



Roadmaps that Guide Us in Managing Our Resources

Photo by Douglas Neasloss

For the first time in history, our leaders have successfully negotiated land and resource agreements government-to-government with the Province to increase our rightful authority to govern and manage our traditional lands. The Province and Coastal First Nations have committed to setting aside new protected areas that accommodate our Aboriginal Rights and Title and to managing our resources on the remaining land base using the principles of “ecosystem-based management”. We are committed to developing a thriving and diverse economy that is based on protecting ecosystem health and strengthening our cultures.

Ecosystem-based management (EBM) is a land management approach that recognizes that people, communities and the land are inseparable. Our choices must consider the health of both the people and the land that sustains them. EBM has two goals: maintain ecosystem health and improve human well-being.

It has been over ten years since the Province convened Land and Resource Management Planning processes on the Central Coast and the North Coast to resolve disputes over land and resource use and to designate protected areas. At the same time, First Nations were developing their own land use plans for their territories. Recommendations from both processes formed the basis for signing the government-to-government Land and Resource Protocol Agreement between Coastal First Nations and the Province.

The Land and Resource Protocol Agreement set out a process for developing the Strategic Land Use Planning Agreements for each First Nation to work collaboratively with the Province to address land use interests for their traditional territory.

PROTECTED AREAS AND EBM FOR OUR TERRITORIAL LANDS

The Strategic Land Use Planning Agreements establish new protected areas — called conservancies and biodiversity areas — that recognize our Aboriginal Rights and Title. The Agreements call for all lands outside of protected areas to implement Ecosystem-Based Management.

Detailed Strategic Plans: Determining what we Value most on our Territories

The Strategic Land Use Planning Agreements established initial understandings with the Province for land management. These were

THE HISTORY OF LAND USE PLANNING ON THE COAST

A chronology of some key events in the history of land use planning on the coast

1997	The Province convenes a Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP) process for the Central Coast.
2000	First meeting of all Coastal First Nations to discuss logging impacts on the coast. A formal alliance, Coastal First Nations, forms to work together to change legislation and government referral processes.
2001	An historic agreement is struck on the amount of protected area to be set aside, and calls for EBM forestry on lands not protected.
2002	An LRMP begins for the North Coast and for Haida Gwaii. A government-to-government negotiating process is established between Coastal First Nations and the Province. First Nations land use planning processes begin.
2004 – 2005	LRMPs present their recommendations to the Province and First Nations governments.
2006	The 2006 Strategic Land Use Planning Agreements and the Land and Resource Protocol Agreement between the Coastal First Nations and the government of British Columbia were ratified after 18 months of dialogue. The agreements established a shared goal to implement EBM by March 31. The Park Act was amended to allow creation of a new form of protected area called Conservancies, in which protection and maintenance of First Nations social, ceremonial and cultural uses is a primary purpose.
2008	Land Use Objectives are established through a Provincial Government Order. Detailed Strategic Plans are approved by First Nations and the Province. Forest companies are required to incorporate Land Use Objectives into Forest Stewardship Planning.
2009	Biodiversity Areas are legalized. Land Use Objectives are amended.
2009	Re-negotiation of Strategic Land Use Planning Agreements.
2010	Negotiation of Strategic Engagement Agreements.

later established by the Province as Land Use Objectives. These Land Use Objectives specify rules for how timber will be cut in areas identified to have significant cultural resources, fish streams and wildlife habitat.

First Nations subsequently worked with the Province to prepare 'Detailed Strategic Plans' that provide recommendations that refine the initial Land Use Objectives further to reflect local interests and needs that may not have been captured adequately in the initial Land Use Objectives. The Detailed Strategic Plan is a living document that will evolve as our knowledge, priorities and operating and legal conditions evolve.

A Detailed Strategic Planning process has been completed for each First Nation, except Haida Gwaii. This process was an opportunity for community members to determine the values most important to them in managing their territory. Many questions were considered such as: Where are the most important streams and watersheds for fish? How much old growth forest remains, and which areas do we want to manage for cultural uses of cedar? Are there any culturally significant places that haven't been protected as conservancies? Where is it important to leave trees standing in a cut block for wildlife values? What will our timber supply needs be over the next few decades?



Forest Stewardship Plans: Incorporating our Values

Under EBM, forest companies are now obliged to address our Land Use Objectives through management strategies specified in their Forest Stewardship Plans. Since the Forest Stewardship Plan is a legally binding document, it is important for First Nations to carefully review it and respond in order to ensure it addresses the Land Use Objectives. We must also ensure that these plans adequately meet our future requirements for consultation and information sharing, and demonstrate a commitment to modifying activities if infringement to Aboriginal Rights and Title occurs.



Transitioning from Planning to Implementation of EBM

To support the transition from planning to implementation, Coastal First Nations is negotiating with the Province to obtain the funds we need to participate fully in the implementation of EBM on our territories. Funds are required to support our technical, administrative and financial capacity as well as the governance mechanisms to manage referrals responsively. Regional Land and Resource Referral centres and support teams will coordinate efforts around activities such as operational planning, and monitoring and evaluation.



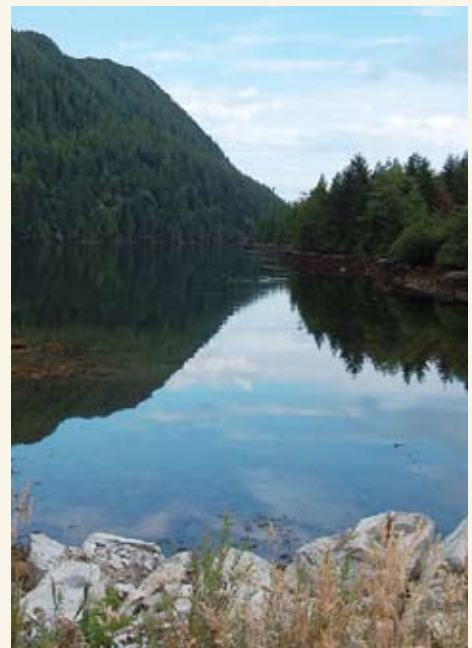
Creating Meaningful Consultation and Decision-Making for our Communities

New strategic arrangements are being negotiated by Coastal First Nations to create meaningful land and resource consultation, management, and decision-making structures for implementing EBM.

Coastal First Nations is currently in negotiation with the province to re-negotiate the Strategic Land Use Planning Agreements. The intent is to strengthen the government-to-government relationship, establish shared-decision making, and create commitments to improve human well-being. Strategic Engagement Agreements are being developed that will provide a more collaborative and shared approach to land tenure review and decision making.

THE LAND — MARINE INTERFACE: WHERE ONE PLAN ENDS AND ANOTHER PLAN STARTS

First Nation communities recognize that managing coastal resources must integrate both the land and the sea. The provincial government holds jurisdiction over the land base, while the federal government holds jurisdiction over the marine environment. Some First Nations, such as the Haisla, are well on their way to developing Marine Use Plans which integrate land and marine planning processes, and are actively involved in the current federal government management planning process for the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area (otherwise called 'PNCIMA'). They recognize that our culture is intertwined with all of creation in the land, sea and air. These community marine use plans will be important in determining what best practices will sustain our culture and communities for generations to come.



Turning Point Initiative Coastal First Nations

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The Coastal First Nations is an alliance of First Nations on British Columbia's North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii. The Coastal First Nations include Wuikinuxv Nation, Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xaixais, Holmalco, Gitga'at, Haisla, Metlakatla, Old Massett, Skidegate, and Council of the Haida Nation. More information on Government-to-Government Agreements and other Ecosystem-Based Management topics can be found on our website.