

INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING AGENDA

**Missoula Board of County Commissioners
and the
Tribal Council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
of the Flathead Nation**

**Tuesday, August 25, 2020
10:00 a.m. - Noon
Zoom Meeting Hosted by Tribal Council**

- 1. Welcome, Introductions**
- 2. Missoula Place Names** – Higgins St. Bridge, Mullan Road (Missoula Commissioners and staff; Tony Incashola, Sr., and Tribal Preservation staff) (See attached historical information.)
- 3. Missoula County Services Evaluation Process** (See attached draft survey document, especially questions 9 and 10, completed by the National Research Center, Inc. and International City/County Management Association.)
- 4. Tribal Update on COVID-19 Prevention and Resiliency Strategy for the Homeless and CSKT Business Relief Grants** (Velda Shelby, Janet Camel)
- 5. Smurfit-Stone Site Update** (Mary Price)
- 6. Other Discussion Items of Mutual Interest**
 - a) Missoula County Commissioners
 - b) Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
- 7. Next meeting – Fall 2021**

Dear Chairwoman Fyant and Tribal Council members,

As background for the upcoming meeting with Missoula County, we wanted to share with you some of our research and discussions regarding three potential positive steps being considered by the Commissioners, which are on the agenda for the meeting: the renaming of the "Mullan area," the replacement of the statue of John Mullan at the north end of Higgins Avenue, and the renaming of the Higgins Avenue bridge.

Renaming of the "Mullan area:"

As with the replacement of the Mullan statue, renaming the "Mullan area" is not about forgetting John Mullan and his significant role in the area's history. It's about recognizing that he is not an appropriate figure to honor if we are to find names that everyone in the community can celebrate. Mullan was a vigorous proponent of political and cultural genocide. His writings contain valuable information for our history, but they are also full of racist references to Indian people. Like his superior, Isaac Stevens, Mullan repeatedly made solemn promises to the Séliš, Qlispé, Kootenai, and other tribes to respect our self-determination and sovereignty. But when Mullan and Stevens wrote to each other, they both explicitly laid out their vision of the future — their true objectives, which they took pains to conceal from tribal leaders during treaty meetings and other discussions. A representative passage can be found in Mullan's letter to Stevens in December 1853:

"One great result obtained from this Council and of course the treaty will be the settling of the whole of the Eastern portions of Washington and Oregon Territories, and thus blot out for ever from the map of our country, what is now looked upon as the great desert, as it were, extending from the Missouri to one hundred miles west of the Rocky Mountains thus occupying a central portion in the heart of our country and replace it by one continued belt of thriving settlements and villages where the stir and bustle of business shall resound without cessation as along our civilized and settled borders."

What is now called the "Mullan area" is located amid a rich cultural landscape for the Séliš and Qlispé people. This renaming could help remind residents and visitors of our deep history there, reaching back thousands of years, as well as our continuing relationship with the area. One possibility would be to use one of the Salish place-names that we have documented in this area.

Before its recent transformation, most of the Missoula Valley was open prairie, rich in bitterroots and other food and medicinal plants, and maintained with the careful, regular application of fire by tribal people. However, along the north side of Nmesulétkw (the "middle" Clark Fork River), there was a riparian forest that stood in sharp contrast to the surrounding grasslands. It was wedge-shaped, wider in the west and gradually tapering to a point in the east, somewhere in the vicinity of present-day Reserve Street. In Salish, this part of the valley is called **Sx^wtpqyen**, meaning "Place Where Something is Cut Off and Comes to a Point." In rough phonetic spelling using English characters, this name could be represented as "Sooh-tup-CANE." (On the attached PDF of our interpretive sign about the Missoula Valley, we have marked with a pink line the rough boundary of the County's designated "Mullan area.")

Another possibility would be to name the area for **spełm**, **bitterroot**. We honor this sacred plant each year in the bitterroot ceremony, when we gather to welcome the return of our "visitor" — to pray for its well-being and abundance, and to express our gratitude for spełm and all the other plants that we will harvest through the coming months. The Missoula Valley as a whole was the most important and

abundant bitterroot digging grounds in all our aboriginal territories. (Whether or not the "Mullan area" is renamed for bitterroot, we would urge that planning efforts there — and throughout the county — include a special effort to identify remaining populations of bitterroot and protect them from disturbance. Some parcels that are already disturbed could be targeted for bitterroot restoration, as is now being done with a small part of Ft. Missoula Regional Park.)

Replacement of the Mullan statue

Rather than destroying the statue, we suggest placing it in a museum — if possible, at the People's Center in Pablo — where it can be properly interpreted as an example of the aggressive memorializing of the invasion of indigenous territories and the distortion in public consciousness of that history.

The location on North Higgins offers a great opportunity for a CSKT artist to create something that would convey our long and continuing history in this place — that this was and always will be our homeland. The piece could in some way convey the way of life that we practiced here for millennia, and the respect we have always held for all of creation and still do today.

If the statue is to be of an individual person, some suggestions have been Sam Resurrection, who led our resistance to government policies in the early twentieth century, or X^weʔtɬáćín (Many Horses—Chief Victor), head chief of the Séliš during the mid-nineteenth century and leader of the CSKT delegation during the Hellgate Treaty negotiations.

Renaming the Higgins Bridge

In our discussions, a few names have come up as possibilities:

- Ntʔay Bridge, from our place-name for Missoula. (One problem: this would be difficult for English speakers to pronounce.)
- Little Bull Trout Bridge, from the translation of our place-name, Ntʔay, for Missoula.
- Vanderburg Bridge. In honor of the family, and especially Louie Vanderburg, who was a sub-chief under Chief Charlo and in command of one of the groups of Séliš people during the forced removal from the Bitterroot Valley to the Jocko in October 1891. According to some sources, the Vanderburg-led group crossed the river on the bridge at this place. However, some historians say there was no good bridge at that time; it had been washed out and was in the process of being rebuilt, with the new bridge not completed until 1892.
- Sulí Bridge or Ulián Bridge. After the Salish pronunciation of the name Julia. Julia Higgins, Christopher's wife, was Qlispé (upper Kalispel or Pend d'Oreille), and was the source of the English place-name Missoula. In 1864-65, Christopher Higgins and Frank Worden established the city of Missoula when they moved their Hellgate Trading Post from the western part of the Missoula Valley to the confluence of Rattlesnake Creek and the Clark Fork River (a place of great importance to the Séliš and Qlispé, known from time immemorial as Ntʔaycčstm, meaning Place of Little Bull Trout). Higgins and Worden wanted a new name for their establishment. Julia took the Salish name for the "middle" Clark Fork River, Nmesulétkʷ (meaning Shimmering Cold

Waters), and shortened and anglicized the word to "Missoula." Julia suggested that name to her husband. Christopher Higgins and Frank Worden thus called their new enterprise Missoula Mills, shortly thereafter dropping the word "Mills."

We hope this information is useful in your discussions with Missoula County. Lemlmtš.

Tony Incashola
Director, Séliš-Qłispé Culture Committee

