

HAIDA NATION

Located off the northwest coast of British Columbia, Haida Gwaii is a chain of rugged and remote islands that are the traditional home of the Haida Nation. It is one of Canada's most historically, culturally, and geographically unique areas. The Haida Enterprise Corporation (Haico) is the business entity of the Haida Nation. Its role is to manage and grow the business enterprises of the Haida Nation in order to develop a sustainable economy on Haida Gwaii. The two main goals of the enterprise are to strengthen the local economy and generate career opportunities for Haida citizens. The Council of the Haida Nation works with Parks Canada to manage Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve. Haida Tourism is a key component of Haico's portfolio, offering destination accommodations and a number of authentic Haida eco-cultural experiences to visitors - including some tours inside the national park.

Identifying a Heritage Site and Cooperatively Managing it

In 1981, SGang Gwaay was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and in 1985, the Council of the Haida Nation designated the land and sea of Gwaii Haanas, which included SGang Gwaay, as a Haida Heritage site. This was done to ensure that these traditional Haida lands would be preserved. In 1988, the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia committed to establish Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve. In 1993, the Council of the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada negotiated the Gwaii Haanas Agreement, a landmark cooperative management agreement for the new park. This agreement ensures that both western knowledge and Haida traditional knowledge inform management decisions for the park.

Cultural Sustainability and Authenticity

Tourism has helped to revitalize Haida culture and improve the lives of the Haida people. Here are a few of the ways Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and other tourism efforts have worked to improve cultural sustainability and authenticity.

- As part of the cooperative management agreement for the national park, a Community Development Fund was established to stimulate the economy of the island and “enhance understanding between the communities and cultures of the islands through the process of joint community economic planning and development” (Gwaii Trust Society 2009). The Gwaii Trust Society operates the fund, using funds to subsidize educational, cultural, and social programs in the community.
- Parks Canada has become one of the major employers on the island. More than 40 employees of the government department are Haida staff and more than \$2 million in salaries is brought into this Indigenous community annually. The [Haida Gwaii Watchmen](#) are a unique feature of this national park sharing their culture and their knowledge of the land and sea, their stories, songs, dances and traditional foods. They help to ensure visitors have an authentic Indigenous experience.
- Located near the historical village site of Kay Llnagaay, the [Haida Heritage Centre](#) is an award-winning cultural tourism attraction operated by the Skidegate Band Council on Haida Gwaii. It celebrates the living culture of the Haida people and helps to keep that culture alive by sharing and reaffirming Haida traditions and beliefs and encouraging artistic expression. There's a museum, a carving shed, and six poles to represent six of the southernmost villages on Haida Gwaii. Locals can take part in language and artisan classes offered at the Haida Heritage Centre. Both locals and visitors can enjoy artisan studio tours offered through the centre.

Youth Involvement/Succession Planning

Since the tourism operations are largely seasonal on Haida Gwaii, there are quite a few employment opportunities for students and young people. This provides an opportunity for them to have a job that allows them to learn more about Haida cultural history and take pride in sharing it with visitors. Youth stewardship programming is also supported in the community through Haida House at Tllaal, a resort property operated by Haida Tourism (HaiCo).

The Haida Gwaii Pledge

Visitors to Haida Gwaii are invited to review visitor orientation information before they arrive, sign the [Haida Gwaii Pledge](#), and contribute to the Haida Gwaii Stewardship Fund. This process allows for greater understanding and invites visitors to tread lightly respecting the history, culture, people, land and animals found in the traditional territory of the Haida Nation.

HAIDA HERITAGE CENTRE
MARY HELMER



Haida Gwaii Museum at Kaay Llnagaay
Saahlinda Naay – Saving Things House

In the beginning it was
both light and dark,
they say...

