



A Land of Plenty

The Nisga'a Nation enjoys an abundant natural environment. At home on the Pacific Rim, in the heart of the world's largest temperate rain forest, the Nisga'a people rely on a rich ecosystem that includes salmon, cedar, and fur-bearing mammals. Nisga'a lands and forests provide the foundation upon which the Nisga'a people have built a culture and economy that respects and protects the natural world.

Under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, the Nisga'a Nation owns Nisga'a Lands and controls the resources on those lands. They are managing their resources for long-term sustainability.

Forest Management

The Nisga'a Final Agreement stipulates that Nisga'a forestry practices must meet or exceed standards established under provincial forestry practices legislation for Crown land. Nisga'a Lisims Government is committed to meeting this requirement while providing consistent, sustainable employment for forestry workers.

The treaty provides for a five-year transition of the control of timber harvesting and management on Nisga'a Lands from British Columbia to NLG. During the transition, B.C., under provincial forestry legislation, licenses the harvest of an annual volume of timber to forest companies who held licences prior to the treaty's effective date. While these licences are issued by B.C., both the Province and NLG, through the Forestry

Transition Committee, have a shared responsibility in the administration of the licences. At the end of the transition period, in 2005, the Nisga'a Nation will have full control of Nisga'a timber.

Under the transition arrangement, forest licensees must harvest specified volumes of timber each year and a percentage of the volume must be contracted to Nisga'a citizens to harvest. In the second year of the treaty, the target of 70 percent Nisga'a contractors was exceeded.

During the reporting period, a total of 74,469 cubic metres of wood was harvested under the transition licences, much of it by community-owned Laxgalt'sap Forest Corporation which employs 30 people. To support operations, 9.6 kilometres of logging road were constructed during the reporting period. Continuing volatility in North American lumber markets has underscored the need for long-range planning. That's why Nisga'a operators are making significant capital investments to ensure they are well positioned to meet increasing demands as markets recover.

Forestry Transition Committee

The Forestry Transition Committee, comprised of one person each from NLG and B.C., has authority to approve forest development plans throughout the five-year transition period. The committee approves silviculture plans and issues all cutting and road permits in the latter years of the transition period.

During the reporting period, the committee received a proposed Forest Development Plan from Skeena Cellulose Inc. (SCI), the major licensee on Nisga'a Lands. The plan was sent to the Joint Fisheries Management Committee and Nass Wildlife Committee for review and comment, made available for public consultation, and ultimately approved. In 2001, British Columbia transferred quarterly Same Economic Position (SEP) payments, totalling \$446,806 to the Nisga'a Nation for timber harvested on Nisga'a Lands. Under the SEP arrangement, the Nisga'a Nation receives a payment of \$6 per cubic metre, and an additional amount if either billed stumpage or industry performance exceeds \$6 per cubic metre. Nisga'a Lisims Government and B.C. are still seeking agreement on the criteria for calculating the conversion factor for determining industry performance.

Loggers' Development Assistance Program

The Loggers' Development Assistance Program is designed to help Nisga'a forestry contractors survive the depressed lumber market. The program, created by NLG during the reporting period, will help Nisga'a logging companies by providing low-interest loans.

Mushroom Harvest

The Lands and Resources Directorate of Nisga'a Lisims Government manages all land and forest

resources on Nisga'a Lands, except for timber harvesting under provincial licences during the transition period. Pine mushrooms, a popular delicacy in Asia, are the second most valuable resource found on Nisga'a Lands. NLG is among the first governments in Canada to establish a management plan for the harvest of this renewable resource. At 27,216 kilograms, the 2001 mushroom harvest was double the size of the previous year's and added more than \$1.3 million to the local economy.

NLG licenses mushroom pickers and buyers. While the licensing program has been in place since the effective date, enforcement was gradually introduced in the 2001 season. Education has resulted in good compliance by both pickers and buyers, and licensing fees provide a reliable source of revenue for continued management of the resource.

Wildlife Management

The Nass Wildlife Committee, a tripartite body created under the Nisga'a Final Agreement, provides advice about wildlife management and harvest within the 16,101 square kilometre Nass Wildlife Area. British Columbia uses this information to establish the total annual harvest levels and approves the annual Nass Wildlife Management Plan.

During the reporting period, the committee monitored developments on the Nisga'a Highway



Kincolith Extension Project, reviewed the Kalum Land and Resources Management Plan document, and discussed both pending “species at risk” legislation and angling guide opportunities. Under the terms of the Fiscal Financing Agreement, B.C. provided \$20,000 to the Nisga'a Nation for Nisga'a participation on the Nass Wildlife Committee.

Moose, grizzly bear, and mountain goat populations are the focus of the annual Nass Wildlife Management Plan. Ongoing research determines population estimates for these species within the Nass Wildlife Area. From these estimates, Total Allowable Harvest quotas are determined to calculate annual allocations. During the reporting period, the moose population was estimated to have been approximately 1,400 and the Nisga'a allocation was 126. The grizzly bear population estimate was 400 animals. With conservation as the overriding principle, the Total Allowable Harvest was determined to be five grizzlies, of which the Nisga'a allocation was two. The mountain goat population was found to be over 3,000 strong; this allowed an allocation of 34 to Nisga'a hunters.

Tourism Development

As an economic engine, British Columbia's tourism industry is second only to forestry. Much of the success of this industry is tied to the province's renowned natural beauty and wildlife. The Nisga'a Nation is eager to take part in B.C.'s

tourism sector by showcasing its stunning natural environment and rich cultural heritage.

To help attract visitors to the Nass Valley, British Columbia issued a commercial recreation tenure to the Nisga'a Nation. NLG, in turn, designated Lisims Backcountry Adventures, Inc. as the recipient of the tenure. The company is preparing to offer wilderness tourism experiences, including wilderness viewing, sport fishing, and hiking. Negotiations continued with several potential industry partners and Lisims Backcountry Adventures plans to begin operations in 2003.

Offering visitors remote wilderness fishing holidays, Wilp Sy'oon (House of Glacier) fishing lodge began operation in 1996. Accessible only by boat or floatplane, the lodge is located approximately 30 kilometres south of Gingolx near Pearse Island. Charter companies fly guests between Prince Rupert and the lodge. Wilp Sy'oon continued to be featured in some of North America's premier sport fishing magazines and television programs. In 2001, eight Nisga'a citizens were employed at the lodge.

Anhluut'ukwsim Laxmihl Angwinga'asanskwhl Nisga'a

The Joint Park Management Committee (JPMC), comprised of members from the Nisga'a Nation and British Columbia, jointly manages Anhluut'ukwsim Laxmihl Angwinga'asanskwhl Nisga'a, or Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park. The




JPMC was established in 1992, and continues under provisions of the Nisga'a Final Agreement. During the 2001 season, approximately 1,600 people were welcomed at the visitors' centre and nearly 400 camping parties used the campground at Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park. Visitation continues to grow slowly, but with the completion of the Nisga'a Highway upgrade, the park has the potential to attract thousands of visitors to the region's rich natural and cultural resources.

BC Parks, with advice from the JPMC, continued to develop business opportunities utilising the park visitor centre, campground, and guided trail to the volcano crater. The JPMC discussed private land access through the park, angling guide regulations, highway projects, and general park operations.

British Columbia funded two Environment Youth Team Interns, an Assistant Park Ranger, a Visitors' Centre Co-ordinator, an Environmental Youth Team Crew (consisting of one supervisor and five members), and a park maintenance contract to a Nisga'a resident.



A woman with short reddish-brown hair and glasses, wearing a bright blue jacket and black pants, is walking towards the camera on a suspension bridge. The bridge has a concrete walkway and metal railings with chain-link fencing. In the background, there are houses and a forested hillside under a clear sky.

Julia Adams, 57
Raven clan

Community Health
Representative (CHR),
Gitwinksihkw. Winner,
2002 National CHR Award.
Interviewed at the old
suspension bridge.

When I was a little girl in Gitlaxt'aamiks, we were isolated. We travelled mainly by river. My dad was a fisherman, my mom worked in the fish plant. We lived comfortably and we always had what we needed. My father believed in education. He encouraged me and gave his support. They were our role models. Having a job and providing for your family plays into your health. I think it's all part of being healthy.

I've been a Community Health Representative for 32 years. I was trained to deliver first aid and basic health care services. We're involved in health teaching and prevention programs. I like it because it's different every day. We teach first aid, give medication, and bring in doctors. We are also trained to deliver babies — although I haven't done it yet. There are over a thousand of us in Canada.

Over the years, I knew that I needed my General Education Diploma. Then Nisga'a Valley

Health Board sent me away to do a course. My grades were so good I was encouraged to continue. Then Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a (WWN) opened and I took culture and language courses every semester. I earned a bachelor's degree while working full-time. I wanted that degree. Because I work full-time, WWN was the only way I could have done it. Having WWN in the Nass Valley is very important.

My husband was my number one supporter. He did the cooking, cleaning, and laundry. I never went to feasts, because I was working and studying. I graduated in 2001. My education helped me get my promotion to a supervisory position. It helped me advance to the next level.

My son went back to school when he saw what I was doing — watching me do my homework and going to WWN. He went back and graduated from high school this year and now he wants to go on to college. You can't ignore the power of example.

We need to work really hard to make this treaty work for us; to make it meet the people's needs. Throughout the treaty process, we saw that there was a need for our own people to have degrees, to develop programs. We are able to sit down and decide what kinds of programs are appropriate. We listen to the people, then do it ourselves. We know the community and can make decisions about community health care. The more we have our own people managing or supervising, the better. It's about control and getting appropriate services.

I think there are more opportunities for my children and grandchildren. The students that just graduated are all going to WWN, they have worked hard to go to college or university. We have to show our kids what the possibilities are. There are some good opportunities, but they need the educational background in order to see them.

**“You can't ignore the power
of example.”**