



COMMUNITY
CULTURE
LAND
STEWARDSHIP

Kwakiutl Forestry Program: Our Journey to Date

PREPARED BY
KWAKIUTL FORESTRY DEPARTMENT
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PLANNING FOR FORESTRY

First Nation Elected Chief and Council, Staff, and community leaders focus on using the *Kwakiutl First Nation Land Use Plan* (Land Use Plan) when setting goals of good stewardship, environmental protection, economic benefit, and increased autonomy on our land base. Forestry and our Nation's concerns about forestry, the environment and stewardship are the highest priorities in this process. The work we are currently looking at started in 2019 under the last council, which led us to the Forestry Business, which is a plan we have started to implement and will continue to do so under the guidance of the membership and our Land Use Plans. It is important to implement our rights and title in all aspects of our Territory. Later in this document we explore some high-level aspects of forest policy which helped guide our decisions to participate for the benefit of our long-term stewardship plans and for the Nation.

The Land Use Plan also takes into account all the other documents Kwakiutl have made, which guide activities in Kwakiutl Community and Kwakiutl Territory (Land Use Plan, page 4). Keeping the Land Use Plans at front of mind provides Kwakiutl Forestry Department important guidance around the vision our Nation has for a better future.

Some important guiding points from the Land Use Plan that are considered in our planning:

- **1.1.5** *Clarify expectation for meaningful consultation and involvement in decision making;*
- **1.1.6** *Ensuring we benefit from development in our territory;*
- **1.1.7** *Improved environmental protection and outcomes;*
- **1.1.8** *Improved decision making and accountability; and*
- **1.1.9** *Ensuring we can benefit from our land through community and economic development.*





A FOCUS ON FORESTS: DEFINING A PATH FORWARD

Forestry was identified by Kwakiutl Elected Chief and Council as an area where action was required to protect and build Kwakiutl interests in Kwakiutl Territory. This action was needed for identified environmental, stewardship, cultural and economic reasons, and through this process it was also identified we had a historic capacity problem with professional Forestry department administration and staff.

In a historical review and program audit, the Chief and Council found Kwakiutl had not held any forest tenure or Provincially provided rights to wood on the Territory since 2004, which is now 18 years ago. Other organizations were found to have extensive and longstanding harvesting operations in Kwakiutl Traditional Territory and Douglas Treaty Lands without referrals from our Band Office. The Chief and Council took on the task of creating a system of accountable administration that could do better for stewardship, our lands, and our people in managing our Forests. First, we needed to upgrade our framework and system, and then we work to implement and continually improve that framework and system.

THE PROCESS: ADMINISTRATIVE MEETINGS, LISTENING, LEARNING & SHARING HAS HAPPENED

STEP 1: Review of historic circumstances around stewardship and land use planning, forestry, forest industry management, old or current agreements, Human Resources, and staffing

STEP 2: Review of current situation impacting the Nations' forests

STEP 3: Consider short, medium and long term solutions; Plan next steps for forestry in alignment with the Land Use Plan

STEP 4: Act in a respectful and timely manner, implementing solutions that create visible positive changes for the community.

STEP 5: Re-establish Kwakiutl rights to hold Provincial Forest Tenure. This was achieved in 2022 in cooperation with Forest Professionals, including North Island Community Forest LLP.



PARTICIPATING IN THE FOREST INDUSTRY

Foremost, in embarking on this work we must acknowledge that commercial forestry is a complex system of colonial environmental laws, policy, and precedents that conflict with traditional Indigenous forest management and ways of knowing. While the sector is changing to be more inclusive of our rights and values, we know we will need to work diligently to ensure Kwakiutl comes to the forefront of forest management in our territory.

At Kwakiutl Forestry we are also exploring forestry innovation, and will create a better, healthier community by asserting our authority in our Territory. In looking at stewardship, biodiversity, innovation, best practices, and the values of the Nation we see tremendous opportunities in business, and our connection and influence on activities occurring on the land base.

Going forward, Band Members are encouraged to engage with the Kwakiutl Forestry Department directly and ask questions about Forestry. Governance and finance questions will still remain under the purview of the Band Administration and Chief and Council. Kwakiutl Forestry Department is available to engage in the process of regular community dialogue meetings to talk about stewardship, business opportunities, innovation, and training opportunities. We are also eager to bring more Indigenous and Non-Indigenous experts into the conversation to help us learn, and have them share in our vision and values.





EVALUATING THE BUSINESS LANDSCAPE FINDING LOCAL EXPERTS & PARTNERS TO INCREASE CAPACITY

Chief and Council have identified qualified strategic partners and experts in Forestry to help further navigate external Forestry systems, and understand the options available. We have asked ourselves how we can achieve the goals of the Land Use Plan in the context of engaging with external parties. Specifically: *Clarify expectation for meaningful consultation and involvement in decision making; Ensuring we benefit from development in our territory; Improved environmental protection and outcomes; Improved decision making and accountability; and Ensuring we can benefit from our land through community and economic development.* (Kwakiutl First Nation Land Use Plan)

Chief and Council recognized the need to work with a company that is invested in community, directly accountable to Kwakiutl, responsive to our needs, would be willing to transparently share knowledge, share assets and resources, share information and educate about Provincial Forest Policy, and become strategic partners and allies in achieving Kwakiutl goals in alignment with our Land Use Plan. We looked for demonstrated diversity, stewardship, creative thinking, strength, and accountability in leadership.

In selecting a partner, we also evaluated economic successes and the scale of potential partner businesses, as we want to participate in business and grow our own opportunities through *proven* business models. We also wanted to talk with organizations that are interested in skill development and succession planning. We also want to try and hire and engage local professionals and keep careers, jobs, and mentorship opportunities as close to home as possible. Working with local businesses gives us opportunity to work daily to train, hire, and expand Kwakiutl capacity in business and resource management, and transferable skills.



LEAD PROPONENT: SUPPORTING OUR CAPACITY

After nearly three years of engagement, Lions Gate Forest Products (Lions Gate) was selected to work for Kwakiutl under the direction of council and took on the administrative task of Professionally reviewing Kwakiutl's Forestry Department and past programs. Lions Gate is managed by Indigenous Forester Ken Johnson of the Sechelt First Nation and Eric Dutcyvich, a business professional of settler descent. Lions Gate is part of Lemare Group, which has a team of resource Professionals, trades people, and administrative professionals. They are locally owned Port McNeill companies with 30 years of experience in Forestry, Engineering, Tenure Management, Heavy Civil Construction, Energy Projects, and more. It is important to acknowledge that Lemare and Lions Gate *have not* operated in Douglas Treaty Lands since 2004 when the Kwakiutl referrals program went off-line, and these companies are not included in the list of organizations harvesting or working in the Douglas Treaty Lands without referrals.

ONBOARDING LIONS GATE FOREST PRODUCTS

Chief and Council Instructions to Lions Gate:

- Identify manners to maintain the highest stewardship values while maximizing fibre recovery in short and long-term planning, including fire wood, shake, shingle, and innovative new uses for non-lumber wood
- Help establish new, professional long-term systems for a Kwakiutl First Nation Forestry Committee and Department
- Work through the necessary steps to approve a Forest Stewardship Plan with the Province for the 60,000CM Forest Licence Identify suitable cut blocks within the Territory that met the Stewardship needs of the Nation
- Engineer those cut blocks to the highest environmental standards and remain communicative throughout with KFN Forestry Committee Leadership
- Manage the permitting process with the Province
- Manage the harvesting and sale of the timber in a manner that would capture the current unprecedented market conditions, and optimize the significant financial benefits to the KFN
- Ensure this process is being managed with transparency and in a manner that will align the land use plan and stated stewardship values and economic interests of the Nation
- Act in a manner that is Professional and prompt enough to capture current business cycles and opportunity, giving us resources to build our programs internally.
- Maintain focus on our priorities of maintaining diversity and being cognizant of climate change concerns



SHORT-TERM STEPS 2022/2023: KWAKIUTL FORESTRY IN KWAKIUTL TERRITORY

1. Chief and Council formed the Kwakiutl First Nation Forestry Committee: The Forestry Committee is operational in nature, and depends on the great documents and groundwork done by the community in Land Use Planning, Stewardship Planning and other recent work for guidance.
 - a. Three Band Council Member Representatives and the Elected Chief, and one Lions Gate Representative.
 - b. In the near future we will be hosting healthy forest community open house and meetings.
2. The KFN Forestry Committee and Management team is working to evaluate all industrial activity in Forestry in the Territory – that is, engage with all external businesses and Governments and learn what they harvested, when, and how, and look at past trends in internal management, external forestry and all agreements relating to resource management happening in our territory.
3. Letters were sent from Chief Grace to all operations in the region, not only asking them about past operation, but also requesting they cease operations pending a re-established communications protocol.
 - a. The KFN Forestry Committee now has clear, direct, professional and accountable communications with external organizations working on the Forest Land-Base for the first time in 18 years. Council considers this a major win for both our Land Use Plan goals and our emerging Forestry Program.
4. The KFN Forestry Committee and Managers successfully negotiated a 60,000 Cubic Metre (M3) Forest Licence from the Province in 2020. This represents the first time in many years we will directly benefit from forestry.
5. We engaged with North Island Community Forest LLP to assert our voice in that conversation and better connect with new partner Quatsino First Nation the non-indigenous communities of Port Hardy, Port McNeill and Port Alice in sharing tenure and looking at innovative Forestry models that are healthy in nature and pay dividends to community. Community Forest funds are used locally to support Port Hardy's recreation department, and create many social opportunities we all enjoy.

The financial benefits from forestry may show in money for personal dividends, in infrastructure improvements, and ability to care and manage environmental and climate-change related improvements on reserve. We also have plans to have forestry dollars support our housing developments.



CURRENT FORESTRY PLANS: A KWAKIUTL-FIRST WORKING FORESTRY PROGRAM

- Approximately 20,000 M3 of timber and fibre was harvested under the Nation's newly re-obtained Forest Licence. The financial benefit of this wood is directly to the Nation.
- This 20,000 M3 meets the Land Use Plan requirements have been engineered and permitted. It is primarily lower grade cedar and a mix of other species.
 - This timber represents about one third of the total available quota for Kwakiutl.
 - The cut blocks are located inside the Douglas Treaty Lands and were chosen over other locations for the following reasons:

STEWARDSHIP RATIONALE:

- These cut blocks were visually inspected in person by the Forestry Committee and have passed evaluation by Kwakiutl Forestry Committee for good stewardship values in alignment with prior, comprehensive community Land Use Plan
- The timber has biologically passed its peak growth cycle and is considered decadent, which means it shows little or no new growth, and/or decay.
- The cut blocks are in the Keogh Watershed area but do not directly drain into any creeks or directly into the Keogh River and no negative impacts to waterways will occur.
- Archeologists were on site to ensure our cultural values were not compromised in any way

The term Watershed refers to the area between two high points of land where a singular river or creek is supplies by all other tributaries. Some watersheds, such as Keogh, are large watersheds of hundreds of square kilometres. In many places throughout large watershed, there may be numerous dry areas without any running water contributing to the main source.

In the current Kwakiutl Forestry project occurring in the Keogh Watershed, there is no running water in the blocks or direct runoff into the Keogh river or other fish-bears creeks. KFN Forestry feels the Forest Stewardship Plan meets the Stewardship needs as defined by the Nation

ECONOMIC RATIONALE:

- The wood in the cut blocks in question has reached a point in its life cycle where it will continue to devalue economically, over time it is decaying and there is no increased value later.
- Harvesting this timber now during high prices made sense for economic benefit reasons for the nation.
- These stands are currently yielding approximately 300 cubic meters per hectare and declining in volume and value. Harvesting them now and replanting them will result in a significantly higher yield forest in the future.
- These stands allowed the Kwakiutl Nation to ensure a timely harvest in order for the Nation to benefit from beneficial guaranteed pricing ahead of a projected recession.

KWAKIUTL'S FOREST LICENSE FROM THE PROVINCE OF B.C.

On assessment, Kwakiutl Band Council and Kwakiutl Forestry Department recognized that we have not formally practiced forestry, given a response to any referral requests, or participated meaningfully in commercial forest resource management in over 18 years. We have also observed from the actions of neighbouring Nations over the past 10-15 years that the most powerful way to manage commercial natural resource development in a territory is to *actively engage* in the larger process, which allows far greater control of these processes. For instance, over the last 10 years a neighbouring Nation has grown from managing their small licenses like the one we have now to now directly managing, influencing and benefiting over 80% of *all* forest resource work in their territory. After gathering this and more knowledge, Chief and Council worked hard with the Province to negotiate tenure so we can benefit from forestry that is permitted to occur in our Territory under the Province's cut control laws and Annual Allowable Cuts. We now have a 60,000 M3 Forest Licence, which represents a right to harvest wood and fibre, under the internal direction of our Land Use Plan and wishes of the Nation.

It is important to note, holding but not using a License does not directly relate to 60,000 M3 of saved trees left standing. In Provincial Forest Policy application, un-used licenses revert to the Province it means other parties, such as Nations within our Timber Supply Area (TSA) which extends beyond our traditional territory are able to obtain this quota, and engage in Forestry in the overarching TSA to their economic benefit. Several neighbouring Nations have obtained and used Quota that would have been available to Kwakiutl over the past 18 years.

CONCERNS OF NOTE: NON-KWAKIUTL FORESTRY OPERATIONS

- Several years ago a large block of timber was harvested within Douglas Treaty lands alongside Byng Road by a publicly traded forest company. The harvest was permitted by the Province because the Nation did not respond to the referrals request from the forest company.
 - This was upsetting to the entire community and was preventable. Our goal is to have control of these processes before they start.
- Current Chief and Counsel are working hard with our forestry manager to put a functional referrals process in place to prevent that from happening again in the future, and how we landed in the current situation. We are looking through a positive, future-forward lens. There are only learnings and no blame.
- The Nation has all final say on Referrals, the Kwakiutl Forestry Department Staff and Contractors do not.
- If anyone should benefit from harvesting cedar within our territory and from within the Douglas Treaty it must be the Kwakiutl community. The current Council will not provide referrals for blocks within the Douglas Treaty unless they are being permitted for the benefit of the Nation and there is a solid stewardship and economic rationale for that harvest and it fits our Land Use Plan.
- The Kwakiutl Forestry program will manage the harvest of any old growth and cedar very carefully and thoughtfully and in a manner that protects the Nation's stewardship values, culture and ensures that there will always be cedar available for cultural and community use.
- Kwakiutl Forestry is focused on the protection of all sensitive areas, areas of cultural significance, and good stewardship amongst other key points of value to our Nation.



THE FUTURE: FORESTRY, FIBRE RECOVERY & INNOVATION

This first 20,000 M3 harvested from the Forestry Program is to direct Kwakiutl financial benefit for the first time in almost two decades, and it is in a location that meets our stringent Stewardship tests. There will always be those who do not wish for any logging, but in our planning, we saw as a whole our community is open to exploring good forestry on the land base - if it meets our stewardship criteria AND benefits us. The community has called for a sustainable, balanced approach and also needs money for housing, recreation, employment and skills training, social programs, environmental repairs on reserve, and more. A sustainable forestry program can help achieve these goals.

The current Forestry program is small step but significant step towards meeting our Land Use Plan goals, but more importantly, we are in a process where we are asserting ourselves into the larger Forestry landscape, with authority, for the benefit of the Nation, our stewardship values, and our economy.

We are excited about what our programs can do for us in creating opportunity for maximum fibre recovery and innovation. Some great options available for us as we take ownership of our forestry resource are:

- Small sawmills and local wood supply
- Shake and Shingle Mill opportunity
- Increased training and partnerships
- Increased opportunity for Kwakiutl-led hands-on environmental management and training
- Chipping plants & fibre Recovery
- Local Heat-Source and bio-mass projects
- Wood Pellet Production for local heat plant
- Partnerships with Universities, Provincial and Federal Government for sustainable forestry pilot projects.

All of these opportunities are based on the current forest industry model, with a goal to maximize fibre recovery. We cannot engage fully in forestry innovation, systems change, and management without engaging in the current system today and develop knowledge, skills and capacity to move the Nation forward.



SUMMARY

As Kwakiutl Forestry Department we see innovation in our involvement in the forest sector, and hope for a better, healthier community by asserting our authority in our Territory, in looking at innovation, best practices, stewardship, and the values of the Nation.

We are proud to have established a Kwakiutl-led forestry program that benefits us financially and meets our stewardship and cultural needs. The KFN Forestry Committee will continue to seek better ways to support healthy communication with band members, respect the values of the land, air and sea, respect the regenerative power of the forest, and to preserve ALL important and sensitive, sacred and beautiful ecosystems in Kwakiutl Territory.

We can work together for the benefit of our houses, jobs, and community while protecting those most sacred places forever. Thank you to all who wish to work with Kwakiutl and enter the evolving and beautiful practice of learning more from each other, every day.

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Kwakiutl Forestry Department



FORESTRY OPEN HOUSE & COMMUNITY MEETING

**JOIN WITH COMMUNITY AND
LEADERSHIP IN EXPLORING
KEY ACTIONS AND IDEAS
AROUND THE KWAKIUTL
LAND USE PLAN, FORESTRY,
AND POSSIBILITY**

SAVE THE DATE

**Sunday, February 26th from 3:00 - 6:00pm
Kwakiutl Community Hall**

Open House Agenda:

- **Welcome**
- **Presentations from Kwakiutl Forestry**
- **Community Discussion & Dialogue**
- **Explore Forestry Booths & Information**
- **Enjoy a Community Dinner**

Gilakas'la

KWAKIUTL FORESTRY TOURS

Gilakas'la!

LEARN FIRST HAND ABOUT KWAKIUTL FORESTRY OPERATIONS

Tour Dates:

Thursday February 2, 11:30 am

Tuesday February 7, 11:30 am

Wednesday February 8, 11:30 am

Thursday February 9, 11:30 am

Other dates available by request

SIGN UP!



manager@kwakiutlforestry.ca



PHONE OR TEXT: 604-250-4193

- Tours meet at 11:30 at the Fort Rupert Park & Ride.
- Please text if you need a ride from Tsakis.
- Lunch is provided
- 6 people maximum

Gilakas'la!

