

#SLCCWhistler



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre to host the carving of the Community Reconciliation Canoe with Master Carver Chief Ray Natraoro (Ses Siyam).

**April 21st, 2022, Skwxwú7mesh and Lil'wat7úl Territory (Whistler, BC)** – The Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre (SLCC) will host the carving of the *Community Reconciliation Canoe*, with Master Carver Chief Ray Natraoro (Ses Siyam) of Squamish Nation leading SLCC Apprentices through spring and summer of 2022.

As part of the *Salish Summer Carving Series*, the *Community Reconciliation Canoe* carving will begin with a blessing ceremony on Wednesday April 27<sup>th</sup> and feature in guided tours Wednesday through Sunday starting April 27<sup>th</sup> until September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Master Carver Chief Ray Natraoro (Ses Siyam) of the Squamish Nation, will lead SLCC Cultural Ambassadors Brandon Hall of Squamish Nation and Qáwaŋ Redmond Andrews of Lil'wat Nation working as apprentices carving the canoe at the entrance to SLCC's Great Hall.

"The Community Reconciliation Canoe is an invitation from the SLCC Ambassadors to the world, and aims to bridge any distance between all the hearts travelling to this land, those living in appreciation on it, and the original peoples who steward the landscape before you." Says Executive Director Heather Paul. "Together, a canoe will be created, thoughtfully carved by Master Carvers, Elders, youth from the Nations, residents of Whistler and visitors who come to play here."

As one of the specialized professions in the Squamish Nation, Natraoro is one of very few people with the knowledge to carve dugout canoes on the Northwest Coast. "Canoe carving is a special gift that has been handed down through our generations by an unbroken line in my family lineage to which I am proud to carry on for the next generation." says Natraoro. "It is important and vital to share and pass down the ancient craft techniques of our ancestors and to work with youth to obtain transformational knowledge. Our tradition has always been based off an oral history, language and culture and this has sustained us since our first ancestors. With this project, I'll be sharing the sacred craft tradition from my family to pass on to those interested in learning and want to experience carving a canoe."

"The ability to have a Master Artist teaching their apprentices is extremely valuable to the SLCC and our Ambassadors. This is our traditional education system, the transfer of knowledge is a sacred, long-lasting bond. We don't just learn the technical side of canoe carving, we learn the protocols, sustainability, family connections and the history of our people." says Mixalhítsa7 Alison Pascal. "Chief Ray Natraoro (Ses Siyam) is a wealth of knowledge; he's a renowned artist of traditional work, using



Salish forms in contemporary styles, as a canoe carver and a song maker, it's an amazing opportunity for Brandon and Qáwaḿ Redmond to work with him this summer.”

The *Paddling through the Nations* Tour will be a guided journey with an SLCC Ambassador, beginning with a welcome drum song, storytelling will showcase historic canoes from both the Squamish Nation and Lil'wat Nation and their distinctive connection to the land and waterways of the shared territories. The tour will then introduce this year's *Salish Summer Carving Series* - the *Community Reconciliation Canoe*, an interactive carving session with a carver, and a chance for guests to carve the canoe and bring their cedar shavings home. Included with Museum Admission, the *Paddling through the Nations* Tour can also be booked as a private group tour for any age including school groups, and can include add-on interactive craft workshops such as the Cedar Paddle Rattle or Cedar Paddle Necklace.

Through this Community Reconciliation Canoe, the SLCC cultivates the distinctive Skwxwú7mesh and Líl'wat7úl ways – the authentic Indigenous culture of the shared territories that Whistler stands on, sharing a truly meaningful cultural experience with the community, guests and global audience.

The Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre would like to thank Pacific Economic Development Canada, BC Arts Council and the Resort Municipality of Whistler for their generous support of the *Community Reconciliation Canoe*.

Guests are encouraged to join Chief Ray Natraoro (Ses Siyam), Brandon Hall and Qáwaḿ Redmond Andrews for the Blessing Ceremony and the beginning of carving the *Community Reconciliation Canoe* on Wednesday April 27 at 10am at the entrance to the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre.

To learn more about this Press Release, Events and Tours visit: [slcc.ca/slcc-to-host-carving-community-reconciliation-canoe](http://slcc.ca/slcc-to-host-carving-community-reconciliation-canoe)

### **About Chief Ray Natraoro (Ses Siyam)**

Chief Ray Natraoro (Ses Siyam) is Squamish/Coast Salish, and Tlingit and Tutchose. Ray inherited his Great Grandfather Andy Natrall ancestral name Kaapulak. He is a sixth-generation canoe carver who works in many different styles. Many of the carvings in the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre and around Whistler are work by Ray, including canoes, welcome poles, house posts and contemporary artwork. The Xaays Canoe a distinctive feature of the Great Hall – is a 40ft ocean-going canoe carved from a single log in the Squamish Nation “Hunting Style” – a style that hadn't been carved in 100 years, and was referenced by studying older canoes with Master Carvers.

Huy Chexw (thank you) Wa Chexw Yuu (take care) – Squamish Language  
Kukw`stumc`kalap (Thank-you all) – Lil'wat Language

#### **MEDIA CONTACT**

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### **About Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre (SLCC)**

Spo7ez Cultural Centre and Community Society is a registered Canadian charity and the first centre of its kind in Canada. The Squamish and Lil'wat Nations came together to celebrate and share our cultures with the world while creating meaningful employment opportunities for members of both nations. By sharing where we are from and where we are going, our visitors acquire a greater understanding of our Nations and the shared territories that Whistler resides upon. [www.slcc.ca](http://www.slcc.ca)



**Skwxwú7mesh Líl'wat7úl**  
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