

First Nations Leadership Council Information Bulletin

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Bear Mountain Development

On November 16, members of the FNLC, Songhees First Nation and Tsartlip First Nation gathered at the site of the Bear Mountain development after discovering that – without meaningful consultation – the provincial Archaeology Branch had approved removing the roof of a sacred cave and draining a subterranean lake used for spiritual cleansing in order to determine whether the site warranted protection.

“First Nations in this province are outraged at what's happened here,” said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, “It's of paramount importance that all the parties recognize the need to resolve this, particularly the developer, otherwise we're going to have a situation develop here which is going to be just as ugly as the other confrontations across this country. There's no question about that. Sacred issues were very prevalent in the Oka standoff as they were in the Ipperwash conflict.”

Hupacasath Chief Judith Sayers said this incident is indicative of “a really large cultural barrier and cultural insensitivity from the archeological branch.”

The FNLC supports the Songhees and Tsartlip in their outrage over the destruction of this sacred site and assisted in organizing a meeting on November 17 to reach an interim solution. Under the New Relationship, work must continue to institute recognition of Aboriginal title, rights and culture across government – including legislative change to ensure the protection of sacred sites.

http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/News_Releases/UBCICNews11230601.htm