



MEDIA RELEASE

May 23, 2012

Petroglyph to return to Secwepemc traditional territory from Museum of Vancouver

(VANCOUVER, BC) – A petroglyph rock that has been in Vancouver since 1926 will be returning to its home with the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (formerly Canoe Creek Indian Band) on June 13, 2012.

A blessing ceremony of the petroglyph will take place June 11 at the Museum of Vancouver with Chief Hank Adam of the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation prior to the petroglyph's historic journey of repatriation back to Secwepemc traditional territory west of Clinton, BC. Members of the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation and the MOV will be joined by Vancouver Mayor, Williams Lake Mayor, the Chair of the Cariboo Regional District, and members of Vancouver City Council.

"It's been 86 years since the petroglyph rock was taken without our consent from our traditional area," says Hank Adam, Chief of the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation. "For Stswecemc/Xgat'tem it means a sense of empowerment for us to finally have a voice as to the future of this sacred petroglyph rock. It is an exciting time for our community. We look forward to the rock's journey home."

The boulder, measuring approximately three by five feet and weighing about six tons, was found on the east bank of the Fraser River near Crow's Bar back in 1926 by prospector H.S. Brown. Brown brought the petroglyph to the attention of Park Board chair W.C. Shelly who arranged for its move to Stanley Park in Vancouver. It took a team of 10 horses a month to drag the boulder from the sandbar along the Fraser up the 3,000 foot ascent to the railhead near Clinton. After years of being in Stanley Park in an unsheltered area where it was subject to vandalism, the Park Board and the Museum agreed to donate and move the rock to MOV in 1992.

In 2010, MOV curatorial staff and its Collections Committee began to explore repatriation of the petroglyph. It was determined to have come from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation. In August 2011, members of the First Nation and MOV staff visited the original site of the boulder and began planning for repatriation.

"We were powerfully moved last year when Chief Adam and our friends at Canoe Creek took us to the exact spot where the rock had stood," explained Joan Seidl, Director of Collections and Exhibitions at the MOV. "It is a timeless place that has endured despite the sadness of the great rock's removal. The Museum of Vancouver looks forward to working with the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation to bring the petroglyph home and to the joy that it will bring to all involved."

After consultation with its people about where the petroglyph should rest after its return, the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation has decided to place the petroglyph in Churn Creek Protected Area upon its return on June 13, 2012.

A documentary film is being made about the repatriation, and everyone is invited to follow the journey of the petroglyph at www.facebook.com/storyofarock .

As part of its ongoing support of the Museum of Vancouver's First Nation Collection, Vancouver Airport Authority is pleased to support the repatriation of this significant petroglyph to the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation.

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Hank Adam and Joan Seidl are available for interview upon request.

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About Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation

For more visit: www.canoecreekband.ca

About the Museum of Vancouver

The Museum of Vancouver is an independent non-profit organization which holds a mirror to the city and leads provocative conversations about its past, present, and future.