



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, **Endangered First Nation**

Languages: Launch of the Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim – Xwelíten Sníchim Skexwts. *The Squamish Nation launches their Dictionary in society on Thursday, April 7th at the Burke Museum, Bill Holmes Center at 4:30 p.m. The Squamish will ‘take home’ this Publication to the Squamish people to celebrate the Ancestors who safeguarded the knowledge. The Squamish-English Dictionary project builds on years of documentation by Squamish speakers working with anthropologists and linguists.*

North Vancouver, British Columbia - April 4, 2011- The Squamish language may not survive as a first language into the next generation. There are fewer than 15 fluent Squamish speakers remaining today, the youngest is 65. The loss of a language is often equated to the loss of its culture, this is a serious loss for the Squamish Nation. The Dictionary project is the first compilation by the Squamish Nation of their language, the *Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim* (the Squamish language). It offers a view of modern daily life, and contains the historical record, protocols, and laws of the Squamish people. As such, it is foundational to Nation building.

Squamish is one of ten languages that comprise the Coast Salish branch of the Salish language family. These languages are found only in Western Canada and Western United States. The Squamish language is a critically endangered language. As part of a language regeneration program, the Squamish offer bi-lingual and bi-cultural education in their Nation school and to more than 400 Squamish learners in the public school system.

The Squamish Language Elders have been involved with the Dictionary project and supported other language recovery initiatives. This important work is a reflection of current Squamish knowledge and is designed as a beginner’s resource for a diverse audience of learners and scholars. The publication is in association with the University of Washington Press, Seattle, and London, distributed with their worldwide publishing partners. The interactive digital catalogue maybe found at www.washington.edu/uwpress.

About the Squamish Nation Department of Education:

The SNED mandate is to provide supports and services which facilitate life long learning and guide students learning in a way that includes their language, culture, and traditions. Six divisions collaborate on initiatives, such as the *Wa Chexw Nexwníw ta a Ímats*, the Elder Language Speakers Group. They provide the Department with direction and support and work directly with the Squamish Language Technologist, Squamish Language teachers and School faculty. Projects include the development of Immersion curriculum, elicitation and vetting work, and other special assignments taken on by the Department Head. Other divisions include K5- Grade 1 Instructional, K – Grade 12 Counseling, Education administration, Squamish Language Curriculum, Post Secondary, and Special Projects & Community Outreach.

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