

History

We have lived on Haida Gwaii, since it was light and yet dark, they say (Swanton, 1905). In the old stories, tell us, the land was much bigger and the climate much colder (see figure 1).

In between there was also a time when it was much warmer and the insects were much larger (Deans, 1899). Our places to live have gone from holes dug in the sand or soil and pulling grass over to protect each person during the “supernatural time.” The supernatural beings taught our ancestors to build the long houses which, where we lived for thousands of years until the early 1800s. (Swanton, 1908).

Our ancestors coped with climate change for thousand’s of years. the oceans rose 154.5 m or just over 500 feet the climate was warming, it all happened in the space of two thousand years (2,000), very quickly (Fedje et al, 2005), it fell about 14.5 m (47 feet) and levelled off to today’s level (see figure 2).

Housing had to be portable and easily moved. Our people were resilient and adaptive. Our old stories tell of floods, Quick rising tides, ice and hot climates. (Swanton, 1905, 1908, 2004). We know that unless it is catastrophic, we can survive. A major shift in climate is upon us again. Haida Gwaii residents are amongst the highest energy consumers per-capita in North America.

Objectives

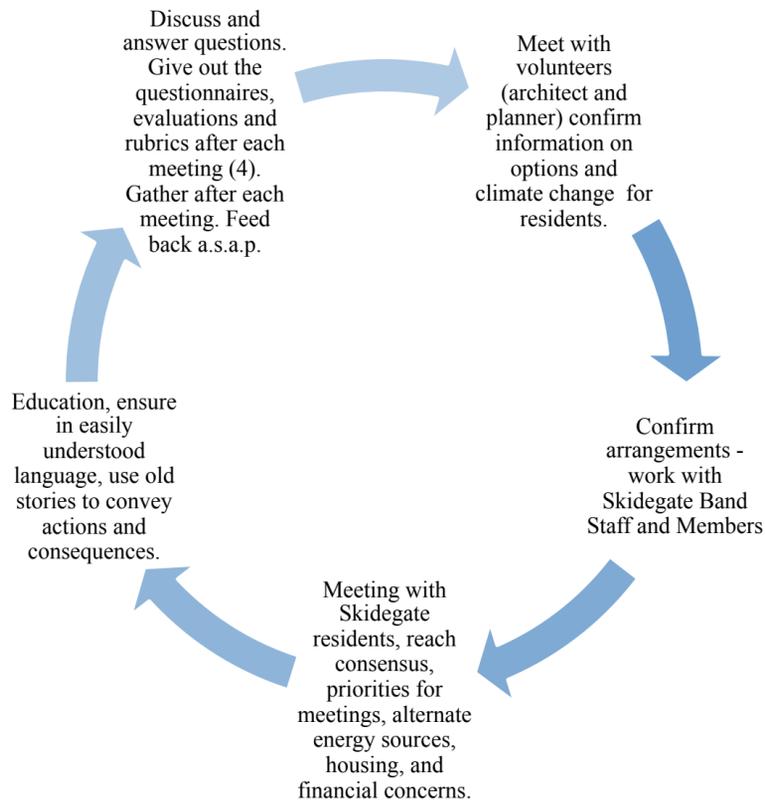
Provide clear concise information/education to residents in order to understand the implications of “Climate Change” and what we as islanders can do to possibly make a difference.

Discuss how we can use the values our ancestors left us and experience of the Haida Nation in developing climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies for those living on Haida Gwaii. Specific steps will be taken toward achieving resolutions set by the Haida’s governing body, the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) concerning financial support, available technologies or alternative energy sources to the mainstay, diesel and how to attain healthy homes and lives.

The intention is to find solutions with the Skidegate residents to start with. Once we have completed this project and are able to evaluate the efforts and results it is hoped we can use the same solutions in other island/coastal communities. The over-arching questions that we intend to answer are:

- What are the most effective ways of passing on information regarding, Climate Change (CC) and the effects CC it will have on our lives? What can we do to make a difference?
- How can houses be modified or built more energy-efficient and still be affordable?
- How can funds be sourced and used to help the village elders, single-parent families and those who are chronically un-employed or under-employed?
- Which way can we ensure we have youth and other people learn necessary skills, to inspect and keep houses in good shape and at the same time, provide employment at good income levels?
- First Nations communities face unique challenges to their way of life from climate change, and this study will help better represent their interests. The research will be carried out on Haida Gwaii, and will engage a broad range of stakeholders including educators, business leaders, youth, and the Haida Nation.

Methods



Results

Stable moderate climate, where we can still harvest our food from the sea, the shore-lines and lands.

Whole healthy village life once more, where people have pride in their homes, their village and themselves.

Respect, responsibility and caring for each person in the community, and our lands, waters and air, instead of the adage of more, more, more.

Mold free homes, with integrity and safety.

Conclusion

- *Yaahguudang* (respect) and *tll yahdah* (to make things right) are tied together. “*There’s a right way and a wrong way. If you do it right you don’t have to worry; but, if you do it wrong, you must make it right.*”
- The *Tllsda Xaaydas K’aaygang.nga* tell of consequences when you are disrespectful to other beings (Wilson, 2005:129-130; Brown & Brown, 2009:35).
- Another knowing is: “Once you know, there’s no excuse” you must do something.

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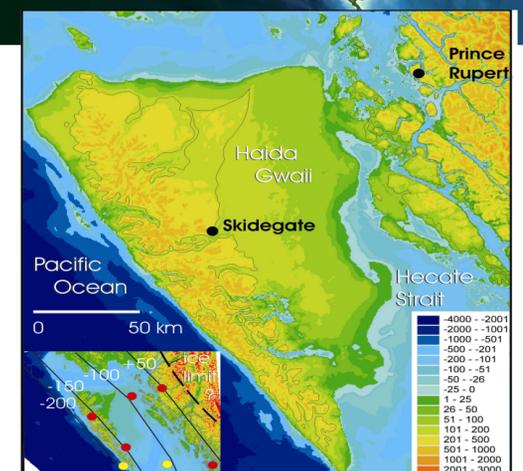


Figure 1. Haida Gwaii 13,000 ca.
Courtesy D. Fedje, UVictoria