



Esquimalt Nation

People of the Esquimalt Nation have survived through many adversities and challenges. Despite this, values such as traditional dance, music, art and cultivating a deep respect for Elders, spirituality and traditional customs continue to be taught to young people. Leadership and mentoring are promoted throughout the community. Encouraging youth to pursue excellence through sports, higher education and the arts has benefited the Esquimalt people in the past and will continue to do so for generations to come.

The wolf is the symbol of the Esquimalt Nation. It represents loyalty and family.



Esquimalt Nation

The Lkwungen People



Songhees Nation



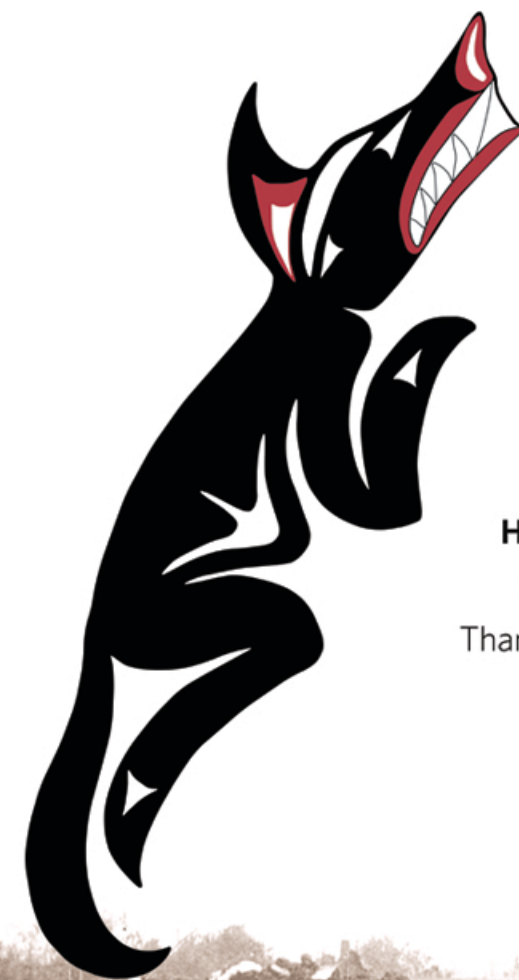
Traditional and Treaty Territories of the Lkwungen People

- Village Sites
- Temporary Camps

Lkwungen Tung'exw

The Songhees and Esquimalt Nations are Lkwungen speaking people.

The ancestors lived, harvested, fished and hunted this land since time immemorial. We have a historical relationship to the land. Archaeological evidence links the cultural ancestry to this region dating back thousands of years. The Songhees and Esquimalt Nations are a living culture governed by the foundation and legacy left to us by the ancestors and elders. We are born to a rich cultural heritage. The resilience of the ancestors and elders is demonstrated in the ability to co-exist in today's diverse world.



Traditional Greeting

A'si'em nu'shwala'kwa
(Oh-sea-em new-shwa-la-kwa)
My honourable close family

A'si'em nu schala'cha
(Oh-sea-em new-chayla-cha)
My honourable friends

Hay'sxw'qa gwns ane 'techul Lkwungen Tung'ex"
(Hy-sh-kwa gwns ana techul Lakwunen too-nulth)

Thank you for coming to Xwsepsum and Lkwungen land,
the land of the smoked herring

Hay'sxw'qa si'em nakwilia
(Hy-sh-kwa sea-em na-kwil-ia)

Thank you my honourable people



Image PND6810 (AA-00100) courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Great Potlatch of 1874 held by Chief Sqwameyuqs

About this kiosk

Design and layout of all 3 panels by Darlene Gait
Esquimalt Nation art work by Darlene Gait.
Whale and Wolf art (above) by Butch Dick
Design of Esquimalt Nation Wolf header by Darlene Gait
Design of Songhees Nation Wolf header by Butch Dick



Proudly supported by the CRD



Songhees Nation



Songhees Wellness Center, opened in January 2014

Photo by Dean Kalyan



A Legend of Camossung

After the flood, the transformer, Haylas, was travelling with Raven and Mink teaching the people how things were to be done. When they reached a grand waterway cutting through the land, they came upon a young girl named Camossung and her grandfather. She was crying, so Haylas asked her why. "My father is angry with me", she replied, "and will not give me anything to eat." Haylas had travelled far and wide and knew of many foods so he asked her if she liked sturgeon. When she answered "No", he threw the sturgeon into the Fraser River, and that is why there are sturgeons there and not here. He asked her if she liked cranberries. When she answered "No", he threw them into Shawnigan Lake, and that is why there are cranberries there now. She refused many things that were offered, but she accepted duck, herring, coho and oyster, and that is why these were plentiful in the Gorge Waterway. Unimpressed by her greed and lack of gratitude, Haylas told her that she would have to look after the food resources for her people and he turned her and her grandfather into stone. This is the stone that was in the Gorge Narrows.

"Sign of Gratitude" carving by Butch Dick

This legend highlights important aspects of Lkwungen belief, reminding us to be grateful for the bounty we have been given. Through gratitude and careful stewardship we can live in balance with our environment.



Kwum Kwum Lelum after school program

Learn Teach Share Value Protect

Nétsamaát We Are All One

We Songhees were moved from the place where our ancestors worked, laughed, celebrated and lived. Our daily lives are very different from that of our ancestors, yet we have protected aspects of our traditional Lkwungen life that reflect a worldview shared with our ancestors and our children. Our ways live both with and within us, and cannot be displaced. We revive gatherings, create new works of art and spaces for our people to learn, heal and govern ourselves, and we know that we can survive in the hardest of times.
We celebrate all Lkwungen, for we are all one.



Big houses on New Songhees Reserve
Maplebank



Songhees woman weaving a basket



Image A-03897 courtesy of Royal BC Museum, BC Archives

Canoe Races on the Gorge Waterway

