



# A Path Made Clear

Now more than ever, prosperity depends on reliable transportation and communication. As economies and cultures become increasingly integrated, connecting the Nisga'a people to each other and the outside world is critical to the success of both government and business initiatives. It's about building pathways — both literal and virtual — to opportunity.

Road construction continued in the Nass Valley during the second year of the treaty. Both the Nisga'a Highway Upgrade Project and the Kincolith Extension Project are providing employment for Nisga'a people. While road crews worked to link Nisga'a villages to each other, Nisga'a Lisims Government also began laying the groundwork for opening modern communication pathways to the world.

## **Nisga'a Highway Upgrade Project**

Funded by British Columbia, the \$52 million Nisga'a Highway Upgrade Project has been under construction for three years. Slated for completion in 2006, the project involves upgrading 90 kilometres of gravel resource road to a paved, two-lane, 70 km/h year-round highway. The project starts at Sand Lake and extends north-west to Laxgalt'sap and east to Nass Camp.

Construction continued on the most difficult 10.5-kilometre Lava Lake segment of the road, which consists of steep rock cuts and narrow lake foreshore. A grading construction contract was

tendered and awarded for the 10.7-kilometre segment between Laxgalt'sap and W.D. McKay Bridge. Design work continued on the 7.3-kilometre segment between Kwinyarh Creek and the Lava Beds, and the project is scheduled for tender in early 2003. The design of the 32-kilometre Lava Bed segment was also initiated during the reporting period.

Nisga'a employment continues to be a focus throughout the construction project. Thirty percent of the workforce (ten workers) were hired from the Nass Valley, providing direct and indirect economic benefits to the surrounding communities.

## **Nisga'a Highway Kincolith Extension Project**

Soon the village of Gingolx (Kincolith) will be connected to the rest of the Nisga'a Nation. Gingolx has been accessible only by large boat or floatplane and there have been numerous transportation accidents. After years of planning for the highway extension, construction began in 2000. By March 31, 2002, work had reached 40 percent completion. The extension is being built under a separate tripartite agreement between Canada, British Columbia, and the Nisga'a Nation.

The \$34 million project will result in the construction of a two-lane, 29-kilometre all-weather gravel road through some of the most geotechnically challenging and visually stunning terrain in



Canada. The road will be owned by British Columbia and funded by Canada, B.C., and the Nisga'a Nation. To ensure economic benefits remain within the Nass Valley, the contractor has committed to utilising a minimum of 35 percent local labour. To date, this target has been exceeded by 10 percent for a total of 30 jobs.

### **Connectivity**


Currently, the availability of broadband Internet access in the Nass Valley is limited. If the Nisga'a people, government, and entrepreneurs are to succeed in communicating with each other and the outside world, a significant investment will have to be made.

Telus, the current access provider in the Nass Valley, is unable to develop a successful business case for expanding broadband Internet access to low population areas. Following presentations to the Premier's Technology Council, NLG worked with B.C. to explore ways of improving connectivity without interfering with Telus' current service. Bringing fibre optic, broadband Internet access to the Nass Valley will have many spin-off benefits for citizens and attract outside businesses wanting to work in a region with modern communication capabilities. NLG launched a comprehensive feasibility study to determine the best way to provide access for Nisga'a people, business, and government.



Shannon Vickers, 18  
Eagle clan

Student, Surrey.  
Interviewed outside her  
grandfather's smokehouse  
at Laxgalt'sap.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a dark grey sleeveless top, stands in front of a wooden structure. She is smiling and has her hands held out. Above her, several strips of salmon skin are hanging from the ceiling. To her left, a large piece of salmon skin is hanging vertically. The background is dark, and the wooden structure has some blue graffiti on it.

Rosalie Vickers, 51  
Eagle clan

Homemaker, Surrey.  
Interviewed at Laxgalt'sap,  
her childhood village.

Rosalie: We moved to Surrey but come back to Laxgalt'sap every summer. I grew up here. I miss it. My favourite memories were coming across the frozen river. I'll move back eventually.

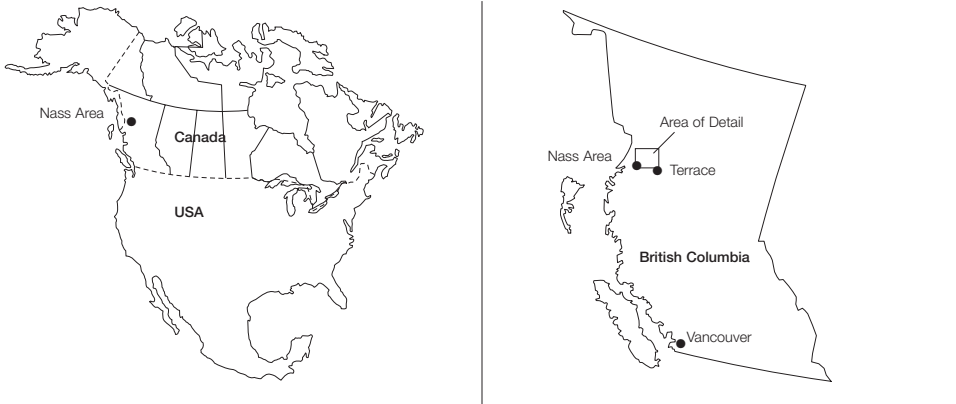
Since the treaty, we've been able to get better food here. Now fresh fruits and vegetables are available. The health of the people will be better. My oldest son was born by coal oil lamp. Now health care is more accessible. They talk about the road opening up to Gingolx — well I remember when the road opened up here in Greenville. There will be changes they said, and there were... The road will help the people in Gingolx.

The treaty has also been positive for jobs. The local village government stresses that. Now my whole family is working. This has happened since the treaty.

Shannon: I'm going to Kwantlen University College in the fall. I want to study social work. I chose that after my mother attended a Nisga'a government meeting where they were saying how much they need social workers to come and work with the people. The stats of how many people were needed, and how many people need help, were incredible. That's when I decided that I wanted to study to be a social worker and come back to my community and help my people.

Rosalie: This is what we need: more professionals. Shannon graduated with honours, you know. She was also Athlete of the Year... Coming up here keeps us in touch. I work with Shannon like my mother worked with me. This is the time my daughter and I can stay close. You have to pass on what you know.

“This is the time my daughter and I can stay close.  
You have to pass on what you know.”



**Area of Detail**

Note: This map is not to scale and is for general information purposes only. Within the area of detail there are private lands owned by the Nisga'a Nation and others (not shown).

- Roads and Highways
- Nisga'a Highway
- Nisga'a Highway Kincolith Extension Project
- Nass Area (includes Nass Wildlife Area)
- Nass Wildlife Area (includes Nisga'a Lands)
- Nisga'a Lands
- Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park (Anhluut'ukwsim Laxmihl Angwinga'asanskwihl Nisga'a)
- Gingiet Creek Ecological Reserve No. 115
- Waterways





