



shíshálh Nation Medicinal Plants Management Policy

PURPOSE

To outline expectations for the Crown, proponents, and all others who seek to regulate or benefit from the use of the medicinal plants in our swiya.

SCOPE

Both the Crown and proponents seeking to use the medicinal plants of our swiya and to engage in consultation and accommodation should fully familiarize themselves with the expectations and directions of the shíshálh Nation Lands and Resources Decision-Making Policy and this Policy.

BACKGROUND

We, the shíshálh Nation, openly and publicly declare that we have Aboriginal Title and Aboriginal Rights to our Territory, including the lands, waters, and resources that have bene ours since time immemorial. We have been given the responsibility from the Creator to care for our Territory. Our Territory sustains our people, maintains our indigenous way of life, and is integral to our identity as shíshálh. We have always governed ourselves and our Territory, and have never relinquished our authority or jurisdiction over such. We assert our collective right to live as a distinct people.

shíshálh Nation Declaration

The shíshálh Nation Declaration affirms our Title and Rights to our swiya, our jurisdiction and authority to determine the use of our swiya, and the centrality of our shíshálh customary laws, traditions, needs, and aspirations.

This Medicinal Plants Policy is one part of implementing our Declaration with respect to the medicinal plants of our swiya and is an exercise of our inherent Title and Rights. This Medicinal Plants Policy supplements the shíshálh Nation Lands and Resources Decision-Making Policy by identifying some specific additional decision-making factors and standards regarding how shíshálh will make decisions with respect to the medicinal plants of our swiya. This Medicinal Plants Policy is developed to reflect and carry forward the sacred trust we hold for current and future generations of the shíshálh People, in a manner which respects our customary laws, Title and Rights, international legal standards, and the common law.

DEFINITIONS

“swiya” means the lands, birthplace, or “Territory” of the shíshálh Nation.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Medicinal Plants of shíshálh swiya

Medicinal plants are central to the shíshálh way of life, spirituality, culture, economy, and society. Medicinal plants have been a source of health and well-being for countless generations of shíshálh people, and are essential to the lives of our present and future generations. shíshálh laws speak to the duties we all hold to honour, respect, and protect the medicinal plants of our swiya. Our Title and Rights include the medicinal plant resources throughout our swiya.

Medicinal plants, for the shíshálh People, are sacred as they are imbued with healing powers and in our worldview we are in a special relationship with them. Our self-determination, as affirmed by United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, includes the practice of our cultural and spiritual relationships with medicinal plants, and the exercise of authority to govern, use, manage, regulate, recover, conserve, enhance and renew our medicinal plant sources, without interference. Article 24 (1) of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* affirms that Indigenous peoples have the right to our traditional medicines and to maintain our health practices, including the conservation of our vital medicinal plants, animals, and minerals.

A number of challenges exist regarding the protection of medicinal plant resources within our swiya, and their short- and long-term health and viability. The on-going taking-up of land in the swiya, the significant volume of forestry activity, the filling-in of areas, and the deepening population density in certain areas, have all led to losses in access to and abundance of medicinal plant resources.

The medicinal plants of our swiya have been identified and documented through our Land Use Plan. The Land Use Plan identifies a range of categories and interests. Many medicinal plant resources will relate to a number of these categories and interests. The Crown and proponents should reference the Land Use Plan for further information. Some examples of categories and interests include the following:

1.1. Identification of Key Species of Medicinal Plants

Some key medicinal plants include, but are not limited to: hemay (cascara bark), lelach' (Oregon grape), kwenalhp (green false "Indian" hellebore), xaxematsay (young grand fir) , kwelhnis (bitter cherry inner bark), ch'ilhpay (Sitka spruce), frog leaves, ch'e?at'ay (devil's club), dandelion, textetaxay (vine maple), wawstl'ach (yarrow), k'eytl'emin (rattlesnake plantain), siwsiw (stinging nettle).

1.2. Identification of Principal Areas of Medicinal Plant Cultivation and Harvesting

Some key areas of the Territory for medicinal plants include, but are not limited to:

- stl'ikwu kw'enit sim alap (Skookumchuck Narrows Cultural Emphasis Area)
- ?iy ch'ach'tlam kw'enit sim alap (Clowhom Lake Cultural Emphasis Area)
- stl'ixwim - kekaw kw'enit sim alap (Narrows Inlet - Tzoonie River Cultural Emphasis Area)

1.3. Identification of Zones

Conservation Areas and designation of sensitive cultivation and harvesting zones are identified in the Land Use Plan.

2. Factors and Standards for Medicinal Plant Resource Decision-Making

2.1. Application of shíshálh Lands and Resource Decision-Making Policy

This Policy is adopted pursuant to the shíshálh Land and Resources Decision- Making Policy. It is a supplementary and complementary policy that provides some specific decision-making factors and standards regarding medicinal plant resources.

This policy does not displace or replace the shíshálh Land and Resources Decision-Making Policy in any way, and should only be read as providing additional policy guidance to the shíshálh Land and Resources Decision-Making Policy, in a manner that is consistent with and in harmony with the shíshálh Land and Resources Decision-Making Policy.

The Crown and proponents should fully familiarize themselves with the shíshálh Land and Resources Decision-Making Policy and this policy, and at all times be fully adhering to all of the elements of both policies. If the Crown or a proponent has any uncertainty or lack of clarity about how the elements of the two policies may interact or relate to each other, they should immediately refer their uncertainty or lack of clarity to the shíshálh Chief and Council for clarification.

2.2. Specific Factors for Medicinal Plants Decision-Making

In addition to the decision-making principles, process, and factors in the shíshálh Land and Resources Decision-Making Policy, the following specific factors apply for medicinal plant decision-making. The Crown and proponents are encouraged to be in direct contact with the shíshálh Title and Rights Department to understand how these factors are currently being applied, and to gain an understanding of the application of these factors to particular proposed activities and proposals.

2.2.1. Conservation and Preservation of Key Areas and Species

A key focus of shíshálh decision-making will be to conserve and preserve key medicinal plant areas and species throughout the swiya, as well as access to those areas and species. This focus on conservation and preservation arises in the context of the on-going disturbance of a number of areas, as well as significant limitations on access that interferes with shíshálh harvesters. It is also a response to the growing impacts of invasive species in the swiya. All proposals will be analyzed and assessed to see how they aid in conservation, preservation, and access. This will include consideration of proposal design, cumulative impacts, use of herbicides and other chemicals, development of management plans, as well as other issues.

2.2.2. Protection of Medicinal Plant Resources from Exploitation

shíshálh People reject efforts by others to exploit the medicinal plant species of our Territory for commodification, and insist upon the full protection of our Traditional

Knowledge and Intellectual Property. Bioprospecting or any commercialization of shíshálh medicinal plants within the swiya without shíshálh Nation consent is prohibited. shíshálh also expects that the Crown and proponents will respect shíshálh protocols regarding its Traditional Knowledge.

2.3. Particular Standards for Medicinal Plants Decision-Making within shíshálh swiya

In addition to the decision-making principles, process, and factors in the shíshálh Land and Resources Decision-Making Policy, the following specific standards apply. The Crown and proponents are encouraged to be in direct contact with the shíshálh Rights and Title Department to understand how these standards are currently being applied, and to gain an understanding of the application of these standards to particular proposed activities and proposals.

2.3.1. Maintain a Distance for Any Proposal of 500 Meters from Sacred Cultivation and Harvesting Areas

Any proposal must maintain a distance of 500 meters from sacred cultivation and harvesting areas. Any commercial gathering or cultivation of medicinal plants is strictly prohibited.

2.3.2. Demonstrating Area Sustainability

Any proposal must demonstrate measures for maintaining sustainability of the medicinal plant resources in the area. One way this is demonstrated for certain types of proposals is demonstrating implementation and operational plans that allow for the replenishment of medicinal plants in areas.

2.3.3. Access Agreements

In many types of proposals, access agreements for shíshálh harvesters will be required to be in place. These agreements will guarantee the necessary access of shíshálh harvesters to areas for the purpose medicinal plant gathering.

3. Crown and Proponent Engagement with shíshálh on Medicinal Plant Resources Decision-Making

The shíshálh Lands and Resources Decision-Making policy provides substantial guidance on how the Crown and/or proponents should participate in the shíshálh decision-making process and engage with shíshálh throughout the process. Indeed, in many aspects Crown and/or proponent participation is fundamental to ensuring that the process will be completed in an efficient, effective, and appropriate manner. The shíshálh Lands and Resources Decision-Making Policy also identifies some recommended best practices for the Crown and proponents. The following additional best practices are recommended when engaging on medicinal plants resources:

- 3.1.** Educate oneself about the centrality of medicinal plant resources to shíshálh culture and way of life. The Crown and proponents should work diligently with the Rights and Title Department from the outset of contemplating a proposed project in shíshálh swiya to gain a strong understanding of the centrality of medicinal plant resources to shíshálh culture and way of

life. Developing such a strong understanding will help inform whether a particular application should be brought, as well as elements of particular focus while the process unfolds.

- 3.2.** Develop work plans with shíshálh for how the principles, factors, and standards identified in shíshálh policies are going to be appropriately considered and addressed in every step of the shíshálh decision-making process. Such work plans will help build efficiency and predictability in how shíshálh, the Crown, and proponents work through the process.
- 3.3.** Work with shíshálh during the earliest stage of the process to develop a proposal that is consistent with traditional knowledge and protocols and designed from the outset to conserve and preserve specific areas and species.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW HISTORY

Version 1 approved by:	Divisional Manager, STLM	
	Chief and Council	
Version 2 approved by:	Divisional Manager, STLM	2025-05-21
	Chief and Council	2025-05-21

Next review date: 2030-05-21

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- shíshálh Nation Declaration
- shíshálh Nation Lands and Resources Decision-Making Policy

REFERENCES

Turner, N. J. (1972). "Sechelt Plant Names." Unpublished manuscript. UBC Botanical Garden.



MINUTE OF DECISION

DATE: 2025-05-21

FILE NO: x140.050B_x140.050C_x140.050D


RE: *shíshálh Nation Fresh Water Management Policy, shíshálh Nation Medicinal Plants Management Policy, and shíshálh Nation Mariculture Policy Official Issuance*

WHEREAS: The shíshálh Nation Chief and Council accept and approve the above recommendation to issue the attached policies: *shíshálh Nation Fresh Water Management Policy, shíshálh Nation Medicinal Plants Management Policy, and shíshálh Nation Mariculture Policy*

AND THAT: The above policies have been edited for the purposes of proper approval process, consistent language, and formatting;

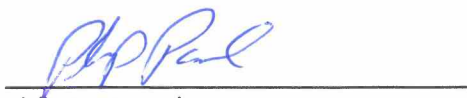
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the shíshálh Nation Chief and Council provide non-opposition and sign a Minute of Decision to be attached to the aforementioned policies in order to certify them as official documents.

shíshálh Nation Council,


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