



February 24, 2023

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NORTHERN SHELF BIOREGION MARINE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK

On February 5th, 2023 at the 5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress, the Council of the Haida Nation, 14 coastal First Nations, and the Provincial and Federal governments announced their endorsement of the Northern Shelf Bioregion Marine Protected Area Network Action Plan. This Network Action Plan will help the Partners continue to work together to create new, and enhance existing, marine protected areas extending from Northern Vancouver Island to Dixon Entrance and out to the continental shelf, west of Haida Gwaii.

“Our Nations draw upon thousands of years of knowledge and experience, and bring forth long-established laws that guide our management responsibilities,” said CHN President Gaagwiis *Jason Alsop*. “The Haida Nation holds the inherent responsibility to steward our territories for present and future generations, with extensive experience in collaborative management and stewardship. The establishment of Haida Heritage Sites and protected areas is one way the Haida Nation continues to uphold our values and ways of being, without compromising the rights of Haida citizens. We are ensuring that culturally and ecologically important areas are protected, while opportunities that benefit Haida Gwaii’s local marine economy are prioritized. The MPA Network Action Plan is another step on the path to a stronger, healthier coast, creating a more secure and prosperous future for our communities.”

MPA Networks are a collection of individual MPAs that work together as a powerful and scientifically proven tool, contributing to improved species resilience and adaptation to future pressures, including climate change. Restoring abundance and ocean health is what will feed our families today, and will sustain our communities, cultures, and economies into the future. The proposed Haida Gwaii network sites have been developed over decades of work with elders and knowledge holders who participated in the Haida Marine Traditional Knowledge Study, and through engagement with Haida citizens, Haida Gwaii residents, and stakeholders. There will be continued engagement with community members and stakeholders throughout the rest of this process.

The framework announced commits all partners to work together to deliver on our Network Action Plan. This includes the monitoring and management of the new marine protected areas that we establish. This model of collaborative governance offers a way for Canada and BC to uphold their commitments to Reconciliation, while recognizing that the Indigenous people of these areas are the best placed to lead stewardship of these sensitive habitats.

This MPA Network Action Plan is just the beginning. We have a great deal of work ahead to develop conservation and management plans for our new marine protected areas. In coordination with the MPA Network, the Haida Nation continues to work on oceans stewardship through a number of initiatives, which include Guardian and Watchmen stewardship, Haida Heritage Sites, community-based fisheries, ecosystem monitoring, marine shipping, emergency response capacity, economic development, and recreational and commercial fisheries management, including bottom trawl fisheries, among many others.

To learn more, please visit the CHN Marine Planning website www.haidamarineplanning.ca, the MPA Network website www.mpanetwork.ca, or email mpp.pm@haidanation.com.