



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

01/25/2023

ST. JOSEPH'S MISSION INVESTIGATION – WLFN RELEASES PHASE 2 RESULTS

Williams Lake First Nation (WLFN) would like to acknowledge that the following release could be triggering for some people. A crisis support line at the Indian Residential School Survivors Society can be reached at 1-866-925-4419 and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

WLFN Chief and Council today announced the results from the second phase of the geophysical investigation at the site of the former St. Joseph's Mission Residential School.

During the Phase 1 geophysical investigation, the St. Joseph's Mission Investigation Team surveyed approximately 16 hectares of the broader 782-hectare site using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) technology. All reflections in the GPR data were reviewed through a rigorous quality control process. The refined data from the Phase 1 geophysical investigation confirmed 93 reflections that were indicative of potential human remains.

Throughout the Phase 2 geophysical investigation, WLFN used the same method of GPR technology to survey approximately 18 additional hectares of land. To date, 66 reflections in that Phase 2 area have been recorded which display characteristics indicative of potential human remains. WLFN emphasizes that no geophysical investigation can provide absolute certainty as to the presence of human remains, and that excavation of these reflection areas would be required to make a definitive determination.



Williams Lake
FIRST NATION

PRESS RELEASE

In response to the results, WLFN Chief Willie Sellars states:

“As we move forward, WLFN will continue to work diligently and collaboratively with survivors and their families, our neighboring First Nation communities and their members, the federal and provincial governments, and the private landowners. This is a very complicated, stressful and emotionally draining process so we want to continue to conduct this investigation in as positive and supportive a way as possible. WLFN remains committed to seeking resolution and truth for those survivors and families who have lost children through the residential school system at St. Joseph’s Mission.”

A Sacred Fire will take place at the Elizabeth Grouse gymnasium from the afternoon of January 25th to the evening of January 28th, ending with a feast, traditional dancing, and a demonstration of Lahal. Everyone is welcome, including the wider non-indigenous public, and health and wellness supports will be on-site throughout the duration of the Sacred Fire.

TO SCHEDULE INTERVIEWS WITH CHIEF WILLIE SELLARS:

Maggie Berns, Executive Assistant to the Chief and CAO

e. Maggie.Berns@wfn.ca

p. 250.296-3507 ext. 138

GENERAL INQUIRIES ABOUT THE SJM INVESTIGATION:

Whitney Spearing, Project Lead

e. Whitney.Spearing@wfn.ca

p. 778.417.0196

Dominique Melanson, SJM Investigation Administrative Coordinator

e. Dominique.Melanson@wfn.ca

p. 778.417.0198