



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH NATION

PEOPLE OF THE INLET

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *Who is the Tsleil-Waututh Nation?*

The Tsleil-Waututh Nation is a small but growing Coast Salish community of almost 500 people, living on a reserve on Burrard Inlet in North Vancouver with additional reserve and private lands in the Indian River valley.

2. *Where is your territory; where do you live?*

Our traditional territory – the land we have always occupied and used – encompasses a large area of 720 square miles that reaches from the Fraser River in the south to Mamquam Lake (east of Whistler) in the north. Today, about half of our people live in Burrard Inlet Indian Reserve #3 (a government-allocated name) and the balance live off the reserve. In addition, there are two smaller reserves at the head of Indian Arm.

3. *What does Tsleil-Waututh mean?*

Tsleil-Waututh (pronounced Slay-wah-tuth) means *People of the Inlet* in Downriver Halkomelem, our traditional language.

4. *You describe yourselves as “People of the Inlet” and “Children of Takaya.” Explain what these terms mean.*

“People of the Inlet” refers to our close relationship with the water. We have lived in and along our Inlet since time out of mind. Our people used to say “When the tide went out, the table was set” in reference to the many food sources once available to us from the inlet. In our language, “Takaya” means wolf, and we are the Children of Takaya. The Story of the Wolf tells us that the Creator transformed the Wolf into the first Tsleil-Waututh, and made the Wolf responsible for this land.

5. *Why do we also see you referred to as the “Burrard Indian Band”?*

Indian Reserves were set out in this area in 1869, by the Federal Government. Our 276 acres was called Burrard Inlet Indian Reserve #3, it is where our People were situated when the reserve was created. This area is actually a former summer village site for our People. We have been using our name, Tsleil-Waututh Nation since 2000.

6. *How are you distinct from the other Coast Salish First Nations?*

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Each of the numerous Coast Salish First Nations has traditional territory within the areas of Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. Each of us has our own culture, our own language, our own traditional territory.

7. *What are the characteristics of your culture?*

To the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, our culture is expressed in our laws and our teachings: caring for the land and water, drumming and dancing, carving and weaving, our language and traditions, our regalia, our ceremonies, the stories and teachings we have been told and we tell our children and the strong sense of family within our community. Our culture has a deep connection to the land, water, resources, animals, and the Creator. We believe that all living creatures and human beings have a purpose; it is our sacred trust, to care for this territory so that all can live in harmony and balance.

8. *What do you want people to know about the Tsleil-Waututh?*

We acknowledge the past history of wrongdoing to our people however we build on the strength and wisdom of our ancestors and in the spirit of unity and togetherness we will move forward in a positive manner.

We are a visible and active First Nation in an urbanized setting. We continue to look for new partnerships, new opportunities, and new ways to share who we are. There is a great opportunity for us to move forward while celebrating our rich culture and building a strong healthy economy, and a strong healthy nation.

“We know where we come from and we know who we are. We are looking forward.”
(Tsleil-Waututh Nation Declaration, 1997)

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