

Wild Archaeology nominated for national award

An Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) archaeology show that features the shishalh Nation has been nominated for Best Factual Television Program at the 2021 Canadian Screen Awards.

The show “Wild Archaeology” first aired in 2016 and uncovers the archaeological record of Indigenous’ peoples in North America.

TV show co-host Terence Clark and Producer Tracy German got the approval from Chief and Council to film two of the episodes about shishalh people in 2017.

They worked with Nation Protector of Culture Steven Feshuk to determine film locations in the swiya and what should be filmed.

The episodes showcased a few shishalh archaeological sites as well as shishalh culture and songs.

The archaeological work at the defensive site of ʔúlhkáyem (Snake Bay) is shown in both episodes.

“In the past, when sihalt residents would probably have been raided by their neighbours - the Laich-Kwil-Tach,” said Clark.

“When those raids happened, they’d flee to a fortified village site called ʔúlhkáyem. The site was much more defensible with cliffs and walls around it to protect them.”

Huge amounts of shell midden were filmed in the episode to show that shíshálh people had lived at the site for long periods at a time.

Another portion of the episode focused on how shishalh people harvested their staple foods.

“We had mus-swiya Jamie Dickson talk ...about the importance of clams and how to

properly dig for them,” said Clark.

The second episode highlights the First Chiefs of shíshálh exhibit in the tems swiya Museum. The faces of a chief’s family buried at kwent-en makw’ali were digitally reconstructed using laser scanners and forensic science techniques. An identical exhibit is on permanent display at the Canadian Museum of History near Ottawa. Near the end of the second episode, Nation Fisheries Technician Jerry Johnson takes the crew on a boat ride to see the pictograph of a tsain-ko (double-headed serpent) at the head of Clowhom Inlet.

The episodes feature shíshálh Nation members Jamie Dixon, Steven Feshuk, Andy Johnson, Sid Quinn, Darryl Jackson, Landon Dixon, and some of the kids from Camp Stalashen summer camp.

The episodes were first aired on APTN in Oct. 2019 and they’re still aired weekly on Saturdays at 8 a.m. All the Wild Archaeology episodes can be viewed on APTN or on APTN’s Lumi app. The winner of the Best Factual Television Program will be announced on Monday, May 17 at 4 p.m. on CBC.

