Mission, B.C. and the province sign land deal with local First Nations

By **[Jon Azpiri](#)** **Global News**
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A step towards reconciliation Wednesday as the province, the city of Mission and three local First Nations inked a historic land deal. Under the "Together we Paddle" agreement the province will return 60 hectares of crown lands to the Leq'á:mel, Matsqui, Sumas First Nations – Jul 21, 2021

The province, City of Mission and three local First Nations inked a historic land deal.

The agreement, named Í:xel Sq'eq'ó, a Hul'qumi'num, a phrase that translates into English as "Together We Paddle," sees the province return 60 hectares of Crown land to the LMS Society, which represents the Leq'á:mel, Matsqui and Sumas First Nations. The land will be subdivided to create a community park that will be leased and managed by the city. There will also be a housing development.
B.C. Indigenous Relations Minister Murray Rankin called the agreement a step in the journey toward reconciliation.

"I don't know of any other example where we've achieved protection of the values, the fabulous landscape that's behind us, as well as providing land for much-needed housing for the community and economic development in the future is positive in every single way and I'm proud that British Columbia can be paddling together," he said.

"Together, we have set the scene for a day in which our children and the children of Mission can grow, laugh and play together, acknowledging the truth about our history and looking forward to a brighter future," Matsqui Chief Alice McKay said.

The lands being transferred are adjacent to the grounds of the former St. Mary's Residential School.

A plan is being developed to maintain the natural character of the area, protect sensitive environmental elements, enhance cultural and historic understanding, and guide improvements over time.

Video clip of the historic event can be viewed at:

https://globalnews.ca/news/8048097/mission-bc-first-nations-land-deal/