

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - B.C. Indigenous Film Earns Nomination at Prestigious Jackson Wild Media Awards



Klemtu, B.C., August 9, 2023—‘Keepers of the Land’, a 29-minute short film produced by the Kitasoo Xai’xais Nation and Moonfish Media Inc., was named a finalist in the ‘Global Voices’ category at the Jackson Wild Media Awards last Thursday. It is one of only four Canadian projects selected from 1100 international category entries, and one of the first Indigenous-produced films to be selected for the internationally coveted awards.

The [Jackson Wild Media Awards](#) are the self-described “nature equivalent to the Oscars”, and in fact, are hosting an Oscar winner at the 2023 Summit. Kartiki Gonsalves’s “The Elephant Whisperers” took home the Oscar for Best Documentary (Short Subject) at this spring’s awards. It too is vying for the top spot in the ‘Global Voices’ category. Winners will be announced at the awards gala in Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming, on September 28th.

The Kitasoo Xai’xais territory lies in the heart of British Columbia’s famed ‘Great Bear Rainforest’, approximately 500km north of Vancouver. The Nation has played a major role in provincial conservation policy over the last decade from its small village of Klemtu. In 2022 alone, the Nation [declared](#) their own marine protected area in *Gitdisdzu Lugyekes* (Kitasu Bay), worked with the province to [ban](#) black bear hunting, and [received](#) B.C. Parks Authority for their Coastal Guardian Watchmen program. They have also contributed actively to international discussions around indigenous stewardship, including at the [COP15](#) UN Biodiversity conference in Montreal last December.

QUOTES:

“In discussions around conservation, indigenous communities like ours need to be given voices on main stages like this. As the film illustrates, storytelling is how we’ve communicated our indigenous laws for thousands of years, which have everything to do with stewardship. We’re really grateful to the judges and Jackson Wild for the opportunity to share our story with so many other world-class films,” said co-director Douglas Neasloss, recently re-elected Chief councillor of the Kitasoo Xai’xais Nation.

“We have always stewarded our lands and waters. Today we’re just doing it through policy, in offices, and on zoom calls, behind closed doors. I think this film visually demonstrates the results of that, and it’s going to change how people think about conservation,” said co-director Douglas Neasloss, recently re-elected Chief councillor of the Kitasoo Xai’xais Nation.

“Klemtu has been consistently breaking barriers and raising the bar of indigenous-led conservation policy for the last decade. Jackson Wild is yet another one of those achievements. We’re honoured and excited to help them share their story with the wider world,” said co-director Deirdre Leowinata of Moonfish Media Inc.

“The world of wildlife film has been largely inaccessible to historically marginalized communities, and is still dominated by people who don’t look like either Doug or me. It’s great to see our little film among the likes of BBC, PBS, National Geographic, and the other natural history giants of the world. I want to show the world that we can be here too,” said co-director Deirdre Leowinata of Moonfish Media Inc.

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Media Kit: [LINK](#)

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ADDITIONAL

Film Synopsis: In the heart of British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest, one Nation is reclaiming the power they held for millennia. As the impacts of colonial exploitation and mismanagement take an increasing toll on their territory, the Kitasoo Xai'xais Nation finds strength in its stories and culture, emerging as a stewardship leader in a new age of reconciliation in Canada. A powerful story of resurgence, the weight of hereditary leadership, and the responsibility they carry into the modern world told through the eyes of elder and hereditary chief Nismuutk, Ernest Mason Jr., and the new young leaders following in his footsteps.

Director Bios: Douglas Neasloss is the visionary elected chief of Kitasoo Xai'xais First Nation in British Columbia. He envisioned Keepers of the Land as a tool to inspire his people and show the world what is possible by re-empowering indigenous people. Deirdre Leowinata is an emerging director and cinematographer driven by a passion for strong multimedia narratives that address our relationship with the planet. Deirdre combines a rigorous commitment to evidence-based storytelling with a knack for personal and evocative stories, which she has brought to a multitude of short-form documentary work. Keepers of the Land is their first major creative collaboration.

Film website: www.keepersofthelandfilm.com