

Gwa'ni Project Engagement Report:
WHAT WE HEARD



2024

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Acknowledgements

This report was made possible by the generosity of spirit and leadership of the Gwa'ni Project Team, including elected Chief Councilor Victor Isaac and former elected Chief Councilor Don Svanvik from 'Namgis First Nation, Minister of Forests Bruce Ralston, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship Nathan Cullen, former Minister of Forests Katrine Conroy, and all team members who have supported the project throughout each phase of work thus far.

Established under the Memorandum of Understanding for Modernized Land Use Planning, the Gwa'ni Project Team is a small government-to-government group with representation from both 'Namgis First Nation and the Government of British Columbia. Their dedication to building strong relationships has proven key to the progress of the Gwa'ni Project, including during the development of consensus recommendations.

Gwa'nalalis Story

When the Transformer (or Creator), Kaniki'lakw, travelled around the world, he was eventually returned to the place where Gwa'nalalis lived. In an earlier encounter, the Transformer had beaten Gwa'nalalis, who was ready for his return. Kaniki'lakw asked, "Would you like to become a cedar tree?"

Gwa'nalalis replied, "No, Cedar trees, when struck by lightning, split and fall. Then they rot away for as long as the days dawn in the world."

Kaniki'lakw asked again, "Would you like to become mountain?"

"No", Gwa'nalalis answered, "For mountains have slides and crumble away for as long as the days dawn in the world."

The Transformer asked a third question. "Would you like to become a large boulder?"

Again, Gwa'nalalis answered, "No. Do not let me become a boulder, for I may crack in half and crumble away as long as the days dawn in the world."

Finally, Kaniki'lakw asked, "Would you like to become a river?"

"Yes, let me become a river that I may flow for as long as the days shall dawn in the world,"

Gwa'nalalis replied. Putting his hand on Gwa'nalalis' forehead and pushing him down prone, Kaniki'lakw said, "There, friend, you will be a river and many kinds of salmon will come to you to provide food for your descendants for as long as the days shall dawn in the world."

And so, the man Gwa'nalalis became the river, Gwa'ni.

Executive Summary

In January 2021, 'Namgis First Nation and the BC government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Modernized Land Use Planning to officially form a partnership to develop a modernized land use plan for the majority of the Nimpkish Valley – a process known as the Gwa'ni Project. The Gwa'ni Project aims to evaluate the existing Vancouver Island Land Use Plan (VILUP) through engagement with local rightsholders and stakeholders who can provide direction for the modernization of the VILUP. The Gwa'ni Project engagement strategy and activities have been vital to ensuring that local communities and stakeholders have confidence in – and feel their interests and perspectives are reflected by – a modernized land use plan. Through this engagement, the Gwa'ni Project aims to introduce stakeholders to the project and share information about land use planning, address questions and concerns about the project, receive feedback on land use planning values, and form strong relationships with local First Nations, governments, industry, and the public.

This 2024 Engagement Report is an updated version of the reports that were published in 2022 and 2023, and includes information about the Gwa'ni Project engagement events, activities, and results from Spring 2022 until Spring 2024.

A fulsome analysis of engagement results is found within this report, and key engagement results from the entire project can be summarized into the following themes:

BALANCE

All those engaged in the Gwa'ni Project emphasized the need for balance among all the land use planning values. Calls for balance in economic and ecological considerations have been emphasized by representatives of local government, local small business owners, recreation users and people who work in forestry.

Engagement results clearly indicated that in an ideal modernized land use plan, all project values would be considered, and balancing the values should be an objective of the overall land use planning process. Striking this balance should be done to address the interests of all rightsholders and stakeholders in the Nimpkish Valley.

LOCAL INPUT

Stakeholders emphasized the need to focus on ensuring

local input is at the forefront of planning and execution of the project. Throughout the project, it was clearly identified that a land use planning process should include – and prioritize – local perspectives. Focus should be placed on building relationships and partnerships to best serve the people who live and work in the planning area. Local residents felt that local input should be weighed more heavily than input from anyone who lives outside of the North Island, and this feedback informed the Gwa'ni Project Team's planning and execution of engagement and modernized land use planning throughout the project's life cycle. Stakeholders appreciated that the Project and its planning concepts would be made in the North Island, with active involvement from the voices of North Island communities, stakeholders and governments.

PREDICTABILITY IN THE FOREST SECTOR

The importance of maintaining a sustainable but productive land base for forestry activity is a priority for stakeholders. When discussing the importance of forestry to the economy and livelihoods of North Island residents, concepts of sustainability, stability, and certainty were consistently emphasized to ensure that forestry would sustain viable employment while also providing balance across land use planning values.

Sustaining a productive forestry industry is vital for securing long-term investment in the region, maintaining certainty for companies' existing investments, and providing opportunities for future investment. This certainty is important not only for those who work in forestry, but also for the communities of people who live, work and recreate in the North Island.

'NAMGIS FOREST VALUES

The forest values held by 'Namgis First Nation are recognized as a high priority across multiple stakeholder groups. This represents acknowledgement of the need to prioritize the rights and interests of 'Namgis. It is important for the Gwa'ni Project to address 'Namgis forest values and ensure they are respected as a demonstration of the province's commitment to partnership building and reconciliation in the Nimpkish Valley.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

The Technical Committee worked to provide thorough and useful information about the Gwa'ni Project to ensure engagement participants felt comfortable discussing

the technical aspects of land use planning, and land use planning more generally. Through multiple engagement events, stakeholders were invited to share their perspectives.

Transparent communication is vital to ensure that audiences clearly understand what the Gwa'ni Project is and what it is not. Communications tactics were designed to clarify any concerns that were expressed, and to correct misinformation about land use activities in the Nimpkish Valley. Ongoing communication about the Gwa'ni Project continues to focus on sharing transparent information as a means of building strong relationships, trust, and understanding about the project.

CONFIRMATION AND ADDITION OF GWA'NI PROJECT PLANNING VALUES

Stakeholders confirmed that the 15 original Gwa'ni Project planning values were accurately reflective of the values of people who are connected to the Nimpkish Valley. In addition to these, two new values were added: cedar (wilkw) and climate resilience & carbon. These were included as two additional values held by 'Namgis members and stakeholders with interests in land use planning in the Nimpkish Valley.

It was important to confirm that these values accurately represent the priorities and key concerns of people who live, work, and visit the Nimpkish Valley. The planning values are foundational to the Gwa'ni Project, and they have been used as tools for engagement and communication shared with local stakeholders. The project is moving forward in a way that ensures these values will be considered in a holistic way as the project team develops strategic land use recommendations.

Introduction

THE GWA'NI PROJECT

"Gwa'ni" is what the 'Namgis named the river currently known as the Nimpkish River (Nimpkish is an anglicized term referring to 'Namgis). The name honours Gwa'nalalis, who became the river, and this land use planning project is called Gwa'ni to recognize that, for millennia, 'Namgis people have been living on the lands and waters in the planning area.

The project is a demonstration of the shared commitment between 'Namgis First Nation Government and the Government of BC to collaborate on land use planning and natural resource management in a manner that is informed by the principles set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

The Gwa'ni Project seeks to evaluate the existing Vancouver Island Land Use Plan (VILUP) current management and processes in order to provide more effective management direction for the resource values within the project area. The 2021 MOU directs the Gwa'ni Project Team to develop and share consensus recommendations about how resources and lands within the Nimpkish Valley should be managed for future generations, and the Project Team will be developing these recommendations for consideration by the 'Namgis First Nation and BC governments. The final land use plan will cover lands, rivers, lakes, and forests from the mouth of the Nimpkish River to the Vernon Lake watershed, and it will guide land use within the planning area.

The Gwa'ni Project is not a Treaty or Land Claims Agreement process however, it is an important step in advancing reconciliation, the province's work of implementing UNDRIP, and ensuring that natural resource planning in BC is aligned with the principles and intent of Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA). It is a government-to-government partnership with the purpose of achieving the objectives set out in the 2021 MOU, while also incorporating collaboration with local government and soliciting input from communities, stakeholders and the public. The Gwa'ni Project is not a new land use plan. However, the Gwa'ni Project Technical Committee may make consensus recommendations regarding amendments to the VILUP and/or other legislative, administrative or management options. These amendments would implement the province's values and interests in addition to 'Namgis' values and interests related to Aboriginal Title and Rights within the Nimpkish Valley.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Collaboration with 'Namgis, BC, local governments and stakeholders is crucial to the success of each phase of the Gwa'ni Project. This Engagement Report is intended to provide stakeholders with a summary of the project and an analysis of results from the phases of community engagement that took place throughout the project, from 2021 to 2024.

MODERNIZED LAND USE PLANNING

The key elements of modernized land use planning are:

- **Reconciliation** with Indigenous governments and the Crown's commitment to the inclusive and robust implementation of UNDRIP.
- **Community and stakeholder engagement** as key to ensuring that communities and stakeholders are engaged in land and resource planning in a way that acknowledges and respects their rights.
- **A strong and stable economy** as a goal of the BC government, Indigenous governments, and industry partners. The engagement portion of the modernized land use planning process facilitates relationship building and identifies solutions needed to advance economic opportunities for rural communities that will create lasting economic benefits for all.
- **Consideration of climate change** and the role it plays in understanding cumulative effects that affect the land base, including species-at-risk management, wildfires, flooding, and drought.

GWA'NI PROJECT VALUES

The Gwa'ni Project began with 15 foundational values, held by both 'Namgis and BC. Identifying these values was one of the first steps taken in this project and they are being used to inform its work; guiding what can happen on lands, rivers, lakes, watersheds, and forests in the planning area.

In 2022-2023, two new land use planning values – cedar (wilkw) and climate resilience and carbon – were added based on the feedback gathered through project engagement, particularly engagement with 'Namgis First Nation. Along with the original planning values, these two new values have guided project planning and the development of the Consensus Recommendations.

The updated list of Gwa'ni Project land use planning values are:

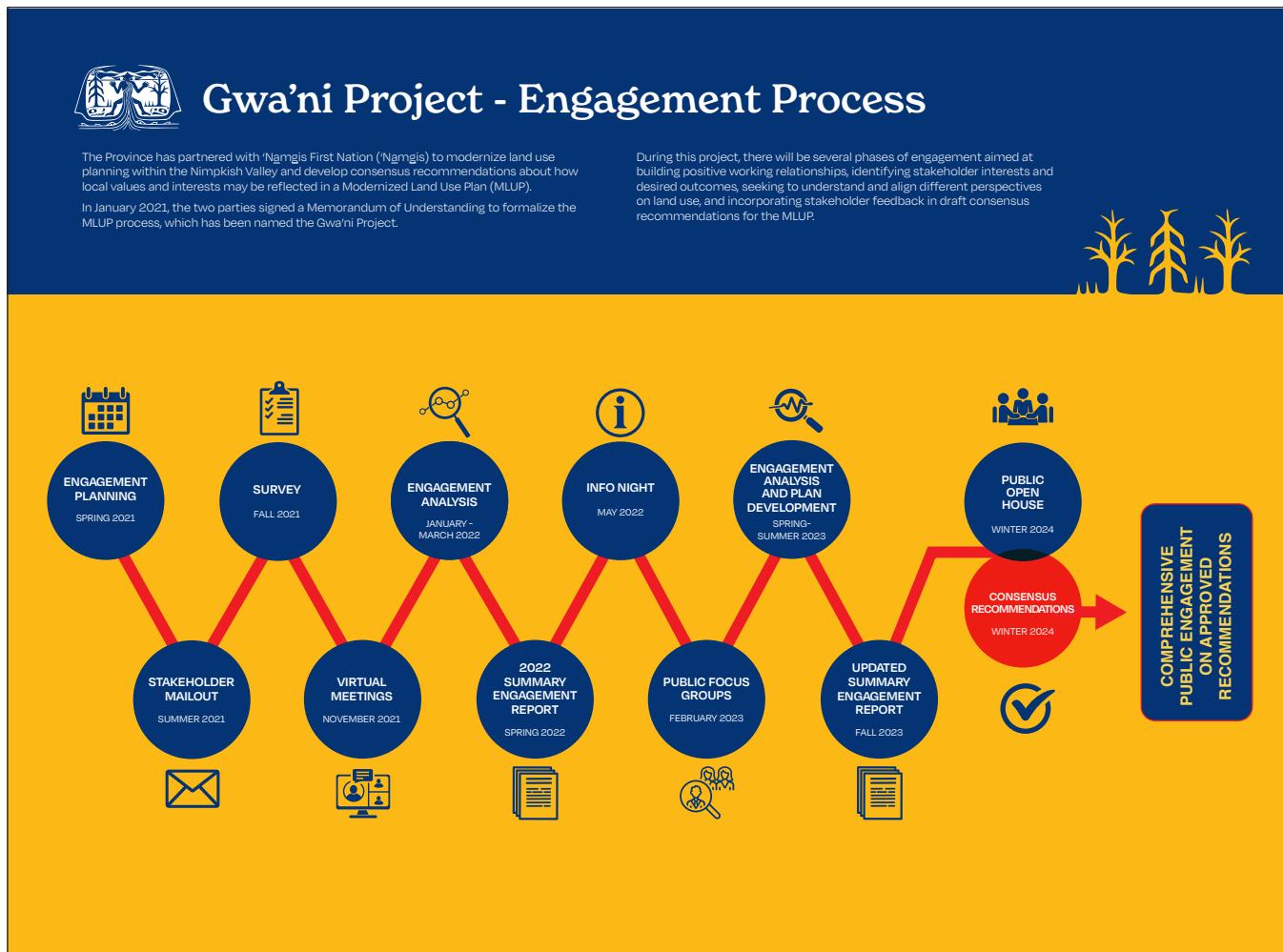


GWA'NI PROJECT TEAM

Established under the 2021 Memorandum of Understanding for Modernized Land Use Planning, the Gwa'ni Project Team is a small government-to-government group with three levels: the Technical Committee, the Steering Committee, and the Executive Committee. At each level of the Project Team, there is representation from both 'Namgis First Nation and the BC Government as a demonstration of the shared approach being taken to manage natural resources in the Gwa'ni Project area (see Appendix A for a complete list of the Gwa'ni Project Team members). Since the project's inception, the Project Team has undertaken multiple phases of work, including:

- Identifying gaps in the information and resources that are required to plan for the Gwa'ni Project and completing appropriate studies to fill those gaps;
- Assessing current conditions and management directions;
- Developing, analyzing, and evaluating the impacts and benefits of different land use management options; and
- Developing and evaluating a set of Consensus Recommendations intended to achieve a shared land use planning vision.

The process diagram shown below illustrates the phases of public engagement of the Gwa'ni Project.



SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEEA)

As part of the Gwa'ni Project process, the Technical Committee worked with a contractor to develop a socio-economic and environmental assessment (SEEA) for the project area. The objective of the SEEA is to quantify the social, environmental, and economic impacts associated with the recommended land use changes that are being proposed by the Gwa'ni Project. The SEEA covers the existing socio-economic and environmental status of the project area and uses it as a point of comparison to the alternative planning scenario. The goal of the SEEA is to capture how the proposed land use changes will impact the project area, should these changes be implemented.

There are three key steps to the SEEA:

1. **Base case:** The base case scenario is a prediction from the baseline conditions that currently exist in the plan area. It involves researching background information, engaging with affected communities, and identifying key values to develop a base case.
2. **Management scenario:** Alternative management scenarios are then developed to reflect a desired future state relevant to the land use plan. The quality and results of engagement are very important to the development of these management scenarios because they are used to highlight key issues, concerns, and interests associated with the plan area. These are then used in developing alternative scenarios or proposed changes to land use and management practices within the plan area.
3. **Assessment:** The socio-economic and environmental changes in land use from the alternate management scenarios are weighed against the base case. This step identifies the effects that each of the alternate management scenarios could have.

The Technical Committee has reviewed the draft SEEA and is working towards finalization to help inform the Plan Evaluation and Approval phase of the project .

Engagement Methodology

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

At the outset of the Gwa'ni Project, the Project Team contracted the Castlemain Group as engagement specialists to provide recommendations and guide the project's public engagement. In early 2021, the team collaborated to create the Gwa'ni Project Engagement Plan that established an approach and seven guiding principles for stakeholder engagement: representation, transparency, accessibility, verity, timeliness, neutrality, and respect. The Engagement Plan provided an important foundation for the planning and execution of all phases of engagement, and ensured a credible and impartial engagement process that stakeholders would have confidence in. The Engagement Plan is posted on the engagement website.

The Engagement Plan established the following communication and engagement objectives for the Gwa'ni Project:

- To engage with identified stakeholders throughout the planning process, with specific engagement and comment periods taking place at milestone stages;
- To share information broadly, address concerns and questions of identified stakeholders and the public;
- To receive input from identified stakeholders on land use planning values and what is most important about those values to inform consensus recommendations;
- To communicate the government-to-government nature of the Gwa'ni Project, and how it supports the parties' goals to advance reconciliation; and
- To build and maintain a good working relationship with local governments, industry, other stakeholders, and the public.

The engagement plan also supported the Project Team in deciding how to identify and connect with the key stakeholder groups as well as the individuals within each group. Local communities, local governments, industry, the public, and other stakeholder groups were identified as targets for engagement based on their social, economic,

cultural, and environmental interests. Stakeholders were initially organized by their expected interest in the project, level of influence over the project and the extent to which the Project Team would require direct, values-specific feedback to develop consensus recommendations.

Ultimately, stakeholders were organized into the following groups:

- Local government
- Local business
- Tourism and recreation groups
- Forestry tenure holders
- Public advisory groups

The Engagement Plan was updated in 2022 and again in 2023 to ensure engagement tactics were aligned with the results of the iterative feedback collected throughout engagement, and to reflect the progress being made by the Technical Committee in their development of consensus recommendations.

While the Technical Committee was engaging with these stakeholder groups, 'Namgis First Nation led separate engagements related to the Gwa'ni Project with its members. The engagement events and activities led by the province and 'Namgis First Nation took place concurrently, and feedback from both sets of engagements have informed the Technical Committee's consensus recommendations.

GWA'NI PROJECT ENGAGEMENT WEBSITE

The BC government has an [online central hub](#) where the public may go to access information on all active land use planning projects in the province. This site allows users to find related project information and documents, respond to surveys, read reports and analyses, and submit feedback to the project teams of active land use planning projects.

The Gwa'ni Project website was set up and launched in March 2021 as an online home for all project information and updates including a map of the planning area, an overview of the modernized land use planning process, project FAQs, a project brochure, and contact information for the Project Team. The website was updated regularly as the project progressed through each of its phases of planning, initiation, plan development, implementation and evaluation. This Engagement Report will also be shared publicly and on the Gwa'ni Project website to ensure adherence to the guiding principles of engagement as set out in the Engagement Plan.

NOTIFICATION OF PROJECT

Over 200 letters were sent to stakeholders and interest groups in Spring 2021, announcing the project.

Postcards were mailed out to the same stakeholders and interest groups in Autumn 2021. The postcards provided information about upcoming opportunities that stakeholders and members of the public would have to engage with the project and where they could find additional information about the work being done. The postcards also included an invitation to complete the public Gwa'ni Project survey and provided an email address for people to ask questions or request information about the project.

2021 PUBLIC SURVEY

The online public Gwa'ni Project survey was launched on October 27, 2021 and closed on December 31, 2021. The survey was open to the public and was created to elicit feedback from a broad audience of stakeholders with the following key objectives:

- To gather information on the relative importance of the Gwa'ni Project values to stakeholders;
- To understand how the Nimpkish Valley is currently being used by the public;
- To understand stakeholders' priorities when it comes to the Nimpkish Valley;
- To get a sense of how public stakeholders would like to be engaged and informed about the Gwa'ni Project; and
- To collect input to inform the modernized land use planning process.

The survey was posted on the Gwa'ni Project website and advertised on the North Island Gazette website over the course of two months. The link to the survey was also shared in the five virtual stakeholder meetings that took place in late November and early December 2021. The survey contained 16 questions including demographic questions, multiple choice questions, rating questions, and open-ended questions. A full summary and cross-tabulation analysis of survey results is provided later in this report and a list of survey questions can be found in Appendix B.

2021 VIRTUAL STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The Gwa'ni Project Team initially planned to hold an in-person open house as a means of connecting with stakeholders and building relationships, however the COVID-19 pandemic and related public health restrictions prevented any in-person engagements from taking place. At the end of November and beginning of December 2021, five virtual stakeholder meetings were held with key stakeholder groups identified by the Gwa'ni Project Technical Committee.

These engagement sessions provided opportunities for the Gwa'ni Project Technical Committee to share updates about the MLUP and SEEA processes with members of each stakeholder group, while inviting identified individuals and organizations to share input on their land use planning priorities and values and overall MLUP goals.

With the support of Castlemain, the Gwa'ni Project Technical Committee scheduled one meeting for each of the five stakeholder groups, and personal invitations were sent to participants via email. The meetings were held over Zoom and were designed to be small working sessions with a maximum of 20 participants in each meeting. In addition to gathering feedback for the Consensus Recommendations, the sessions were also an opportunity to:

- Inform stakeholders about the Gwa'ni Project process;
- Build relationships between the Gwa'ni Project Team and stakeholders;
- Hear from stakeholders and better understand their perspectives;
- Allow stakeholders to expand on survey responses through more focused questions; and
- Create dialogue within the identified stakeholder groups to understand commonly shared opinions, concerns, and priorities.

Each meeting began with the story of Gwa'nalalis, followed by introductions to the Gwa'ni Project Technical Committee and an overview of the Gwa'ni Project and the SEEA process. Following this introductory presentation, stakeholders participated in facilitated engagement activities using Mentimeter, a virtual engagement tool that allows participants to see the results of their input tabulated and synthesized in real-time. The Mentimeter segment of virtual meetings consisted of baseline activities (six activities that were repeated with every stakeholder group) and stakeholder-specific activities (2-3 questions specifically tailored to each stakeholder group).

Each meeting concluded with a summary and wrap up discussion led by members of the Gwa'ni Project Technical Committee, as well as an invitation to stay engaged and informed about the project moving forward.

2022 WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

In Spring 2022, an initial version of the Gwa'ni Project Engagement Report was prepared and published on the BC Government's Land Use Planning website. The report summarized the input that had been collected as part of the Gwa'ni Project's public engagement in 2021, and identified the areas for further discussion that the Technical Committee would be exploring as the project moved forward. .

2022 INFO NIGHT

In May 2022, the Technical Committee hosted a Gwa'ni Project Info Night in Port McNeill, which was attended by over 30 participants from the forest industry, local recreation groups, and local government. The Info Night included presentations on Gwa'ni Project engagement to date and provided participants with the opportunity to hear directly from the Technical Committee and have informal conversations about their questions related to the project. Gwa'ni Project Steering Committee members Andrew Ashford (Government of BC) and Kelly Speck ('Namgis First Nation) were also in attendance to provide their perspective on relevant questions and comments.

One of the key goals of the Info Night was to clarify what the Gwa'ni Project was planning to accomplish, and the issues that were both in and out of scope of the project.

2023 FOCUS GROUPS

During the week of February 20, 2023, in-person focus groups were held with key stakeholders and government representatives identified by the Gwa'ni Project Technical Committee. These focus groups were the final formal opportunity for stakeholders to provide input to inform the work of the Technical Committee before the Gwa'ni Project consensus recommendations were to be finalized and submitted to the Executive Committee.

These focus groups were an opportunity for stakeholders to receive an update from the Gwa'ni Project Technical Committee, get a preview of some of the proposed land use planning changes the Technical Committee was considering, and to provide input on those proposed changes.

Participants from all focus groups were provided with an update on the stakeholder feedback collected to date, and

the Technical Committee delivered presentations on key proposed planning changes: zoning changes and proposed conserved areas in the Upper and Lower Nimpkish Landscape Units. Maps of the current zoning, proposed zoning and proposed conserved areas were displayed around the room, and break-out sessions were held to get more detailed feedback.

Upon request from the Woss Community Association, the Technical and Steering Committee representatives held a similar focus group meeting in Woss.

2023 WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

In 2023, an updated version of the Gwa’ni Project Engagement Report was prepared to summarize the results of the Gwa’ni Project’s public engagement in 2022 and early 2023. The report identified the topics and themes that the Technical Committee would be focusing on as the project continued towards the development of consensus recommendations. The updated report was published on the BC Government’s Land Use Planning website.

This 2024 Engagement Report is an updated version of the 2023 report, and includes information about the Gwa’ni Project engagement events, activities, and results that came from the entire lifecycle of the project, until Spring 2024.

2024 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE AND LAUNCH EVENT

On March 13, 2024, the Gwa’ni Project Technical Committee, along with additional representatives from ‘Namgis First Nation and the Province, hosted an Open House in Port McNeill to share the Gwa’ni Project consensus recommendations and draft TFL 37 Forest Landscape Plan (FLP) and Forest Operations Plan (FOP) with key stakeholders and the broader public. This was the first engagement event for the Gwa’ni Project that was entirely open to the public. It was an opportunity for the public to learn about the work that had been done with input from key stakeholders, who have been invited to provide feedback at the various information sessions, focus group events, and stakeholder meetings – described within this report – that were held throughout the life of the project.

The event was attended by just under 70 members of key stakeholder groups and the broader public.

The first hour of the event was invite-only for local government groups and licensees who were invited to ask questions about the FLP/FOP, learn about how it relates to the work of the Gwa’ni Project, and offer their reactions to the FLP/FOP planning concepts. Following this first hour,

the event was a drop-in style event where members of key stakeholder groups as well as the broader public were invited to learn about the outcomes of both the Gwa’ni Project and FLP/FOP and to hear from the Technical Teams who have been working on both projects. The event aimed to provide attendees with an updated and finalized summary of data, input and information that has gone into the development of the Gwa’ni Modernized Land Use Planning (MLUP) Project and the FLP/FOP. Posters and displays from both projects were set up around the room and attendees were encouraged to walk around and ask questions to the ‘Namgis and Provincial representatives in attendance.

EMAIL UPDATES

Regular email updates were distributed to the Gwa’ni Project stakeholders and public mailing list to share information on the topics that relate to the draft consensus recommendations. These email updates provided information on the topics being discussed by the Technical Committee, including:

- Modernized Land Use Planning 101
- Desired Future Forest
- Protected Areas
- Zoning and the Gwa’ni Project
- Proposed Conserved Areas
- Engagement Event Updates and Recaps
- Other Provincial Initiatives and Projects related to the Gwa’ni Project

See Appendix C for each of the email updates distributed between June 2022 and October 2023.

LIMITATIONS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on in-person gatherings in 2021 and early 2022, the communications and active engagement activities during the early phases of the Gwa’ni Project took place virtually. The Gwa’ni Project Team heard feedback from stakeholders that in-person engagements are preferred for purposes of relationship building and information sharing, so as restrictions on in-person events eased and people expressed increasing comfort with gathering with others, the Technical Committee made efforts to create more in-person options for engagement where possible.

Summary of Engagement Results

PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS - FALL 2021

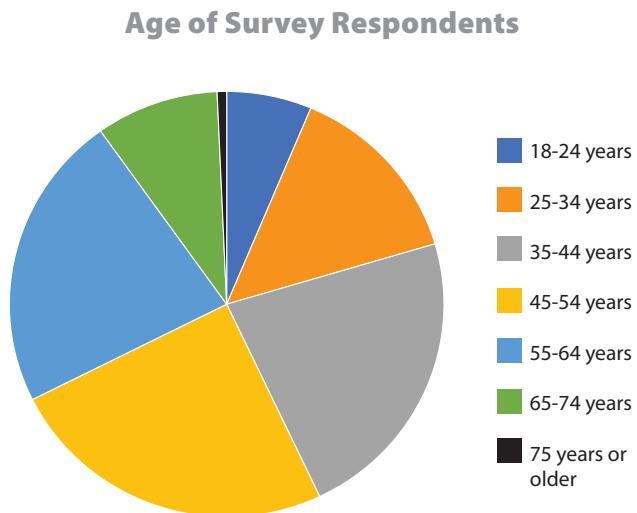
As noted earlier in this report, the Gwa'ni Project engagement survey was designed to collect input for the development of a modernized land use plan and will inform future engagement activities. It was meant to assess respondents' understanding or awareness of the Gwa'ni Project, as well as their priorities and interests when it comes to land use planning on Vancouver Island and more specifically, within the project area.

Survey respondents were targeted based on the groups identified in the Engagement Strategy, and individuals who attended virtual stakeholder meetings were asked to circulate the survey among their own professional and personal networks. The survey was also open to the public, and so in addition to those stakeholder groups who were specifically targeted, interested members of the public were also welcome to respond to the survey.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

144 people completed the Gwa'ni Project public survey. Respondents were relatively evenly distributed across age group categories, with the largest proportion falling between the ages of 45-54 years old. A full summary of the ages of survey respondents is captured in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Age of Survey Respondents



Of the 144 survey respondents, 49 (34%) identified as female, 82 (57%) identified as male, 11 (7%) preferred not to share their gender identity and one person self-identified using their own preferred terms. One respondent did not answer the question.

Survey respondents have overlapping relationships with the Nimpkish Valley based on how often they work, live, visit, and enjoy the area, if at all¹. Respondents may also be Indigenous people with long-standing ancestral ties to the territory, business owners, tenure holders, or have other interests in the Nimpkish Valley.

The 144 survey respondents characterized their relationship to the Nimpkish Valley as follows:

- 27 full time residents
- 15 part time residents
- 24 full time workers
- 26 part time workers
- 19 business owners
- 13 tenure holders
- 61 regular visitors (visit more than twice/year)
- 12 occasional visitors (visit less than twice/year)
- 6 Indigenous people with ancestral ties to land

Respondents were also asked to identify the industry that they currently work in, with nearly half identifying that they work in the forestry industry. The following is a list of professional industries that were represented in significant ways by the survey respondents:

- 71 people work in forestry
- 14 people work in tourism and/or recreation
- 17 people work in environmental services and/or advocacy
- 15 people are small business owners
- 10 people work in public service

USE OF THE NIMPKISH VALLEY

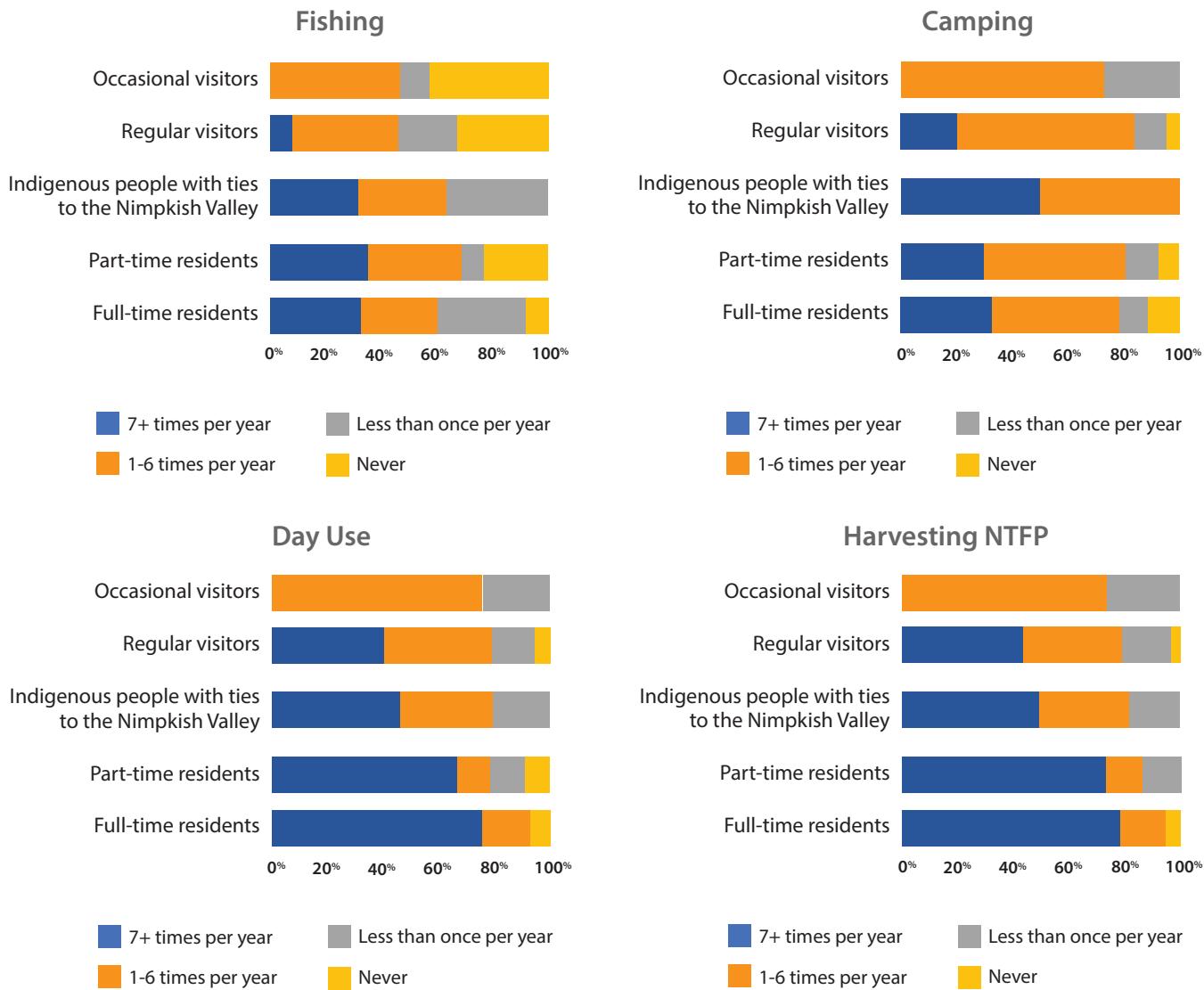
The Nimpkish Valley is used for several recreational and cultural activities by those who live, work, and visit in the area, as well as those Indigenous peoples who have long-standing and deep familial ties to the land and territory.

The four most popular recreation activities that survey respondents enjoy and participate in within the Nimpkish Valley are fishing, camping, day use activities such as hiking and picnicking, and harvesting non-timber forest products such as berries, mushrooms, and bark boughs. According to cross-tabulation analysis of the frequency at which

¹ The response rate for the question "Where do you live most of the time?" was relatively low, with a mere 58% of people answering the question. This resulted in a gap in capturing data of where a large proportion of respondents live full-time.

respondents recreate and participate in these four activities, harvesting non-timber forest products is the activity that is done most regularly, specifically by residents of the Nimpkish Valley (both full-time and part-time), regular visitors to the Nimpkish Valley (visit more than twice a year), and Indigenous people who have ancestral ties to the territory. Day use activities are also very popular, especially for full-time and part-time residents. Figures 2-5 below compare the frequency at which each of the four activities are enjoyed by five different groups: occasional visitors, regular visitors, Indigenous people with ancestral ties to the Nimpkish Valley, part-time residents, and full-time residents of the Nimpkish Valley.

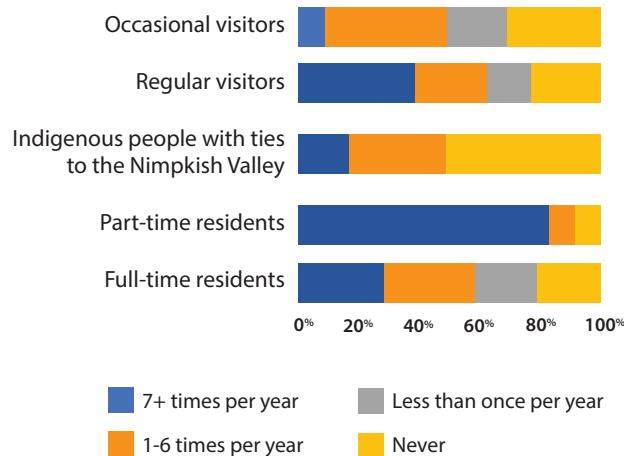
Figures 2-5: Frequency of current participation in recreation activities in the Nimpkish Valley



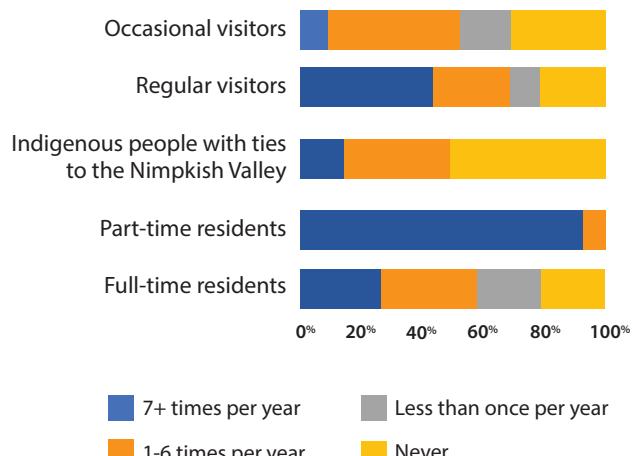
Survey respondents were also asked about how frequently they use the Nimpkish Valley for hunting, water sports and winter sports. While these activities are less popular, particularly among full-time residents, they are still enjoyed to varying degrees by different groups. More specifically, winter sports (i.e., skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing) and water sports (wind surfing, kite surfing and boating) are very popular among part-time residents of the Nimpkish Valley. Also of note, Indigenous respondents are the most avid hunters in the area. Figures 6-8 below compare the frequency at which these three activities are enjoyed by five different groups: occasional visitors, regular visitors, Indigenous people with ancestral ties to the Nimpkish Valley, part-time residents, and full-time residents of the Nimpkish Valley.

Figures 6-8: Frequency of current participation in recreation activities in the Nimpkish Valley

Winter Sports



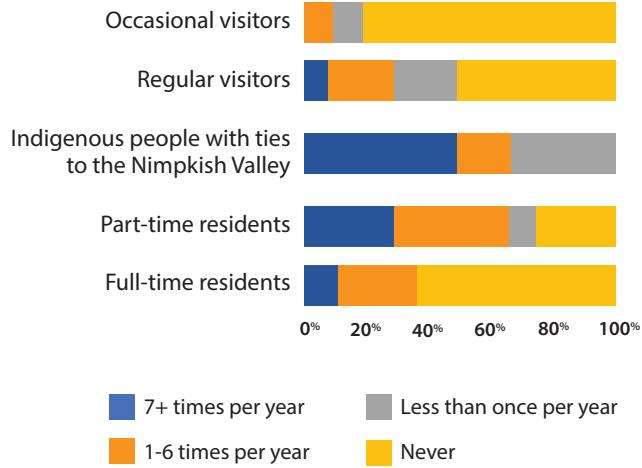
Water Sports



Survey respondents were also asked about how often they participate in caving, equestrian and motorized recreation activities such as quadding and snowmobiling however, responses indicated that these activities do not have a significant level of popularity among those surveyed. Only 5% of respondents said that they ever do equestrian in the Nimpkish Valley, while just 20% said that they go caving more than once a year, and less than half of all respondents participate in motorized recreation more than once a year. In addition to the activities included in the survey, respondents noted that they use the territory to enjoy other activities such as mountain biking, rock climbing, and for general enjoyment of the beautiful landscapes that the area has to offer. One respondent also noted that the Nimpkish Valley has cultural and spiritual value to them, explaining that they use it for "retreats, cleansing, and ceremonies".

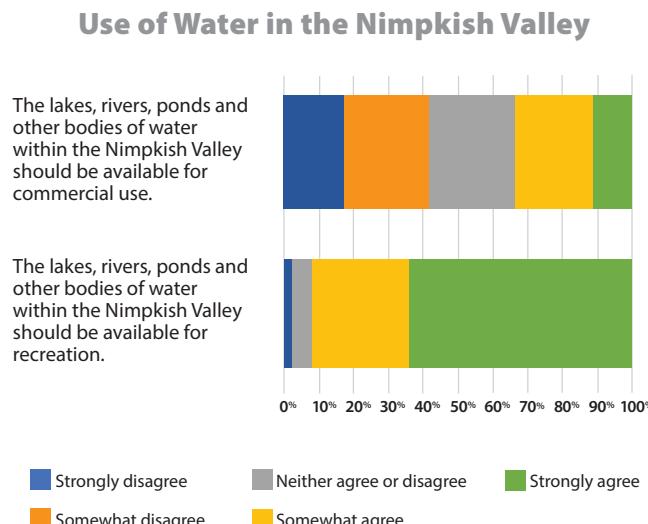
Beyond the recreation activities that people enjoy in the Nimpkish Valley, the survey was used to get information about how stakeholders related to a set of value statements presented within the survey. These value statements were aimed at gauging perspectives on how the forests, lakes, rivers, and areas of cultural significance within the Project Area should be managed. Understanding these perspectives and priorities was also a way to better understand how the Gwa'ni Project values may be reflected in the development of a modernized land use plan. There was almost total consensus from survey respondents about the cleanliness of water, with 93% strongly agreeing that the lakes, rivers, ponds and other bodies of water within the Nimpkish Valley should be clean. However, there were

Hunting



differing opinions on how the lakes, rivers, ponds and other bodies of water in the Nimpkish Valley should actually be used. Figure 9 below illustrates the perspectives of survey respondents on the recreation and commercial use of lakes, rivers, ponds, and other bodies of water in the Nimpkish Valley. The results clearly indicate that while there is strong support for bodies of water being available and used for recreational purposes, there is almost near consensus they should not be used for commercial activities.

Figure 9: Perspectives on the use of water in the Nimpkish Valley for recreation and commercial purposes

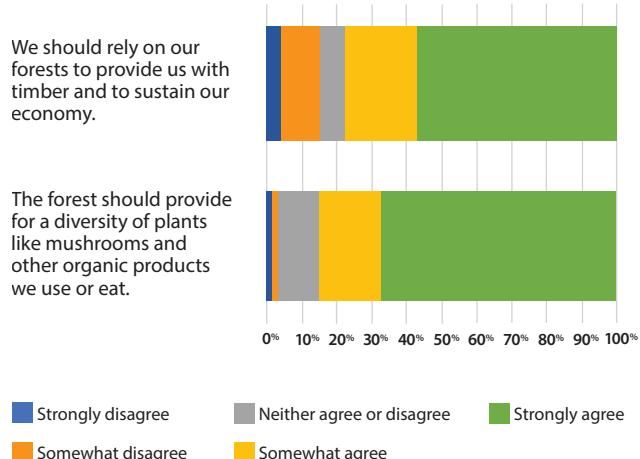


These results are helpful in the analysis and testing of the Gwa'ni Project values, because they reflect the prioritization of some values over others when it comes to the use of water in the Nimpkish Valley. The 93% of respondents who strongly agree that the lakes, rivers, ponds and other bodies of water within the Nimpkish Valley should be clean are indirectly expressing that they value water, biodiversity, aquatic habitats and fish, cultural values and recreation over the use of water for commercial or economic purposes.

Respondents were similarly asked to share their perspectives on how they think forests, including both timber and non-timber forest products, should be used in the Nimpkish Valley. More specifically, they were asked whether the forest should be relied upon to provide plants and products for humans to use and eat, as well as whether or not forests should be relied on to provide timber as a means of sustaining the economy. The results, shown in Figure 10 below, indicate a high level of agreement that the forest should provide for a diversity of plants and products for people to use and eat, with a combined total of 85% of respondents either identifying that they somewhat or strongly agree. There was also clear agreement from respondents that the forests should be relied upon for the economic value of timber, with 77% indicating that they either somewhat or strongly agree that we should rely on forests to provide timber to sustain the economy.

Figure 10: Perspectives on the use of forests in the Nimpkish Valley for economic and other human uses

Use of Forests in the Nimpkish Valley



These responses indirectly reflect support for the Gwa'ni Project values that forests and forest health rely on, including timber, non-timber forest products, soil, and Indigenous forest values. Survey respondents also took the opportunity to elaborate on the significance that the health of forests and forestry economy has on their lives, emphasizing that there should be a working forest that is conducive to sustainable harvesting and planting activities. One person simply noted, "forestry feeds my family," underscoring the need for commercial forestry to strike a balance that both respects the environment and supports those who are financially dependent upon the industry.

VALUES AND PRIORITIES RELATED TO THE NIMPKISH VALLEY

Understanding the values and priorities held by people who live in, work, visit and enjoy the Nimpkish Valley is very important to the development of a modernized land use plan. Survey respondents were asked about their values and most pressing priorities as they relate to land use planning and management in the Nimpkish Valley. In their responses, 72% of all respondents reflected that they would like to see balance between ecological and economic considerations when it comes to the future of land use planning, agreeing that “the Nimpkish Valley should be managed in a way that maintains both economic activity and healthy ecosystems”. On the other hand, 24% most agreed that “protecting the health of the Nimpkish Valley lands, water and natural ecosystems should be a priority, even at the risk of slowing down economic activity”. While this group reflected a smaller proportion of respondents, it is still significant. However, it should also be noted that of those who would like to see environmental considerations prioritized over economic considerations, only four either live or work full-time in the Nimpkish Valley. Figures 11 and 12 below illustrate the level of agreement that various groups have with statements about priorities for the future of land use planning in the Nimpkish Valley.

Figure 11: Priorities for Future Land Management in the Nimpkish Valley by Relationship to Project Area

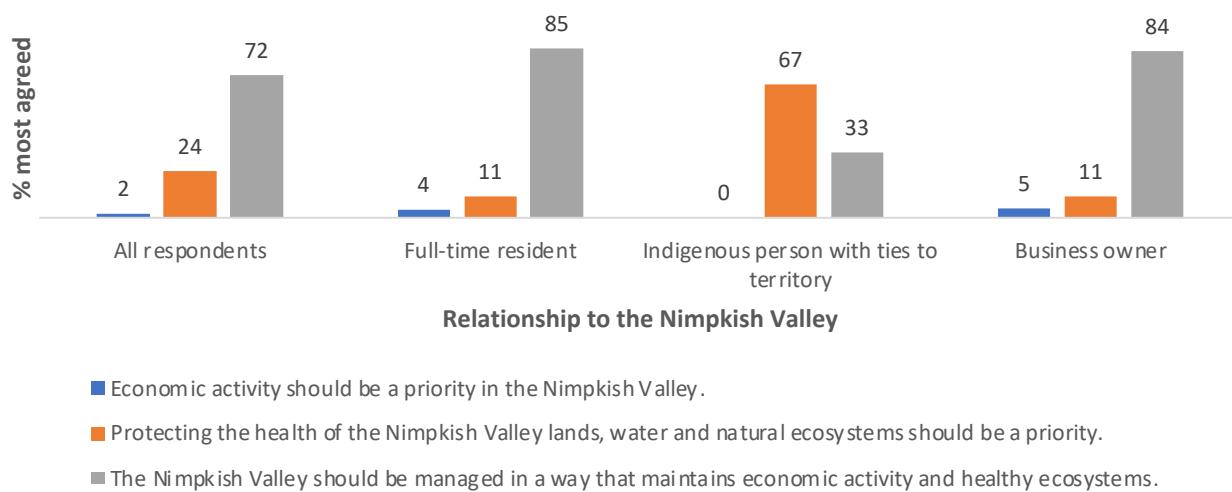
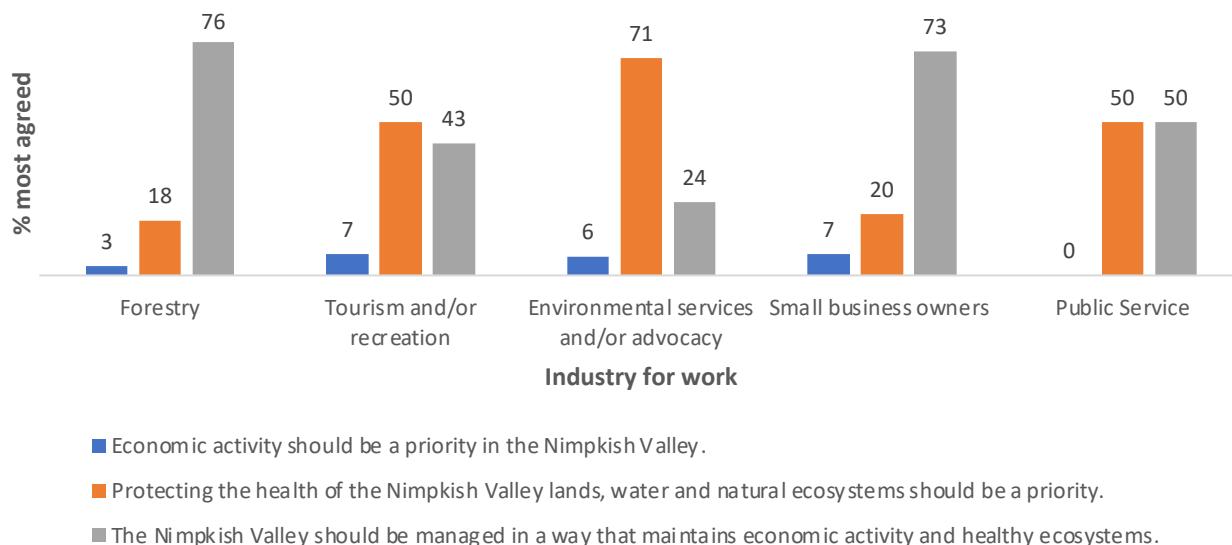


Figure 12: Priorities for Future Land Management in the Nimpkish Valley by Industry



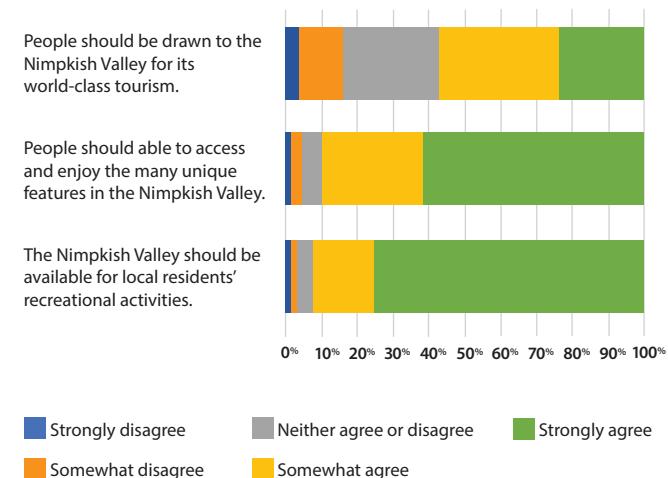
Building upon these statements, respondents elaborated on additional concepts and themes that further reflect their values. These included: agriculture, economy, working forests, protection, restoration, balance, forest health, Indigenous leadership, forest stewardship, climate resilience, and residential development. While several of these additional concepts are already reflected within the existing Gwa'ni Project values, residential development and climate resiliency may be considered as new values added to inform the project. Additionally, some of these additional themes identified by survey respondents are helpful in guiding the future of the Gwa'ni Project in various ways. For example, understanding the importance of local involvement may be a new consideration when it comes to project engagement principles. Explicit consideration of the local economy and a working forest may inform the SEEA process, and increased consideration for Indigenous leadership is important for the ongoing government-to-government mandate.

Looking ahead to the future of how land might be used and managed in the Nimpkish Valley, it is crucial to know what residents, employees, business owners and visitors see for the future of the territory. It is also very important for the Gwa'ni Project Team to test the values that have already been established, and understand any values that require new or increased consideration. Understanding these perspectives are important in gathering insights about the values that local stakeholders have, and how they would like to see those values reflected in a modernized land use plan.

One approach to understanding stakeholder values is evaluating how much access to the Nimpkish Valley local stakeholders would like to see made available both to their neighbours and to tourists. Survey respondents agreed that they would like to see the Nimpkish Valley be accessible and enjoyed by people, especially by locals (see Figure 12 below). However, responses were less favourable when it came to drawing tourists from outside of the Nimpkish Valley to visit the area, with 44% of respondents either disagreeing or expressing indifference to the prospect of inviting tourism to the area. This data shows that while people are not overwhelmingly opposed to opening and welcoming tourism to the Nimpkish Valley, they are less eager for the territory to be accessible to visitors than locals, residents, of those who frequent the Nimpkish Valley.

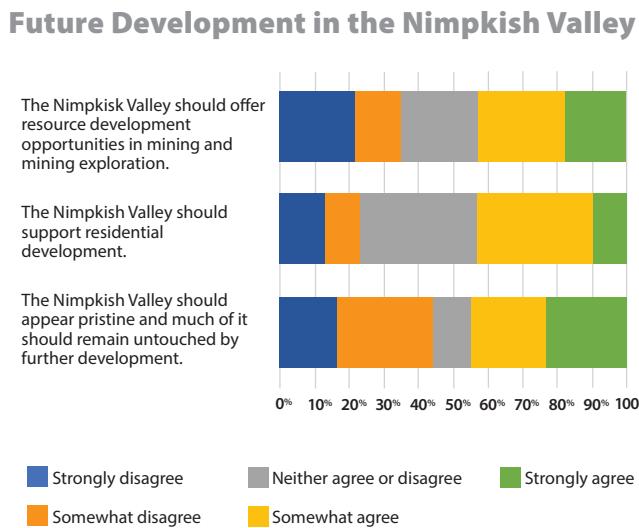
Figure 13: Perspectives on local and tourist access to the Nimpkish Valley

Access to the Nimpkish Valley



Survey respondents expressed even less overt support for future development opportunities in the Nimpkish Valley, as the number of people who agree (44%) that there should not be further development in the area is almost the same as the number of people who disagree (45%) with the same statement. There were other similarly split opinions on whether the Nimpkish Valley should offer resource development opportunities in mining exploration, and whether the Nimpkish Valley should support residential development. These may be areas to explore in future engagement to better understand the type of development that stakeholders are or are not interested in or open to.

Figure 14: Perspectives on potential new development and exploration in the Nimpkish Valley



In addition to reflecting how water, forests and land should be used, a modernized land use planning process will also speak to the *protection* of these resources. Specifically, responses indicated strong support for the protection and preservation of some of the natural resources that live and exist in the Nimpkish Valley in order to reflect the values and priorities of survey respondents. More specifically, a combined total of 95% of people indicated that they either somewhat or strongly agree that fish and their habitat should be protected and, where needed, restored. This is important guidance for the Gwaii Project and the modernized land use planning process, because as a tool to make decisions about how resources will be used, the MLUP will also govern how resources are managed, protected, and in the case of fish and their habitats, preserved.

There was also strong support for the careful management of areas that hold cultural significance in the Nimpkish Valley, demonstrated by 93% of respondents indicating that they either somewhat or strongly agree that culturally significant places and resources should be managed with care and respect.

Respondents were also asked about other value statements or words that describe their priorities that they would like to see reflected in a modernized land use plan for the Nimpkish Valley. While there was only a 52% response rate to this question, those who did respond took it as an opportunity to note other aspects of the land and resources within the Nimpkish Valley that they would like to see prioritized to

reflect values that they hold. A response that was repeated by respondents spoke to the old growth management within the project area, with one person stating that "the land use plan should identify a working forest, made up of a combination of second growth and old growth".

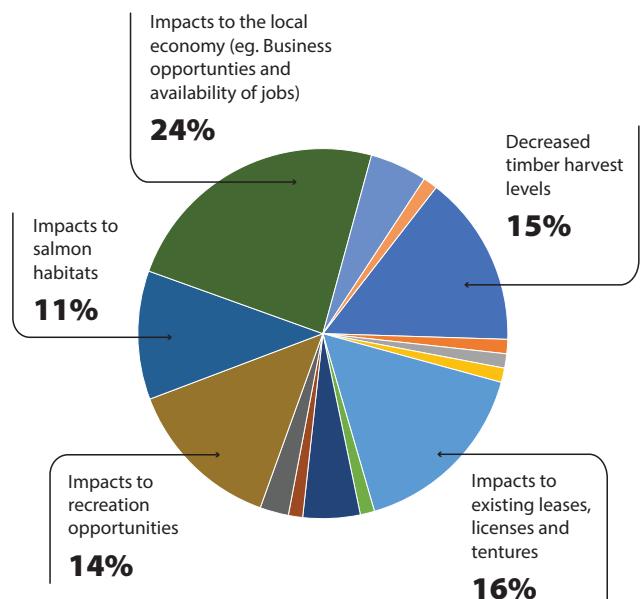
The prioritization of Indigenous partnership and perspectives was also identified by survey respondents, with emphasis being placed on the importance of Indigenous governance, self-determination, and autonomy over unceded lands. "Indigenous peoples and their perspectives should be taken into account first and foremost," said one person, with another writing that Indigenous governments should have a heavy influence over decisions that are made. Another respondent answered that while forestry is an important component to life in the Nimpkish Valley, the approaches taken to managing forests need to be sustainable and reflective of Indigenous values, including that "forest stewardship practices should align with tradition Indigenous knowledge".

CONCERNs ABOUT THE NIMPKISH VALLEY

For public stakeholder input to properly inform the land use planning process, it is important to understand the greatest concerns that people have. Based on their relationship to the Nimpkish Valley, industry of work, and cultural and/or ancestral ties to the area, stakeholders hold varying concerns about what the MLUP could mean for them, their rights, their property, and their ways of life. The below analysis takes a closer look at the top concerns expressed by survey respondents regarding a new land use plan for the Nimpkish Valley.

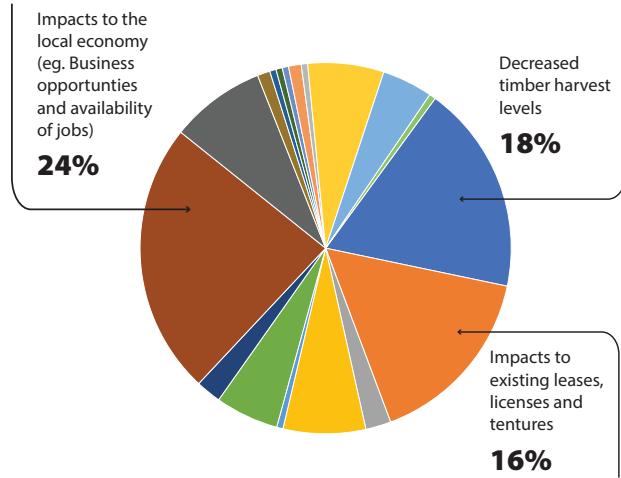
For those who live in the Nimpkish Valley on a full-time basis, some concerns are more pressing than others based on their unique economic, social, cultural and property interests. When asked about their top concerns regarding the Gwaii Project and a modernized land use plan, full-time residents identified that their concerns, illustrated in Figure 14, are: 1) impacts to the local economy including business opportunities and the availability of jobs, 2) impacts to existing leases, licenses and tenures, 3) decreased timber harvest levels, 4) impacts to recreation opportunities, and 5) impacts to salmon habitats.

Figure 15: Full-time residents' top concerns with a new land use plan for the Nimpkish Valley



Because the local economy is reliant upon the forestry industry, the concerns of locals are also similarly aligned with the concerns identified by survey respondents who work in forestry, which are: 1) impacts to the local economy, 2) decreased timber harvest levels, and 3) impacts to existing leases, licenses and tenures (shown in Figure 15). Understanding these issues is important for the development of a modernized land use plan because while some concerns may be addressed by the MLUP itself, other fears can and should be addressed through transparent communication and public engagement throughout the modernized land use planning process. Those concerns which require better and ongoing public information sharing are important for the Gwa'ni Project Team to understand and will inform future engagement planning and activities in the hopes of mitigating stakeholder concerns.

Figure 16: Forestry workers' top concerns with a new land use plan for the Nimpkish Valley



While a smaller proportion of survey respondents identified themselves as Indigenous people with ancestral ties to the Nimpkish Valley, their concerns about the Gwa'ni Project and a modernized land use plan are very important to note. Impacts to salmon, impacts to wildlife habitat, and increased timber harvest levels were the top three concerns identified by this group of survey respondents. Interestingly, the third concern – increased timber harvest levels – is in direct contrast with one of the top concerns expressed by respondents who work in forestry, who are concerned about *decreased* timber harvest levels. This is an important flag for the Gwa'ni Project Team, and mitigating these concerns will be important to address in future information sharing and public engagement efforts, and especially in the development of future consensus recommendations.

In addition to these concerns, survey respondents were asked to share additional questions and concerns they have as the land use planning process progresses. Several people noted their concerns about how the Gwa'ni Project might impact them directly, based on their unique interests as forestry workers, cabin owners, current residents and private landowners. People expressed concerns about how exactly a modernized land use plan will affect their private interests and land ownership in the Nimpkish Valley, if at all. Private land will not be affected by the Gwa'ni Project, but these comments indicate the need for more publicly available information to be shared with specific stakeholder groups based on their unique interests, so that they have a better understanding of what the Gwa'ni Project is and what it is not.

VIRTUAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING RESULTS - FALL/WINTER 2021

In late 2021, five virtual stakeholder meetings were held with key stakeholder groups identified by the Gwa'ni Project Technical Committee. These engagement sessions provided opportunities for the Gwa'ni Project team to familiarize stakeholders with the project, confirm project values, share updates about the MLUP and SEEA processes, and invite feedback from identified individuals and organizations on their specific land use planning priorities. The meetings also allowed the Gwa'ni Project team to gather stakeholder-specific feedback about overall goals of modernized land use planning and the trade-offs between priorities that they may or may not be willing to make in order for some values to be prioritized over others.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS

Three local government stakeholders attended and participated in the virtual meeting that took place on November 30, 2021.

To understand how participants prioritize each of the Gwa'ni Project values, they were asked to rank the values in their perceived order of importance. The aggregate results of the ranking were:

Highest-ranked values	Lowest-ranked values
Biodiversity	Non-timber forest products
Timber	Minerals & karst
Access	Soil

Despite completing the ranking exercise, it's important to note that participants expressed challenges doing the activity because they felt a general lack of familiarity and comfort with the topic of land use planning. They placed a lot of emphasis on the concept of balance, frequently noting that they would ideally like to see balance between all the project values and that it was difficult to prioritize some values over others since they are so interconnected. Ranking the values posed a significant challenge in striking a balance between environmental concerns and economic concerns, namely ensuring support for job creation and the local economy. More specifically, participants noted that making trade-offs between the health of ecosystems and the health of the economy is complex, and weighing the

need for cultural recognition and ecological health against the need for a strong economy is their highest priority but also their greatest challenge.

Using a word cloud, the participants then highlighted specific words and phrases they consider to be of high importance including "balance", "culture", "jobs", "longevity", "transparency", "climate action", "community", "access" and "economy".

Land Use Designations

The local government representatives were also asked to indicate how they would like to see land proportionally allocated within the project area within a set of standard land use designations. The aggregate results of local government officials' responses were:

- Protected areas (25%)
- Low intensity resource extraction areas (28%)
- General resource management zones (33%)
- High intensity resource extraction areas (13%)*

It is important to note that participants expressed challenges with their lack of technical knowledge about the various resource management zones and after seeing the way that land is currently allocated in the project area, some acknowledged that they would have answered the question differently. However, during discussions about the allocation of lands into these four zones, they noted that the weight of economic benefits – including tourism, logging and recreation – make some zones more important to them than others.

Looking forward to the future of land use planning in the Nimpkish Valley, local government representatives stressed that relationships are of utmost importance. They would like to see a land use planning process that is inclusive and based in respect – prioritizing relationship and partnership building to best serve the people who live and work in the area. They emphasized that to ensure the modernized land use plan considers the diverse activities that take place on the land base, local input should be more heavily weighted than input from anyone who lives outside of the North Island, and explicitly noted that the plan should not be directed or led by environmental non-profits (eNGOs). Ultimately, local business representatives called for the modernized land use plan to address the realities of today while looking toward the future in a way that will account for intergenerational changes in community priorities and developments in forest and climate science.

* Actual land use designations: Protected Areas (10%), Low Intense Resource Extraction Areas (17%), General Resource Management Zones (38%), High Intensity Resource Extraction Zones (35%)

TOURISM AND RECREATION STAKEHOLDERS

There were 12 individuals from the tourism and recreation industries who attended and participated in the virtual stakeholder meeting held on December 1, 2021.

The words and phrases of importance identified by the tourism and recreation stakeholder group were closely aligned with activities and values important to their respective industries. These included: "hiking", "camping", "caving", "skiing", and "wild". When ranking the Gwa'ni Project values in order of perceived importance, tourism and recreation stakeholders ranked them as follows:

Highest-ranked values	Lowest-ranked values
Aquatic habitat and fish & Wildlife	Non-timber forest products
Recreation	Timber
Cultural	Minerals & Karst

Stakeholders stressed that maintaining balance among all the values is needed to maximize tourism and recreation opportunities in the valley, and suggested that the values be examined as a whole rather than in isolation from one another. Examples of the values' interconnection that were given during the meeting include:

Biodiversity (ranked 4th): "protection of biodiversity is necessary for any of the other activities and should be the foundation of the land-use plan".

Karst (ranked 8th): "connected to fish habitat, water quality, forest health, soils and lastly recreation. To separate them shows a great misunderstanding of what karst is".

Visuals (ranked 5th): cannot be maintained or sustained without the prioritization of biodiversity, timber, forestry and water, and are made accessible because of logging and roads.

Ultimately, the tourism and recreation stakeholders stressed the need for a modernized land use plan to strike a balance between prioritizing industry, recreation and conservation in the Nimpkish Valley. They indicated that emphasis should be placed on conserving ecological systems, protecting recreation activities, and supporting economic activity, and all the values that are related to those high-level objectives should be focused on as opposed to concentrating on only three of the project values.

Land Use Designations

When asked to indicate how they would like to see land proportionally allocated within the project area, local business participants allocated the land as follows:

- Protected areas (33%)
- Low intensity resource extraction areas (27%)
- General resource management zones (26%)
- High intensity resource extraction areas (14%)*

Participants acknowledged that for those people who are not knowledgeable about different zoning types, it can be difficult to delineate between low, general and high intensity logging when they see it happening in the territory. As one participant noted, for someone unfamiliar with forestry activities or with the territory, "logging is logging is logging," and when people see logging taking place and they do not know or understand the industry, their perceptions are often skewed in a negative way. Participants blamed some of this misunderstanding on mainstream media depictions of forestry, expressing concern about the depiction of logging and the forestry industry within popular media. They noted that when the average person sees cut blocks or clearcutting, they associate the activity with being bad for the natural environment, even if that is not necessarily the case. They explained that without logging, activity and access in the Nimpkish Valley would be challenged and reduced, and called upon the project team to mitigate misconceptions about these activities.

When looking ahead to what they would like land use planning to look like for the Nimpkish Valley, the tourism and recreation stakeholders identified three key areas of priority:

- Improving and expanding access of the territory for recreational use and enjoyment
- Clarifying misconceptions
- Improving public education about logging; and sustaining the land for future generations

With respect to improving and expanding access to the territory, participants shared that they would like to see consistent access to mountains and recreation areas, including areas with caving opportunities, back country exploration, Mount Cain, and those places with particularly spectacular views, tourist appeal, alpine and subalpine areas. They noted that this continued access is important for both locals and tourists.

* Actual land use designations: Protected Areas (10%), Low Intense Resource Extraction Areas (17%), General Resource Management Zones (38%), High Intensity Resource Extraction Zones (35%)

Participants also stressed that moving forward, they would like to see the development of public educational resources, data, and general guidance on land use planning itself. Suggestions for resources included guidance on accessing culturally significant areas, data about trees, forestry, and fish populations, and efforts for clearing up misinformation about the logging industry.

The underlying principle of the entire land use planning process, as indicated by discussion among tourism and recreation participants, should be sustaining the land for future generations. To do this, they explained that a modernized land use plan must create a sustainable balance between economic growth, maintenance, and conservation.

FORESTRY TENURE HOLDERS AND CONTRACTORS STAKEHOLDERS

Thirteen individuals representing forestry tenure holders and contractors attended and participated in the virtual stakeholder meeting held on December 6, 2021.

When ranking the Gwa'ni Project values in order of perceived importance, tenure holders and contractors ranked as follows:

Highest-ranked values	Lowest-ranked values
Timber	Minerals
Aquatic habitat and fish	Tourism and visuals
Indigenous forest values	Non-timber forest products

Participants clearly stated that local economic considerations – specifically the need for long-term stable employment opportunities – are an absolute priority for them, and that a healthy working forest is the key to many of their priorities and values. There was strong consensus that timber plays an integral role in the success of local economies, and that the interconnectedness of timber harvesting and economic prosperity cannot and should not be looked at as exclusive of one another. When explaining the absolute importance of timber in the Nimpkish Valley, one person put it simply; “timber is the driver. Balancing and managing the other values is why developing land use plans is so important. A strong economy provides great opportunities”.

Participants also identified the following as values that they felt should have been included in the Gwa'ni Project values:

- Local economies
- Forestry economy
- Rural communities
- Employment
- Reconciliation
- Sustainability of harvesting

The prioritization of forestry and harvesting was also emphasized in conversations about potential trade-offs that may have to be made between the Gwa'ni Project values, with one person stating that they would be willing to limit access and tourism opportunities if it meant higher paying employment in forestry. On the other hand, others noted that maintaining recreation and tourism opportunities in the region supports the economic viability and enjoyment of local communities and adds to successful employee retention, which can otherwise be difficult in such a rural area. Ultimately, the group concluded that to make decisions about trade-offs, there needs to be more opportunities to collaborate and communicate with other residents and workers in the North Island, thereby improving their common understanding of what is important to others in the area.

Participants went on to express their understanding that Indigenous forest values, ranked third highest in importance, are vital to ensuring the 'Namgis have a successful forest economy and acknowledged that addressing 'Namgis forest values will promote economic and planning confidence in the area. As one participant stated, “we need to ensure Indigenous forest values are respected over certain types of motorized recreation” as a means of demonstrating a commitment to the partnerships being built with 'Namgis First Nation.

Land Use Designations

Forestry tenure holders and contractors were then asked to indicate how they would like to see land proportionally allocated within the project area. The aggregate results of their allocation was:

- Protected areas (48%)
- Low intensity resource extraction areas (23%)
- General resource management zones (15%)
- High intensity resource extraction areas (14%)*

* Actual land use designations: Protected Areas (10%), Low Intense Resource Extraction Areas (17%), General Resource Management Zones (38%), High Intensity Resource Extraction Zones (35%)

To explain their allocation decisions, participants noted that the current provincial legislation already protects important sensitive features and values during the process of developing harvest areas. There are already parks and other protected spaces in the project area that have been set aside to ensure social and environmental values are preserved long-term and therefore, participants did not feel the need for more space to be allocated to protected spaces.

In their discussions on land allocation within the project area, the group once again emphasized that the strength and stability of the local economy is heavily reliant upon the sustainable harvesting of timber, with one person noting "a working forest is very important for local economies, which includes Indigenous economies". They explained that the high intensity extraction areas are important to ensure harvesting levels are not greatly reduced, while general resource management areas are important to allow other economic opportunities. It was further noted that the long-term availability of pulp logs and residual salvage opportunities (waste wood utilization) relies on the sustainability of timber harvesting operations as well, and some were concerned with the prospect of those operations being reduced. Participants further expressed explicit concern that jobs may be at risk depending on the sustainability and long-term viability of forestry activities and generating a stable source of income on Northern Vancouver Island. To accomplish this, they explained, there must be a sustainable level of timber harvesting to ensure that a balance of social, environmental and economic objectives is met, thereby fostering healthy communities and a healthy environment in the long-term.

According to the forestry tenure holders and contractors, the most important feature of a modernized land use plan will be its ability to provide long-term certainty and predictability to residents and workers on the North Island. One attendee summarized this well, saying "drive certainty into the business cycle and you will drive health and stability into community". They emphasized terms such as "sustainability", "stability", "viability", "certainty" and "long-term" to describe the characteristics of an ideal land use plan. "Transparency, predictability and fairness will provide a stable climate for investment, employment and healthy communities," said one person. At the heart of ensuring this predictability, they explained, is consistent and meaningful consultation processes with 'Namgis and local stakeholders to ensure that timber harvesting and forestry activities are consistent with the values of all stakeholders while also ensuring sustainable levels of employment and economic prosperity are possible. Forest tenure holders and contractors also agreed that a modernized land use plan could be an important tool in providing stability and predictability to harvest levels. This certainty would:

- Ensure that harvest levels are high enough to sustain a viable industry
- Help secure long-term investment in sustainable natural resource development in the region
- Provide comfort to employees seeking long-term job security
- Maintain certainty for companies' existing investments
- Create opportunity for future investments

The group provided suggestions for mechanisms to achieve this stability including ensuring a dedicated land base for forestry activity and allowing forestry businesses to develop standing timber inventories of permits and a flow of operations over several years. Participants also explained that forest management is likely to continue to become more important in a changing climate, making long-term economic investment an increasingly important component of land use planning. Accordingly, the tenure holders and contractors group highlighted the need for timeliness of the Gwa'ni Project in terms of both the development and implementation of a modernized land use plan. In the face of a changing climate, economy and political environment, completing the Gwa'ni Project in a timely way is crucial to ensure it is relevant to local needs and priorities, while remaining adaptable to the needs and considerations of future generations.

Similar to tourism and recreation stakeholders, forestry tenure holders and contractors explained that they are frustrated by the significant amount of misinformation in the media and on social media about the ways that forestry activities are carried out. They expressed concern with the ways that the public perceive the forestry industry to be contradictory to efforts of combatting climate change, explaining that sustainable forest management should and does include balancing social, economic and environmental values. Ultimately, the group encouraged better education and a reframing of the way that forestry is perceived by the public and other stakeholders, with one person saying, "forests in BC are a well-managed renewable resource, and they should be celebrated as a green product that can take the place of more detrimental materials such as plastic, concrete and illegally harvested timber from other countries". The group also said that the modernized land use planning process needs to be one that fosters trust so that local partners, businesses and investors can have confidence in the long-term sustainability of the local economy. Trust must also be built and nurtured between the province, 'Namgis First Nation, and local stakeholders for a plan to have long-term success, participants agreed. They identified the need for a common understanding of the expectations of both 'Namgis First Nation and the public

in terms of forestry and permitted economic activity on the land base; "confidence for the 'Namgis that their needs are being addressed and confidence for the forestry sector within the North Island," stated one attendee. Participants also expressed their desire for more opportunities to partner with 'Namgis, recognizing the importance of the First Nation's involvement and leadership of land use in the territory. "Having a mutually-developed and mutually agreed-upon long term plan for timber harvesting and other opportunities in the Gwa'ni plan area could provide the certainty needed for forestry businesses to invest in the region and maintain a sustainable level of business development and employment into the future," one person explained.

The tenure holders and contractors noted some specific locations within the project area that they hope become focal points of the modernized land use plan. These included North and South ends of Nimpkish Lake, areas near the Nimpkish River, as well as Vernon Lake. Vernon Lake specifically was identified as an area that should be focused on because forestry operations are able to co-exist with the many recreational opportunities in the area such as fishing, camping, and hunting.

LOCAL BUSINESS STAKEHOLDERS

Three local business stakeholders attended and participated in the virtual meeting that took place on December 8, 2021.

The key words emphasized by local business participants throughout the session were "opportunity" and "employment". When asked to rank the Gwa'ni Project values, participants responded as follows:

Highest-ranked values	Lowest-ranked values
Timber	Water
Tourism and visuals	Biodiversity
Recreation	Karst and soil

Participants noted that the bottom three values simply do not rank as high when it comes to the interests of businesses in the Nimpkish Valley, and agreed that almost all sectors of the business community rely on tourism dollars and the health of natural resource-based industries. "Fishing and logging are resource-based industries

that are large contributors to the local economy along with the vendors and suppliers who rely on them," one participant explained, and while ecological considerations are important, they do not have the same level of value to the business community as economic considerations do". Participants noted that they consider this focus on economy to be more important than environmental considerations, however they are also "trying to figure out the balance, and what the prioritization of these values means for jobs, economy, biodiversity, desires and needs of 'Namgis and BC", noting that "we all must be willing to shift priorities to make community peace and prosperity".

Land Use Designations

When asked to indicate how they want to see land proportionally allocated within the project area, the local business participants indicated that they would like to see the following allocation:

- Protected areas (33%)
- Low intensity resource extraction areas (28%)
- General resource management zones (24%)
- High intensity resource extraction areas (16%)*

When discussing the results of the exercise, participants acknowledged that they have limited knowledge on zoning and land use planning in general, and that their answers might be different if they had more knowledge about the topic. However, participants also agreed that they felt a natural inclination towards more space being allocated for protected lands and low intensity resource extraction based on preconceptions of what high intensity extraction might look like. One person did say that "high intensity sounds evil," which influenced their decision to allocate more to protected lands and low intensity extraction. This comment could also be an example of the type of negative portrayal and misconception that both tourism and recreation stakeholders as well as tenure holders and contractors mentioned in their engagement sessions.

When discussing how they would like land use planning to move forward for the Nimpkish Valley, local business stakeholders were the most adamant in their expression of interest for public education and information sharing. Suggestions were also made for the use of plain language and online social media platforms to generate interest and excitement about stakeholder involvement in the

* Actual land use designations: Protected Areas (10%), Low Intense Resource Extraction Areas (17%), General Resource Management Zones (38%), High Intensity Resource Extraction Zones (35%)

project. Participants further urged consideration and empathy for the fact that people are afraid of change, particularly business owners who have been forced to face a great deal of uncertainty over the past 22 months of the COVID-19 pandemic. "The amount of adapting that small business have had to do in the last year and a half has been hard and people are resistant to more," explained one participant, highlighting the need for transparent communication about modernized land use planning. Participants noted that a knowledge gap currently exists, and that this gap needs to be closed to build trust among the business community and other stakeholders who might be concerned about what a modernized land use planning process might mean for them. They very clearly communicated the need for transparent, digestible and plain-language information about the Gwa'ni Project and land use planning process overall, including:

- Continuous project updates
- Relationship and respectful partnership building
- Face-to-face engagement with smaller groups
- More public information sharing and consultation
- Clarity on what can and cannot be done with a land use plan (i.e., defined spaces and activities included in the plan)

Participants noted that they would like to see a land use plan that sets high-level strategic priorities for the land base and provides long-term goals with short- and medium-term actions that are easy for the public to digest. They explained that providing this type of 'road map' would allow all local stakeholders to fully understand the high-level objectives of the plan and therefore invest and act accordingly. They also provided input on what they would like to see included in these high-level objectives, noting that in the interest of local businesses and economic activity, more focus should be placed on economic considerations over environmental ones. More specifically they noted that priority should be placed on:

- Investment in infrastructure to support local tourism
- Support for local businesses
- Continued partnership building with Western Forest Products and BC Timber Sales

Local business stakeholders further elaborated on these economic priorities by explaining that local businesses largely rely upon dollars generated by tourism and natural resource industries. Economic generation is of significant value to the business community, and this economic generation is heavily reliant upon the tourism and recreation industries as well as the stainability of natural

resources such as fish, logging, water cleanliness, and maintaining the beauty of natural landscapes. The role that these natural resources play in tourism and recreation are by extension very important to the success of local businesses who rely on the support of people who visit the Nimpkish Valley as tourists and recreators.

PUBLIC ADVISORY GROUPS AND FORESTRY RELATED INTEREST GROUPS

There were five stakeholders who joined and participated at the virtual meeting for public advisory groups and forestry related interest groups on December 9, 2021. It should be noted that a few participants in this session experienced some technical difficulties working within Zoom and Mentimeter however, efforts were made to mitigate these challenges and ensure the perspectives of each participant were reflected in engagement results.

When asked to rank the Gwa'ni Project values, participants responded as follows:

Highest-ranked values	Lowest-ranked values
Water	Karst and soil
Indigenous forest values	Access
Timber	Non-timber forest products

"Sustainable" was a key word emphasized by the public advisory groups and forestry related interest group stakeholders. The sustainability of both environment and economy was identified as being of high importance to the group; they acknowledged the interconnectedness of all values, particularly ties between the environmental (i.e., water, fish, biodiversity and Indigenous forest values) and the economic considerations of the project area (i.e., jobs and the forestry industry). Participants noted that sustainability is also important for future predictability and consistency of the land base, which were two other concepts heavily emphasized by participants. They explained that sustainability of the land base is intrinsically linked with the sustainability of jobs and the local economy, and shared that long-term predictability and certainty on the land base is of very high importance for long range planning, particularly in the face of climate change and increasing cumulative effects impacting the local communities.

Land Use Designations

When asked to indicate how they would like to see land proportionally allocated within the project area, public advisory groups and forestry related interest groups said they would like to see land allocated as follows:

- Protected areas (31%)
- Low intensity resource extraction areas (30%)
- General resource management zones (20%)
- High intensity resource extraction areas (19%)*

To elaborate on these results, one participant put it simply; “we are loggers, we want to work”. Participants shared that they would like to see a working forest combined with recreation opportunities in the Nimpkish Valley, once again emphasizing the value and benefits of each type of land designation type and the importance of working to maintain some balance and flexibility among them in the interest of forestry workers.

Finally, participants identified several areas that they consider to be of high importance within the Project Area, and where they would the modernized land use plan to focus on. These areas include Nimpkish Lake Provincial Park and the south end of Nimpkish Lake where the River meets the Lake, which participants identified as being important for its beauty and visuals, recreation activities and hunting.

INFO NIGHT MEETING RESULTS – MAY 2022

In May 2022, the Gwa’ni Project Technical Committee hosted a by-invitation Info Night which was attended by over 30 participants from the local forest industry, local recreation groups, and local government. The Technical Committee delivered presentations on the Gwa’ni Project engagement that had taken place to date and provided a summary of engagement results and outcomes from 2021 and early 2022 engagements. Info Night presentations and meeting packages that were distributed during the meeting included information about VILUP, what the Gwa’ni Project is and is not, and the three levels of planning in BC. All hand-out materials can be found on the Gwa’ni Project engagement website. The Info Night allowed participants to hear directly from the Technical Committee and have informal conversations about the Project. Questions that participants asked during the Info Night presentations covered topics including project set-up (how the project area was chosen, future MLUP projects, etc.), the connections between ‘Namgis governance and economic development, and what the final product of the Gwa’ni Project is going to include.

* Actual land use designations: Protected Areas (10%), Low Intense Resource Extraction Areas (17%), General Resource Management Zones (38%), High Intensity Resource Extraction Zones (35%)

“We are looking to create an idea of predictability and certainty in troubled times, and this project looks to provide those things” – Info night participant

“It’s nice to see local people in a local area working it out, rather than having decisions forced on them from outside forces. Nice to see neighbours working on this.” – Info night participant

While the Info Night was intended to provide information to stakeholders and attendees, and was less focused on gathering formal input on the Gwa’ni Project outcomes, anonymous feedback forms were used to ask participants how satisfied they were with the information presented. 12 feedback forms were returned, and when asked to rank their satisfaction with the information presented at the Info Night on a scale of 1-5, all responses ranked the presentations either a 4 or 5 out of 5. Some of the oral and written feedback received during the Info Night is quoted below:

“Continue with the work as this is trail breaking and will serve as the template for future projects and joint decision-making initiatives” – Info night participant (feedback form)

“Thank you for the thoughtful presentation. The explanation of the Gwa’ni process as well as how land use “works” was helpful. I hope your work becomes an exemplar for other Government-to-Government collaboration.” – Info night participant (feedback form)

FOCUS GROUPS RESULTS – WINTER 2023

During the week of February 20, 2023, three in-person focus groups were held with key stakeholders and government representatives identified by the Gwa’ni Project Technical Committee. These focus groups were the last formal opportunity for stakeholders to provide input to inform the work of the Technical Committee before the Gwa’ni Project Consensus Recommendations are finalized and submitted to the Executive Committee later in 2023.

“It’s not a reserve zone, not a park, there is still forestry – that is excellent” – Local Business and Recreation Users focus group participant in response to the proposed SMZs

“It’s excellent that we can talk about this. Seems to be a more open approach to planning.” – Local business and recreation focus group participant

Participants from all the focus groups were provided an update on the Gwa’ni Project and stakeholder feedback to date, and the Technical Committee delivered presentations on key proposed planning changes: zoning changes and proposed conserved areas in the Upper and Lower Nimpkish Landscape Units. Maps of the current zoning, proposed zoning and proposed conserved areas were displayed around the room, and participants were divided into breakout groups so that they could dig deeper in proposed concepts and share more specific feedback.

“It’s [the] economy in the North Island; we need to stabilize it. We need to know what works for everyone.” – Forestry and Public Advisory Group focus group participant

“The devil is in the details …there is a realm of different options and a big range of protected areas…What [use] is allowed is important.” – Forestry and Public Advisory Group focus group participant reflections on the proposed SMZs

Several themes emerged from the conversations during the focus groups, as participants reacted to the Technical Committee’s updates and proposed planning concepts. The focus group discussions can be summarized into the following themes:

- Details are key:** Participants in all three focus group sessions had questions about operational details and impacts. Multiple stakeholders reflecting that when it comes to their opinions of the proposed changes, “the devil is in the details.”

- A good first start:** Stakeholders shared they were happy to see that the proposed changes paid attention to riparian areas. They expressed interest in how the proposed changes will provide momentum for future changes moving forward.

- Open communication:** In every focus group, there were stakeholders who initially had concerns about the proposed changes. However, after hearing the presentations and speaking with the Technical Committee members, participants left with a positive opinion of the changes, underscoring the importance of clear, open communication about the project and the proposed changes that will come from the Consensus Recommendations.

- Clarity:** Focus group sessions revealed some shared misunderstanding about the ability to log in the proposed Specials Management Zones (SMZs) and what the implications of the SMZs would be for the forestry industry in the North Island. Clarity around the rules in the SMZs will be an important part of project communications going forward to minimize any further misunderstanding about how SMZs and other proposed changes will impact stakeholders who live, work, and recreate in the North Island.

“I think this is great. It’s the first of its kind, but probably not the last.” – Local Government focus group participant reflections on proposed zoning changes

“This looks like it achieves the balance of the planning values. Phenomenal attribution and hits many of the values. Think it’s a great choice .” – Local Government focus group participant on the proposed areas for conservation

“The thing I like is that it’s not someone in Victoria throwing darts at a map. It makes total sense. It’s reasonable. We’re all in this together. People’s trust is important. This is beyond a reasonable first step.” - Local Government focus group participant

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE AND LAUNCH EVENT RESULTS – SPRING 2024

In March 2024, the Gwa’ni Project and TFL 37 Forest Landscape Plan (FLP) Technical Teams hosted an in-person launch event in Port McNeill to share the recommendations and outcomes of both projects. 68 representatives from key stakeholder groups and the broader public attended the launch event and provided their reactions to the outcomes of the Gwa’ni Project and the FLP/FOP planning concepts.

At the beginning of the event, local government representatives were invited to attend a special one-hour meeting with the FLP team and ask questions about the FLP, learn about how it relates to the work of the Gwa’ni Project, and offer their reactions to the planning concepts. Following this invite-only one-hour meeting, members of the public were invited to join the launch event to learn about the outcomes of both projects, hear from the Technical Teams, and understand how the two projects relate to one another.

The specific goals of the Open House were to:

- Update key stakeholders (who have previously been engaged to varying degrees) on Gwa’ni Project and FLP activities and outcomes

- Provide information about the Gwa’ni Project and FLP to the broader public (who may not be informed or aware of either project)
- Show how stakeholder feedback has been incorporated into the work and outcomes of the projects
- Educate and inform attendees on anticipated next steps

The feedback received from attendees was generally positive, with people sharing their appreciation for the level of transparency and engagement that took place throughout the Gwa’ni Project and FLP drafting phases. Of the 68 attendees, almost half were individuals from stakeholder groups or members of the public who had not been engaged before (i.e., had not been part of previous stakeholder engagement sessions or communications) and were new to the projects.

The attendees who had been previously engaged and who were familiar with the projects expressed that they were very pleased with the updated information being presented at the Open House.



Some key stakeholders were especially supportive of the changes being presented at the Open House. These included government representatives from the Town of Port McNeill, the Council of Forest Industries (COFI), members of speleological groups who were pleased to see the recognition of karst values included in the planning concepts, and representatives from Atli Resources and Paper Excellence, who were happy to see consideration for predictability in the business sector included in the projects.

Representatives from Kwakiutl First Nation and Quatsino First Nation also attended and voiced support for the changes and interest in continuing to learn more about the work that has been completed as part of the projects. Additional positive feedback was received related to proposed zoning changes and management zones.



Discussion

The Gwa'ni Project engagement activities were designed to provide opportunities for people to engage in conversation about the Gwa'ni Project, the values that should inform a modernized land use plan, and the future of land use planning in the Nimpkish Valley. People who live, work, and recreate in the Nimpkish Valley remained engaged in the project by providing continuous feedback about the vision for a modernized land use plan. Throughout the project, the Technical Committee aimed to introduce stakeholders and rightsholders to the Gwa'ni Project, listen to their feedback, and share consistent updates to ensure it represented the interests of the 'Namgis, BC, and North Island residents.

Engagement captured feedback from interested parties and incorporated it into the development of the consensus recommendations, as well as next steps that will be taken upon

the conclusion of the Gwa'ni Project. The Steering Committee will share the consensus recommendations with the Gwa'ni Project Executive Committee for official approval and recommendation to BC Cabinet and 'Namgis leaders. If approved, the next phase would involve the implementation of the approved consensus recommendations.

Engagement was vital to connecting with project stakeholders throughout the life of the project, addressing questions and concerns about the project, receiving feedback on land use planning values, and forming strong relationships with local communities, governments, industry, and the public.

Key themes that emerged from engagements and that informed the development of the consensus recommendations are summarized below.

Themes for Further Exploration	Summary of Input
Balance	<p>The engagement confirms that there is a need for the Gwa'ni Project to strike a balance among the 17 land use planning values that include both economic and environmental considerations of the project. The need for a balance of values and considerations was emphasized by those who were engaged in the project, with several stakeholder groups identifying that trying to rank or prioritize the values was difficult and, in some cases, unhelpful. This challenge stems from the interconnectedness that the values have with one another.</p> <p>The Gwa'ni Project sought to find this balance in engagement and communications with stakeholders, and in the ways that the modernized land use planning process could address their concerns. More specifically, when sharing feedback on the revised zoning and proposed conserved areas, stakeholders shared that they felt the proposed planning concepts achieve balance among the planning values.</p>
Local Input	<p>The Gwa'ni Project is a collaborative initiative, proudly made in the North Island, with active involvement from the voices of North Island communities, stakeholders and governments. Local input has been prioritized in the planning and execution of the Gwa'ni Project, and should be more heavily weighted than input from anyone who lives outside of the North Island. When providing their feedback on the revised planning concepts, stakeholders shared that they were pleased to see that local North Island residents are working on land use planning in the area, rather than decision makers who are far removed from the area.</p> <p>The Gwa'ni Project Team considered this in the planning of engagement for the project, as well as in the development of its Consensus Recommendations.</p>

Themes for Further Exploration	Summary of Input
Predictability in the Forest Sector	<p>Sustainability, stability, and certainty were emphasized to ensure that timber harvesting levels would sustain viable levels of local employment and a healthy forestry industry. This is important in providing forestry workers with job security, and it is vital for securing long-term investment in the region. Stakeholders identified that a modernized land use plan should provide long-term predictability within the forestry sector in order to create economic certainty for those who work in the forest industry and for the broader community of people who live, work, and recreate in the North Island. The results of the survey and stakeholder meetings also indicate concerns about timber harvest levels. Additionally, when sharing their feedback on the revised zoning and proposed conserved areas, stakeholders emphasized the need to ensure predictability in forestry and stabilize the North Island economy.</p> <p>Ongoing communication about the Gwa'ni Project continues to focus on addressing these concerns through information sharing and efforts to increase fact-based understandings of the real impacts of the Technical Committee's Consensus Recommendations, including the socio-economic and environmental impacts identified by the SEEA.</p>
Public education and information	<p>Stakeholders stressed a need for clear and accessible public information on the Gwa'ni Project and land use planning processes. There was an overarching sentiment that the average member of the public required more information about this project in order to be engaged and contribute to public consultations.</p> <p>Transparent communication was crucial to adequately informing the public about what the Gwa'ni Project is and what it is not. Communications were aimed at clarifying concerns that were expressed during engagements, including whether the project would impact private land ownership and rights, and concerns of misinformation about the forestry industry and logging activities in the Nimpkish Valley.</p> <p>Ongoing communication about the Gwa'ni Project continues to focus on sharing transparent information as a means of building strong relationships and trust both with and among stakeholders.</p>
Gwa'ni Project Values	<p>The Gwa'ni Project values identified in this report continue to accurately reflect the values of people who live in, work in, and visit the Nimpkish Valley. Cedar (wilkw) and climate resilience and carbon were added as two new values held by 'Namgis members and stakeholders with interests in land use planning in the Nimpkish Valley.</p> <p>The Gwa'ni Project continues to be guided by these foundational values, and they have informed the various forms of engagement and communication shared with local stakeholders.</p>
'Namgis Forest Values	<p>Indigenous forest values were identified as a high priority across multiple stakeholder groups and in late 2022, the name of this value was changed to 'Namgis Forest Values.</p> <p>In addition to multiple stakeholder groups ranking this as a value that should be prioritized by the Gwa'ni Project, the importance of recognizing the forest values held by 'Namgis First Nation also signifies a commitment to prioritizing the rights and interests of 'Namgis and reconciliation efforts more broadly.</p>

APPENDIX A: Gwa'ni Project Team Members

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Elected Chief Councillor Victor Isaac	'Namgis First Nation
Minister Bruce Ralston	B.C. Ministry of Forests

STEERING COMMITTEE

Kelly Speck	Councillor, 'Namgis First Nation
Jessica Coster	Executive Director, Strategic Projects, Regional Operations Division, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development
Andrew Ashford	District Manager, North Island Central Coast Resource District, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development (Port McNeill)
Matt LeRoy	Executive Director, WLRS

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Dukwalisala – Brian Svanvik	Natural Resources Director, 'Namgis First Nation
Mike Green	Representative of the 'Namgis First Nation
Rachel Dalton	Representative of the 'Namgis First Nation
Pam Silver	Section Head, Resource Initiatives, WLRS
Amy Beetham	Land and Resources Specialist, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development (Port McNeill)
Kathy DesRochers	Director of Indigenous Relations, Ministry of Forests (Port McNeill)
Devin Sullivan	Land & Resource Specialist, WLRS
Ron Cotton (former Technical Committee member)	Land and Resources Specialist, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development (Nanaimo)
Cyndy Grant (former Technical Committee member)	Land and Resources Specialist, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development (Port McNeill)
Cody Jackman	Land and Resources Specialist, WLRS

APPENDIX B: Gwa'ni Public Survey

SECTION 1: YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO GWA'NI

1. What is your relationship to the Nimpkish Valley? [select all that apply]

- Full-time resident
- Part-time resident
- Work full-time in the Nimpkish Valley
- Work part-time in the Nimpkish Valley
- Business owner
- Tenure holder
- Regular visitor [more than twice a year]
- Occasional visitor [less than twice a year]
- Indigenous person with ancestral ties to the Nimpkish Valley
- Other [please describe]

2. Where do you live most of the time?

- Area A (Malcom Island)
- Area B (Winter Harbour-Holberg, Quatsino, Coal Harbour)
- Area C (Hyde Creek)
- Area D (Woss)
- Alert Bay
- Port Alice
- Port Hardy
- Port McNeill
- Strathcona Regional District
- First Nation Community [please describe]
- Other (please describe)

3. Where do you work? [Select all that apply]

- The Nimpkish Valley
- Malcom Island
- Winter Harbour – Holberg
- Coal Harbour
- Hyde Creek
- Quatsino
- Woss
- Alert Bay
- Port Alice
- Port Hardy
- Port McNeill
- Strathcona Regional District
- First Nation Community [please describe]
- Other [please describe]

4. Which of the following categories best describe the industry you primarily work in? [Select all that apply]

- Recreation and/or tourism
- Hospitality
- Agriculture
- Fishing and/or Hunting
- Forestry
- Mining/mineral exploration
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Environmental Services
- Retail, Wholesale Trade
- Information and/or Technology
- Education
- Health and/or Social Services
- Finance and/or Insurance
- Art and/or Entertainment
- Public Service
- Administration and/or Business Support
- Real Estate and Development
- Transportation and/or Warehousing
- Utilities
- Legal Services
- Student
- Retired
- Homemaker
- Environmental Advocacy
- Small business
- Other [please specify]

5. Which of the following categories best describe the industry you primarily work in? [Select all that apply]

ACTIVITY	LESS THAN ONCE A YEAR	1-6 TIMES PER YEAR	7-12 TIMES PER YEAR	MORE THAN ONCE A MONTH	MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK
Fishing					
Hunting					
Water sports and recreation (e.g., wind surfing, kite surfing, boating etc.)					
Caving					
Front country skiing/snowboarding					
Back country skiing/snowboarding					
Equestrian					
Camping					
Picnicking and day use					
Motorized recreation (e.g., quadding; snowmobiling)					

If you use Nimpkish Valley for any other recreational activities, please describe them here:

SECTION 2: YOUR PRIORITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

6. Tell us how consistent each of the following value statements are with your priorities in relation to the Nimpkish Valley.

VALUE STATEMENTS	VERY CONSISTENT	SOMEWHAT CONSISTENT	NEITHER CONSISTENT OR INCONSISTENT	SOMEWHAT INCONSISTENT	VERY INCONSISTENT
The Nimpkish Valley should have an abundance of plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms					
The forest should provide for a diversity plants like mushrooms and other organic products we use or eat.					
We should rely on our forests to provide us with timber and to sustain our economy.					
The lakes, rivers, ponds and other bodies of water within the Nimpkish value should be clean and have potential to be used for agriculture, industrial and recreational purposes.					
The fish and their habitat should be protected and, where needed, restored.					
People should be drawn to the Nimpkish Valley for its world-class tourism and cultural tourism.					
The Nimpkish Valley should offer resource development opportunities in mining and mining exploration					
People should easily be able access and enjoy the many unique features in the Nimpkish Valley					
The Nimpkish Valley should appear pristine and much of it should remain untouched by further development					
The cultural, historical and archeological significance of the Nimpkish Valley to 'Namgis First Nation is well understood and culturally significant places and resources should be managed with care and respect.					

7. What are other value statements or words that describe priorities you believe should be reflected in a modernized land use plan for the Nimpkish Valley?

8. Based on your experience in the Nimpkish Valley, which of these statements do you most agree with:

- Protecting the health of the Nimpkish Valley lands, water and natural ecosystems should be a priority, even at the risk of slowing down economic activity?
- Economic activity should be a priority in the Nimpkish Valley, even if there is a risk to the health of our land, water and natural ecosystems?
- The Nimpkish Valley should be managed in a way that maintains economic activity and healthy ecosystems.
- Unsure

**9. What are your top three concerns regarding a new land use plan for Nimpkish Valley that may result from this Project?
[Please select three]**

- Impacts to the local economy (eg. Business opportunities and availability of jobs)
- Impacts to salmon habitats
- Impacts to old growth forests (forests that have never been commercially harvested)
- Increased timber harvest levels
- Decreased timber harvest levels
- Impacts to wildlife habitat
- Impacts to recreation opportunities
- Impacts to existing leases, licenses and tenures
- Impacts to protected areas
- Other [please specify]

10. How important are the following considerations for making land use decisions in the Nimpkish Valley?

	EXTREMELY IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	A LITTLE IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
Availability of food, energy and water					
Sustainability for future generations					
Protecting lands and water from pollution and degradation					
Public safety and disaster avoidance					
Science, facts, and expert knowledge about the area (incl. Indigenous knowledge)					
Jobs and economic development					
First Nations rights, interests and stewardship responsibilities					
Interest of all British Columbians					
Minimizing rules and regulations					
Climate adaptation					

SECTION 3: MORE ABOUT YOU AND HOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ENGAGED IN THE GWA'NI PROJECT

11. Which of the following best describes your gender?

- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Male
- Two-Spirit
- Prefer to self describe [please specify]

12. Which of the following describes your total household income in 2020?

- Less than \$10,000
- \$50,000 to \$69,999
- \$150,000 or more
- \$10,000 to \$29,999
- \$70,000 to \$89,999
- Prefer not to say
- \$30,000 to \$49,999
- \$90,000 to \$149,999

13. How old are you?

- 18-24 years
- 55-64 years
- 25-44 years
- 65-74 years
- 35-44 years
- 75 years or older
- 45-54 year

14. Generally, what additional information would help you to better understand modernized land use planning processes, including the Gwa'ni Project?

- The Modernized Land Use Planning (MLUP) process in British Columbia
- The role of stakeholders in the MLUP process
- The role of stakeholders in the Gwa'ni Project
- The Vancouver Island Land Use Plan (VILUP)
- MLUP projects elsewhere in BC
- Other [please specify]

15. Generally, what's your preferred method of engagement?

- Email
- Mail
- Website
- Other [please specify]
- Social Media

16. What are other value statements or words that describe priorities you believe should be reflected in a modernized land use plan for the Nimpkish Valley?

APPENDIX C: Email Updates

All attachments referenced in the email updates can be found on the Gwa’ni Project website.

GWA’NI PROJECT UPDATE - JUNE 2022

Thank you for your interest in the Gwa’ni Project!

This is the first email update to share what’s happening at the Gwa’ni Project; you can expect to hear from us each month until the project is concluded in 2023. You are receiving this email because you signed up on the Engagement Site or because you are identified as a stakeholder in the process.

The Gwa’ni Project is a Government-to-Government partnership between the BC Government and ‘Namgis First Nation as we work collaboratively to modernize land use planning in the Nimpkish Valley.

Modernized land use planning is a priority of the BC government, and this project reflects the Province’s commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. Together, the governments of ‘Namgis First Nation and British Columbia are developing Consensus Recommendations that will direct the future stewardship and development of lands in the Nimpkish Valley on North Vancouver Island.

In 2021-2022, the Gwa’ni Project Team began seeking input from stakeholders through various engagement activities including an engagement website, a public survey, and virtual stakeholder meetings. In 2022-2023, the Gwa’ni Project Team is continuing engagement with government and key stakeholders which will inform the Gwa’ni Project Team’s development of Consensus Recommendations.

You will also find several foundational project documents including an updated set of frequently asked questions about the Gwa’ni Project on the Documents tab of the Gwa’ni Project Engagement Site.

GWA’NI PROJECT UPDATE - JULY 2022

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the Gwa’ni Project!

The Gwa’ni Project is a Government-to-Government partnership. As the project progresses, members of the Technical Team continue to regularly report to, and receive feedback from, the Steering Committee, which includes leadership from both ‘Namgis First Nation and the Province. Together, both governments are developing Consensus Recommendations that will direct the future stewardship and development of lands in the Nimpkish Valley on Northern Vancouver Island. Local engagement remains foundational to this work.

In case you missed it, a summary of last year’s Gwa’ni Project public engagement can also be found on the BC Government’s website, which contains the 2021-2022 Gwa’ni Project What We Heard Report and other important project documents.

This year, engagement with local government and stakeholders on the North Island is continuing. Most recently, several representatives from the North Island forest industry, recreation groups and local government attended the Gwa’ni Project Info Night. Representatives gathered with the Gwa’ni Project Technical Team to learn more about the project, how the Gwa’ni Project could modernize land use planning, and how the Gwa’ni Project fits with the Forest Landscape Plan Pilot in Tree Farm Licence 37. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and raise their concerns about the project. If you did not attend the May 26th Info Night, you can access and download the meeting package by going to the documents tab of the Gwa’ni Project Engagement Site.

Since the Info Night, the Technical Team is continuing to focus on the feedback that has been received to date as it works on developing Consensus Recommendations. Highlights of the feedback received to date include: prioritization of local input in the planning process, predictability within the forest sector, support for Indigenous forest values, and aiming to strike a balance between the various land use planning values which guide the project. The presentation about the Forest Landscape Plan described how the plans will integrate, and how the spatial and temporal modelling will help to assess how to best manage the land and resources. The outcome of the FLP modelling will inform the Gwa’ni Project. Under the government-to-government partnership, all values will be considered, and meaningful targets and tactics will be applied at both planning levels; the outcome should be a predictable harvest level.

In addition to hosting the Info Night and more engagement events happening this year, the Technical Team is also undertaking a Socio-Economic Environmental Assessment (SEEA). The SEEA is an important element of the project, which will help decision-makers to understand the potential effects of various land use directions. In the fall of 2022, the SEEA will begin its third and final phase.

Remember to stay in touch with the Gwa'ni Project through the Gwa'ni Project Engagement Site and by email at Gwani.Project@gov.bc.ca.

GWA'NI PROJECT AND THE VANCOUVER ISLAND LAND USE PLAN – AUGUST 2022

Hello and thank you for your continued interest in the Gwa'ni Project!

As you know, the Gwa'ni Project is a Government-to-Government partnership to develop Consensus Recommendations that will direct the future stewardship and development of lands in the Nimpkish Valley. They will form the basis of recommendations for updates to the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan.

Vancouver Island Land Use Plan

The Vancouver Island Land Use Plan – commonly referred to as VILUP – was drafted in the 1990s and established in 2000; VILUP was one of several regional level Land Use Plans to be developed in the 1990s. These plans were the first time that comprehensive land use planning had been done on a regional scale in B.C. By identifying a set of resource management zones and planning frameworks, VILUP sets strategic direction for sustainable resource stewardship and management across B.C. In essence, VILUP guides the management of provincial public land in consideration of the province's economic, environmental, and social objectives.

Specifically:

- VILUP created a vision for land use throughout this region of BC via The Vancouver Island Summary Land Use Plan
- The VILUP Higher Level Plan Order created a zoning system, which formalized management objectives in three zones – special management zones, general management zones and enhanced forestry zones
- Subsequently the Upper and Lower Nimpkish Landscape Units were established through related Orders.

Key Dates

VILUP was many years in the making will evolve as priorities and approaches to land use planning change over the years. Attached to this email is a timeline that traces various milestones that led to VILUP, and those that have continued to influence land use planning on Northern Vancouver Island. Each of those milestones have collectively led us to the current Modernized Land Use Planning (MLUP) process, the Gwa'ni Project.

To learn more about VILUP, including plan maps, legal direction and orders, and decision support reports, you can visit the BC government land use planning website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/crown-land-water/land-use-planning/regions/west-coast/vancouverisland-lup>. A backgrounder called, "Gwa'ni Project Land Use Planning Context" can be found on the documents tab on the Gwa'ni Project website.

The Future of VILUP

The Gwa'ni Technical Team – comprised of representatives from the BC Government and 'Namgis First Nation – are in the process of developing Consensus Recommendations as part of BC's MLUP process. This process is meant to update VILUP through a modern lens. Among other important changes, a key marker of this modernized process includes 'Namgis First Nation joining as an equal partner in the decision-making process, where they were previously absent.

While those recommendations are still in development, there are some categories that the Technical Team is considering:

- Desired future forest: what would the forest of the Nimpkish Valley look like to continue to provide economic benefits, cultural access and recreational opportunities to residents and visitors of the North Island?
- Reconciliation, UNDRIP, and DRIPA: how can the Consensus Recommendations best steward the commitments that the BC government has made to reconciliation with First Nations in their traditional territories?
- Climate Change, models and datasets: how can climate-based datasets that have been developed apply to the project area to better inform the decisions being made at the planning table?

Don't hesitate to send us an email if you have any questions or comments.

GWA'NI PROJECT UPDATE - SEPTEMBER 2022

Thank you for your continued interest in the Gwa'ni Project.

As you know, the Gwa'ni Project is a Government-to-Government partnership to develop Consensus Recommendations that will direct the future stewardship and development of lands in the Nimpkish Valley. In particular, they will form the basis of recommendations for updates to the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan.

The 'Namgis First Nation and British Columbia are drafting the Consensus Recommendations, considering direction for the short- and long-term management of the project area. As one of the key land use planning values informing the Gwa'ni Project (see attached infographic for more), 'Namgis forest values set the vision that the project is striving for in imagining a desired future forest condition. 'Namgis forest values involve ensuring that the cultural, environmental, and spiritual vitality of the waters, lands, and resources are protected and used sustainably for future generations of people, plants and animals. Through employing a modern holistic approach to forest management, the desired future forest will balance the management of the forest resources, and will incorporate social, economic, and environmental factors.

A modernized land use plan will be able to articulate the specifics of the desired future forest including outcomes of the Gwa'ni Project's public engagement, as well as technical expertise. These specifics will look to balance the values used to guide the Gwa'ni Project, including but not limited to biodiversity, recreation, timber and non-timber forest products, wildlife, habitat, and water.

The attached infographic identifies and defines the 15 land use planning values that were developed and confirmed through various forms of public and community engagement for the Gwa'ni Project thus far. Each of these land use planning values are interconnected, and in drafting the Consensus Recommendations, they will be considered as complementary to one another, rather than competing with one another for importance.

A modernized land use plan may also support a proactive approach to ensuring future forests are more resilient to climate change and other future conditions including ecological, economic, social, cultural, or political changes. Through the public engagement conducted thus far, the Gwa'ni Project Technical Team have heard that predictability in forestry is extremely important to all stakeholder groups. This will be an important aspect of the desired future forest that informs the Consensus Recommendations and updates to the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan.

In addition to hosting various public engagement events, the Technical Team is also undertaking a Socio-Economic Environmental Assessment (SEEA). The SEEA will help decision-makers to understand the potential effects of various land use directions. In the Fall of 2022, the SEEA is beginning its third and final phase. The Team is working on the development of planning concepts which they hope to share in future project updates throughout the Fall of 2022.

Remember that you can always contact the Gwa'ni Project Technical Team through the Gwa'ni Project Engagement Site and by email at Gwani.Project@gov.bc.ca.

GWA'NI PROJECT UPDATE: SOCIO ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT – OCTOBER 2022

Hello and thank you for your continued interest in the Gwa'ni Project.

One of the tools feeding into the Gwa'ni Project is a Socio-Economic and Environmental Assessment (SEEA), and today we wanted to share more information about the SEEA, which will help decision-makers understand the potential effects of various land use directions.

The general approach of the SEEA involves comparing the current state (the "base case") with alternative land use plan configurations. Economic, social, and environmental implications are considered, and trade-offs are identified that may lead to more effective and predictable management direction for the resources found within the project area.

Some of the accounts and indicators that will be considered include:

- Environmental: biogeoclimatic variants, old and mature forests, culturally significant species;
- Indigenous: participation of Indigenous governments in planning, management, stewardship, observance of traditions and customs, community cohesion, contributions to reconciliation;
- Economic: harvest levels, secondary manufacturing, employment and employment income, resource rents, business capacity;
- Social: well-being measures, protection of sites and resources, access, peace and enjoyment of spaces, recreation use and infrastructure.

The SEEA uses a “multiple accounts” analysis to consider many interrelated values and issues and to measure different outcomes. This involves five steps, and the Gwa’ni Project is at the early stages of step 4:

1. Selecting and confirming indicators
2. Selecting appropriate method(s) of analysis
3. Collecting data
4. Analyzing the effects of the base case scenario and alternative scenarios on indicators
5. Comparing the results of the analysis between scenarios

Outcomes of the multiple accounts analysis may be expressed quantitatively; however socio-economic and environmental impacts are often expressed using qualitative scales. Common criteria for evaluating these socio-economic and environmental effects involve the type of change, magnitude of impact, geographic extent, probability and level of confidence.

The Province’s updated 2022 Socio-economic and Environmental Assessment Guidance for Modernized Land Use Plans broaden the SEEA by ensuring it is directed by two governments (‘Namgis and the Province), while broadening the scope of considerations to include Indigenous rights and climate change. The full document can be found here: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/natural-resource-use/land-water-use/crown-land/land-use-plans-and-objectives/policies-guides/mlup_guide_socio-economic_environmental_assessment_2022.pdf.

You can always contact the Gwa’ni Project Technical Team with further questions about the SEEA and the overall project by going to the Gwa’ni Project Engagement Site and by email at Gwani.Project@gov.bc.ca.

GWA’NI PROJECT UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2022

Thank you for your ongoing interest and engagement in the Gwa’ni Project!

This email will provide information about the protected areas in the Gwa’ni Project area, including their origin and purpose.

British Columbia’s protected areas system provides for the protection and maintenance of important natural and cultural values and outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities. Protected areas contain some of the best representative elements of British Columbia’s natural

and cultural heritage. They include ecological reserves; provincial parks; conservancies; recreation areas; and protected areas.

There are currently five protected areas in the Gwa’ni Project area: Nimpkish River Ecological Reserve, Shoen Lake Provincial Park, Woss Lake Provincial Park, Nimpkish Lake Provincial Park and Lower Nimpkish River Provincial Park.

The Nimpkish River Ecological Reserve (18 ha) was established in 1988, to preserve an exceptional growing site that supports Canada’s tallest coastal Douglas-fir forest, as well as to protect rare and endangered species. More detail can be found in the Nimpkish River Ecological Reserve Purpose Statement: [https://bc-parks.ca/planning/mgmtpls/nimpk_er_ps.pdf?v=1669845312412](https://bc-parks.ca/planning/mgmtpls/nimpk_er/nimpk_er_ps.pdf?v=1669845312412)

Shoen Lake Provincial Park was originally established in 1977 and amended in 1994 to include area along the Davie River; the total area of this part is 8,775 ha. The primary role of the park is to conserve natural resources and provide relatively accessible opportunities for wilderness recreation. The Shoen Lake Management Plan can be found at this site: https://bc-parks.ca/planning/mgmtpls/schoen/schoen_mp.pdf.

In 1995, A Protected Areas Strategy for BC (PAS) was released by the Province following new global trends for conserving areas to maintain representativeness of natural diversity (Goal 1) and special features (Goal 2). Within the planning area the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan (VILUP) process led to the 1995 designation of the remaining three parks.

Woss Lake Provincial Park is 6,635 ha, and was established as a Goal 1 Park to conserve representative old growth forest, lake and mountain ecosystems. The park also contributes to Goal 2 of the PAS by protecting special old growth forest features, archaeological sites, salmon-spawning watershed, rare plants and wilderness recreation, to name a few. The Management Direction Statement for this park can be found here: https://bc-parks.ca/planning/mgmtpls/wosslake/woss_mds.pdf?v=1669845359119.

Nimpkish Lake Provincial Park is 3,950 ha, addressing Goal 1 of the PAS by incorporating habitat in under-represented ecosystems. Goal 2 features (fish, wildlife, old-growth forest, limestone geology) were also considered in establishing this park. This park also offers unique backcountry wilderness recreation opportunities. The Management Direction Statement for this park can be found here: https://bc-parks.ca/planning/mgmtpls/nimpkish/nimplk_mds.pdf?v=1665165273191.

Lower Nimpkish River Provincial Park is the smallest of these, at 264.7 ha. The primary role of this park is to provide day use opportunities in a riverside setting. Access to the park is limited to foot traffic, and intended uses were seen to be ideal for angling, hunting, swimming, hiking and kayaking. The park also contains a large number of traditional and cultural sites that are significant to the 'Namgis First Nation. The riparian corridor along this longest river on Vancouver Island provides habitat for 5 species of salmon. The Management Direction Statement can be found at: https://bc-parks.ca/planning/mgmtplns/lnimpk/lnimpk_mds.pdf?v=1665165585724

The attached map shows the location of each of these areas. You may have noticed that many of Gwa'ni Project planning values are listed as

To ensure the Technical Team continues to receive input during this process, focus groups are being planned for February 2023, where we will be looking to discuss key planning concepts, such as reviewing protected areas, with stakeholders before the drafting of Consensus Recommendations is completed.

Please continue to reach out to the Gwa'ni Project Technical Team with any questions about the project by going to the Gwa'ni Project Engagement Site and by email at Gwani.Project@gov.bc.ca.

GWA'NI PROJECT 2022 RECAP & LOOK FORWARD – DECEMBER 2022

Thank you for the interest you have shown in the Gwa'ni Project throughout 2022!

This year, the Technical Team has been working to discuss and develop Consensus Recommendations with input from technical discussions and public engagement. We are also continuing the work of the Socio-Economic Environmental Assessment (SEEA), which will help decision-makers understand the potential effects of various land use directions. As the year comes to a close, we wanted to provide you with a snapshot of some of the engagement that has taken place in 2022, accompanied by a look ahead to what's to come in the new year!

In April 2022, the Technical Team released the Gwa'ni Project What We Heard Report. The report provides a summary of engagement that had been completed to date, including a public survey and five targeted stakeholder meetings with local government officials, local businesses, tourism and recreation stakeholders, public advisory groups, and forestry tenure holders. The report synthesizes

the results of the engagement outcomes into key themes:

- Need for balance among land use planning values
- Importance of local input
- Predictability in the forest sector
- Inclusion of Indigenous forest values
- The need for more education and information about the Gwa'ni Project
- Confirmation of the Gwa'ni Project's land use planning values

In order to continue sharing more information with stakeholders, the Technical Team hosted a Gwa'ni Project Info Night in May 2022, which was attended by over 30 participants from the forest industry, local recreation groups, and local government. The Info Night included presentations on Gwa'ni Project engagement to date, Land Use Planning 101, and an Introduction to the Gwa'ni Project and Forest Landscape Plan. The Info Night also provided participants with the opportunity to hear directly from the Gwa'ni Technical Team, chat with one another, and have informal conversations about their questions related to the Gwa'ni Project.

As you know, we have been distributing monthly emails since July 2022 to keep stakeholders connected to the project and Technical Team. Through these monthly emails, we have shared information about the following topics to help set the stage for some of the draft Consensus Recommendations that will be shared in the new year:

- Gwa'ni Project Background
- Engagement
- Vancouver Island Land Use Plan
- Desired Future Forest
- Socio-economic and Environmental Assessment
- Protected Areas in the Gwa'ni Project area

An up-to-date-list of Gwa'ni Project background and supporting documents can always be found on the Gwa'ni Project Engagement Site.

All of the input gathered through public engagement so far has been incredibly useful, and we are looking forward to continuing this work in the new year! Focus groups with targeted stakeholders are being planned for February 2023.

In 2023, we will also continue to provide you with these monthly project email updates, further public communications about the Gwa'ni Project and the SEEA, and updates on the progress being made by the Technical

Team in drafting Consensus Recommendations. As always, you are welcome to reach out to the Technical Team at any time by email at Gwani.Project@gov.bc.ca.

Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season, and a great start to 2023!

ZONING AND THE GWA'NI PROJECT - JANUARY 2023

Happy New Year! The Gwa'ni Project Technical Team has hit the ground running in 2023 to continue our work developing Consensus Recommendations and would like to thank you for your ongoing interest in the project.

In our November email update, we provided some information about the origin and purpose of protected areas within the Gwa'ni Project area. Through input from technical discussions and engagement, protected areas remain a key topic of conversation for the Technical Team, along with potential zoning changes that could happen in the project area.

As you know, there are 15 land use planning values (see infographic attached) that inform the Gwa'ni Project. During the engagement activities that we have hosted, we have heard that a modernized land use plan must find ways to strike a balance in the ways that it prioritizes and protects these 15 values. The Technical Team is investigating how amending zoning designations in key areas would allow for a contemporary approach to balancing values.

The Technical Team is currently considering zoning changes to support the desired balance and predictability in forestry that stakeholders have called for thus far. The Vancouver Island Land Use Plan (VILUP) created Enhanced Forestry Zones (EFZs) to identify areas that were suitable for increased timber production, where exceptions could be made to the default limits established in legislation. Through the Modernized Land Use Planning Process, the Technical Team has an opportunity to assess the EFZ in the project area and determine whether the direction provided by VILUP is effective and where a modernized land use planning approach can be applied. Proposed alternative zoning regimes would include redistribution of Special Management Zones, to include areas where multiple values exist.

Zoning is key to land use planning. As planning partners, 'Namgis and BC are considering modernizing the VILUP zoning designations to meet contemporary expectations and move toward a shared desired future condition that encompasses Social, Economic and Environmental

objectives. The importance of balance has been heard throughout this project and we continue to bring that lens into our technical zoning discussions.

Please continue to reach out to the Gwa'ni Project Technical Team with any questions about the project by going to the Gwa'ni Project Engagement Site and by email at Gwani.Project@gov.bc.ca.

ZONING AND THE GWA'NI PROJECT – FEBRUARY 2023

Thank you for staying interested and engaged in the Gwa'ni Project! Over the coming months, the Technical Team will be busy as we continue to develop Consensus Recommendations for submission to the decision makers later this year. Through input from our public engagements and technical meetings to date, potential zoning changes in the project area remains a key topic of conversation and consideration for the Consensus Recommendations.

The Technical Team has reviewed the current zoning that exists under the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan (VILUP). The proposed zoning changes are being considered to support the desired balance and predictability in forestry that stakeholders have called for thus far. In our review of VILUP, the Technical Team considered the current zoning and asked ourselves some of the following questions:

- Are these designations still appropriate in 2023?
- Is the current zoning distribution still appropriate?
- What would the balance of values look like if a more modernized approach is used to determine land use designations?

The Vancouver Island Land Use Plan (VILUP) created Enhanced Forestry Zones (EFZs) to identify areas that were suitable for increased timber production, where exceptions could be made to the default limits established in legislation. Through the Modernized Land Use Planning Process, the Technical Team is proposing elimination of the Enhanced Forestry Zone. EFZs were not seen to be consistent with a contemporary approach to land use planning where balancing values is a key objective. Elimination of the EFZ would give a higher priority to the biodiversity values around Nimpkish Lake.

Proposed alternative zoning regimes would also include redistribution of Special Management Zones, to include areas where multiple values exist. The proposed redistribution of SMZ would:

- Allow for the consideration of all relevant land use planning values to be considered, including sites of special importance, access and recreation;
- Recognize the importance of fish and riparian values;
- Capture a greater proportion of ecosystems which are rare or unique to the region;
- Promote connectivity and biodiversity within riparian and forest ecosystems; and
- Consider restoration of valley bottom ecosystems and long-term recovery to increase the proportion of older forest areas.

It is important to note that timber harvesting will continue to occur in SMZs. This is similar to the current management in SMZs as described in VILUP.

The Gwa'ni Project Technical Team will continue to refine this proposed planning concept based on feedback received during stakeholder engagement, along with input from 'Namgis members and the Gwa'ni Project Steering and Executive Committees. Please continue to reach out to the Gwa'ni Project Technical Team with any questions about the project by visiting the Gwa'ni Project Engagement Site or by email at Gwani.Project@gov.bc.ca.

GWA'NI PROJECT PROPOSED CONSERVED AREAS – APRIL 2023

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the Gwa'ni Project!

The project team has been working to collect comments and feedback from stakeholders through all phases of the project, and the Consensus Recommendations are being prepared for submission to decision-makers in both 'Namgis and BC Governments later this year.

One of the changes being considered for the Consensus Recommendations is the creation of two proposed conserved areas in the Gwa'ni Project area: one in the Upper Nimpkish and one in the Lower Nimpkish. The locations of the proposed conserved areas are shown as green cross hatched polygons on the attached map.

The creation of these two conserved areas is intended to enhance existing ecosystem protection and to conserve specific sites that encompass many planning values and hold great cultural significance. The Upper Nimpkish proposed conserved area is adjacent to the Nimpkish River Ecological Reserve and includes cultural features, salmon and wildlife habitat. The Lower Nimpkish proposed conserved area surrounds the Lower Nimpkish Provincial Park and includes significant cultural sites.

These proposed conserved areas are being considered as part of the Consensus Recommendations of the Gwa'ni Project that will be submitted to the Executive Committee of the Gwa'ni Project for approval, which includes the 'Namgis Chief Councillor and the BC Minister of Forests. If the Consensus Recommendations are approved, a new process will begin to determine how the proposed conserved areas could be established, and this new process would include a period of public engagement.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the Gwa'ni Project Technical Team by visiting the Gwa'ni Project Engagement Site or by email at Gwani.Project@gov.bc.ca.

GWA'NI PROJECT: WHERE IT'S BEEN AND WHERE IT'S GOING – MAY 2023

Thank you very much for your continued interest and engagement in the Gwa'ni Project!

We'd like to take this opportunity to share a summary of where the Gwa'ni Project is today; how we got here, and what is coming next.

As you know, in January 2021, 'Namgis First Nation and the Province of B.C. signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which formalized a partnership between 'Namgis and the Province to develop Consensus Recommendations for land use planning in the Nimpkish Valley on North Vancouver Island. Since then, stakeholders have been asked to identify their values, interests, and concerns related to the Gwa'ni Project and the creation of a modernized land use plan.

Since Winter 2021, nearly 450 people in total have been engaged in various way throughout the life of the Gwa'ni Project:

- In February of 2021 project announcement letters were mailed to 200 people
- During the winter of 2021 virtual stakeholder meetings were attended by 36 people
- In fall of 2021, a survey was advertised via 200 postcards & social media ; 144 people responded
- In the spring of 2022 Info Night was attended by 30 people
- Winter 2023 focus groups were attended by 48 people
- In the last year, over 100 people have signed up to receive monthly emails on background information and updates related to the draft Consensus Recommendations that will be shared later this year.

- Throughout the planning process, Technical Committee reps have shared presentations with a number of other groups, including Nimpkish Woodlands Advisory Committee, Forest Management Leadership Team, Woss Residents Association, Regional District Economic Forum

A Socio-Economic and Environmental Assessment (SEEA) is also being conducted to assess the projects various impacts. For more information about the SEEA process, read the Socio-economic and Environmental Assessment Guidance for Modernized Land Use Plans.

In addition to these engagement activities and events, the Gwa'ni Project published a What We Heard Report in 2022, which is available on the Gwa'ni Project Engagement Website and later in 2023, a revised version of this Report will be published to include the outcomes of 2023 engagement.

The Consensus Recommendations are currently being finalized and prepared for submission to decision makers in both 'Namgis and BC Governments later this year. To date, two recommendations have been shared and are being considered for the Consensus Recommendations: proposed zoning changes and two proposed conserved areas in the Gwa'ni Project area (see attached maps). There are other planning concepts being considered that will be shared in the months to come.

Later this year, the Technical Committee will submit Consensus Recommendations (supported by a report and rationale) to the Steering Committee who will determine which recommendations will be elevated to the Executive Committee of the Gwa'ni Project for decision; Executive Committee members include the 'Namgis Elected Chief and the BC Minister of Forests. If the Consensus Recommendations are approved, a new process will begin to enact some of the recommendations into law, including additional government-to-government work with 'Namgis First Nation as well as public review and comment periods.

Have more questions? You can always continue to reach out to the Gwa'ni Project Technical Team by visiting the Gwa'ni Project Engagement Site or by email at Gwani.Project@gov.bc.ca.

GWA'NI PROJECT SUMMER UPDATE – JULY 2023

Thank you for your continued interest in the Gwa'ni Project.

Over the past few weeks, the project team has been reviewing results of spring engagement events and other key data sources to create the Background and

Intention document, which will include the Consensus Recommendations with supporting rationales. Once the documents have been drafted, they will go to the Gwa'ni Project Steering Committee for consideration and will be shared with stakeholders and local government. The Steering Committee is a joint committee between the Province and 'Namgis First Nation, and they will make recommendations to the joint Executive Committee for decision.

During plan development, the project team has been monitoring other Provincial initiatives that relate to the Gwa'ni Project, particularly around revised zoning and two proposed conserved areas. These initiatives include the Old Growth Strategic Review, Together for Wildlife, the Canada-British Columbia Nature Agreement, and the Watershed Security Strategy. These initiatives emphasize the importance of working with Indigenous communities, which is a central tenet of the Gwa'ni Project, and our team will be reviewing the available outcomes, recommendations, and action items to seek alignment between the Gwa'ni Project Consensus Recommendations and these initiatives.

For more information about those current initiatives, you can visit these links:

Old Growth Strategic Review: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/old-growth-forests/strategic-review-of-old-growth-forest-management> - being consistent with the recommendations

Together for Wildlife: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/wildlife/together-for-wildlife> -

Canada-British Columbia Nature Agreement: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2021/02/canada-and-british-columbia-launch-development-of-a-new-nature-agreement.html>

Watershed Security Strategy: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/watershedsecurity/process/>

We will continue to share information in the coming months. We'd love your input on any topics that interest you! Please respond to this email at any time with any questions or requests for future updates.

As always, feel free to reach out to the Gwa'ni Project Technical Team by visiting the Gwa'ni Project Engagement Site or by email at Gwani.Project@gov.bc.ca.

2023 WHAT WE HEARD REPORT – OCTOBER 2023

The Gwa’ni Project Technical Committee is pleased to share the 2023 Gwa’ni Project Engagement Report: What We Heard!

This 2023 Engagement Report is an updated version of the report that was published in Spring 2022, and provides stakeholders with a summary of the Gwa’ni Project, as well as an analysis of results from the community engagements that took place between 2021 and 2023.

In addition to the feedback that stakeholders provided on key proposed planning changes, the Report shares information about some of the changes that were implemented throughout the planning process, including the addition of two new land use planning values which have guided the Gwa’ni Project.

The 2023 Gwa’ni Project Engagement Report will be shared on the BC Government’s Gwa’ni Project Website soon. You may also visit the website for further project details and foundational documents.

As the work of the Technical Committee is ongoing, we will continue to keep you updated. In the meantime, please reach out to the Technical Committee with any questions you have by emailing Gwani.Project@gov.bc.ca.

As always, we would like to thank you for your ongoing interest and engagement with the Gwa’ni Project!

GWA’NI PROJECT - MARCH UPDATE – MARCH 2024

As the Gwa’ni Project nears the end of its Plan Development phase, we would like to take an opportunity to thank everyone who joined the Gwa’ni Project Open House in Port McNeill on March 13, or have participated in other ways!

The Technical Team was thrilled to connect with area residents and representatives of local government, business, recreation groups, natural resource sectors, and others to share the progress and outcomes of the Gwa’ni Project. We invite you to check out the coverage of the event from the North Island Eagle newspaper here: https://www.northislandeagle.com/_files/ugd/1e96f3_6f7c10de093a4883b90fbef1727761b4.pdf

Currently, there is an open comment period for the public to provide feedback on the Gwa’ni Project’s proposed planning outcomes. This comment period closes May 14, 2024.

To read more about the public comment period and to submit a comment, visit: <https://landuseplanning.gov.bc.ca/p/6038070ec65ea900200bbf5a/background-info?bcgovtm=enewsletternov19>

As a next step, Gwa’ni Project team members are finalizing planning documents and beginning to draft implementation plans. If approved, the Gwa’ni Project will move towards the Plan Implementation & Monitoring phase. Future milestones and updates will be communicated through the Gwa’ni Project website: <https://landuseplanning.gov.bc.ca/p/6038070ec65ea900200bbf5a/background-info>. You can also sign up for project updates to be emailed directly to you via this website.

The Gwa’ni Project Team would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the Project since 2021 and who have contributed to the development of the Gwa’ni Project outcomes, including the consensus recommendations. Your participation and input have been invaluable in ensuring this process is rooted in the values and priorities of the local communities whose lives will be most directly impacted by this work.

If you have any questions going forward, please email gwani.project@gov.bc.ca or contact us via the Gwa’ni Project website.

We look forward to staying in touch!

Stay informed and engaged about the project:
<https://landuseplanning.gov.bc.ca/>

Gwa'ni Project email:
Gwani.Project@gov.bc.ca



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