

# Meares Island Trail Re-Clearing – July and August 2011 Trip Report

*Clearing the old 1980's Wilderness Committee trail from C'is-a-qis cabin (Heelboom Bay) to the Big Tree Trail (at Ducking Mud Flats)*

By Geoff Senichenko



*Meares Island Tribal Park sign in Heelboom Bay and C'is-a-qis cabin in background.*

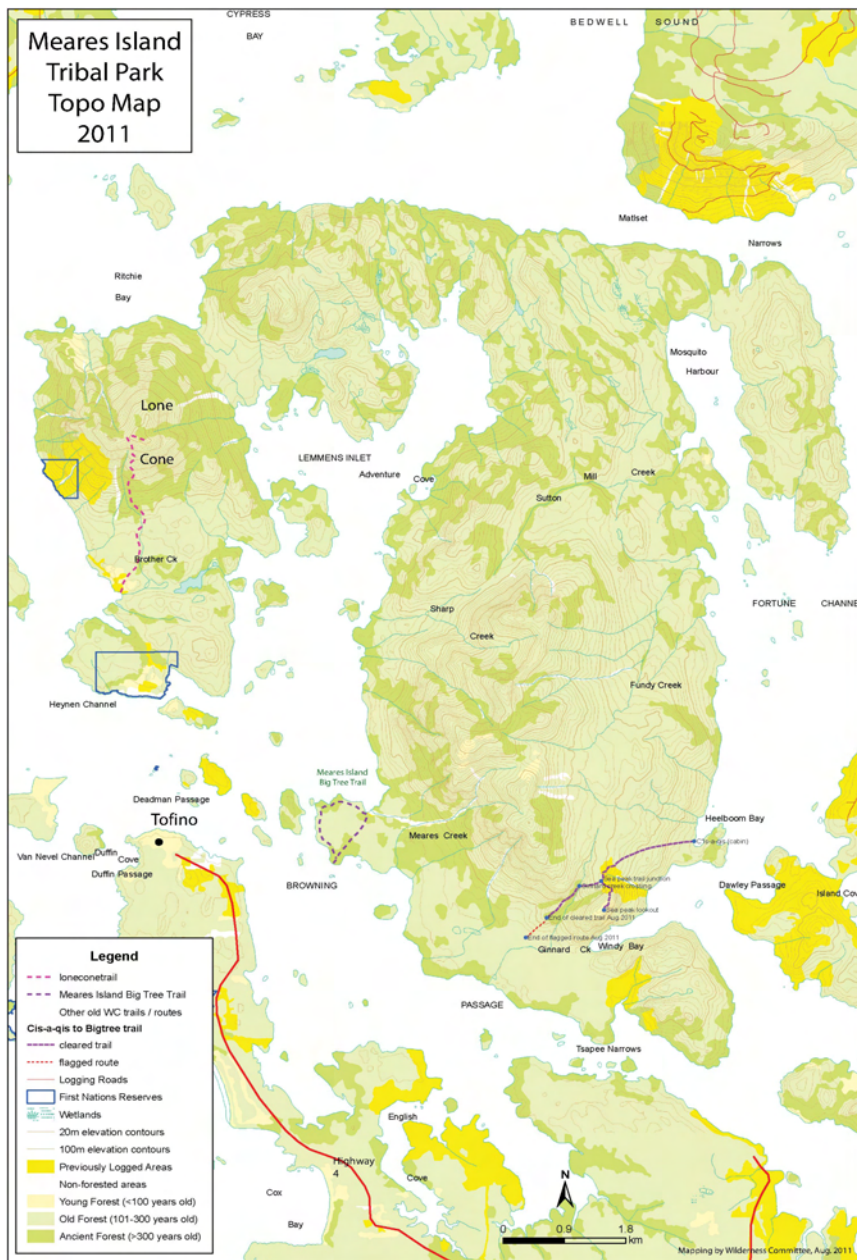
## 1- What We Did:

Both the July and Aug trips had full crews, 11 volunteers and myself, Geoff Senichenko, as crew leader for a total of 12 people (which is the limit of the water taxi). Both trips were a success, no rain on either trip, morale was high, with lots of fun times and lots of work done. We mainly focused on trail clearing on these trips, but we also did some cleanup of the C'is-a-qis cabin and surrounding area.

### a) Trail Re-Clearing Work:

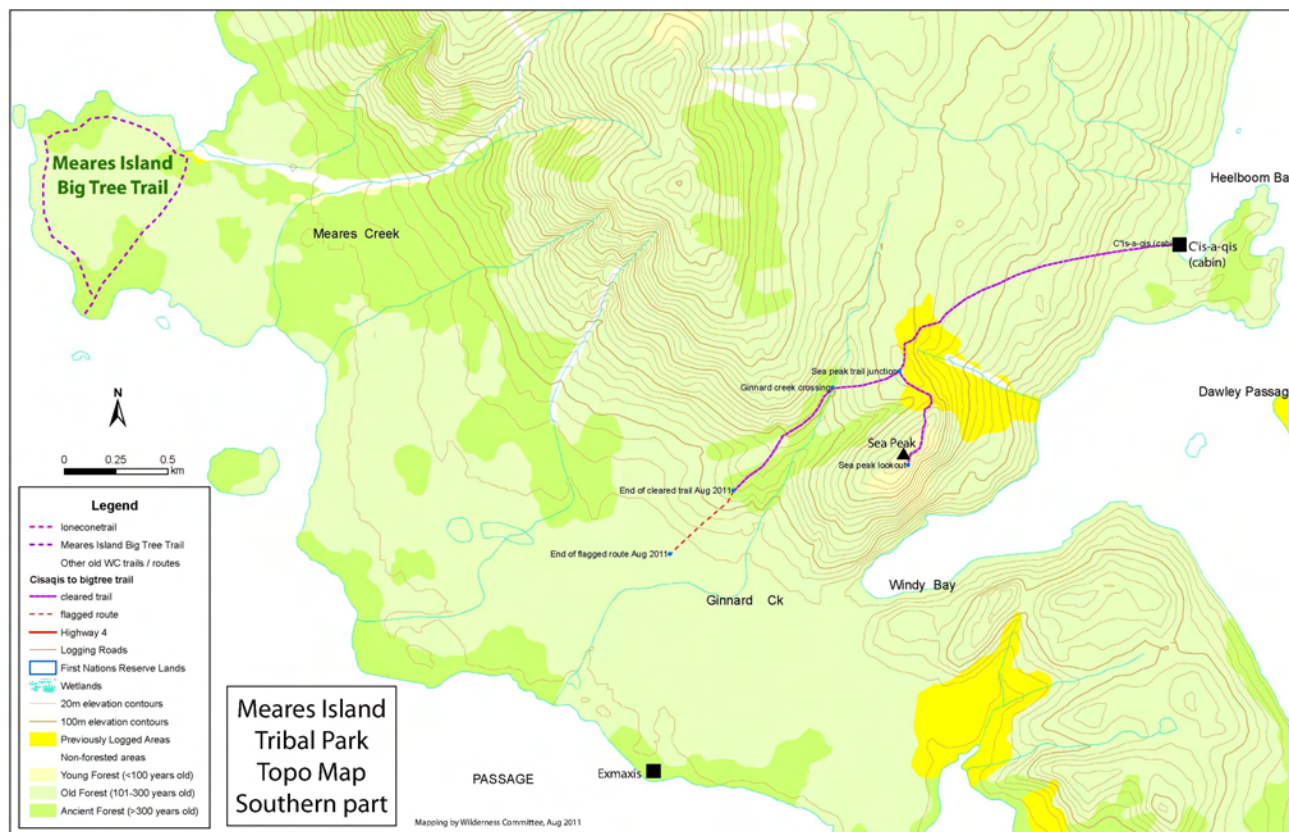
i) *Main Trail from C'is-a-qis to Big Tree Trail:*

We made it about half way now on the trail from C's-a-qis to the Big Tree trail. We've cleared almost 3km of trail and it looks like another 3 to 3.5km of trail left to go to get to the Big Tree trail. The trail steadily climbs the slope west-southwest of the C's-a-qis cabin, then through an old clearcut, then summits the ridge at 320m elevation between Sea Peak and the main mountain of Meares Island (Mt Colnett). Then the trail continues west-southwest, descends into upper Ginnard Cr valley, crosses Ginnard Cr, then finally continues southwest towards the base of Mt Colnett to a flat area. To the end of the cleared trail is about 2.6km, then to the end of the flagged trail to flat small wetland area at base of Mt Colnett is another 400m, so about 3km total from the cabin. So the end of the trail is about a two hour hike from the cabin now and it is in some pretty thick salal jungle, where the salal is over your head high. It was slow going, but with twelve of us the clearing gets done pretty well. Looks like the trail should continue west along this flatter/toe slope area to the Big Tree Trail. See maps for more details.



*Topographic Map of all of Meares Island*





*Topographic Map of southern Meares Island, showing Sea Peak side trail and amount of the main trail re-cleared to date.*

## *ii) Sea Peak Side Trail:*

We also found and cleared a 600m long side trail up Sea Peak that has amazing views. This side trail starts at a signed junction just over the main ridge and continues along the ridge south, through forest and clearcut, and then up to just below the southeast side of the peak at about 380m elevation.

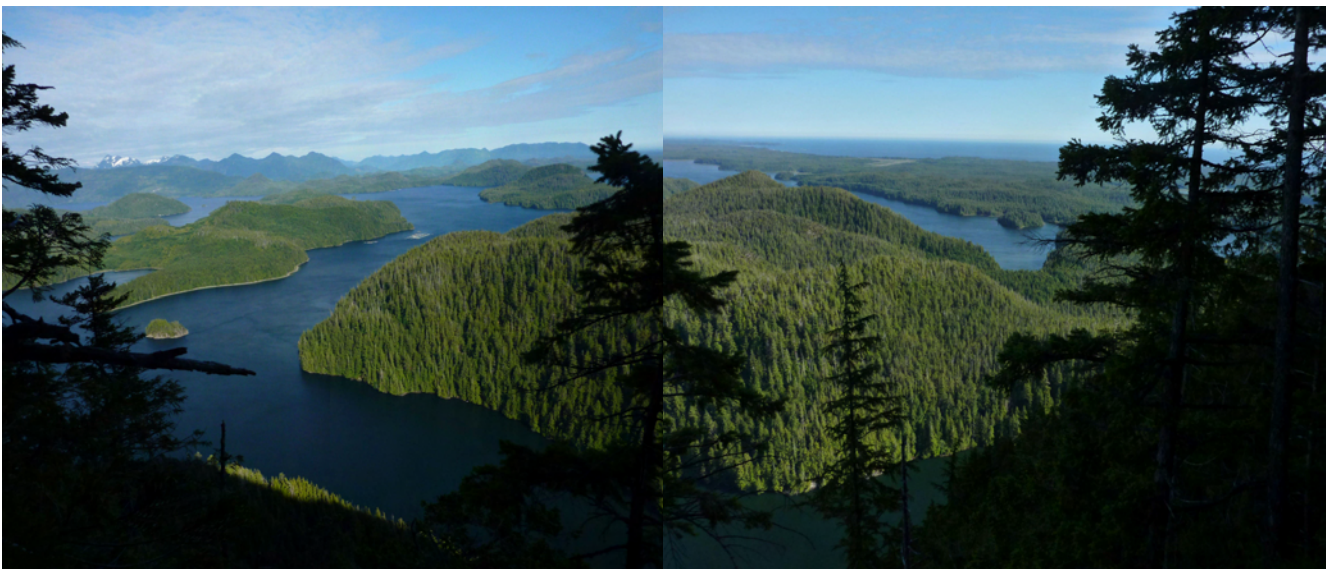


*Leaving Heelboom Bay by water taxi, looking up to Sea Peak on the left*



*Main Trail & Sea Peak Side Trail Junction, with old painted signs in very good shape.*

The Sea Peak side trail ends at a cliff ledge with a sketchy bit of old rope tied to a tree for safety. The views to the east are magnificent! About a 180 degree view, from the snow capped mountains of Vancouver Island to the north, Clayoquot Sound's mostly intact forests of islands and inlets below, to the wild beaches and Pacific Ocean to the south.



*View from Sea Peak cliff ledge lookout.*



*iii) Old plastic poly ropes replaced with new nylon climbing ropes along Trails:*

On the August trip, we brought some long sections of good thick nylon climbing rope (left over from the Carmanah tree platforms) and had with us on the crew a former Mexican rock climbing instructor. With her help, we replaced old weathered hand splintering plastic poly rope from the 80's to five steep sections along the main trail going up to the ridge from the cabin and from the end of the Sea Peak side trail at the cliff ledge. These ropes should now last longer and be safer, as they are stronger and more resistant to UV damage than the old ropes.



*Installed new rope at Sea Peak cliff ledge lookout*

b) Cleaning up the C'is-a-qis Cabin and Surrounding Area:

On the July trip we did some clean up of the cabin, but did a more thorough job of cleaning the cabin and surrounding area on the August trip. In August, we took out about six huge garbage bags of old plastic, shredded tarps, old cans and bottles, garbage and just junk left behind over the years. We also consolidated into a pile some old scrap metal and rusted old wood stoves and stove pipe that we didn't take. It is probably worth money for someone who collects scrap metal. So maybe someone from Tla-o-qui-aht community could get it and make a little cash.





*Old sauna, near cabin at C'is-a-qis. Still functional. We cleared the fallen tree on roof and the plastic tarps and garbage near bottom left.*

## **2- What Needs to Get Done:**

So here is a list of things that need to get done, we'll discuss more many of these over the next few months, to be done for next summer. Some need funds and skilled labour, hoping that the Wilderness Committee can help out or jointly with TFN with many of these, we need to discuss further inhouse here at the Wilderness Committee and also with Terry at Tribal Parks and TFN.

1- Chainsaw crew could be sent now to clear logs on the trail we've cleared so far and the side trail we cleared up Sea Peak, as we are done trail clearing for the summer. Andy mentioned that Terry knows some TFN folks who could do this?

2- Scrap metal pile needs to be picked up at the C'is-a-qis cabin.

3- Sea peak platform - a safe viewing platform would need to be built at the top of Sea Peak. We discussed some ideas of building one between some of the bigger trees up there, maybe even have cables between these trees and then put wooden boards on top of the cable lattice. Then a few of the smaller trees would then be cleared to open up the view. As it is now the trail ends at a cliff ledge with just a rope for safety. If the Sea Peak trail is to be developed



for tourism use in the near future, which I think it is a worthwhile destination hike with amazing views, it would need a safer viewpoint for liability, like the platform to be built.



*Potential Sea Peak viewing platform location. Could be built between larger trees, while clearing smaller trees to open up view. Trail currently ends at cliff just off to the bottom right of photo.*

4- Outhouse to be built near C'is-a-qis cabin. Again, if more tourists will eventually come to use the cabin and campsite at C'is-a-qis and the trail to Big Tree trail and trail to Sea Peak, then an outhouse should be built to contain the increased human waste.

5- Sauna/sweat lodge needs to be repaired and eventually rebuilt. Again if the idea is to have tourists use more the cabin, campsite and sauna at C'is-a-qis then the sauna needs some immediate repairs (and eventual replacement). The whole thing is slowly rotting away, but most of it should last at least another ten years. It just needs some immediate repairs: the two central posts and cross beam holding the roof in the middle need to be replaced, as well as several rotted floor boards. An new small wood stove and stove pipe, maybe getting a used one donated or cheap, should be installed, as the existing barrel stove and stove pipe are pretty rusted out. Otherwise, the sauna is in okay shape and usable. In the medium to long term, say ten years down the road, the whole thing should be rebuilt, but that will require a lot of money and labour.



*Inside of sauna. Rusted drum stove and stove pipe need replacing, as well as some rotten floor boards and central posts and beams.*

6- It's amazing to see the cabin is in amazing shape, really well built. It could probably use some new roof shingles, though, in the next couple of years.





*Cabin in good shape, except will need new rood shingles in next few years.*



*Some final photos:*



*July crew eating dinner by the fire*



*July crew eating dinner by the fire at high tide*





*July crew group photo*



*August crew group photo*





*August crew silly group photo*



*C'is-a-qis sauna and surrounding old growth forest*