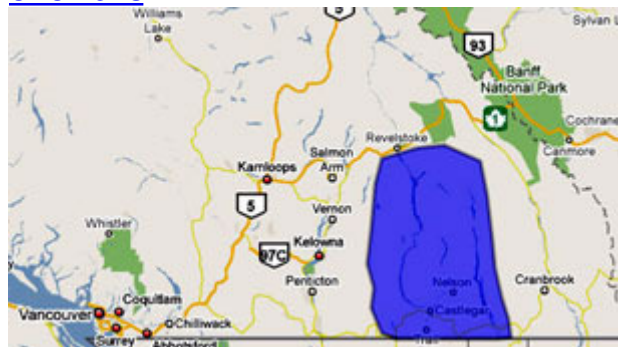


# 'Extinct' First Nation files B.C. land claim

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[CBC News](#)



*The blue-shaded area in the West Kootenay is what the Sinixt are asking for in their land claim. (Google map/CBC)*

A First Nation in southeastern British Columbia, declared legally extinct by the Canadian government more than 50 years ago, is making a land claim.

The Sinixt are claiming a huge territory in the West Kootenay. The boundaries of the land they seek run roughly from Nakusp in the north, to the Monashee Mountains to the east, the Selkirk mountains to the west, and the U.S. border in the south.

While the First Nation was declared extinct under the Indian Act in 1956, estimates on how many Sinixt remain go as high as several thousand. However, court documents indicate 75 people are represented in the claim.

On their website, the Sinixt, who also call themselves the Arrow Lakes band, quote Ron Irwin who, as minister of Indian affairs, said in the summer of 1995 that while the First Nation had "ceased to exist as a band for the purpose of the Indian Act ... It does not, however, mean that the Sinixt ceased to exist as a tribal group."

Lawyer David Aaron hopes the court proceedings will give the Sinixt control over the land.

"We're talking about, for all intents and purposes, asserting a right to be consulted, and to consent to all uses or dispositions of Crown land within that territory," Aaron said Thursday.

Private lands would not be affected by the claim, Aaron said.

