



# Nuchatlaht First Nation



## PRESS RELEASE

### Vancouver Island First Nation Files Historic Aboriginal Land Title Case

(Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, B.C. – January 20, 2017) This morning, on the steps of the B.C. Supreme Court in Vancouver, the Tyee Ha'wilt (Hereditary Head Chief), Walter Michael of the Nuchatlaht First Nation declared his Nation will be seeking an official recognition of the rights and titles held solely by Nuchatlaht for thousands of years.

Tyee Ha'wilt Michael stated *“Nuchatlaht has spent many frustrating years of discussions at the Treaty table and other processes trying to protect our lands and the health of our people. Successive governments have failed to give Nuchatlaht serious iisaak (respect) for their Rights and Title.”*

Located in a once pristine area on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, the Nuchatlaht tribe have continuously and exclusively occupied their territory and maintained their traditional hereditary government. Successive generations of Nuchatlaht Ha'wiih (Chiefs) have refused to surrender their title and the Nuchatlaht muschim (People) have defended their territory with arms in ancient times.

When the first European explorers arrived in Nuchatlaht territory, they observed and recognized Nuchatlaht ownership and governance and paid tribute to their Ha'wiih. Until the arrival of these early foreign visitors and the interference of modern governments, Nuchatlaht Ha'wiih intensely managed and protected all land and aquatic resources within their Hahoulthi (Chief's exclusive territory).

This continuous, sustainable management cycle protected the land and resources and sustained the Nuchatlaht people. This system was interrupted when wasteful industrial systems were implemented by B.C. and Canada during the last 150 years. These actions have enriched corporations, but adversely impacted Nuchatlaht sacred land and food sources while leaving few benefits for the Nuchatlaht people.

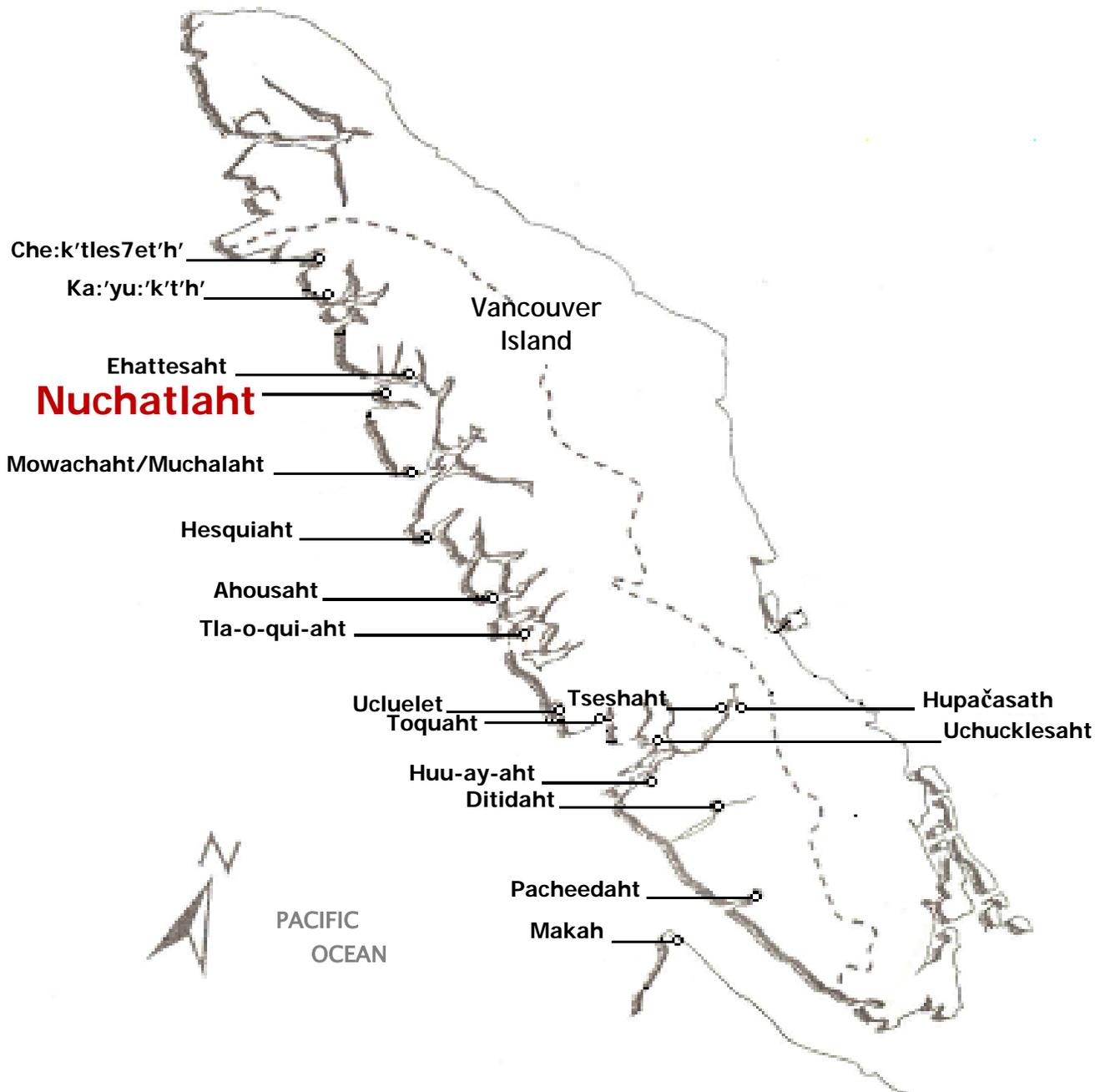
After decades of futile efforts, the Ha'wilt of Nuchatlaht has sought the assistance of the same legal team that was so successful in the recent landmark Aboriginal Title Supreme Court victory of the Tsilhqot'in Nation in Central B.C.

Tyee Ha'wilt Michael declared *“These governments need to hear from the court system to allow us to restore and protect our ancestral lands for the benefit of all future generations.”*

#### Media inquiries:

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# Nuu-chah-nulth Territories



To contribute financially or seek more information about this project, please contact:

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*“.....Without a question these people are the richest in every respect in British Columbia .”*

Blenkinsop, George. "Report to J.W. Powell, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, by G. Blenkinsop, 23 September, 1874."  
(Reporting on his observations of visiting Nuuchah-nulth people)