KWANLIN DÜN FIRST NATION

Operation and Maintenance Policy and Procedures for Kwanlin Dün First Nation Community Cemeteries

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1. INTRODUCTION

Kwanlin Dün First Nation cemeteries must be treated respectfully and maintained in accordance with Kwanlin Dün customs and traditional practices. Advice was sought from the Elders Council and the Elders Working Group to establish the Operation and Maintenance Policy for Kwanlin Dün First Nation Community Cemeteries (the "policy") on Kwanlin Dün First Nation settlement lands.

2. DEFINITIONS

In this policy

"ashes" means the cremated remains of a deceased human body;

"burial plot" means a piece of ground which has been designated for the interment of a casket or urn containing human remains;

"burial registry" means the secure recording and documentation of individual grave sites in the cemetery for historical purposes;

"cemetery" means those areas of land that are set aside for the interment of human remains or ashes;

"citizen" has the same meaning as assigned to it by the constitution;

"constitution" means the *Constitution of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation*, as may be amended from time to time;

"human remains" means the remains of a deceased body;

"immediate family" has the same meaning as assigned to the phrase "immediate family member" by the constitution;

"interment" means the digging and preparation of the grave, placing the casket or urn, filling the grave and levelling the grave;

"Kwanlin Dün" has the same meaning as assigned to it by the constitution; and

"traditional ties" means when a Yukon First Nation person has a connection to Kwanlin Dün as a resident of one of the Kwanlin Dün communities where the Yukon First Nation person has been a resident of one of the Kwanlin Dün communities for the majority of his or her life or where a Yukon First Nation person is a descendant or an adopted child of a Kwanlin Dün citizen.

3. KWANLIN DÜN FIRST NATION COMMUNITY CEMETERIES

3.1 Cemeteries in Use

- **Tágà Kwädän Tth'än K'è** — *River People Gravesite*

  Located on an escarpment overlooking the Yukon River on Lot 1239, Quad 105 D/11, off the Long Lake Road in Whitehorse. This is a large parcel of land that will meet the needs of Kwanlin Dün citizens for many generations.

- **Marsh Lake Cemetery**

  An older, well established cemetery located at Marsh Lake on Lot 373, Plan 50382, approximately 46 km from the McIntyre subdivision. This cemetery is used primarily by families with ancestral ties to the area.

3.2 Cemeteries no Longer in Use

- **Äsì Khìą Tth'än K'è** — *My Grandparents Gravesite*

  Located at the bottom of the Two Mile Hill on C–73FS, Quad 105 D/11, Downtown Area, City of Whitehorse, Lot 3, Block 59, Plan 40033 CLSR, 17459 LTO.

- **Kwädąy Näts'älè Tth'än K'è** — *Long Ago Peoples Resting Place*

  Located behind the General Hospital on C–85FS, Downtown Area, City of Whitehorse, Lot 1084, Quad 105 D/11, Plan 74173 CLSR, 92-34 LTO.

4. POLICY

4.1 Application

1. Section 4.2 only applies to the Tágà Kwädän Tth'än K'è and Marsh Lake gravesites listed under section 3.1. Single or family plots outside the boundaries of the two cemeteries are recognized and registered by the Lands and Resources Department of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation but are not maintained or otherwise subject to the policy.

2. Section 4.3 of this policy applies to all Kwanlin Dün First Nation community cemeteries listed under section 3.

4.2 Operations of the Tágà Kwädän Tth'än K'è and Marsh Lake Gravesites

The purpose of the policy is to ensure the Tágà Kwädän Tth'än K'è and Marsh Lake community cemeteries are operated in an efficient manner and in keeping with Kwanlin Dün First Nation's traditional customs and burial protocols.

Burial Sites and Plot Reservation

1. The two cemeteries in this section will be primarily used by Kwanlin Dün citizens, their spouses and members of their immediate families who fit the definition of "traditional ties" in section two of the policy and who wish to have their remains or ashes laid to rest in one of the two Kwanlin Dün First Nation community cemeteries.

2. A spouse does not necessarily have to be a Kwanlin Dün citizen but can be a spouse from another First Nation or a non-First Nation spouse who fit the definition of "traditional ties" and, as a matter of protocol and respect, after the family of the deceased has been given permission from the Elder on the Council and the Chief.

3. When a Kwanlin Dün citizen or his or her spouse passes away, a plot is selected for his or her burial. An additional plot may be reserved at that time for the surviving spouse.

4. In cases where a child under the age of 19 is buried in one of the two cemeteries, the parents may reserve two plots beside the child.

Access to the Cemeteries

The entrances to the cemeteries are gated and locked. The family coordinator or designated person will obtain a key to the gate from the Community Services Administrative Assistant. A $25 deposit is required to obtain the cemetery gate key and will be refunded when the key is returned. Deposit for key can be combined with deposit for key to Potlatch House. The coordinator/designated person will be responsible for ensuring the gate is closed and locked whenever the user has left the area, even for a short period of time. Keys must be promptly returned to Community Services after the burial.

Burial Registry

1. A burial registry was established to provide a historic record of who is buried in the cemeteries. Information is shared by Community Services (allocation of plots), Lands and Resources (mapping of the burial sites) and the Executive Council Office (the Citizenship Registrar who updates the AIS database and archives the information received).

2. The Community Services Administrative Assistant will work with the family coordinator or designated person to collect a memorial pamphlet, a copy of the death certificate, and any other relevant information the family would like to provide to the registry and passes this information on to the Citizenship Registrar.

3. Community Services and the Lands and Resources GIS Analyst will work together to ensure that the maps of the cemeteries are updated annually. Copies of the updated maps will be provided to the Community Services Administrative Assistant and the Citizenship Registrar.

4.3 Maintenance for all Kwanlin Dün First Nation Community Cemeteries

The Manager of Capital Projects will oversee the maintenance of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation community cemeteries which includes the following:

(a) ensuring proper signage that identify the name and dates of birth and death of the person (if not kept in the burial registry, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation will work with the families of the deceased to obtain this information);

(b) working with Human Resources to hire work crews to provide maintenance;

(c) grubbing (cutting brush, digging out root systems and removing stumps);

(d) creating and maintaining accessible pathways;

(e) carrying out repairs; and

(f) carrying out frequent site inspections to check for damage or vandalism.

During the winter months, Community Services will maintain the access roads to the cemeteries and ensure that they are ploughed when needed. Damage or vandalism will be reported to the Director of Community Services.

4.4 Maintenance of other Burial Sites

The Kwanlin Dün First Nation may maintain burial sites not listed in this policy and, if required, amend this policy accordingly.

5. PROCEDURES

1. The Health Centre is usually the first point of contact when a Kwanlin Dün First Nation citizen passes. The Health Centre staff will provide a purchase order for refreshments. Telephone: **668-7289**.

2. The family coordinator or designated person will contact the Executive Director to receive a funeral support benefit as approved by the Council and to be used to assist with funeral expenses. Telephone: **633-7800**.

3. The family coordinator/designate will be advised to drop by Community Services at 77 McClennan Road to make the necessary arrangements if using a Kwanlin Dün First Nation community cemetery.

4. The Community Services Administrative Assistant will work with the family coordinator/designate to book the Nàkwät'à Kų Potlatch House, to book a vehicle, obtain keys to the cemetery ($25 deposit required) and fill out the attached checklist.

5. Rental fees are waived for the funeral/burial potlatch for a citizen; however, damage deposits are still mandatory (refer to the Nàkwät'à Kų Rental Policy).

6. Rental fees for the van are waived for the funeral/burial potlatch for a citizen; however, the family is still responsible for fuel and hiring a qualified driver from a list of qualified drivers provided by Human Resources.

7. A representative from Community Services and Lands and Resources will accompany the family coordinator/designate to the Kwanlin Dün First Nation community cemetery to assist in selecting a burial plot.

8. The River People Gravesite has two fire pits: one for general use and one for ceremonial purposes (sacred fires). Community Services staff will indicate which fire pit is to be used for general burning and which one is to be used for sacred fires only. The family will provide a copy of the burning permit to Community

Services. Community Services will provide water tanks to ensure fires are properly extinguished.

9. Digging and preparing the burial site will be the responsibility of the family. If needed, the family can borrow shovels from Community Services. A $25 deposit is required for all tools borrowed and will be refunded upon return.

10. The family coordinator or designated, traditional person is responsible for:
    (a) selecting the grave diggers/pall bearers;
    (b) ensuring that graveside protocols are followed; and
    (c) providing firewood for the fires;
    (d) obtaining burning permits from the City of Whitehorse or Yukon Government (Marsh Lake);
    (e) making sure fires are properly extinguished;
    (f) returning the keys and borrowed tools to Community Services; and
    (g) in the case of a burial of a citizen, provide Community Services with a copy of the memorial pamphlet, death certificate, photos or other information for the burial registry, and notify the Executive Council Office.

11. Lands and Resources will
    (a) update cemetery maps with new information as required; and
    (b) provide updated copies of the maps to Community Services Administrative Assistant.

12. The Citizenship Registrar will
    (a) update AIS with the date of the citizen's death; and
    (b) file the memorial pamphlet in the citizen's file or scan to AIS where no file exists.