

# Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw Backgrounder

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Chief Johnny Scow

The Kwikwasu'tinuxw Nation, the Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw Tribes and concerned members of the Mamalilikulla Nation are staging a protest of the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em referendum proposing to separate the Mamalilikulla and Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em (Sewid Family) into two separate tribes. We do not oppose that the Mamalilikulla are a distinct tribe with legitimate rights to a cultural history and lands, but refute that the people referring to themselves as Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em have the legitimate right to the name, history and lands of the Kwikwasu'tinuxw Nation (composed of the Scows, Coons, Willies and inclusive of others).

We refute the claims of the Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em (Sewid family) that Jimmy Sewid was the legitimate heir to the head chieftainship of the Kwikwasu'tinuxw and we assert that Chief Johnny Scow was the recognized and legitimate head chief of the Kwikwasu'tinuxw tribe. We refute the claims of the Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em (Sewid family) that Chief Johnny Scow was representing the interests of the Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em, living among the Mamalilikulla, when he spoke on behalf of the Kwikwasu'tinuxw at the 1914 Royal Commission. We assert with emphasis that the people he was representing were the Kwikwasu'tinuxw with whom he was living with at Gilford Island. By 1914, the majority of the Kwikwasu'tinuxw who had moved to Village Island after the massacre at Gilford Island by the Bella Coola, had died, left Village Island or rejoined the Kwikwasu'tinuxw at Gilford.

The Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em (Sewid Family) are attempting to create a new band based on the erroneous testimony of Daisy Sewid-Smith who has promoted biased and misinterpreted historical information to serve the interests of her own family at the expense of the Kwikwasu'tinuxw people. The Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em (Sewid family) in forming their own band will be taking both Mamalilikulla assets and the contested spiritually significant land of Apsagayu, site of 'Nawalagwat'si "the supernatural cave" with them. These are assets they have no right to. The financial assets of the Mamalilikulla people belong to the Mamalilikulla People not the Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em (Sewid Family) and

Apsigayu was claimed by Chief Johnny Scow but allocated to Chief Harry Mountain of the Mamalilikulla. The proposed Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em (Sewid Family) have no legitimate right to this land.

This Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em (Sewid Family) claim is based on the supposed hereditary standing of Jimmy Sewid as Al Sewid. Jimmy Sewid claimed that Yakatlan'Iis, Toby Seaweed Willie validated his standing when he was a boy. If this was true Jimmy Sewid would have carried the name Al Sewid the majority of his life. He did not. He would have worked with and acted as a leader amongst the Kwikwasu'tinuxw all his life. He did not. He placed the name Al Sewid upon himself a year before he died in 1987. It is validated and recognized in the potlatch ledgers that Toby Willie placed the standings of Yakatlan'Iis on his son Alec Willie and Al Sewid on his other son Charlie Willie. This means the entire claim upon which this proposed separation is based is false.

We reject that this separation is being proposed by stealing the names, history, crests and lands of the Kwikwasu'tinuxw.

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Some of the many direct quotations from documents that have provided misinformation, therefore bringing us to this current situation. We refute everything listed below.

“The action is brought by Robert Chamberlin on behalf of the group referred to as the Kwicksutaineuk/Ah-Kwa-Mish First Nation. Kwicksutaineuk is an alternative spelling of the name of my Nation – Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox. I am a member of the Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox Nation but I am not member of the group referred to as the Kwicksutaineuk/Ah-Kwa-Mish First Nation. As is described at paragraph 17 of my 2003 Affidavit, the Kwicksutaineuk/Ah-Kwa-Mish First Nation is a merged group which came into being post-contact, in or about 1943. That group has no valid traditional claim to the traditional territory and fishing rights of the Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox Nation. The survivors began using Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em Nation to protest the Gilford Island Indians referring to themselves as Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox Nation. Over 150 years ago, Chief Chamberlin's ancestor was 4 years old at the time and was a female named Wayolth. Under the customary laws of the Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox, we get our citizenship from the male descendent. We are not matrilineal.”

“I was trained at a young age in the laws and protocol of our nation by clan Chiefs and the Lords and Elders “knowledge keepers”. This training was to guide the future clan Chiefs and Lords and the future generations”

Kwickwasutaineuk / Ah-Kwa-Mish First Nation v. British Columbia – Daisy Sewid-Smith Sworn Affidavit No. S090848

“[58] Ms. Sewid-Smith traces the history of the allocation of the Indian Act reserves for the benefit of the indigenous peoples of the Broughton Archipelago. This led, she deposes, to the establishment of reserves within the traditional territory of the Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox for the benefit of related tribal groups with no ancestral connection to the land, including the group now comprising the Kwickwasutaineuk / Ah-Kwa-Mish First Nation.”

Kwickwasutaineuk / Ah-Kwa-Mish First Nation v. British Columbia – 2010 BCSC 1699

“It was my great great uncle [Yakatl̓an̓'is<sup>1</sup>] who kept the culture and traditions of the Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox alive by teaching Olsiwite and the others. After a few years, while Olsiwite was still alive, the three Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox families in Kingcome asked Olsiwite if they could move to Gwayasdams because the winters were so severe in Kingcome. He said they could and they came and cleaned up the village and stayed there. When they came to Gilford Island they came with three other tribal groups, the Tsawataineuk from Kingcome, the Gwaweanuk from Drury Inlet and Hopetown, and the Haxwamis...from Wakeman Sound. In time, these other groups tended to adopt the name Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox (or Kwicksutaineuk, which is an alternative spelling) *even though they are not the true Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox People.*” (Daisy Sewid-Smith)

Court File No. T-677-03, Section 11 <sup>1</sup> Name added for clarification

“They are a mixture, whereas in our traditional laws we go by the male descent. The Gilford Island Band is a creation of Indian Affairs. Indian Affairs transferred our name to them and our land to them. The Gilford Island Band does not represent the laws and traditions of the Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox. It is a composite group formed in modern times. Many of the Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox living at Gilford Island are not “traditional” Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Enox at all.”

Court File No. T-677-03, Section 19, Exhibit "A" in referring to the Gilford Island Band as Kwicksutaineuk

“The proposed division of the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em Band is no business of Mr. Chamberlin or his Band. As well, his statement that “the Kwickwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis is likely to be impacted, and must be consulted, with respect to any steps that your offices may take related to the anticipated referendum” has no basis in fact or law.”

Harold Sewid, in response to the KHFN's written concerns to the Department of Indian Affairs