



Welcome to

TLA-O-QUI-AHT



TRIBAL PARKS!



NEW TRIBAL PARKS DECLARED IN CLAYOQUOT SOUND



Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks Staff

On behalf of our Nation, we would like to welcome all of you to Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks! Tribal Parks are land designations on our *Ha'hulthii* (territories), managed by our people to better harmonize human needs and environmental well-being.

With two new additions this year, there are now four declared Tribal Parks in Tla-o-qui-aht territory: *Wah-nuh-jus – Hilth-hoo-is* (Meares Island), *Ha'uukmin* (Kennedy Lake Watershed), and the newly declared *Tranquil Tribal Park* and *Esowista Tribal Park*.

Instead of following the heavy industrial model of unsustainable resource extraction, we aim to benefit from our territories by enjoying and respecting them, rather than exploiting them. This is where you come in!

One of our priorities for economic activity within our

Tribal Parks is sustainable, low-impact tourism. We hope to develop this into a vibrant economic sector that is a point of pride for our people, and a way for you to experience the power of our territory – the lands and waters surrounding the town of Tofino on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

On your way into town, stop in for some action at West Coast Wild Adventures in Ha'uukmin Tribal Park, just off Highway 4. The popular zipline and canyon tour is sure to get your heart racing, and the company is hoping to offer river kayak tours soon.

At Wah-nah-jus – Hilth-hoo-is (Meares Island), our first declared Tribal Park, you and your family and friends can hike in the old-growth rainforests that make Clayoquot Sound legendary.

Although only a short water taxi ride from Tofino, the Big Tree Trail is a world away. On this well-maintained boardwalk loop you will see some of the biggest redcedar trees in the world, and marvel in the beauty of a forest saved from clearcut logging in the 1980s. Tla-o-qui-aht guides are available for this walk to provide insight into the cultural significance of the plants, animals, and medicines that make up this rich forest.

For those seeking more adventurous hiking, a trail is now completed from the Big Tree Trail to C'is-a-qis, a small bay on the other side of Meares Island. This trail is more strenuous, taking about six hours one-way, with rough campsites along the route.

Also on Meares Island, visitors can take guided hikes from the Tla-o-qui-aht village of Opitsaht up

Wah-nah-jus (Lone Cone Mountain), the iconic peak across the water from Tofino. The trail winds through several types of old-growth rainforest, and the views from the top of the mountain are absolutely breathtaking. Finish the day off with a refreshing swim in Hisnit Lake before returning to Opitsaht to catch a boat back to Tofino.

The trail system in Wah-nah-jus – Hilth-hoo-is Tribal Park is constructed and maintained by Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks staff and Wilderness Committee trail crews, and they're now ready for you to enjoy!

Fishing, paddling, and bear-watching tours are also available in our Tribal Parks, and this is just the beginning. **With four declared Tribal Parks within our territory, we hope to become leaders in sustainable tourism, and we want you to be a part of it!**

We hope to see you out this year to experience our unique recreational opportunities and have some fun in our Ha'hulthii!



Photo top: Ancient redcedar on Big Tree Trail, Meares Island (WC files), inset left: Discovering a Pacific tree frog (Jacqueline Windh), inset right: Enjoying Ha'uukmin Tribal Park zipline (WC files), bottom: Sign on Hwy 4 (WC files).

THE HISTORY OF TLA-O-QUI-AHT TRIBAL PARKS

We, the Tla-o-qui-aht peoples, are the original inhabitants within the area known today as Clayoquot Sound. Our oral histories speak of an advanced system of traditional governance that took care of the people and the environment. Strict laws were established to ensure that we as human beings would not disrupt the natural order of the world in which we lived. Even after many generations of Tla-o-qui-aht people had lived within our *Ha'wiih* (Chiefs) territories, we still enjoyed a fully intact rainforest until European contact.

British and Canadian colonization devastated our Tla-o-qui-aht society, reducing our population by 90 per cent due to disease. As well, Tla-o-qui-aht children – as young as four or five years old – would endure several generations of government and church-run residential schools that enforced strict rules against speaking our language and practicing our

traditional ways, and involved forced labor, months away from parental care, and religious indoctrination.

Along with the *Indian Act*, the federal government established the reserve system, creating small parcels of land that would further displace and obstruct our access to our *Ha'wiih's* resources. These laws aimed to break down the relationships that we as Tla-o-qui-aht peoples had

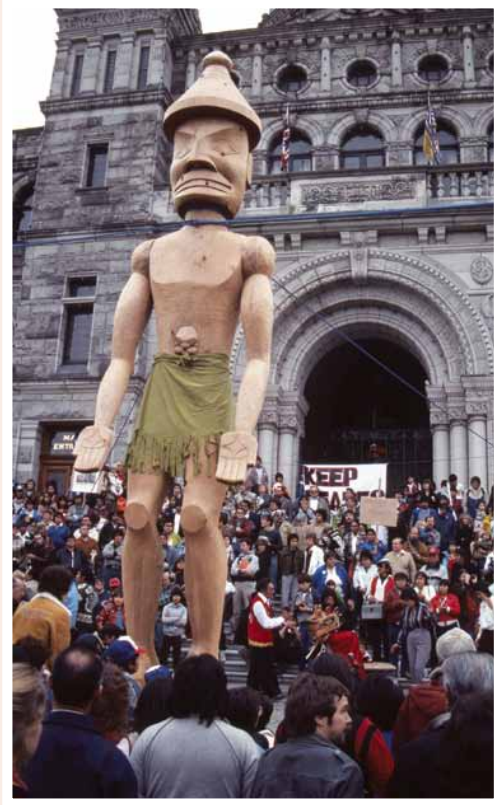


Photo: 1984 Save Meares Island protest at BC Legislature (WC files).

with the environment, which included ancient roles and responsibilities to ensure its well-being.

In response to unhealthy logging practices in the 1960s and 1970s, our *Ha'wiih* declared *Wah-nah-jus* – *Hilth-hoo-is* (Meares Island) a Tribal Park. The 1984 Tribal Park Declaration envisioned how resource management could be implemented in a modern context with traditional harvesting practices that included the



Photo: Starfish (Leslie Degner).

protection of intact rainforest and waters, and the development of recreational opportunities.

Today, our Tla-o-qui-aht leadership has utilized the values and teachings of the Tribal Park Declaration to implement a watershed-by-watershed approach that will encompass all Tla-o-qui-aht territory.

By learning from our elders about how they upheld traditional values and teachings with the Tribal Parks declaration, we hope to continue to ensure the well-being of our natural environment and our people.



Photo top: Big Tree Trail (Kate Hill), above: WC trail building crew (Morgan Grubb).

GUIDED HIKES UP WAH-NAH-JUS (LONE CONE MOUNTAIN) 7 DAYS A WEEK!



Photo: Martin Kryorka.

10AM DROP OFF & 4PM PICKUP AT THE OPITSAHT DOCK CALL 1-888-425-3350!

CARING FOR OUR TERRITORY



Photo: Joe Martin (Eli Enns).

In 1984, we Tla-o-qui-aht designated Meares Island a Tribal Park, making it one of the first Tribal Parks in Canada. It was one of the best ideas our people had to care for our territory, especially with the pressures put on our lands by industrial logging at that time. Today, the pressure of logging is compounded by the threats of mining and fish farming, and our people must stay vigilant and aware of these threats.

It is our responsibility to leave this place for our children in better shape than we received it, and this will be difficult due to decades of heavy resource extraction. Growing up here, this place was incredibly rich and diverse. Stocks of many different kinds of fish were strong and bountiful, and they supported an amazing and healthy place. Now, however, after the impact of destructive logging, we see less salmon than there used to be.

As we declare Tribal Parks on our territory, we must consider the implications of this on the treaty process. Our tribe has said "No" to treaties, and we are out of that process – all of the land belongs to us, not just some of it. I see Tribal Parks as a way to use our land our way, to unite and move away from destructive activities like fish farming and industrial logging. We can get out and use the resources of the forest in ways similar to our ancestors. We must adapt to what we have today, yes, but it is still possible to utilize the resources in our own sustainable ways.

The journals of the first Europeans to arrive here describe mountains covered in worthless forests – they couldn't see the true value at that time. But there were huge numbers of people living here on the coast at the time of contact, and they utilized the resources of the forest in a very respectful way. The mountains and the trees appeared untouched, because our people selectively used the forests based on laws and teachings that pertained to these things. I learned some of these laws from my late father while carving canoes or selecting trees to make a canoe. I like to share these laws and teachings with people, and am very happy to have a couple of our young fellows who are interested in learning them.

Carving a canoe in the forest and bringing it out of the trees to finish is the method our ancestors used in former times. We didn't rely on logging companies or anyone else for anything. When I made my first canoe my father said, "Son, now you have access to all the resources because a canoe gives you access to everything. You can go anywhere, visit villages far and near, you can catch your food, and you can protect the resources too." That was a huge lesson that my father left for my brothers and I.



Photo: Joe carving a canoe (Mark Hobson).

In 1984 when we drafted our Tribal Parks declaration, we only considered Meares Island because of the immediate threat of clearcut logging. At the time, this was a huge thing for our people, and now a lot of us are beginning to see the value of extending Tribal Park status to all Tla-o-qui-aht lands. We envision all of our territory designated as Tribal Parks, including areas like Tofino Inlet, the Kennedy Lake watershed, the Upper Kennedy River, Clayoquot Lake – even our territory that falls within Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. The whole works; lock, stock, and barrel! We want Tribal Parks under our management – lands and resources that our people have always looked after.

JOE MARTIN, Tuu tuu qwis naw shilth from the House of Ee-waas

TLA-O-QUI-AHT TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE

Traditional governance is integrated into modern Tla-o-qui-aht culture and society, and its laws are based on respect and the ensured well-being of our people and the environment. The Hereditary Chiefs are known collectively as *Ha'wiih*, and each *Ha'wiih* has complete title and rights within their traditional territory, or *Ha'huulthii*. Included within these *Ha'huulthii* are responsibilities to rivers, food, medicines, songs, dances, and ceremonies. These components are passed down to the *Ha'wiih* through inherent rights or marriage. The *Ha'wiih* have a responsibility to the Creator to take care of their *Ha'huulthii*.

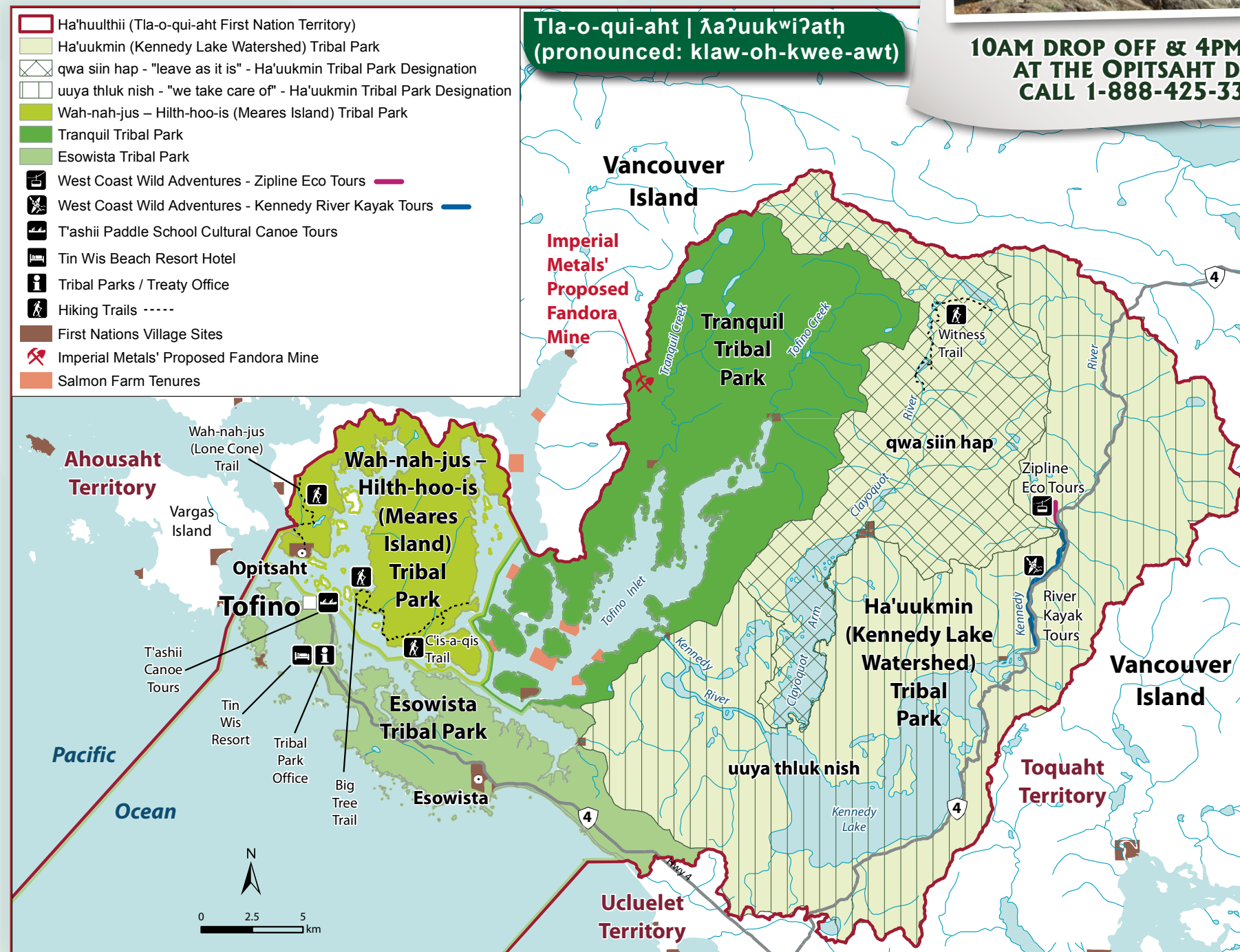
The Tla-o-qui-aht community is organized according to "Houses," or family clans. People descending from one lineage belong to a specific House. Each House has an appointed "Head of the House" who serves as a representative in the decision-making process, and is referred to as *Ta'ii aqkin*. The House and the people have access to the names, songs, rivers, land and resources that belonged to the *Ha'wiih's* *Ha'huulthii*. Therefore, each House falls under the care of a *Ha'wiih* and has access to their *Ha'huulthii*. One *Ha'wiih* can have many Houses under his or her care and can therefore have many *Ta'ii aqkin* to appease.

Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks staff are engaged in a strategic land-use planning process that encompasses the territories of all our *Ha'wiih* in a

watershed-by-watershed approach. To meet this important objective, we are reaching out to our Tla-o-qui-aht people, various levels of government, industry, and interest groups as part

of an inclusive, solution-based strategy. Along with a strong foundation rooted in the *Wah-nah-jus* – *Hilth-hoo-is* (Meares Island) Tribal Park Declaration of

1984, our leadership and our people hope to achieve modern management areas based on our traditional Tla-o-qui-aht values and practices.



MODERN TRIBAL PARKS MANAGEMENT BASED ON TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS

Over our history, we managed parts of our territories in different ways, with varying levels of activities and resource use. Some watersheds were managed with the intent of conservation – water, foods, medicines, and other resources were left for future generations. These areas are called *qwa siin hap*, which loosely translates to "leave as it is."

Other parts of our territories were managed to integrate human activities and ecosystem well-being. In these areas, our ancestors would harvest resources in a respectful manner, focusing on ecological restoration. These areas are called *uuya thluk nish*, which means "we take care of."

We currently have a management plan in place for Ha'uukmin Tribal Park (the Kennedy Lake Watershed) that includes both *qwa siin hap* and *uuya thluk nish* areas.

Qwa siin hap management zones

include the Upper Kennedy River, the Clayoquot River Valley, and the western shores of the Clayoquot Arm. These areas contain pristine old-growth forests and rare ecosystems, and hold special cultural significance as our place of origin. Many culturally modified trees and recorded archaeological sites can be found in these areas, and they are considered sacred for our Tla-o-qui-aht people.

The rest of Ha'uukmin Tribal Park has been declared *uuya thluk nish*, including the Kennedy River, the Sand River, the eastern shore of the Clayoquot Arm, and Kennedy Lake. Many of these areas have been subject to logging or other industrial use, and in their management we aim to integrate economic development and ecosystem restoration, such as salmon habitat restoration.

Eventually we will create similar *qwa siin hap* – *uuya thluk nish* management plans for our

other declared Tribal Parks: *Wah-nah-jus* – *Hilth-hoo-is* (Meares Island) Tribal Park, Esowista Tribal Park, and Tranquil Tribal Park.

Activities that have too great an environmental impact are not permissible at all within Tribal Parks. An example of this is the Pandora Gold Mine, being proposed by Imperial Metals within our Tranquil Tribal Park without our consent. We will be working to oppose this mine in the future, and will be looking for support in these efforts.



Photo left: Western red backed salamander, Clayoquot Sound (Mark Hobson), right: Totem pole in Opitsaht (WC files).

THE WILDERNESS COMMITTEE SUPPORTS TRIBAL PARKS



Torrance Coste
Vancouver Island
Campaigner,
Wilderness
Committee
@TorranceCoste

Parks management aims to better balance ecological health and human well-being within a Nation's territory.

Some places, like the legendary old-growth rainforest of Meares Island, are set aside for future generations, to be cared for and protected for all time. In other areas, such as previously logged valleys in the Kennedy Lake watershed, small-scale economic activities such as salmon hatcheries and selective logging are undertaken, with a focus on sustainability and ecosystem restoration. In these Tribal Parks, the potential for growth in low impact wilderness and cultural tourism is limitless.

Tribal Parks are designed to keep economic benefits within First Nations and local communities – a critical step in achieving sustainability on this coast. This is also in direct contrast to the environmentally destructive logging, fish farming, and mining industries that operate in the region and are all managed at the multinational level, with minimal financial benefit to local communities.

Official government recognition of Tribal Parks will be a big step towards a positive and long-lasting environmental solution in Clayoquot Sound. The Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation has always been a leading voice for environmental stewardship, and Tribal Parks are a result of their dedication to incorporating traditional teachings into the modern context and developing sustainable and ecologically respectful economies. If successful, Tribal Parks could become a template for environmental solutions and indigenous empowerment in other places, and that is a truly exciting prospect!

CONTACT INFO FOR TRIBAL PARKS, TOURS, ETC.

Your Clayoquot Sound adventure starts in Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks! With options for tours, hikes, and accommodation getting out into the Tribal Parks is easier than ever!

Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks

Get in touch with our Tribal Parks staff for more information about guides, tours, hikes, and other ways you can enjoy our territory!

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TribalParks.ca

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Photo: Killer whale (John Marriott).

How can we meet our economic needs and reduce our impact on our shared environment? How can rare ecosystems be preserved in a just and sustainable way? How can we engage in responsible resource management that benefits local communities and doesn't detract from the long-term natural capital?

These are pressing questions on the west coast, and we believe Tribal Parks will be part of the answer.

The Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation has shown tremendous leadership on this front, and the Wilderness Committee has welcomed each of their Tribal Park declarations, from Wah-nuh-jus – Hilth-hoo-is (Meares Island) in 1984, to Ha'uukmin (Kennedy Lake Watershed) in 2008, to the newest additions, Tranquil Tribal Park and Esowista Tribal Park, declared this year. These Tribal Park declarations are in keeping with our support for Aboriginal rights and title, and our view that First Nations should have decision-making authority within their territories.

Tribal Parks are special conservation areas, zones for sustainable economic activities, or a combination of both, and they're envisioned, declared, and managed by local First Nations communities. Based on traditional teachings and guidance from elders and Hereditary Chiefs, Tribal

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT!

Contact Premier Clark, and let her know you want to see official government recognition of Tribal Parks and acknowledgement of Tribal Parks as effective environmental and socio-economic solutions in BC!

Hon. Christy Clark, Premier of BC

PO Box 9041, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC, V8W 9E1

☎ 250-387-1715

Fax: 250-387-0087

✉ premier@gov.bc.ca

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