



Haida Gwaii Management Council

2014-15 Annual Report

Following the first transition of the Haida Gwaii Management Council (HGMC) members in 2013, the HGMC has continued to work in a highly collaborative manner to pursue and implement the legal and policy mandates established under the The Kunst'aa guu – Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol and the legislative direction of the Parties to that Protocol.

Allowable Annual Cut Determination

The Allowable Annual Cut (AAC) Determination was made by HGMC by consensus and formally released on April 4, 2012. The HGMC identified a number of concerns in that decision, and today continues to monitor the implementation and assess the need to re-open the conditional items identified in its decision.

Since the AAC Determination, the Chief Forester of BC has made the various AAC determinations for the specific management units that were conditional on the HGMC Determination, and the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) also released his apportionment decisions for the Queen Charlotte Timber Supply Area.

In 2014 and early 2015, HGMC has received briefings on the status of work to complete an improved forest inventory; specifically, completion of the vegetation resource inventory. Initial results of this new inventory are cause for concern, however, ground-truthing is needed to verify the results. The HGMC is concerned that completion of ground-truthing of that inventory as early as possible in 2016 is urgently needed, since this information is key to assessing the veracity of the current AAC. FLNRO is accelerating its verification work and the HGMC hopes it will be completed in 2016.

Use of LIDAR is also a key component to improving the information about the status of forests; Taan and the Province have jointly acquired LIDAR for the TSA and the Taan TFL. The HGMC is hopeful that the remainder of Haida Gwaii will also be completed and that this information will be used to support resource management on Haida Gwaii.

The current status and future prospects of cedar was a significant issue in the 2012 determination. The HGMC was concerned that a partition may be required as an interim measure to ensure that sufficient cedar stands remain to sustainably balance cultural uses, commercial harvest and conservation in the future. However, the Chief Forester decision did not impose a formal partition; rather, a “soft” partition with cedar targets was identified. Recent records of harvest (August 2015) indicate that in some tenures cedar is being harvested above the target levels. The HGMC has discussed with FLNRO options to reduce this pressure prior to setting a new AAC and will continue to do so. A joint work plan will be developed in collaboration with the Chief Forester's office that will lay out a timetable for a Timber Supply Review and identify options for dealing with the cedar over-harvest in both the short and long terms.

The HGMC anticipates formally addressing the AAC no later than 2017.

Land Use Objective Orders Amendment

The HGMC has legislative responsibility for any change to the Haida Gwaii Land Use Objectives Order that was put in place in 2010. The HGMC has agreed on the processes for Minor and Major Amendments to the LUOO and has made a number of decisions.

In 2014, the HGMC received and reviewed a number of specific proposals for LUOO amendments and, as a result, initiated a more comprehensive review of a package of priorities for amendment. In the summer of 2014, the HGMC technical staff and some licensees undertook a field review of certain key issues. This resulted in significant improvements in mutual understanding and agreements on interpretation of the Land Use Objectives Order.


The HGMC has also agreed on the priority to review potential amendments to address operational issues. Subsequently, the HGMC received a package of proposals from forest licensees. In April 2015, a joint technical staff team completed analysis and recommendations on these proposals as part of a comprehensive set of potential amendments. Work is underway to develop wording for amendments and some of these proposals were reviewed in August 2015. Further work is underway and the formal amendment process will be followed.

Many issues have been resolved through revisions to the Background and Intent Document that guides interpretation of the LUOO. However, a number of proposed amendments from the licensees were not found to have been substantiated by evidence and will not proceed to further review at this time.

Major amendment issues that have been resolved include concerns about interpretation of various aspects of the LUOO, including Forest Reserves and their boundaries. A report and recommendations from the LUOO Joint Technical Team on implementation of the provisions for S4 Streams is also expected in 2016.

Notwithstanding this progress, a number of broad concerns are emerging and remain to be addressed. These include:

- * Industry is concerned about the issue of quick responses to concerns and timely decision making.
- * The inflexibility of the current Land Use Objective Order has prevented common sense solutions to certain issues (e.g., Class 1 Forest Features) and might potentially result in lower environmental standards and practices while confounding economic harvesting operations. The HGMC has identified an improved process for resolution of Class 1 Forest Features related issues, however, this will require an Amendment of the LUOO and the broader issue will require a Major Amendment review.
- * Formal interpretation/clarification and improved implementation of the “generic” term PRACTICABLE, which is used in a number of places in the LUOOs, is required as there is a concern that the focus is only related to costs versus operational feasibility. The Background and Intent Document clarifies the interpretation of this term. Monitoring of performance will continue to ensure correct interpretation and application of this term in planning and carrying out forest harvesting.



* Increasing work pressures and demands, in concert with reduced staffing capacities, along with the increased number of administrative structures established under the Protocol, may create difficulties for continuing positive progress on implementing the Protocol. The HGMC and the Parties need to consider the need for more timely, efficient and responsive processes and structures in light of experience thus far

Protected Areas

In November 2012, the HGMC received legislative authority for the amendment of Management Plans for all Protected Areas on Haida Gwaii. The HGMC has been advised that the Management Plans for a number of pre-existing areas are out of date. The HGMC is seeking an inventory from the Parties of the needs and timing requirements for this work and anticipates having a strategic direction in place by 2016.

The HGMC has advised the Parties of the need to consider how to improve operational processes in a fully delegated approach to Protected Areas management.

Heritage Sites

The HGMC has the responsibility to develop a set of policies and standards for consideration by the Parties. Work began on this assigned responsibility in 2014. In 2015, the HGMC commissioned and received reports on the current state of heritage knowledge, and on the BC and Haida legislative and policy perspectives and practice. The HGMC has received recommendations on a plan and will shortly present a complete final set of policy and practice recommendations to the Parties, for implementation in 2016.


Forestry Strategy

The Kunst'aa guu – Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol assigns the completion of a Forest Strategy to the HGMC. In announcing the AAC Determination, the HGMC made commitments to undertake development of this strategy. The HGMC has always been clear that the success of such a strategy depends on development of partnerships among all Haida Gwaii interests.

Building on a discussion paper undertaken in 2013/14, the HGMC began a renewed consultative process in 2015 that aimed to engage the various players. A successful series of workshops culminated in an April 2015 Forum that focused the interests and desires of all potential partners. An Implementation Committee subsequently developed a set of recommendations to HGMC on i) four priority initiatives and ii) establishment and funding of Roundtables as well as a formal Community Council to advise and steer future work. The HGMC received and discussed these recommendations in August and is seeking input from various stakeholders before deciding on next steps.

Solutions Table

The HGMC has been meeting regularly with the Solutions Table Co-Chairs and has received update reports on the work of the Solutions Table. Positive progress continues as a result of revised process to improve management of the Solutions Table that began late in 2013. The Solutions Table has been successful in maintaining a clear and streamlined process (for



consensus recommendations) supporting some of the fastest turn-around times for applications in the province. However, concerns remain that this success has been achieved on the shoulders of a very limited capacity; should one or two individuals depart from the Table, the progress will not be maintained. In addition, there is an increase in the number of non-consensus recommendations coming from the Solutions Table

The Parties need to assess the efficiency and viability of the administrative structures established through the Protocol.

The HGMC will continue its monitoring role and will advise the Parties of progress in 2015/16.

2015 Board Membership

Haida Members

Guujaaw, appointment on HGMC extended until March 2016

Allan Davidson (Skil Helans); appointment on HGMC extended until March 2016

Provincial Members

Sharon Hadway; appointment to HGMC is due to end in 2016, a recommendation has been made to government that appointment be extended until 2017

Monica Perry; appointment on HGMC ends December 2015 and a new member will be appointed.

Chair

Derek Thompson . The Parties have extended the appointment of the Chair until March 2016.

All members were fully trained in 2014, as per the Reconciliation Protocol, and an amended administrative procedures Guidance Document has been completed.

Given the likely change-over of the majority of its members, the HGMC intends to prepare transition advice and recommendations to assist the next members.

Funding

Fiscal 2012/2013 was the last year of the initial formal agreement under which the Parties agreed to provide funding for HGMC operations. However, HGMC funding has continued to be shared equally between the parties with each Party contributing \$40,000 in 2015/16, since earlier contributions proved insufficient to undertake the fully developed HGMC Work Plan.

The HGMC develops a Work Plan and Budget in October for the next Fiscal Year to guide work and expenditures. The HGMC meets quarterly and often undertakes working meetings between those regular meetings.