

Nuxalk Nation Government



Press Release

13 February 2008

"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."

We, as Nualkmc went to Nuxalknalus, to protect our Valley of ISTA because it has a spiritual significance to the existence of Nuxalk People. The sacred story of ISTA is where the first Nuxalk woman descended to our lands from Nusmata. Today we continue to sing the Song of ISTA danced by our ladies to introduce our most powerful dance of Thunder, the "T'sayulth." Lady ISTA brought the family names, peoples' names, and their family crests for our traditional blankets to show who we are as the Nuxalk. Today we pay tribute to one of our Elders, Lucy Mack, "Skuelikwana," a name which originates from ISTA.

To clearcut log the Valley of ISTA is like the tearing down of other peoples' churches. To destroy ISTA is to destroy Nuxalk beliefs; our Human and Indigenous Rights; our identity as a People.

We aligned ourselves with environmental groups as guests to our Ancestral Lands to help get the word out to the world and protect our Lands. We aligned with them to protect the environment and all the life therein because that is what they do. It became a strong alliance, a known encounter against many odds. It was done by protocol and understanding with mutual respect for each others' goals. It has been regarded as a protest and blockade against clearcut logging practices and its impacts. But for us, it was for Nuxalk history, existence, beliefs, and who we are as a People.

As Nuxalkmc, we have never ceded, treated, sold, or relinquished our connection to our Lands and Rights. Our Creator through the Great Spirit put us into these Lands to care for and protect; as Nuxalkmc, we are committed to do so.

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

Way!

**Hereditary Chief Qwatsinas
House of Smayusta
Q'umk'uts' (Bella Coola)**