

A Culture Renewed

Ayuukhl Nisga'a is the inheritance of Nisga'a oral culture and laws. The Nisga'a people learn the Ayuuk as children through feasts and daily events in the Nisga'a communities. It has been passed down from generation to generation.

Ayuukhl Nisga'a Department

The Ayuukhl Nisga'a Department (AND) of Nisga'a Lisims Government is entrusted by the nation to protect, preserve, and promote Nisga'a language, culture, and history. This is accomplished by encouraging research and understanding, respecting traditional ownership of Nisga'a history and adaawak (stories belonging to a Nisga'a wilp or house), and conserving this heritage through research. AND also responds to requests from government and the community for information on a variety of topics, from Nisga'a spelling and syntax to traditional land use systems and cultural practices.

The AND Collection consists of archival, historical, and contemporary documents regarding the Nisga'a Land Question, and general Nisga'a history and culture written by academics, anthropologists, and scientists. It includes interviews with Nisga'a elders, a photo library, a map collection, historical documents, and transcripts. AND is working to set up access to its collection for students and the general public.

"It's really gratifying to know that there are people on this earth who still have the patience to go through negotiations for over 100 years and come out winning. It reminds me of Moses being 40 years in the desert and finally building a nation."

— Milton Wong, Chairman,
HSBC Asset Management (Canada) Ltd.

Nisga'a Artifacts

The remarkable story of the repatriation of Nisga'a artifacts under the Nisga'a Final Agreement is one of co-operation, cross-cultural understanding, and goodwill.

Nisga'a artifacts are an important expression of Nisga'a culture. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, Nisga'a artifacts were collected by numerous individuals. Some of these collections were eventually transferred to the Royal British Columbia Museum and the Canadian Museum of Civilisation. The treaty provides for the return of approximately 100 artifacts currently held by the Canadian Museum of Civilisation and 180 from the Royal British Columbia Museum.

With the goal of sharing Nisga'a culture with the rest of the world, some of the artifacts will remain in the care of museums so others can learn about the Nisga'a, their land, and their culture. Artifacts returned to the Nass Valley will be housed in a special collection of the Nisga'a Nation. A facility of international standard will be built in the village of Laxgalts'ap to provide a central destination for returning artifacts and for visitors wishing to learn more about Nisga'a culture and heritage.

Nisga'a Treaty Gallery

Since the Effective Date, major museums across North America have been featuring Nisga'a culture and artifacts. The Canadian Museum of Civilisation, the Royal Ontario Museum, the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology, and the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City have all brought the story of Nisga'a heritage and determination to a wider audience.

Planning is also underway for an interpretive display of the Nisga'a Treaty at the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria. With text, photos, and artifacts, the Nisga'a Treaty Gallery is designed to give British Columbians, Canadians, and international visitors a better understanding of the Nisga'a Final Agreement. Scheduled to open in early 2002, the display will offer a glimpse of contemporary Nisga'a culture, language, and the opportunities the treaty represents for the Nisga'a people.





