Clayoquot River Valley is the Ha’uukmin Tribal Park is in the heart of Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations territory - Adrian Dorst. Top: West Coast Wild Adventures billboard - Eli Enns. Bottom: Tofino welcome sign.

CLAYOQUOT REBORN

Clayoquot Sound has been an international destination for over two hundred years, and has seen its share of conflicts — from the battle that sank the merchant ship Tonquin in 1811 to the protests over plans to clearcut log Meares Island in 1984. But a new day of cooperation is dawning in Clayoquot with exciting prospects for local economies and ecosystems.

The lands and waters of the Tla-o-qui-aht are located in Clayoquot Sound. Their territory encompasses the communities of Opitsat, Esowista and Tofino plus all of the surrounding forests, rivers, lakes, ocean inlets and islands, where they have lived since the beginning of time. The Tla-o-qui-aht are one of the Nuu-chah-nulth nations, whose combined territories cover western Vancouver Island. Clayoquot Sound is a wildly beautiful place, rich in wildlife, ancient forests, beaches, inlets, islands, indigenous culture and history.

The Hawihs, or hereditary chiefs of the Tla-o-qui-aht, have long sought to ensure that the territory is not mistreated or over-harvested. In modern times, with increasing pressures from industrial logging, fishing and mining the Hawihs’ task has gotten more difficult with each passing year.

On April 21, 1984 the Tla-o-qui-aht proclaimed Meares Island as a Tribal Park, and were supported by their neighbors, the Ahousat First Nations. First protests, then a court case mounted by the tribes of Clayoquot Sound finally succeeded in fending off the logging company, MacMillan Bloedel, who wanted to log Meares.

In 1993 plans by MacMillan Bloedel to log in the Tla-o-qui-aht’s Clayoquot River Valley and other pristine valleys of Clayoquot sound touched off a massive series of environmental protests, with participation of thousands of people from across Canada and beyond.

By the late 1990’s the Tla-o-qui-aht and the other Nuu-chah-nulth tribes of Clayoquot Sound had gained controlling interest in MacMillan Bloedel’s cutting rights (eventually owning them outright). They had also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with environment groups, committing to not log in the pristine valleys of Clayoquot Sound.

Now, a decade later, the Tla-o-qui-aht have announced their latest nation-building initiative – the Ha’uukmin Tribal Park. In the Nuu-chah-nulth language, Ha’uukmin means ‘like a great feast bowl’, which speaks of its former abundance. The tribal park encompasses the entire watershed known today as Kennedy Lake. Its boundaries extend far beyond the shores of Kennedy Lake, encompassing 500 sq km of mountain peaks, backcountry trails, ancient forests and salmon rivers. The Ha’uukmin Tribal Park is a great place to go to experience the amazing mountain rainforest of Tla-o-qui-aht territory.

Read on to find out how you can visit and help the Tla-o-qui-aht better manage this special place.

There are many good memories of the time back in 1984 when we worked to protect Meares Island, but the momentous time was when our elected chief then, Moses Martin, stood on the shores asking in his respectful manner of the logging company to not destroy our garden.

Then of course, it all culminates to the day the court ruling was announced and we succeeded! Vividly, I still see those images of the late George Watts flying in and hand delivering the verdict to our people, you could just see the pride he carried in a few words.

Meares Island is what galvanized the sheer support, strength and determination of our people. We were united behind one clear cause and there was no cloudiness as to what we wanted to achieve and how we wanted to achieve it.

Tribal Parks are but a modern day version of how our Hawiih, and their advisors managed and protected our resources without jeopardizing our future yet being in a strong position to deliver the immediate economic needs. The Tribal Parks clearly reflect how we want to manage man within the park instead of your conventional parks where they work to manage keeping man out of the park.

Tribal Parks is a fundamental engine towards not just bringing to life our management practices and beliefs but also revitalizing the strength of our Hawiih’s governance model so that there are plenty of resources for our generations ahead.

**CHOO**

Chief Francis Frank
Elected chief councilor of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations
When people think of Tofino and Clayoquot Sound, images of white surf on endless ocean beaches surrounded by emerald green islands and mountains come to mind. But Clayoquot Sound also has the biggest cluster of unlogged river valleys remaining on Vancouver Island. Within the Ha’uukmin Tribal Park lies the Clayoquot River Valley in the heart of Tla-o-qui-aht territory.

In 1993 members of the Wilderness Committee teamed up with Tla-o-qui-aht people to construct a hiking trail into the ancient forest there. A backpack trip to Norgar Lake in Clayoquot Valley is a once in a lifetime experience. See the Wilderness Committee’s web site for trail info at wildernesscommittee.org

For guided hikes check out WestCoast Wild Adventures’ web site at www.wcwild.com

Backpacking the Clayoquot Valley

For several years Parks Canada has helped to fund and support planners from the Tla-o-qui-aht, who have worked hard to design a management plan for the Ha’uukmin Tribal Park that remains true to the vision of the Havihi of a protected area which integrates economies with ecosystems. The Ha’uukmin Tribal Park greatly adds to the ecological integrity of the nearby Pacific Rim National Park. In addition, the Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks have just gained some important new partners. The Canada-Africa Research and Learning Alliance under their Poverty Reduction and Protected Areas program has linked planners from the Serengeti National Park of Tanzania and the University of Victoria to support the ongoing work to manage the Ha’uukmin Tribal Park.

What the planners came up with is a two-zone Tribal Park. A recovery zone known in the Nuu-chah-nulth language as uuya tuknis (we take care of) takes in most of Kennedy Lake and the lands that surround it, as well as the Highway 4 corridor. Here the Tla-o-qui-aht would allow single tree selection logging, small hydro development, and tourism development such as fishing, boating, mountain biking, a zip line and lodge.

Restoration of forest and stream health damaged by earlier poor logging practices is a priority in this zone to bring salmon numbers back to former abundance. A demonstration salmon weir is located here to show traditional ways of salmon fishing that properly manages the resource.

A protection zone known as qwa siin hap (leave as it is for now) takes in the pristine upper Kennedy and Clayoquot River valleys, as well as part of the Clayoquot Arm of Kennedy Lake. Here no logging or industrial activities are allowed. Light tourism such as backpacking, hiking and camping as well as scientific research on salmon, wildlife and ancient forests are encouraged. Preservation of the ancient forest ecosystem is a priority in this zone.
A young man and his grandmother were travelling down river by canoe. They travelled with a full load of salmon, on their way to join the rest of the nation at the winter village site. Unexpectedly, the universe well up under one side of the canoe tipping it and spilling its contents into the rushing river.

Paddles in hand, the two were able to pull themselves and the canoe up onto the river bank, but the salmon store was lost to the current.

Grandmother told the distraught young man about a place up river where a plentiful salmon run ran late.

Grandmother explained that she would wait in the canoe for him, and cautioned that he should not go too far up the river, adding, “Only take what you need to restore what was lost.” He listened with gratefulness; that he was going to have a chance to redeem his name.

Upon arriving up river, grandson was overwhelmed at how many fish there were. He leapt into the river and started collecting fish. As he leapt forward his grandmother’s words of warning faded away behind him. Suddenly he realised how far up the river he had come, and how many fish he had already collected. He looked around and in the stillness he heard singing. His curiosity piqued, he made his way over and climbed up onto a fallen tree. Now standing, grandson could peer over the bough to see where the singing was coming from. Not far away, a group of strange looking people were doing a ceremony around a fire. Their bodies were covered in a short dense hair that glinted light in the fire and they did not stand quite straight.

One of the largest looked up at grandson and their eyes met. Startled, grandson turned to flee and lost his balance, falling to the ground where he hit his head losing consciousness. When he awoke, his body was polluted with thousands of embryonic river otters. In a panic he started running back down along the river.

Down below his grandmother heard him coming and knew that he had gone too far. She started a fire and began preparing a medicine wash for him. Following his frantic arrival, the grandmother worked on him for many long hours. The sun was coming up by time she was done. They climbed back into the canoe with what salmon store they could gather; no more than they needed. Grandson realized his destiny. His story would live on for many generations to come, teaching others the importance of humility and only taking what you need from the resources around you.

Remembering River Otter Dreams…

Here are a few listings of some folks that can make your West Coast adventure come alive. For a more complete list see Tofino Tourism’s website below.

**Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks**

- **Tel:** (250) 266-0471
- **www.tribalparks.ca**

**WestCoast Wild Adventures Ltd.**

- See come the Há’uuukmin Tribal Park with Zip Line and River Kayaking Eco-Educational Tours. A portion included in the ticket price goes towards the Tla-o-qui-aht Salmon Enhancement Fund.
- **Tel:** (250) 725-8668
- **Email:** info@wcwild.com
- **www.wcwild.com**

**Tla-o-qui-aht Salmon Enhancement**

- Giselle Martin guides dugout canoe trips, guided hikes, trips to Meares Island Big Tree Trail.
- **Tel:** (250) 725-2656
- **Toll Free:** 1-877-942-2663
- **www.tlaook.com**

**Clayoquot Freedom Charters, Tofino**

- Moses Martin guides fishing, whale and bear watching, custom boat tours, trips to Meares Big Tree Trail.
- **Tel:** (250) 725-2765
- **Toll Free:** 1-866-725-2765

**Best Western Tin-Wis Resort**

- Located 3 km outside of Tofino, in the beautiful and pristine heart of Clayoquot Sound on Vancouver Island, BC. Positioned on the traditional territory of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations. 1119 Pacific Rim Highway Tofino, BC, V0R 2Z0
- **Tel:** (250) 725-4445
- **Toll Free:** 1-800-661-9995
- **Email:** info@tinwis.com
- **www.tinwis.com**

**Tourism Tofino**

For an extensive listing of West Coast purveyors of fun see **www.tourismtofino.com**

**I support the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations’ Tribal Park!**

Here is my donation towards the Tla-o-qui-aht Há’uuukmin Tribal Park initiative.

Enclosed is: $25 $50 $100 $ Other $ __________

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**I support the Wilderness Committee’s work to protect Clayoquot Sound**

Enclosed is: $25 $50 $100 $ Other $ __________

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**SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE HA’UUUKMIN TRIBAL PARK!**

Contact Premier Campbell, and tell him how much you support and appreciate the Tla-o-qui-aht’s Tribal Park initiative.

Hon. Gordon Campbell, Premier of B.C.
Room 156, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, British Columbia, V8R 1M4
Phone: (250) 387-1715 Fax: (250) 387-9087
Email: premier@gov.bc.ca

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**FUN! WEST COAST STYLE**

**Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks**

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www.tribalparks.ca

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Website: wildernesscommittee.org