

Nuxalk Nation Government



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"First of all; we acknowledge and recognize Tatau, the Creator through Manakays, the Great Spirit for all that is provided for us since the beginning of time and still is today."

Message to the General Meeting at Lobeico Hall, 9 June 1997

Right from the first time your grandparents arrived here in this Valley our grandparents were friendly with them, that's the way it was in those days. The means of transportation was the river canoe. Our ancestors helped one another if there was a fire or an accident. We helped one another. Our people helped your people survive here.

Today, we still have friends here amongst you. Here in this valley we don't hate anyone. We have no intentions of hurting anyone. This has always been the way of our people. Our movement has always been that of non-violence.

Our message is to the multinational corporations who come in and strip our forests. The way in which they come in and devastate our forests then leave without total consideration of our future. We need to consider the future of all our children and our grandchildren who will be affected by this method of destructive clearcutting. The land has a great meaning to us. Places like Ista are very sacred to our people.

Our grandmothers have always sang the song of Ista. This place is sacred as it was where the First Nuxalk women descended there. Our responsibility to protect the land comes from

Manakays, the Great Spirit. When we don our dance blankets we make a statement to Manakays that we accept the responsibility that we have to speak for the Bear, Raven, Eagle, Killer Whale, and Salmon who will be affected by logging.

Jobs should stay in the Bella Coola Valley so that all the locals can work. Raw logs should stay in Bella Coola and not shipped out. Short term multinational companies like Interfor clearcut huge areas of forests in about five years or less whereas it would take the local community 50 years or more to harvest the wood.

There are people targeting Forest Action Network, Greenpeace and other environmental groups but these groups are not against jobs. They are our friends and they have agreed to help protect our lands from clearcut logging practices.

I sincerely hope that in this statement I have not offended anyone. I feel we need to respect each others' beliefs and work towards one common goal which is the survival of all people.

For the future of our children, grandchildren and those yet to be born . . .

Way!

**Nuximlayc (Lawrence Pootlass)
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