

- Alex Mah: 0:00 The track you're about to hear is part of Earth Witnessing, an audio project for Vines Art Festival that invites you to engage with this park through this audio track, using each of your senses to connect to the earth. First a word about the land this park is on.
- Christie Lee Charles: 0:21 [Speaks Hən̓q̓əmiṇ̓əm̓]
- Christie Lee Charles: 0:51 Good day, good day, it's such a beautiful day during this hot season, [Crow Cawing] and welcome. My name is Christie Charles and— [Crow Cawing. Christie Lee Charles laughs]. The crows are saying hello as well. My name is Christie Charles and I come from Musqueam. I also descend from Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh and all the different nations... Yeah, through the lineages that I come from. [Crow Cawing] I just wanted to say welcome in our language. [Speaks Hən̓q̓əmiṇ̓əm̓]. I speak Hən̓q̓əmiṇ̓əm̓ which is the Downriver dialect of the Coast Salish peoples, and I just welcomed you in our language, introducing who my father and who— who my late father is and my mother and saying I'm so proud of my beautiful children. Yeah.
- Christie Lee Charles: 1:34 So where I'm standing today is at Trout Lake. This is within the city of Vancouver and it's such a beautiful place. I used to come here all the time when I was little; go play in the lake, run around, have barbecues—it's such a beautiful park. But it's also a place that our people would gather throughout the year. And I'm so excited that Vines Festival has stepped up and acknowledged and recognized that we are still the caretakers of this beautiful land. We still speak the language, we still speak with the birds, and we still use all these beautiful plant medicines all across the city of Vancouver.

Sound Effect: 2:11 [Footsteps on gravel]

Morning Star Trickey: 2:17 [Canada geese honking intermittently in background]
Trout Lake used to be a body of water fed by multiple streams, which were part of a larger network of streams draining into False Creek. Like any body of water, this area would have been good for hunting as all animals, including the human animal, gravitate to water. Picture a sweeping hemlock forest surrounding the stream fed lake full of wildlife and insects. Today, Trout Lake is a peat bog fed by city water to keep it from drying out. The natural streams once utilized by industry to form a giant flume, to direct water to the Hastings Mill at the foot of Dunlevy Street, have long since been culverted. I came to Vancouver in the early 2000s, and I was always interested in Trout Lake. And in pretty much any piece of information I could find online about Trout Lake, I was directed to information about industry and the people behind the industry. The park is actually named John Hendry Park after industrialist and mill owner, John Hendry. But what I really wanted to know was about the fish, the birds, and other creatures who inhabited this area and the people in the surrounding area long before it became a park or John Hendry came to clear the forests for profit.

Morning Star Trickey: 3:31 But I'm not giving John Hendry any more of my energy or time. I wanted to connect to the space, to the ground below me, and the water that flows around. And every time I have gone to Trout Lake, the weeping willows have defined my experience. Oddly, I looked into where weeping willows come from and they are not indigenous to this area. They actually come from China. They are another product of colonization, likely traveling along the silk road into Europe and from Europe into North America.

Morning Star Trickey: 4:02 Colonization, all the time in every direction I look. And who am I? And how did I end up here? A stolen body on a stolen land? My mother is a black woman from the Southern United States and my father is a white American man. Several years ago, my mother started looking into her family genealogy and was unable to go very far back because of slavery in the US. My father's family can trace their lineage back many generations and they have done so. Several years ago, my mother gifted us each, her six children, with DNA tests in order to trace our ancestry. My results showed 35% Western and Central European, 28% Western and Central African, 24% Great Britain and Ireland, 5% Eastern Europe, and 4% Eastern Africa. And why did we want to know? Because my mother is black and her family is black as far back as we know, but I'm only 32% of African descent.

Morning Star Trickey: 5:06 Many people will think it is ridiculous to go back in time and try and figure out where you're from. I've heard "go back where you came from" enough in my life to really want to know where that might be. Slavery interrupted the answer to that question. Colonization interrupted the answer. We exist in a world where every tree, bird, and human body is seen as a commodity, where every scrap of land is valued for its economic potential. But we and the world around us are more than chattel. Waterways are more than a tool for deforestation. So here I am, a settler on coast Salish territory, a stolen body on stolen land, sitting under a weeping willow tree at Trout Lake.

Morning Star Trickey: 6:02 [Singing "Willow Weep For Me" written by Ann Ronell]
*Willow weep for me, willow weep for me
Bend your branches green along the stream that runs to sea
Listen to my plea, listen willow and weep for me
Gone my lover's dream, lovely summer dream
Gone and left me here to weep my tears into the stream
Sad as I can be - Hear me willow and weep for me*

*Whisper to the wind and say that love has sinned
To leave my heart aching and making a moan
Murmur in the night to hide her starry light
So none will see me sighing and crying all alone
Weeping willow tree, weep in sympathy
Bend your branches down along the ground and cover me
When the shadows fall, bend oh willow and weep for me*

*To leave my heart aching and making this moan
So none will find me sighing and crying all alone
Weeping willow tree, weep in sympathy
Bend your branches down along the ground and cover me
When the shadows fall, bend oh willow
Bend oh willow and weep for me*

Alex Mah: 10:03 Thank you for listening to Earth Witnessing presented by Vines Art Festival. This is part of a series of six audio works related to parks in Vancouver. I hope this gave you a chance to deepen your connection to this place. As you find yourself in amongst the willow trees in Trout Lake Park, take a moment to reflect on the forces and events that brought you to this place today.