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HAIDA LAAS

News from the Council of the Haida Nation

June 2018



Photo: Tanisha Salomons

K'aas Gandlaay Protected

See page 9 for full story.



HAIDA LAAS

NEWSLETTER of the COUNCIL OF THE HAIDA NATION

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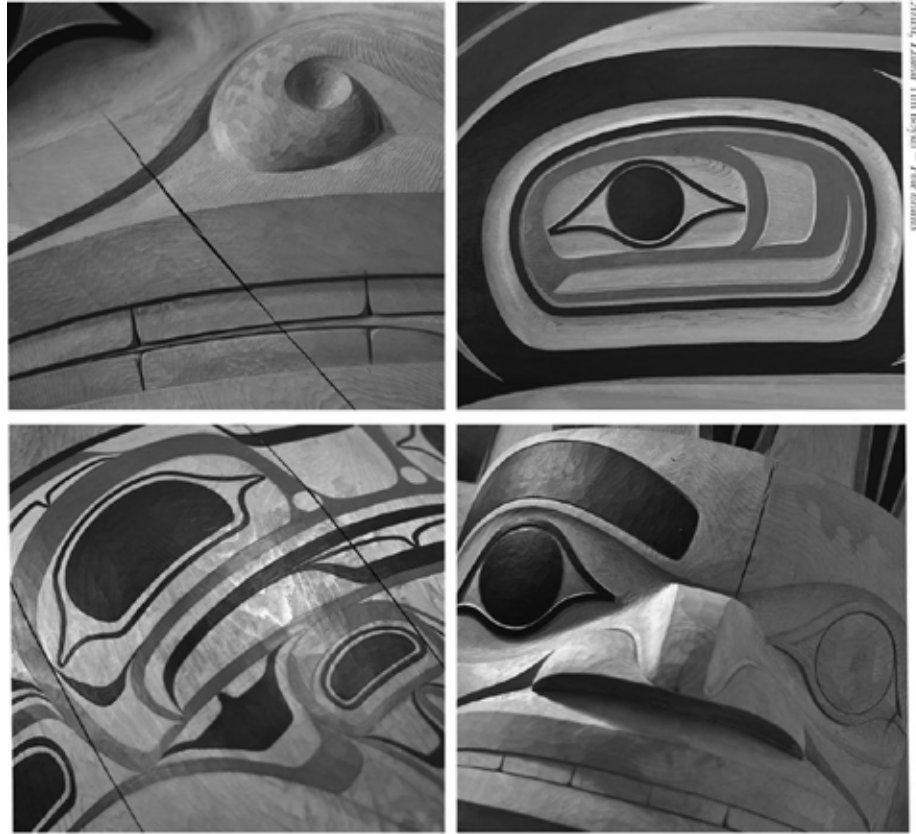
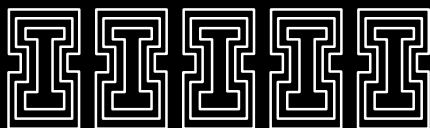
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Haida Laas: Tim Bayko - The Hawk

*Please join the Council of the Haida Nation, Xaaynangaa Naay,
Northern Health & the Village of Queen Charlotte at*

Xaayda Gwaay Ngaaysdll Naay

to raise a 40' monumental pole

June 23, 2018 – 4:00 pm



Feast to follow

George Brown Recreation Centre, HlGaagilda – 6:00 pm

*{ RSVP or for more information
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Haida Laas/Rhonda Lee McIsaac



Skil duugahl *Alfie Collinson* with his family at Saahlinda Naay. Back row (l-r): Conrad Collinson, Les Collinson, Alfie Collinson, Bev Collinson, Jhett Collinson, Jenny Collinson and Zoey Collinson. Front row (l-r): Tymeke Collinson and Lakye Collinson.

Bill C-48 off to the Senate

The Haida Nation and other coastal First Nations are welcoming the news that Bill C-48, the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act, has passed its third reading in Canada’s House of Commons.

Although concerns remain as to the amount and type of fuel (such as refined oil products) that will still be permitted under Bill C-48, as well as the Bill’s provision allowing Canada’s Minister of Transport to exempt identified oil tankers from the ban, and the issue of tanker traffic along daawuuxusda *Haida Gwaii’s west coast*, the Haida Nation acknowledges the passage of the Bill as a step in the right direction.

“It is a good step, but does not go far enough to protect Haida and other communities along the north coast. [But] the moratorium is important in achieving long-term protection from the risks of oil tankers and oil spills,” says President of the Haida Nation, kil tlaats ‘gaa *Peter Lantin*.

It was nearly a year ago, in May 2017, that the Canadian government introduced Bill C-48, the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act. If legislated into law, the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act will prohibit any vessel carrying more than 12,500 metric tonnes of crude or persistent oil from accessing, loading, or unloading at any ports along siigaay *Hecate Strait, Dixon Entrance, and Queen Charlotte Sound*.

Now that the Bill has passed its third parliamentary reading, it must be passed through the Senate before it is implemented under Canadian law.

For nearly fifty years, Indigenous nations, environmental organizations, and political allies have insisted that oil tankers have no place in siigaay. In 2010, the Haida Nation, together with the Hailzaqv Heiltsuk, Haisla, Maaxlakxaala *Metlakatla*, Gitga’at, Kitasoo/Xai’xais and Wuikinuxv nations, signed the Coastal First Nations Declaration, asserting that crude oil tankers are not permitted in our territories. •

DEEP CARVING

The work of Alfie Collinson

by Rhonda Lee McIsaac

HlGaa hlGahl s'aagas argillite dust cakes the rugged hands of Skil duugahl *Alfie Collinson*, a 67-year-old carver as he overlooks the ocean which inspires him and carries to him visions of 'waasGuu *sea-wolf* and ts'aag *Bald eagle*. Since he was 14 his art has fascinated collectors, family and friends.

On Friday, May 4, Skil duugahl *Man of the Mountains* opened first exhibit of his hlGaa hlGahl s'aagas carving at Saahlinda Naay *Haida Gwaii Museum*.

Recounting Skil duugahl's artistic career, Saahlinda Naay *Haida Gwaii Museum* Executive Director and Curator Jisgang *Nika Collison*, described Skil duugahl watching and learning at the knees of his kaaGaay *uncles* who inspired his art. Rare pieces like his first hlGaa hlGahl s'aagas carving are on display along with other pieces loaned by residents. Additional photos of his work shows the depth and breadth of his carving and imagination.

An intricate and central piece in the show is the sGaaga *shaman*. The human figure is delicate and ornately carved with inlaid abalone and removable parts. “The cape comes off, the hat comes off, the rattles come out,” said Jisgang. The rounded curves reflect the light and sharp lines cut deep into the hlGaa hlGahl s'aagas. The SGaaga is both formidable and delicate.

Skil duugahl's carvings are found in museums, galleries and personal collections across Canada and the world. •

Find < Council of the Haida Nation > on social media

CHN Spring Session 2018

Pods of *kun Gray whales* gasped in *Xaana Kaahlii GawGa Skidegate Inlet* releasing tall, sunlit plumes as Haida Citizens arrived at Naagudgiikyaagang *Skidegate Community Hall* for CHN's spring seasonal session on April 25 and 26. A beautiful, pink sunrise signaled two, warm, clear, days where birds vied for airspace, performed acrobatic feats or found each other again after arriving home for the summer.

Haida citizens started the session again with an open information gathering format. Elected representatives and staff milled about amongst friends and relatives, and were able to answer citizens' questions in person and find the information they were looking for. The informal style of reporting-out this way creates direct, engaging, and fruitful dialogue.

In the afternoon everyone settled as President of the Haida Nation, *kil tlaats 'gaa Peter Lantin* gave the executive report.

Haida Title Case

CHN brought a severance motion to divide the Title Case into two phases at the Supreme Court of BC on January 15. CHN and Canada agreed that the court should sever the case into two phases, and that the court should hear Aboriginal Rights in phase one.

BC disagreed with hearing Aboriginal Rights in phase one, and argued to hear them in phase two instead. Should BC's tactic succeed, the court will hear about Haida Title and rights to specific areas and species, rather than to Haida Gwaii as a whole. This is known as the "postage stamp" approach to aboriginal title. By forcing indigenous people to argue for each plot of land and species individually, colonial powers can limit the size and scope of aboriginal title and rights. This tactic is also designed to cost a lot of money, exhaust rightful aboriginal people and waste time.

On February 22, the court released a ruling regarding the severance. The court agreed with CHN and BC on a few things. Importantly, the court agreed with CHN that it should hear about Title in phase one and about compensation in phase two. However, BC disagreed with CHN and Canada and presented the opposite argument, saying

that the court should hear about Aboriginal Rights in phase two. The court agreed with BC that the court should hear Aboriginal Rights in phase two, rather than in phase one. Should this decision hold, CHN could find itself proving rights and Title in the "postage stamp" style, as noted above.

CHN argues that Haida Title and Rights to Haida Gwaii are comprehensive in nature. Haida have the right to manage, harvest, use, and sell the many species that inhabit all areas of Haida Gwaii. The court's severance decision would compel Haida to argue for Aboriginal Rights to each specific species and area of land one at a time.

Because of this and a number of other issues, Haida filed a Notice of Appeal to the BC Court of Appeal regarding the severance decision on March 21. The Province of BC responded with a Notice of Appearance, signaling its intention to challenge the appeal. This process will likely delay the start of the Title Case to 2019.

Taa Suu

Haida are fighting on all fronts as a mining company moves back into Taa Suu, a rich habitat for birds, fish, marine mammals, and taan *Haida Gwaii black bear*. The old mine site stopped operations in 1983. In the decades since then abandoned piles of mining waste have been leaching poisons into the surrounding marine environment. Further mining will disturb heavy metals in waste piles that reach 325 metres in height.

In 2011 a company called Coastal Construction Aggregates Inc (CCAI) submitted an application to the BC Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources to mine sand, gravel, and armour stone at the old Taa Suu mine site. Although the Nation opposed the project at the Solutions Table, the Province of BC has overridden that decision and signed off on the mining application. CHN met with the company owner on March 21 and informed him his activities were illegal. The proponent expressed he was aware of the Nation's opposition. CCAI has moved into Taa Suu with personnel, living quarters, and mining equipment and has started working.

A Solutions Table briefing note from 2011 notes the proponent should ensure several tasks are complete before starting operations. These include:

1. An Environmental Assessment
2. A foreshore habitat assessment prior to barging
3. A detailed contaminated site investigation from the director of the Ministry of Environment
4. An independent third-party evaluation of ground water quality testing during high water flow
5. Independent third-party sampling and testing for marine bio-accumulation and ecological community status. Ecological values should include species richness and bio-diversity.
6. Independent third-party evaluation of acid rock drainage and metal leaching potential
7. An independent third-party biological assessment of surrounding foreshore areas
8. A professionally engineered sediment control plan
9. A resource sharing agreement from the Reconciliation Table
10. A mine plan addendum showing site details for armour stone quarrying operations. Details should include maps, locations, rock types, and volumes.
11. An investigation disclosing whether proposed armour stone sites associate closely with Acid Rock Drainage or Mineral Leaching deposits
12. Acid Rock Drainage and Mineral Leaching sampling technique details
13. A sediment management plan
14. A plan to mitigate risks of blasting agents and bi-products poisoning marine environments
15. More rigorous standards for reclamation and rehabilitation
16. An amended and updated mine plan addressing these specifically outlined concerns regarding quarrying, sand, and gravel operations

Thus far it appears nobody has met any of these requirements. •



The Stand at St’alaa Kun

As the stand at St’alaa Kun *Collison Point* reached a turning point on May 5, Land Protectors worked with K’aayts’id IlGaayGalang RCMP Officers to dismantle their camp. The K’aayts’id IlGaayGalang had arrived at St’alaa Kun to enforce an injunction granted by the BC Supreme Court. Husby applied for an injunction to force an end to the Land Defenders’ blockade that had disrupted Husby’s logging activities at St’alaa Kun for weeks. After agreeing to disassemble the line and move their camp, the Land Protectors invited the K’aayts’id IlGaayGalang to join them in celebrating the birthday of Haida Land Protector and organizer Kuuyaang *Lisa White*. K’uljaad Gaanga women held in high esteem, Council of the Haida Nation elected representatives, and CHN staff were also in attendance to witness this gesture of mutual respect on what could have otherwise been a tense and divisive day.

The series of events that brought the parties to this place began in early 2016. Then, CHN members at the Solutions Table began to reject cut permits for logging at St’alaa Kun while the Province continued to approve them and allowed Husby to proceed with logging. The areas of contention

contained a high concentration of old ts’uu *Western red cedar* and citizens expressed concern about the sustainability of the cut at St’alaa Kun, the overcutting of ts’uu in the area, and the diminishing prospect of having enough ts’uu for future cultural practices.

Since Then...

On May 7, two days after the Land Protectors moved their camp, Husby resumed work, hoe chucking the felled trees behind St’alaa Kun. CHN Cultural Feature Identification (CFI) crews also returned to the cabins at St’alaa Kun that day to audit and monitor activities in the area.

Thus far, CFI crews have identified approximately 99 potential monumental ts’uu that have been felled; only two of these ts’uu had been marked as monumentals by Husby. The crews have also found that despite Husby’s claim that some of the cut blocks are “white wood,” these blocks in fact contain a high percentage of felled ts’uu which is categorized as red wood.

These issues are of concern to CHN who will continue audit the area as well as the proposed cut blocks. The audits undertaken by CFI crews involve identifying standing and logged monumental ts’uu

“

This is just the beginning. It might be the end of this stand here at St’alaa Kun, but it’s the beginning of the next chapter for change here on Haida Gwaii.

President of the Haida Nation, kil tlaats ‘gaa

as well as potential compliance issues in regards to hlgiiid *Western yew*, culturally modified trees, cut block boundaries, and ts’uu overharvesting. Monitoring work will continue throughout the summer. Land Protectors plan to move their camp to an observation point near CHN’s monitoring cabins. This will enable them to maintain a presence at St’alaa Kun and monitor CHN and Husby activities without violating the terms of Husby’s injunction against them.

On May 28, the CHN filed for an injunction in the BC Supreme Court seeking to halt Husby’s logging operations on Haida Gwaii. The CHN has submitted evidence of Husby’s overharvest of ts’uu. Husby will respond in court on June 18. •



Photo: Haida Gwaii Land Protectors

Haida Gwaii Land Protectors heading out to St'alaá kun.

How the Events Unfolded

April 7 2016 – CHN stops approving Husby cut permits at the Solutions Table

2016-2018 – CHN rejects 25 applications concerning St'alaá Kun at the Solutions Table. These applications include cut permits, forest licence renewals, and logging road construction or variance requests. In each case, BC overrides CHN's decision and allows work to proceed.

August 2017 – Haida Gwaii Management Council formally requests, again, that the provincial Chief Forester implement a ts'uu and sGaahlan cedar partition.

October 24 – Provincial Chief Forester agrees to assign a ts'uu and sGaahlan partition, however it is not legally binding under provincial law.

November 27 – CHN hosts public meeting to discuss Solutions Table non-consensus.

December 11 – Haida citizens and Haida Gwaii residents form Land Protectors, an Islands-wide group made up of 'everyday people who are worried about the status-quo of forest practices in Haida Gwaii'.

December 13 and 18 – Land Protectors rally support and organize marches in G̱aw and Daajing Giids.

February 28, 2018 – To provide better oversight of the logging at St'alaá Kun, CHN visits St'alaá Kun to find a location to build

monitoring cabins. The cabins will provide CHN crews with better access to monitor, audit and report on activity in the area. This will include monitoring forest practices, water quality, wildlife, Land Use Objectives Order effectiveness, and monumental ts'uu. Further capacity building may enable crews to conduct waste assessments.

March 2 – Crews begin construction of the CHN monitoring cabins.

March 13 – G̱aayhldaá X̱aadee release a statement announcing their determination to reoccupy St'alaá Kun and declaring logging without Haida consent illegal. Land Protectors set up camp at St'alaá Kun, blocking access to Hancock Mainline.

March 22, April 3 – CHN seeks legal counsel, anticipating that Husby will apply for an injunction to remove Land Protectors.

April 11 – Husby informs CHN legal counsel that the company is applying for an injunction hearing.

April 14 – Two CHN monitoring cabins are completed.

April 16 – CHN applies for intervenor's status in the injunction hearing.

April 18-19 – The parties present arguments to Justice Jasvinder S. Basran in the Supreme Court of BC.

April 18 – In court, Husby accuses Land Protectors of "brandishing weapons," This becomes a key piece of evidence in the Judge's decision. The CHN investigated this claim prior to the injunction hearing and found there were no grounds for the allegation.

April 26 – The court grants Husby an injunction, stating that, "Husby holds all of the necessary permits, approvals, and authorizations to conduct its logging operation at Colison Point. Accordingly, the defendants have no legal right to obstruct Husby's operations." The CHN initiates discussions with Ḵ'aayts'id IlG̱aayGalang and Husby to ensure that the injunction is enforced respectfully.

April 27 – Community members meet in G̱aw to discuss what approach should be taken at St'alaá Kun given the potential for arrests.

May 1 – Ḵ'aayts'id IlG̱aayGalang travel to St'alaá Kun to introduce themselves and check-in with Land Protectors.

May 3 – The court hands down injunction. Ḵ'aayts'id IlG̱aayGalang deliver it to Land Protectors at St'alaá Kun.

May 4 – Ḵ'aayts'id IlG̱aayGalang return to St'alaá Kun to check-in with Land Protectors again.

May 5 – Eight Land Protectors begin dismantling the line in the morning. Haida elders, Haida Nation, President, kil tlaats 'gaa and staff, and additional Land Protectors travel to St'alaá Kun to witness the events as they unfold.

May 5 – Ḵ'aayts'id IlG̱aayGalang arrive at St'alaá Kun. There are no arrests and they assist Land Protectors in dismantling the camp, loading trucks with gear and providing transportation to awaiting vessels. The parties participate in prayers, speeches, and ceremony, share in Yaahl Aadaa's birthday celebration, and Ḵ'aayts'id IlG̱aayGalang welcome Land Protectors aboard police vessels to transport them back to G̱aw. •



St'alaa Kun: By the Numbers



Logging at St'alaa Kun.

Anxiety continues to grow in Islands communities about the future of logging on Haida Gwaii. For years, Haida citizens and residents have voiced their frustration with a forest management system that fails to address basic issues like the unsustainable overharvesting of ts'uu *Red cedar* and sGaahlan *Yellow cedar*, the industry's non-commitment to local communities, and the chasm that lies between the values held by the Haida Nation and the Province.

This past year has seen Island communities rally to draw attention to these issues. Individuals and groups came together to stage

marches in Daajing Giids and Gaw to voice their concerns, a blockade of a proposed cutblock near Tlaga Gawtlass *New Town* resulted in a successful resolution, and, most recently, Land Defenders set up camp at St'alaa Kun *Collison Point* to call attention to what they have identified as illegal logging operations in the area.

To better understand the issues, here's a look at the numbers:

The 2012 Allowable Annual Cut (AAC), which is determined by the Haida Gwaii Management Council, limits the amount of wood that licensees are allowed to cut each year. Within the 2012 AAC, the Province's

Chief Forester indicated that ts'uu and sGaahlan *Western red and Yellow cedar* should comprise no more than approximately 195 000 cubic metres, or 38% of the Timber Supply Area's (TSA) Allowable Annual Cut.

According to these limits, Husby, the principal logging company at St'alaa Kun, should only cut an average of 76,172 cubic metres of ts'uu and sGaahlan each year. Instead, Husby cut 159,828 cubic metres of ts'uu and sGaahlan in 2016, representing a 110% overcut. Husby cut 101,540 cubic metres of ts'uu and sGaahlan in 2017, representing a 33% overage. Furthermore, Husby clearly targeted ts'uu and sGaahlan in their logging operations, as those species comprised 68% and 59% of the wood it logged in 2016 and 2017, respectively. This year, it appears Husby has already exceeded their allocation of ts'uu by at least 12,000 cubic metres.

In response to this overcut, CHN stopped approving Husby cut permits at the Solutions Table in 2016 and since then CHN has rejected 25 of Husby's applications concerning work at St'alaa Kun. In each case, BC overrode the CHN's decision and let logging proceed.

Land Defenders at St'alaa Kun have also highlighted concerns about the lack of Haida consent to the logging that is taking place on Haida Gwaii, potential impacts to watersheds and salmon-bearing streams, and the need to protect vulnerable species such as stads k'un *Northern goshawk* and taan *Haida Gwaii Black bear*. •

What is a "Partition"?

A partition limits what portion of the AAC can come from a specific type of timber. In 2012, the Haida Gwaii Management Council (HGMC) requested that the Chief Forester implement a partition to address the overharvesting of ts'uu and sGaahlan. At that time, the Chief Forester chose instead to identify a 'target' for cutting ts'uu and sGaahlan, rather than a formal partition. The target was set at 38% of the annual cut in the Timber Supply Area (TSA), 39% in TFL 60 and 41% in TFL 58.

In August 2017, the HGMC again requested that the Chief Forester implement a ts'uu and sGaahlan partition in the Timber

Supply Area as licensees were not voluntarily staying within the 2012 target.

In October 2017, the Chief Forester signed off on a ts'uu and sGaahlan partition in the TSA, requiring licensees to harvest no more than approximately 195 000 cubic metres of ts'uu and sGaahlan per year, however this partition remains non-legally-binding. The partition will not be enforceable under provincial law until the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Doug Donaldson, signs off on the Order.

BLACK GOLD

by Rhonda Lee McIsaac

The sound of seawater lapping against the rocks at Suu Iiwans Gawdaas in Nang Xaldangaas Protected Area was constant as rain jacket-clad men and women clambered along the rocky shoreline. They came in search of black gold hanging from rocks or lying thick on the exposed intertidal at low tide. For many this was an opportunity to get onto the shoreline for a traditional harvest and a feed of sGyuu *Purple laver seaweed* for their families.

A thin crepe-like appearance early in the spring distinguishes Purple laver, also called nori. The species, known to science as *Pyropia abbotiae*, is a member of bangiaceae, the red algae family. sGyuu's deep, dark-green hue verges on black. Broad fronds with frilly edges can grow from a few inches to a meter in length. It grows in the intertidal zone typically between the upper intertidal zone and the splash zone. It can be eaten raw or dried and contains high vitamin B12.

The smiles on the sGyuu harvesters' faces are contagious as heads pop up from various points on the rugged shoreline. Their hands become tacky and sticky with salt from the slick seaweed. Careful harvesters are keen to pick sGyuu properly to ensure it grows back the next year. They avoid picking sGyuu right off of the rock, leaving a few inches of stem instead. The pickers don't even notice cold winds as their eyes and hands dart from frond to frond. Even barnacle-scraped knees can't keep them from their quarry.

The weather holds as they pick large gunny sacks full for their families. Seawater oozes from the bags as they pack them from patch to patch. Within a few hours they have harvested at least 14 bags.

Harvesters will clean the sGyuu and lay it out in the sun to dry naturally. Haida keep it dry and watch it carefully to prevent mold growth. Harvesters can then break it up and package it in zip locked freezer bags. Black gold is a sought-after delicacy in Islands homes, at feasts, at potlucks and in every bowl



William Yeltatzie carrying two full bags of sGyuu.

of jam. If a good harvester feels a little more k'uudaga they can eat their sGyuu straight out of the bag.

The Haida Gwaii Restorative Justice program organized the event with support from the Old Massett Village Council Healthy Families Program. CHN's Protected Areas Management Program provided

transportation. Participants included Xyaahl Gulaa's *Colleen Williams*, Xay Kuyaas *Arian Medley*, Tammi Ryland, William Yeltatzie, Helmer Edgars, Yalthkunung *Chris Collison*, Wilfred Marks Sr, Oot Iiwaans *Leo Gagnon*, Wayne Edenshaw, Andy Williams, and CHN staff. •

Haida Laas/Graham Richard



Haida Leah/Tanisha Salomons

K'aas Spruce pitch dripping down the bark of a k'ayd Spruce tree.

K'aas Gandlaay Protected

by Tanisha Salomons

There are now 1,202 more hectares of jointly protected land on Haida Gwaii. The Honourable George Heyman, British Columbia's Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, announced this week that Bill 19 Protected Areas of British Columbia Amendment Act, 2018 passed Third Reading in the provincial legislature on May 15th and received Royal Assent two days later.

The amendment, which is now in force, includes several additions to existing protected areas. The largest addition was made on Haida Gwaii, where the K'aas Gandlaay Pitch Creek area was added to the Duu Guusd Haida Heritage Site and Conservancy. Duu Guusd is Haida Gwaii's second-largest protected area,

encompassing a sizeable swath of the west coast of the Islands.

In 2008, when the boundaries for Duu Guusd were officially established, K'aas Gandlaay was left out. K'aas Gandlaay has long been considered an area of high cultural value by the Haida Nation. Situated east of T'aat'uu GawGaay Tartu Inlet near the mouth of Chaahluu Kaahlii Renell Sound, the K'aas Gandlaay area is rich in archeological sites, some of which were recorded by the Council of the Haida Nation between 1998 and 2003. The most unique of these findings were dozens of culturally modified kayd Spruce trees scattered along the creekside. The trees, some still living, bear scars that show where Haida ancestors extracted k'aas Spruce pitch many

generations ago.

In 1981, as concerns were growing about the scale of logging on Haida Gwaii, the Haida Nation designated Duu Guusd Tribal Park and petitioned the provincial government to defer all development plans within the area. Duu Guusd was the subject of conflict for three decades while the Haida Nation protected the area from logging. In 2008, Duu Guusd became formally protected both by the Haida Nation as a Haida Heritage Site and by the Province of British Columbia as a Conservancy.

At the time, however, Husby Forest Products was active in the K'aas Gandlaay area and had already made an investment towards road development. Through negotiation, the Haida Nation reached an agreement with Husby to cease activity around K'aas Gandlaay, but by that time the protected area's boundary had been established and K'aas Gandlaay remained outside of Duu Guusd.

Since then, the Haida Gwaii Management Council, the Council of the Haida Nation, and the Province have worked to add K'aas Gandlaay to Duu Guusd. In 2015, the HGMC wrote a letter to British Columbia's Deputy Minister of the Environment, officially requesting that K'aas Gandlaay be added to Duu Guusd. In the interim, the area was designated as part of a Forest Reserve in order to afford it some level of protection under Provincial law. This Spring, K'aas Gandlaay was included in Bill 19 Protected Areas of British Columbia Amendment Act, 2018 which amends the legal description of Duu Guusd protected area to include K'aas Gandlaay.

With the protection of K'aas Gandlaay now formalized in both Haida and provincial law, the updated Duu Guusd Haida Heritage Site and Conservancy now covers approximately 144,934 hectares of upland and 84,173 hectares of foreshore.

Protected areas on Haida Gwaii, which include the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site, Gantl' Gadaas Pure Lake and Nee Kun Naikoon Provincial Parks, five Ecological Reserves, and 11 Haida Heritage Sites/Conservancies, cover more than 52% of the archipelago. •



Photo: Kunj Xaangjee Shawn Compaar

Taan patrolling the shores in Taa Suu.

Taa Suu gained scientific notoriety after divers found a previously undescribed sea cucumber species there, dubbed *Parastichopus leukothele*.

and congregate at Taa Suu's entrance, diving for food fish amongst many other seabirds. Hlk'yah *Perergine falcons* and Ts'aag Bald eagles circle close to mountain slopes, swooping and diving to snag the small birds.

In spring, sk'aagii *chum*, ts'it'an *pink*, taay.yii *coho*, and taaxid *sockeye* return to several rich salmon streams that drain from surrounding mountains into Taa Suu. Haida fishers recall looking across Taa Suu to see inlets full of jumping salmon. Hundreds of k'aang and skul *porpoises* follow the fish, gathering at Taa Suu K'yuuGa alongside kun Kaajii Gaajaawuu sperm whales. Taan *Haida Gwaii black bear* assemble along the shores of river mouths to feast on returning salmon.

Taa Suu supplements this abundance with xaaguu *halibut*, k'uust'an *crab*, Gaalahlyan *abalone*, k'yuu *clams*, guuding.ngaay *Red sea urchin*, Guuda gii Gayd *prawns*, taaxaw *mussels*, stan *geoduck* weighing up to four kilograms and hlk'wii *rock scallops* 'the size of dinner plates'. In the spring, iinang *Pacific herring* arrive to spawn and produce a moderate amount of k'aaw *Herring roe on kelp*. Xuud *Harbour seal* guard the inlet entrance from their rookery at Taa Suu Gwaay.yaay *Horne Island*, and keep a sharp eye out for the transient sGaana *orca* that hunt them.

All this natural ecological wealth provided kuuniisii *ancestors* with plentiful food and healthy forests that supported at least five major villages. With over 8,000 years of occupation, dozens of archeological sites fill Taa Suu's shores. After 1862, Haida lineages living in Taa Suu gradually moved to HlGaagilda *Skidegate*. Haida continue to fish, hunt and harvest in the area while the ocean's abundance also started to draw sport and commercial fishers. •

Taa Suu

by Graham Riachrd

The K'aas 'Laanas *Spruce Pitch People* lived along Daawxuusda the west coast of *Haida Gwaii*. These kayxal *raven matrilineage descendants* established villages from Kaysuun Llnagaay Kaisun to Taa Suu *Tasu Sound*. They built one of these villages, called Sing.ga Llnagaay *Winter Village*, on the shores of Sing.ga GawGa *Lomgon Bay* within Taa Suu. St'awaas XaaydaGaay *Witch People* joined K'aas 'Laanas there to intermarry, and together they established Grease House. It is said that Haida potlatched the first kiida *crest tattoo* at Grease House in Taa Suu.

Beyond Taa Suu's entrance westerly winds bring heavy swells from Tang.gwan the *open ocean*. These waves smash violently against

jagged outcroppings and rocky cliffs that tower over Daawxuusda. Imbedded in the kilometre-high wall is a small puncture, a 500-metre narrows called Taa Suu K'yuuGa. Here, the waves abate and enter a network of protected inlets and bays, shrouded in the shadows of surrounding mountains.

Eight and half kilometres of the narrows' coastline fall within Daawxuusda SGaagiidaay Kuuyada Daawxuusda Haida Heritage Site and Conservancy. The narrows are 121 metres deep and the inlet falls to 353 metres as it widens. Taa Suu then branches into four smaller inlets that together cover roughly 50 square kilometres.

In summer, ts'allang.nga *Marbled murrelets* nest in nearby old-growth forests



Hard working people

by Rhonda Lee Melsaac

Working on a dream for your community takes ongoing and a sustained effort to fully consider all the community needs and activities.

Since wrapping up Phase 1 of the Comprehensive Community Plan (CPP) in March 2017 the Gaw Comprehensive Community Planning (GCPP) organizers have been busy working on Phase 2 since September, 2017. Phase 2 of the process has taken them through the winter and organizers have been asking the community to think about Health, Infrastructure, Culture, Social, Education, Economy, Land and Resources, and even Governance. In mid-April the organizers shared the results of Phase 2.

Coordinator Victoria Grosse worked alongside UBC School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) students, Hudson McLellan and Mallory Blondeau to gather and process all of the community's suggestions and ideas – the team identified 175 actions from over a year of meeting. “We then had the community prioritize these actions which resulted in 36 top action items,” says Grosse.

The actions include regular public meetings with Chief and Council, more job opportunities for students and youth, ongoing management of the Mosquito Fleet, creating opportunities for tourism related revenue, extending open gym hours, and fixing the lighting around the village.

“It is an exciting time in Gaw to have the community produce a plan that is fully supported by Chief and Council. Just the other night

they postponed their scheduled meeting by two hours in order to allow Council members to attend a community dinner we held, showing us buy in from leadership and dedication to moving forward with plans for the future,” Grosse says.

With Phase 2 coming to conclusion, Grosse is now waiting for Phase 3 funding

“Phase 3 will include creating implementation strategies for the top action items. This will ensure that we are continuing to work as a community to help build the steps for each individual or department that these action items fall under. This process has been a community-wide effort from the beginning and will continue to be as we enter the next phase,” she says.

One of the fulfilling aspects of Grosse's involvement was connecting with local artists to include their work in the planning document. A logo contest wrapped up in March with artist Wayne Edenshaw's design being chosen.

“This one is called Planning the Future,” says Edenshaw. “It is members of the community planning the future. The beaver is a master builder so I thought he should be in there. With all of our hard working Haida, I see a bright future for us all.”

“Edenshaw's art and words are really meaningful to us as we work to make this process as respectful to the community as possible. We are hardworking people, and always have been,” says Grosse. •



Three women at Gaw.

SPEAKING OF XAAD KIL

Having a space for language revitalization and transmission is important and with only three weeks in-office there are already many ideas percolating for upcoming programs. The Xaad kil office staff: Administrator, Leslie Brown; Program Coordinator, Blanche Bell and Resource Coordinator, Skil Jaadee White, are busy too!

“Our first order of business will be to create a Xaad Kil Advisory Committee to guide our actions,” Bell said, who is excited about all of the possibilities. “We will be

inviting people who have been working in the language. We will also hold public forum sessions, to ask the community what they need to connect with Xaad Kil.”

“Another big task for our committee will be to get the “XK App” up and launched, Skil Jaadee will be working on that with Marianne Ignace,” Bell added. “The second program will be the Language Certificate through Simon Fraser University, where we host classes and students earn credits through Simon Fraser University.”

“The team will have a better idea of

programs to come, as we get further into our contract, and have meetings with the Village Council and public forums,” Bells added. Until those events happen, the community is welcome to visit the office at 415-B Frog Street (near the HaiCo office). The office is open week days from 9-noon. You are welcome to send any ideas, words of support, or suggestions to: xaadkiloffice@gmail.com.

