

# Nuxalk Nation Government



## **Statement on Ista By Hereditary Chief Qwatsinas**

**February 13, 2008  
Bella Coola, Nuxalk Territory**

We, as Nualkmc went to Nuxalknalus, "Ista," to protect our valley because it has a very 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, "Skuclikwana," 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, human and Indigenous rights, and 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. It was a known encounter against many odds. It was done by protocol and understanding with mutual respect for each other's goals. It has been regarded as a protest/blockade against logging, 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.

**Nuxalk Strong, Nuxalk Forever . . . .**