



Photo by Jens Wieting

## A Commitment to Our Future

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.

### **Government-to Government Negotiations and the Land Use Planning Framework**

Coastal First Nations have focused their efforts in several areas to ensure our ability to implement EBM on our territories:

- ▶ Developing and negotiating land use plans and agreements for each territory
- ▶ Envisioning new roles and responsibilities and developing new governance institutions
- ▶ Securing economic investments and funds for local community economic development initiatives
- ▶ Developing guidelines for applying the EBM approach to forestry on the ground

### **Working Together to Achieve a Conservation-Based Economy Rooted in First Nations Values**

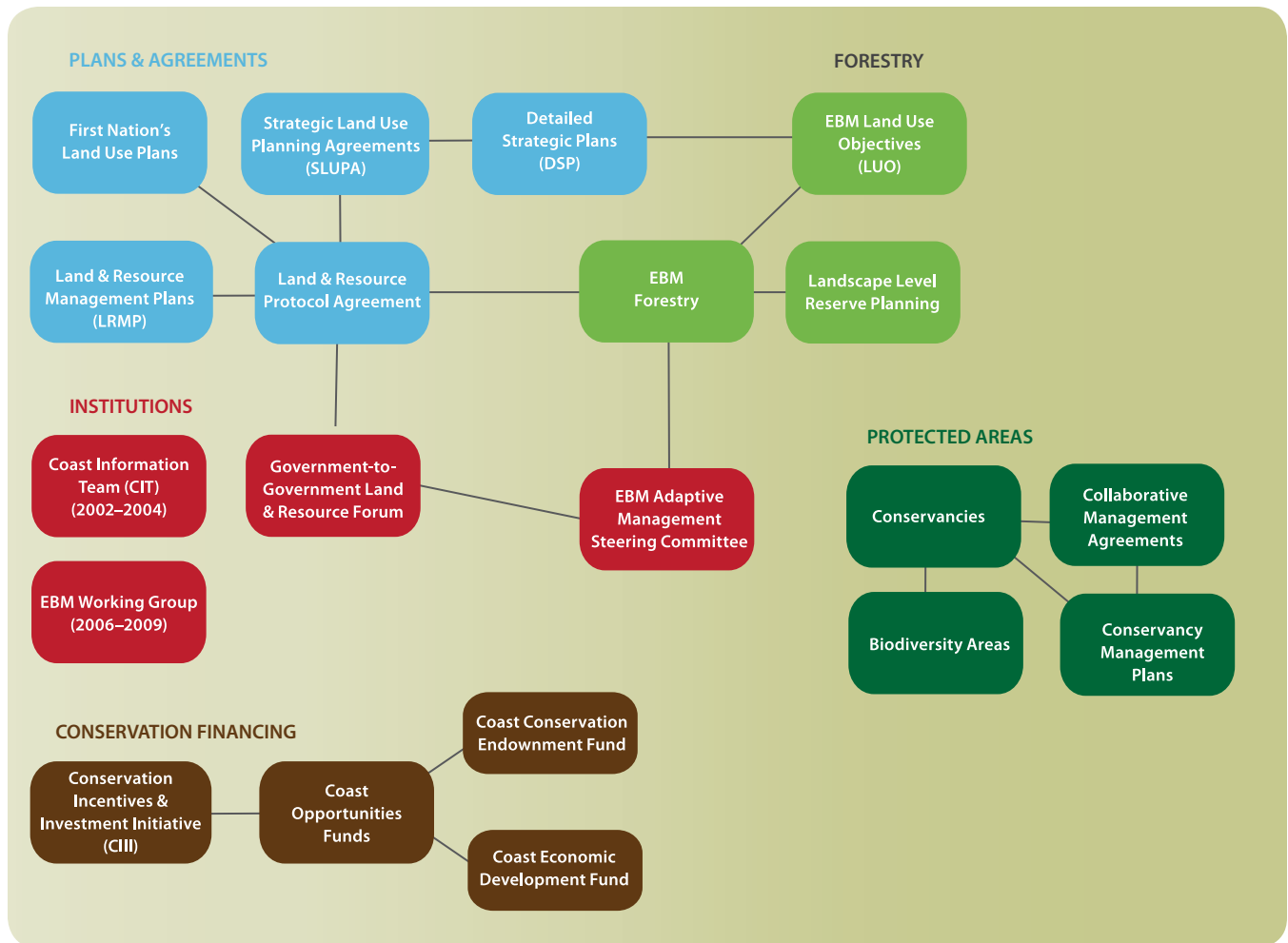
First Nations people on the coast have watched as natural resources within our territories have been exploited for maximum profit over the last 100 years. The cost to our communities has been enormous. We continue to suffer from weak economies and high unemployment rates. We have seen a depletion of our forests and traditional food sources such as fish. At the same time, the loss of coastal old growth forests and biodiversity has become a global concern. It is clear that an economy based on unrestrained exploitation of natural resources is no longer viable.

In 2000, our leaders from the Central and North Coast and Haida Gwaii came together in a united front to discuss how to change our common socio-economic situation. They realized that by working together they could make progress on these issues and create a brighter future for our communities.

The Coastal First Nations Turning Point Initiative was created at that gathering, with the conviction that a conservation-based economy rooted in our First Nations ethic and values is needed on the coast. This means recognizing the link between economic and ecological sustainability.

## Agreements, Land Use Plans and Institutions: How Do They All Fit Together?

Different agreements and institutions have guided the development of each First Nation’s land use plan. The following diagram and descriptions explain the key components of these plans, and how EBM fits in the picture.



### PLANS AND AGREEMENTS

The Strategic Land Use Planning Agreements (SLUPA) between each First Nation and the Province established new government-to-government arrangements for managing our lands. The Land and Resource Protocol Agreement (LRPA) signed by all the Coastal First Nations and the Province, established a government-to-government structure that supports implementation of the SLUPAs. The drafting of each SLUPA and the LRPA took into consideration each Nation’s Land Use Plan as well as Provincial Land and Resource Management Plans.

Detailed Strategic Plans document each First Nation's specific land use interests at the landscape or watershed level. These plans identify the important cultural and ecological values to protect, provide guidance on how to apply Land Use Objectives, and analyze different options for long term timber supply.

Several benchmarks have been reached to date:

- ▶ New protected areas have been established and EBM is beginning to be implemented across the land base.
- ▶ Detailed Strategic Plans have been completed for each First Nation territory that specify where and how land use objectives will be implemented.
- ▶ New funding sources have been secured for conservation and economic development activities.
- ▶ Revenue and benefit-sharing agreements and partnerships with forest companies are being reached to improve human well-being.



## **INSTITUTIONS**

Key institutions ensure that we are participating in decision-making as governments at all levels and that stakeholders follow through on their commitments to EBM.

Government-to-Government Land and Resource Forum: representatives from Coastal First Nations and the Province work collaboratively to make decisions about EBM implementation. The Forum guides the implementation of EBM through a variety of committees that work on specific issues.

Adaptive Management Steering Committee: a technical committee that makes recommendations to the Land and Resource Forum on a range of issues related to employing an adaptive management framework to monitor EBM implementation.

## **FORESTRY**

EBM establishes new rules about where and how forestry can take place on our territories.

Land Use Objectives establish better protection under Provincial law for our values such as cultural resources, fish and wildlife habitat.

EBM Forestry, or "lighter touch" logging, can happen on all land outside of protected areas. This means careful planning before any trees are cut, to maintain healthy ecosystems over the long term. A landscape level reserve planning process is underway to implement the spatial reserve components of the EBM land use objectives. This technical planning effort includes First Nations, licensees, the Provincial government, and other stakeholders. The objective is to design landscape scale reserve areas that protect First Nations cultural values and ecological values, while minimizing impacts to economic development opportunities (for example, by avoiding placing reserves in areas where First Nations have plans for economic initiatives).

## PROTECTED AREAS

The Strategic Land Use Planning Agreements establish new protected areas for important ecosystems, areas of high biodiversity, and significant cultural heritage features. New legislation designates a type of protected area where we can practice our Aboriginal Rights, such as harvesting cedar, hunting and fishing. These new protected areas are called Conservancies.

Conservancies protect our social, ceremonial and cultural use of the land, while protecting ecological and recreational values. Conservancies allow us to benefit from certain commercial activities but not commercial logging, mining or large-scale hydro-electric power generation.

A Biodiversity Area allows for similar activities to a conservancy but some mining is also permitted.

All 128 conservancies and 21 biodiversity areas are now legislated and protect a total of 1,920,187 hectares of land and marine foreshore, including 40% of all documented salmon-bearing streams.

Collaborative Management Agreements establish a working relationship between the Ministry of Environment and each First Nation to jointly manage the conservancies within their territory. They are intended to establish a decision-making process, guide management planning and operations, and identify First Nations economic opportunities.

Conservancy Management Plans will be developed for each conservancy to identify land zoning and allowable use.



## CONSERVATION FINANCING

Investments by private donors, the Government of BC and the Government of Canada totaling \$120 million are now in place. The Coast Economic Development Fund supports First Nations economic development initiatives and the Coast Conservation Endowment Fund supports activities that protect and manage ecosystems.

Coast Opportunity Funds administer the funds and the first grants have been received by eligible First Nation applicants. See the website for more information: [www.coastfunds.ca](http://www.coastfunds.ca).



**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.