



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 29, 2019**

## **CHN and Communities collaborate to get Community Forest tenure issued this year**

**Gaw Tlagee Massett, Haida Gwaii:** The Council of the Haida Nation and communities on Haida Gwaii have worked collaboratively for many years to manage a community forest based on shared principles of stewardship and community benefits. Leadership does not accept the current offer from the Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations, which requires a partnership with BC Timber Sales and does not maximize local control, jobs, sustainable management, access to timber for local sawmills, and revenues that the public wants to see invested in Haida Gwaii.

CHN and Community leadership intend to jointly meet with Minister Doug Donaldson and advise that the proposed 80,000 cubic metre AAC tenure should be offered to the CHN. A legal partnership between civic and Haida communities will manage the Community Forest for the benefit of all Haida Gwaii residents.

“The CHN’s position on the current community forest offer was formally rendered to the Minister last January 2018, expressing that the offer bears little resemblance to a viable community managed tenure, a result of years of the BC government neglecting consultation with the communities or the CHN on its development”. Nang Kaadlljuus *President of the Haida Nation Gaagwiis Jason Alsop.*

“The CHN is keen to move from a commitment to an allocation of volume in 2019. We want the community forest to ensure all communities of Haida Gwaii benefit from investment through sustainable forest management. This initiative, formalized through a partnership between the civic governments and CHN, can learn from and build upon the successes of many other reconciliatory partnerships between municipalities and First Nations managing community forests throughout BC.” Nang Kaadlljuus Sding *Vice President of the Haida Nation Ginn wadluu un uula isdaa ayaagang Trevor Russ.*

“Our communities trust and prefer a corporate relationship and co-management of the Haida Gwaii Community Forest with the CHN, over the current requirement by the Ministry of Forests to partner with BC Timber Sales. We work together well and are confident that this partnership will benefit all residents of Haida Gwaii and showcase sustainable ecosystem-based forest management.” Doug Daugert, Chair, Misty Isles Economic Development Society

“Haida Gwaii has been waiting 23 years for a community forest, since NDP Minister of Forests David Zirnhelt signed an MOU committing to an 81,000 m<sup>3</sup> AAC Community Forest in 1996. This partnership will meet with government and make a community



forest for the people of Haida Gwaii a reality this year.” Barry Pages, Chair, North Coast Regional District and Mayor of Masset.

“This is another example of the Protocol Agreement working for the benefit of all communities on Haida Gwaii. Following last year’s elections we have been renewing our efforts to meet regularly and to leverage the strength of working together. A community forest for Haida Gwaii is a key priority.” Evan Putterill, North Coast Regional District Area ‘E’ Director.

**About the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN):** CHN is the Haida national government. Rooted in the power of hereditary law, CHN acts at the direction of Haida citizens as they vote through direct democracy. CHN’s primary purpose is to uphold Haida Title and rights. Haida hold Title to Haida Gwaii.

**About Misty Isles Economic Development Society (MIEDS):** MIEDS is an economic development society governed by the civic communities and North Coast Regional District electoral directors from Haida Gwaii. The Society promotes locally owned businesses, destination marketing, and the Haida Gwaii Community Forest as well as writes grants to build the economy, assets, and quality of life on Haida Gwaii.

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