

Yaqan Nuki Heritage Center in partnership with Creston Valley Arts Council (CVAC) is excited to announce the release of a new film 'Voices of the Ancestors: Teachings of the Flatbow Kutenai'. Produced and filmed in the Kootenay Lake region of British Columbia, the 32-minute video shares the traditional knowledge and unique life experience of Hereditary Chief Robert Louie, Sr.

Based on the oral history lessons Robert learned as a child, the project shares information of the Flatbow Kutenai that has been handed down through many, many millenniums, much of it previously undocumented in written or video form. This is Indigenous knowledge at the core of the people's lives who travelled in canoes up and down the waterways of rivers, swamps and lakes of the Columbia Basin region. People who had a strong belief system, family structure, and oral history. Many of these oral teachings included animal-based storytelling with gentle morals and are reflected in the surrounding geographical formations of the area. The land literally comes alive with the teachings.

The film is Robert's tribute to his maternal grandmother, Marion Ernest Goodman. "I was adopted and brought into our people's culture as a baby by my grandmother, who taught me everything she knew about our culture, including our language and our ancestral knowledge of the Kootenay region," says Louie. "These teachings formed the person I am, provided a strong base for my adult life and inspired me to accept and celebrate my life with joy, my connection to it,

to give back, to return through sharing all that has been given to me.”

Voices of the Ancestors producer Sharon Svanda, who is also the CVAC liaison, says the video has been similarly inspiring for its small crew. “Our group has learned an incredible amount about the Indigenous knowledge and experiences of the Kootenay Lake and wetlands. After hearing Robert’s stories of the mythic animals and chiefs embodied in the rock formations along the Lake, I personally will never look at this region’s mountains or wetlands in the same way.”

Svanda and the Louies also thank the film’s numerous sponsors. “We could not have done this project without the generous support of the Creston Valley Arts Council, Central Kootenay Cultural Alliance, Columbia Basin Trust, British Columbia Arts Council, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, and the Canada Council for the Arts” adds Sharon Svanda.

The film will be available for viewing during the CBT Cultural Tour at Legend Logos on August 7 and 8, 2021.

This event is free of charge; however, donations will be accepted for future film projects. Reservations are recommended due to limited seating in the viewing room. As well, the film can be booked by organizations and societies for private viewings. Contact Janine Basil at 250-428-2977 for a booking, reservations during the Cultural Tour or a premiere show ticket.

