

EMBODYING VALUES, PROTECTING FUTURES

IMAGINING A SQUAMISH CONSTITUTION

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Executive Summary

What is the Squamish Nation? What does it mean to be Squamish?

This report paints a landscape of what it might look like to create a Squamish constitution that embodies Squamish values and protects the future of all Squamish people.

The Squamish Nation’s centennial in 2023 presents a unique window of opportunity for asserting their right to self-determination. Situated against the backdrop of colonial and post-colonial governance frameworks that have affected Indigenous self-governance, this report provides insight into constitutional development. It focuses on Indigenous rights and responsibilities involved in constitution-building, while reflecting on lessons in self-governance practices from Indigenous Nations across the world.

The report asserts that, contrary to a “one size fits all” approach, a range of social, cultural, economic, and political factors must be considered in Indigenous constitution-building. Nevertheless, there are several emergent themes shared across Indigenous Nations in North America, Latin America, Africa, Europe, and Oceania when it comes to expressions of Indigenous rights to self-determination. This report draws on precedent-setting frameworks, court decisions, and constitutional documents to highlight key rights, divisions of responsibilities between Indigenous Nations and the State, and strategies for affirming Indigenous self-determination. These discussions are firmly grounded in the context of Squamish values, principles, and goals.

In looking to the future, the report outlines recommendations to support Squamish Nation in the pursuit of a constitution and raises questions Squamish Nation will need to answer in order to have an impactful and lasting constitution.

