

REVISED
BASED ON YOUR INPUT
— Vote in November! —



Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Shxwelméxwelh

(Stó:lō People's Constitution)

Áthelets (Aitchelitz)

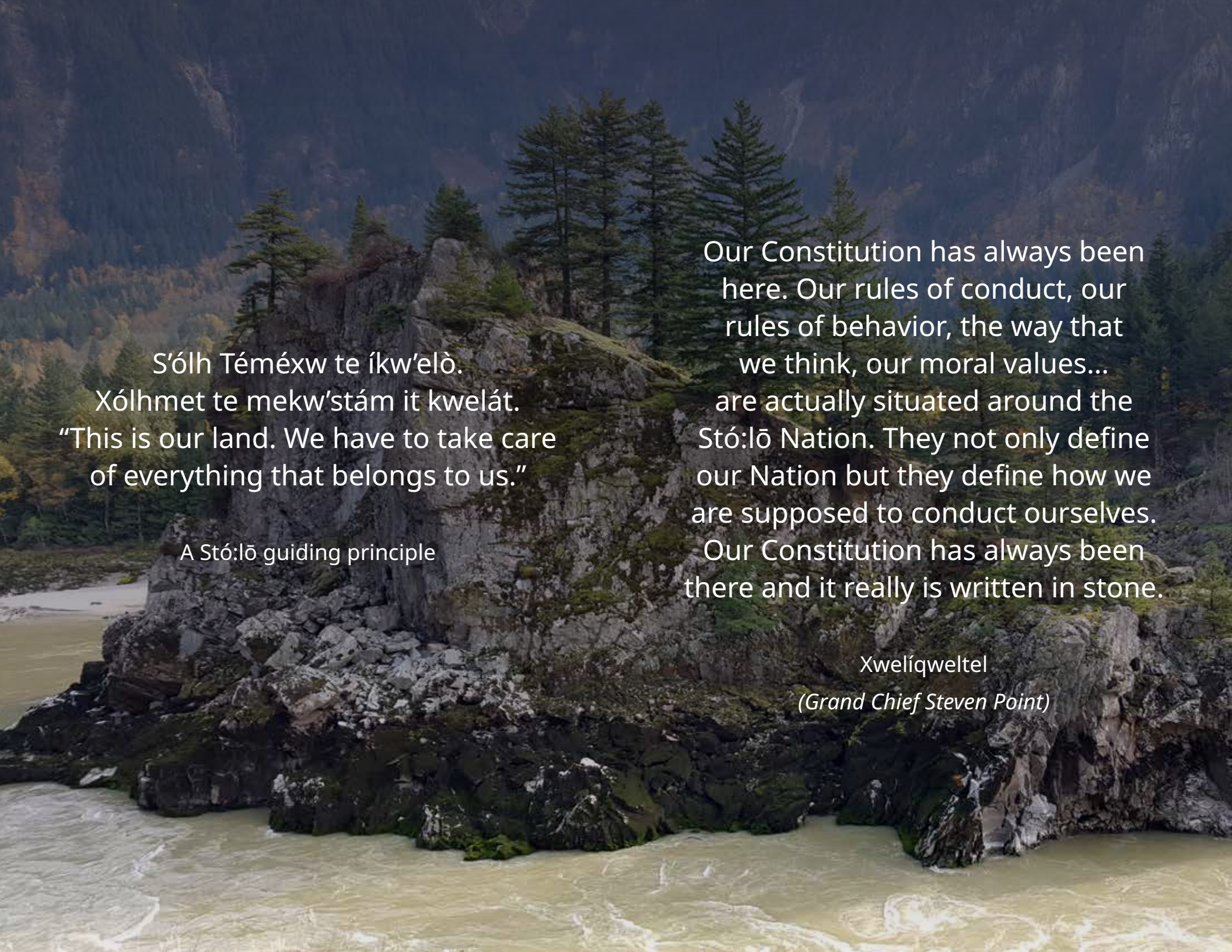
Leq'á:mel

Sq'ewá:lxw (Skawahlook)

Sq'ewqéyl (Skowkale)

Ch'iyáqtel (Tzeachten)

Yeqwyeqwí:ws (Yakweakwioose)

The background image is a scenic landscape. In the foreground, a river with white water rapids flows past a dark, rocky shoreline. Several tall, dark evergreen trees stand on a rocky outcrop in the middle ground. In the background, steep, forested mountains rise under a hazy sky. The overall tone is natural and majestic.

S'ólh Téméxw te íkw'elò.
Xólhmet te mekw'stám it kwelát.
"This is our land. We have to take care
of everything that belongs to us."

A Stó:lō guiding principle

Our Constitution has always been
here. Our rules of conduct, our
rules of behavior, the way that
we think, our moral values...
are actually situated around the
Stó:lō Nation. They not only define
our Nation but they define how we
are supposed to conduct ourselves.
Our Constitution has always been
there and it really is written in stone.

Xwelíqweltel
(Grand Chief Steven Point)

1. Lets'e (One): Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Shxwelméxwelh (Stó:lō People's Constitution)

- 1.1 Six Stó:lō Villages – Áthelets (*Aitchelitz*), Leq'á:mel, Sq'ewá:lxw (*Skawahlook*), Sq'ewqéyl (*Skowkale*), Ch'iyáqtel (*Tzeachten*), and Yeqwyeqwi:ws (*Yakweakwioose*) – have come together to form the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People*) and to establish a common government. Each of these Stó:lō Villages is a unique and valued part of the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People*).
- 1.2 We are Stó:lō and Xwexwílmexw, the people of the river and the land that holds our ancestors. This Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*) only applies to the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People*).
- 1.3 As Stó:lō we are born with the inherent right of self-determination and self-government, Aboriginal rights, title and interests. This Shxwelméxwelh is how the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People*) will exercise our self-government.



2. Isá:le (Two): S'í:wes (Teachings)

- 2.1 This Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*) is xáxa (*sacred*).
- 2.2 Our teachings are called s'í:wes (*teachings*) and shall be used to interpret this Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*).
- 2.3 We are also people of the xwelmexwáwtxw (*longhouse*) guided by our s'í:wes (*teachings*).
- 2.4 Our s'í:wes (*teachings*) endure and evolve over time.
- 2.5 We follow in the footsteps of our ancestors and acknowledge our sí:yólexwe (*Elders*) by keeping our traditions alive.
- 2.6 Our relationship to the land is that we come from Mother Earth and we return to Mother Earth. Our Aboriginal title, rights and interests will never be for sale; we cannot and will never sell our ancestors.
- 2.7 Our Si:yá:m (*respected leaders*) have the obligation to protect and fairly govern the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People*) and S'ólh Témexw (*Our Land*) according to this Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*).
- 2.8 Our Si:yá:m (*respected leaders*) have always and shall continue to make decisions guided by our s'í:wes (*teachings*) and in consideration of our tómieqwi (*seven generations past and future*).

3. Ihí:xw (Three): Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Híkw Lálém (Government)

- 3.1 The Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Híkw Lálém (Government) consists of the following:
 - 3.1.1 Si:yá:m Lalálém (Village Governments)
 - 3.1.2 Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém (National Government)
 - 3.1.3 Átéłálém (Justice Council)
 - 3.1.4 Advisory bodies, including:
 - 3.1.4.1 Sí:yólexwe Lálém (Elders Advisory Council)
 - 3.1.4.2 Xwexwílmexwó:llh Lálém (Youth Advisory Council)
- 3.2 The purpose of the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Híkw Lálém (Government) shall be to:
 - 3.2.1 act in the best interests and for the well-being of the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (Stó:lō People);
 - 3.2.2 respect all laws including Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (Stó:lō People's) Laws;
 - 3.2.3 preserve and protect for all Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (Stó:lō People) today and for xwelmi:ay stá:xwelh (future generations) for as long as the land shall last, the following:
 - 3.2.3.1 our Stó:lō inherent, Aboriginal and Treaty rights, title, and interests; and
 - 3.2.3.2 the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (Stó:lō People's) way of life including our culture, language, heritage, lands, economy, and resources;
 - 3.2.4 be ólhet (respectful), fair, accountable, and transparent;

- 3.2.5 not directly or indirectly cede, release, surrender or extinguish any inherent, Aboriginal or Treaty right or title of the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (Stó:lō People);
and
- 3.2.6 take care of all Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (Stó:lō People's) Lands for xwelmi:ay stá:xwelh (future generations).
- 3.3 Every member of the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Híkw Lálém (Government) must conduct themselves in an honourable and ethical manner in accordance with our s'í:wes (teachings).
- 3.4 The official languages are Halq'eméylem and English. The Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Híkw Lálém (Government) shall respect and encourage the use of the Halq'eméylem language and the practice of Stó:lō culture.



4. Xe'ó:thel (Four): Si:yá:m Lalálém (Village Governments)

- 4.1 Each Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People's*) Village shall be governed by a Si:yá:m Lalálém (*Village Government*), the members of which shall be selected according to their own s'í:wes (*teachings*).
- 4.2 Each Si:yá:m Lalálém (*Village Government*) shall govern according to its own sxwōxwiyá:m (*old history*) and sqwélqwel (*recent history*) in a manner that is consistent with this Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*).
- 4.3 Each Si:yá:m Lalálém (*Village Government*) shall have authority to make laws of a local nature that are not otherwise granted to the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lalálém (*National Government*).
- 4.4 Each Si:yá:m Lalálém (*Village Government*) may exercise the authorities, responsibilities and functions assigned to it by this Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*).

5. Lheq'á:tse (Five): Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lalálém (National Government)

- 5.1 The Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lalálém (*National Government*) shall be composed of one Siyá:m (*respected leader*) selected by each Si:yá:m Lalálém (*Village Government*).
- 5.2 The Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lalálém is the national government of Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw and shall:
 - 5.2.1 make decisions by consensus or according to a voting formula as the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lalálém may enact from time to time;
 - 5.2.2 carry out their decisions by enacting laws, regulations, resolutions and policies; and

- 5.2.3 have the authority with respect to matters of a national concern including, but not limited to: fishing, child protection, education, justice, health, gaming, environmental protection, land, air, water, resources, culture, heritage, emergency powers, intergovernmental relations and the establishment of Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw public institutions.

6. T'xém (Six): Chílh Siyá:m (National Spokesperson)

- 6.1 The Chílh Siyá:m (*National Spokesperson*) will be selected at least every four years by the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lalálém (*National Government*), from its members, to act as the chair of the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lalálém (*National Government*), the political spokesperson of the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People*) and serve as the national leader.

7. Th'ó:kws (Seven): Átéálálém (Justice Council)

- 7.1 The Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lalálém (*National Government*) and Sí:yólexwe Lalálém (*Elders Advisory Council*) shall each appoint one of its members to the Átéálálém (*Justice Council*). Each member of the Átéálálém (*Justice Council*) serves as long as they hold a seat in their Lalálém (*Council*).
- 7.2 The Átéálálém (*Justice Council*) shall establish and implement conflict resolution processes that promote harmony and facilitate the resolution of disputes, reviews, challenges and appeals.
- 7.3 After exhausting all internal processes, an appeal from the Átéálálém (*Justice Council*) lies with the Provincial or Supreme Court of British Columbia, or the Human Rights Tribunal of British Columbia.

8. Tqá:tsa (Eight): Advisory Councils

- 8.1 The Sí:yólexwe Lálém (*Elders Advisory Council*) and Xwexwílmexwó:llh Lálém (*Youth Advisory Council*) are advisory bodies. The Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém (*National Government*) may establish other permanent or temporary advisory councils at its discretion.
- 8.2 Sí:yólexwe Lálém (*Elders Advisory Council*):
- 8.2.1 The Sí:yólexwe (*Elders*) are the holders of our s'í:wes (*teachings*), our sxwōxwiyám (*old history*) and our sqwélqwel (*recent history*).
- 8.2.2 Each Si:yá:m Lálém (*Village Government*) shall select, from its members one Siyólexwe (*Elder*) and an alternate to serve on the Sí:yólexwe Lálém (*Elders Advisory Council*).
- 8.2.3 Each Sí:yólexwe (*Elder*) and the alternate shall serve on the Sí:yólexwe Lálém (*Elders Advisory Council*) for a term of four (4) years or as otherwise determined by the selecting community;
- 8.2.4 The Sí:yólexwe Lálém shall advise the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Híkw Lálém on any matter so referred to the Sí:yólexwe Lálém.
- 8.3 Xwexwílmexwó:llh Lálém (*Youth Advisory Council*)
- 8.3.1 Each Si:yá:m Lálém (*Village Government*) shall select, from its members, one youth and an alternate, 14-25 years of age, to sit on the Xwexwílmexwó:llh Lálém (*Youth Advisory Council*).
- 8.3.2 The Xwexwílmexwó:llh Lálém (*Youth Advisory Council*) shall select from its members a youth representative and an alternate to attend meetings of the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém (*National Government*) and the Átéálém (*Justice Council*) as observers and advisors.

9. Tú:xw (Nine): Átéálém (Ombudsperson)

- 9.1 The office of Átéálém (*Ombudsperson*) is independent of the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Híkw Lálém (*Government*).
- 9.2 The Átéálém (*Ombudsperson*) shall be authorized to investigate and make recommendations, with respect to written complaints it receives from Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People*) citizens about actions or inactions of the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Híkw Lálém (*Government*) that directly affect the complainant, within a timely manner.
- 9.3 The Átéálém (*Ombudsperson*) shall report as required to the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém (*National Government*) and/or the Átéálém (*Justice Council*).

10. Ó:pel (Ten): Citizenship

- 10.1 All matters concerning Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People*) citizenship including the definition of citizens are within the power of the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém (*National Government*) and each Si:yá:m Lálém (*Village Government*) and shall be determined consistent with s'í:wes (*teachings*) and the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw S'ólh Lets'emó:t (*Treaty*).



11. Ópel gas te léts'a (Eleven): Amendments

- 11.1 A major amendment to this Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*) shall be made by referendum where in each village a majority of a quorum of electors who are eligible to vote, vote in favour of the proposed amendment. A quorum is 51% of village citizens who are eligible to vote unless a Si:yá:m Lálém (*Village Government*) establishes an alternate quorum according to their customary law.
- 11.2 A minor amendment to this Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*) shall be made by a majority vote of the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém (*National Government*).
- 11.3 A Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People*) Village may be created, amalgamated or dissolved only by a major amendment to this Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*).



Appendix A

In 1975 twenty-four Stó:lō Chiefs affirmed the Stó:lō Declaration, which stated the values and principles that informed the treaty negotiations and have led to this Constitution. It reads in part, as follows:

Stó:lō Declaration, 1975

The Creator gave us laws that govern all our relationships to live in harmony with nature and mankind.

The laws of the Creator defined our rights and responsibilities. The Creator gave us our Spiritual Beliefs, our language, our culture, and a place on Mother Earth, which provided us with all our needs.

The people of the Stó:lō Tribes have held and still hold Aboriginal Title and Aboriginal Rights to all the land and resources within our Tribal Territory.

The people of the Stó:lō Tribes declare and affirm our inalienable right of Aboriginal Title and Aboriginal Rights of the land, the rivers, the streams, the sea, the air, and other resources of our land.

We declare that our Aboriginal Title and Aboriginal Rights have existed from time immemorial, exist at the present time and shall exist for all future time.

Appendix B

The purpose of this appendix is to provide the minimum standards for each Village Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*).

{Insert name of Village} Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*)

1. This is the Shxwelméxwelh of the {insert name} Village.
2. The {insert name} Lálém shall be the local government of {insert name} Village and shall make decisions by enacting laws, regulations, resolutions and policies;
3. The {insert name} Lálém shall exercise its powers and authorities consistent with this {Insert name} Village Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*) and shall:
 - (a) be accountable to the members of the {insert name} Village;
 - (b) act with respect and fairness and without discrimination or abuse;
 - (c) allow the full and free expression and participation of its members;
 - (d) protect its lands, waters, and resources including the conservation and enhancement of all living things; and
 - (e) act consistently with the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*).
4. The citizens of {insert name} shall select representatives for its Lálém from among its members. The {insert name} Lálém shall be composed of at least {insert number} members of that Village.
5. The {insert name} Lálém shall meet at least five (5) times per year and may convene other meetings as necessary. A quorum of the {insert name} Lálém shall be {insert number}.
6. The {insert name} Lálém will strive to make decisions by consensus. When consensus cannot be achieved, decision may be made by majority vote of those present.

7. The {insert name} Lálém shall select from its members one representative to the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém.
8. The {insert name} Lálém shall have the authority to, among other things, manage all {insert name} lands, to conduct any business on behalf of the {name of Village} including borrowing funds, entering into contracts and the opening of bank accounts.
9. The {insert name} Lálém shall report to its members at least annually, all of its activities including financial activity for the past year.
10. The {insert name} Lálém shall have the authority to pass by simple majority any law pertaining to the good government and management of each Village.
11. A major amendment to this Shxwelméxwelh shall be made by referendum where in each village a majority of a quorum of electors who are eligible to vote, vote in favour of the proposed amendment. A quorum is 51% of village citizens who are eligible to vote unless a Si:yá:m Lálém establishes an alternate quorum according to their customary law.



Appendix C: Definitions, Interpretation and Legal

C:1 Halq'eméylem Definitions

- a) **Átéłálém** is the name given to the Justice Council. From **ate** meaning "right, in the sense of exactly or just" and **lálém** meaning "house."
- b) **Átéłéq** is the name for the ombudsperson. From **ate** meaning "right, in sense of exactly or just" and **eléq** meaning "one who does, as an occupation."
- c) **Chílh Siyá:m** is the name for the National Spokesperson. From **chílh** meaning "high, upper, above" and **siyá:m** meaning "our respected leader, chief."
- d) **Híkw Lálém** is the name for the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Government. From **híkw** meaning "be big, be large, be high" and **lálém** meaning "house."
- e) **Lálém** is the name of the individual bodies (governments and advisory councils) that comprise the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Government and the name for the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Government. From **lálém** meaning "house." **Lalálém** is plural.
- f) **Ólhet** means to be respectful or to respect someone.
- g) **Shxwelméxwelh** means "according to the ways of the Indian, in the way of the Indian, in the Indian way" and is the name of the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Constitution. A Constitution is a body of fundamental principles and rules according to which the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw are governed. From **shxw** meaning "something that/to/for" and **elh** meaning "according to the ways of, in the way of."
- h) **S'í:wes** means our teachings.
- i) **Siyá:m** means our respected leader, chief. **Siyá:m** is singular; **Si:yá:m** is plural.
- j) **Si:yá:m Lálém** is the name of a Village Government. From **siyá:m** meaning "our respected leader, chief" and **lálém** meaning "house." **Si:yá:m Lalálém** is plural for "Village Governments."

- k) **Síyólexwe** means "old person, an elder." **Tó:lmels ye siyelyólexwa** means "wisdom of the elders." **Síyólexwe** is singular. **Sí:yólexwe** is plural. **Siyelyólexwa** is the collective.
- l) **Sí:yólexwe Lálém** is the name for the Elders Advisory Council.
- m) **S'ólh Lets'emó:t** is the name of the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Treaty. **S'ólh** is "ours, our (emphatic)." **Lets'emó:t** is the word, provided by Rosaleen George and Elizabeth Herrling, to use for 'one mind/heart.' **Léts'e** is "one" and **mó:t** is "piles, kinds." **Lets'emó:t** is "one kind, one pile." However, in this case the heart and mind is "one kind," hence "Our one mind/heart."
- n) **S'ólh Téméxw** means "our traditional territory." From **s'ólh** meaning "ours, our" (emphatic) and **téméxw** meaning "earth, ground, land, the earth, the world."
- o) **S'ólh Téméxw te íkw'elò. Xólhmet te mekw'stám it kwelát.** "This is our land. We have to take care of everything that belongs to us."
- p) **Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw** – For the purposes of this Shxwelméxwelh, **Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw** means the members of the Stó:lō communities that are signatories to this Shxwelméxwelh. From **Stó:lō** meaning "river" and "Fraser River" and **Stó:lō** people, which refers to the Halq'eméylem speaking people living along the Fraser River or its tributaries from Five Mile Creek above Yale downriver to the mouth of the Fraser River. Also from **xwélmexw** meaning "Indian person, North American Indian", **xwel** meaning "still" and **mexw** meaning "person, people." **Xwexwílmexw** is plural.
- q) **Sqwélqwel** means "news, a true story, what was told, message." From **qwà:l** meaning "speak, talk, give a speech." Rosaleen George and Elizabeth Herrling said it also means "family history" stories about where your ancestors fished, hunted, gathered berries etc. Full-blooded siblings share the same sqwélqwel. It's important because we as Stó:lō have an obligation to carry on those activities where our ancestors did. And then we must take care of these places.
- r) **Sxexómes** means "our gifts." From **sxómes** meaning "a gift in memory from someone gone" and **shxweli**, meaning "our gifts" which includes natural resources and ceremonies.

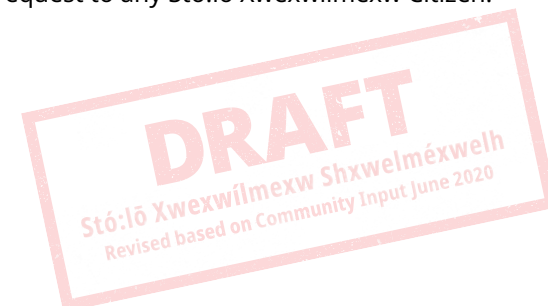
- s) **Sxwōxwiyám** means old history. From **xwiyám** meaning “tell a story (legendary).”
- t) **Tómiyeqw** means “great great great great grandparent, great great great great grandchild, sibling or cousin (up to fourth), or great great great great grandparent or child.”
- u) **Xáxa** means sacred.
- v) **Xwelmi:ay stá:xwelh** means future generations. From **xwel** meaning “still,” **mi** meaning “come, coming, come to, coming to,” **á:y** meaning “keep on going” and **stá:xwelh** meaning “children, not necessarily one’s own.”
- w) **Xwelmxwáwtxw** means longhouse.
- x) **Xwexwílmexwó:llh Lálém** is the name of the Youth Advisory Council. From **xwexwílmexw ó:llh** meaning “youth.”
- y) **Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém** is the name of the National Government. From **yewá:l** meaning “first,” **si:yá:m** meaning “respected leaders” and **lálém** meaning “house.”

C:2 Interpretation

- a) Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People’s*) Laws shall be interpreted in a large, liberal and purposive manner.
- b) “major amendment” means an amendment that substantially changes the meaning of the clause sought to be amended.
- c) “minor amendment” means an amendment that is administrative in nature including spelling and punctuation errors.
- d) “Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People’s*) Laws” means all laws enacted by the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Híkw Lálém (*Government*) and includes this Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*) and all regulations enacted pursuant to Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People’s*) Laws.
- e) “Treaty” means the S’ólh Lets’emó:t (*Treaty*), the name of the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Treaty, which is a “treaty” within the meaning of s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.
- f) The appendices are attached to and form part of this Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*).

C:3 Legal

- a) This Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*) is the highest law of the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People*). All Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw (*Stó:lō People’s*) Laws, the application of such laws, and all policies, actions and decisions made by the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Híkw Lálém (*Government*) and its institutions, shall be consistent with this Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*), and if inconsistent, are of no force and effect to the extent of the inconsistency.
- b) On Effective Date of this Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*) the Si:yá:m Lálém (*Village Governments*), the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém (*National Government*), the Átélálém (*Justice Council*) and the office of Átéléq (*Ombudsperson*) shall be established as legal entities and the Sí:yólexwe Lálém (*Elders Advisory Council*) and Xwexwílmexwó:llh Lálém (*Youth Advisory Council*) shall be established as advisory bodies.
- c) Subject to Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Laws and any Self-Government Agreement or treaty, the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém (*National Government*) may take all actions required to carry out its responsibilities as set out in the Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Self-Government Agreement and this Shxwelméxwelh (*Constitution*).
- d) The Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém (*National Government*) will meet at least five (5) times per year and may convene other meetings as necessary. A quorum of the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém shall be four (4). The Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém will make decisions by consensus. If voting, each member of the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém shall have one vote.
- e) The Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém (*National Government*) shall report at least annually, all of its activities including financial activities of the Yewá:l Si:yá:m Lálém and its institutions. These reports shall be made available to each Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Village and on request to any Stó:lō Xwexwílmexw Citizen.



The background of the entire page is a solid teal color. Overlaid on this is a large, stylized graphic in a darker shade of teal. The graphic depicts a hand, with fingers slightly curled, holding a large, pointed leaf. The lines of the hand and leaf are thick and bold, creating a strong visual impact.

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