



TLA-O-QUI-AHT TRIBAL PARKS ANNUAL REPORT 2019



TRIBAL PARKS: DRIVING CLAYOQUOT SOUND'S CONSERVATION ECONOMY SINCE 1984



TLA-O-QUI-AHT
FIRST NATION

**Cover photo: Ocean Shine*



Photo by Emilee Gilpin, National Observer

Message from the Director:

When European explorers and traders first visited our shores, they found a densely populated, ecologically abundant, and culturally vibrant society thriving along this coast. Tla-o-qui-aht and other Nuu-chah-nulth peoples maintained strict protocols with other species who share our home, and over generations played a key role in building the natural capital of the landscape. Over millennia, Beach Keepers, Stream-keepers, foresters, and fishers plied their skills, shaping rivers, feeding forests, and delivering abundance through myriad cultural practices.

Since those times, our people have been through great hardship and change. Knowledge has been lost and sacred protocols have not been observed. Our people continue to struggle with the impacts of colonialism. Thanks to our elders and the territory itself, much of which remains intact, we have not forgotten who we are as a people. 35 years ago, our Tla-o-qui-aht leaders – with the support of many Allies – declared the first Tribal Park, seeking to reclaim our collective inheritance: an ecosystem as rich as the memories of our grandmothers, and a culture as rich as the dreams of our grandsons. With the launch of the Tribal Parks Allies Certification Standard, 2019 marked the beginning of a transformation for our people and for all who call the Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks home.

The following report details some of the milestones Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks crossed this year, including the acquisition of a Tribal Parks marine vessel, which will enable our Guardians to conduct important monitoring activities in our waters and remote coastlines. Our trial year for the Tribal Parks Allies Certification Standard was a great success. So far this year, thanks to the contributions of 27 newly certified Tribal Parks Allies, we have raised \$55,088 towards the stewardship of the Ha’hulthii. Read on to learn about the steps our Nation is taking to achieve our vision of a homeland as rich as the stories that shaped us. Thank you for your support!

Tleko tleko,

Saya Masso

Tla-o-qui-aht Natural Resources Director



Tribal Parks Allies Logo designed by Cory Charlie. Adapted from Joe David's design of the original Tla-o-qui-aht Logo

Introduction:

Welcome! This is our second annual Tribal Parks Report. As the Tla-o-qui-aht Guardians Stewardship program grows and our Nation works to achieve its Ha’hulthii (~Unceded Traditional Territory) Vision, this Annual Report represents a milestone to help us evaluate, share, and celebrate our progress.

As the municipality of Tofino and its tourism economy in the heart of our Tribal Parks continues to grow, new pressures and demands are exerted on our ecosystems and ways of life. Increased water consumption, sewage, recreation in the hinterlands, and development of the territory necessitate new

infrastructure, monitoring, mitigation, and restoration for our Tribal Parks Guardians and our partners to administer.

The 2018 Report articulated the initiatives the Tribal Parks Department has been engaging with since the 2008 and 2014 declarations of Ha'uukmin, Tranquil, and Esowista Tribal Parks (in addition to Wanachus/Hulthuis, established in 1984).

This report details progress made in these initiatives in 2019, and reports how money invested into our Tribal Parks was spent this year to advance our Ha'hulthii Vision. In 2019, much of the costs of running the Tribal Parks Program, including Tribal Parks Allies, were paid for by grants and one-time subsidies as well as Tribal Parks Allies' Ecosystem Service Fees. As the Allies initiative grows, we plan to fully fund our programs with Tribal Parks Allies revenues.

Here in Tofino, the tourism economy depends on healthy forests, fisheries, oceans, and communities. According to the 2018 Tourism Tofino Report, the direct economic output of tourism in Tofino is \$230 million per year. While Tofino businesses have benefitted from the conservation of Clayoquot Sound, the First Nation has borne both (1) the opportunity cost of not exploiting "natural resources" in their homeland, and (2) the direct cost of paying rent fees to retain Tree Farm Licences for the last three decades. Since assuming control of Tree Farm Licences in Clayoquot Sound, the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation has spent millions of dollars to protect the old-growth forests tourists travel here to witness. To date, businesses have not contributed to this cost of doing business in Clayoquot Sound. The Tribal Parks Allies Certification Standard provides an opportunity for businesses to contribute a fair proportion of their earnings towards the stewardship and restoration of the Ha'hulthii.

The Nuu-chah-nulth principle of *Heshuk-ish Tsawalk* (~everything is connected) encapsulates what distinguishes Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks and other Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) from National or Provincial Parks. We believe that you cannot service healthy ecosystems without maintaining healthy communities. We are excited to release our new capital plan, which envisions how Tribal Parks Allies will support priorities determined in our First Nation's Comprehensive Community Plan. Please read on to learn more about our vision for a more socially and ecologically equitable Clayoquot Sound!

Tribal Parks Guardians in Action:

Here is a snapshot of some of our achievements since we released our 2018 Tribal Parks Report. We have accomplished a lot this year, and expect that things will only keep accelerating in the following years as our programs become better funded and our Tribal Parks become increasingly recognized.

Programs: We have expanded our Guardians Program, establishing a stronger presence on the water, backroads, and around town. We launched a marine monitoring initiative this summer, and started working with partners to develop capacity and programming in the future. Meanwhile, on land

our Guardians continue to monitor and clean backroads and beaches, expand and maintain trails and signage, restore damaged waterways and habitats, and provide Archaeological and Environmental Monitoring to crews on the ʔapsčiiik ʔašii connector trail between Tofino and Ucluelet. Land Vision Coordinator Gisele Martin has worked extensively to consult elders and community members, developing GIS maps that reflect our vision.



Clockwise from top left: Draft Ha'hulthii Vision Map (Gisele Martin), Beach Clean with Clayoquot Cleanup (Josh Temple), Guardians' Canoe (Ocean Shine), Guardians and Surfrider Collaborate on Beach Clean Signage (Julian Hockin-Grant)

Acquisitions: The Tribal Parks Guardians Truck, which was purchased last year, has had Tribal Parks logos affixed to the exterior. It can now be seen around town and throughout the Tribal Parks, establishing a stronger Guardians presence. We also purchased a marine vessel with support from a Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation subsidized loan, which is currently being refurbished and will be in the water this winter. These new acquisitions are critical for our Guardians to access remote areas, collect data for long-term monitoring initiatives, and maintain a presence throughout our Tribal Parks.



Tribal Parks Truck and Marine Vessel (Terry Dorward)

Employment: Each summer, we hire several Junior Guardians to help us meet our stewardship targets. The Guardians Program provides young Tla-o-qui-aht members with valuable training and skills as well as experience serving their Nation and providing for their families. We were happy to welcome three new Guardians to our team this year: Colin Thomas, Alex Frank, and Patrick Tom. In 2019, we hired 12 part-time Guardians to assist our three full-time managers with fisheries management, salmon enhancement, and other Tribal Parks tasks.

	Managers	Guardians
Fisheries Management	1	2
Salmon Enhancement	1	4
Tribal Parks	1	6



Junior Guardians conducting dune-grass remediation (Parks Canada)

Revenue Streams: The beautiful land- and water-scapes visitors travel to Tofino to experience are serviced by Tribal Parks at significant cost to the First Nation. During the 1984 legal proceedings to protect Meares Island from logging, the Tla-o-qui-aht Nation expended over \$5 million in legal fees and other costs, a huge burden to our communities. After gaining control of Tree Farm Licences 54 and 57, Tla-o-qui-aht and other Nuu-chah-nulth Nations have paid \$400,000/year for over 30 years in rent to the Province to prevent other logging companies from destroying our forests. The Tla-o-qui-aht Nation has

had to divert funds intended to service our communities to service these debts and pay the cost of conservation. As a result, Clayoquot Sound boasts the largest intact tracts of old-growth coastal rainforest on Vancouver Island, attracting millions of visitors every year and fueling a thriving tourism economy – but our communities remain underserved and our people continue to struggle with poverty.

Since the declaration of Wanachus/Hilthuis in 1984, we have worked to have Canada and the Province recognize our Tribal Parks as protected areas, not Tree Farms. At this time, the majority of Clayoquot Sound’s Old-Growth remains unprotected by the Provincial or Federal Governments. To secure the long-term protection of our Tribal Parks, we need the tourism economy to support our stewardship efforts.

To date, our Guardians program has been underfunded. We depend on precarious, inconsistent funding streams from grants and subsidies which cannot be depended on from one year to the next. Our existing program is not able to effectively address the stewardship needs on the Ha’hulthii without scaling up our funding. With the support of our Allies, we intend to establish a reliable, consistent grass-roots funding stream to support a strong stewardship program capable of meeting the needs of Vancouver Island’s largest contiguous old-growth rainforest ecosystem and providing equity to its residents.

Year-to-date Tribal Parks Credits & Debits

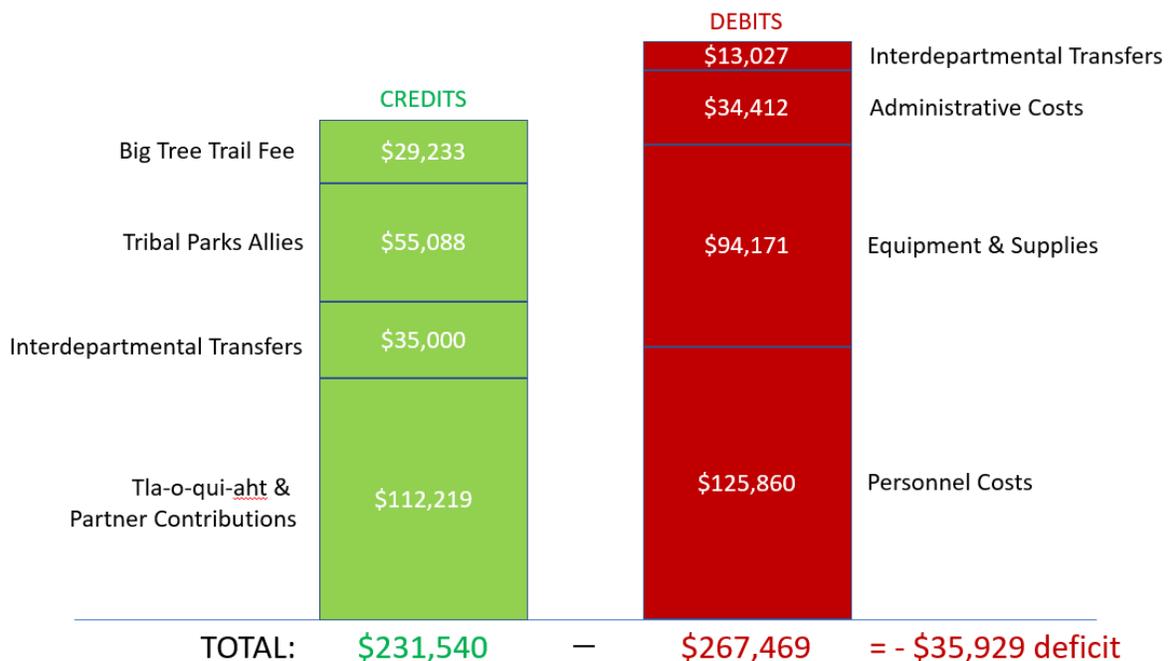


Table 1: Tribal Parks credits and debits (October 31st, 2019). While supported by Tribal Parks Allies and Trail Fees, our department runs at a deficit, relying on precarious funding streams like one-time grants.

Investing in Ha'hulthii:

In our initial year of engaging businesses in the Tribal Parks Allies Certification Standard and collecting an Ecosystem Service Fee, we raised \$88,321 through the contributions of Tribal Parks Allies and Big Tree Trail Fees. With over 450 businesses operating within the Tribal Parks, and with a tourism economy worth \$230,000,000/year in direct revenues, we anticipate a steady growth year-over-year of our Ecosystem Service Fee revenues, potentially reaching up to \$2,300,000/year. With no certain way to anticipate the amount we will raise in any given year, we have developed a graduated investment model to demonstrate how we intend to invest our Ecosystem Service Fees back into the region and our communities. This “Graduated Capital Plan” was developed based off of the Tla-o-qui-aht Comprehensive Community Plan, which consulted our membership to determine investment priorities. The Comprehensive Community plan has been approved by Tla-o-qui-aht Chief and Council, and Tla-o-qui-aht Membership have voted in support of utilizing an Ecosystem Service Fee to fund the categories described in *Figure 2* (below). We believe that we cannot protect and heal our land and water without protecting and healing our communities. As long as our people remain vulnerable, our homeland is vulnerable to ecological degradation.

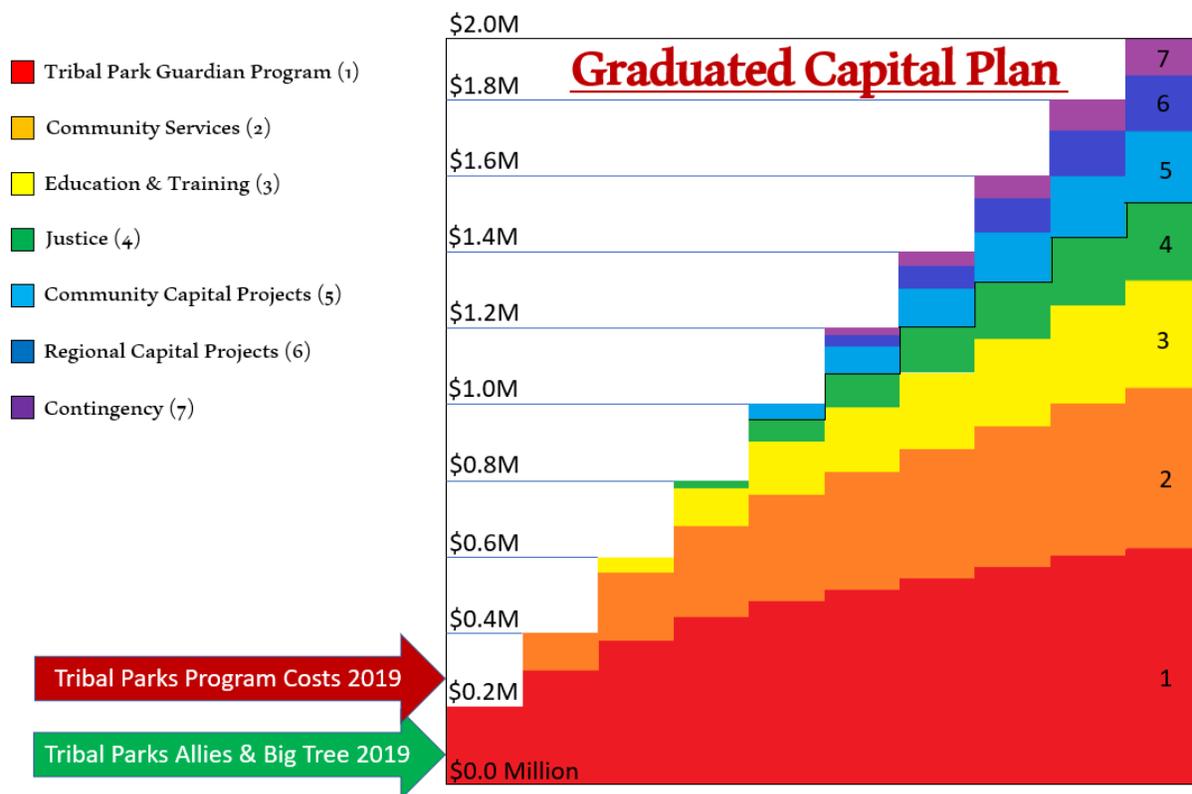


Figure 2: Graduated Capital Plan depicting how revenues generated through Tribal Parks Allies will be invested holistically in our Tribal Parks.

Capital Plan Categories:

- 1) **Tribal Parks Guardian Program:** Revenues allocated here will pay the wages of Tribal Parks Guardians, contracts, operating costs, restoration, fishery enhancement, and Tribal Parks infrastructure development (eg. equipment capital costs).
- 2) **Community Services:** By all social determinants of health indicators (egs. prevalence of diabetes, tuberculosis, alcoholism, infant mortality, suicide), Indigenous people rank at the bottom of Canadian statistical data. As long as our communities remain underserved and unhealthy, our vision of a healthy homeland will not be achieved. Revenues allocated here will support medical service programs and social program delivery for our membership.
- 3) **Education & Training:** Revenues allocated here will support our membership as they strive to achieve the education and training of their choice. Historically, Indigenous people have been alienated from higher education, reinforcing cycles of poverty and marginalization. We also wish to better fund Tla-o-qui-aht language instruction for all ages in our communities.
- 4) **Justice:** Our Comprehensive Community Plan has identified the establishment of a Justice Committee to keep our membership safe as a priority. These revenues will enable us to establish outreach mechanisms capable of providing emergency services, safety, and security to our membership. Healing circles and restorative justice will also be funded.
- 5) **Community Capital Projects:** Revenues allocated here will support the planning and ultimately the construction of capital projects like a gymnasium, youth centres, and a long house in our communities.
- 6) **Regional Capital Projects:** Revenues allocated here will support infrastructure which will be shared with our regional neighbors. Examples include continuing to provide and maintain water infrastructure, supporting sewage treatment in Tofino, developing and servicing additional trail networks, and contributing to beautification and tourism experiences in Tofino and the Tribal Parks.
- 7) **Contingency:** West Coast Communities should always be prepared for the unexpected. Revenues allocated here will be compounded to support our communities and programs should a natural disaster or unanticipated financial duress occur.



Original Artwork: Joe David.

Photo Credit: Jeh Custerra