the Stó:lō Service Agency.



Coqualeetza grounds, 1940.  
Photo: Stó:lō Library and Archives



Coqualeetza Hospital  
Photo: Stó:lō Service Agency



# All Hallows

- ▶ Yale, BC
- ▶ 1884-1917
- ▶ Anglican Church of Canada
- ▶ Segregated residential school for Indigenous and non-Indigenous girls.
- ▶ Associated cemetery/cemeteries currently unknown.



All Hallows  
Photo: BC Archives E-00707







**Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh (*Taking Care of our Children*): Core Elements of Our Work**



# ARCHIVAL and COMMUNITY RESEARCH

- ▶ Documentary and oral history research to locate cemeteries associated with these schools. This also serves to inform the grounds investigations.
- ▶ Deaths occurring at or related to attendance at these schools.
- ▶ Lost Stó:lō Children Registry – recording family members who attended any residential school and did not come home.



Indian Affairs School Files	
(RG 10, Volume 6423)	
File 869-5, part 1	New Westminster Agency - Coqualeetza Industrial School - Establishment - Building Maintenance - Accounts - (Plans). 1890 - 1904
File 869-5, part 2	New Westminster Agency - Coqualeetza Industrial School - Building Maintenance - Supplies - Accounts (Report). 1925 - 1932
File 869-5, part 3	New Westminster Agency - Coqualeetza Industrial School - Inspector of Construction. 1921 - 1934



# COMMEMORATION and MEMORIALIZATION

- ▶ Memorial Posts carved by Siyémches (Chief Terry Horne, Yeqwyeqwí:ws First Nation), recognized in ceremony at St. Mary's and Coqualeetza Sept. 30, 2021, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- ▶ The posts acknowledge those who attended and those who did not come home.
- ▶ Relocation of former Coqualeetza Residential school and Hospital corner stones from the last remaining hospital building which will be demolished in fall of 2021. This is a true recreation of how they were installed at the hospital building. It now sits in dialogue with the Memorial Post.
- ▶ Potential future memorials related to associated cemeteries.



Siyémches with St. Mary's Memorial Pole

Photo: Dave Schaepe



Coqualeetza Memorial Pole and the relocated "Coqualeetza Hospital Monument"  
Photo: Dave Schaepe



# GROUNDS INVESTIGATIONS

- ▶ Established protocols for field work with cultural advisors (Stó:lō House of Respect Caretaking Committee; Sqwá First Nation; Skowkale First Nation). Work with and pay respects to the ancestors. Follow established principles in the Stó:lō Heritage Policy which provide guidelines for heritage-related work.
- ▶ Associated ceremonies and cultural work.
- ▶ Address reporting and communication protocols with the Steering Committee and related First Nations regarding confidentiality and cultural sensitivity.



Foundation of Girls' Dormitory at second St. Mary's institution with cemetery in the background.

Photo: Dave Schaepe



# GROUNDS INVESTIGATIONS

- ▶ **Step 1 – Aerial Remote Sensing** (photogrammetry/LiDAR – light detection and range) and related surface mapping and non-invasive detection methods.
- ▶ **Step 2 – Terrestrial Remotes Sensing** (ground-penetrating radar, and possibly other technologies). Geophysical remote sensing assessment of residential grounds and related sites, including on-reserve cemeteries associated with Coqualeetza.



Drone with LIDAR attachment used for surface mapping of the grounds of the second St. Mary's institution (Fraser River Heritage Park).  
Photo: Dave Schaepe



# GROUNDS INVESTIGATIONS

## Understanding the context:

The context in which the forms of technology are being used in this investigation is recognized as **humanly-connected**.

They are serving the purpose of relocating and reconnecting lost loved ones to their relatives living today, and also recognizing and respecting their memories within the broader range of communities in our society.

Any findings we arrive at will not be considered “discoveries” but rather “remembrances.”

Technology assists us with the work within this understanding.



Memorial on the foundation of the Boys' Dormitory at the second St. Mary's institution with a photograph of a young girl. Information on the back of the photo indicates that she had died at St. Mary's in 1957.  
Photo: Dave Schaepe





# CONFERENCE PANEL

**Community-led Searches: Success  
and Challenges – Perspectives from  
the SNCC/SRRMC Experience**



# Le hó:y!

## Questions?

- ▶ **Dr. Dave Schaepe – Project Lead**  
Director, Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre  
[Dave.Schaepe@stolonation.bc.ca](mailto:Dave.Schaepe@stolonation.bc.ca)
- ▶ **Amber Kostuchenko – Project Manager**  
Manager, Language, Archives, Cultural Education and Tours  
[Amber.Kostuchenko@stolonation.bc.ca](mailto:Amber.Kostuchenko@stolonation.bc.ca)