



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Ancient Musqueam Marpole village site must be protected from further desecration**

**Coast Salish Territory/ Vancouver, BC** – First Nations Summit leaders are speaking out in support of the Musqueam Nation in their continuing fight to protect the remains of their ancestors located on the former Musqueam village site Cəsnaʔəm, now known as the Marpole Midden.

The Musqueam Nation has been engaged in discussions with the City of Vancouver and the co-developers of the site, Century Holdings Ltd. and Fran and Gary Hackett, on a proposal to conduct a land swap which would result in the protection and preservation of the remains located on the sacred ancient Musqueam village site. Unfortunately, the provincial government has placed the urgent discussions in jeopardy by delaying their participation in the negotiations.

“What is the point in having a Heritage Conservation Act in this province”, questioned Dan Smith of the First Nations Summit political executive while attending today’s Musqueam rally.

“It is unfathomable to believe that even though the complete remains of two Musqueam infant burials have been found on this site, little has been done to ensure the site’s protection and preservation. This is a terrible example of disrespect and apathy by the various levels of bureaucracy. It is an affront to the Musqueam people, their ancestors and their heritage”.

“Governments must recognize that ancient heritage sites such as the Marpole village site are not just another avenue or means to generate economic development. These lands are sacred to our people, to our communities. They are our footprint and our anchor that holds us true to who we are. We must fight to protect these valuable cultural ties to our past”, added Grand Chief Edward John, also of the First Nations Summit executive.

The First Nations Summit has sent letters to the provincial government encouraging them to actively engage with the Musqueam Nation and work toward the protection of the ancient Musqueam village site.

Cəsnaʔəm is located in the South West Marine Drive area in Vancouver, within Musqueam Traditional Territory. The site was recognized as a Canadian Heritage Site as far back as 1933 and contains priceless artifacts and undisturbed intact burials of the Musqueam people.

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The First Nations Summit speaks on behalf of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations in British Columbia. The Summit is also a NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Further background information on the Summit may be found at [www.fns.bc.ca](http://www.fns.bc.ca).

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