

## UFV researcher confirmed presumed unmarked graves at Kamloops Residential School

Dr. Sarah Beaulieu, a University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) anthropologist, presented a summary of her ground penetrating radar (GPR) investigation to media Thursday morning at an event held by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, highlighting 200 “targets of interest” of what are likely to indicate human burials.

The Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation have identified Beaulieu as a collaborating researcher who's work confirmed the probable unmarked graves on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School (KIRS).

Beaulieu emphasized that remote sensing such as GPR is not the only means of knowing children went missing in Indian Residential School contexts. Beaulieu added that this fact has been recognized by Indigenous communities for generations, and that remote sensing provides specific coordinates to this truth.

Beaulieu, a specialist in conflict archaeology, joined Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Chief Rosanne Casimir, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Legal Council, KIRS survivors and other experts at [the virtual and in-person gathering](#) at the Coast Kamloops Hotel & Conference Centre.

“My findings confirmed what Elders had shared,” Beaulieu said after the event. “It’s an example of science playing an affirming role of what the Knowledge Keepers already recognized.”

Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Knowledge Keepers shared their stories with Beaulieu during her GPR field work at the former KIRS site in late May.

“As these heartbreaking realities are revealed, while we offer our deepest sympathies to Indigenous communities across this land, we understand that condolences are not enough,” said Dr. Martha Dow, director of [UFV's Community Health and Social Innovation \(CHASI\) Hub](#). “Dr. Beaulieu’s work sheds light on these historical truths that continue to have real impact today, and contributes to the critical work outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Report.”

Beaulieu is in UFV's [Social, Cultural and Media Studies department](#), and is a Faculty Associate with CHASI.

“She is keenly attentive to the coexistence of voice with silence and agency with marginalization,” said Dow. “That and her commitment to community-led processes is truly inspiring to her colleagues and students.”

Beaulieu’s collaborative approach with communities is a vital component of her work. In addition to partnering with Indigenous communities, she has used ground-penetrating radar to

[identify grave sites at internment camps](#) that were established in Canada during World War I to confine more than 8,500 Canadian residents of Austro-Hungarian and German origin. According to Beaulieu, her work highlights her commitment to being of service to stories and histories that have been marginalized and often undocumented.

Beaulieu notes that she is not the only archaeologist collaborating on the important task of identifying unmarked graves at residential schools.

“A lot of people are working to fulfill the call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that says we need to do this work,” she said. “I was the one on the ground in Kamloops but I am part of a community fulfilling this mission.”

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For media inquiries with respect to Dr. Beaulieu and her GPR services, please contact Greg Laychak | 604-621-0319 | [greg.laychak@ufv.ca](mailto:greg.laychak@ufv.ca).