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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
Sumas First Nation (Semá:th)

### **Land purchase protects sacred Lightning Rock site**

ABBOTSFORD – Sumas First Nation (Semá:th) and the Province are taking a major step in their shared reconciliation journey through the purchase and acknowledgement of a sacred site.

The Province has purchased 36 hectares of undeveloped private property in Semá:th territory. The Lightning Rock site holds deep cultural and spiritual significance, serving as a repository of traditions and narratives passed down through generations.

"We are pleased to hear that the Lightning Rock site has finally received the recognition it deserves as a sacred site for the Semá:th people," said Semá:th Chief Dalton Silver. "We extend our gratitude to Semá:th, the S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance (STSA), John Glazema, Cold Water Ranch and all those within the government who played a role in moving this forward. This acknowledgment marks a positive step in the right direction towards reconciliation."

The Semá:th people have long sought to protect the Lightning Rock site for heritage and cultural purposes. Semá:th and the Province have worked in close collaboration to chart a path forward since signing a memorandum of understanding in 2017.

"Lightning Rock is a sacred site for Semá:th, and this purchase is an important step in ensuring its protection," said Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. "This purchase sets a strong foundation for the ongoing relationship between Semá:th, the Province and the City of Abbotsford and ensures we can move forward together in a positive direction."

The Lightning Rock site was bought as part of ongoing negotiations between the Province and Semá:th. The Province will hold the property until an agreement with Semá:th is negotiated and the land transfer process can be completed.

"We are looking forward to working with Semá:th First Nation and the Province in a collaborative way as these lands transfer to Semá:th," said Ross Siemens, mayor of Abbotsford. "As neighbours, Semá:th First Nation and the City of Abbotsford are committed to working together to address ongoing considerations in this culturally significant area in Semá:th traditional territory."

The Province and Semá:th will provide ongoing opportunities for consultation with other local First Nations, municipal officials, residents and stakeholders as the negotiations progress.

#### **Quote:**

#### **Pam Alexis, MLA for Abbotsford-Mission -**

"I raise my hands to Semá:th and Chief Silver for working alongside the Province and the City of

Abbotsford on this achievement. This is an important milestone for Semá:th and the Province; one that we are proud to achieve together as neighbours and partners."

**Learn More:**

To learn more about Semá:th, visit: <https://sumasfirstnation.com>

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