

First Nations Summit

STATEMENT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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First Nations Summit congratulates Ktunaxa Nation on reaching agreement to preserve Qat'muk

(Xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and sə́lilwətaʔ/sə́lilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh)/Vancouver, BC) — The First Nations Summit (FNS) executive is sending congratulations and expressing deep gratitude to the leadership and citizens of the Ktunaxa Nation following an announcement that an agreement with the provincial and federal governments has been reached to extinguish development rights in the Jumbo Valley thereby preserving the Ktunaxa sacred site known as Qat'muk.

The FNS holds our hands up to the Ktunaxa Nation for their hard work and the twenty-five plus year struggle to protect this sacred jewel within their unceded territory. We especially commend the Ktunaxa for their unwavering willingness to openly share sacredly held spiritual beliefs in an attempt to educate the public and to create an understanding of the importance of the sacredness of Qat'muk, where their spiritual beliefs are manifested.

Qat'muk, including the Jumbo Valley and Jumbo Glacier will now be encompassed under an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) framework. The Ktunaxa will take the lead on stewardship and conservation of the land in collaboration with all levels of government and other parties.

The move to place Qat'muk under an IPCA is a clear example of reconciliation in action and is a reflection of Article 25 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which states;

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

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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.