

In British Columbia, native groups have traditionally depended heavily on salmon, not only for food but also for cultural as well as economic purposes; consequently, fish will undoubtedly be a major component of any settlement. It is not, however, the intention of this government to settle the land claims at the expense of the non-native fishing community. As indicated earlier, there are several components that make up a land claim settlement and when an agreement is finally concluded, there will be a proper mix of land, natural resources and compensation involved in the settlement.

Perhaps it would be useful to explain the major principles being followed in attempting to negotiate a settlement of the Nisga'a fisheries component. Specifically they are:

1. The establishment through negotiation of the share of salmon which will be allocated to the Nisga'a from the total salmon resource available for all fishermen.
2. The establishment of a guaranteed amount of salmon to meet traditional Nisga'a requirements for food, societal and barter purposes. The 120,000 pieces which are currently the subject of negotiation represent an estimate of the amount of salmon which is currently being taken by the Nisga'a in all parts of British Columbia.
3. The settlement, when reached, will apply to all of the Nisga'a numbering approximately 5,000. Approximately 2,500 Nisga'a currently residing in other parts of British Columbia will be asked to take their fish in the settlement area, thereby freeing up for other uses fish currently taken elsewhere by the Nisga'a.
4. The Nisga'a share of the fish will be taken from the amount of salmon they are now harvesting, augmented by a salmonid enhancement program and through voluntary purchase of boats and licences.
5. Compensation for the share of the fishery which will not be returned to the Nisga'a will be made up from cash and/or other benefits such as commercial fish boats.