

Histories, Territories and Laws of the Kitwancool Part II: Gitanyow Lax'yip Protection Plan

Introduction

The Gitanyow Huwilp have exercised their authority and legal obligation to sustain and protect the land and resources of their territories (Lax'yip) for millennia. The Gitanyow have remained steadfast in the defence of their inherent title and jurisdiction over their territories in the face of ever greater encroachment from forestry, mining, settlement, and other threats. They have done so through military, diplomatic and legal means. In 1959, the Gitanyow Chiefs, in conjunction with the Provincial Museum of British Columbia, published Histories, Territories and Laws of the Kitwancool (Gitanyow). The histories, territorial boundaries and legal principles recorded therein go back thousands of years and will continue to exist forever.

The Gitanyow have developed Histories, Territories and Laws of the Kitwancool (Gitanyow) Part II: Gitanyow Lax'yip Protection Plan to provide direction about land and resource use in their territories in accordance with their inherent title, jurisdiction and law. A planning team consisting of Chiefs, Matriarchs and technical experts worked for close to a decade to develop the plan, which gives effect to and forms part of Gitanyow law. Volume One summarizes the Gitanyow legal principles that underlie the plan and contains maps of each Wilp showing relevant land and water designations. Volume Two contains a number of important related legal and technical documents, including the Gitanyow Constitution and detailed management objectives for land and water use in Gitanyow territories.

The Gitanyow Lax'yip are rich and abundant, capable of supporting diverse needs of a modern society. However, the Gitanyow also require that human needs be met in a manner that respects the needs of the plants and animals that share the land and waters, in accordance with Gitanyow law, in order to ensure Wilp sustainability. The rules for doing so are set out in the Gitanyow Lax'yip Protection Plan.

[Russ – the text on land use planning that appears here in the draft of the formatted report has been moved to the land use planning section in the body of the report]The Gitanyow [NOTE; Voice Changes from third to first person]

We are the Gitanyow, and the Gitanyow Lax'yip Protection Plan has been enacted to uphold our ancestral laws as they relate to land and resource use in our territories, or Lax'yip. These territories encompass approximately 627,342.00 hectares in the mid-Nass, Upper Kitwanga, and Upper Kispiox Watersheds.

The Gitanyow peoples are known collectively as the Gitanyow Huwilp, and today comprise approximately 2000 individuals. The Gitanyow Huwilp consists of two pdeek