



HAIDA GWAII YAH'GUUDANG
[*respect for this place*]

HAIDA LAND USE VISION

Council of the Haida Nation
May 2004

The Haida Nation is the rightful heir to Haida Gwaii.

Our culture, our heritage, is the child of respect and intimacy with the land and sea.

Like the forests, the roots of our people are intertwined such that the greatest troubles cannot overcome us.

We owe our existence to Haida Gwaii.

The living generation accepts the responsibility to ensure that our heritage is passed on to following generations.

On these islands our ancestors lived and died, and here too we will make our homes until called away to join them in the great beyond.

– from the Constitution of the Haida Nation

HAIDA GWAII YAH'GUUDANG

FORWARD

The common name for these islands is *Haida Gwaii* meaning “people island” or “island of the people.” In earlier times this place was more commonly known as *Haadala Gwaii-ai*, meaning “taken out of concealment.” At the time of the supernaturals and *Nangkilsas* it was *Didakwaa Gwaii*, meaning “shoreward country.”

Our oral history traces the lineage of our families back to our ocean origins. We've witnessed the ice age, two great floods, changes in the sea level, the arrival of the first tree and many other earth-changing events. Together with all living things we've grown and prospered through the ages, nourished by the wealth and generosity of the ocean around us.

Our physical and spiritual relationship with the lands and waters of Haida Gwaii, our history of co-existence with all living things over many thousands of years is what makes up Haida culture. *Yah'guudang* — our respect for all living things — celebrates the ways our lives and spirits are intertwined and honors the responsibility we hold to future generations.

Haida Gwaii Yah'guudang is about respect and responsibility, about knowing our place in the web of life, and how the fate of our culture runs parallel with the fate of the ocean, sky and forest people.

Our people are satisfied and thankful with our place in this world. Our stories, songs, dances and crests are displayed through the ancient traditions of feasting and potlatching, where prestige is gained through the distribution of property. Told through the spoken word, animated and fulfilled by inflection and nuance. Handed down in private or displayed in the formal array of our traditions, they weave together through time the historic fabric of Haida Gwaii.

“And know that Haida culture is not simply song and dance, graven images, stories, language, or even blood. It is all of those things and then ... awakening on Haida Gwaii anticipating the season when the herring spawns. It is a feeling you get when you bring a feed of cockles to the old people, and when you are fixing up fish for the smokehouse, or when walking on barnacles or moss.

It has something to do with bearing witness when a falcon takes a seabird, and being there when salmon are finishing their course.

Along the way, you eat some huckleberries, watch the kids grow up, and attend the funeral feasts.

And then there is the matter of dealing with squabbles within, and the greater troubles that come to us from the outside.

It is about being confronted with winter storms and trying to look after this precious place. All that we say is ours is of Haida Gwaii. This is our lot, our heritage, our life.”

Guujaaw

INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of time and counted in many generations, the Haida Nation has adapted to the changing earth. The art forms associated with Haida culture and celebrated for being among the world's great intellectual accomplishments, is an expression of our relationship to Haida Gwaii.

Over the past fifty years, the lands and waters have been impoverished by over-exploitation. The corporate bonanza has come at the cost of the culture and communities. There has been no comprehensive planning or regulation other than the extraction of resources and revenues to feed the insatiable appetites of people who don't live here and are not concerned with the consequences of their actions.

Today we recognize that the resource industries have gone too far too fast, and that important cultural, economic and environmental issues need to be addressed. For this reason, the Council of the Haida Nation and province of British Columbia have convened a strategic land use planning process, now underway. The Haida Land Use Vision is a foundation of the process, produced by the Council of the Haida Nation to guide the Community Planning Forum and other deliberations towards a sustainable Land Use Plan for Haida Gwaii.

The Haida Land Use Vision (HLUV) reflects our understanding of how things function together and how they have changed through time. It conveys our concern about the damage that has occurred in recent times, and addresses the need to ensure continuity and sustainability for the generations to come. In this way, *Yah'guudang* is brought forward in the context of Haida Title.

To sustain Haida culture, a land use plan must adequately address certain priorities, beginning with the well-being of the land. We need to clearly understand the changes that have occurred to ecological conditions and our culture, and then provide directions for restoring and maintaining balance. That's the objective of the HLUV, which is organized into three parts.

Part 1 - Well-being of the Land

Well-being of the Land considers the land and forests, rivers and lakes, and the life that inhabits them, in particular the cedar, salmon, bear, birds and plants that matter to Haida culture. We describe some of what we know about them, why they are important and how we are connected.

Part 2 - Condition of the Land

Condition of the Land describes the nature and pace of changes that have occurred from industrial use and disturbance. We examine the condition of life forms we call our relations, of cedar, salmon, bears, birds, plants and inter-tidal ocean life. These findings are key considerations for what follows in the next part.

Part 3 - Natural Ability of the Land to Function and Provide

Natural Ability of the Land to Function and Provide considers what must be done in accordance with *Yah'guudang* to bring land and resource use into balance to ensure the continuity of Haida culture and ultimately the health of all human society. We identify places where the land must be protected against commercial and industrial uses, and address the need to restore things that are damaged. We present guidelines for sustainability, including *ecosystem-based forestry* and *economic stability* in the Island Community.

The Haida Land Use Vision is a living document. This draft has been developed by the Council and people of the Haida Nation for presentation to the Community Planning Forum in May of 2004. It has gone through many changes in preparation, and we expect that over the next several months, the text and maps will be revised to include new information from the communities and Land Use Plan process.

It should be noted that the planning process underway is limited to the land, even though the land and ocean are linked together in many ways. This document addresses all the places where people go on land, from hilltops to the low tide beaches. In time, when a marine planning process occurs, the ocean and all that it entails will be given full consideration.

Finally, this document is based on Haida culture — the land use vision it describes is based on *Yah'guudang*. We appreciate that people from other cultures also have attachments to this sacred place, and seek to work together in harmony and accord.

PART 1 - WELL-BEING OF THE LAND

Haida Gwaii is an island place, lodged in the northeast corner of the Pacific Ocean. It's an isolated archipelago of forest, muskeg and ocean, shaped like a bear's canine tooth shrouded in swirling clouds. The closest landfalls are about eighty kilometers away on the mainland west coast of Canada, and the bottom of the Alaska panhandle where the *Kiis Haada* live.

The land is formed by ancient upheavals, volcanoes, sediments, ice flows and runoff. The surrounding ocean climate is warmer than the neighboring mainland, so during the ice ages some parts of the islands remained free of glaciers.

Most of the modern Hecate Strait and parts of our outer coastal regions were once above sea level, covered by tundra, streams and lakes, and inhabited by our ancestors. Over just the past few thousand years, the sea level has fluctuated by almost two hundred metres, while the fish, forest life and our people adapted to the changing times.

The weather is shaped by the dynamics of the largest ocean on earth: there are high winds and rain, large tides, mild winter temperatures and cool, cloudy summers. Warm ocean currents mix with cold water upwellings rich in nutrients. The sea is abundant in plankton, seaweeds, fish, shellfish and mammals. Through the lives of everyone — people, seabirds and salmon, bear, and many others — the food webs of the ocean and land are woven tightly together.

Because of our isolation, unique forms of life have evolved — birds, mammals, fish, plants and insects — in plenty. The forests are renowned for growing trees of high quality, for large seabird nesting colonies, unique salmon populations, raptors, the world's largest black bears, and an abundance of diverse ocean life. This is the physical and biological world in which Haida culture has grown for thousands of years, ever since Raven coaxed the first people from a cockle shell.

This part of the HLUV — *Well-being of the Land* — describes some of the key things about the land and waters that have a special place in Haida culture. The list is not meant to be complete, but it does address many aspects of our relations with Haida Gwaii. It includes:

- *Tsuuaay* cedar
- *Tsiin* salmon
- *Taan* black bear
- *Xiit 'lit* birds
- *Kil* plants

- *Sk'waii* beach

Considering each in turn, we present some details of our collective understanding of how things are interconnected and why they're important.

Later in Part 2, we will consider the condition of these things, how they've been affected by the changes of the recent past.

In Part 3, we will describe what needs to be done to restore balance, to manage commercial activities in a way that sustains the land for generations to come.

TSUUAAY – Cedar

"Oh, the cedar tree!

If mankind in its infancy
had prayed for the perfect substance
for all material and aesthetic needs,
an indulgent god could have provided nothing better. Beautiful in itself,
with a magnificent flared base
tapering suddenly to a tall, straight trunk
wrapped in reddish brown bark,
like a great coat of gentle fur,
gracefully sweeping boughs,
soft feathery fronds of grey-green needles.

Huge, some of these cedars,
five hundred years of slow growth,
towering from their massive bases.

Across the grain it cuts clean and precise.
It is light in weight and beautiful in color,
Reddish brown when new,
Silvery grey when old.

When steamed, it will bend without breaking.
It will make houses and boats
and boxes and cooking pots.
Its bark will make mats, even clothing.
With a few bits of sharpened stone and antler,
some beaver teeth and a lot of time,
with later a bit of iron,
you can build from the cedar tree
the exterior trappings
of one of the world's great cultures."

– from *Out of the Silence*, by Bill Reid

Our stories begin in the time before cedar, when living conditions were more basic. They tell of the intervention of supernaturals in the birth of canoe technology, and of the first totem poles being seen in an underwater village.

Tsuuay arrived on Haida Gwaii about six thousand years ago. In time it became an essential part of Haida culture, and the products of our cedar technology fill many volumes of books, display cases and collections around the world. Today as ever, the cedar tree is essential to Haida well-being — which includes material things and cultural affairs as well as growing economic opportunities in forest management, logging, carving and construction. The renewal and strength of Haida culture is intimately linked to the well-being of *tsuuay*.

Cedar trees are important to many other living things great and small. They provide habitat for forest creatures, some of which are an important feature of Haida crests and histories. The biggest one is *taan*, the black bear, taking shelter and giving birth in hollow, dry cedar trees. Smaller, but as important to the forest, are the birds, bats and others that nest and perch in cedar trees. As insect-eaters and seed spreaders, they help to maintain healthy forest conditions, which includes hunting opportunities for predatory birds and mammals.

When a Haida person goes for bark, a pole or a canoe, the trees are approached with respect. Their spirits are hailed in a song and thanked with prayer. A bark gatherer takes care that the tree will go on living. A canoe builder '*looks into the heart*' of a cedar (test holes) so that trees with unsuitable qualities will be left standing alive much as before. The "Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs)" and canoe blanks that you find in the forest are the sacred workplaces of our ancestors.

TSIIN – Salmon

"Salmon are creatures of the forest, they're born there and they die there."
– spoken by Charles F. Bellis

Salmon are integral to all life on Haida Gwaii and to Haida culture. We express this understanding in our art forms when the "salmon-trout-head" design is placed in the ovoid joints of other creatures.

There are races of salmon and other fish on Haida Gwaii that are ancient and unique in the world. The sockeye return much earlier than other parts of the mainland coast. There are land-locked salmon in various lakes, the outcome of changing sea levels.

Every year the salmon swim into the forest to spawn, carrying in their bodies thousands of tonnes of nutrients gathered in ocean food webs, back to the land.

They feed everything on the way upstream and down. They are the single most important source of nourishment in our diet, and over the years we have developed many ways to prepare, store and serve them in family meals and ceremonial feasts.

Many others also rely on *tsiin* for food. Black bear snatch tens of thousands of salmon out of the streams and haul them onto the forest floor. Many times they eat choice parts and leave the rest to be eaten by birds, small mammals and insects.

Eventually the nutrients within their bodies pass into the soil and from there to the roots of trees and plants. The salmon feed the forest and in return receive clean water and gravel in which to hatch and grow, sheltered from extremes of temperature and water flow in times of high and low rainfall.

TAAN – Bear

Our Bear Mother Story, which is often depicted as a crest figure on family poles, explains our long and close relationship with bears. We are also similar to them in material ways, such as our reliance on salmon and cedar, and we learned a great deal from them about plants and their various uses.

Bears play a key role in the well-being of the land. When they lift salmon out of the streams each year, they transfer a great load of nutrients from the ocean to the forest floor, much to the benefit of many other kinds of life.

The best kind of forest for a bear contains lots of cedar trees of the right size with cavities for dens and daybeds, succulent plants for spring feeding, berries and salmon streams. This kind of forest grows at lower elevations in valley bottoms and neighboring slopes.

The best bear mother dens are in larger cedars with a cozy chamber inside sheltered from wind and rain, and a small well-hidden opening, easy to defend against intruders. Day beds used in warmer times by male, female and young can be found near streams and other places where different foods are in season.

A bear mother has five or six trees in her territory, and moves between them from winter to winter, birth to birth. If she feels threatened in her den by a roaming male or disturbed by human industry, she will pick up and move her cubs to another den tree.

KIL – Plants

Haida plant technology is ancient and complex. Many medicines were shown to us by a supernatural woman and others by the birds and other animals such as *Taan*. The first tree to arrive in Haida Gwaii was the pine tree, which was taken

as a crest by the *Xagi Kiigawaii* who wore a pine branch in their hair. Science has recently confirmed that the pine tree was the first to arrive, about 14,000 years ago.

Everyone depends on plants — people, fish, birds, animals and insects — for the same sorts of things, for nourishment and shelter, and everyone has a role to play in their well-being.

Our uses include a wide variety of things made from different parts of different kinds of trees and plants — root, bark, stem, flower, berry, leaf and branch. They provide us with medicines, food and teas. Pigments and dyes. Materials for the smokehouse, cooking and weaving of clothing, hats, mats and baskets. >From them we can make spears, arrows and bows; string and rope; fish hooks, nets and weirs; tool handles and clubs; whistles, rattles and ceremonial adornments.

The wide range of plants we use grow everywhere from deep forest to open muskeg, meadows and shorelines, but the old growth forest contains many important things, including some of the most powerful medicines with proven effects.

Plants and trees are nourished and affected by the ocean. Depending on its proximity to the ocean and exposure to its influence, the same kind of plant has different qualities for food value and medicinal effect.

Alder plays an important ecological role in the forest. It's one of the first things that grows on the most disturbed sites, and brings nitrogen out of the air and into the nutrient cycle that makes new soil. When alder sees a landslide she exclaims: "I'm going to have that place!"

Modern drug companies are always searching for natural medicines to create new commercial opportunities. This commercial enterprise has caused many problems for traditional medicine practitioners in many parts of the world, for which reason we hold our knowledge of these things in secrecy. They cannot be explained here or shown in any detail on maps.

XIIT'LIT – Birds

Many different kinds of birds fly the airways of Haida Gwaii, coming to ground to swim, bath, perch, eat, rest, sing and nest. Their families include seabird, songbird, shorebird, falcon, hawk, owl, crow, duck and goose, sapsucker, woodpecker, kingfisher, heron, swallow, crane, hummingbird, grouse, loon, gull and cormorant.

Through the ages, birds have played an integral role in building and maintaining the well-being of the land and Haida culture. As seed-spreaders, insect-eaters,

predators, scavengers and fertilizer carriers, they play a key role in tending the plants in the forest, muskeg, estuary and shoreline what they are.

Seabirds, like salmon, come in from the ocean in great numbers every year to birth their young. They nest in burrows in the ground or mossy platforms in the treetops. Their *umma* is rich in nitrogen, and over the ages the forests where they nest have grown wealthy with large trees. They are also a part of our traditional diet, an important source of nourishment in the time before the salmon return when stored supplies are running low.

From watching the birds we learned the properties of plants, what is good for nourishment and medicine. Their songs and doings are expressed many different ways, many of which are family crests.

Two of the most prominent birds in Haida culture are the eagle and the raven — which are the crest figures for the two main branches of Haida lineage and social structure. Eagle down is held sacred and is used in ceremony to signify peace and good intentions.

SK'WAIL – Beach

Island dwellers are ocean-going people. In the beginning we came out of the ocean, and like everything else that inhabits the land we are nourished and shaped by it — in terms of food, the supernaturals, many stories, the cycle of the tides, currents and weather, and our use of cedar canoes for travel, trade and adventure.

In river estuaries large and small, Creek Woman meets the ocean, releasing the young ones into the beds of eelgrass and kelp forests where they begin the saltwater stage of their lives, then welcoming them on their return.

The sand and gravel beaches are inhabited by razor clams, butter clams, horse clams, cockles, geoducks and crabs. On rocky shores are barnacles, mussels and a multitude of periwinkles, and nourishing seaweeds rich in minerals and trace elements. Hiding in the seaweed are the abalone, urchin, scallop and octopus.

The places washed by the ocean's tides are where we go to gather sea foods of all kinds — animal, vegetable and mineral. With every tide comes the nourishment of all living communities.

PART 2 - CONDITION OF THE LAND

This part of the HLUV presents our view of changing conditions for *tsuuaay*, *tsiin*, *taan*, *kil*, *xiit'lit* and *sk'waii*. In relation to the Land Use Plan process, it is to be considered in combination with the technical analysis of environmental conditions being prepared by the Process Technical Team for the Community Planning Forum. Together, they provide a basis for considering the priorities for a sustainable land use plan.

In recent times, resource use industries have drawn great wealth from the hills, forest and ocean. In the early 20th Century, there was an attitude of endless supply — an ill-conceived belief on the part of the Crown and early industrialists that we couldn't run out of trees or fish.

When it became clear that this wasn't true, people said: "somebody's going to go get them and make a fortune, so it might as well be me." Licenses were handed out first-come-first-serve, and there was logging and fishing like there was no tomorrow. Some people call this *The Tragedy of the Commons*.

On the land, logging has greatly changed the age and character of the forest — out of balance with the ability of the land to function and replenish itself. Habitat places for cedar, salmon, bear, nesting seabirds, hawks and many other things have fallen to economic interests in timber. The measured flow of water from hillside to stream and ocean has been disrupted, and the modern community economy is at risk because of a few short decades of short-sighted policies and practices.

ISUUAAY – Cedar

For several decades the Haida have voiced growing concerns that the high rate of cedar logging is threatening the continuity of Haida culture, both today and especially for the coming generations.

Cedar of high quality for canoes, poles and longhouses are disappearing from Haida Gwaii within *our* lifetime, cut down and floated away on log barges at a rate out of all proportion to their number. The needs of future artists, communities, bears and other forest dwellers are not respected by government planners and professional foresters.

The problem is compounded by the large population of introduced deer, which has reduced the ability of cedar to grow back after logging, and even in the old growth forest that remains.

The young cedar stands in the 19th century burn area between the lower Yakoun and Tlell rivers need special consideration. Some of them grow in very rich soil,

and three hundred years from now they'll be one of the few remaining sources of accessible monumental cedars — if they aren't logged out in the next decade.

TSIIN - Salmon

The land and people need more salmon to be healthy. Sockeye in particular are in dire straits compared to their historical abundance. Every year we have to carefully limit our catches in different rivers so as not to endanger them. At times we find there's not enough to go around to provide for the needs of single families, let alone large public feasting.

As a watershed becomes progressively logged, the qualities that make for a healthy salmon stream become degraded. In many places the riparian forest that surrounds the streams and lakes has been laid bare. Because the hillside forests have been taken as well, seasonal floods run faster and higher, ripping away the structure of logs and spawning pools and the shelter of small side channels. Roads and bridge crossings funnel sediments into the streams. Landslides and debris torrents are catastrophic events that effectively erase a stream's capacity to provide habitat.

One of the worst examples is the Ain River, once a major system and important food source; today barren of sockeye. The Copper River is not much better — almost 90 percent of the watershed has been logged. Where the sockeye are a shadow of their former abundance, Creek Woman's wealth has been diminished.

Other major salmon systems in trouble include the Davidson, Naden, Awun, Mamin, Yakoun, Deena and Mathers, with many smaller streams becoming increasingly degraded.

It is clear that the provincial Forest Practices Code is a case of too little, too late. It provides no protection for the thousands of small stream habitats, or the vital headwaters of streams where much logging is happening today.

TAAN - Bear

A great many bear den trees and the forest places around them have been cut down. Experienced local loggers say that for most of the past 50 years the common practice has been to cut them. Sometimes loggers are allowed to leave occupied dens until the bears depart. When a mother with cubs feels threatened by a disturbance, she packs up and looks for another den.

When bears are stressed this way, or by developments such as fishing lodges located in the best places for their foraging, they come out of the forest — thrashing around and trashing things in anger.

The pattern of change can be seen by looking at the age of second growth forests. The places where the old forest has been logged have lost whatever big standing cedar trees for bear dens and daybeds they once contained, and their disappearance from the land has been extensive. This forces the bears to concentrate in old growth remnants, bringing them stress from crowding and depriving the land of the role they play in the salmon nutrient cycle.

In the recent past, the troubles facing bears were compounded by the Department of Fisheries' misguided and now discontinued policy of killing bears because they eat fish. Most recently, their lives are further threatened by a rapid increase in commercial sport hunting, which like catch-and-release sport fisheries are unforgivable exercises in disrespect and disregard for the lives and spirits of creatures we hold to be our relations.

KIL - Plants

The single-minded focus of the logging industry pays little regard to the many kinds of plants it calls "non-timber forest products." No respect is shown for plants which are sacred to us for their proven medicinal powers and food values.

Where we might approach a Yew tree in a ceremonial manner, the industry takes them for building temporary roads, bucked into pieces for the heavy steel-tracked machines to travel on, then left behind on the ground.

Many of the most powerful medicine plants grow in the old growth forest, especially under the canopy in riparian areas within one hundred metres of the streams. So much of this kind of forest has been clearcut that plants like devil's club — also an important medicine for the bears who taught us to use it — have become very difficult to find.

Other kinds of plants for food and medicine have become scarce, and we have to travel further and further to find them. Recently, more people have become interested in harvesting plants for personal and commercial use in off-island markets, and this is a growing problem that needs to be addressed.

Plants and trees are nourished and affected by the ocean. Depending on their exposure to the ocean's influence, the same kinds of plants have different nutrient and medicinal properties. Because of this they need to be protected in various places from the shoreline to more sheltered inland places.

XIIT'LIT - Birds

Many kinds of birds depend on old growth forests with their high canopies and understories of fern and shrubs such as salal and huckleberry, and plenty of insects to eat. Those who live inside the forest are very vulnerable to disturbance

by logging. Clearcuts and the “variable retention” openings are barren of the conditions that birds need to live there, and so their numbers decline.

The problem is compounded by introduced species. Rats, raccoons and squirrels are alien predators of adult birds, eggs and hatchlings. The growing flocks of starlings are vigorous competitors for the foods that remain. The deer have had the greatest affect, and while we respect that they have become an important part of many people’s diet, we need to realize how their heavy browsing of bird and insect habitat has impoverished the plant communities.

Some birds adapt to the new openings and edges that logging creates, but after several years the young conifer forest draws together into a tight canopy that blocks most of the light out from the understory. When this happens, the forests are unsuitable habitat for many birds for up to 60 years, a condition that exists over an ever-increasing portion of the land.

Goshawks have declined in number such that they are listed by the government of British Columbia as a threatened species — the reason given is the logging of the forests where they nest and forage. *Ts’alangaa* (Marbled Murrelet) is listed by the province as a threatened species. Heron and saw whet owls have become increasingly rare, dependant as they are on old forest conditions for nesting and foraging.

In effect, the loss of birds is depriving the land of their essential role in insect control, seed dispersal and nutrient loading, a condition that will surely become worse if logging continues in the pattern of recent years.

Shoreline birds are easier to observe, and those who count them say that the falcons and eagles are still high in number here, in comparison to the other parts of the mainland.

SK’WAIL - Beach

The beaches are vulnerable to disturbance by pollution from human sewage, oil and the many products made from it, by seepage from mining sites, and by timber industry activities at log sorting and dumping sites.

Log dumps are usually located in sheltered bays, where bark and debris sinks to the bottom and decomposes, starving the water of oxygen and smothering clams and other life forms.

Wherever streams have been heavily logged and damaged by landslides and erosion, in periods of heavy rainfall the estuaries are loaded with silt and huge quantities of gravel are washed out of the stream channels and into the sea.

PART 3 – NATURAL ABILITY OF THE LAND TO FUNCTION AND PROVIDE

In the final part of the HLUV, we address what must be done in accordance with Yah'guudang to bring land and resource use into balance — to ensure the continuity of Haida culture and the economic well-being of the entire Island Community. This part of the document is incomplete in several regards, as explained below.

On the accompanying set of maps, we identify places where the land use plan should provide protection against further degradation and address the need to restore things that are damaged.

The map of Haida Protected Areas delineates important landscapes that have been brought forward by the Haida Nation in negotiations with the government of British Columbia on interim measures related to the treaty process. There has been little or no logging in these areas over the past ten years, and the province has suspended forestry planning in these places while the process is under way.

In reference to Part 2 of the HLUV, six other maps have been prepared to indicate the scope and intent of measures that need to be taken in order to protect important things that are threatened by continued resource extraction, and to ensure an opportunity for the land to restore and replenish itself. These are:

Tsuu'aay (cedar) - forests set aside to protect the workplaces of our ancestors and monumental cedars for Haida culture.

Tsiin (salmon) - riparian forest areas set aside to protect salmon stream conditions and restore degraded watersheds.

Taan (bear) - habitat for denning and foraging within their territories where future logging may occur.

Kil (plants) - places set aside to protect food and medicine plants.

Xiit'lit (plants) - places set aside to protect nesting and foraging habitat.

Sk'waii (beach) - places set aside to protect life along the shore and the intertidal zone.

With the exception of the Haida Protected Areas, most of these maps are preliminary in nature. They indicate the scope and intent of the HLUV in restoring balance, but they are not a final determination for use in the Land Use Plan. Good decisions are based on good information, so the completion of these maps will await our review of the report on environmental conditions (still in preparation), and will require further dialogue in the communities and the Planning Forum.

The Haida Land Use Vision is not just about the protection of natural areas. It is also about understanding economic conditions, and providing a vision of a sustainable economy in which the forest continues to play an important role in the well-being of the Island Community.

The forests have fueled an industry that has provided jobs to Haida and other island communities for a few short decades. Families have been fed and sheltered, and relationships among our communities have grown. But the forest was logged too fast, and without provision for the stability and sustainability of the Island Community as a whole.

There is room enough for forestry and other commercial activities on Haida Gwaii, but in order to be sustainable they must be managed with more respect and greater responsibility — in other words, in accordance with yah'guudang.

In Haida culture, wealth is a different thing than money, which is a currency for doing business in the modern economy. Wealth flows from the well-being of the land, and from having the opportunity, knowledge and capacity to support our families, raise healthy children, and organize the individual collective efforts of our clans and society. Wealth is to be shared and distributed — prestige is gained through the ability to do so.

This economic component of the Haida Land Use Vision is also incomplete. It will take careful consideration and extensive consultation, and the work towards its completion will proceed in the months ahead.

In closing, the land and waters of Haida Gwaii can and must be made well again. Our economic needs can and must be brought into balance with the capacity of the land to function and provide. We have the political will and we accept the responsibility to see that this is done.

In the words of Bill Reid:

“... The boat goes on, forever anchored in the same place.”