



## GRAND TRUNK PATHWAY RENAMED XPILAXHA TRAIL

On Friday, May 31, 2024, the City of Terrace and Kitsumkalum First Nation officially renamed the Grand Trunk Pathway with the new name *Xpilaxha – Charles and Emma Nelson Trail*. A close approximation of the pronunciation would be “SPEE-la-haa”.

The renaming took place during a small ceremony, held at the western end of the pathway near the Kitsumkalum River bridge next to the newly installed pathway sign. The ceremony was attended by many descendants of the Nelsons, along with political and staff representatives from both Kitsumkalum and the City of Terrace.

"This is a historic event for Kitsumkalum and for the City of Terrace. It represents a formal recognition of our traditional territory and of the role that Kitsumkalum tribal leaders Charles and Emma Nelson played in the establishment of the City of Terrace. I am encouraged by this important step in reconciliation taken by the City," said Kitsumkalum Chief Councillor Don T. Roberts.

Charles and Emma Nelson were people of the Gitsm'geelm (Kitsumkalum) Tribe of the Ts'msyen Nation. Emma Nelson (née Starr) was a matriarch of the Gisbutwada (killer whale) house of Gitsm'geelm. Charles Nelson Sr., who held the name Xpilaxha, was Chief of the Ganhada (Raven) house of Gitsm'geelm. The Nelsons had their home and gardens at the present-day site of Kitsumkalum. They assisted early European settlers in the Terrace area through a general store run out of Kitsumkalum. In addition to providing food, hospitality, and local knowledge, the Nelsons invested in George Little's sawmill. They had a large family and many of their descendants continue to live in this area.

Charles Nelson was seriously injured when he and his dogsled were lifted up and thrown aside by a railway snowplow during a snowstorm. In those days, this stretch of road was dangerous and unwelcome to pedestrians; it continued to be dangerous until the recent completion of the pathway, connecting Frank Street to Kitsumkalum.

The City of Terrace's role in the pathway connecting the communities is a small piece of the story. In 2000, the City of Terrace received funding from the Millennium Bureau of Canada to develop a 1.6-kilometre, multi-use trail between Eby Street and Kalum Lake Road; this became known as the Millennium Trail. In 2008, following the popularity of this section of pathway, the City of Terrace and the Greater Terrace Beautification Society worked to develop a Master Plan to complete a continuous multi-use pathway, with the eventual goal of connecting downtown Terrace to the Kitsumkalum First Nation community. This became known as the Grand Trunk Pathway, named after the railway venture, since the three planned sections of pathway ran alongside the railway tracks.

The second section, completed in 2015, ran from Kalum Lake Road to Frank Street and was known as the Grand View Walk. In 2024, with the completion of the final Skeena River Walk section between Frank Street and the Kitsumkalum River, the City of Terrace has now completed a key recreational and active transportation linkage to Kitsumkalum First Nation, while also addressing safety issues along this corridor.

The City of Terrace Council started conversations with Kitsumkalum in early 2023 to gain a deeper understanding of how the pathway's lands were historically used. In June 2023, Council resolved to work with Chief Don Roberts and Kitsumkalum to rename the Grand Trunk Pathway, to recognize that this pathway has a history reaching back much further than the year 2000.

The City of Terrace is grateful for Kitsumkalum's support of the funding applications submitted for the project, which included Provincial funding from the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation through the Rural Dividend Program, as well as Gas Tax Funds received from the Federal Government. The City of Terrace thanks the provincial and federal governments for these resources.

Two new signs will mark the start and end of the trail. One can be found west of the Kitsumkalum River bridge across from Fisherman's Memorial Park, while the other will be located near Kwinitsa House (location of Chill Soda Shop). Renewed and revised interpretive panels will also be installed along the trail in the upcoming months. This interpretive signage will include a description of Charles and Emma Nelson's role and contribution to the local history.

"Kitsumkalum looks forward to continuing to work together in partnership on these and other initiatives that address colonial injustices of the past," said Chief Roberts. "We welcome the people of the City of Terrace to enjoy the Charles and Emma Nelson 'Xpilaxha' trail, connect with Kitsumkalum, and to learn more of our history in the lands that they live on."

"In renaming this pathway, we are upholding and celebrating the Tsymyten history of the area. We are beginning to change the historical narrative of Terrace. We are beginning the long, ongoing process of recognizing the people who have been here since time immemorial. In doing so, we make steps toward reconciliation," said City of Terrace Mayor Sean Bujtas. "It was very important to Council that, when we extended the Millennium Trail, we ensured that it went all the way to Kitsumkalum. It is not only the physical connection between our communities, but also a symbol of that connection. It is especially fitting and reflective of the future that the site of Charles Nelson's long-ago accident is now a safe walking passage between Kitsumkalum and Terrace. Let our two communities walk forward into the future together."

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