

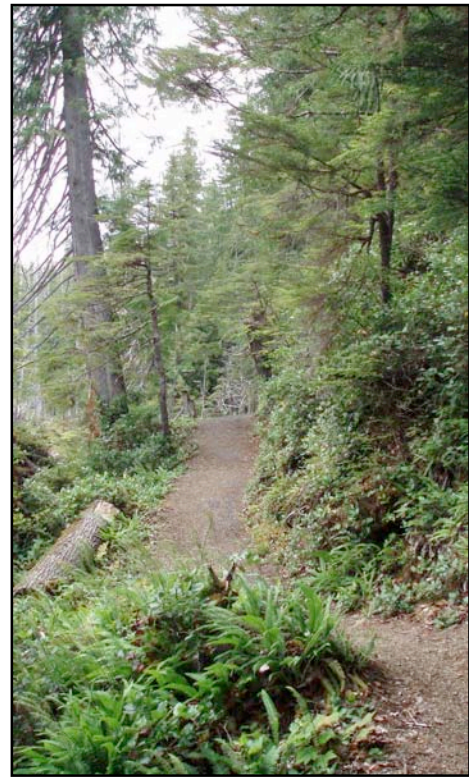
k'yuwaatl'aagee / k'yuwaatl'aagaay^a

The Haida Gwaii Trails Strategy

Gap Analysis Report

December 7, 2010

This report summarizes the work completed to date on an islands-wide strategy for trails development on Haida Gwaii. It provides analysis of information gaps that will need to be addressed in Stage 1 of k'yuwaatl'aagee, the Haida Gwaii Trails Strategy (HGTS), in order to move forward into Stage 2, Implementation.



*Spirit Lake Trail, Skidegate
Popular, Scenic, Legendary*

p.1/8

1. Inventory of Haida Gwaii's Trails

A significant amount of stakeholder consultation, research, and mapping has taken place that records ancient, historic and contemporary trails of Haida Gwaii. The Mount Moresby Adventure Camp (MMAC), and the Haida Mapping Department of the Secretariat of the Haida Nation completed the most comprehensive inventory work in 2007. This work was accomplished with the financial support of the South Moresby Forest Replacement Account (SMFRA)¹. The North Moresby Island Trails Development Project 2009 report documents several trails and provides extensive information on the costs of developing these trails. The Archaeological Overview Assessment of Northern Haida Gwaii Draft report 2001³ documents historic, ancient and some contemporary trails. Other trail inventories and proposals may exist.

Gaps: No comprehensive list of existing trails and trails under development on Haida Gwaii exists. Though the MMAC 2007 Inventory is a very good start, it has not been updated, and some trails are missing from this inventory. More Trail Inventories and Trail Projects have been initiated since this study was undertaken. No map, printed or digital has been found for the MMAC Inventory, though mapping with GPS and hand mapping of historic trails is mentioned in the minutes of their committee work.

Recommendations:

1. An Inventory of Haida Gwaii trails should be compiled using the existing MMAC 2007

^a k'yuwaatl'aagee (M) |kū.wattl'a.gay| , k'yuwaatl'aagaay (S) |kū.wattl'a.guy| definitive noun: the path out from concealment / the woods. See Enrico J., 2005, Lachler, J., 2009, and Old Massett unpublished orthography.

all-island data, as well as additional information that will be gathered from federal, provincial, and municipal jurisdictions, trail users, trail service providers, the general public, and documentary research as required. This inventory should build on the MMAC Inventory, using their metadata sets and adding additional data as is relevant.

2. Obtain copy of the MMAC 2007 Inventory maps and metadata, in a digital form if possible.

3. Research mapping and metadata collection standards, and provide a recommendation on appropriate standards for the HGTS to the Steering Committee.

2. Standards for Trail Inventory

The inventory standards followed for the MMAC 2007 are the TrailsCanada Basic and Enhanced Inventory Standards 2005, Scouts Manual. Complete Inventories of some trails have not been completed. Standards for various jurisdictions may vary.

Gaps: Have the 2005 Scouts standards been amended since? Can / should we look for funding to inventory all island trails to the same standard? Is the TrailsCanada Standard the appropriate model for an islands-wide trails strategy?

Recommendation: Research these items and provide recommendations to the Steering Committee. Research should include documentary and stakeholder consultation.

3. Strategic Plans

Various jurisdictions on Haida Gwaii have their own strategic plans for trails and other economic and social development. The MMAC 2007 Report includes a 5-year plan for islands-wide trail development. Due in part to the MMAC not perceiving a mandate to enact the strategy^b, no work has been completed on the 5-year plan in the past 3 years. Since that time, the Haida Gwaii Strategic Land Use Agreement (HGSLUA) has been brought to its final drafts, with an expectation that the Province of BC and the Council of the Haida Nation will both sign it off sometime in the first half of 2011.

Gap: The MMAC 2007 5-year plan is not detailed enough to provide forward movement on trail system development, though it does provide an excellent check-list for moving forward with a strategic approach.

Recommendations:

1. The HGTS should use the MMAC 5-year Plan as a guiding document, but open it and revise it. Other trails development plans that exist in Haida Gwaii jurisdictions should be consulted.

2. Research should be conducted on how other Trails organizations have approached strategic planning and apply their knowledge to the HGTS. A short list of projects that may have relevance include the Vancouver island Spine Trail project, the West Coast Trail, and the Sunshine Coast Trail.

4. Public, Stakeholder Consultation

The MMAC 2007 Inventory process chose stakeholder meetings as their main consultation process.

Gaps: With reference to the MMAC 2006-2007 Trail Inventory Initiative meeting minutes, which inform the MMAC Inventory Report and 5-year plan, there appears to be some

^b Personal Communication from MMAC 2007¹ author and researcher Jonathon Ebbs, December 2010, paraphrased.

interests missing from the table.

Recommendations:

1. A complete list of stakeholders should be compiled. The Steering Committee should be formed by designates from all the island jurisdictions, stakeholders, trails organizations and service providers. These may include but are not limited to: Old Masset Village Council, Masset Village Council, Tow Hill Road Community, Tlell Community, BC Parks and Conservancies and Haida Gwaii Protected Areas, Recreational Sites and Trails BC, Skidegate Band Council, Taan Forest Limited (TFL 39, Block 6), Teal Jones Group (includes various Timber licensed areas on Haida Gwaii), Village of Queen Charlotte, Sandspit Community, Parks Canada / Gwaii Haanas, and trails service providers. The list should be consolidated as part of stakeholder and public consultation process.
2. An advertised, public consultation process should take place to inform the development of the HGTS.
2. Regular reporting to the MIEDS, to be distributed to Steering Committee members and the general public through the MIEDS website and direct e-mail communications should take place, to ensure ongoing island wide dialogue.

5. Ensuring that Islanders are in the Driver's Seat: A long term, Islands-wide organizational Structure to Manage, Market and Maintain Trails

Ensuring that islanders are in the driver's seat was very important to some of the stakeholders who attended the 2006-2007 MMAC meetings.

Gap: How to ensure we continue to be in the driver's seat?

Recommendation: During public and stakeholder consultations, participants should be asked what their thoughts are around this issue. The MIEDS can take this information forward through the HGTS by ensuring the appropriate safe guards are in place so that our trail system is developed locally. While economic development is one of our goals, maintenance of the Islands lifestyle must be balanced with it⁴. By working with all local jurisdictions, and eventually in concert with the HGSLUA Joint Management Committee, we can achieve this important goal.

6. Liability and Insurance, Safety issues

Gaps: There are varying standards for trail maintenance and liability depending on the jurisdiction within which a trail exists. Different island jurisdictions have chosen different standards.

Recommendation: Research maintenance and liability standards for trails through municipal, federal, private and crown lands. Research safety variables both broadly and specific to each area, including hunting areas and seasons. Report on findings and provide recommendations on appropriate Haida Gwaii trail standards to the Steering Committee.

7. Funding for research, development and implementation of the HGTS

Several references are made to the need for an ongoing administrative structure for an All-Islands Trails Strategy in the 2006-2007 MMAC meeting minutes, in order to best pursue grants and other strategic funds. The MIEDS can provide this, as the goal is all-island representation on the Board, and it has a staff administrator, providing for timely reporting to HGTS supporters. This is where the MIEDS can be most effective in taking the HGTS into the future.

The SMFRA, now called the Gwaii Forest Society (GFS), and currently administrated by the Gwaii Forest Charitable Trust (GFCT), was identified as a possible source for ongoing trail maintenance in the MMAC Inventory Report 2007. However, ongoing funding of initiatives may

not be in the GFTS mandate. The GFTS / GFS not currently operating but will be operating in some form in the future. The GFCT may be able to consider a change to its mandate if the request comes from an Islands-wide mandated group like the MIEDS, with additional recommendation from jurisdictionally mandated HGTS Steering committee members.

The MMAC 2007 minutes suggest that funding for the HGTS permanent Coordinator position can, with enactment of a strategy, come increasingly from a portion of fees for trail use.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a proposed funding structure for ongoing research, development and maintenance of the HGTS. Collaborating with federal, provincial and municipal jurisdictions will be required.
2. Work with Island jurisdictions to consider how the Gwaii Forest Charitable Trust and/or the Gwaii Trust Society may be accessed islands-wide to fund maintenance and ongoing development of this and similar islands-wide initiatives.
3. Partner funding for the trail network may be available through the engagement of local educational institutions, including the local elementary and high schools, as well as possibly the Haida Gwaii Semester. Other Universities could be made aware of the potential for research and educational opportunities associated with inland and coastal trail routes of Haida Gwaii, and provided with standards for participation. Funding for portion of trails maintenance, for example, may be a requirement of any research granted for in the HGTS and trails network.
4. Ongoing research into trail funding options is needed. The granting environment changes daily. Other Trails Organizations should be consulted on funding options, and networking with provincial, national and even international trails and environmental organizations may prove helpful in sorting out funding options as the HGTS proceeds.
5. Consult with local trails initiatives about their funding proposals that may not have been successful and find out why they were not funded. In the HGTS Stage 2, work with them to assist them in securing funding for their projects.

8. Haida Gwaii Trails Projects in progress and Islands-wide branding, signage

Several jurisdictions have trails that they are currently maintaining with various signage standards. Some trails should have extensive signage for interpretive opportunities, while and other trails may require only directional signage, but all signage should have an island brand, to allow for certainty among our guest hikers especially.

Gap: Do the various jurisdictions agree that Islands-wide branding of the trails network is desirable, and to what extent should the signage reflect this?

Recommendation: Ask the above question when interviewing during the public consultation process.

9. Archaeological, ethnographic and culturally important sites, and archaeological site potential, on or near trails

Archaeological sites are protected by the Heritage Conservation Act of BC, and have some specific kinds of protection under the draft HGSLUA.

Gap: For some areas where trails are proposed, ethnographic and archaeological surveys have not been completed. The MMAC 2006-2007 consultations note the need for such

surveys to inform trail development. An inland^c (above 25 meters elevation) archaeological potential model, apart from culturally modified trees and cedar trees generally as indicators, has not been developed.

Recommendation:

1. The HGTS should provide for Archaeological Impact Assessments that would include significant ethnographic and documentary research, particularly when potential for archaeological, ethnographic or traditional use sites exists.
2. The development of an inland archaeological potential model for Haida Gwaii would assist in trail development planning.

10. Orienteering

Walking off of the designated trails provides an exciting opportunity for discovery in our islands landscape. With the designation of new BC Conservancies in the past year, and within the other Designated Park areas of Haida Gwaii, orienteering may be an activity that is desirable for educational, cultural, research, and tourism purposes. Orienteering requires little to no maintenance, and may not have been considered in previous trail studies.

Gap: Orienteering guidelines are not part of any previous Trails Initiatives on Haida Gwaii

Recommendation: Orienteering should be a subject for discussion during the public and stakeholder consultation. Prior to these discussions, research into standards for orienteering in other areas should be researched.

11. Partnering with Existing Trail Projects

Recommendations:

1. As part of the public and stakeholder consultation process, the HGTS should hold individual meetings with all Haida Gwaii trail organizations and developers to find out what roles they see for the HGTS in their planning.
2. The HGTS should network with other Trail projects on the North Coast of BC about the benefits of connecting with them in terms of marketing, strategic planning, cultural, educational and research opportunities.

12. Job Creation and Marketing

Recommendations:

1. Develop an Islands-wide job creation and marketing strategy, always with reference to the values of Islanders, as detailed in the Heritage Tourism Strategy⁴ and the HGSLUA.
2. Direct consultation with Stakeholders who have already developed strategic plans should take place to see how the HGTS can enhance their projects.

13. Trail Types and Associated Activities

Gaps: Some trail types are not addressed significantly in the MMAC 2007 Inventory including ATV trails, **bicycle trails and lanes**, interpretive trails, and trails in federal parks,

^c inland archaeological potential for Haida Gwaii may be defined as potential for subsurface and surface archaeological remains in areas above 25 meters in elevation. There is generally high potential for such archaeological remains in all areas below 25 meters in elevation, associated with the time of varying sea levels in the last 9000 years

for example. Various activities that may be associated with trails have not been inventoried, for example, canopy climbing, zip lining, and hunting.

Recommendations:

1. The HGTS should provide direction for all trail types, and standards for vendor activities that may, in time, be associated with managed trails.
2. A trails services and vendor inventory should take place as part of the public consultation process.
3. Bicycle trails and lanes have been identified as an important aspect of Haida Gwaii trail development by the Skeen Queen Charlotte Regional District. Local bicycle trail advocates should be sought out for input to the development of this important aspect of the Islands trail system. Municipalities and the Ministry of Transportation / Highways should be asked about their plans to manage for bicycle trails and lanes during the public consultation process.

14. The Role of Volunteerism

Volunteers are mentioned in the MMAC 2006-2007 minutes as a source for trail maintenance capacity.

Recommendation: As part of the HGTS public consultation process, the question should be asked: What role should volunteers reasonably play in the maintenance of Haida Gwaii trails?

Conclusion and Action Plan

The public consultation process should begin soon, with advertisements placed in local and regional newspapers, both paper and web-based, and posters hung in all local post offices and kiosks. E-mail notice of the advertisement should be sent out to known stakeholders. Public meetings should not be required, as the preferred method of consultation at this level of strategic planning is in written form. Written comments are most succinct, and do not require transcription or paraphrasing, increasing the productivity of the researcher while ensuring accuracy.

The Joint Management Committee for Haida Gwaii, when it is established (expected in Spring or Summer 2011), will be consulted and informed of our progress in the development of the HGTS.

References listed in the bibliography will inform the public and stakeholder consultation process. New reference documents will be added to the HGTS bibliography as they are discovered.

All Recommendations provided above, in addition to any additions that may be indicated during the public consultation process should be addressed in the Stage 1 Report to provide a strategic direction that all Island stakeholders can use to help forward their trail development projects as soon as possible.

This report provides a baseline for the development of a detailed set of deliverables for Research and Coordination of k'yuwaatl'aagaay, the HGTS, Stage 1. The Stage 1 Report is intended to provide a strategy for implementation of the HGTS, which will include a permanent HGTS coordinator position.

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Appendix 1: List of Acronyms

HGTS: Haida Gwaii Trails Strategy

MIEDS: Misty Islands Economic Development Society

MMAC: Mount Moresby Adventure Camp

AIHA: All-Island Hikers Association

MIMC: Moresby Island Management Committee

MTSA: Ministry of Tourism Sports and the Arts

GFS: Gwaii Forest Society

GFCT: Gwaii Forest Charitable Trust

GTS: Gwaii Trust Society, formerly,

SMFRA: South Moresby Forest Replacement Account

AOA: Archaeological Overview Assessment

HGSLUA: Haida Gwaii Strategic Land Use Agreement, 2010 draft

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