

## ABOUT US

Last Updated Tuesday, 07 July 2009

We have been occupying and exercising our rights on the lands, water and resources of our ancestral territory since time immemorial. What is now known as the Nuxalk Nation is a mixture of many villages that were distributed throughout kulhulmcilh (our land), including the four largest villages: Talyu in Ats'aaxlh (South Bentick); Suts'lhm (Kimsquit) to the north -this includes Satskw' (Kimsquit River) and Nut'l (Dean River); Kwalhna to the west; and Q'umk'uts' to the east.

Map of Nuxalk Territory (in blue)

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### Before

European contact, the Nuxalk population was approximately 35,000 (based on oral histories and academic research). After the small pox epidemic of 1862-64 (following waves of new gold seekers and settlers), Nuxalk villages were devastated to approximately 300 survivors. Nuxalk people were scattered throughout the territory and either relocated on their own to survive, or were forcibly removed by the Department of Indian Affairs, to form a settlement in what is now known as Bella Coola. Knowledge of family ancestry remains strong in Nuxalk families, including villages of descent, family crests, as well as songs and dances that tell the histories of our people in our smayustas.

### Subsistence

activities on these lands and trading with other Nations have always been central to the Nuxalk way of life. We are salmon people of the rainforest and without healthy and abundant lands and water, our very existence is seriously threatened. We, the Nuxalk, maintain our rights and title to our entire traditional territory and continue to strive to maintain our traditional systems of governance and powers, citing a long and rich cultural history as evidence of our continued use and occupation.

#### Despite

the devastation of the small pox epidemic and the relocation of the survivors from certain villages to Bella Coola, the Nuxalk Nation has long asserted our rights and obligations to our ancestral territory and has never ceded, sold, surrendered, nor lost our traditional lands through act of war or treaty. The Nuxalk remain strongly against entering any treaty process as we know that our Ancestral lands have never been surrendered and remain legally ours, in both our tradition and under Canadian law.

#### Current

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) population estimates indicate a total Nuxalk population of approximately 1400 with nearly 900 of those living on the Nuxalk reserve in Bella Coola. However, according to traditional Nuxalk government, the true Nuxalk population is closer to 3,000. This number includes people of Nuxalk ancestry who are not registered or may be registered to another "Indian Band."