

Shxunutun's Tu Suleluxwtst: In the footsteps of our Ancestors
New Land Use Plan Announced for Hul'qumi'num Traditional Territory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LADYSMITH, B.C. – After more than three years of community consultations and research, the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group (HTG) today released an historic Land Use Plan for its territory on southeast Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.

"The Land Use Plan represents our strategic vision for the future use of lands in our territory. As spelled out in this document, HTG re-asserts its jurisdiction over its lands," says Robert Morales, HTG Chief Negotiator.

³This plan also lays the foundation for discussions with local and senior governments, business and our non-aboriginal neighbours for the future use and management of these lands and resources.²

According to Morales, the plan calls for the creation of ³natural and cultural areas² to protect the land and marine ecosystems needed to support the cultural and economic activities of the Hul'qumi'num people. Sustainable forestry and fishing practices, for example, will be developed in consultation with HTG's non-aboriginal neighbours.

Hul'qumi'num traditional territory encompasses about 335,000 hectares of land and an additional 2,300 hectares of near-shore and offshore areas in and around the Gulf Islands. Currently, there are 8,800 hectares or 2.6 per cent of the land base protected as provincial or federal park. The plan includes striking colour-coded maps indicating these areas.

The plan provides management direction for key resource sectors including cultural heritage, plants, forests, wildlife and biodiversity, hunting and trapping, beaches, freshwater, tourism, minerals and energy as well as wilderness access. In all sectors, HTG calls for the conservation of cultural and natural resources, with HTG retaining priority access.

Ian Gill, President of Ecotrust Canada said that this kind of land use planning should be supported. "The Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group has done what every community in this province needs to do. They have articulated a vision of a future that integrates social, environmental and economic values in all development and planning in their territory. Given the press of real estate and industrial development on southeast Vancouver Island, real vision and leadership is required

to protect the region's natural and cultural assets. With their land-use plan, the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group are providing that leadership, and are to be commended."

Representing six local First Nations, HTG is negotiating a comprehensive agreement-in-principle through the B.C. treaty process.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, TO REQUEST A COPY OF THE PLAN OR A TECHNICAL BRIEFING:

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