# Nłʔay | PLACE OF SMALL BULL TROUT

## *The Missoula Area and the Séliš & Qlispé People*

For millennia, the Missoula Valley has been a place of great importance to our people, the Séliš (SEH-leesh, also known as 'Salish' or 'Flathead') and Qlispé (Kah-lee-SPEH, also known as 'Kalispel' or 'Pend d'Oreille').

This is a vital part of our aboriginal territories, a landscape filled with cultural meaning, reflected in the selected place-names on this sign. Some names come from our creation stories. Others refer to our traditional way of life and the resources, such as bull trout, that were particularly abundant here. The confluence of Rattlesnake Creek and the Clark Fork River is known as Nłʔaycčstm, meaning Place of Small Bull Trout. The shortened form of this name, Nłʔay, is used by Salish speakers to refer to the city of Missoula.

The west side of the valley, including the prairies around Fort Missoula, was the greatest bitterroot digging ground in all of our vast aboriginal territories. Until the 1960s, when development made it impossible to continue, our people gathered here every spring to offer prayers of thanks for this staple food and dig for several weeks.

In 1855, just a few miles west of this sign, our tribal nations met with U.S. officials to negotiate the Hellgate Treaty. The treaty established the sovereign Flathead Reservation, and guaranteed our continued use of tribal homelands for traditional purposes.

Today, Séliš and Qlispé people maintain a vital connection to the Missoula area. We are active members of the community, engaging in this transformed world even as we maintain and revitalize our connection to the ancestors.

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Čłxʷm̓xʷm̓šn̓á (Sophie Moiese) digging bitterroot near Ft. Missoula, 1945. *Univ. of Montana, 91-6083.*

Bigcrane family at annual bitterroot dig, 2009. *Courtesy SQCC.*

Séliš-Qlispé elders at Člmé (Council Grove), 2003. *SQCC image.*

Ep Stm̓tú
HAS CURRANTS
Mill Creek

Qʷʔéł
REFERRING TO WATER
Frenchtown area

Snłp̓ú Nšiy̓tétkʷs
COMING-OUT-INTO-THE-OPEN'S CREEK
O'Keefe Creek

Snłp̓ú(px̌m̓)
PLACE WHERE YOU COME OUT
Base of Evaro Hill

Ňeslétkʷ
TWO WATERS
Lavalle & Butler Creeks

Ňmlišé
PLACE OF COTTONWOODS
GRASS VALLEY

ʔamtqné
SOMETHING SITTING ON TOP
Site above Cyr Gulch

Ništétkʷ
WATER IN A DEEP VALLEY
Deep Creek

Člmé
TREE-LIMB-STRIPPED-OFF
Council Grove

Nłq̓esuʔlm
LITTLE WIDE CREEK YOU CAN CROSS
Grant Creek

Nłʔay Sewłkʷs
SMALL BULL TROUT'S WATERS
Rattlesnake Creek

Ep Sčiłt
HAS WHITE CLAY
Marshall Creek

Sxʷtpqéyn
PLACE WHERE SOMETHING IS CUT OFF AND COMES TO A POINT
Missoula Valley

Nmesulétkʷ
SHIMMERING COLD WATERS
Middle Clark Fork River

Nmq̓ʷe
HUMPED MOUNTAIN
Mount Jumbo

Naaycčstm Sewłkʷs
BULL TROUT'S WATERS
Clark Fork-Blackfoot Rivers

Eslq̓ʷolexʷ
PRAIRIE
Bandmann Flat

Naaycčstm
PLACE OF BULL TROUT
Blackfoot - Clark Fork Confluence

Nłʔaycčstm
PLACE OF SMALL BULL TROUT
Rattlesnake Creek-Clark Fork confluence and city of Missoula

Sxʷplstwé
PLACE OF THE KILLERS
Fort Missoula

Esmoq̓ʷ
IT'S A MOUNTAIN
Mount Sentinel

Nstetčcxʷétkʷ
RED-OSIER DOGWOOD WATERS
Bitterroot River

Smłk̓ʷsšná
NAME OF A SELIŠ WOMAN
McCauley Butte

Ncq̓ʷelstétkʷ
FLINT-STUCK-IN-THE-GROUND WATERS
Upper Clark Fork River

Slo̓ʔté
VALLEY WHERE TWO RAVINES MEET
Pattee Canyon

Nccq̓ełpé
SMALL AREA OF DOUGLAS FIRS
Blue Mountain

Snčleʔxʷqʷi
PLACE WHERE THE EGGS HATCH
Around Mouth of Miller Creek

Nccq̓ełpétkʷ
SMALL-AREA-OF-DOUGLAS-OF-FIRS WATERS
Deadman Gulch

Nłqq̓ʔá
STEEP TRAIL
Between Lolo & Missoula

Epłčiliy̓alq̓ʷ
HAS VIRGIN'S BOWER
Miller Creek

Esnx̌axasci
GOOD-SINGING PLACE AREA ALONG BITTER-ROOT RIVER

Naptniša
Trail to the Nez Perce
Lolo Trail

Tmsmłí
NO SALMON
Lolo area

Q̓ʷlotqné
SOMETHING SEPARATE STICKING UP ON TOP
Two rocks on ridgetop across from Lolo