

May 22 2015

Forest Strategy Forum Themes and Path Forward

The role of the Haida Gwaii Management Council (HGMC)

The HGMC was created by the Parties to the Kunst'aa guu Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol (i.e. The Haida Nation and the Province of British Columbia).

The HGMC is composed of four appointed representatives, two by the Haida Nation and two by British Columbia. The Chair is appointed jointly by the two Parties. The legally established mandate of the HGMC is defined as follows:

- 1) To set the allowable cut for all of the non-private forest lands on Haida Gwaii outside all protected areas.
- 2) To oversee and make any necessary amendments to the Land Use Objectives Orders established under the agreed to Strategic Land Use Agreement.
- 3) To approve and amend as necessary the management plans for all the Protected Areas identified in the Land Use Plan.
- 4) To recommend to the Parties a set of policies and standards for heritage sites identification, protection and management.

In addition to its legal mandate the HGMC was directed by the Parties to undertake "development of a comprehensive Haida Gwaii forest management strategy that maintains ecological integrity and supports a sustainable Haida Gwaii economy". The HGMC was, however, given no jurisdiction over or responsibility for any aspect of implementing such a strategy.

HGMC recognized that the only way to prepare and effectively carry forward a forest strategy was to develop partnerships with those people and stakeholders on Haida Gwaii that are most affected by forestry and most vested in implementation of the strategy.

Forest Strategy Forum Intent

In early 2015 HGMC commissioned a series of workshops with stakeholders around the Islands that were designed to stimulate discussion and generate ideas for discussion at the planned forum.

The April 17-18 Forum was set up to encourage all interested stakeholders to come together to advise HGMC on priorities and opportunities for partnerships to develop a forest strategy to increase the delivery of social and economic benefits to island communities from the forests of Haida Gwaii.

Forum Report: A Short Summary

The Forum was opened by a greeting and prayer for success. The Haida Gwaii Management Council Chair welcomed participants, introduced the HGMC members and reminded everyone that development of a forest strategy was mandated by the

Parties to the KK Reconciliation Protocol to “*Undertake Development of a comprehensive Haida Gwaii forest management strategy that maintains ecological integrity and supports a sustainable Haida Gwaii economy*”. In so doing the HGMC is intent on developing partnerships with key stakeholders.

The HGMC Desired Outcomes from the Forum

- Priorities for immediate actions
- Process to move forward on a comprehensive strategy.
- People to lead the initiative with the HGMC

The Challenge: How to collectively take ownership of the future at a time of great change in Islands governance as well as significant adjustment to the traditional forest economy and concern about local employment and need for diversification.

Day 1: Understanding the Challenges and Identifying Actions:-

Presentations & Discussions

Presentations were made by the President of the Haida Nation, representatives of communities, economic development organizations, training and capacity development organizations, tourism industry, Haico and others, and will be available on the HGMC website by June 30 2015 along with the notes taken at the plenary discussions.

Some Key Messages:-

- The era of the Fight (for Recognition, Respect, and Recovery) was effective but is over: now is a time to define our future and for developing partnerships to define a new future. The Haida Nation invites all communities and interests to work in a respectful relationship that recognizes Rights and Title and finds reconciliation for all.
- Recognition of need for all communities to work together to achieve greater local control and improved and diversified employment opportunities.
- There has been much progress on understanding and protecting environmental values. Now is the time to focus on economic, cultural and social values and beneficial outcomes in better balance with environment.
- Capitalizing on the opportunities and strengths of the Haida Gwaii forest economy requires acceptance of practical economic reality, in particular the markets and the operational challenges of working on-island.
- A number of initiatives by major tenure holders are already underway.
- Island communities have begun to work together on ideas on opportunities to work on essential aspects of a Forest Strategy such as: local control and access to forests, stimulation of industrial and related employment expansion and diversification, building a diversity of skilled people on the islands and improving community services and amenities.
- Economic development organizations working collaboratively emphasized the importance of understanding the resource and the opportunities, dealing

- with regulatory barriers, recognition of the distinct lifestyles and culture on the islands and, providing support for small business.
- Skills training experts came together to present an assessment of limiting factors and of the need to base future initiatives on a solid comprehensive assessment coupled with an approach that “stops looking at what is wrong”!
 - Tourism interests reminded everyone of the significant current and future business and employment diversification AND of the importance of the forests to that business.
 - Finally a number of speakers talked from the heart about socially responsible business and the need to ensure the long term perspective is always in mind along with practical lessons from individual and group endeavor.

The balance of Day 1 was spent in group work focused on coming to terms with the first of the desired outcomes, to identify “priorities for immediate actions”

Day 2: Moving Forward

In opening Day 2 the HGMC Chair briefly summed up the Day 1 experience and reminded participants that the HGMC is “not a new agency that is going to solve your problems for you but rather a catalyst to enable and be one member of community partners responsible for action on the Forest Strategy”
Participants then returned to the group work and produced the following ideas.

Group Work: (a full summary of the group presentations will be available on the HGMC website by end of June):

SOME IDEAS on Immediate Priorities for Action:

Increased Local Involvement and Accountability of Forest Tenures;

- Community forest tenure.
- Islands Governance and community collaboration.

Steady Employment: Initiatives for longer term Employment & Diversification:

- Improve access to wood/salvage/Yew for small business
- Diversify employment & products including value added & cultural products
- Improve data Base on employment and employable individuals.
- Initiatives to go beyond traditional forest sector employment
- Investment by Islands trusts in business initiatives for employment development

Infrastructure and Roads: Including a range of actions such as:

- managing road deactivation to ensure economic access

Training Programs, including:

- Islands first hiring.
- Mentorships, apprenticeships, etc.
- Task teams e.g. i) Skills training; ii) Developing a data base and “dating service” to match employees to employers.
- Support for a variety of secondary schools programs.

IDEAS about Longer Term Priorities: regulatory change, energy & transportation infrastructure improvements, forest investment initiatives for diversification e.g. virtual log market, buying out existing tenures was proposed.

SOME IDEAS about a Path Forward

In a plenary at the end of Day 2 a number of ideas were put forward by participants:-

- Taking Community Control is key.
- Importance of developing a partnership to harness Athlii Gwaii Legacy Trust resources for investment in forest related economic development.
- Haida Leadership was recognized and welcomed.
- A “Steering Committee for Coordination & Advice to HGMC” on next steps was suggested and potential “volunteers” suggested including Percy Crosby, Ian Gould, Cameron Bell, Sabrina Frasier.
- A number of ideas were discussed about how to move forward such as: Pilots to test ideas, MoUs between partners e.g. Commitments between employers and governments to create programs to market available resources better, Research and information initiatives e.g. Research focus on systemic barriers, why are companies hiring off-island and what is needed collectively to work to align resources.
- Some form of long term “Empowered Community based Institution” was identified as a requirement for future success.

HGMC PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

The HGMC met on April 28-29, 2015 to review the results of the Forestry Forum and discuss how to move forward. The members all expressed their gratitude that a significant number of residents attended the Forum and that so many and varied communities and organizations came together to present unified perspectives. They also noted that a broad base of participation will be required in the future including major business, since a successful Forest Strategy can only be achieved through the active participation of these businesses.

With these thoughts in mind HGMC made the following decisions:-

- HGMC is prepared to move forward in search of effective partnerships and community commitment.
- HGMC will by June 30 2015 have the notes from the plenary and a full summary of the Forum group work, available on the HGMC website.
- HGMC will by the August HGMC quarterly meeting, convene a small group of stakeholders and will meet Athlii Gwaii Trust to encourage partnership and further advice on priorities and actions to move forward.
- A contract will be awarded to help the HGMC complete these two steps.

Following the August meeting the HGMC will publicly communicate the results of the work with stakeholders and identify next steps.