

Ts'msyen

Inside the Skeena River

Ts'm = in; inside; within

Ksiyeen = Skeena River

Ksi= out

Yeen= fog/mist

We are the people of Kitsumkalum

Kitsumkalum, a Galts'ap (community) of the Tsimshian Nation. The meaning of Kitsumkalum has been described a few different ways. One of the more common descriptions is that the name refers to the riffles in the water as it runs over the rocks, while another refers to 'people of the plateau'. Kitsumkalum First Nation is a Tsimshian community located at the confluence of the Skeena and Kalum Rivers.

One of our ancestral villages, Dałk Gylakyaw (Robin Town), is located a mere few miles upstream at the canyon on the Kalum River. It was at Robin Town that our original four pteex (clans) first came together and the abundance of the resources from the land and waterways made settlement possible.

Our four pteex are: Gisbutwada (Killerwhale), Laxsgiik (Eagle), Ganhada (Raven), and Laxyibuu (Wolf). Over time, as with all Tsimshian communities, different house groups under these four pteex have become part of the community eventually creating the social and political make-up of our community today. Although our daily operations function under the Federal Government's Indian Band system, our long-standing political system that operates under our hereditary chiefs is alive and well despite the complex impacts of colonization.



Our traditional territorial lands (laxyuup) are located in and around the Kitsumkalum watershed, Skeena River and Prince Rupert Coast. Although this was where our permanent villages were located, our ancestors carried out what is sometimes referred to as a 'seasonal round', travelling to our seasonal village sites down the Skeena River and on the coast to gather ocean and land foods. These sites were maintained, used year after year, and we still frequent these spots today for many of our foods. These foods, then and now, sustain our people throughout the year and are essential to our feast system through which we carry out our Tsimshian politics and practice our culture – keeping it strong and vibrant.

Our connection to the land, the rivers and the coast is central to our social, cultural, and political life and helps maintain our ideologies as Kitsumkalum and as Tsimshian. Our Chief and Matriarch names are attached to the land, defining the territories of our house groups and rooting us firmly in place. These roots are strong and can never be broken: roots that stretch back through time, allowing us to always maintain our connection to our ancestors; burrow deep, keeping us connected to the land, its resources and to our culture; and always reach forward into the future, providing a sense of place, home and identity for our children and future generations to come.

Gitsmgeelm de wil 'wit'waatgm! (We are Kitsumkalum!)

*All spellings of the words in our language, Sm'algyax, are standardized to the spellings in *People of the Robin: the Tsimshian of Kitsumkalum* by James Andrew McDonald (2003) in order to remain consistent with other writings on this poster.

Ts'msyen (Tsimshian) translates as "Inside the Skeena River". Kitsumkalum people travelled seasonally throughout our lands following vegetation and hunting cycles.



Information from Kitsumkalum Research Department.

For more information visit www.kitsumkalum.com