



Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation

P.O Box 10, Alert Bay, BC V0N 1A0

Phone: 250-974-3001 Fax: 250-974-3036

HADA (Bond Sound) & KAKWEIKAN (Thompson Sound) INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREA

Backgrounder

On November 16th, 2023, the Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation (KHFN), with the support of the Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw Hereditary Chiefs, officially declared Hada (Bond Sound)—including the Ahta watershed—and Xakwikan/Kakweikan (Thompson Sound) as the Hada & Kakweikan Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (“IPCA”) (see map below). The Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation holds inherent and unceded Aboriginal rights and title over the lands, seas, sky, and *ma'mikas* (natural resources) of the *Hada & Kakweikan* IPCA, and the entire territory. Hada and Kakweikan, and the surrounding areas, are a core part of KHFN territory. KHFN invites governments and citizens to support us in the vision for the *Hada & Kakweikan* IPCA.

IPCA Area

The IPCA comprises over 40,000 hectares and includes critical watersheds, ecology, cultural sites, village sites and core habitat for *ma'mikas*. The Hada portion of the IPCA includes Bond Sound, Atah Valley, and the Hada/Ahta River estuary—extending upwards from the mouth of the river to the lakes and the height of land that feed into the watershed. This Declaration expands on the closure of Bond Sound by the Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation on March 21st, 2023 (see map below).

The Kakweikan portion of the IPCA includes Thompson Sound and extends from the mouth of Kakweikan River up to Kakweikan Lake, covering the height of land to either side of the watershed. The Hada and Kakweikan portions of the IPCA connect through Tribune Channel, through to Nickoll Passage towards Knight's Inlet.

Hada and Kakweikan are *Nawalakw* (supernatural and sacred) and are crucial to our *nuyambalis* (our ancestral stories from our Territories that tell our core values and the history of our people from the beginning). The Hada River estuary is the birthplace of Tsekame', ancestor to the Kwikwasut'inuxw people.

Hereditary and Elected Chief, Tlakuglus (Chief Councillor Rick Johnson) says of Hada: “Our people lived there over the centuries, they thrived on the abundance of seafood in the area—not only salmon, but prawns, crab, and halibut. All the essentials to survive were just right there.” Today, Hada is home to [Nawalakw](#)—our culture camp and healing centre. Nawalakw aims to reconnect youth and community members with their language and culture, including upholding traditional stewardship responsibilities.

Kakweikan is home to several village sites, including Watu and Kakweikan, which were occupied until the 1860s and are sacred to the Kwikwasut'inuxw. *Tsekame's* first ancestor originates from

Kakweikan and descended from two *Kulus* (supernatural birds) who transformed from their original form and became human.

IPCA Ecology

The marine component of the *Hada & Kakweikan IPCA* features a rich estuarine environment, including the salmon-bearing Ahta and Kakweikan Rivers. Our people harvest halibut, herring, Pacific salmon, and clams in both Hada and Kakweikan. Grizzly bears are frequent visitors and they, like many other species in the area, depend on a healthy salmon run for survival. With sorrow, we have observed drastic declines in the foods we rely upon. Overfishing in Bond Sound and fish farms throughout the Broughton Archipelago have severely impacted the aquatic ecosystem, including the abundance of crabs, prawns, salmon, and herring.

The Ahta River supports Pink, Chum, Coho, a small run of Sockeye Salmon, and historically, Steelhead. Kakweikan River was once a spawning ground for all five species of Pacific Salmon, including Pink, Chinook, Chum, Sockeye, Coho, and Steelhead. The salmon run provides an essential food source for the surrounding ecosystem. Historically, Kakweikan River was one of the largest producers of Pink Salmon throughout the Broughton Archipelago region, however, Chinook, Chum, Coho, and Sockeye Salmon returns have significantly declined in recent years and require restoration. KHFN will revitalize the area, including DFO's old fish monitoring cabin and salmon ladders, to improve the spawning channel and promote the return of healthy salmon stocks. The terrestrial area sustains our medicines, hunting grounds, and other sacred sites.

Bond Sound and Thompson Sound—connected by Tribune Channel through towards Knight Inlet—are an important migratory route for juvenile salmon and the returning salmon run. Each year, salmon return via these channels to spawn in the Hada and Kakweikan Rivers. Protecting these migratory routes is paramount to the revitalization of the salmon population and the watersheds throughout the IPCA. Our people continue to harvest clams from these areas and throughout Tribune Channel.

Our People

The Kwikw̓asutinu̓xw and H̓axwa'mis First Nations are two of the Four Tribes of the Musgamakw Dzawada'enu̓xw, along with Dzawada'enu̓xw First Nation and Gwawa'enu̓x'w First Nation. KHFN have occupied our Territory that spans from Wakeman Sound to the waters between Gilford Island and Village Island where the Territory of the Mamalilikala begins since time immemorial. Within our Territories, KHFN has always enjoyed an abundance of *ma'mikas*. KHFN have never ceded or surrendered any portion of our Territories or our stewardship responsibilities and rights. The hereditary governance systems of the Kwikw̓asutinu̓xw and H̓axwa'mis continue to be the foundation of KHFN decision-making.

The sustainable management of the ecosystems and *ma'mikas* for future generations is necessary in order to ensure that KHFN can continue to be effective stewards. KHFN's knowledge gained over millennia, including about the current state of the ecosystems and what these ecosystems and *ma'mikas* need to sustain ourselves is applied in all decisions made about our Territories.

Activities involving our lands, waters, and *ma'mikas* must be carried out in a manner consistent with our laws, teachings, principles, and practices. Kwikw̓asutinu̓xw and H̓axwa'mis laws are based on traditional teachings of respect and responsibility to protect our lands, our waters, and the species of our Territories. A very important law for KHFN is *Mayatla*, which translates to "Respect"; respect all things, all the time.

This law and the responsibility that *Mayatla* entails was described by Elder Glenny Johnson, grandfather of KHFN's Hereditary and Elected Chief, Tlakuglus (Chief Councillor Rick Johnson):

Our creator put everything here that we're going to need: animals, birds, water, all the things. Then they put us on here, so that you're going to use that, to live off that, take care of it, just take what you need. You don't do things wrong to it. You don't go chopping trees down just to make it pretty. Our mountains are showing their bones now. It's all cleared, cut off.

Everything out there, all people, it's all chained together: every living creature. To squish a bug or whatever, that is a no-no. That thing has a family: he's out there looking for something for his family. They've all got feelings. Every living creature has feelings, has a purpose, they come from somewhere. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link. If we chop that off, nothing can put it together again.

- Elder Glenny Johnson

IPCA Vision

KHFN's stewardship and management goals for the IPCA include:

- Restoring and maintaining our connection to our unceded traditional lands, waters, watersheds, skies, and *ma'mikas* (natural resources);
- Restoring and maintaining our cultural food security and spiritual resources in the IPCA;
- Practicing our culture and applying our language, stories, songs, dances, and place names to the IPCA;
- Protecting and managing the IPCA's cultural and archaeological resources;
- Protecting, conserving, and restoring the IPCA's significant marine, terrestrial and freshwater habitats and culturally important species;
- Conserving and restoring the ecological integrity and natural balance in the IPCA's watersheds, keystone cultural species, and habitats;
- Continuing our governance and stewardship in the IPCA, including by generating long-term funding for governance capacity;
- Generating a sustainable economy for our people that allows continued KHFN use and ensures the well-being of our territory; and,
- Monitoring and enforcing our laws within the IPCA through a KHFN-operated guardian program.

More specifically, KHFN is in the process of developing a Land, Water, and Resource Management Plan. This plan will expand upon the expectations for management zones, acceptable and non-acceptable uses, and outline broader management objectives and strategies for KHFN's traditional territory and the *Hada & Kakweikan IPCA*. KHFN is also in the process of establishing a Guardian Program, which will support on-the-ground management, stewardship, and ecological revitalization activities.

Salmon are central to Kwikw̓asut̓inuxw and Haxwa'mis culture, society, economy, and way of life. They provide a link between the ocean and the land and nourish the ecosystems within KHFN Territories and beyond. Wild salmon stocks are currently threatened and declining throughout KHFN's Territories. Activities such as clear-cut logging and fish farming have caused long-term damage to the *ma'mikas* that KHFN have always depended upon. KHFN is committed to preventing the extinction of wild salmon in their territory and recently succeeded in removing Atlantic salmon farms from their waters. The Declaration of this IPCA is the next step in protecting all salmon migratory routes and ensuring wild salmon populations will be safe from harmful industrial activities

moving forward. KHFN, in partnership with other organizations and government entities, is undertaking ongoing efforts to revitalize salmon stocks within the territory. The *Hada & Kakweikan IPCA* will further these rehabilitation efforts.

Numerous provincial and federal Crown tenures and land use designations exist throughout the *Hada & Kakweikan IPCA*, including those for log handling, commercial recreation, commercial and sport fishing, and other activities. KHFN will review existing parks, conservancies, tenures, and other designations and authorizations that have been issued by the Crown for the use of our lands, waters, and *ma'mikas* within the IPCA without the free, prior and informed consent of the *Ƙwɪƙwɔsɔt'inuƙw Hɔxwɔ'mis* First Nation.

KHFN is actively working to expand sustainable economic opportunities throughout the traditional territory. This includes engagement with stakeholders, such as commercial eco-tourism companies, non-profits, industry, and other organizations. KHFN will align ongoing and future economic opportunities in the IPCA with the ecosystem-based management and the broader objectives of the IPCA Declaration.

Working with Others Moving Forward

KHFN is working with neighbouring Indigenous nations and Crown governments to ensure harmonized, long-term protection for the IPCA. The *Hada & Kakweikan IPCA* is adjacent to the Gwaxdlala/Nalaxdlala IPCA declared by the Mamalilikulla First Nation in November 2021. We are collaborating with neighbouring nations to uphold and revitalize Indigenous governance and ensure comprehensive protection throughout the region.

Both Canada and British Columbia have committed to partner with Indigenous nations to protect 25% of the lands and waters by 2025 and 30% by 2030. We are encouraged by the recent signing of the Tripartite Nature Agreement by the federal government, British Columbia, and First Nations Leadership Council as a commitment of support for Indigenous-led conservation in BC, including for our IPCA. The Declaration of this IPCA reflects our good faith efforts to assist Canada and British Columbia in achieving their respective targets for land and marine protection and conservation.

The federal and provincial governments have also both committed to implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in Crown law. The Declaration of our IPCA is made in accordance with *Ƙwɪƙwɔsɔt'inuƙw Hɔxwɔ'mis* First Nation rights to ownership, control over use, conservation, and protection, and setting of priorities for its traditional lands, territories, and resources, which are recognized by Articles 26(1-3), Article 29(1), and Article 32(1) of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. We are committed to helping the Crown advance implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in a meaningful way.

To support this IPCA, we invite Crown governments to work with us to recognize our IPCA and ensure Crown decisions uphold *Ƙwɪƙwɔsɔt'inuƙw Hɔxwɔ'mis* First Nation laws. We invite all those operating in our territory to support and respect our IPCA vision and the future plans we release. We expect all other governments and third parties to refrain from activities, approvals or other actions that are inconsistent with the purposes of the IPCA. KHFN invites governments and citizens to support us in the vision for the *Hada & Kakweikan IPCA*.



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Map of the Kwíkw̓asut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation Hada (Bond Sound) & Kakweikan (Thompson Sound) IPCA

