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Sharing deep history as digital knowledge: An ontology of the Sq'éwlets website project

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Abstract
Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence, and relation. This paper presents an ontology of the Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada Website Project, a project that has focused on creating a digital community biography of the Sq'éwlets First Nation (www.digitalsqewlets.ca). Based on several decades of community archaeology and the recent production of short video documentaries, the website presents a long-term perspective of what it means to be a Sq'éwlets person and community member today. We explore how this project came to focus on the nature of being Sq'éwlets; how community members conceived the nature, structure, and nomenclature of the website; and how this Sq'éwlets being-ness is translated for outside audiences. We suggest what lessons this approach has for anthropological conventions of naming and knowing as they relate to Indigenous histories, and consider how archaeological knowledge can be transformed into a digital platform within a community-based process.

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Keywords
Sq'éwlets-Scowlitz, Qithyil, ontology, website, digital representation, critical community archaeology, intangible heritage, Stó:lō-Coast Salish

Kwéleches, hello and welcome to this work! Since time immemorial, the Sq'éwlets First Nation has inhabited the bend where the Harrison River feeds into the Fraser River.[1,2] The Sq'éwlets identify themselves as Sqwōwich, People of the Sturgeon, owing to their origins from the Sturgeon People (Boas, 2002; Maud, 1978). This community, located in the central Fraser Valley of British Columbia, is part of the broader Stó:lō-Coast Salish people of the southern Pacific Northwest. This paper presents an ontology of the Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada Project, which has focused on creating a digital community biography of Sq'éwlets (www.digitalsqewlets.ca; Figure 1).

Our project at Sq'éwlets is the work of community leaders, Elders, and youth partnered with archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, media specialists, and other content experts. It stems from a collaborative relationship formed 25 years ago between Chief Clarence Pennier of Sq'éwlets, Archaeology Professor Michael Blake of the University of British Columbia, and researchers at Stó:lō Nation. A partnership was formed in 1992 to excavate, examine, understand, and protect the ancestral archaeological resources at one the Sq'éwlets community's primary ancestral sites, Qithyil. Based on several decades of community-based archaeology, oral history, and ethnohistorical work, and the recent production of short video documentaries, the website that is the subject of this paper presents a long-term perspective of what it means to be a Sq'éwlets person and community member

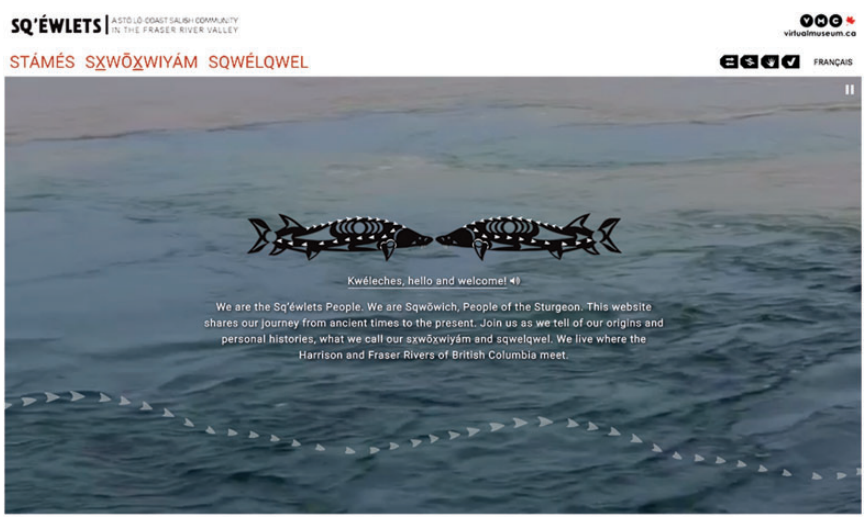

Figure 1. Main page of the Sq'éwlets website.

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today. It also offers one model for embedding the tangible and intangible results of community-engaged archaeology into an accessible and engaging platform for learning and sharing.

Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of reality, existence, and relation. It forms part of the field of metaphysics, a branch of philosophy concerned with being. Aristotle (1981, 1983) was foundational to the development of ontological ideas, seeking to understand the *quidditas* or whatness of things, their whoness and howness, and how these forms relate one to another. Aristotle was fascinated by the life cycles of the biotic world. He suggested, in a vein akin to many Aboriginal traditions of thought, that the mind and body of all living things are propelled forward by the slow fire of the *pneuma*, a material property of the soul (Pierotti, 2015: 85).

Although the terms and questions originated by Aristotle have formalized over time, his schema remains central to ontological thought and analysis (Smith, 2001). Ontological philosophers continue to refine understandings of the nature of existence, the beingness of humans and other forms of life, conceptions of time, space, and the universe, and the relations between these ideas. Within anthropology, ontology has long been used as a venue to explore indigenous philosophies and theories of being (Glass, 2014). Ontology has more recently been adopted as an organizing concept to describe the internal relations of digital management system components, particularly in relation to Eurocentric knowledge systems (Srinivasan, 2012). This usage has implications for how indigenous material culture is digitally represented within both Indigenous and non-Indigenous archives, websites, libraries, and museums (Christen, 2009; Salmond, 2012; Srinivasan et al., 2009, 2010).

In this paper, we begin to explore both existential and digital aspects of ontology, through the consideration of Sq'éwlets and Stó:lō philosophies of the world, how they have informed this project, and how the Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada exhibit is organized within this set of understandings. Through several years of co-creation, the Sq'éwlets website came to be about more than the archaeology, history, and material culture of the Sq'éwlets community. In the following pages, we explore how the project came into being; how Sq'éwlets members conceived the nature of this being; how being Sq'éwlets informed the framing and naming of cultural concepts; and, how this Sq'éwlets being-ness is translated for outside audiences in and through the website. We look at what it means to be Sq'éwlets in a digital world and consider what is required to integrate and translate archaeological and cultural knowledge into a digital platform within a community-based process. We conclude with lessons our approach has for anthropological conventions of naming and knowing as they relate to First Nations histories and self-representations.

How did this project come into being?

The roots of this project are with the archaeology of the Sq'éwlets ancestral site Qithyil. During a decade of intensive excavation, we discovered a complex history

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that began with a settlement that grew in size and influence, and shifted in time to a cemetery site that would eventually stretch into a vast mortuary landscape (Blake, 2004; Blake et al., 1993, in press; Brown and Lepofsky, 2008; Lepofsky and Lyons 2003; Lepofsky et al., 2000; Lyons, 2000; Morrison, 1997; Oakes et al., 2008; Thom, 1995). While Sq'éwlets members had knowledge of Qithyil as a special and spiritual place, further understanding of the scope of its history was welcome and exciting news in the community.

Following a decade of excavations, over 6000 artifacts would be housed at three different repositories—University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, and Stó:lō Nation. Former Chief Andy Phillips (pers. comm., 2005) emphasizes that it has long been the community's goal to reunite this collection in a way that allows Sq'éwlets youth to learn their own histories and identities. He also emphasized the importance of the community sharing their own perspectives of Sq'éwlets history with the broader world of which they are a part but by which they are not well understood. In 2007–2008, this idea began to germinate through discussions between Chief Phillips, John Welch via his Sovereignty and Heritage Project at Simon Fraser University, and David Schaepe of the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre (SRRMC). The objective was to consolidate the Qithyil collections at the UBC Lab of Archaeology and use the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN) to establish a digital connection between the collections, data, and images from the many field schools conducted at Qithyil in the 1990s by Michael Blake at the University of British Columbia and Dana Lepofsky at Simon Fraser University.

In 2010, our project team began searching for funding and formulating a plan for a digital space to exhibit the Qithyil collection (Lyons et al., 2011). In 2013, we received a Virtual Museum of Canada grant to pursue this goal. Yet, as we began a process of intensive workshops and discussions, this goal transformed into something that encompassed 'representing Sq'éwlets heritage' but moved closer towards to 'being Sq'éwlets'. This shift has much to do with the long history of working relationships between our partners—Sq'éwlets Elders Betty Charlie, Clifford Hall, Vi and John Pennier who worked with archaeologists David Schaepe, Michael Blake, and Natasha Lyons from Ursus Heritage Consulting over the past two decades. Many of us, in turn, have long working relationships with team members that came into the project in the 2000s, including media anthropologist Kate Hennessy from Simon Fraser University and Kyle McIntosh from Popgun Media. A new cohort of Sq'éwlets youth and Elders joined us, including Reg Phillips, Yvonne Hall, Philamena Hulbert, and Joseph Chapman. Many additional community and outside scholars mentioned in this paper came to actively engage with the project.

The Sq'éwlets project is part of a global movement toward community-based research. At this juncture, the arguments for the growth, significance, and now prevalence of community-based collaborative research with Indigenous and local communities are well-rehearsed. Since the rise of post-modernism, and the crises of representation and authority in anthropology, both Indigenous scholars and their

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allies have increasingly sought to understand and reflect indigenous bodies of theory and systems of knowledge within the processes, practices, and products of research: in essence, their epistemological and ontological foundations (cf. Echo-Hawk, 2000; Grande, 2004, 2008; Martindale and Lyons, 2014; Martindale et al., 2016; Nicholas, 2010; Welch et al., 2009; Wylie, 2015). The decolonizing of research has had profound political, social, and intellectual influences within academic, governmental, business and institutional contexts (Atalay et al., 2014; Lyons, 2013; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, 2005). Social and new media are particularly well positioned in relation to this expanding body of research because of their ability to present cultural and individual viewpoints with fluidity, immediacy, and accessibility (e.g., Dawson et al., 2011; Glass and Hennessy, forthcoming; Hennessy et al., 2013).

We can also situate the Sq'éwlets project within developments in the digital humanities, specifically work being undertaken by Indigenous communities and ethnocultural communities with partnering heritage institutions. Our project is one example of how these partners are creatively exploring digital media applications to identify, access, and mobilize cultural heritage in both analog and digital forms. The goals of these initiatives focus on generating new opportunities for broader engagements with digital heritage materials in locations that are external to the communities while also building internal knowledge, capacities, and controls. For example, a number of influential projects downunder have developed digital infrastructures that are responsive to local audiences and specific cultural protocols for knowledge sharing. These include the Mukurtu Content Management System developed by Australian Warumungu communities (Christen, 2005) and the *Te Rauata* hub developed by New Zealand Maori (Hogsden and Poulter, 2012; Ngata et al., 2012).

As suggested above, the Sq'éwlets project traces some of its roots to the RRN, an online research space co-developed by Stó:lō Nation, the Museum of Anthropology at University of British Columbia, and other partners (Rowley, 2013). The RRN and other emergent networks, such as the Plateau Peoples' Portal and the GRASAC project (Christen, 2011; Phillips, 2011), respond to calls for museums to decentralize curatorial authority and integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into museum database content and architectures (Muntean et al., 2015). Our project used the RRN to unite fragmented digital collections records, curate the Qithyil collections, and enable other RRN users to access these collections and share information and perspectives.

The Sq'éwlets project also builds on earlier work conducted by our team members, Indigenous communities, and partnering museums in the field known as digital or virtual repatriation (Hennessy et al., 2013). New technologies and the digitization of tangible and intangible cultural property have supported such partnerships in rethinking and creating culturally specific models for the circulation and sharing of digital heritage (Bell et al., 2013). Critiques about the motivations behind the development—by museums and other

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institutional bodies—of virtual exhibits and other digital platforms are beyond the scope of this article. However, important questions and concerns persist about creating even an appearance that digital resources may satisfy demands for the physical repatriation of cultural property (Boast and Enote, 2013). At worst, some forms of digital repatriation have been viewed as extensions of neo-colonial practice (Boast, 2011). At best, perhaps, virtual exhibits enable local communities to have greater access to their digital collections, and allow them to both re-mediate records and share perspectives on their own tangible and intangible heritage (cf. Hennessy et al., 2012, 2013; Hennessy, 2009). Our collective intention with the Sq'éwlets virtual exhibit is to foster critical and constructive contestation and representation of Qithyil material cultural and Sq'éwlets being-ness; time and community will gauge our success.

How did Sq'éwlets members conceive the nature of this being?

In our first concept workshop, Sq'éwlets Elders set the tone and direction for the website project. They were interested in emphasizing the Halq'eméylem language as a way of presenting and reflecting their true selves and understandings of the world. The Elders wanted the website to speak to the healing that has gone on in this community and the identity politics that are central to this process. They also wanted to evoke the mood and feeling of being on the water where the clear, blue Harrison River flows around the bend at Qithyil into the muddy, powerful Fraser River, called Stó:lō, the River of Rivers, in Halq'eméylem. David Schaepe, who led this workshop, sketched the group's ideas, goals, and thoughts as they emerged (Figure 2).

The community discussions highlighted central tenets of Stó:lō philosophy relevant to website construction and presentation. The first of these is about the nature and duty of humans. In Western thought, humans exist atop a hierarchy,

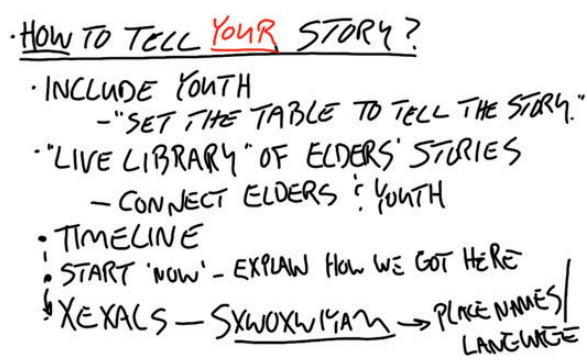

Figure 2. Excerpt of notes from the first website planning session with Sq'éwlets partners.

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and physical and metaphysical entities are considered distinct, divided into material and immaterial categories such as science and spirituality. In the Stó:lō world, these categories are nearly seamless:

> Stó:lō social relations with non-humans are not limited to what non-Stó:lō might think of as supernatural beings. All important natural resources in the region are considered by the Stó:lō to be ancestors who in the distant past turned themselves, or were turned by others, into plants and animals to be used for the benefit of the people. The Stó:lō consider these plants and animals to be part of their extended family, and if treated with proper respect, they will continue to provide the Stó:lō with the materials they need to go about their lives. (Washbrook, 1995: 6–7)

The element of caretaking continues to be very strong today, encompassing the notion 'we have to take care of everything that belongs to us' (McHalsie, 2007). Elders wish to pass this sense of responsibility on to their youth: in order to grow into tomorrow's leaders, they require a strong foundation grounded in Stó:lō principles. To manifest this goal, our subsequent discussions sought the right tone and voice for the text, and the right look and feel for the design of the website. We decided to present the website in the first person plural, from the perspective of 'our history', and to aim at an early highschool reading level for accessibility. We worked to make the navigation simple and clear. We chose bright images having central relevance to Sq'éwlets people practicing cultural activities today. This strong vein connecting the community to its activities includes salmon fishing and canoe racing to making and using traditional technologies. We purchased rights to use the beautiful sturgeon painting in mirror image created by Alicia Point as a project logo. The sturgeon's stickleback scales appear throughout the site, providing aesthetic and thematic cohesiveness as well as orientation foci for site navigators (Figure 3). We featured video prominently across the website to give both a sense of immediacy and cultural resonance.

Sq'éwlets Elders also wanted the website to reflect the holistic conception of the world that is so prominent in Stó:lō thought (Carlson et al., 1997, 2001; Schaepe, 2007, 2013; Schaepe et al., 2004). Two Stó:lō concepts anchor the website: sxwōxwiyám and sqwelqwel. Sxwōxwiyám are the origin stories of the Stó:lō, introduced in the website like this:

> Our Elders tell us that sxwōxwiyám is the time and the stories from long ago when the world was not quite right. It was a time when animals and people could talk to each other and could transform from one to the other. Through sxwōxwiyám we are all connected. Xexá:ls are the Transformers, the beings who made our world right in the mythical times of our origins. The Transformers Red Headed Woodpecker, his wife Black Bear, and their three sons and daughter were given the responsibility to walk through our world, S'ólh Téméxw, and make things right. They transformed our ancestors into stone, mountains, birds, land animals, fish, and plants, to teach us how to live right and relate to the living world.

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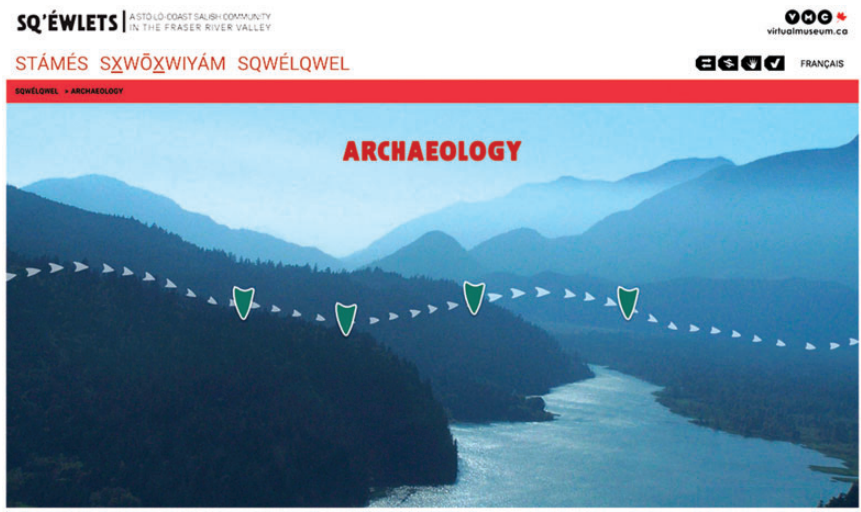

Figure 3. Sturgeon stickleback spines as orienting markers on the website.

Sqwelqwel means 'true news' and is introduced like this:

> [Sqwelqwel] refers to the oral history of our ancestors and the places they lived, fished, hunted, and harvested plants. Every Stó:lō person has their own sqwelqwel. Just as sxwōxwiyám links us to things and places transformed long ago, sqwelqwel links us to the more recent past. Once we know our sqweqwel, we have a responsibility to use the places our ancestors used. Once we use these places, it becomes our responsibility to take care of them. Taking care of the places in our sqwelqwel means protecting them so they can provide for our future generations.

The website's third section is Stámés, which means 'about' and describes the cultural and project context. Below we explore how the Halq'eméylem language also served as a touchstone to both structure and generate site content.

How did being Sq'éwlets inform the framing and naming of cultural concepts? Part 1

A major intention of the website is to share the Sq'éwlets people's long and proud history in a respectful and community-centered way. Archaeology is considered within the realm of more recent Stó:lō history and is encompassed within the Sqwelqwel section of the website. In determining how to approach the archaeological material, we set out to represent Sq'éwlets ancestors and the physical remains they left behind by naming and framing cultural constructs in the Halq'eméylem language, demonstrated with two examples below.

For Stó:lō, 'taking care of everything that belongs to us' connotes caretaking within both metaphysical and physical realms, everything from participating in

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specific ceremonials and minding spiritual relations to active use of lands and resources and assisting individuals and their particular needs (Carlson, 1997; McHalsie, 2007; Piccini and Schaepe, 2014). We collectively decided to use the term 'belongings' in place of the archaeological term artifacts. Belongings encompass all material elements excavated: artifacts, features, and ecofacts. In Halq'eméylem, belongings are 'á:wkw, the things our ancestors made and used'. The term á:wkw creates a relationship of belonging to these objects of the ancestors. Equally, it creates a responsibility to take care of these belongings through their journey from original creation through re-discovery by archaeology, to curation and preservation (Muntean et al., 2015; and see Piccini and Schaepe, 2014; Schaepe, 2013).

A central feature of the Sqwelqwel section is the virtual exhibit of Belongings from Qithyil. The exhibit is organized around traditional activities: plant harvesting, fishing, hunting, building, dwelling, trading, and caring for ancestors. Each section is written from a Stó:lō perspective, picturing and describing a series of belongings excavated from Qithyil. The hunting section, for example, is introduced like this:

> We have always depended on animals for our survival and we have great respect for them. When the world was made, our Creator, Chíchelh Siyá:m, put animals here first and humans here last, as the weakest of all beings. Hunters, called tewít, were given knowledge and expert hunting skill by the Creator. In this section, we describe hunting tools and techniques.

Hunting belongings are depicted and described, including an array of spear points, arrowheads, cores, fauna, hunting and finger knives from Qithyil (Figure 4).

A second example of the importance of naming relates to the choice of terminology for 'burial' features. Qithyil transformed from a village to a cemetery about 1500 BP (Lepofsky et al., 2000). The building of a wide range of earthen mounds and cairns across the site lasted until about 1000 BP, and then extended beyond Qithyil after this date to create a vast mortuary landscape (Oakes et al., 2008). Sq'éwlets historians recall that their relations were later put to rest in cedar boxes in trees on site during the historic era. Many of these interment features required careful and substantial construction. In the larger mounds and cairns, for example, a clay floor was prepared, into which a shallow central pit was dug for the individual to be carefully placed. A square stone cairn or rock pile was laid over the individual. For mounds, a square rock wall was built around the perimeter of the features with large boulders stacked at the corners. A large earthen mound was built over top, requiring considerable community labor (Blake, 2004; Morrison and Myles, 1992; Thom, 1995). Many of the features were built in relation to solar alignments. The stonework within the largest of the mounds aligns exactly with the local summer solstice sunrise.

Stó:lō and Sq'éwlets Elders are very clear that they are not 'buried' when they die, and that the terms 'burial mound', 'burial cairn', and 'tree burial' are culturally inappropriate. Elders specify that their deceased relations are 'put away' following Stó:lō protocols and practices that do not align well with the English term 'burial'.

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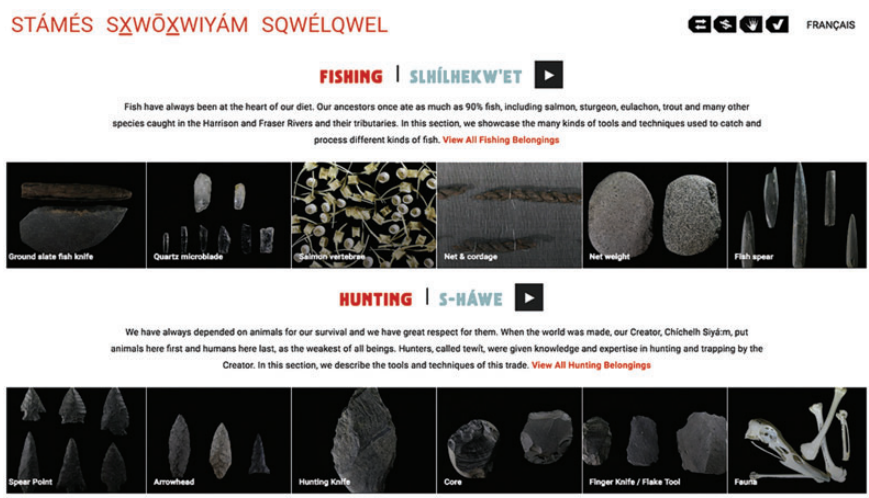

Figure 4. Hunting belongings page of the Sq'éwlets website.

The processes of 'putting people away', while having changed through time, consistently equate to respectful treatment of the deceased, where 'burial' implies disrespect. We chose to use the term 'ancestor memorials' in place of the general category 'burial features', and the specific terms 'ancestor mound', 'ancestor cairn', 'ancestor tree', and 'afterlife belongings' to more correctly portray Stó:lō and Sq'éwlets' notions of caring for their loved ones in the afterlife, an important and lasting responsibility.[3]

How did being Sq'éwlets inform the framing and naming of cultural concepts? Part 2

A second, more emergent, intention of the website is to share a sense of Sq'éwlets people's lives in the contemporary world: who they are today, where they live, what they do, and how they conceive of their lives and places. Several elements of the Sqwelqwel section grew out of the lively workshops conducted in support of the website project. In addition to a site visit to Qithyil and a Youth and Elders Camp, our workshops involved planning, discussing concepts, interviewing, verifying content, eating and visiting, and starting the process again. Each workshop and project stage helped to build momentum and community interest. We shared a lot of great salmon and hearty meals made by Lucille Hall. Several types of knowledge and content emerged from these gatherings. Perhaps foremost, the Sq'éwlets community wants the outside world to know they are prospering as indigenous peoples in the 21st century:

> Our members pursue many careers that reflect our traditional interests, such as environmental monitoring, teaching, storytelling, archaeology and history, art, social work,

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> landscaping, fish processing, construction, and politics. Our Elders Group helps to sustain our well-being through their guidance and teachings. They help guide our community planning and our healing as we recover from the harmful legacies of Residential Schools and the Indian Act. We are active in protecting our Aboriginal rights and title, and in teaching our youth and others about our history and who we are. We do our best to live our lives in a good way, following our traditional teachings.

It is equally important for Sq'éwlets members to recite the profound changes experienced since colonial entanglement as a way to move forward. Elders feel that there are many lessons to be learned from their colonial history, which continues today. They see no point in mincing words about the past, yet hold their sustained focus on looking forward through repatriation, land claims, and other decolonizing processes. In 'Okw'elexwtes'iyólewéthettset', the 'Our Past is Our Future' section of Sqwelqwel, twin historical timelines—representing Sq'éwlets and world events—were developed by ethnohistorians Keith Carlson and John Lutz that describe the chronology of many of these processes.

These different sentiments were captured in photos and video recorded during workshops and used as foundations for the website. Sq'éwlets members brought their historical photos to be digitized, leading to some remarkable community interactions about the people and events depicted. Many youth brought their contemporary cultural belongings to be photographed with: Lauryanna Williams brought her canoe paddle; Noah Grey brought a toggling spear he and his Dad built; C.J. Hare brought a stone tool that is a family heirloom. We took hundreds of family portraits, a selection of which fills a family gallery on the site (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Sq'éwlets family gallery.

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The greatest sense of immediacy is seen in video, featured prominently across the website in ambient loops of video and short 'video quotes' to introduce the themes of given sections; in narrated animations of origin stories; in extended interviews with Sq'éwlets members; and in a series of short video documentaries that capture the many thematic strands of the project. Videography was both spontaneous and planned. For example, Chelsea Grey came in powwow dress and the beaded Senior Princess tiara she won at the 2014 Chilliwack Powwow; we filmed her during a Youth and Elders workshop performing a spur-of-the-moment 'fancy dance'.[4] Chief Andy Phillips spoke directly about the challenges faced by contemporary Indigenous leaders and the need for Sq'éwlets people to connect with their identity as Xwelmexw (http://digitalsqewlets.ca/sqwelqwel/voices-voix/video/q-andy-phillips-identity_identite-traditions-eng.php).

Nine short documentaries serve to anchor Ye Sqelxwále Tset, the 'Our Voices' section of Sqwelqwel. These 5–10 minute videos are framed with Halq'eméylem for the Stó:lō concepts they reflect. For example, the documentary 'The Beginning of Archaeology at Sq'éwlets' is framed with the concept Xaxastexwtemekw' stam, or 'respect for all things' (http://digitalsqewlets.ca/sqwelqwel/voices-voix/video/doc-archaeology_archeologie-eng.php). Community members and archaeologists discuss the evolution of the work at Qithyil and the emergence of cultural protocols for excavating and conducting oneself on this sacred site. Témélh, a red ochre 'paint', was used by all site workers and visitors to make them visible to the spirits, who then recognize and protect them and others from spiritual harm. This and an additional suite of cultural practices and ceremonials were performed throughout the work at Qithyil, and have set the bar for respectful archaeology in Stó:lō territory and influenced many First Nations archaeology programs beyond.

The short documentary 'Our Xwelmexw Names', which features community members stating both their Xwélmexw ('Indian') and English names, is framed by the concept Mekxwatmemeylhtel, which means 'everyone help one another' (http://digitalsqewlets.ca/sqwelqwel/voices-voix/video/doc-xwelmexw-names_noms-eng.php). Many assert that being Sq'éwlets means being an unassimilated First Nations people who continue to practice traditions such as the winter dance cycle, canoe racing, and preserving country foods. Sonny (John Jr.) and Chrystal Williams, for example, run the Golden Eagles Canoe Club—about 60 kids strong from Sq'éwlets and neighboring Sts'a'i:les First Nation who practice every day of the summer and race against other Coast Salish clubs at very popular weekend events (see Richard Williams reflecting on what it means to work together to pull a canoe: http://digitalsqewlets.ca/sqwelqwel/voices-voix/video/q-canoe-eng.php).

How is Sq'éwlets being-ness translated for outside audiences?

We chose to feature the Halq'eméylem language prominently within the Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada website in order to create a comfortable and familiar entry into the website for Sq'éwlets and Stó:lō users and to invite outside users to

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learn more about the Sq'éwlets community, its stories, and its worldview. Recognizing that both the structure and content of the website need some degree of translation eg., no need for quotation marks for outside audiences—Xwelítem (European settlers) in Halq'eméylem—we developed tools to help these users appreciate the language, gain a cultural orientation, and be able to use and share Sq'éwlets and Stó:lō knowledge in diverse community and classroom settings. These tools include language resources, teacher's resources, and traditional knowledge (TK) Labels, all located on a toolbar along the bottom of the site.

The language resources

The language resources section (http://digitalsqewlets.ca/language_resources-ressources_linguistiques-eng.php) has two components. The first is a key to the Stó:lō writing system: Halq'eméylem is an oral language for which a written orthography was developed by Brent Galloway (1997: v–vi) in the 1970s and 1980s. The key describes Halq'eméylem vowels and consonants and how they are pronounced. The second component is a glossary for all Halq'eméylem terms on the website. The glossary was developed by Strang Burton, linguist at SRRMC. Close to 90 terms appear on the site, pronounced by Stó:lō Elder Viviane Williams and SRRMC oral historian Naxaxalhts'i (Albert 'Sonny' McHalsie). Each term is linked to the glossary, where the audio pronunciation, along with meaning, origin, and related words, are provided. This format is also used for maps of significant Sqwelqwel and Sxwōxwiyám Places compiled, interpreted, and pronounced by Sonny McHalsie. For instance, birch trees are significant to a place called Seqwema, where the bark was peeled for household technologies.

The classroom resources

The classroom resources (http://digitalsqewlets.ca/classroom-resources_ressources-pedagogiques/index-eng.php) were prepared by Sheryl MacMath at University of the Fraser Valley. They include six classroom activities that draw on different aspects of the website. Each activity includes appropriate grades (from Grades 3 to 9), learning outcomes, activity descriptions, teacher assessments, and extension activities. In 'Storytelling as an Oral History' (http://digitalsqewlets.ca/classroom-resources_ressources-pedagogiques/lesson_cours-1-eng.php), grade 3–5 students are asked to talk about the practice of storytelling, discuss stories they love, and listen to Gwen Point telling the story of Th'owxeya, the Cannibal Woman. They are required to discern different environments described in the story and make connections about land and people. All of the activities are aligned with the First Peoples' Principles of Learning, established by British Columbia Ministry of Education's First Nation Education Steering Committee. This body is helping to transform the provincial social studies curriculum to reflect more local indigenous content. The Sq'éwlets website will be highlighted in the new curriculum as a

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digital resource developed by a First Nations organization—SRRMC—using an Indigenous (Sq'éwlets-Stó:lō-Coast Salish) worldview.

TK labels

The TK labels (http://digitalsqewlets.ca/traditional-knowledge_connaissances_traditionnelles-eng.php) are another tool used to help website users both relate to the cultural knowledge presented and know how to use, cite, and share this knowledge in a culturally appropriate way. TK labels and licenses were developed by Kimberly Christen Withey and Jane Anderson within the rubric of their Local Contexts project (Anderson and Christen, 2013; Christen, 2015). Their aim is to 'provide a practical method to deal with the range of intellectual property issues that arise in relation to managing cultural heritage materials [by] offer[ing] Indigenous stakeholders the tools to add cultural and historical context to their cultural heritage content' (localcontexts.org). We hosted a workshop with Kim and Jane to discuss Sq'éwlets TK and how it is represented on the website. Community members chose a set of six labels most suited to this content and composed culturally specific descriptions for each. Four TK labels are used throughout the website: Attribution, Non-Commercial, Verified, and Outreach. As an example, the text for the Attribution/Skwixqastetéméxw label reads like this:

> This website represents the true knowledge and history of Sq'éwlets people. The attribution label literally means 'name' and 'place' in our language, skwixqastetéméxw. We ask everyone that visits this website to attribute our knowledge and histories to us, the Sq'éwlets First Nation, a tribe of Stó:lō. Our history has not always been respected or told correctly. Here we tell our own story in our own words. We are both holders and caretakers of our own lands, resources, and histories. It is the responsibility of our families and communities as Stó:lō people to take care of these things in a respectful way. Please feel free to contact us with further questions about attribution.

The Non-Commercial/Eweta xwóxweyem label refers to the non-commercial use of all site content, the Verified/Iyólem syó:ys label conveys that all information on the website has been approved for public use by the Sq'éwlets community, and the Outreach/S'íwes label asserts that all content is to be shared to educate Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō alike (Figure 6). Two additional TK labels are used for specific purposes on the website. The Sacred/Xa:xa label recognizes that certain types of knowledge are restricted in some way and may be referred to but not specified or shown, such as human remains. The Family/Ts'elhxwélmexw label acknowledges that some information was shared by families who have the right to hold that knowledge. Drawing attention to the different and particular types of knowledge represented in the website—from its suitability to be publicly shared (Skwixqastetéméxw) to highlighting the presence of knowledge forms that are sacred and private (Xa:xa)—is an assertion of control over the representation of Sq'éwlets knowledge and an interest in educating visitors about it.

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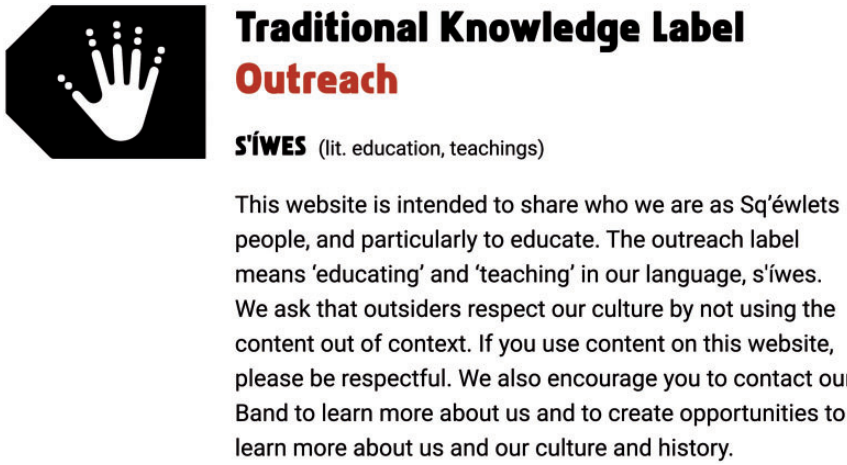

Figure 6. Outreach/S'íwes TK label.

Discussion: On being Sq'éwlets in the digital world

The archaeological work at Qithyil began as a means to protect Sq'éwlets ancestral lands from being logged. It grew over the course of a decade into the first large-scale community-based archaeology project in British Columbia. The openness that has always characterized our working relationships at Qithyil laid the groundwork for a fluid approach by the project team to the virtual exhibit process. This paper has described how the Sq'éwlets website came to be about more than the archaeology, history, and material culture, and how in turn it came to focus on being Sq'éwlets.

Through the lens of this project, we have explored both existential and digital aspects of ontology, through the consideration of how Sq'éwlets and Stó:lō philosophies of the world have informed this project, and how the Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada website is organized within this set of understandings. Ontology is used here as a basis for examining the forms, parts, and conceptions of this living project and the digital exhibit it produced: its whoness, howness, and whatness. In what follows, we consider what 'being Sq'éwlets' in the digital world means; offer what lessons our approach may have for anthropological conventions of naming and knowing as they relate to Indigenous histories; and discuss how archaeological knowledge may be translated into a digital platform within a community-based process.

Like their ancestors, many contemporary Sq'éwlets people conceive their 'relations' in the broadest of terms, wherein sentience is accorded to plants and animals; lands, waterways, and resources; and spiritual transformers and the ancestors they turned to stone as a means of instructing people in proper behavior. The physical and metaphysical entities of the past, present, and future have great fluidity and relationality. Within this understanding of the world, it is incumbent on Sq'éwlets

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and Stó:lō people to take care of everything that belongs to them (Carlson, 1997; McHalsie, 2007; Washbrook, 1995). This doctrine implies that Sq'éwlets and Stó:lō communities must develop cultural protocols to take proper care of both the physical and spiritual remains of their ancestors (Piccini and Schaepe, 2014). Re-uniting the Qithyil belongings in a digital format flows from this sense of unity and existential holism.

Sq'éwlets sensibilities guided both the nature and structure of the website planning process. Belongings needed to be portrayed within their widest cultural context, through introductions to Sxwōxwiyám, the origin stories of Sq'éwlets from their Skyborn and Sturgeon ancestors, and Sqwelqwel, the multiple, varied, intersecting true histories of Sq'éwlets people. This broad canvas created space for community members to talk about both the deep and recent past: their colonial losses, contemporary struggles, and the continuity and re-emergence of traditional practices. Perhaps, most centrally, being Sq'éwlets in the digital world means that present-day Sq'éwlets youth are able to take and create opportunities that allow them to succeed with their feet in 'two canoes', using their own values, understandings, and language and taking what is most useful of Western culture and technologies.

We have suggested that many of the principles of respectful community-based practice laid a foundation for us to have open and trusting discussions and decision-making processes (e.g., Atalay, 2012; Lyons, 2011, 2013; Welch et al., 2009). Identifying concepts in a Stó:lō cultural framework and naming them in Halq'eméylem created the bedrock for the Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada exhibit. Naming is a fundamental human activity, perhaps described in its most basic and weighty sense in Ursula LeGuin's (1968) classic 'Wizard of Earthsea' novels, wherein the characters learn that knowing and sharing their true names and those of other beings is an act of complete and utter trust. Sq'éwlets people today are moving beyond the fear instilled by colonial powers to assert and share their own conceptions and knowledges of themselves, their histories, and their world with the Xwelítem majority (e.g., Carlson, 1997; Carlson et al., 2016; Miller, 2007; Schaepe, 2007).

This positioning creates certain opportunities and responsibilities within the context of the Sq'éwlets exhibit. The TK Verified/Iyólemsyó:ys label in the website encapsulates this responsibility: 'The verified label acknowledges that th[e] knowledge [presented in this website] was produced through 'correct work' in our language, iyólemsyó:ys, and has been approved by our community as a whole'. Naming becomes more than just a secular activity; it takes on political, spiritual, and cultural proportions. The naming and framing of archaeological objects within a Stó:lō ontology, for example, can be viewed as a way for Sq'éwlets people to imprint their knowledge and identity onto their deep and recent histories, to claim their right to express relationships to their ancestral belongings within their own understandings of the world (Schaepe, 2007; T'xwelátse et al., 2013; and see Green et al., 2003; Lyons, 2014). In a similar vein, naming all partners to the research and their respective contributions—whatever form these take—and their relation to the

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belongings and narratives becomes a central task because it acknowledges the trajectories, forms, and outcomes of the work properly and respectfully (Lyons and Marshall, 2014; Wilson, 2008).

The politics of naming within a digital space are similarly weighty. There are now countless means by which archaeological knowledge co-produced with Indigenous communities can be translated into digital platforms. Over the course of the new millennium, Indigenous communities throughout North America have re-imagined their relationships to museum institutions and repositories, capitalizing on new developments in 'museum databases, digital media production, social media, online interfaces, strategies of reciprocal curation and information management, and repatriation legislation' (Glass and Hennessy, forthcoming: 1). The capabilities and sophistication of these platforms are increasing exponentially, enabling their authors to be ever-more flexible in conceiving the nature and structure of these resources. In keeping pace, these platforms are increasingly able to emulate non-Western modes of thought. Glass (2014: 22) has observed that 'in the case of digital information management systems, the goal is to build computational ontologies (structures of information, which are themselves relational by definition) that better reflect indigenous ontological perspectives surrounding objects and their relations to persons'.

There has been much recent discourse surrounding the 'ontological turn' in the anthropological disciplines, with some arguing that non-Western ontologies and epistemologies are not translatable across culture and language barriers (Graeber, 2015; Viveiros de Castro, 2015). Yet, digital media representing all nature of tangible and intangible cultural heritage are being produced at an astonishing rate by and with Indigenous and other local communities. The intersection of particular cultural knowledges with public-oriented digital platforms is premised on an intention of cross-cultural interaction and understanding. This kind of digital space is where cultural knowledge is chosen and tailored for the consumption of cultural others, and further, where one cultural community is offering a translation of their ontological being-ness—whatever its scope—for another set of larger and more various public communities (cf. Bell, 2014). This creation of an intentional 'communicative space' (Habermas, 1996) generates a heightened awareness of and need for intellectual property savvy. TK labels and licenses were developed to fill this need and to enable source communities to specify their desired uses of knowledge shared in digital formats (Anderson and Christen, 2013). Through the development of these tools, communities are consciously translating conceptual aspects of their cultural ontologies—about knowledge production, use, pedagogy, and outreach—in ways of their own choosing. It is in this way that we view the representation of Sq'éwlets knowledge within their virtual exhibit.

The Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada Website was co-produced and co-created by Sq'éwlets knowledge-bearers who are the historians, leaders, youth, and Elders of their community, in collaboration with a committed team of archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, content and media specialists with enduring ties to this community. This digital community biography focuses on what it means to

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be a Sq'éwlets person and community member today. Many Stó:lō concepts laid the groundwork for the content that emerged from our lengthy series of community workshops and visits that allowed the website to take this personal turn and to explore a community who has endured significant losses and re-built itself to its present evolving form. Sq'éwlets people are very candid about who they are, what they have experienced, and how they plan to move forward based on this knowledge and experience. We have worked hard to translate this Sq'éwlets being-ness for outside Xwelítem audiences and at the same time to both assert and protect the Sq'éwlets knowledge presented within this virtual exhibit. We offer it to you to enjoy: tseléystexw! La hoí!

Please see our project trailer at: http://www.digitalsqewlets.ca/index-eng.php.

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Notes

1. The voice used in this paper represents a culmination of all the different authors' perspectives and the many working processes and discussions we have undertaken together. Several authors on this paper are not from the Sq'éwlets First Nation, and thus the first person plural 'we' used in the paper is not a solely Sq'éwlets voice but a combined perspective. As such, we refer to the Sq'éwlets community and its heritage in the third person.

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Alternatively, the first person plural voice used in the website, cited throughout this paper, is a singularly Sq'éwlets voice.

2. In earlier literature Sq'éwlets is spelled 'Scowlitz'. 'Scowlitz' has been used to refer to both the Sq'éwlets First Nation community, and to their ancestral site Qithyil, as 'the Scowlitz site'.
3. Many Stó:lō members are Christian, others follow the Winter Spirit as Dancers, and some follow both ways (Kew, 1990).
4. Powwow dancing is a tradition originated by First Nations on the Canadian and American prairies. Today, powwow dancing and events are practiced and attended by many Aboriginal Peoples across North America. Many Stó:lō community members travel to and compete at powwow events through the summer months; other Stó:lō practice the winter dance cycle in the longhouse that is traditional to this community.

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Author Biographies

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David M Schaepe is director and senior archaeologist of the Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre at Stó:lō Nation and Adjunct Faculty in the School of Resource and Environmental Management at Simon Fraser University. He has worked for 20 years to address issues of aboriginal rights and title, heritage management policy and practice, repatriation, land use planning, archaeological research, and education and outreach.

Kate Hennessy is associate professor in the School of Interactive Arts and Technology at Simon Fraser University and director of Making Culture Lab. She is a cultural anthropologist whose research explores the role of digital technology in the documentation and safeguarding of cultural heritage, and the mediation of culture, history, objects, and subjects in new forms.

Michael Blake is professor and head of the Department of Anthropology and former Director of the Laboratory of Archaeology at the University of British Columbia. His research interests include the emergence of social and political complexity, the origins and spread of agriculture, and household and settlement archaeology in both the Pacific Northwest and Mesoamerica.

Grand Chief Clarence Pennier is a policy analyst for Stó:lō Tribal Council, a society whose mandate is to provide representation and governance for the member First

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Nations of Stó:lō. In his capacity as Sq'éwlets Chief, Clarence Pennier initiated the archaeological investigations at the ancestral site of Qithyil in the early 1990s and has guided the project research team since its inception.

John R Welch is professor and director of the Professional MA in Heritage Resource Management in the Department of Archaeology at Simon Fraser University and is cross-appointed to the School of Resource and Environmental Management. His research is grounded in broad questions about how culture- and place-based communities define, protect, use, and sustain their biophysical and cultural heritage.

Kyle McIntosh is a web designer and founder of Popgun Media. He has designed and developed a wide range of digital media products and virtual exhibits, including Sq'éwlets: A Stó:lō-Coast Salish Community in the Fraser River Valley (http://www.digitalsqewlets.ca/).

Andy Phillips is a policy analyst for Stó:lō Tribal Council. In his capacity as Sq'éwlets Chief, Andy Phillips instigated the Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada Project in order to re-unite Qithyil collections online and share his community's knowledge and history.

Betty Charlie is a Sq'éwlets elder and knowledge-holder. She has been an integral cultural advisor to archaeologists and other historical researchers about Sq'éwlets history and spiritual practices, and a longtime participant in archaeological investigations in the territory.

Clifford Hall is a Sq'éwlets elder and knowledge-holder. He has been an integral cultural advisor to archaeologists and other historical researchers, and a longtime participant in archaeological investigations in the territory.

Lucille Hall is a Sq'éwlets elder and knowledge-holder. She has been an integral cultural advisor to archaeologists and other historical researchers, and a primary community organizer for the Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada Project.

Aynur Kadir is a media anthropologist, digital archivist, and doctoral researcher at the Making Culture Lab, Simon Fraser University. She works with local communities in northwest China and the Pacific Northwest to develop digital media that document, manage, interpret, and represent indigenous cultural heritage.

Alicia Point is a coast salish artist and Sq'éwlets elder and knowledge-holder. She produced the mirror image sturgeon logo that serves as the primary thematic element of the Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada website.

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Vi Pennier is a Sq'éwlets elder and knowledge-holder. She is an active and longtime contributor of Sq'éwlets history and knowledge.

Reginald Phillips is a Sq'éwlets elder and knowledge-holder. He is an active contributor to the Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada Project.

Reese Muntean is a doctoral researcher in the Making Culture Lab at Simon Fraser University's School of Interactive Arts + Technology. Her research interests include digital cultural heritage and collaborative development of ethnographic new media projects.

Johnny (Sonny) Williams Jr. is a Sq'éwlets member and cultural liaison to the Mission School District and Leader, with his wife Chrystal, of the Golden Eagles Canoe Club. Sonny has been involved with archaeology at Qithyil since his early years.

John Williams Sr. is a Sq'éwlets elder and knowledge-holder. He is an active and longtime contributor of Sq'éwlets history and knowledge, and has been an important adviser to the all of the archaeologists and researchers working in the territory.

Joseph Chapman is a Sq'éwlets member and social development coordinator for Sq'éwlets First Nation. He has helped to coordinate Youth & Elders Camps as part of the Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada Project and has contributed his knowledge and experiences of being raised Sq'éwlets.

Colin Pennier is current chief of Sq'éwlets First Nation. He has helped to coordinate many aspects of the Sq'éwlets Virtual Museum of Canada Project.

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