

'Extinct' First Nation gets ancestral bones back

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[CBC News](#)

RCMP in British Columbia have returned some human remains that washed up on the shores of the Arrow Lakes to a First Nation that's supposedly extinct.

In March, the bones of two people were found near a traditional burial ground of the Sinixt First Nation in the West Kootenay region.

The federal Department of Indian Affairs declared the Sinixt people extinct in 1956 for the purposes of the Indian Act, so the provincial government asked two neighbouring First Nations if they wanted the remains.

But Marilyn James, the appointed spokesperson for the Sinixt or Arrow Lakes Indians, stepped forward to claim the bones instead.

"Because of our distinction of extinction, it's very hard for people to officially make contact with us," said James, who estimates there are still 6,800 Sinixt descendants alive in British Columbia and Washington state.

RCMP in Castlegar released the bones to James last week.

"You can tell when bones are happy and they're not very happy," James said of the bones, which hikers discovered washed up on the shore.

Similar remains have been found occasionally near the Arrow Lakes over the past 15 years.

