



For Immediate Release

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GATHERING AT HOZOMEEN HUGE SUCCESS

Over 150 participants at the two day event

HOPE – The Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission is pleased to announce a successful Gathering at Hozomeen in the Skagit Valley on September 12 -13, 2009. Over 150 participants attended the international event including first nation and tribal representatives from Montana, Idaho and Washington states and the Okanagan, Similkameen, Fraser Canyon and Fraser Valley in British Columbia.

The gathering was emceed by Sto:lo Nation member Sonny McHalsie with greetings from North Cascades National Park Superintendent Chip Jenkins and BC Minister of Environment, the Honourable Barry Penner. First Nations representatives from the east, south, west and north welcomed people and bore witness to the event as part of their oral history tradition.

Presenters at the event expressed a strong desire to collaborate and care for the land saved in the 1980's when the High Ross Treaty prevented the further raising of Ross dam and potential flooding in the American and Canadian Skagit Valley. The same High Ross Treaty also created the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission with its unique mission to promote education, research, collaboration and cross-border stewardship of the Upper Skagit Watershed. To carry out this mission the footage gathered at the event will be used for an upcoming documentary. This documentary will be available for schools and the interested public next year.

Attendees also indicated a willingness to continue gathering in some way to share cultural activities, stories, information and new interesting findings in the future.

Links to imagery and additional information can be found at <http://skagiteec.org/hozomeen-gathering> .

– 30 –

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