



## **Gitksan Treaty Office**

### **NEWS RELEASE**

Sept. 13, 2007  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Decision date announced, hereditary chiefs ready**

GITXSAN TERRITORIES – Gitksan hereditary chiefs announced today that they are gathering at Gitanmaax Hall on Sept. 17 to receive the Kemess North joint review panel’s recommendation on Northgate Mineral’s proposal to turn a large, pristine mountain lake into a toxic tailings pond on their traditional territories.

“We’ve spent a lot of time and thousands of dollars in court and in front of the joint review panel explaining our ayookw (laws) and adaawk (oral histories) as they relate to the protection of Taax Daajii (Amazay Lake),” said Gitksan Chiefs’ Office executive director Luutkudziiwus (Gordon Sebastian). “It is our hope that the panel members were able to understand what we mean when we say An haahl bixhoo’osxw – that life is water and water is life -- on our traditional territories.”

Gitksan hereditary chiefs (Simgigyet) will hear results of the panel’s recommendation at 2 p.m. on Sept. 17. The joint Canada-BC panel is releasing its report on Northgate Mineral’s proposal to develop the Kemess North copper-gold mine 200 km northeast of Hazelton on Gitksan traditional territories. As part of the proposal Northgate wants to kill six-kilometre long Taax Daajii (Amazay Lake) by using it as a dump for 750 million tons of acid producing tailings.

Simgigyet Nii Kyap (hereditary chief Rena Benson) and Milulaak (hereditary chief Alice Jeffrey), whose territories are affected by Kemess North, recently visited Taax Daajii to perform an Eagle Down ceremony and pray to the spirit of the lake.

“We were thanking the Creator for the water and thanking our ancestors who protected this land for future generations,” said Nii Kyap about the ceremony. “I can’t understand why people don’t think about the effect killing a watershed will have. You don’t need to go to school to know that – to know how to protect the fish and game.”

“Why do they want to wreck a pristine lake?,” said Miluulak. “My ancestors fought for this territory and it is our job to take care of it today.”

Gitksan Simgigyet, including Simgigyet Nii Kyap and Simgigyet Miluulak, will arrive at Gitanmaax Hall beginning at 1:00 p.m. for the 2 p.m. announcement. Media are invited to attend.

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Video footage of the Eagle Down ceremony can be viewed at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zr\\_QbfSZ2iM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zr_QbfSZ2iM)  
Raw footage and photographs are available to media outlets.

For more information:

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