



K'ómoks First Nation

The K'ómoks are a distinct nation but share a cultural and historical kinship with other Coast Salish peoples. This kinship is not a unification into a single "people" but rather a recognition of shared traditions, linguistic ties, and cooperative relationships forged over generations. Agreements with the Crown, such as modern treaties, often reflect these interconnected histories while affirming the unique rights and identities of each nation.

"7a ta 7a77N s07s ta k'u."
"The land provides everything."

This phrase reflects the K'ómoks people's deep connection to the land and understanding that the land sustains all aspects of life, from food to shelter to spiritual well-being. It emphasizes respect and gratitude for the natural world.

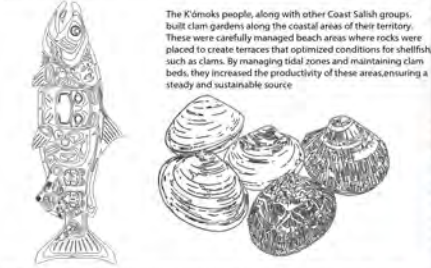
K'ómoks people who speak Ey7a77uthem, their language contains expressions and phrases deeply tied to their cultural values, relationship with the land, and worldview. While Ey7a77uthem itself is a Coast Salish language and has shared roots with neighboring nations like the **Tlaxmin and Nahoos**.

Respect for the Land
Community and Kinship
Cultural Preservation and Identity
Wisdom and Guidance from Elders
Collaboration and Partnership
Self-Determination



Totem poles and other art forms are used to tell stories, honor ancestors, and mark significant events or places.

Fishing, particularly for salmon, is not just a food source but a cultural practice that connects the K'ómoks people to their ancestors. Salmon runs are central events in their calendar.



The K'ómoks people, along with other Coast Salish groups, built clam gardens along the coastal areas of their territory. These were carefully managed beach areas where rocks were placed to create terraces that optimized conditions for shellfish, such as clams. By managing tidal zones and maintaining clam beds, they increased the productivity of these areas, ensuring a steady and sustainable source.

The K'ómoks people use cedar for building homes, canoes, and making ceremonial items like masks. Cedar bark is also woven into baskets and clothing, showing the versatility and importance of the tree in their daily lives and spiritual practices.



Stripping cedar bark

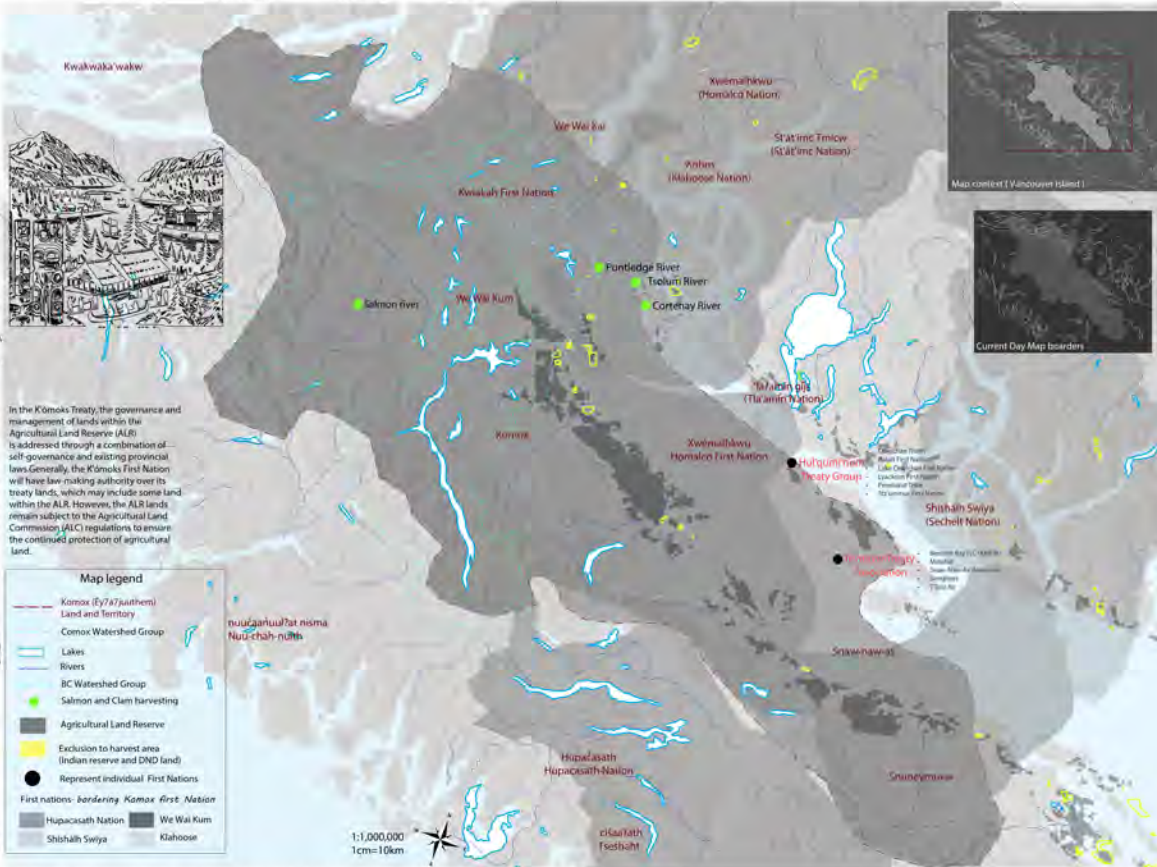
STAGE 5
Stage 5 in the BC Treaty Process is the Final Negotiation and Ratification Stage. This is the last phase before the treaty becomes official, where final details and approvals are put in place to make the agreement legally binding and ready for implementation.



Recognition of Rights and Title: The treaty formally acknowledges the pre-existing rights and title of the K'ómoks people, affirming their sovereignty over specific lands.
Self-Governance: The treaty will allow the K'ómoks First Nation to replace the Indian Act governance with a self-determined governance model, enabling them to create laws for areas like land use, health, education, and cultural preservation.
Land and Resource Ownership: The treaty designates approximately 3,460 hectares (8,550 acres) of land as K'ómoks treaty lands, including current reserve lands and additional Crown lands. K'ómoks will have management authority over these areas, which allows for sustainable development aligned with cultural values.
Economic and Cultural Opportunities: The treaty opens up avenues for economic development and partnership opportunities with local governments, supporting cultural initiatives and community well-being.

K'ómoks traditional territory spans the Comox Valley in the central-eastern part of Vancouver Island, extending into Johnstone Strait. There are approximately 350 K'ómoks members.

K'ómoks First Nation is located on the east coast of Vancouver Island. The Traditional Territory reaches across the Salish Sea and over the middle of Vancouver Island. Members of the Nation have lived on these lands and by their waters since time immemorial. The Nation first entered into the Treaty Process almost 20 years ago as a member of the Hamatla Treaty Society. However, after much negotiation, K'ómoks First Nation (KFN) decided in 2008 to negotiate with the provincial and federal governments independently and since then KFN has moved from Stage 1 to Stage 5.



The music of the K'ómoks people, like that of other Coast Salish nations, is an essential expression of their cultural heritage and is deeply connected to ceremonial practices, storytelling, and community bonding. Here are some core elements of K'ómoks traditional music.



Ceremonial Music:
Music plays an important role in Potlatch ceremonies, where it sets the tone for various events within the ceremony, from welcoming guests to honoring ancestors. Each song used in the Potlatch has its unique meaning and is often connected to specific family lines or clans.

Song and Storytelling:
Traditional songs are used to convey stories, teachings, and historical events. These songs preserve the K'ómoks language, Ey7a77uthem, and pass down cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. Songs often accompany dance and express themes of nature, family, and the sacredness of the land.

Drumming:
Drumming is central to K'ómoks music, often accompanying songs in ceremonies and gatherings. The rhythm of the drum is seen as a reflection of the heartbeat, symbolizing life and unity within the community. Drums are typically made from cedar and animal hides, materials significant to the K'ómoks.

Vocal Style:
Coast Salish singing, including K'ómoks songs, often has a distinct vocal style that can include call-and-response patterns. This style allows singers to engage with each other and the audience, creating an interactive experience that strengthens community ties.

In addition to drums, rattles and flutes are used in K'ómoks music. Rattles add rhythm, while flutes create a haunting, melodic sound that reflects the natural world, particularly mimicking bird calls and other sounds from the environment.



Rattles and Flutes

2012

Agreement in Principle Signed

Significance: Outlined the key terms of the K'ómoks treaty, including governance and land allocations. Implications: Marked a major step toward self-determination and recognition.



1994

K'ómoks Enters BC Treaty Process

Significance: Initiated formal negotiations for a modern treaty. Implications: Aimed to resolve historical injustices, recognize sovereignty, and restore land and resource rights.

1876

Indian Act

Significance: Imposed a colonial governance system, including the creation of reserves and restrictions on cultural practices like the Potlatch. Implications: Severely disrupted K'ómoks governance, language use, and cultural traditions, forcing adaptation and resistance.

1884

Potlatch Ban (Amendment to Indian Act)

Significance: Outlined key cultural ceremonies like the Potlatch, targeting the spiritual and communal heart of K'ómoks and other Indigenous nations. Implications: Despite the ban, the K'ómoks and neighboring nations maintained these practices in secret, preserving their cultural heritage.



1973

Calder Case (Supreme Court of Canada)

Significance: Recognized Aboriginal title in Canadian law for the first time. Implications: Set the precedent for the BC Treaty Process, laying the groundwork for K'ómoks to assert land rights.

K'ÓMOKS TREATY TIMELINE

- 1994 Negotiation began.
- 2008 Framework Agreement on negotiation topics
- 2012 Agreement in-principle on substantive details signed
- 2017 Incremental Treaty Agreement providing advance treaty land signed
- 2019 Revitalization Agreement signed, integrating Recognition and Reconciliation of Rights Policy
- 2023 Technical and legal issues substantively resolved. Land and Cash Offer finalized (formal acceptance dependant on ratification vote)
- 2024 Treaty formalizes ratification version of draft treaty. Legal and technical reviews, and Crown consultations continue
- 2025 K'ómoks Nation members vote on ratification
- 2026 If ratified by K'ómoks, legislation introduced for provincial ratification
- 2027 If ratified, legislation introduced for federal ratification
- 2028 (Earliest) Effective Date

MODERN TREATIES

Modern treaties are one of the most comprehensive forms of reconciliation between First Nations, B.C. and Canada. They are comprehensive agreements protected by the Constitution that create clarity on jurisdiction, recognize a First Nation's rights and title, and provide for First Nation self-governance. Modern treaties provide predictability and transparent processes for managing land and resources together between B.C., Canada and the First Nation. This creates economic certainty and ensures all people can build good lives in British Columbia.

K'ÓMOKS TREATY

A K'ómoks Treaty will be different than any treaty negotiated in modern history. Previous treaties required "certainty" which essentially means that aboriginal rights are exchanged or "extinguished" for treaty rights. These older treaties were "Final Agreements" and did not allow for the inclusion of new rights based on new developments in the law, or on innovations in other treaties.

Arrival of Captain James Cook

Significance: Marked the beginning of settler interest in the Pacific Northwest, leading to increased European exploration, trade, and eventual settlement that impacted Indigenous territories. Implications: Early contact brought disease and disrupted traditional economies, setting the stage for colonization.



Oregon Treaty

Significance: Established the boundary between British and American territories, impacting Coast Salish nations, including the K'ómoks, by splitting ancestral lands across national borders. Implications: Set the foundation for Crown control of K'ómoks territory on the Canadian side.

1846

Douglas Treaties (Vancouver Island)

Significance: Governor James Douglas signed a series of treaties with Coast Salish nations near Vancouver Island, but the K'ómoks were excluded from these agreements. Implications: This exclusion left K'ómoks land unceded and without formal recognition, a status that persists today.

1850s