

Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council

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April 20, 1998

Skagit Environmental
Endowment Commission
4 th Floor
810 Blanshard Street
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X5

Attention: Chris Tunnoch

RE: Nlaka'pamux Language Development for Interpretation of Place Names, Oral Traditions and Production of Education Material - Grant 95 -06.

Dear Commissioners:

In 1994 an agreement was established with Seattle City Light, Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission and Nlaka'pamux Nation to complete an inventory of traditional cultural properties (TCPs) in the Skagit area. Information gathered from this research would determine potential impacts, and mitigative strategies, of the Hydroelectric Project in the area. Objectives of the project were:

- * to visit important locations and landmarks of the watershed to provide Nlaka'pamux names and verbal histories;
- *review flora and fauna inventories of the watershed and provide traditional names, uses and legends;
- *map historic and prehistoric trails to show traditional Nlaka'pamux migration routes;
- *investigate the feasibility of archaeological research;
- *and to develop a plan for the production of education materials that could be used for public information and site interpretation.

As noted in intermin letter dated November 27, 1996, Nlaka'pamux has met several of these objectives, including visiting important localities with Chiefs, Councillors, elders and community members; reviewal of flora and fauna; mapping out traditional travel routes, examination of past archaeological work and a plan of action for development of education material.

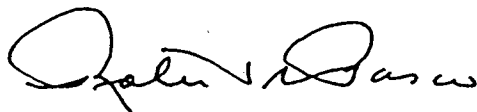
At the time the project was initiated, Nlaka'pamux Nation did not have an acceptable writing system. Therefore, it was decided, early on, that Nlaka'pamux Nation must work toward developing an acceptable writing system to meet many of the projects objectives. These objectives include transcribing place names, natural and cultural resources, oral traditions and developing a plan for education materials.

Since that time, Nlaka'pamux Nation has worked consistently on developing a writing system that is user friendly and reflects Nlaka'pamux culture and traditions. Results of this labour have yielded an acceptable pronunciation guide that can be used to address other objectives, such as, translating place names, resource names and oral traditions. Data attained from these translations can be utilized to create education materials for interpretation of sites in the Skagit water shed.

Presented below is a summary of the goals and process that was followed to formulate of a written form of Nlaka'pamux.

If you have any questions about the contents in this summary, please do not hesitate to call me at my office (250 455 2711).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Pasco". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bob" being more prominent than the last name "Pasco".

Chief Bob Pasco
Nlaka'pamux Nation

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Chief Bob Pasco	Nlaka'pamux Nation	Project Director Steering Committee Member
Bev Phillips	Nlaka'pamux Nation	Project Co-ordinator Steering Committee Member Interviewer Nlaka'pamux Language Expert
Karen Aird	Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council	Archaeologist Writer
Les Edmonds	Nlaka'pamux Nation	Steering Committee Member Resource Person
Eddy Charlie	Nlaka'pamux Nation	Steering Committee Member Resource Person
Amy Charlie	Nlaka'pamux Nation	Steering Committee Member Resource Person
Hank Andrews	Nlaka'pamux Nation	Steering Committee Member Resource Person
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Susan Tanco	Nlaka'pamux Nation & NNTC	Lawyer for NNTC Advisor
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Assistance received from
Nlaka' pamux Nation Tribal Council Staff
Chiefs, Councillors, and Community Members
of
Nlaka'pamux Nation
is gratefully
appreciated

and

A special thanks to
Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission,
Seattle City Light Building
&
BC Parks
for
the financial support
to develop
this
Pronunciation Guide

The proceeding summary describes the goal, methods and results of Nlaka'pamux Language study.

GOAL

The goal of this program was to ensure continuance of the Nlaka'pamux language and, subsequently, cultural and traditions. By meeting this goal, Nlaka'pamux Nation is now able to work toward interpretation of traditional cultural properties and natural resources of Nlaka'pamux traditional territory, including the Upper Skagit Watershed in Canada and the USA.

Many Native languages are on the verge of extinction. Within Nlaka'pamux Nation, only a small percentage of the population speaks Nlaka'pamux. It is very uncommon to hear Nlaka'pamux spoken, and even more unusual to see it written by someone other than a linguist.

Colonization and assimilation of Nlaka'pamux into non-Native populations through forced education, economic, political, cultural and religious policies have caused the rapid destruction of language. In the past, residential schools and religious organizations discouraged any representation of traditional ways, specifically Native languages. Dissipation of Nlaka'pamux language, since the introduction of residential schools, has negatively effected the well-being of the community and it's members. Influence by rapid economic, technological and political changes, and the need for one common language, or forum, has caused an almost complete disintegration of Native languages. Modern day First Nation societies confront high illiteracy rates in their languages and in English.

The link between language, culture and traditions is evident. Oral traditions have always been a primary means of relating the past to the present. Families would gather and elders would tell stories. Gatherings not only explained the relationship between nature, humans, the creator and animals, but also taught respect, language skills, and built bonds. Loss of language impacts culture, traditions, and social structure of the community. Once the language disappears, these traditions may be lost, and translations will not hold the same significance. This system was developed with the realization that there is an urgent need to preserve the language.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

In the last year, Nlaka'pamux Nation has worked diligently to develop a written form of their language. A pronunciation guide with rules of usage and phonetic descriptions was used to summarize the Nlaka'pamux language. The guide has been reviewed and approved by a steering committee, which consists of a Nlaka'pamux instructor, elders and community members.

By seeking community participation in constructing the recently developed writing system, the Nation hopes to avoid past errors made in orthographic studies. Discussions with Nlaka'pamux teachers have provided several reasons why past orthographic systems were not successfully implemented and these include: elaborate rules of usage were too difficult to interpret; orthographies were not phonetically based, a learner could not sound out a word; writing systems were not familiar; diacritics were used to represent Nlaka'pamux phonemes that had no equivalent English sound; and very little community input.

Re-introduction of Nlaka'pamux into the communities will hopefully strengthen relationships, create a better understanding of traditions, and improve confidence in members' perception of themselves as aboriginal people. Fluency and literacy in Nlaka'pamux will allow community members further means of understanding and appreciate their cultural heritage and developing knowledge and skills for a successful future. The subsequent stages were followed to develop the Nlaka'pamux writing system, or pronunciation guide:

- * Formation of a steering committee to oversee the program.
- * Interviewing steering committee members to create a detailed inventory of Nlaka'pamux sounds.
- * Identifying and describing sounds that are unique to Nlaka'pamux.
- * Determining rules of usage to better understand variations in pronunciation, grammar and syntax.
- * Developing a pronunciation guide. The guide consists of:
 - Pronunciation key with rules of usage.
 - Key to headings, explaining how to use the pronunciation guide.
 - Pronunciation guide with all the Nlaka'pamux phonemes (sounds), and examples.

The steering committee consisted of fluent Nlaka'pamux speakers from the communities of Ashcroft, Oregon Jack Creek, Lytton and Boothroyd. Primarily, the steering committee was responsible for monitoring all progress and informing the committee and their communities about any developments. Steering committee members included Bob Pasco, Les Edmonds, Bev Phillips, Eddy and Amy Charlie, and Hank Andrews.

Interview sessions were held at least once a week, in one-on-one or group settings. All interviews were recorded on micro-cassettes. Bev Phillips, a Nlaka'pamux speaker and instructor, guided each interview and provided detailed descriptions of sounds and words. Each resource person, or interviewee, was asked to repeat words and sounds at least three times. Variables used to describe sounds recorded during interviews include the shape of the mouth, tongue position and how the air is passed through the mouth. Sounds were also described according to voicing (the vibration in the sound as it is produced), the manner of articulation (the alteration of air in the mouth), and the place of articulation (the location of the sound, i.e., the back of the throat). A tape recorder assisted in isolating and determining the features of difficult sounds.

Once the difficult sounds had been accurately isolated and categorized, rules regarding usage were explained. Every language has rules that help the learner understand variations in pronunciation, grammar and syntax.

Analysis of sounds produced during interviews helped locate 50 phonemes, 22 of which are unique to Nlaka'pamux. As a result of this study, a user friendly, well presented and phonetically simple writing system, or pronunciation guide, was formulated.

CONCLUSION

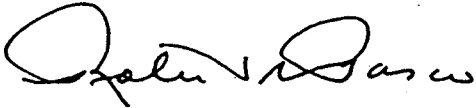
The pronunciation guide is designed for those who have not had linguistic background or previous accountancy with the phonology of Nlaka'pamux. Nlaka'pamux writing symbols (phonemes) are listed along with English and Nlaka'pamux examples of pronunciation and their English translations. In instances where the sound (phoneme) is unique to Nlaka'pamux, or there is no equivalent English sound, a description is provided to show the manner and place of

articulation.

With completion of the pronunciation guide, Nlaka'pamux Nation hopes use remaining funding to focus on transcribing oral traditions, place names, traditional names of plants and animals and developing education materials that would be used to interpreted Nlaka'pamux sites in the Skagit area.

A time line of no more than three months will be needed to complete the remainder of these objectives and produce a final report. We look forward to continuing our work in the Skagit and thank you for your support and cooperation.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Pasco". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "P".

Chief Bob Pasco
Nlaka'pamux Nation

A GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION

This guide was established for those who do not have linguistic background or previous acquaintance with the phonology of Niha.kabmhhchEEEn.

PRONUNCIATION KEY

The sounds **h, k, m, n, p, t, w** and **y** are basically the same sound/symbol as in English.

Sometimes **k** will sound like **g** (game), **p** often sounds like **b** and are interchangeable, as are **d** and **t** and **z** and **l**.

There are some sounds in Niha.kabmhhchEEEn that have no equivalent English sounds. In those circumstances, the sounds can only be learned and memorized, no corresponding English examples are provided. Some examples are **-ah, -hh, k, kw, -l, lh, -n, qu, ts, -w, -y** and **yg**.

Often there are several sounds grouped together. These grouped sounds may be said in different areas of the mouth but it is easier to learn to pronounce them together, as one sound unit. Sounds **KW, KW, qu, wuh** and **ch** always represent one sound unit, and can not be pronounced separately.

A large or capital letters (**A**) within a word means that sound should be heavily emphasized during pronunciation.

Long sounds are indicated by doubling (**aa**) the symbol, i.e., **Nlah.KabnhhchEEEn**, or **zaahchEEEn**

The period (.) is used to let the reader/learner know that there is a pause or a stop in the word, as if you were to say **uh-huh**. For learning purposed the stop will be exaggerated so that it is not missed, i.e., **pAya**.

The minus sign (-) is used to let one know that the symbol being used is a short sound, with an abrupt stop, i.e., **-w** and **-n**. The sounds produced with this symbol are unique to Niha.kabmhhchEEEn and must be learned from a fluent speaker.

Symbols with lines () underneath them are pronounced in the deep with in the throat, often using the back of the tongue to alter air flow and sounds, i.e., **K, KW** and **wuh**. The sounds produced with this symbol are unique to Niha.kabmhhchEEEn and must be learned from a fluent speaker.

KEY TO HEADINGS

#:	Is a reference number for a Niha.kabmhhchEEEn symbol (Phoneme) and/or sound (Allophone).
Niha.kabmhhchEEEn Symbol (Phoneme):	Is a symbol that represents one or more sounds in Niha.kabmhhchEEEn.
Sound Symbol (Allophone):	Is a symbol that depicts an actual sound of a Niha.kabmhhchEEEn (Phoneme). A Niha.kabmhhchEEEn symbol (Phoneme) may have one or more sound symbols (Allophones). For example: The symbol/sound (phoneme) a in Niha.KabmhhchEEEn has three sounds (allophones), these are a (similar to a in lake), ae (similar to a in bat) and a long aa (similar to a in Canada).
English Example:	Is an English word containing a sound that corresponds with Niha.kabmhhchEEEn symbol and/or sound.
Niha.kabmhhchEEEn Word:	Is a Niha.kabmhhchEEEn word that includes a referenced Niha.kabmhhchEEEn symbol and/or sound.
Note: Bold letters indicate the location of the referenced symbol within a word.	

Nlha KabmhchEEn Pronunciation Guide

#	#	NLHA. SYMBOL	SOUND SYMBOL	ENG. EXAMPLE	NLHA. WORD	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
1.		a				
	1.1	a	a	lake	bAya. yAya. IhoowAychin	one pet name for grandma I left you
	1.2	a	ae	bat	KihhmAka. wuha.bEEt	branch clothing
	1.3	aa	aa (long)	Canada	zaahchEEn ShOObaa.	rivershore tail (animal)
2.		ah				
	2.1	ah	ah	*mouth open *lips unrounded *tongue low in the front *root of tongue retracts (Pharyngeal) *is a long sound that flows from deep within the throat	mAahhhadn ah achdAna	moon I tied it
	2.2	-ah	-ah	*mouth open *lips unrounded *tongue low in the back *a sound, or lack of sound, occurs when the vocal cords are held together (glottal) *is a short sound, with a quick stop, that flows from deep within the throat	ma-ahdt n-ahchOOyemwuhm n-ah ach KEEnem	broken to stake something to tie a net
3.		b				
	3.1	b	b	baby	bAya. buMEEn nshe-IKbOOsh	one drum drunk
4.		ch				
	4.1	ch	ch	chew	choAwoalha chA-wak chOOlhka	steel head tiger lily seven
5.		d				
	5.1	d	d	dear	dakem yamEEd	all of it to pray

	5.2	d/t	d/t	deep title	dakem takem	all of it
6.		e				
	6.1	e	e (short)	men	OObenaksh	ten
	6.2	ee	ee (long)	seep	hanEE. quOOqubee. shkeeAwlh	siamon - Humpback Chief boss/leader
7.		h				
	7.1	h	h	hat Hank	hanEE. halA-w hAchoo nhA-noosh	pink salmon eagle let's go where abouts
8.						
	8.1	hh	hh	*mouth open wide (like a wide smile), teeth slightly open *tongue rests between upper teeth and alveolar ridge *most of the air flows out the sides of the mouth, making a soft hissing sound.	keehh hhEEzna zahhdt	older sister I stirred it something long
	8.2	hh	hh	*mouth open wide (like a wide smile), teeth almost touching *tongue does not move *sound is located deep in the throat, with the back of the tongue moving (not closed) toward the soft palate *most of the air flows out the sides of the mouth, making a soft hissing sound.	dahhdt	bitter taste
					sh hha. Ach	smoke from fire/chimney
9.		i				
	9.1	i	i (short)	sit	KihhmAka	branch
10.		k				
	10.1	k	k	kangaroo	kapOO kayhh kanm Ihkap/Ihkab	coat hand what? cooking pot
	10.2	k/g	k/g	kid guide	Ka.lhash Ga.lhash	three

	10.3	<u>k</u>	<u>k</u>	<p>*similar to saying English 'k', except softer with air held longer in the throat, causing a deep back sound with a slight stop.</p> <p>*the slight stop is produced by quickly pushing the back of the tongue against the velum (at the top of the throat)</p> <p>*a soft sound that comes from deep within the throat</p>	che <u>k</u> chA <u>k</u>	tame
					ka <u>l</u> EE <u>l</u>	to be angry
	10.4	<u>K</u>	<u>K</u>	<p>*similar to saying English 'k', but there is a loud click sound produced by the back of the tongue raising to stop the air flow and form a velar closure</p> <p>*once the velar closure is released, the mouth opens, with the tip of the tongue lowered, so the air flows out of the mouth quickly.</p>	ss <u>K</u> el	buckskin
					nEE <u>K</u> ash	he cut it
	10.5	<u>K</u>	<u>K</u>	<p>*similar to saying Nlah. 'K', but the sound is produced deep in throat, creating a gargle rather than a click</p> <p>*the glottis (in the throat) narrows, creating a vibrating sound</p> <p>* by placing your hand against the your throat, you can feel the throat expanding and moving up and down to produce this sound</p>	A <u>K</u> men	button
11.		<u>l</u>				
	11.1	<u>l</u>	<u>l</u>	lamb	she <u>l</u>	cloth
	11.2	- <u>l</u>	- <u>l</u>	*a short 'l'	nshe- <u>l</u> K <u>l</u> OO <u>sh</u>	drunk
					Ke- <u>l</u> mEE- <u>n</u>	scissors
					ze- <u>l</u> bEE <u>h</u>	bone game
					ss <u>T</u> s- <u>l</u> sha	oregon grape
12.		<u>lh</u>				
	12.1	<u>lh</u>	<u>lh</u>	<p>*teeth together</p> <p>*tongue behind teeth, or near alveolar ridge.</p> <p>*air flows steady through teeth and tongue</p> <p>*a breathy sound</p>	chOO <u>l</u> h <u>k</u> a.	seven
					<u>l</u> ha-w <u>d</u> t	spine
					ka. <u>l</u> h <u>ash</u>	
13.		<u>m</u>				
	13.1	<u>m</u>	<u>m</u>	mother	mo <u>o</u> sh	four
					mO <u>o</u> sm <u>ess</u>	cows
					may <u>d</u>	Ind. doc. work
	13.2	- <u>m</u>	- <u>m</u>	*a short 'm'	shne-m <u>n</u> E- <u>m</u>	blind

					nEshde-m	isn't it
					shwoawuh-m	
14.		n				
	14.1	n	n	nail	nash	to go
					nchAwa.	me
					nkwoOma	north
					nchEE.a	over there
					nlha.kApmhh	our (us) people
	14.2	-n	-n	*a short 'n'	kin-nE-n	touched or bumped
					pa-nAa	to fold s. th.
					ssTSA-di-n	rattlesnake
15.		o				
	15.1	o	o	home	lh.Om	poke
	15.2	oo	oo (long)	moose	moosh	four
					poss	cat
16.		p				
	16.1	p	p	paper	pa-nAa	to fold s. th.
					APash	he wipes it
	16.2	p/b	p/b	people big	pos/bos lhkap/lhkap	cat cooking pot
	16.3	P	P	*similar to English 'p', except lips are pursed tightly together, with a strong plosive sound	shooPm	to breathe
17.		qu				
	17.1	qu	qu	quick	quAna	I got it
					quOOqubee.	Chief
	17.2	QU	QU	*similar to English 'qu', except lips rounder and the velar closes against the palate (top of mouth) for longer time, to produce a deep sound.	shnOOQUa.	friend
					QUa.Am	to chew
					QUEEnahh	how many?
	17.3	qu	qu	*this sound is produced in the deep in the throat and is much softer than 'QU'.	shquom	mountain
					quo.	water
					queenchoot	talk
18.		sh				

	18.1	sh	sh	she	shkA-mach	avalanche lily
					shEEnchee.	little brother
					shAya	two
					shhhaw	yawn
					sh kaw	sister-in-law
19.		ss				
	19.1	ss	ss (long)	siste	ssOlssel	cricket
					mOssmess	cows
20.		t				
	20.1	t	t	take	OObenakshdt	ten
21.		TS				
	21.1	TS	TS	cats	shEETSem	blanket
					TSoldt	salt
22.		w				
	22.1	w	w	way	wAwem	to call people together to feast
					shAwna	I ask him
					wEEkna	I saw him/her
	22.1	-w	-w	*a short 'w'	sha-wdt	slave
					shemgyA-w	lynx
23.		<u>woa</u>				
	23.1	<u>woa</u>	<u>woa</u>	*sound comes from deep in throat *lips rounded * a soft sound	yo <u>woa</u> yOAwoad	hidden
					<u>woa</u> -yd	to sleep
	23.2	<u>-woa</u>	<u>-woa</u>	*a short sound coming from deep in throat, with lips rounded	nba <u>-woa</u>	ice/frozen
					z-woa z-woadt	strong
24.		wuh				
	24.1	wuh	wuh		cheedtuh	house
					wuh. eedt	lots
					wuh. oo wuh	a smell
					lh wuhakshd	finger ring
	24.2	<u>wuh</u>	<u>wuh</u>	*lips more round than with 'wuh' *sound coming from deep in throat	<u>wuh</u> aydt	all died
					shbt e <u>wuh</u>	spit

25.		y				
	25.1	y	y	yes	yee.A	good
					bAya.	one
					shnOOya	money
	25.2	-y	-y (short)		bA.yem	to dry food (fruit/vegetables)
26.		yg				
	26.1	yg	yg	<p>*there are two sounds produced with this symbol</p> <p>*the first sound is an 'ahhhh', but with more vibration in the back of the throat (gargle)</p> <p>*the next sound is 'yug', said quickly with emphasis on the vowel 'u'</p> <p>*to make the right sound, say 'ahhh and yug' together</p> <p>*it should sound very gargled, with not distinct 'y' or 'g' sound</p>	sheygAp	tree
27.		z				
	27.1	z	z	zoo	zahhd	long
	27.2	-z	-z	a short 'z'	sske-zKE-z	cactus
28.						
	28.1	.	.	<p>*stop or pause</p> <p>*similar to saying 'uh-huh'</p>	bAya.	one
					wuh. eedt	lots
					yAya.	pet name for grandma