

Caring for Place

A Place-Based Learning Guide for Teachers & Staff



Indigenous Education



Huy tseep q'u:

Prepared in collaboration with school teacher leaders,
Hul'q'umi'num Language & Cultural Advisors,
Indigenous Education Department

Acknowledgements



We gratefully acknowledge that we are located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Quw'utsun, Malahat, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, & Lyackson Peoples.

We recognize the connections between land, language and story. We share gratitude for Elders and Knowledge Keepers who give voice to their family stories within the Indigenous Education department and throughout this document. This wealth of knowledge is passed down to xe'xe' smun'eem in authentic place-based experiences that honour the land and it's many teachings.



We are grateful to learn from the traditional lands of the Quw'utsun, Meluxulh, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Peneluxutth', Halalt, Stz'uminus, & Lyackson Nations

Place based learning: Reconciliation in action

"The land knows you, even when you are lost" - Robin Wall Kimmerer

Using guiding documents such as UNDRIP, DRIPA and the Truth & Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, the Cowichan Valley School District is committed to creating holistic, place-based learning experiences that value and recognize the connection between land, language and stories within Coast Salish culture.

Place based learning opportunities are being developed and refined in multiple ways throughout the K-12 experience. This teacher & staff guide includes location specific themes and local Nation stories to support place based learning lessons and experiences. We use the following definition to describe some of the work involving place based learning as it "brings together layered concepts like the importance of language and the geography of stories, cosmologies and world views, land protections and rights, relationality and accountability, a connection to reconciliation, and much more" (UNESCO, Canadian Commission, 2021).

The social norms and holistic aspects of Indigenous Knowledge Systems of Learning speak to the delicate balance of being a caretaker of the earth's resources, offering students the skills to understand sustainability within systems and the local environment. The importance of intergenerational knowledge and community is at the forefront of this work, in deep partnership with local Nations and guiding teachings from the Indigenous Education Council. Inviting knowledge keepers and elders is integral to this work.

Please note: Cultural Stories are available in print by emailing the District Principal of Indigenous Education and working with school Indigenous Education Departments. These particular stories can be shared to students by an invited guest who is a Nation member of a particular story or a staff member of that Nation. They are returned to the department to maintain the integrity of local knowledge being shared by local Nation members.

*Many invited guests (Knowledge keeper and Elders) have versions of stories passed down through their own families. When inviting guests to share with students, be mindful that some stories will be from personal memory and family narrative. **Reach out to your school's Indigenous Education Department to invite guests.**



Storytime at Tth'itth'xwumqsun village site

http://hulguminum.bc.ca/pubs/Place_Names_maps_2005.pdf

Indigenous Knowledge Systems of Learning

Oral & narrative based
Experiential
Social Norms
Intergenerational
Holistic

(Adapted from Battiste, 2000: Canadian Council of Learning, 2009)

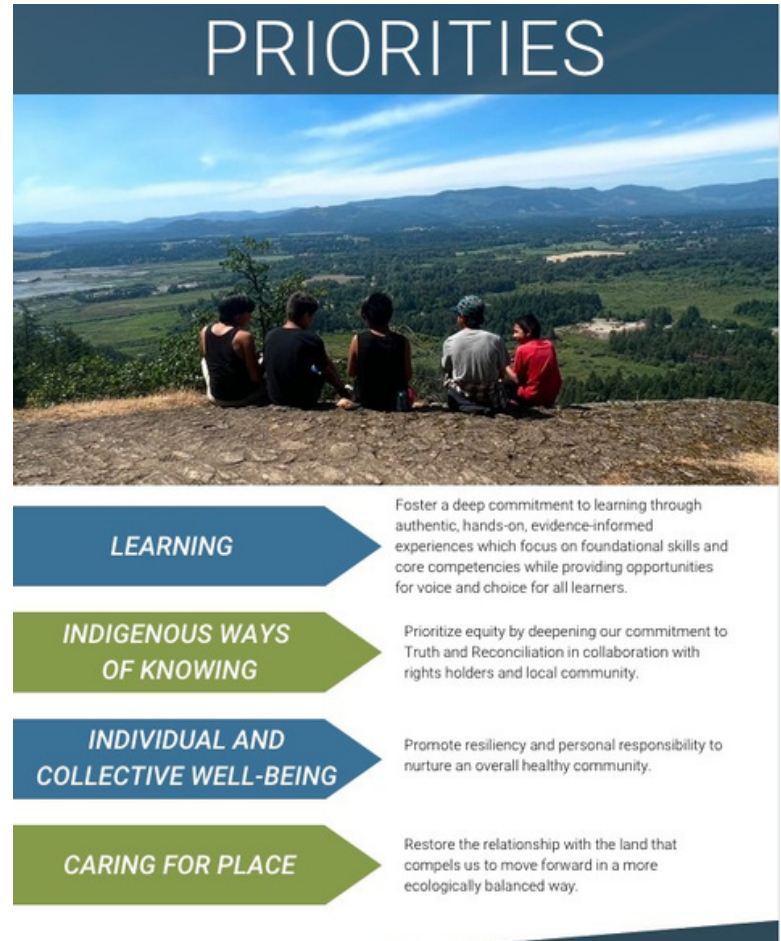
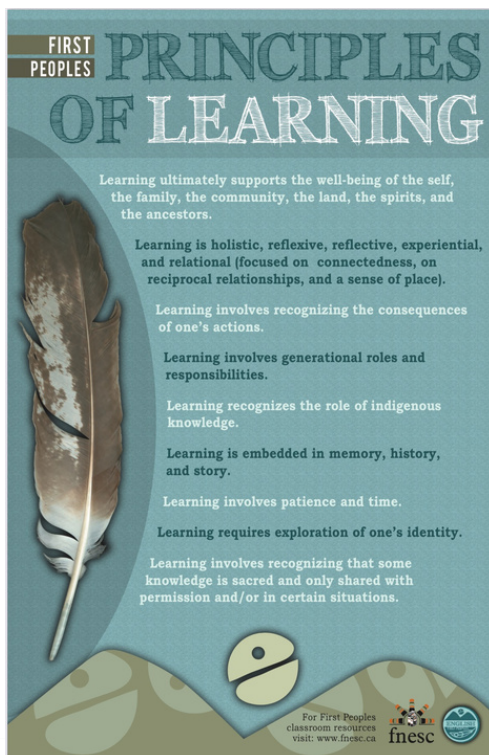
Strategic Plan Goals: Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Caring for Place

"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children" -
Chief Seattle

District Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030

Each district priority is deeply rooted in connection with one another, building on the First People's Principles of Learning: Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place) (FNESC, 2006).

We recognize that place based learning has a positive impact, creates opportunities for youth to engage with the natural space they live in, as "not a singular lesson, but rather a reflective practice that prioritizes meaningful connections between learners and the more-than-human world" (Smith, 2007).



Plantwalk with Siih'na'mut (Ken Elliott) on Pi'paam

Procedures, Policies & Practices: Safety First

Action	When	Considerations
High risk forms: https://sd79.bc.ca/board-of-education/district-forms/	Need to be submitted at least 10 days to associate superintendent for approval BEFORE booking bus/location/permission forms	Admin. Procedure for transportation: https://sd79.bc.ca/wp-admin/admin-ajax . Estimate for bussing form: https://sd79.bc.ca/wp-admin/admin-ajax .
Inviting Cultural Presenters/knowledge keepers/elders (through Indigenous Education Department staff at your site)	Best to communicate with guests regularly: • initial invite 1 month prior to date • check in 2 weeks prior to date • confirm day and time the day before	Cultural presenters and elders have a very important role in community. This could mean possible cancelations and rescheduling. Always have a back up plan. *See protocols on page 11
Book a bus using the transportation form found here: https://sd79.bc.ca/wp-admin/admin-ajax .	At least 10 business days prior to your land based date	Accommodations needed for accessibility? Bussing? Activity? Location? Are they suitable for all students to access and have a meaningful experience on the land? Washrooms, snacks, lunch, water....frontload/communicate expectations and facilities prior to the day of.
Send home permission forms	At least 1 week prior to land based date	District insurance information: https://www.bcspp.org/coverage

Suggestions for Timeline of Learning

"Learning Recognizes the role of Indigenous Knowledge - FPPL (FNESC)

	+ Two weeks prior to land day	One Week prior to land day	Land based Day	One - two weeks after land day
Phase 1 4 walls learning, pre-experience	Introduction of theme/big idea: introduce land based day in a letter to parents. Book bussing, book location			
	Literacy connections: mapping, stories, brainstorming, journaling, front loading land day expectations Send home permission forms			
		Show videos if available about specific locations, ex. Ye'yumnuts, Cowichan Watershed Board, Cowichan Bay estuary		
Phase 2 Land-based experience	Begin building vocabulary, develop hunches about the land day experience, review 5 senses for younger students, beginning stages of project (if being created)			
		Use of technology on land: practice this at your school prior to land day. Ex. Capturing photos of flowers, rocks, trees, animals etc. Using technology safely (protect from breakage)		
		On day of, review themes/vocabulary taught in the classroom, stop and assess during different times on the land based day, model expectations for learning		
Phase 3 4 walls learning, post experience			Upon return, review new learning in a KWL chart or other graphic organizer, hold circle discussions.	
Phase 4 4 walls learning, scaffolding for new experience		Continued work on project/sharing		
				Share learnings, connect to new understandings

Place-Based Learning Locations

"We are as much alive as we keep the Earth alive" - Chief Dan George

PLACES BY ZONE

ACCESSIBILITY/TERRAIN

FACILITIES

CENTRAL	STORIES/THEMES	Contact/ Information	Rocky/ Moderate	Flat/ Easy	Water	Wash- rooms	Learning Signage	Picnic tables
Hwukwukwu-lush (Stoney Hill)	"Monster at Octopus Point", "Arbutus Tree/Qaanlhp"	2 classes on the trail at one time, some steep sections						
Pi'paam-Flower Preserve (Kaspa Road Trailhead)	Book - <i>Blue Camas, Blue Camas</i> , Video- <i>Sara's Sunflower</i> "Quamichan, the giver of fire", "Bluejay and the Girl"	2 classes max at one time, must stay on trail single file through the preserve			Non-potable			
Pi'paam Lookout Point (Kaspa Road Trailhead)	"Xeels' The Transformer", "Thunderbird & Orca", "The Great Flood", "Kis-ack and the Munmaanta'qu/Legend of Qiseq"	Moderate and steep sections, 2 classes max. Be aware of safety instructions to students prior to the lookout point.			Non-potable			
Somenos Marsh	"The Story of the First Human Being", Local birds, invasive species, salmon	Wheelchair /mobility accessible boardwalk						
Ye'yumnuts	Ancient Civilizations, Land and cultural governance, trade/economies, archaeological artifacts	Cultural protocols before going can be found here: https://www.yeyumnuts.ca						
Cowichan Valley Trail System	Seasonal migrations between villages in Cowichan to Lake Cowichan, forests, river systems	Easy access for mobility needs, share about medicines, tools and foods of the forest with HLCA, knowledge keepers						
Swaq'us (Mt. Prevost, Bings Creek)	Water systems, origin stories, wooly dog origins, "Those who fell from the sky", "The Story of the first people", "The Great Flood"	Limited space for bussing, steep and difficult in sections						
Hwtl'up'nets (Maple Bay Beach)	"Raven, Seagull & Sea Urchin: A Cowichan legend about the theft of daylight", "Monster at Octopus Point"	Contact CVRD for booking school trips						

Place-Based Learning Locations

PLACES BY ZONE			ACCESSIBILITY/TERRAIN				FACILITIES	
SOUTH	STORIES/THEMES	Contact/ Information	Rocky Moderate	Flat/ Easy	Water	Wash- rooms	Learning Signage	Picnic tables
Glenora Trailhead	Plant Walk, Salmon, Holt Creek, foods, tools, medicines	Book shelter and facilities through CVRD https://www.cvrld.ca/3500/Park-Facility-Reservations-Events-Permit			Non-Potable			
Tl'ulpalus Village site	"Xeels' the Transformer", "Orca & Killerwhale", "PiP'aam and the Great Flood", "Young Boy and the Orca"	Indigenous education department staff contacts Cowichan Tribes lands to ask for access						
Tth'itth'xwu-mqsun village site (Hecate Park)	Book - <i>Ruler of the Forest</i> , "Raven, Seagull and Sea Urchin", Birds of the Sea, Sea life	Visit and book programs through https://www.cowichanestuary.ca						
Cowichan Estuary	Land revitalization, food sovereignty	Indigenous education department staff contacts Cowichan Tribes						
Showe'luqun Lake (West Shawnigan Lake Park)	"Short story of the young girl at Showe'luqun", Koksilah River System, Land governance	Part of CVRD trail system, flat area, lake beach access, close to McGee Creek Trestle						
Showe'uqun Lake (Old Mill Park)	Land Governance	https://www.cvrld.ca/3500/Park-Facility-Reservations-Events-Permit						
Bright Angel Park	Koksilah Watershed, forest life, river systems	Suspension bridge, amphitheatre, must connect with CVRD to book a shelter and communicate date of arrival						
Mill Bay Nature Park	Beach access and trails	Contact CVRD						

Place-Based Learning Locations

PLACES BY ZONE			ACCESSIBILITY/TERRAIN			FACILITIES		
SOUTH	STORIES/THEMES	Contact/ Information	Rocky Moderate	Flat/ Easy	Water	Wash- rooms	Learning Signage	Picnic tables
Cobble Hill Mountain	Land governance, Koksilah watershed	https://www.cvrld.ca/3500/Park-Facility-Reservations-Events-Permit						
Malahat Skywalk	"Malahat First Peoples Story", "Salmon who formed the gulf islands"	https://malahatskywalk.com/plan/schools-groups/		Boardwalk with elevation				
Goldstream Park	Salmon lifecycle, salmon forest, "Salmon Woman"	Email: goldstreamnaturehouse@bcparksfoundation.ca Undercover area fire pits are first come first serve, Can book a tour through the nature house, or go on your own with a knowledgeable ISW or HLCA			Non-potable			
Bamberton Beach	Coastal/tidal beach study, Malahat restoration, land governance	Email k2parks@shaw.ca to book school groups			Non-potable			
Kinsol Trestle	Governance, forest walk, plants, medicines, tools of the forest, Koksilah River system	Contact CVRD						



Spearfishing on the Cowichan River



Planting in the Cowichan Bay Estuary



Exploring the Malahat Skywalk

Place-Based Learning Locations

PLACES BY ZONE

ACCESSIBILITY/TERRAIN

FACILITIES

WEST	STORIES/THEMES	Contact/ Information	Rocky Moderate	Flat/ Easy	Water	Wash- rooms	Learning Signage	Picnic tables
Skwuts (Skutz Falls)	"Monster at Octopus Point", "Arbutus Tree/Qaanlhp", Cowichan River system, Salmon	Indigenous education department contacts Cowichan Tribes lands for permission to access Skwuts Falls group campground			Non- potable			
Ted Burns Nature Preserve	Masolomo People (referenced from <i>Those who fell from the sky</i>), Cowichan Watershed	Great spot for bird watching/identifying species						
Lakeview Park Trail Access	Tsubaa-asatx First Nation, Mesachi Lake Cowichan Watershed, "How the Deer got Black Legs"	Access at the public parking lot at Lakeview Park, or Point Ideal Drive						



Hiking on Pí'paam

(http://hulquminum.bc.ca/pubs/Place_Names_maps_2005.pdf)

Place-Based Learning Locations

PLACES BY ZONE			ACCESSIBILITY/TERRAIN				FACILITIES	
NORTH	STORIES/THEMES	Contact/ Information	Rocky Moderate	Flat/ Easy	Water	Wash- rooms	Learning Signage	Picnic tables
Chemanius Lake (Weddles Lake Park)	Frogs, fish, cedar, forest walk	Easy terrain for younger students (k/1)						
Eves Park	Reconciliation: Land to railways, forest trail and old railway. Docents work with Cowichan knowledge keepers when requested	Book docents through Lorna Lawson: awesomelorna@gmail.com						
Sunuw'nets (Chemainus River Estuary-Swallowfield Road)	"Wild Woman", "Creation Story by Willie Seymour", Chemainus river system, estuary studies, protected flowers	Limited space for bussing, no services, pack in, pack out, wet sections						
Stocking Creek Park	Salmon Studies	Chum salmon release spot, various trails and elevations. Contact CVRD						
Transfer Beach	Beach studies, "Monster at Octopus Point" connection: the big rock erratic from the story is at Transfer beach	Email to book school groups: prc@ladysmith.ca			Non-potable			



Hiking and storytelling at Hwukwukwulush

(http://hulquminum.bc.ca/pubs/Place_Names_maps_2005.pdf)

Considerations

- First aid attendant/qualified staff member on site for every land day
- First aid kit, attendance sheets - Count students often, use buddy system, students never run ahead, adult in the back of the group
- Create school learning kit: footwear, clothing, backpacks, pencils, clipboards, food, snacks, language cards, water
- Washrooms, water, food, snacks
- Accessibility needs for both students, guests and bussing space
- Collective agreements: breaks, lunch, etc.
- Coordinating parent helpers, Educational Assistants, Indigenous Education Department staff support (sometimes having another vehicle other than a bus is helpful)
- Booking cultural presenters/elders: connect with Indigenous education teacher or ISW regarding inviting a presenter to your school. Have a general outline or story in mind that connects to your 4 walls learning.
- Some knowledge keepers require transportation to and from a place, so take that into account when booking a bus, etc. They should be gifted a blanket and thanked with the group and with the students present, along with their cheque (unless other arrangements have been made).

Protocol for greeting Elder/guest speaker (shared by late Rita George Green):

- Greet Elder at the entrance or pick them up at their home if needed
- Walk them to the learning space (at the Elders walking pace), form a circle with students and staff and acknowledge territory, introduce speaker (allow room for them to introduce themselves in the traditional way)
- Serve a beverage (coffee, tea, water etc.)
- Make sure they have a comfortable place to sit, if they are walking with classes ensure they are leading the group
- If Elder is present during lunch or snack times, make sure they are served and provide a lunch for them. When possible - serve meals on real plates (on hikes, ensure there is a meal for them)
- If honorarium is ready give to them. If possible, a small gift with swag is encouraged. Also, at that time - a gift bag can be given with the honorarium
- When Elder is finished, escort them to the exit and maybe even their car



Pi'paam flower preserve

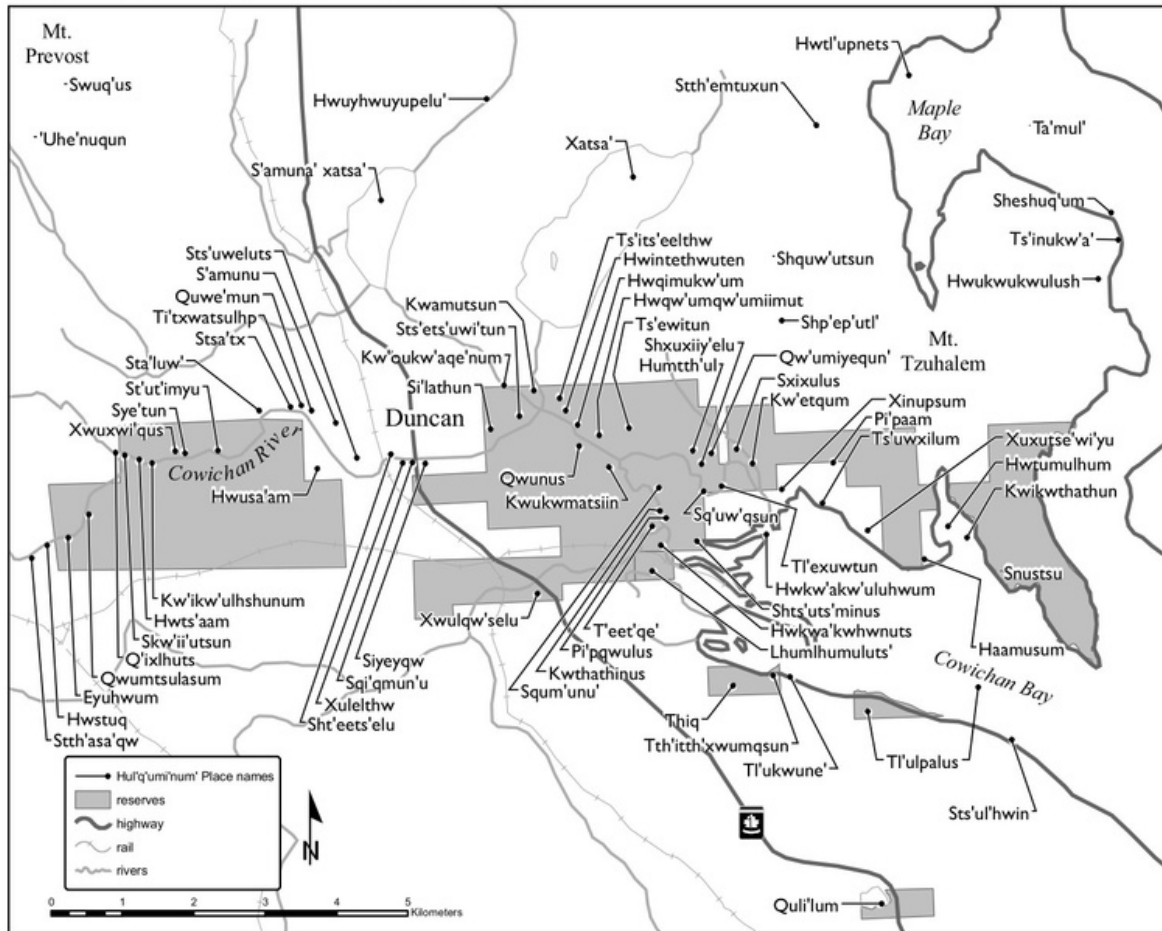
(http://hulquminum.bc.ca/pubs/Place_Names_maps_2005.pdf)

Mapping References

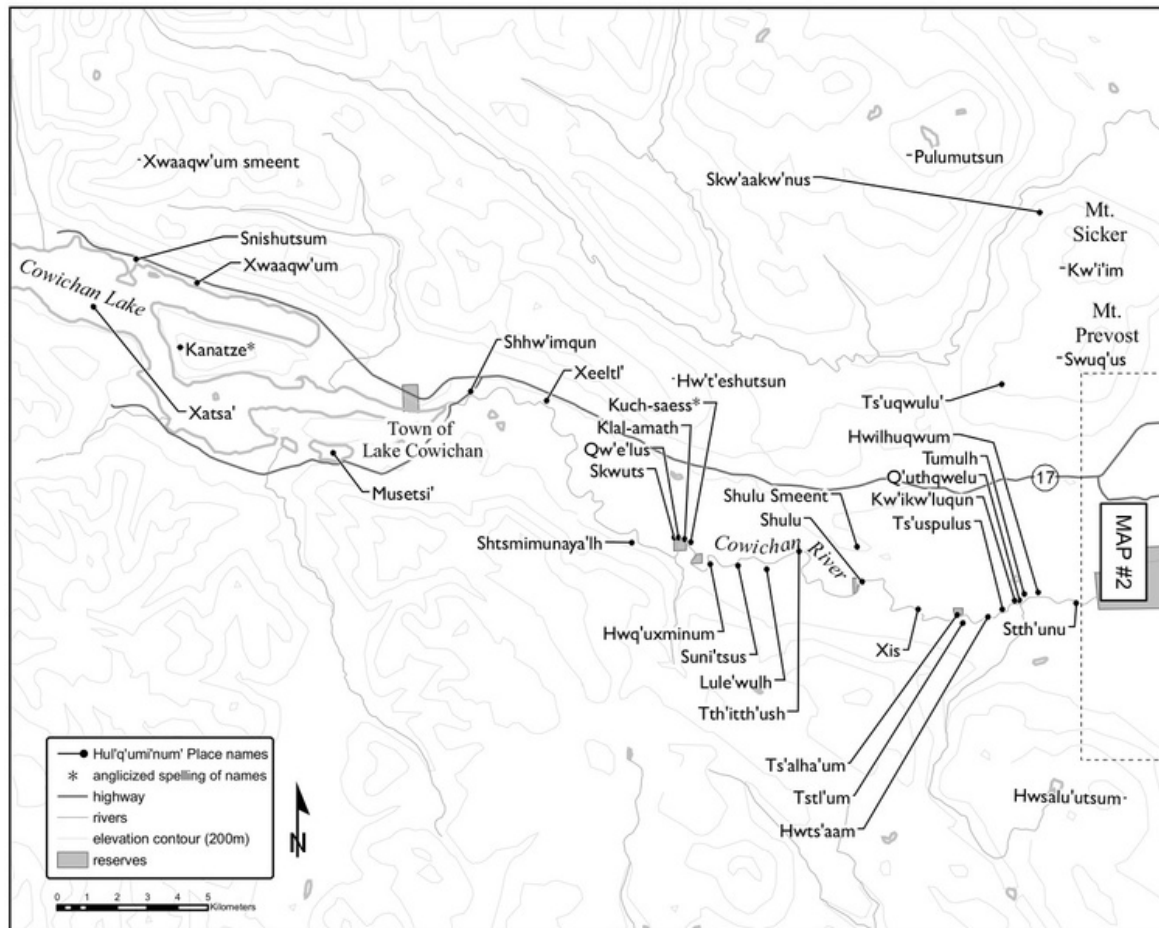


COWICHAN VALLEY
School District

MAP 2: HUL'Q'UMI'NUM' SNUHUWUMUHW — SELECTED PLACE NAMES



MAP 3: HUL'Q'UMI'NUM' SNUHUWUMUHW — SELECTED PLACE NAMES



Maps retrieved from: http://hulquminum.bc.ca/pubs/Place_Names_maps_2005.pdf

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With Gratitude

This guide was created in partnership on the land with teachers, Indigenous Education staff and reviewed by the Indigenous Education Council.

It is a holistic document, that will change and adapt over time.

