



CASE STUDY #22

## *Tsleil Waututh Nation and BC Parks: Collaborative Management of Say Nuth Khaw Yum Heritage Park/Indian Arm Provincial Park*

*A collaborative management agreement signed between the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Province of British Columbia forms the foundation of a relationship that has brought both parties forward in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. Under the agreement, both the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Province (represented by BC Parks) are active participants in the planning, management, and operations of Say Nuth Khaw Yum Heritage Park/Indian Arm Provincial Park (the Park).*

### **Background**

The Park is located in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. The 6,821 hectares (16,855 acres) Park is situated in the core area of the traditional territory of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. In 1995, the Province announced the creation of "Indian Arm Provincial Park", but this decision was made without consulting the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. The Tsleil-Waututh Nation initiated legal proceedings to challenge the process by which "Indian Arm Provincial Park" was created.

After a year of intense discussions, a collaborative management agreement was signed between the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Province of British Columbia in January 1998. The Agreement established a Park Management Board with equal representation from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Province for the collaborative management of the



Milestone Celebration Sept. 2006,  
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*“The Board oversees  
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renamed Park. By working together as partners in protected area management, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Province embarked on a new journey of reconciliation and cooperation based on mutual respect and trust. Today, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Province of British Columbia are committed to moving forward in the implementation of the Park Management Plan for the Park for the benefit of all British Columbians and future generations to come.

### **Initiative**

The 1998 Management Agreement established a Park Management Board, to formalize the collaborative relationship between the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Province. The Board oversees and provides recommendations to the Minister of Environment regarding aspects of planning, management and operations in the Park. Specifically, the Board is responsible for preparing management plans, annual operation plans, capital development budgets, issuance of Park Use Permits, fish and wildlife harvesting measures, and the tendering and awarding of contracts. The objectives and principles of the Management Agreement are now being used to guide the development of a Park Management Plan.

The planning process for the Park Management Plan was divided into three phases: Phase 1 included data gathering and conducting base-line research; Phase 2 consists of plan development and public consultation process; Phase 3 will address the implementation of the Management Plan.

During Phase 1, the Board actively sought funding to complete the broad range of research necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of the biophysical and cultural identity of the Park.

Detailed interviews with Tsleil-Waututh Nation Elders regarding their traditional uses of the Indian Arm area were completed. Archaeological investigations were undertaken in addition to terrestrial ecosystem mapping. The information collected in these research projects contributed to the development of a unique Bioregional Inventory Atlas designed to provide a visual summary of knowledge related to the Park. During this period minor upgrades to existing Park infrastructure were completed, with development of all major projects held in abeyance pending the completion of the Park Management Plan. In September 2006, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and BC Parks celebrated the completion of the Bioregional Inventory Atlas and the end of Phase 1.

The second stage of the planning process is currently focused on drafting the Park Management Plan document and developing a transparent public consultation process to enable major stakeholders and the public to participate in the final development of the plan. A coordinator was hired to assist the Board in the planning process, and to facilitate between the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, BC Parks, other stakeholders and the public in the drafting of the Plan. Open Houses were held to provide general information to stakeholders and the public about the park planning process. In the next phase, other First Nations in the area will be consulted by BC Parks staff in accordance with government regulations and policies of the Province of British Columbia. Comments from stakeholders, First Nations and public meetings will be reviewed and considered by the Board in this extensive draft plan revision process.



## Lessons Learned

Both parties have learned a great deal over the years of developing this relationship. Through the Park Management Planning process the Board has identified some important goals for the Park. These goals also reflect the lessons learned in the evolution of the collaborative partnership between the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Province.

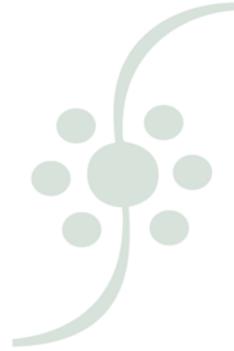
### *Goal 1: Collaborative Partnerships*

A truly collaborative relationship requires a high level of trust and communication. Building this trust takes considerable time and effort and must be earned through results. It requires letting go of some control and emerges gradually through incremental steps of working together.

It is the Board's goal to extend the collaborative management approach to many other agencies and jurisdictions that service the Park. There are opportunities in working cooperatively with other authorities and organizations. They each provide additional expertise and resources that can assist the Board in ensuring public safety, providing recreational activities, and protecting the natural and cultural resources of the Park. In short, the goals for the Park cannot be effectively achieved without the full cooperative support of these agencies and organizations.

### *Goal 2: Integrated Stewardship*

Integrated Stewardship consists of the combination of Tsleil-Waututh and BC Parks land management perspectives. It integrates BC Parks'



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## Heritage Park/Indian Arm Provincial Park





ecosystem-based management approach, which focuses on the interrelationships of ecosystem components for long-term large-scale planning, and Tsleil-Waututh's principles of bioregional planning and holism, which is based upon deep knowledge of the interactions between biophysical and cultural landscapes. The objectives and action plans for park management clearly reflect these central integrated stewardship values.

*Goal 3: Contemporary Cultural Expression*

An important outcome of the collaborative relationship is the opportunity for the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Province to highlight the significant and unique cultural heritage of the Park to all British Columbians. Tsleil-Waututh culture and traditions are an integral part of the long-term sustainable stewardship of the Park. In addition, the Plan identifies commercial opportunities which will enable the Tsleil Waututh Nation to be active participants in ecotourism and cultural tourism activities in the Park.

**Conclusions**

An adversarial start to the protection of the lands of the Park has been turned into one of the most proactive collaborative management agreements in British Columbia. The Parties continue to build their relationship with each other as they complete the Park Management Plan. They recognize that extending the collaborative approach to other agencies and jurisdictions will allow them to fully achieve the management objectives identified in the Park Management Plan, including the protection of natural and cultural resources of the Park.

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Camper's at Granite Falls campground, Photo copyright Tsleil Waututh Nation



Inlailawatash Estuary, Photo copyright Tsleil Waututh Nation

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