

An indefensible privilege

WIPING OUT SALMON IN THE BETSIAMITES RIVER
TO LIGHT UP CITIES



Pessamit Innu First Nation – September 29, 2016



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PRESENTED BY THE PESSAMIT INNU FIRST NATION



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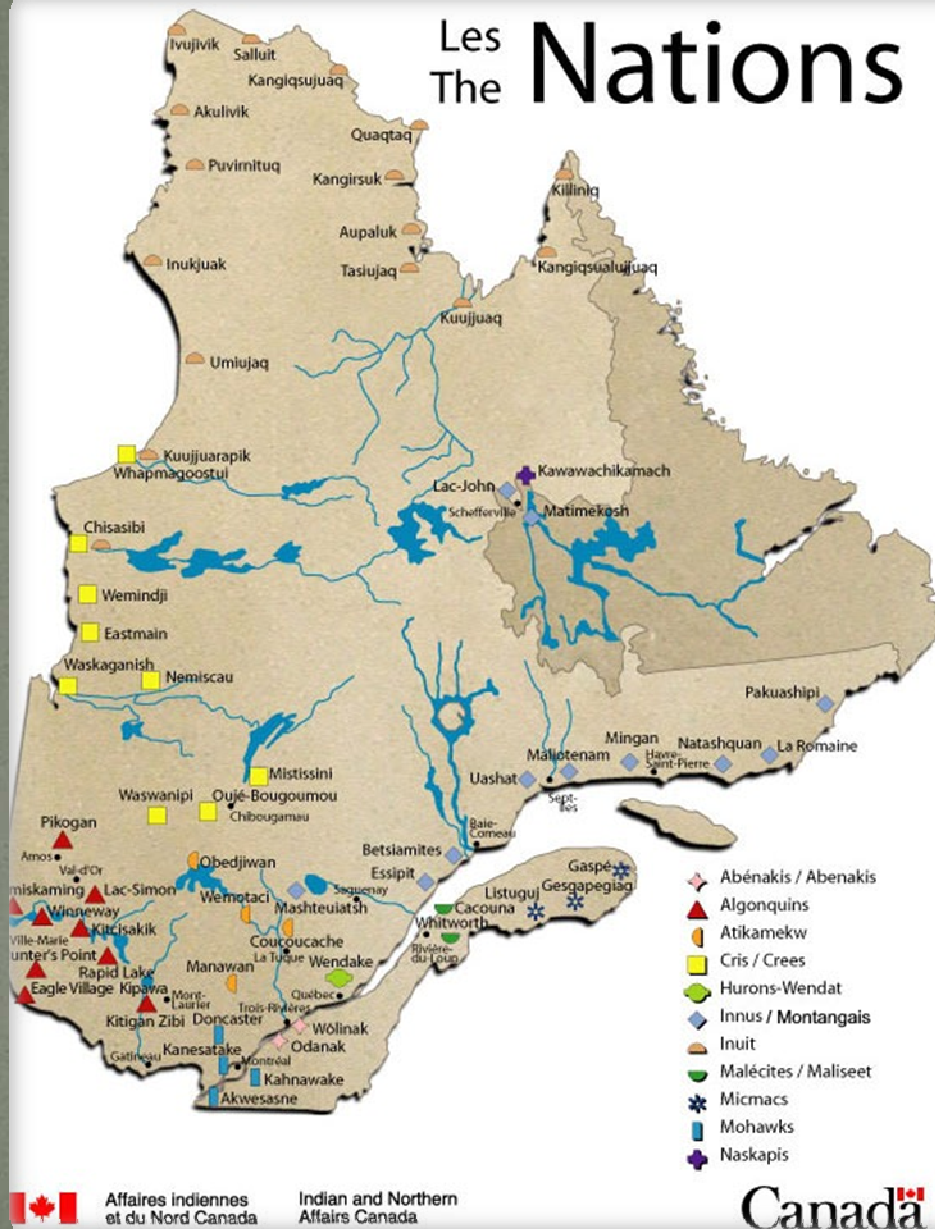


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WHO ARE THE INNU?



Les Nations The Nations



WHO ARE THE INNU?

THE INNU NATION IS ONE OF ELEVEN ABORIGINAL NATIONS LIVING IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

THERE ARE 10 INNU RESERVATIONS LOCATED IN NORTHEASTERN QUEBEC.



Affaires indiennes
et du Nord Canada

Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

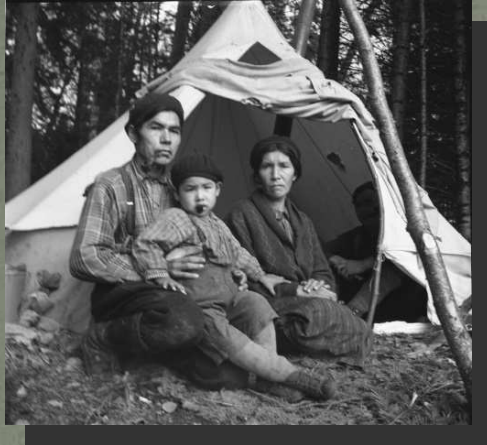
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THE INNU AND THEIR NITASSINAN

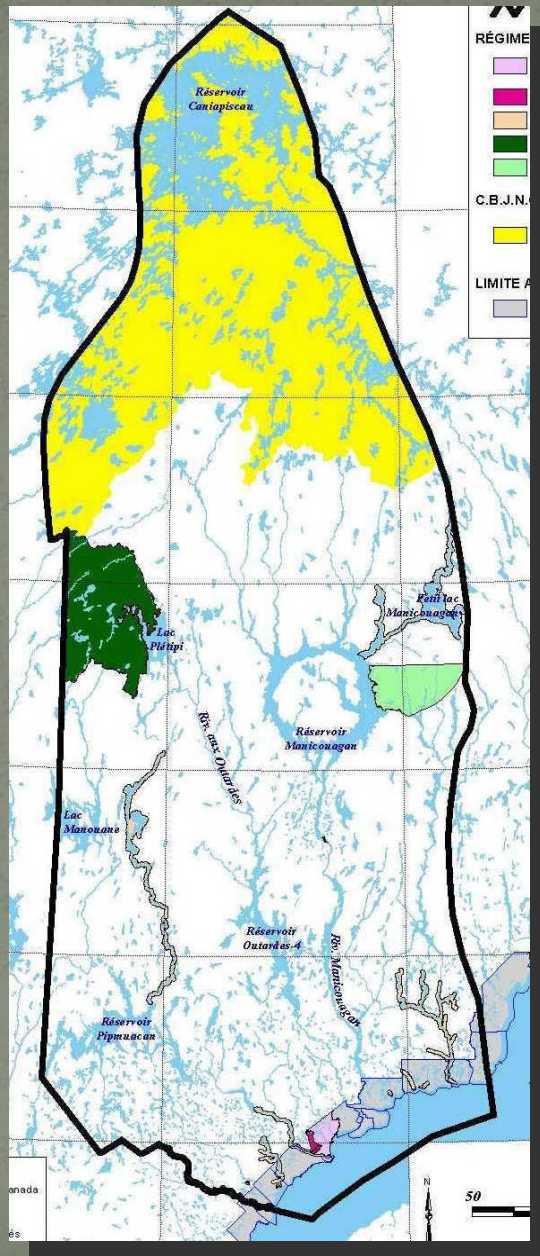


- THE INNU BELONG TO THE ALGONQUIAN LINGUISTIC FAMILY, AS DO ALGONQUIN, CREE, NASKAPI, MICMAC, ATIKAMEKW AND MALISEET.
- *INNU-AIMUN* IS THE INNU MOTHER TONGUE, STILL CURRENTLY SPOKEN.

THE INNU AND THEIR NITASSINAN



- THE INNU HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN EASTERN CANADA LAURENTIAN AND BOREAL FORESTS FOR THOUSAND OF YEARS.
- THE INNU ARE NOMADS BY NECESSITY: PREDICTABLE ANNUAL CYCLE BASED ON AVAILABILITY OF SEASONAL FOOD RESOURCES.
- INNU COMMUNITIES: TEN (10) IN QUEBEC AND TWO (2) IN LABRADOR: ± 21,000 MEMBERS.
- *NITASSINAN*: INNU TRADITIONAL TERRITORY, WHICH MEANS « *OUR LAND* ».



PESSAMIT'S NITASSINAN

- 53,400 sq. mi.
FROM 48.5th to 55th
NORTHERN
PARALLELS.



PESSAMIT'S NITASSINAN

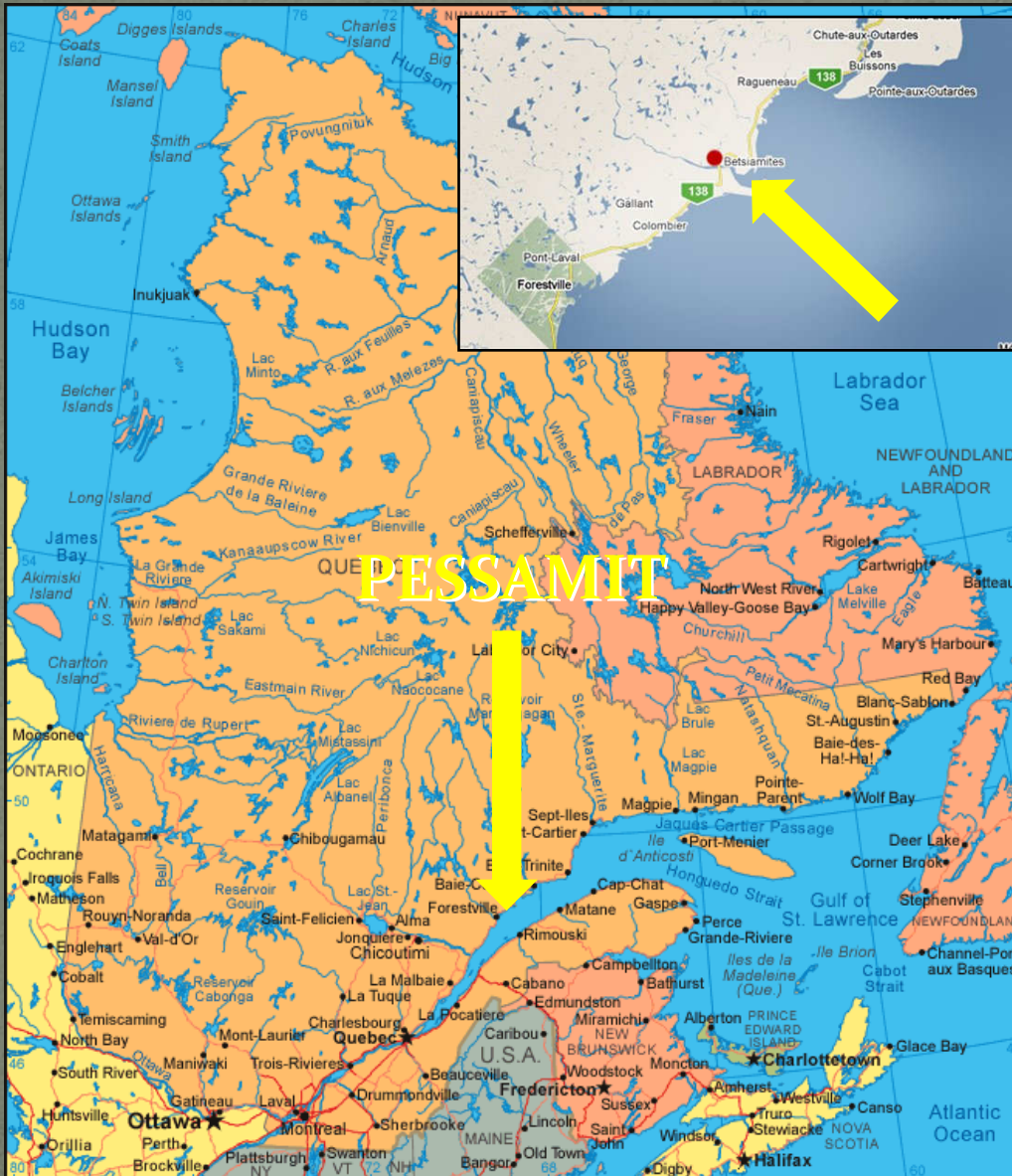
- 53,400 sq. mi.
FROM 48.5th to 55th
NORTHERN
PARALLELS

8 000 YEARS OF
RESPECTFULL
RELATIONS WITH
THE MOTHER
LAND.



PESSAMIT RESERVATION

- SETTLED ON THE ST-LAWRENCE RIVER'S NORTH SHORE, AT THE MOUTH OF THE BETSIAMITES RIVER.
- 390 MILES NORTHEAST OF MONTREAL AND 560 MILES, NORTH-NORTHEAST OF CONCORD N.H.



PESSAMIT AND THE PESSAMIULNUAT



- THE PESSAMIT INNU RESERVE WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1861 AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE ST-LAWRENCE AND BETSIAMITES RIVERS.
- THE PESSAMIT INNU FIRST NATION IS GOVERNED BY AN ELECTED BAND COUNCIL COMPOSED OF THE CHIEF AND SIX COUNSELORS.
- THE PESSAMIULNUT ARE REGISTERED MEMBERS OF THE PESSAMIT INNU FIRST NATION.
- PESSAMIT IS THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT INNU COMMUNITY WITH ± 4 000 REGISTERED PESSAMIULNUT.



PESSAMIT SALMON FISHING RIGHTS A TROUBLING HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1821:

BRITISH CROWN AWARDED EXCLUSIVE COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHING RIGHTS TO HUDSON BAY COMPANY (HBC) ON PESSAMIT'S NITASSINAN. A SUSTAINABLY HARVESTED TRADITIONAL FOOD BECAME A COMMERCIAL RESOURCE. HBC PROHIBITED OR AT LEAST SEVERELY RESTRAINED SURVIVAL FISHING ACTIVITIES.

1821 to 1859:

MULTIPLE FAMINE EPISODES CAUSED DEATHS IN THE INNU POPULATION.



PESSAMIT SALMON FISHING RIGHTS A TROUBLING HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1844 to 1850:

FACING STARVATION AND ILLICIT NITASSINAN OCCUPATION, THE INNU ADDRESSED CLOSE TO 10 PETITIONS TO CANADA'S SUCCESSIVE GOVERNORS GENERAL .

1859:

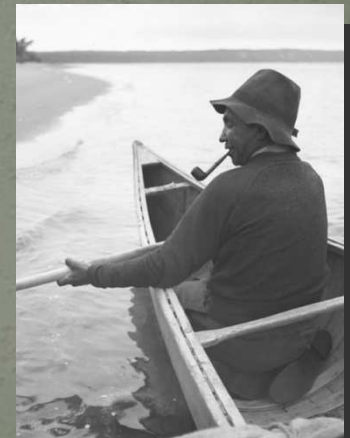
WIDE-SCALE SALMON OVERFISHING RESULTED IN THE LOSS OF HBC EXCLUSIVE COMMERCIAL RIGHTS. FROM THAT YEAR ONWARDS, THE LOWER CANADA AND QUEBEC GOVERNMENTS SUCCESSIVELY ESTABLISHED EXCLUSIVE SPORT FISHING POLICIES ON PESSAMIT'S NITASSINAN. WEALTHY BUSINESSMEN AND FOREST COMPANIES TOOK OVER THE HBC MONOPOLY. PESSAMIULNUAT WERE DOUBTLESSLY DRIVEN FROM SALMON RIVERS.

PESSAMIT SALMON FISHING RIGHTS A TROUBLING HISTORICAL CONTEXT



1864:

THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT GRANTED THE PESSAMIULNUAT WITH EXCLUSIVE SALMON FISHING RIGHTS FOR TRADITIONAL PURPOSES ON THE SOLE BETSIAMITES RIVER . THESE RIGHTS HAVE NEVER BEEN REVOKED. IN PRACTICE, THESE RIGHTS ARE NOW FUTILE DUE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SALMON POPULATION.



INFRINGEMENT OF PESSAMIT RIGHTS HISTORICAL CONTINUITY AS A PRESENT- DAY DIRECTION



BEGINNING OF THE 1950s:

REPEATED GOVERNMENTAL PRESSURE TO FORCE THE PESSAMIULNUAT PERMANENT SETTLEMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, FAMILIES BRINGING THEIR CHILDREN ON THE NITASSINAN FOR TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES WERE DEPRIVED OF FAMILY ALLOWANCES, AND BY COINCIDENCE....

1952:

LAUNCHING OF NUMEROUS MEGA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECTS ON PESSAMIT'S NITASSINAN : BERSIMIS -1 & 2, HART-JAUNE, MANIC- 1, 2, 3 & 5, OUTARDES 2, 3 & 4, ALL COMPLETED IN 1978

INFRINGEMENT OF PESSAMIT RIGHTS HISTORICAL CONTINUITY AS A PRESENT- DAY DIRECTION



- PESSAMIULNUT SYSTEMATICALLY DRIVEN FROM THEIR NITASSINAN.
- BETSIAMITES SALMON RIVER RUINED.
- 1033 SQUARE MILES OF FLOODED LANDS: 2.2 TIMES THE SURFACE AREA OF LOS ANGELES.
- FORESAID PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE, WITHOUT IMPACT ASSESSMENTS, WITHOUT PESSAMIT'S AGREEMENT AND WITHOUT COMPENSATION.
- 29 % OF HYDRO-QUEBEC'S INSTALLED CAPACITY ILLEGITIMATELY ACQUIRED TO THE DETRIMENT OF PESSAMIT.

INFRINGEMENT OF PESSAMIT RIGHTS HISTORICAL CONTINUITY AS A PRESENT- DAY DIRECTION



- IN COUNTERPART OF WEALTH GENERATED FOR HYDRO-QUEBEC, PESSAMIT HAS ENDURED LONG TERM ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DISRUPTIONS.



**THIS CONSTITUTES A PRECEDENT IN
QUEBEC!**



**THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC AND HYDRO-QUEBEC
HAVE PROFOUNDLY UPSET THE PESSAMIULNUT'S
FAMILY UNIT AND SOCIO-ÉCONOMIC BALANCE,
WITHOUT ANY COMPENSATION WHATSOEVER.**

- THE BEAVER, OTTER AND MINK HAVE COMPLETELY DISAPPEARED FROM RIPARIAN ECOTONES.
- THE NEW WATER COURSES CREATED ARE DANGEROUS TO NAVIGATE.
- TRADITIONAL FOOD FROM HUNTING AND FISHING IS NO LONGER ACCESSIBLE .
- THE ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITIES OF HUNTING, FISHING AND TRAPPING HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED AND REPLACED BY SOCIAL PAYMENTS TRANSFERS.



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NEXT: THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

