

Tl'abne 'ani Dahth'ke Noh'dih:

'We say real strongly regarding Klappan' or Klappan Declaration'

From the Klappan (Tl'ab'ne) Road Blockade; Sept 16,2005

We, the people of the Stikine and Tahltan ancestry have been forced by the actions of others into denying access to Tl'abne to those who would despoil this place.

Tl'abne is the Sacred Headwaters of the Stikine, Skeena and the Nass rivers. The land, water, animals and plants of these Sacred Headwaters have nourished us for untold centuries, and still do. We have lived and died here for millennia, and like our ancestors, here too we will die. What has been proposed for this place by the despoilers would enrich a few, for a short time, but would leave us dispossessed of the very thing which defines us as a distinct people.

To those who would despoil our homeland, we say this: we will never dishonor those who have gone before us, and whose bones are now part of the earth beneath our feet. Long ago our people established laws to protect the land and waters and the animals and plants that live among us. We have a solemn duty and responsibility to those who came before and those to follow to protect this place. It is a Sacred Trust given to us, and which no one can deny. Our title to these lands, and our responsibilities to it, remain unextinguished, and in full force and effect under our laws and customs.

This place can remain a wonder and inspiration for all, for all time, if only we respect its beauty and richness. We are

not opposed to economic development on our homeland and deeply desire economic justice and opportunity for all people, and especially our children. There are places within our territories we are willing to share with those who come to us in respect, those who recognize our place on this land, and those who understand we have traditions and laws we are obliged to honor.

To those who come without respect, we must warn you: you will find us relentless and fierce in defending the Tl'abne Sacred Headwaters. To those in our own nation who would sell out our interests for monetary gain; you must desist in these ways, and honour the ancient path. You cannot create the façade of traditional governance while you have secret meetings with those who propose to destroy us. Come to us and begin the healing our communities so desperately need, stand with us in protecting our home, and work with us in deciding how and where we will share our wealth with others.

Long after those who come to destroy our lands, and annihilate us are gone we will still be here, we were here when they came, and here we will remain.

We now solemnly declare these ancient lands the Sacred Headwaters, to be held as a Sacred Trust for all time, and to those who would respect this place, we will make you welcome here, and may it be that you find it nourishes your spirit also.