



Forest Enhancement
Society of British Columbia

Forestry Project on Haida Gwaii Incorporates Haida Culture While Treating the Land

Press Release | April 29, 2019

HAIDA GWAII, B.C.: In the West Coast Region in the Haida Gwaii District, Taan Forest, an enterprise established by HaiCo in 2010 to manage forests incorporating Haida values, is working on a forest rehabilitation project funded by the Forest Enhancement Society of B.C. (FESBC). The project, valued at \$344,000, is locally supported to achieve long term restoration objectives in areas within the Yakoun River drainage. One of Taan Forest's goals is to have a permanent silviculture crew on Haida Gwaii comprised of members of the Haida Nation. The project is also assisting the crew to focus on restoring wildlife habitat for salmon, black bear, and raptors while at the same time creating economic benefits of employment and enhanced value of forest products such as Western Red Cedar.

"The overall plan for this project is multi-year," said Jeff Mosher, Planning Manager for Taan Forest. "This funding allows us to move forward with treatments to the land, which incorporates Haida culture and will benefit many species like the black bear. By accelerating the transition of young trees, through thinning and fertilization, to become forests with more old growth characteristics and values, we will improve black bear habitat. The project will also restore forests within the river valley with benefits to salmon and other fish and many spin-off benefits to goshawk, eagles, saw whet owls, bats and many other resident and migratory birds. With FESBC funding the planning, overstory removal, fertilization, and thinning, it's an exceptional collaboration with what we hope will provide some outstanding results."

The Taan black bear is culturally and spiritually significant to the Haida. The bear generally utilizes cedar trees, stumps, logs, or holes in the ground to create denning and to forage rotten logs and stumps for food. Throughout the young stands identified for spacing treatments, there is very little black bear activity due to the density of trees. The riparian work and spacing will create new access for the black bear and fertilization will increase growth and shorten time frames for the area to have trees and logs that can be utilized by the black bear for denning sites.

FESBC Operations Manager, Dave Conly, appreciates the thoughtful work of Taan Forest with Haida Nation members performing spacing work of important forested areas.

"This opportunity, given the previous Taan Forest investments in planning, has created a great opportunity to leverage FESBC funding to achieve fabulous forest enhancement objectives," said Conly. "The spacing activities performed by the Haida forest workers are part of a more comprehensive enhancement project, including work to promote culturally and economically important cedar trees. We are pleased to support a project that fulfils several of our Society's purposes, wildlife habitat enhancement, and opportunities to improve forests with the Haida Nation members doing that important work."

Within Taan tenures, 28,190 hectares of Timber Harvest Land Base falls within potentially valuable goshawk habitat, much of it being young second growth stands. Silviculture practices, to enhance growth, habitat, and mimic mature or old growth attributes, will benefit goshawks, which prefer to hunt in mature stands on Haida Gwaii.

"One of our objectives for wildlife enhancement of the riparian areas is also to reduce the time it takes to create preferred foraging stands for goshawk," said Mosher.



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Reducing the number of trees per hectare down to what is typical of a mature stand will allow for more light to reach the forest floor for shrub and berry growth, which is a benefit not only for goshawk prey forage, but for the benefits of other wildlife, too.

“We are grateful to the team at FESBC for funding our project and working in close collaboration with us,” said Mosher. “We appreciate that the project will bring many benefits to the Haida Nation: employment, environmental stewardship, wildlife enhancement, stand rehabilitation, and the positive outcomes for the future of the land and the people.”

For More Information:

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ABOUT TAAN FOREST: The Haida Nation saw the necessity to have a direct voice and management authority in managing the forest practices on Xaayda Gwaay.yaay Haida Gwaii. Shortly after HaiCo was incorporated in 2009, Taan Forest was born in 2010 as an enterprise through which the stewardship of these forests could be managed with Haida values. Taan Forest is 100% Haida owned.