



For Immediate Release – April 28, 2022

nʔaysnúlaʔx^w iʔ kʔlux^wnwix^wmntət **Declaration of the Ashnola Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area** **(IPCA)**

nʔaysnúlaʔx^w (Ashnola), Keremeos, BC, sməłqmix / syilx Territory: Today, the sməłqmix, the syilx people of the Similkameen Valley announced the designation of a new Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) in their territory. The Ashnola IPCA declaration upholds the inherent jurisdiction and responsibility of the sməłqmix to protect and manage their territories according to sməłqmix / syilx law.

“We welcome all governments, organizations and individuals who wish to learn more and to work with us, to take advantage of this historic opportunity to align their efforts with our inherent title, laws and management plans,” said *kalʔlupaqn*, Keith Crow, Lower Similkameen Chief.

Protecting and conserving the water and tmix^w (the life force within all four sacred ecosystems) is not the sole burden of sməłqmix / syilx. It should be shared, including by national, provincial and local governments through communication and collaboration.

Through the IPCA, the nʔaysnúlaʔx^w / Ashnola Watershed in its entirety will be managed by the sməłqmix in perpetuity for:

- the protection of the water, the ancestors and air / climate, in accordance with sməłqmix / syilx law;
- maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity and sməłqmix cultural interconnection with the territory through active sməłqmix management and teaching;
- the healing and strengthening of the interconnected relationships between water, the earth, and all of those who interact with it. This includes the tmix^w (the life force within all four sacred ecosystems), which are described in our story systems as: the under the earth tribes, the water tribes, the growing on the land tribes, and the walking and flying on the earth tribes of living beings;
- the spiritual, cultural and physical sustenance of the sməłqmix people, including sustainable economic opportunities consistent with our responsibilities in the Ashnola.

“The Ashnola is one of the last pristine stream systems in sməłqmix territory. Protecting the cold, pure waters of our watershed is essential if the sməłqmix, the land, all beings, as well as settlers to the Similkameen, are to thrive in a time of climate change and increasing water scarcity,” said *xitulax^w* Ira Edward, Lower Similkameen Councillor.

A new kiosk and interpretative signage accompany the Ashnola IPCA designation, which was made at a ceremony in the watershed today, attended by dignitaries, elders, nation members, provincial, federal and local government representatives, and neighbouring nations.

Licensees and non-sməłqmíx water and land users in the watershed will be given notice regarding how the new IPCA declaration will affect them.

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To arrange interviews, please contact:

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Declaration documents available online: https://www.lsib.net/?page_id=3823

naysnúla?x^w (Ashnola) IPCA Declaration Poster: [English](#) | [nsyilxcən](#)

[naysnúla?x^w \(Ashnola\) IPCA Informational Two-Pager](#)

[naysnúla?x^w \(Ashnola\) IPCA Legal Backgrounder Booklet](#)

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