

MEDIA FACT SHEET:
The Squamish Nation

Winter 2010

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OFFICIAL SPOKESPERSONS: Chief Gibby Jacob and Chief Ian Campbell

OVERVIEW: The Squamish Nation's total land reserves cover 6,732 square kilometers. There are 24 Squamish Indian Reserves comprising about one half of one percent of the Traditional Territory. These parcels of land are scattered from North Vancouver and Gibson's Landing to the area north of Howe Sound. The Squamish Nation is comprised of 3,556 people (as of January 1, 2010) who live among nine communities stretching from North Vancouver to the northern area of Howe Sound. Membership is determined by birthright and by marriage. The Nation is self-governing and has created its own infrastructure that includes departments for Ayas Men Men Child and Family Services, Chen Chen Stway Human Resources, Chiefs and Council, Communications and Band Manager Services, Community Operations, Education, Finance, Health Services, Housing, Intergovernmental Relations, Natural Resources and Revenue, Project Negotiations and Development, Business Revenue and Services, Registry (Land & Membership), Recreation and Employment & Training.

HISTORY: The Squamish people are descendants of the Coast Salish aboriginals who lived in the present day Greater Vancouver area, Gibson's Landing and the Squamish River watershed. After contact with European settlers, 16 Squamish speaking tribes amalgamated to form one unit called the Squamish Indian Band. The amalgamation was signed on July 23, 1923 and was established to guarantee equality to all Squamish people and to ensure good government.

GOVERNANCE: Programs and services for the membership are administered by Chiefs and Council, Band Manager and 12 Departments. Chiefs and Council is comprised of 16 elected officials who are elected by members for four year terms. A Band Manager (who oversees the overall finances and operations of the Nation) is also elected by members for a four year term.

CULTURE: Although the Squamish Nation has embraced modern life, the cultural traditions of the original Coast Salish people are still very much in evidence. The

original Salish culture was fueled by the rich, natural resources of the Pacific Northwest coast. Those resources – from salmon and wild berries to the vast tracks of forest, lakes and rivers – were shared by all and celebrated in the carvings, paintings and music of the Salish people (as they still are today). Ceremonial events are typically held in “The Longhouse”, a large meeting hall based on the original communal dwellings that housed and brought people together for festivals and other special events. Complex kinship ties connect social life and cultural events to different families and nearby nations. Native language is Skwxwu7mesh Snichim (“People of the Sacred Water”).

QUOTE: “Now it’s our turn to develop our lands to their best and highest use. This is not only an opportunity for us – it’s also Vancouver’s next great opportunity. It will be one of the most significant urban renewal projects in the world.” – Chief Gibby Jacob, December 10, 2009

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY: The Squamish Nation owns land in the Lower Mainland that has some of the highest real estate value in Canada. Some of these lands are leased and rent is generated to fund programs and services for membership. Some tenants on Squamish lands include: Park Royal Shopping Centre, the International Plaza, the Greater Vancouver Sewage Treatment Plant, the Capilano Trailer Park, and the Real Canadian Superstore.

The Squamish Nation has been a proponent of several federal legislative initiatives including the the First Nations Land Management Act (FNLMA), the First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act (FSMA) and the First Nations Commercial and Industrial Development Act (FNCIDA). Most recently, the Squamish Nation has been working in partnership with British Columbia and Canada to introduce amendments to FNCIDA to improve the land title system on designated parcels of reserve land.

BUSINESS REVENUES: Additional revenues are earned through Squamish Nation businesses, which include Mosquito Creek & Lynnwood marinas, driving range and a gas bar. Another business arrangement was recently concluded that saw six digital billboards erected on Squamish Nation lands in North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Vancouver and Squamish; that contract is projected to bring some \$60 million in revenue to the Squamish Nation over the next 30 years. The Squamish Nation has also recently completed an agreement that will see a state-of-the-art gaming facility built across from the Nation’s “Totem Hall” facility on the highway leading into Squamish.

OLYMPIC HOSTS: For the first time in history, aboriginals will share (as equal partners) in the hosting of the Olympic Games (in this case, the “Four Host First Nations” are the Squamish, Li’wat, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam). Fourteen of the 20 Olympic and Paralympic events are scheduled to take place in the Nation’s shared territories. Squamish Nation Chief Gibby Jacob was instrumental in negotiating the agreement on behalf of the Four Host Nations, and now sits on the Board of Directors

for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games as a representative of both the Squamish Nation and the Lil'wat Nation.

OLYMPIC RETURNS: The Olympic agreement has created much needed employment for many Squamish Nation people along with significant returns for Squamish Nation businesses. Aboriginal art and culture are reflected in both the 2010 Winter Olympics logo ("Ilanaaq") and the Olympic medals themselves, which feature original West Coast aboriginal designs of an orca and a raven. Representatives from the Four Host First Nations will also participate as Olympic torch bearers; aboriginal artists and musicians will also perform in the ceremonies.

SHARED LEGACIES: In 2001, Squamish and Lil'wat Nation signed a Shared Legacies Agreement with the Province and the 2010 Bid Corporation. Key elements of the agreement are: Lands for economic development; Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre; Skills and training; Naming and recognition; Legacy housing; Aboriginal youth sports legacy; and Economic opportunities.

SQUAMISH LIL'WAT CULTURAL CENTRE: Another partnership that was recently formed between the Squamish Nation, the Lil'wat Nation, Bell Canada and the Province of British Columbia is the Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Museum in Whistler. This 28,000 square foot facility features award-winning architecture that houses authentic Squamish and Lil'wat artifacts, hands-on demonstrations, a theatre, gift shop and meeting centre.