

### **2.3.7 First Nations of the Shuswap**

The Shuswap area obtained its name from its original inhabitants, the Secwepemc, or Shuswap, as settlers later called them. Four bands are now located in the Shuswap: Adams Lake Band, the Neskonlith Band, the Spallumcheen Band and the Little Shuswap Band. The First Nations population living on and off reserves in the Shuswap in the 1996 census data totalled 800 people, approximately 2.6 percent of the study area's population. In 1996 there were roughly three hundred private dwellings on the reserves in the Columbia-Shuswap Regional District with a land area of 73.33 square kilometres. In terms of growth between 1991 and 1996 in the population living on reserves, the Columbia-Shuswap Regional District saw a 2 percent decline in that five year period, and another 4 percent depreciation in 1996-2001 to 760.

In British Columbia in 1996 there were a total of 93,835 people registered under the Indian Act living on and off reserve which represents 2.5 percent of the total population for the province of British Columbia. Out of the total people registered under the Indian Act 41,320 lived on reserve while 52,515 lived off reserve.

Within the four bands mentioned above the population size of each band as of January, 2002 quoted by the Shuswap First Nations Tribal Council, Kamloops, follows:

<b>Table 2.3-1: First Nations in the Shuswap Region</b>			
	<b>On Reserve</b>	<b>Off Reserve</b>	<b>Total</b>
Adam's Lake	403	269	672
Neskonlith	303	239	542
Little Shuswap	223	67	290
Spallumcheen	345	338	683
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,274</b>	<b>913</b>	<b>2,187</b>

It must be noted, however, that some of the band population (approximately 1,394 members) quoted above live outside the study area. This accounts for the difference in total numbers mentioned above of 800 First Nations people in the 1996 census data who live in the Shuswap. It is also interesting to note that roughly 58 percent of the members who belong to the four bands mentioned above live on reserve while the remaining 42 percent live off reserve.

The Neskonlith Band is situated at the west end of the Salmon Arm town centre across from the Salmon River and is referred to as the Switzmalph Reserve 3. This is the band that has been involved with creating the Switzmalph Cultural Society, a non-profit society that has been formed to develop The Shuswap Centre, a native cultural centre. Mary Thomas, a widely-respected and well-known elder of the Neskonlith Band, has had a vision for many years of a native cultural centre. The Switzmalph Cultural Society are in the process of fundraising to develop The Shuswap Centre which would be located on property belonging to Mary Thomas. One of the major contributors has been the Adams Lake Band. The aim of the centre would be to not only educate the public on native culture but to help boost tourism in the Shuswap. The long term goal is to have a self-sustaining learning and tourism centre. HRDC has been another major contributor in the past two years providing funding for a project co-ordinator.

The Adams Lake Band office is located in Chase which is just outside the study area boundaries but the band has members who live within the Shuswap area. The Spallumcheen Band office is situated in Enderby, however, a small part of its area stretches into the Shuswap region where some of its members live. The Little Shuswap Band office is located not far from Chase on the route to Scotch Creek and close to Little Shuswap Lake. They have successfully built Quaaout Lodge on their land on Little Shuswap Lake. The main building is based on a native design and it is an important destination point for many tour buses going through the area from Vancouver to the Rockies.