

Secwepemcul'ecw Traditional Peoples Government

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INTERNATIONAL STATEMENT

T'kumlups, Secwepemcul'ecw - Thursday, June 16, 2005 – 11 pm PST

SUN PEAKS RESORT CONTINUES DESTROYING SECWPEPMC LAND AND SENDING SECWPEPMC NATIONALS TO JAIL IN PROCESS

In Kamloops Supreme Court today, Justice F. Cole jailed four Secwepemc Nation members – Nicole Manuel, Rose Jack, Trevor Dennis and Mark Sauls for their participation in a 4 hour roadblock on August 24, 2001 at Skwelkwek'welt (Sun Peaks Ski Resort)

Sentences ranged from 45 days for 28 year old Secwepemc mother of 2, Nicole Manuel, to 90 days for three other Secwepemc Nationals, Trevor Dennis 26, Rose Jack 25 and Mark Sauls 24.

Two other Secwepemc Nationals in today's proceedings, Beverly Manuel and Miranda Dick were given suspended and conditional sentences, respectively.

Following an established pattern since December 15, 2004, Justice Cole denied all attempts by the defence to have numerous constitutional questions submitted to his court concerning the BC Lands Act dealt with before sentencing in this matter was administered.

"Since December 15, 2004, we have targeted the patently unconstitutional 1874 BC Lands Act as the center of our legal actions and defense. Canada's 1875 Duty of Disallowance reaffirms this illegal definition" stated defendant Beverly Manuel.

Secwepemcul'ecw Traditional Peoples Government spokesperson Janice Billy said " I deplore the imprisonment of my people for upholding our sacred responsibility to protect our land from destruction by Sun Peaks Resort Corporation." She added, the "the imprisonment of our people is just one of the many immoral tactics used by the BC provincial courts, government, and corporations to continue the theft and destruction of our unceded lands. Rather than deal honorably with us, the government uses the RCMP, courts, and media to carry out their theft and destruction. The young people jailed have shown tremendous courage to stand up to this oppressive and racist system"

Attending court for the sentencing, Bonnie Andrew, councillor of the Neskonlith Indian Band, said "The government has to respect our rights to this land as Indigenous People and quit it's 'business as usual' approach"

Despite the continuing desecration of our traditional territory and the governments refusal to respect our Title to Secwepemcul'ecw, Secwepemc Nationals will continue to '*occupy, use and enjoy all lands within our Nation*'. This is the exact principle which was mutually agreed upon by the Secwepemcul'ecw Traditional Peoples Government and the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council on September 20, 2004 prior to the arrests of three other Secwepemc Nationals on September 21, 2004 at Skwelkwek'welt.

For More Info contact

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