



Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

AHOUSAHT
DITIDAHT
ʔIIHATIS/ČIINAᖶINT
HESQUIAHT
HUPACASATH

HUU-AY-AHT
KA:YU:K'T'H'/CHE:K:TLES7ET'H'
MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT
NUCHATLAHT
TLA-O-QUI-AHT

TOQUAHT
TSESHAHT
UCHUCKLESAHT
YUUŁU7IŁ7ATH

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Song, dance and plentiful seafood to celebrate Nuuchahnulth fishing rights

On Saturday, November 1, Nuuchahnulth Ha'wiih (hereditary Chiefs), fishers, members, and supporters will gather in Port Alberni to celebrate the success of Nuuchahnulth Nations in the legal recognition of the Aboriginal Rights to fish for economic purposes.

"This is a day to recognize our momentous wins, to celebrate through our ceremonies songs, dances, and to hold up and share a meal with all the people who have worked for us and with us to get to this day," says Deb Foxcroft, NTC President. "However this decision isn't just a win and celebration for us; the results of this decision have a ripple effect with all the First Nations in B.C. and in Canada."

The event highlights the connection of Nuuchahnulth Nations to their sea resources and showcases their reputation as great hosts. The celebration will include a diversity of seafood to demonstrate the abundance and variety of species that Nuuchahnulth Ha'wiih have in their Ha-ha-houlthee (territories).

On January 30th, 2014 a decade-long battle with the Canadian government over fishing rights ended when the Supreme Court of Canada refused to hear Canada's appeal in the Ahousaht et al. vs. Canada court case. The five First Nations—Ahousaht, Ehattesaht/Chinehkint, Hesquiaht, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht—received a final affirmation of the Nations' Aboriginal fishing rights, confirming again that Nuuchahnulth are a fishing people, dependent on the sea for their food and economy.

"Five of the 14 Nuuchahnulth Nations have the constitutionally protected right to fish and sell all species of fish within their territories," says Ken Watts, NTC Vice-President. "The decision holds tremendous promise for our communities in terms of economic opportunities and improving social conditions. Nobody can take those rights away. They are cemented in history."

In 2009, the BC Supreme Court determined the five Nuuchahnulth Nations as fishing rights holders, and that Canada's fisheries policies and regulations had infringed their Aboriginal fishing rights. The Court instructed Canada to negotiate a "new fisheries regime" based on the Aboriginal Rights of the Nations. Unfortunately, Canada has been reluctant to engage in meaningful negotiations, forcing the Nations back into court this spring to seek full implementation of the Aboriginal rights to fish and sell all species in their territories.

Even with further litigation ahead, Nuuchahnulth Ha'wiih decided after last January's Supreme Court decision that it was time to celebrate the tremendous achievement thus far and to thank Nuuchahnulth Nations, fishers, members, staff and other supporters.

Adds Deb Foxcroft, "We are excited and stand proud in our strength as Nuuchahnulth people coming together to celebrate our success."

The event starts at 10 a.m. and takes place at Maht Mahs Gym, 5000 Tsuma-as Drive in Port Alberni.

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