



STATE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY DECLARED FOR TSILHQOT'IN TERRITORY DUE TO TSILHQOX (CHILCOTIN RIVER) LANDSLIDE

The Tsilhqot'in National Government has declared a state of local emergency due to the *Tsilhqox* (Chilcotin River) landslide that occurred the evening of July 30th. The landslide, located upstream of *Nagwentled* (Farwell Canyon), is currently fully blocking the river. TNG's main priority is ensuring public safety, including the Tsilhqot'in people and communities. Tsilhqot'in Rangers were dispatched the morning of July 31st to ensure people stayed away from *Nagwentled* and low areas of the river.

TNG is warning everyone to stay away from the *Tsilhqox* due to unpredictable water flows. The situation is changing rapidly with many unknowns at this time. Flooding upstream of the *Tsilhqox* has the potential to threaten bridges to two Tsilhqot'in communities of Xeni Gwet'in and Yunešit'in. The six Tsilhqot'in communities are preparing for all potential impacts the landslide may have, including postponing cultural events and ensuring essential resources in communities.

The *Tsilhqox* flows into the Fraser River and is a main tributary for diverse salmon species which are already facing record low returns due to mismanagement by government and exacerbated by climate change and other environmental and social pressures. The landslide has, and will continue to have, significant impacts on this year's salmon migration.

"*Nagwentled* means slide area in the Tsilhqot'in language. What we have seen from the air is devastating. It's a wake-up call to how powerful nature is and the integral role of the *Tsilhqox* to our territory. At this time, we don't know what each day will bring – but we are prepared and have managed emergencies over thousands of years, including several slides blocking the river in my lifetime. The land that slid is within the 2017 wildfire boundary, demonstrating the immense cumulative impacts of climate change and wildfire. We thank all our neighbours that have reached out in support. As the situation unfolds, we will be in contact with those offers of assistance as needed."

— Nits'il?in (Chief) Joe Alphonse, O.B.C, LL.D. (hon.). Tribal Chair
T̂silhqot'in National Government

“My community of Tl'esqox, one of the six T̂silhqot'in communities, is the caretaker of *Nagwentled*. The river and all the life it supports is threatened. Tl'esqox is keeping watch of the river from a distance. Some of the salmon species are already headed upstream to spawn. At 1:00pm today our people held a ceremony above the river to pray for the water and fish to find their way.”

— Nits'il?in Francis Laceese, Tl'esqox

“We are working to assess the landslide to better understand the potential impact it could have on T̂silhqot'in territory and other communities if the dam were to suddenly collapse. Public safety is our number one priority and we will continue to keep First Nations updated on the potential risk, and we will be there to support them if flooding does occur. I strongly urge people to remain vigilant and follow instructions of their First Nation and local leaders.”

— Bowinn Ma, Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness

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