

## News Release

For Immediate Release

# Parks Canada and Huu-ay-aht First Nations gather to officially reveal a plaque honouring Kiiḡin Village and Fortress National Historic Site

September 20, 2022

Anacla, British Columbia

Parks Canada Agency

Today, Huu-ay-aht First Nations and Parks Canada celebrated the installation of a plaque at Huu-ay-aht First Nations' Kiiḡin Village and Fortress (Kiiḡin) to officially commemorate the designation of Kiiḡin as a National Historic Site of Canada.

Located on the west coast of Vancouver Island, Kiiḡin is the site of a 19th-century village and fortress that exhibits evidence of continuous occupation of the area for almost 3,000 years, dating back to 1000 BCE. It is also the only known traditional First Nation's village of more than 100 villages on the southern British Columbia coast that still features significant, standing traditional architecture. The site's natural features made it an ideal location for occupation and defense. It is characteristic of Nuuchah-nulth defensive sites and warfare patterns, resource extraction and commercial practices, and illustrates changing Nuuchah-nulth political and economic patterns in the 18th and 19th centuries. To this day, it remains a sacred site to Huu-ay-aht First Nations people.

In 1999, the Government of Canada designated Kiiḡin as a national historic site, with the official recognition referring to four distinct archaeological sites, which include the main village and fortress and two related archaeological sites. In 2002, a commemorative plaque was presented to Huu-ay-aht First Nations by Parks Canada, and today, both parties came together to reveal the plaque which has now been installed on a beautifully carved cedar frame at the Kiiḡin Village and Fortress for visitors and locals to enjoy.

Huu-ay-aht First Nations has three Sacred Principles: ʔiisaak (Greater Respect), Hiḡuk ma čawak (Everything is One), and ʔuuʔaḡuk (Taking Care Of). Since declaring Kiiḡin a national historic site in 1999, these sacred principles, as they pertain to the land, Huu-ay-aht's Ḥahuuḡi (traditional territory), have been upheld, protected and valued, and efforts will be made to continue honouring these principles for years to come.

Huu-ay-aht First Nations offers guided tours of Kiiḡin, with traditional knowledge holders, to enrich and teach all who are interested in learning about the history, culture, and traditions of the first peoples of this land. Tours take place between May and September. More information about Kiiḡin and the tours can be found at [kiiḡin.ca](http://kiiḡin.ca).

## Quotes

"Today, Parks Canada is honoured to join with Huu-ay-aht First Nations in commemorating Kiiḡin Fortress National Historic Site. National historic designations are the most significant form of historical recognition that is bestowed by the Government of Canada. Parks Canada has enjoyed a positive relationship with the Huu-ay-aht and this designation would not be possible, nor as meaningful, without this Nation's commitment to preserving and sharing its knowledge and history."

*Ron Hallman,  
Parks Canada President and CEO*



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“This official installation of the plaque signifies the importance of Kiiḡin and the rich history it tells. Kiiḡin is the main attraction of Huu-ay-aht’s cultural tourism as it offers a truly unique cultural experience for guests who come and visit Huu-ay-aht’s Hahuuli (traditional territory). Now, when visitors come to Kiiḡin, they will hear our stories, see our culture and understand the great Canadian national historical site designation it holds.”

*Robert J. Dennis Sr.  
Chief Councillor, Huu-ay-aht First Nations*

### Quick Facts

- The Government of Canada, through the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, recognizes significant people, places, and events that shaped our country as one way of helping Canadians connect with their past.
- Huu-ay-aht First Nations is an indigenous community located on the west coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia. It is a part of the Nuuchah-nulth Nation, formerly called the Nootka. Huu-ay-aht is a party to the Maa-nulth Final Agreement, a modern treaty that grants its five member-nations constitutionally protected self-government as well as ownership, control, and law-making authority over their lands and re-sources. For more information, visit [huuayaht.org](http://huuayaht.org).
- Kiiḡin is managed by Huu-ay-aht First Nations. Huu-ay-aht First Nations is a self-governing First Nation and signatory to the Maa-Nulth First Nations Final Agreement. The Traditional Territory and Treaty Settlement Land is situated in Barclay Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island, at the entrance to Alberni Inlet. The Nation is committed to balancing the objectives of strong and diverse economic growth with environmental sustainability and social responsibility.
- Parks Canada works together with Huu-ay-aht First Nations on a cooperative management board to operate Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. While Kiiḡin is outside of the national park reserve boundary, historic designations, such as the one for Kiiḡin, occur under Parks Canada’s National Program of Historical Commemoration and present and commemorate all aspects of Canada’s history.
- The Government of Canada is committed to a renewed relationship with Indigenous peoples, based on a recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.
- National historic sites represent thousands of years of human history. These are places of profound importance to Canada as they bear witness to our country’s defining moments and illustrate its human creativity and cultural traditions. Each national historic site tells its own unique story, part of the greater story of Canada, contributing a sense of time, identity, and place to our understanding of Canada as a whole.
- Created in 1919, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada advises the Minister of Environment and Climate Change on the national historic importance of the sites, people and events that have marked Canada's history.
- The designation process under Parks Canada’s National Program of Historical Commemoration is largely driven by public nominations. To nominate a person, place or historical event in your community, please visit the Parks Canada website for more information: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/clmhc-hsmbc/ncp-pcn/application>

### Related Links

[Kiiḡin National Historic Site of Canada](#)

[Huu-ay-aht First Nations](#)

[Kiiḡin Village and Fortress National Historic Site - Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada](#)

[Parks Canada Agency](#)



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**Caption:** Illustrated photo: Artist's rendering of Kiiḵin Village as it looked ca. 1875.

**Credit:** Illustration by Lori Graves



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**Caption:** Archway: The standing traditional archway is the remains from ʔApwinisathʔ house at Kiiḡin Village.

**Credit:** Glen Friesen



**Caption:** Huu-ay-aht Chief Councillor Robert J. Dennis Sr. and Parks Canada President and CEO Ron Hallman unveil the commemorative plaque on a beautifully carved cedar frame at Kiiḡin Village and Fortress National Historic Site at Anacla, British Columbia on September 20, 2022.

**Credit:** Parks Canada



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