

# Species Are Sacred

## A Stó:lō world view on Species At Risk in S'ólh Téméxw (Fraser Valley)

Stó:lō Legend

### **Tseyí:yex [tsueeyuxh] Pacific Giant Salamander**

*A young girl was walking on the beach by herself, drawing swirls in the sand with a stick as she went along. She heard someone singing and stopped. The singing was coming from behind her, so she turned and stood looking back at the beach, but she heard nothing, and all she saw were the swirls she had drawn in the sand.*

*Carrying on down the beach, the girl heard the singing again. This time she called back to the singing without turning. And the singing stopped once more.*

*When the girl turned and stared back at the beach, she saw that there were gaps between some of the swirls she had drawn, and small hand prints in their place. This puzzled the girl and she walked back along the beach to look closer at the imprints in the sand.*

*She was sure they were handprints, and followed them into the bushes. As she gently stepped alongside the hand prints she could hear the singing she heard before just ahead of her in the distance. So curious, the girl kept on.*



*Arriving at a cold swift stream, the girl lost the tracks at the water's edge. She sat down on a soft mossy spot on a log, and sang the song she had been hearing. Out from the water popped a large salamander. It stood perfectly still and smiled, sparkling its big brown eyes at her, it opened its mouth and began to sing the most beautiful song she had ever heard.*

*Suddenly there was a crashing in the bushes, startled the salamander jumped back in the water. Out from the cedars walked the girl's grandmother. She was harvesting stinging nettle roots for fishing line. She looked at her granddaughter and knew something was up. "My dear grandchild, did I startle you?" The girl nodded her head, glancing quickly back at the water. Her grandmother apologized and reminded to pick some blackberries on her way home to go with dinner.*



The sxwoxwiyám and Stó:lō narratives are the intellectual property of The Stó:lō people. Very specific use permission has been granted to South Coast Conservation Program for sharing purposes.

# *Tseyí:yex [tsuyeeyuxh]* *Pacific Giant Salamander*



*That salamander popped its head out of the water again, but this time it spoke, "I am a girl like you" she said. And the girl leaned closer and smiled into her big brown eyes, she touched the soft smooth skin of the salamander and asked her if she had any clothes. The salamander didn't have any. The girl looked around, thinking such a beautiful creature deserved a beautiful shawl.*

*She thought of how the salamander led her from the water, and to the mountainside under the tall dark canopy of the forest. The girl loved the sky, she always walked along the river to see the clouds and the distant mountains. She dreamt of running her hands along the mist that pours from tops of the mountains in the early morning.*

*As she was day dreaming salamander heard her thoughts and saw her vision. She said "I too love the sky and distant mountains, I sing to them to come closer but they never do." The little girl dipped her hand in the water and with her eyes closed she held her hand cupped full of water to the sky, when she lowered her hand to salamander she had a shawl in it. Wrapping salamander, she smiled and smoothed out the wrinkles. She said "now you have a shawl as beautiful as the songs you sing, and the sparkle in your eye."*

*Salamander peered in the water to see her reflection, the shawl she wore looked just like the clouds in the sky and the mountains in the distance. She felt so beautiful, all she could do was smile. The salamander the girl were friends for years and years, when the girl grew up and married she left behind the salamander, but they always remembered each other.*

*Visit [www.sccp.ca](http://www.sccp.ca) to learn more about Species At Risk*