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Media Release: Washed Away film premiere

“If you move from one place to another, you can always go back. In this case, everything was obliterated.” – Ron Gawiuk

Revelstoke Museum and Archives created the exhibition “Stories Beneath the Surface” in 2018 to bring awareness to a fading story of the Columbia Valley – the displacement of approximately 2000 people to make way for the reservoir of the Hugh Keenleyside Dam that opened at Castlegar in 1969. Museum curator Cathy English became aware that many people knew about “the flats” south of Revelstoke, but did not know the history of land use in the region, or the stories of the people who once lived there. The dam was far away – close to 230 kilometres south – and built so long ago. How could it be relevant to us now?

Stories Beneath the Surface tells the stories of the communities that existed in the valley south of Revelstoke: the Ukrainian settlement of Mount Cartier, the once-thriving Arrowhead, and others. The narrative then shifts to displacement. The stories of former residents of the valley share common themes of sadness and powerlessness. There was little negotiation. Residents were told that they needed to leave, and told what they would be paid for their properties.

The film “Washed Away – Stories of Displacement on the Columbia River” continues the story that was begun in Stories Beneath the Surface. The museum worked with award-winning filmmaker and photographer Agathe Bernard to create a stunning short film that explores the theme of displacement, and what was lost under the waters of the Hugh Keenleyside Dam. The film also touches on the Sinixt, who were displaced from their traditional territory at the time of exploration and settlement in the valley, and on the displacement of salmon and other species due to dam construction.

The film cannot begin to tell the breadth and scope of the losses experienced on the Columbia River due to dam construction. What it does do is to remind us of a way of life that was washed away under the waters of the dam reservoir, and helps us to feel a connection to the river and the landscape.

“Washed Away” will premiere at Revelstoke Performing Arts Centre on Friday, May 6th at 7:30 pm. Tickets are on sale at Revelstoke Museum and Archives. As well as the screening of the film, there will be other opportunities to learn the story of the valley in engaging and surprising ways.

Ticket price is $20 per person. Contact the museum at 250-837-3067 or [office@revelstokmuseum.ca](mailto:office@revelstokmuseum.ca) for more information.