



Kitselas First Nation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kitselas First Nation calls for responsible use of Copper Flats

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Kitselas First Nation is calling for responsible use of the lands situated on their Zymoetz Reserve (IR#5) commonly known as Copper Flats. After several years of illegal dumping, this popular recreation area continues to pose challenges to the Nation as it seeks to preserve the natural integrity of Kitselas lands for people to enjoy.

The area, located both the east and west of the Copper River Bridge on Hwy 16, has been subjected to the illegal dumping of garbage and industrial materials, the abandonment of vehicles, and squatting.

The Kitselas Lands and Resources Department (KLRD) has worked tirelessly to address these issues by removing multiple vehicles, trailers, garbage, and waste. To discourage illegal dumping intensified by vehicular access at Copper Flats west, KLRD has installed concrete barriers that will prevent standard-sized vehicles from entering the area while allowing passage for motorized recreational vehicles such as ATVs and side-by-sides. Signage has also been installed reminding users to respect, preserve and protect these Kitselas lands. Despite these efforts, the problem persists. As a land code Nation, Kitselas has full jurisdiction and authority to manage its reserve lands. This could mean fully restricting access if violations continue to occur.

"We understand that our communities cherish these places, and we want to be good neighbours. But we have a responsibility to ensure that our lands remain pristine," said Chief Councillor, Glenn Bennett. "It costs a great deal to remove abandoned vehicles, and we are concerned they have the potential to contaminate our land. We have made reasonable efforts to prevent cars and trucks from accessing these sites, but if barriers continue to be removed, we may need to seek more permanent options for restricting access."

Kitselas understands the importance of this area as a recreational space and is committed to maintaining public access. However, to achieve this, we must all embrace a "leave-no-trace" ethic, which encourages responsible outdoor activities and collaborative efforts to protect the environment.

Kitselas requests that visitors adhere to the following respectful land use practices:

1. Leave concrete barriers in place.

2. Dispose of waste responsibly by packing out what you pack in – this is not a landfill, and this area should not be used for dumping household, commercial or industrial waste.
3. Report any illegal dumping or vehicle access immediately to the Report all Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) line at 1-877-951-RAPP (7277). This is a toll-free tip line that allows you to report suspected or known violations of fisheries, wildlife or environmental protection laws.

By following these guidelines, we can ensure the continued access to this area for recreational land users to enjoy while safeguarding the natural integrity of this environment.

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