



Lələʔnəŋ Listening-With

Listening and Speaking With the Land: An invitation

Listening and Speaking with the Land, May 2024, invites people to consider their relationship to the lands and waters around them through audio recordings to be used in *Lələʔnəŋ Listening-With* events on June 1 at Gorge Park, and June 2 at Wingate Studio.

Lələʔnəŋ Listening-With is hosted by Open Space on the traditional lands of the ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt Nations). I would like to acknowledge these nations whose traditional lands we are on today and thank them for welcoming me and allowing me to live and work here. I would also like to acknowledge Justin Wilson and Aaron Nelson-Moody (Tawx'sin Yexwulla) whose article *Looking Back to the Potlatch as a Guide to Truth, Reconciliation, and Transformative Learning* has guided the development of my process.

My name is Michael Benneyworth and I am a first-generation settler on these lands. I am an invited sound artist in this project, as I have spent 19 years as a member of the Unity Drummers and Singers, a local urban Indigenous group open to anyone. During this time, I have been honoured to have experienced and learned about many facets of Indigenous cultures that have been shared with me. I have also started to know about Indigenous relationship to place and how language and culture are intimately connected to the land and waters.

The two locations for *Listening and Speaking with the Land* are cultural sites chosen by Yuxwelupton Bradley Dick.

Meequn

The camas field on the south edge of Meequn was cultivated for centuries and managed by the women of the ləkʷəŋən as a primary source of food.

Xixaluk

This point was chosen as a spot where the land meets the shore. It was a prominent lookout of the long standing ləkʷəŋən villages and is one of Yuxwelupton's favourite locations to watch the ocean.

By offering audio, you consent to its use within the project. Anyone is welcome to share their voice. One part of the project intends to give space specifically for indigenous voices. If you are Indigenous and are comfortable doing so, please feel welcome to self-identify.

INSTRUCTIONS

Take some time to clear your mind and listen to the sounds around you. If you wish to move away from others please feel free to find some space for yourself. Sit or stand quietly and take some calming breaths.

I would invite you to spend time experiencing this place and then to offer a word, a phrase, a thought, something in your birth language, or simply a sound, to the lands on which we stand.

Picture yourself as a part of the landscape and ask yourself:

“What do I hear, or imagine I hear, that resonates with me and inspires me to offer some sounds in return?”

Please keep in mind I am not seeking perfection in your recording; I would like you to speak from the heart.

When you are ready, please signal me to turn on the recorder.

Please make whatever sounds you wish to offer.

When you are finished, please signal me, and I will turn off the recorder.

Thank you for your offering of sound and for taking part in this project.

As you leave and continue to move through these lands, I ask that you make some time to consider the relationship between people and place, how the lands that we spend our time on have shaped the sounds made by those living here, and how sound has shaped the lands over millennia.

I feel that we can all benefit from spending more time listening.

