



## Maaqutusiis Hahoulthee Stewardship Society

PO Box 1245 Tofino BC V0R2Z0

### PRESS RELEASE

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## **AHOUSAHT FIRST NATION CELEBRATES THEIR PROGRESS TOWARDS A LAND USE VISION THAT PRIORITIZES SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*Protocol Agreement signed between the Ahousaht First Nation and the Government of British Columbia paves the way for an economic diversification strategy supported by \$1.25 million in provincial funding over the next five years.*

**TOFINO, B.C.**— Today, the Ahousaht First Nations released the first phase of their long term sustainable economic development plan for their *hahoulthee* (territory) in Clayoquot Sound. The event will be in Tofino, BC at the Shore Unit 9 Event space 360 Main Street Tofino from 1-3pm.

In August 2016, the Ahousaht were honoured to welcome British Columbia Premier Christy Clark to their territory to sign a new relationship protocol, which was jointly announced by Ahousaht Tye Ha'wilth Maquinna (Hereditary Chief Lewis George), elected Chief Councillor Greg Louie and Premier Clark. The agreement between Ahousaht and B.C. will bring \$1.25 million to Ahousaht over five years to support economic development and to establish a collaborative approach to resource management and permitting within our traditional territory.

Today's release builds on that Protocol Agreement. "The economic sustainability of our community must be underpinned by sustainable marine and land use planning and that is where we are starting today," said Chief Maquinna.

The release of this vision represents the culmination of over two years of work by the community, led by the Maaqutusiis Hahoulthee Stewardship Society (MHSS), which represents the Ahousaht Hawiik (Ahousaht Chiefs). Chief Maquinna also voiced his appreciation to The Nature Conservancy Canada (TNC) for their technical support in reaching this point and their commitment to raise a stewardship endowment fund to support the implementation of their land use vision and the sustainable management and economic development in the region.

The Ahousaht believe that this is the beginning of a new era, based on recognition and celebration of Ahousaht people and culture, conservation of the world-class forest and marine resources of Clayoquot Sound, and the development of a more diversified, sustainable local economy, including community forestry.



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Ahousaht Chief Councilor Greg Louie commented: “We look forward to building on the strong relationship we have established with the Government of British Columbia to advance our shared vision of economic prosperity that respects traditional Ahousaht values. Our people are ready to create local, family-supporting jobs through renewable energy, respectful tourism and sustainable resource development.”

Hereditary Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo expressed his support for the vision: “The community values expressed during the planning process reaffirmed our traditional teachings that the Ahousaht people are inextricably linked to the natural world that we refer to as our *hahoulthee*. This bold vision brings certainty to the future of old growth forests and ensures functioning marine and aquatic ecosystems into the next millennia. It is a proud day to be Ahousaht.”

TNC Canada Executive Director Hadley Archer offered his congratulations: “When Ahousaht invited TNC Canada to support their land-use planning, we could only hope that it would become what it is today—a blueprint for a sustainable future rooted in sacred cultural values and protective of a globally significant ecosystem. We look forward to continued work with the Ahousaht and other Nations in building thriving, local economies.”

Chiefs Atleo and Maquinna also voiced their support to their neighbouring First Nations, Tla-o-qui-aht and Hesquiaht, as they embark on similar planning processes for their traditional territories and look forward to developing shared boundary accords as they progress.