



GITXSAN HUWILP GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE GITXSAN HEREDITARY CHIEFS

GITXSAN FAST FACTS

Gitksan, is a traditional society, governed by a system of Ayookw (laws) and (Adaakw) oral histories. The Gitksan Laxyip (lands) covers 35,000 sq. km in Northwest BC from Terrace to Hazelton to Smithers.

Of the 35,000 sq.km, Gitksan control 70% of the Laxyip (lands), excluding roads, bridges and Crown land. They have lived off their Laxyip (lands) and Anaat (waters) of the basin of the upper Skeena River around Legate Creek to the Skeena's headwaters and its surrounding tributaries, Gitksan control 100% of the Anaat within their traditional territories. Gitksan Huwilp Government leads by using their Ayookw and Adaakw which have been in place since time immemorial. Led by Hereditary Chiefs, and governed autonomously through each House Group - Wilp.

Gitksan are a matriarchal society consisting of four clans: Lax Seel/Genada (Frog), Lax Skiik (Eagle), Lax Gibuu (Wolf), and Gisgaast (Fireweed). Although each clan consists of a series of independent Houses (Huwilp), each with their own Wii Simoogit (High Chief), and traditional territories and fishing sites, they live interdependent to each other. Specifically,

Gis'kaast / Fireweed has 19 Wilps
Lax Gibuu / Wolf has 17 Wilps
Lax Skiik / Eagle has 4 Wilps
Lax Seel / Frog (Giigeenix) has 11 Wilps
Genada / Frog (Gyeets) has 6 Wilps

Currently, 18,000 people of Gitksan heritage live around the world.

Gitksanimaax is the traditional Gitksan language. Dialects include Giigeenix (up river) and Gyeets (down river).

Archaeological evidence shows that Gitksan have been inhabiting their traditional lands for at least 10,000 years.

GITXSAN GLOSSARY

Adaakw oral history of the Gitksan traditions and culture
Ama hiihluxw good morning
Ama silkwsa good afternoon
Ama yuxwsa good evening
Anaat the waterways of the Gitksan traditional territory.
Ayookw the traditional laws that govern the Gitksan since time immemorial
Delgamuukw a 1997 joint lawsuit and the first comprehensive validation of the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en Indigenous rights and title of their traditional lands by the Supreme Court of Canada
Git People
Gitksan People of the River of Mist
Ham i yaa Thank you
Laxyip Gitksan lands in their traditional territory.
Simoogit Chief
Simgiyat Chiefs
Wilaloo Gitksan way of life
Wilp ahlee'e jail/bloodhouse