

# Protecting Haida Values through Sustainable Forestry



BRIGHT IDEAS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## SYNOPSIS

The Haida Nation is supporting the socioeconomic well-being of its citizens and protecting important ecosystems on Haida Gwaii through its nation-owned forestry company, Taan Forest.

## LOCATION

Haida Gwaii

## ECONOMIC BASE

Aquaculture, Forestry, Tourism

## INNOVATORS

Coast Funds



## THE BACKGROUND

Members of the [Haida Nation](#) have carefully managed the forest resources of the Haida Gwaii archipelago for thousands of years. But in the 1920s, newcomers brought large-scale logging to Haida Gwaii that disrupted this way of life, used harmful practices, and brought little economic benefit to the Haida people.

## CHANGING THE LOGGING LANDSCAPE

After years of escalating conflict over forestry practices on Haida Gwaii, the Haida signed the Kunst'aa Guu – Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol Agreement establishing the co-management of the islands by the Haida Nation and the Province of B.C.

In 2009, the Haida used this turning point to invest in the purchase of the largest forest tenure on Haida Gwaii and established their own nation-owned-and-



operated logging company, [Taan Forest](#). By owning and operating a forestry company, the Haida Nation can ensure its environmental mandate for Haida Gwaii is enforced through Taan's on-the-ground operations.

“In terms of forest management practices, we operate under the toughest environmental mandate on the Coast,” explained Bob Brash, CEO of the [Haida Enterprise Corporation \(HaiCo\)](#), the

parent company of Taan. The company is also guided by the Haida Gwaii Land Use Objectives Order, which contains objectives to protect important Haida cultural values and ecosystem integrity through forestry operations.

“We work closely with the Haida Nation to protect environmental and cultural values, and to support community well-being, such as providing for the nation's cultural cedar need,” said Brash.





Taan Forest also supports the socioeconomic aims of the Reconciliation Protocol Agreement to ensure Haida citizens and communities on Haida Gwaii benefit from commercial activity on the island.

The nation-owned enterprise also ensures that Taan's profits are invested back into the island to support other industries. Taan works with local businesses to create spinoff opportunities, like a joint venture with the [Skidegate Band Council](#) to create a new pole-making business.

---

## OUTCOMES

With its investment in the startup and operation of Taan Forest, the Haida Nation secured controlling interest of forestry tenures for 60 per cent of the forestry operations on Haida Gwaii. The nation is able to manage logging activities using more sustainable logging practices, and generate wealth and employment opportunities for Haida members and local workers.

Taan Forest has created 20 full-time positions in the local community, half of which are held by First Nations members. Taan also invests in the training and capacity-building of local workers. All of its foresters receive Cultural Feature Identification training, and other specialized training to support their growth in the business.

Through Taan, the Haida ensure that world-recognized sustainable forestry management is at the core of forestry operations. Taan Forest has Forest Stewardship Council certification, considered the most stringent forestry management practices in the world, and Rainforest Alliance certification. The business is further accountable to the conservation standards of the Haida Nation's land-use order.

*This article appears courtesy of [Coast Funds](#), and a full version of the story can be viewed [on their website](#).*

## ABOUT COAST FUNDS

Coast Funds was created to support First Nations in achieving their goals for sustainable economic development and conservation management in the Great Bear Rainforest and Haida Gwaii. Coast Funds has approved \$78.5 million toward 337 conservation and sustainable economic development projects.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- ◆ Haida Gwaii's remote location provides some unique challenges for Taan's growth. To meet this challenge, Taan focuses on specialty products to realize the value of its **unique brand** and **high-end wood materials**. "The answer is to find value-added ventures, like doing high-end custom cuts for instruments, and to forge strategic partnerships, such as our joint venture with the Skidegate Band Council to create a telephone-pole making plant," said Richard Jones, manager of Taan Forest.
- ◆ "Another challenge for us is to find local workers with the appropriate skillsets for some jobs," said Brash. For a solution, Taan works closely with the council of the Haida Nation to **provide training locally**. Once employed, the nation works to develop its employees through various training programs.

---

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about **Taan Forest** or **Coast Funds**, visit [coastfunds.ca](http://coastfunds.ca)



For more information, visit [gov.bc.ca/economicdevelopment](http://gov.bc.ca/economicdevelopment)

