

# **S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance Land and Resource Use Consultation and Decision-making Policy**



Approved by the Leadership of the  
S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance

January 13, 2015

**S'ólh Téméxw te íkw'elò. Xyólhmet te mekw'stám ít kwelát.  
(This is our land. We have to look after everything that belongs to us).**

Prepared by the Stó:lō Research & Resource Management Centre  
and People of the River Referrals Office

S’ÓLH TÉMÉXW STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE – LAND AND RESOURCE USE  
CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING POLICY

- 1.0 FORWARD.....3
- 1.1 Preamble..... 3
- 1.2 Vision ..... 4
- 1.3 Purpose ..... 4
- 2.0 CENTRAL PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES FOR RESPECTFUL AND  
MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION ACCORDING TO STÓ:LŌ VALUES .....4
- 2.1 S’ólh Téméxw te íkw’elò. Xyólhmet te mekw’stám ít kwelát. (This is our land. We have  
to look after everything that belongs to us) ..... 4
- 2.2 Xaxastexw te mekw’ stam. (*Respect all things*) ..... 5
- 2.3 Xólhmet te mekx’ stam s’i:wes te selsila:lh chet (Take care of everything our great  
grandparents taught [showed] us) / Haqls chexw xwelmi:ay staxwelh (Remember the  
future generations) ..... 5
- 2.4 Ewe chexw qelqelit te mekw’ stam loy qw’ esli hokwex yexw lamexw ku:t (*Don’t ruin  
waste, destroy everything; just take what you need*)..... 5
- 2.5 Lets’emó:t (One heart, one mind) ..... 5
- 2.6 Additional significant Principles:..... 6
- 3.0 DEFINITIONS.....6
- 4.0 GUIDELINES FOR CONSULTATION .....7
- 4.1 Decision-making and Consent ..... 7
- 4.2 Ensuring Respectful Treatment..... 7
- 4.3 Determining Value ..... 8
- 4.4 Identifying with whom to Consult ..... 8
  - 4.4.1 Interwoven Circles of Stewardship Responsibility..... 8
- 4.5 Learning to Work and Live Together in a Good Way ..... 9
- 4.6 Funding and Capacity..... 9
- 4.7 Identifying Consultation Guidelines in Other Stó:lō Policies..... 9
- 5.0 ENGAGEMENT, CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING OPERATIONAL  
PROCESSES.....9
- 5.1 S’ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance (STSA) ..... 10
- 5.2 People of the River Referrals Office (PRRO)..... 10
  - 5.2.1 Relationship to Technical Staff..... 10
- Appendix I - Map of S’ólh Téméxw (‘Our World’, ‘Our Land’).....11
- Appendix II - S’ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance - First Nations Membership .....12

# S'ÓLH TÉMÉXW STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE – LAND AND RESOURCE USE CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING POLICY

## 1.0 FORWARD

Stó:lō title and rights exist, now as before and into the future, throughout S'ólh Téméxw. We have never ceded any of our rights, title or interests within S'ólh Téméxw. We maintain and express our title and rights within the ever-changing world of which we are a part. This policy is a living document that presents our consultation process regarding interests in using land and resources within S'ólh Téméxw adopted by the sixteen Stó:lō First Nation members of the S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance (STSA) on January 13, 2015. The membership of the STSA may change from time to time and the policies presented in this document are subject to periodic reconsideration and revision. We, the S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance maintain and administer this, our Land and Resource Use Consultation and Decision-Making Policy (the Policy). Nothing in this Policy shall be construed in a manner which infringes upon, abrogates, derogates or denies our Stó:lō aboriginal title, rights or interests.

### 1.1 Preamble

“Stó:lō” is the Halq'eméylem word for “river” and also for the Halkomelem-speaking people who live within the lower Fraser River watershed. We, as the Stó:lō, are a collective community who hold rights and title within all of S'ólh Téméxw – “our world” (see Figure 1). Our World is alive. We are connected to the river, as Stó:lō. We are connected to the land, as Xwélméxw. We are connected to our ancestors, each other and our World through shxwélí (life force – see definitions at 3.0). We are a people made from interconnected families, sxwōxwiyám (transformation narratives and time of the distant past – see definitions at 3.0), sqwelqwel (personal histories of the more recent past / news – see definitions at 3.0), language, customs, beliefs and laws. We were put here by the Creator, Chíchelh Si:yám. Xexá:ls (the Transformers) and Tel Swayel (Sky-Borne People) came to make the world right and transform it into its present form. Our laws are written in the land. Our laws guide our actions and decision-making, including our and others' uses of land and resources; of sxexó:mes (gifts of the Creator – see definitions at 3.0) .

Our world, unlike that of many of our present-day neighbours, includes inseparable spiritual and material realms. In our Stó:lō culture a special link exists between the past, present and future. The connection between the past and future rests with those living today, in the present. We view our place and actions in our world as the centre of a continuum - we live today in the world of both our ancestors and relatives yet to come. Our history connects us to our future. It is important to know our history.

For nearly two centuries, the historic and on-going influx of Xwelítem (in-migrating peoples without aboriginal rights and title) into S'ólh Téméxw has profoundly impacted our lands, our heritage, our ability to practice our way of life. The loss of our land, heritage sites and people, and the clear and continuing impacts to our culture are due largely to the Xwelítem society's failure to understand and respect our way of life, our actions and beliefs, our belongings, and our aboriginal rights, title and interests, and the Stó:lō as a people.

We have to learn to live together in a good way. Our Policy provides a means of doing so.

# S'ÓLH TÉMÉXW STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE – LAND AND RESOURCE USE CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING POLICY

## 1.2 Vision

The vision of the STSA is to champion the integrity of our relationship with S'ólh Téméxw for our communities and future generations as a self-sufficient, sustainable resource supporting wise decision-making. Consultation is part of our relationship with S'ólh Téméxw, our world, our land and resources, shxwelí, and our neighbours, offering a way of bridging our communities through respectful dialogue. We promote better understanding between peoples in order to create a better and healthier way of life for all living within S'ólh Téméxw.

## 1.3 Purpose

The duty to consult originates from the inherent aboriginal rights and title of the Stó:lō, as a people, who occupy S'ólh Téméxw as they have for thousands of years. Stó:lō's inherent governance and sovereignty gives rise to a unique relationship between ourselves and the Crown. The legal obligation to consult lies with the Crown, primarily, but consultation also involves all Parties to land and resource use applications and decision-making. Our approach to land and resource use, and therefore consultation over such matters, comes from our laws, customs and beliefs. Our procedural aspects of consultation, including all related aspects of decision-making accommodation, justification, and otherwise, flow from our Stó:lō worldview and laws. A primary objective of this policy is to define principles guiding our process of engagement and consultation with all others, including between Stó:lō tribes, between governments and with proponents.

## 2.0 CENTRAL PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES FOR RESPECTFUL AND MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION ACCORDING TO STÓ:LŌ VALUES

### 2.1 S'ólh Téméxw te íkw'elò. Xyólhmet te mekw'stám ít kwelát. (This is our land. We have to look after everything that belongs to us)

Stó:lō rights, title and interests exist throughout S'ólh Téméxw. These are proprietary rights recognized in Canadian law. In addition we Stó:lō relate to our lands and resources in terms of responsibility and a form of property relationship strongly connected by stewardship. The lands and resources are our extended family with whom we have a fulsome connection, including a shared life force. The right to care for the lands and resources is therefore both a privilege and an obligation.

The caretaking responsibilities are those of the Stó:lō. The responsibility cannot be delegated or compromised because it is a part of our identity. The laws of our land, Snoweyelh, govern these relationships to our sxexó:mes (gifts of the creator), our land and resources, and everything that belongs to us.

**Policy Statement:** The Stó:lō aboriginal title and rights in S'ólh Téméxw which includes the authority, the responsibility, and the ability to manage our traditional lands and natural resources. Consultation must respect our relationships with our territory and our laws that govern these relationships. The experience and wisdom of the stewards of our lands, resources, items, features, etc. must inform our decisions.

## 2.2 Xaxastexw te mekw' stam. (*Respect all things*)

It is through Shxwelí that the Stó:lō exist as a part of S'ólh Téméxw, not independent from it. Shxwelí is the life force that exists in all things. Since all things are alive with shxwelí, they must not be taken for granted.

We Stó:lō will continue to occupy S'ólh Téméxw now and into the future, forever. Our identity is expressed through the very term that describes our community – we are people *of* the river. The future existence of the Stó:lō and S'ólh Téméxw are intertwined and inseparable.

**Policy Statement:** We must engage in consultations in a way that is mindful of our interconnectedness to all of S'ólh Téméxw and that conveys our respect for all things.

## 2.3 Xólhmet te mekx' stam s'i:wes te selsila:lh chet (Take care of everything our great grandparents taught [showed] us) / Haqls chexw xwelmi:ay staxwelh (Remember the future generations)

In Stó:lō culture a special link exists between the past, present, and future. We express this connection in many ways. In Halq'eméylem, for instance, we have the word tómiyeqw which translates into English as both great-great-great-great-grandparent and great-great-great-great-grandchild. The relationship expressed in this word connects people seven generations past with those seven generations in the future. The connection between the past and future rests with those of use living today.

**Policy Statement:** Those whose interests must be considered cannot be identified only among those living in the present. In this sense it is important to realize that the number of individuals involved in consultation is much broader than might initially be expected. Consultations must make room for the consideration of the impacts throughout seven generations. We must be respectful of our relatives seven generations past and future.

## 2.4 Ewe chexw qelqelit te mekw' stam loy qw' esli hokwex yexw lamexw ku:t (*Don't ruin waste, destroy everything; just take what you need*)

There is a life force in all things that must not be needlessly consumed or destroyed. Wisdom must be used to avoid taking more than is needed thereby turning 'use' into 'waste'.

**Policy Statement:** The need for consultation is triggered if an activity has a potential impact on S'ólh Téméxw. It is necessary to understand the extent of the project and what it requires of our territory in determining the scope of potential impacts and consultation requirements.

## 2.5 Lets'emó:t (One heart, one mind)

Embedded in this principle is the importance of maintaining a good feeling, collectively. As a community, we share much in common. But we also have diverse interests and identities. Working together as Stó:lō requires us to work within ourselves to find unity. Part of what unifies us is our cultural landscape, which is an expression of our collective identity. There is only one S'ólh Téméxw to which we all belong.

# S'ÓLH TÉMÉXW STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE – LAND AND RESOURCE USE CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING POLICY

**Policy Statement:** S'ólh Téméxw is more than the delineation of boundaries on a map. To protect our territory and way of life, we must be aware of our commonality. While there is room for many voices, there is a single song that we must all must learn to sing.

## 2.6 Additional significant Principles:

- Shxwelí
- Sxwōxwiyám
- Sxexó:mes
- Tómiyeqw
- Sqwélqwel
- Mekw wat memeylhtel (everybody help one another)

## 3.0 DEFINITIONS

This Policy adopts the following definitions.

**Chichelh Si:yá:m** means the Creator

**Halkomelem** means the language spoken by Stó:lō of the lower Fraser River watershed and their relatives and neighbours from southeastern Vancouver Island. Halkomelem is made up of three dialects - Hul'q'umín'um ('Island' Halkomelem dialect), Hun'qumyi'num ('Downriver' Halkomelem dialect) and Halq'eméylem ('Upriver' Halkomelem dialect).

**Lets'emó:t** means “one mind; one heart.”

**Shxwelí** is the “life force” or “spirit” connecting all things, including plants, air, earth, water, animals, and people within S'ólh Téméxw.

**Sqwélqwel** means “news” and includes oral narratives of personal histories.

**Snoweyelh** means “laws of the land.”

**S'ólh Téméxw** is the Halq'eméylem word for “our world” or “our land”, including the lower Fraser River watershed from Spuzzum Creek above the lower Fraser River Canyon to the Salish Sea. S'ólh Téméxw represents the world transformed by the actions of the Xexá:ls, Tel Swayel and other 'agents' of Chichelh Siya:m. S'ólh Téméxw is defined through the known extent of occupation and land use coincident with the Aboriginal rights and title as currently understood by the Halq'eméylem-speaking Stó:lō. In English, S'ólh Téméxw is commonly called Stó:lō Territory or Stó:lō Traditional Territory. The map in Appendix I defines the geographic extent of S'ólh Téméxw, as a consultative area for the purpose of this Policy.

**Stó:lō** means “River”; also “People of the River; Tribe of Tribes.”

# S'ÓLH TÉMÉXW STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE – LAND AND RESOURCE USE CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING POLICY

**Sxexó:mes** means “all our gifts; gifts of the creator.”

**Sxwōxwiyám** means narratives describing the distant past "when the world was out of balance, and not quite right, as well as the actions of the Xexá:ls (the Transformers)” accounting for the origins and connections between the Stó:lō, shxwelí, and sxexó:mes.

**Tómiyeqw** means all generations from great-great-great-great-grandparent to great-great-great-great-grandchild, expressing the relationship connecting people seven generations past with those seven generations in the future, and establishing a connection between the past and future residing in those Stó:lō living today.

**Xexá:ls** are the 'Transformers' whose actions of the distant past account in part for "making the world right."

**Xwelítem** literally translates as 'hungry people' describing the condition of some of the first non-Aboriginal immigrants into S'ólh Téméxw (during the 1858 Gold Rush) who lacked access to the resources and food needed to ensure their survival. In later times, the Stó:lō used this term to describe the seemingly insatiable appetite of Colonial-period immigrants in the consumption of the land and resources of S'ólh Téméxw. This term is currently applied to those in-migrating (or in-migrated) people who lack land rights or title supported by spiritual / ancestral / historical connections to S'ólh Téméxw).

## **4.0 GUIDELINES FOR CONSULTATION**

### **4.1 Decision-making and Consent**

It is necessary to consult with the membership of the STSA for all land and resource use applications that are located within S'ólh Téméxw, defined as the Consultation Area in Figure 1, or which have the potential to affect Stó:lō rights and/or title and interests. The Stó:lō, as represented by the families, villages and tribes of the STSA membership, and as holders of Aboriginal rights and title, are decision-makers over land and resource use throughout S'ólh Téméxw. Free, prior and informed consent is required from the Stó:lō for the approval of any and all land, air, water, and all other resource use applications within S'ólh Téméxw. The STSA are willing to share decision-making with the Crown, as defined and agreed upon within specific government-to-government agreements. The STSA will work with non-member First Nations, Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō alike, to maintain strong and healthy relationships in the spirit of working together, as may be needed in the engagement and consultation process.

### **4.2 Ensuring Respectful Treatment**

The respectful treatment of what is unearthed through engagement and consultation may require privacy to be maintained regarding some of the information disclosed. According to Stó:lō beliefs, some relationships and responsibilities are devalued through documentation. Means of protecting Stó:lō knowledge may include designating information as limited use data, exemptions from Freedom of Information requests, or agreeing not to disclose particulars beyond the internal

consultation and decision-making processes. Consultation models must take this into account by ensuring there are alternatives to written conveyance/receivership of Stó:lō concerns.

### **4.3 Determining Value**

Stó:lō-specific 'valuation', in all its forms, associated with the use of land, air, water and all other resources can only be determined from within the Stó:lō community and from a Stó:lō understanding of the world. Impact assessments conducted outside the community have the potential to inform Stó:lō perspectives, but may reflect very different values. Impacts, including social, economic, environmental, cultural and health factors, will vary according to Stó:lō indicators and values. Accessing Stó:lō knowledge requires identifying and taking into consideration input from caretakers, Elders and other community members who are potentially affected by any proposed use of land and resources. There may be a range of values among Stó:lō caretakers who have an interest in the resource, land, object, feature, etc. being assessed. Interest-holders may include individuals, families, villages, tribes and the Nation or people as a whole, depending upon the circumstance. Inclusive approaches to engagement and consultation are therefore integral to ensuring consultations are adequate. We, Stó:lō, are the only ones able to determine value and who is necessary to include in the engagement and consultation process.

### **4.4 Identifying with whom to Consult**

It is necessary to engage and consult with the Stó:lō, as a people. Engagement and consultation is most effective within traditional governance, social, political, spiritual and economic structures -- in keeping with snoweyelh, sqwélqwel and sxwōxwiyám. As a people, we hold our rights and title collectively. A core element of our social structure is the extended family. It is by way of our snoweyelh, sxwōxwiyám and sqwélqwel that the allocation of rights and title are determined. Rights- and title-holders are stewards of land and resources and, as they may be identified, play a vital and primary role in the engagement and consultation process. We recognize that stewardship can exist, independently or simultaneously, at numerous levels including individuals, families, villages, tribes and the people as a whole. In some circumstances and places, the allocation of rights and title among our people may be shared. Determining who must be included in the engagement and consultation process is neither an obligation of the Crown nor a valid outcome of Crown strength-of-claim analyses, but must necessarily be left to Stó:lō to decide among ourselves as the rights- and title-holding people.

#### ***4.4.1 Interwoven Circles of Stewardship Responsibility***

Caretaking responsibilities for different aspects (resources, land, etc.) of S'ólh Téméxw lies with different groups. At the highest level, the community as a whole has certain roles and responsibilities. Tribes and then villages are the next largest collectives with specific connections and responsibilities. Families and individuals also have independent stewardship obligations. The different groups of caretakers may be interlinked, but each of these different groupings must nevertheless be considered when engaging with consultations in the community.

The boundaries between people, places, and resources are rarely as certain or distinct as non-aboriginal people may wish. There is often a degree of sharing between caretakers



## S'ÓLH TÉMÉXW STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE – LAND AND RESOURCE USE CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING POLICY

within a particular place, maintaining different roles and responsibilities. Within families, a *sia:teleq* may hold the primary stewardship obligations and will care for the resource or land in a dynamic way that reflects the needs of their extended family and others. A single respondent, therefore, may be unable to fully represent Stó:lō interests in a consultation directed at a particular interest or place even where that individual has a stewardship obligation impacted by the proposal. Our Stó:lō worldview is a holistic one that acknowledges the interrelatedness of the various parts of our World and connections between people, places and things. As a result, we must take care to carry out engagement and consultation in a manner that is inclusive and ensures proper representation among our Stó:lō collective.

### **4.5 Learning to Work and Live Together in a Good Way**

Consultation is a part of finding a way to live together in a good way. It requires us to respond to the challenges of sharing our land with the in-migrating people. Because we Stó:lō have inhabited S'ólh Téméxw since time immemorial, and because this is a fairly new experience for our community, for the Crown and for the proponents, it is helpful if every participant in the consultation and engagement processes begins from a place of cooperation. We support the development of processes that will encourage strong relationships and reconciliation at a government to government level, as well as with proponents and the public at large.

### **4.6 Funding and Capacity**

Funding is necessary to provide Stó:lō-based capacity needed to carry out engagement and consultation over development applications. It is necessary for those submitting applications, with interests in using land and resources within S'ólh Téméxw, to adequately and fully fund engagement and consultation processes. Sufficient funding is needed to maintain continuity of operational capacity as needed to address the totality of development applications received throughout the year.

### **4.7 Identifying Consultation Guidelines in Other Stó:lō Policies**

The Stó:lō have additional issue-specific policy manuals, including for heritage (Stó:lō Heritage Policy), and the use of lands and resources (e.g., the S'ólh Téméxw Use Plan). These policies are interconnected and implemented in conjunction with this consultation policy.

## **5.0 ENGAGEMENT, CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING OPERATIONAL PROCESSES**

The processes of engagement, consultation and decision-making are determined by the Stó:lō. At different moments in our relationships with governments and proponents, the Stó:lō may choose to engage in consultations according to predetermined processes, as may be arranged through specific agreements. Such agreements may allow the Stó:lō to clarify some of the procedural aspects of the

## S'ÓLH TÉMÉXW STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE – LAND AND RESOURCE USE CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING POLICY

relationship. The core elements of the review of development applications include but are not limited to engagement, consultation, accommodation, and decision-making.

### **5.1 S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance (STSA)**

The STSA is the political body and representative leadership that guides all engagement and consultation processes, on behalf of their membership and per their Terms of Reference. The current membership of the STSA is included in Appendix I.

### **5.2 People of the River Referrals Office (PRRO)**

The PRRO is the operational wing of the STSA responsible for receiving and processing all development applications located within S'ólh Téméxw. All development applications located within S'ólh Téméxw are to be submitted either to the PRRO, either in:

(a) a digital format, as the preferred mode of submission, to:  
[www.stoloconnect.bc.ca](http://www.stoloconnect.bc.ca)

or

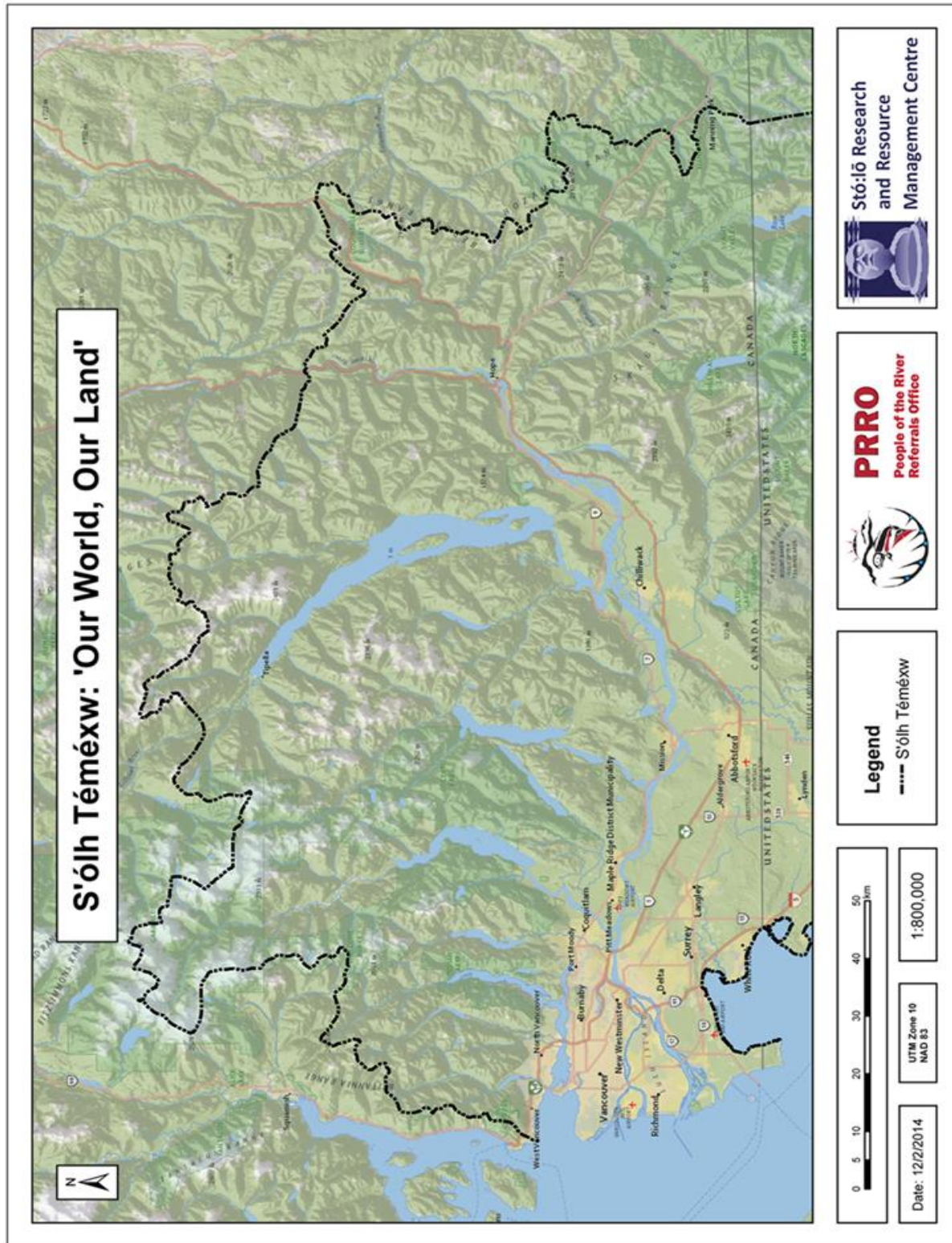
(b) a hardcopy format to:  
Referrals Administrator  
People of the River Referrals Office  
10-7201 Vedder Road  
Chilliwack, B.C. V2R 4G5

#### ***5.2.1 Relationship to Technical Staff***

The Stó:lō may choose to delegate to technical staff engagement and consultation responsibilities and activities. The ultimate decision in all consultation and decision-making process resides with the Stó:lō, the people.

S'ÓLH TÉMÉXW STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE – LAND AND RESOURCE USE CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING POLICY

Appendix I – Map of S'ólh Téméxw ('Our World', 'Our Land')



S'ÓLH TÉMÉXW STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE – LAND AND RESOURCE USE  
CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING POLICY

**Appendix II - S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance - First Nations Membership**

Chawathil First Nation

Cheam First Nation

Kwaw'Kwaw'Apilt First Nation

Leq'á:mel First Nation

Scowlitz First Nation

Shxw'ow'hamel First Nation

Skawahlook First Nation

Skwah First Nation

Sumas First Nation

Ts'elxwéyeqw Tribe Limited Partnership, as comprised of;

Aitchelitz Band

Shxwhá:y Village

Skowkale First Nation

Soowahlie First Nation

Squiala First Nation

Tzeachten First Nation

Yakwekwioose First Nation,