



## Shishálh Nation Archaeology

We the shishálh people have intensively occupied and utilized our entire territory since time immemorial; material remains (heritage/archaeological sites) left behind by our ancestors are present throughout our territory and exemplify our extensive occupation of our lands and water. To date, the earliest artifacts recovered from shishálh territory date from between 8,000-11,000 years BP (Before Present) and there are well over 600 archaeological sites within shishálh territory, representing only a fraction of all existing (and unidentified) archaeological sites within the territory.

### What is a Heritage/Archaeological Site?

In British Columbia an archaeological site is designated as a “heritage site” by the Province of British Columbia and includes any site or object where there is evidence of past human activity. Archaeological sites can include projectile points, pictographs, petroforms, intertidal loose-mason fish traps and clam gardens, culturally modified trees, bone, stone, and wood tools, stone bowls or the remains of long houses or shell middens (ancient garbage dumps).

### How are Heritage/Archaeological Sites Protected?

Heritage sites within British Columbia are managed and protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act* (HCA). The purpose of the Act is to ensure the protection and conservation of heritage property in British Columbia.

**It is against the law to excavate or otherwise alter land for the purpose of archaeological research or searching for artifacts of aboriginal origin.** Individuals who intentionally or unintentionally damage a site, (unless they have done so under the authority of a Section 12 or 14 Permit), can be fined a maximum of \$50,000 or face imprisonment for a maximum of 2 years or both. Corporations can be fined up to a maximum of \$1,000,000.

### What are the most common sites and what do they look like?

There are many types of heritage/archaeological sites located throughout shishálh territory. To the untrained eye sites and individual artifacts can be extremely difficult to identify. Some of the more common sites however, are quite visible and their identification can be relatively easy, the most common are:

#### Examples of Archaeological Findings:

**Lithic Scatters:** These are concentrations of chipped stone flakes (debitage) and/or fragments of ground slate which are the by-products of stone tool manufacturing. Fragments of, or complete arrow heads, spear points or ground slate leaf shaped knives can also be found. Lithic scatters are most obvious on exposed ground surfaces and within the intertidal zone. They can be deposited on or beneath the ground surface and can range from as few as one stone flake to many thousands of flakes. Within shishálh territory flakes have been identified from the intertidal zone to over 5000 feet above sea level. Lithic scatters represent many different activities from hunting locations to short term camp sites. The oldest lithic scatter within shishálh territory is between 8000-11,000 BP.

**Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs)** consist of rectangular or triangular-shaped bark stripped scars of exposed wood often tapering towards the top. They can also be deep rectangular scars where planks have been removed for the construction of longhouses or other large structures. “Pitch collection” scars on Old Growth Trees near archaeological sites have recently been discovered. Frequently, tool marks caused by cutting or chopping can be seen along the base of the scar or along the scar’s edges (Figure 2).



**Figure 1:** Lithic debitage discovered during archaeological survey.



**Figure 2.** Recent CMT at Lyon Lake



**Figure 3.** Displaying partially exposed shell midden and Douglas Fir CMT site within shíshálh territory.

**Shell Middens:** Middens are the largest and often most visible type of archaeological site. A midden is a mound of shell that have been deposited through human activity over thousands of years and often mark the location of the old village sites. These mounds are often exposed in the cut bank along a beach at the high tide line. In such cases visible remains will consist of narrow to thick bands of whole to finely crushed shell often separated by bands of dark brown, black or gray organic soils, usually greasy in appearance and texture (Figure 3). Middens also become exposed on the ground surface and will appear as concentrations of crushed white shell. Often human burials as well as stone, bone or other precious artifacts will be preserved in middens. All shell middens, disturbed or *in situ*, are protected by the Nation and the HCA.

### What should I do if I think I've found an archaeological/heritage site on my property?

If you identify an archaeological/heritage site or think that you may have an archaeological/heritage site on your property you should cease all land-altering activities immediately and contact one or all of the following agencies who will guide you through the process of managing heritage resources and answer any questions or concerns that you may have:



#### shíshálh Nation (Sechelt Indian Band):

5555 Highway 101, Sechelt BC  
phone: 604.740.5600  
fax: 604.885.2275  
email: [jpaul@secheltnation.net](mailto:jpaul@secheltnation.net)



#### Archaeology Branch, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations

phone: 250.952.5021  
fax: 250.952.4188

### shíshálh NATION HERITAGE POLICY

The shíshálh Nation manages our heritage resources through the shíshálh Nation Rights & Title Department. The Rights & Title Department conducts archaeological assessments, reviews all proposed archaeological investigation permit applications and issues shíshálh Nation Heritage Investigation Permits. All permit applications submitted by archaeological consultants, researchers and developers are subject to an application fee. Archaeological Permit applications and answers to any questions relating to shíshálh Nation Heritage Policy can be obtained from the Rights and Title Department office located on the ground floor of the Sechelt Indian Band Administration building located at 5555 Highway 101 Sechelt B.C.

This information sheet is intended to provide brief information only and is not a substitute for professional or official advice and consultation. Please contact the shíshálh Nation Rights and Title Department for more information:

Ph. 604.740.5600

Fax. 604.885.2275

Email: [jpaul@secheltnation.net](mailto:jpaul@secheltnation.net)