

Celebrating a New Chapter of Collaboration in Skwelkwekwelt (Sun Peaks)

Sun Peaks, BC – July 20, 2026 – a special community gathering was held in Sun Peaks on Monday, July 20, 2026 bringing together Adams Lake Indian Band, Neskonlith Indian Band, Skwlāx te Secwepemcúlecw, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality (SPMRM), and Sun Peaks Resort to celebrate partnership, reconciliation, and a shared commitment to the future of Skwelkwekwelt.

Recognition of the Renewed Reconciliation Framework MOU

A key milestone of the gathering was the formal recognition of the renewed Reconciliation Framework and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Province, through the ministries of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, Adams Lake Indian Band, Neskonlith Indian Band and, Skwlāx te Secwepemcúlecw. The renewed MOU will continue to guide discussions on a collaborative, coordinated, and sustainable approach to stewardship of land and natural resources in the territory and help identify and develop new economic and revenue sharing opportunities to support the Nations' socio-economic objectives. Under the MOU, the Province and Adams Lake, Neskonlith and Skwlax bands will find ways for the communities to share in the economic benefits that Sun Peaks offers.

“Sun Peaks is a key contributor to B.C.’s mountain resort and tourism sectors. This agreement furthers reconciliation and helps pave an inclusive path toward economic prosperity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in the region,” said Anne Kang, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport. “By renewing this MOU, we are affirming our partnership to work together in creating recreation and tourism development opportunities inclusive of the Secwepemc communities in the region. This agreement supports shared stewardship of the land, sustainable community growth and reflects our government’s commitment to advancing meaningful and lasting reconciliation in B.C.”

Kukpi7 Irvin Wai of Neskonlith Indian Band emphasized that this milestone represents both an acknowledgement of the past and a commitment to a stronger future built on respect, reconciliation, and partnership:

“For generations, Sun Peaks has been a revered mountain for our people. It is far more than a place on a map. It is part of who we are. Our ancestors travelled these lands, gathering food and medicine, finding shelter, and caring for their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. The alpine meadows, lakes, and valleys are part of our history and our identity. They are the pathways our ancestors used to travel and trade throughout Secwépemcúlecw.

We also recognize that the history of development on this mountain has been difficult. For many years, decisions were made without the meaningful involvement of our people. That history cannot be forgotten, and it reminds us why respect, recognition, and meaningful partnership are so important today.

This moment is not about looking backward with resentment. It is about looking forward with purpose. We are committed to building strong and respectful relationships with Sun Peaks Resort, neighbouring municipalities, and communities throughout Secwépemcúlecw. Our shared future depends on trust, open dialogue, and a commitment to work together in a good way.

As we face the challenges ahead — whether they are wildfires, floods, climate change, or other emergencies — we all have a responsibility to stand together. None of us can face these challenges alone. By respecting each other's rights, honouring our commitments, and supporting one another, we can build resilient communities that will benefit future generations.

Today marks another step toward that future. We move forward guided by the teachings of our ancestors, with hope for our children and grandchildren, and with a shared commitment to reconciliation, mutual respect, and lasting partnership.”

Community-to-Community Relationship Building

The gathering also provided an opportunity for meaningful community-to-community dialogue. Representatives from all participating partners came together to share community updates, discuss mutual priorities, and advance local reconciliation through shared storytelling and strategic alignment on opportunities for environmental stewardship, economic development and the representation of Secwépemc culture in Sun Peaks.

Kukpi7 Dianne Francois of Skwlāx te Secwepemcúlecw shared “Skwlāx te Secwepemcúlecw values the commitment Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality has shown toward reconciliation, and we acknowledge the dedication of Adams Lake Indian Band, Neskonlith Indian Band, the Province, and all our partners who have worked together to reach this milestone. As Secwépemc, we have an inherent responsibility to care for the Tmicw (land) and ensure it remains healthy for future generations. By working together through respectful collaboration and shared stewardship, we are honouring that responsibility while building lasting partnerships and transparency for a stronger future for our communities”

Secwépemc Flag Raising Ceremony

A highlight of the day was the official raising of the Secwépemc flag by Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality. The flag will now fly permanently in Sun Peaks, serving

as a public acknowledgement of Secwépemc culture, heritage, and the deep Indigenous history of the land.

“Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality (SPMRM) is honoured to receive and fly the Secwépemc flag which recognizes the Secwépemc culture and presence that have nurtured and continue to nurture this land. This celebration and collaboration are an important step towards reconciliation, and we look forward to our continued partnerships and relationship building with the Secwépemc Lakes Division Bands,” said Robert O’Toole, SPMRM Mayor.

Official Community Plan (OCP) Information Session

The day concluded with a community information session hosted by Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality focused on the draft Official Community Plan (OCP). Council recently gave first reading to Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 0239, 2026. As part of the Municipality’s ongoing efforts to gather input from residents, stakeholders, agencies, and First Nations, this open session provided attendees with an opportunity to review the OCP work completed to date, share feedback, and explore how the draft aligns with the Sun Peaks Master Development Plan.

The day’s events reflected the continued commitment of the participating partners to strengthening relationships, advancing reconciliation, and working collaboratively toward a shared future for Skwelkwekwelt.

Media Contacts:

Robert O’Toole, Mayor
Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality
rotoole@sunpeaksmunicipality.ca

Kukpi7 Irvin Wai,
Neskonlith Indian Band
irvinwai@neskonlith.net

Skwlāx te Secwépemcúlecw
communications@lslb.ca