
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Council of the Haida Nation

SUSTAINABLE LAND-USE AGREEMENT REACHED FOR HAIDA GWAI

VANCOUVER – Nearly half of the land base of Haida Gwaii will rest within protected areas as a result of a strategic land-use agreement announced today by Premier Gordon Campbell and Guujaaw, President of the Council of the Haida Nation. This agreement allows for sustainable economic development opportunities for the benefit of all British Columbians.

“I congratulate the Council of the Haida Nation for their long-term vision and leadership in working with us to complete this agreement,” said Premier Campbell. “This is an example of building partnerships with First Nations through respect, recognition and reconciliation and developing an agreement that balances social and economic values and industrial certainty with conservancy.”

The agreement was reached through government-to-government discussions between the Province and the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN).

“After 50 years of intensive forestry without holistic planning, this land-use agreement now starts to bring cultural, environmental, and economic interests into balance,” said Guujaaw. “It provides a firm footing to take the next steps in reconciliation of our competing yet coexisting Titles.”

Highlights of the final strategic land-use agreement (SLUA), which is consistent with the framework established for the Central Coast and North Coast agreement, include:

- A commitment to an economic timber opportunity of at least 800,000 cubic metres per year, to ensure continuation of sustainable forestry operations, and an agreement to develop a process that will inform the determination of the long-term timber supply for Haida Gwaii.
- New protected areas to reflect ecological, cultural conservation, spiritual and recreation purposes, totalling 254,000 hectares to be managed collaboratively with the Province. The new areas equal 25.3 per cent of the total land base and, with the Gwaii Haanas, Naikoon and other existing protected areas, bring the total protected area on the Islands to about 50 per cent, which is more than 1,200 times the size of Vancouver’s Stanley Park and nearly equivalent to the size of Prince Edward Island.
- Identification of special value areas comprised of areas of critical nesting habitat for QC goshawk, saw-whet owl and great blue heron, to be designated as 100 per cent timber retention areas. The total area is approximately 2,750 ha, or 0.3 per cent of the land planning area.
- An operating area covering the remaining 501,436 ha or half of the land planning area. Forestry operations will be subject to an ecosystem-based management regime in these areas.
- A set of initial ecosystem-based management (EBM) objectives for forestry to be further tested and refined through detailed strategic planning before being legally established as requirements for timber harvesting. These will ensure the vital balance between healthy ecosystems and vibrant communities.

- The agreement provides for a number of key implementation steps within the next 24 months, including more detailed forest planning to address cultural cedar values, coastal zone planning and protected area management planning.

The Province has commenced discussions with the forest licensees on Haida Gwaii regarding adjustments to timber allocations and forest tenures necessitated by the land-use agreement.

A significant outcome of the land-use discussions has been the development of an economic development understanding (EDU) amongst all Islands communities. Completed by local government leaders, this additional agreement outlines a common set of economic development priorities and an Islands-wide economic development approach. The Province is currently assessing the EDU and will be announcing its response to the EDU in early 2008.

Carol Kulesha, Mayor of Queen Charlotte City, said, “In order to best respond to future economic opportunities, we recognize the importance of working co-operatively, providing planning and co-ordination, to ensure the long-term benefits to our communities, families and our future generations, which will result from this land-use agreement.”

Haida Gwaii is an archipelago of more than 150 islands, rich in biodiversity, natural beauty and vibrant and thriving cultures. Approximately 6,000 people call the islands home.

Through treaties and other agreements with First Nations, the Province is committed to closing the socio-economic gap that separates Aboriginal people from other British Columbians and to building a new relationship with First Nations based on respect, recognition and reconciliation.

For more information on the agreement and a copy of a map outlining the land-use zones, please visit: <http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/lup>

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