# BC PARKS RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

## 2021-2024

BRITISH COLUMBIA | BC Parks

Kema Experience, photo by Natasha Ewing

Juan de fuca park, photo by Sarah Burger

# INTRODUCTION

British Columbia's provincial protected areas system covers over 14% of the land base and includes many diverse, unique and sacred places. The BC Parks system is also part of the province's colonial legacy – as many of the older parks were established with little to no consultation or consideration for the Indigenous Peoples who have historically occupied or used these areas and whose deep connections to the land continue to this day.

BC Parks acknowledges that reconciliation and the interests of Indigenous Peoples have not always been a focus of our agency. Today, and in the future, BC Parks is committed to moving to a place of deep acknowledgement and respect for Indigenous Peoples.  BC Parks' approach to reconciliation is guided by the UN Declaration (UNDRIP), the Declaration Act, Draft 10 Principles and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report.

***Reconciliation at BC Parks***

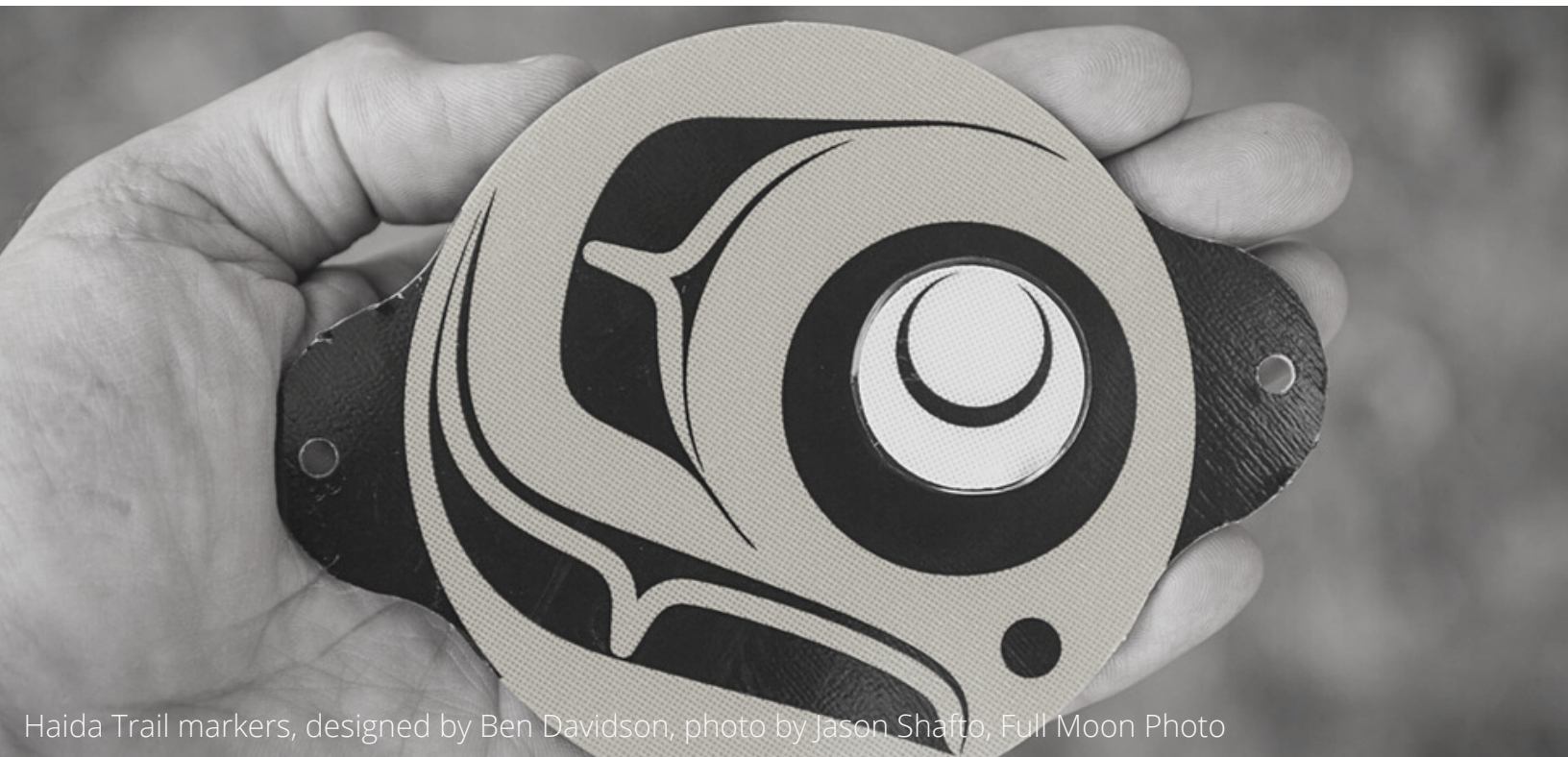
*BC Parks is committed to strengthening our relationship with Indigenous Peoples, by nurturing our common interests in stewardship, management and appreciation of the many values maintained and revered within protected areas.*

*Reconciliation at BC Parks means acknowledging that work with Indigenous Peoples is an integral part of our continuing role in land management and is a shared responsibility of everyone in the agency.*

# BC PARKS RECONCILIATION VISION

BC Parks will:

- Recognize Indigenous Peoples as partners in stewardship and protected area management.
- Endeavour to establish a foundation of mutual trust and respect with Indigenous partners.
- Seek access to sustainable funding, enabling us to make progress on agreements, projects and other commitments.
- Ensure provincial parks and protected areas are safe spaces for Indigenous Peoples to practice their Aboriginal rights.
- Nurture a culture at BC Parks that supports and promotes reconciliation in everyone's work.
- Create space and opportunities to reflect Indigenous Peoples history and cultures in provincial parks and protected areas.



Haida Trail markers, designed by Ben Davidson, photo by Jason Shafto, Full Moon Photo

# BC PARKS RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

The BC Parks Reconciliation Action Plan is an agency-wide action plan. The plan was developed internally, with contributions and input from all BC Parks staff and communicates a shared responsibility for all of us to continue this important work.

**The plan is divided into four action areas:**

1. **Internal Transformation**
2. **Shared Stewardship and Partnerships**
3. **Innovating Our Approach**
4. **Supporting Traditional Use**

The BC Parks Reconciliation Action Plan highlights work we are already doing as well as visionary actions that we would like to start doing over the next 3 years should additional capacity/resources become available. We invite BC Parks staff to find their place in this document and use the plan in a way that works for you and your team.

ŁÁU,WELNEW/John Dean Provincial Park naming ceremony, submitted photo

# INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION

BC Parks is implementing changes to ensure our internal structures, regulations, and legislative framework, including our policies, processes and priorities are inclusive, and align our reconciliation efforts with the way we steward the land.

- *Revise the BC Parks mission statement to reflect the organization's commitment to reconciliation.*

- *Appropriately and respectfully incorporate an Indigenous focus into public communications (e.g. updating website, signage, interpretive information, etc.).*

- *Continue to develop policies, guidelines, processes, tools and resources to support our collective reconciliation work.*

- *Ensure appropriate collection, use and sharing of reconciliation related information across our organization, with other ministries, and the broader public sector.*

- *Engage in cross-ministry networking and keep abreast of other advancements on the implementation of provincial reconciliation commitments.*

- *Support and encourage our regional staff to seek out and receive cultural training from the Indigenous Peoples whose traditional territories they operate in.*

- *Connect BC Parks staff with opportunities to learn through sharing of resources and working with colleagues across government.*

- *Propose, prioritize, and pursue updates to BC Parks' legislative framework, as appropriate, as we align with the Declaration Act / UNDRIP.*

- *Acknowledge and address the increasing demand of Indigenous-focused work with the creation of dedicated regional Indigenous relations positions and/or resources.*

- *Recognize reconciliation as an important part of all current BC Parks staff positions and ensure this is reflected in job descriptions and work planning.*

- *Encourage the development of Indigenous relations related competencies among those who represent our organization, including contractors and park operators.*

*Ensure Indigenous people are welcomed as recreational users of Parks.*

# SHARED STEWARDSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS

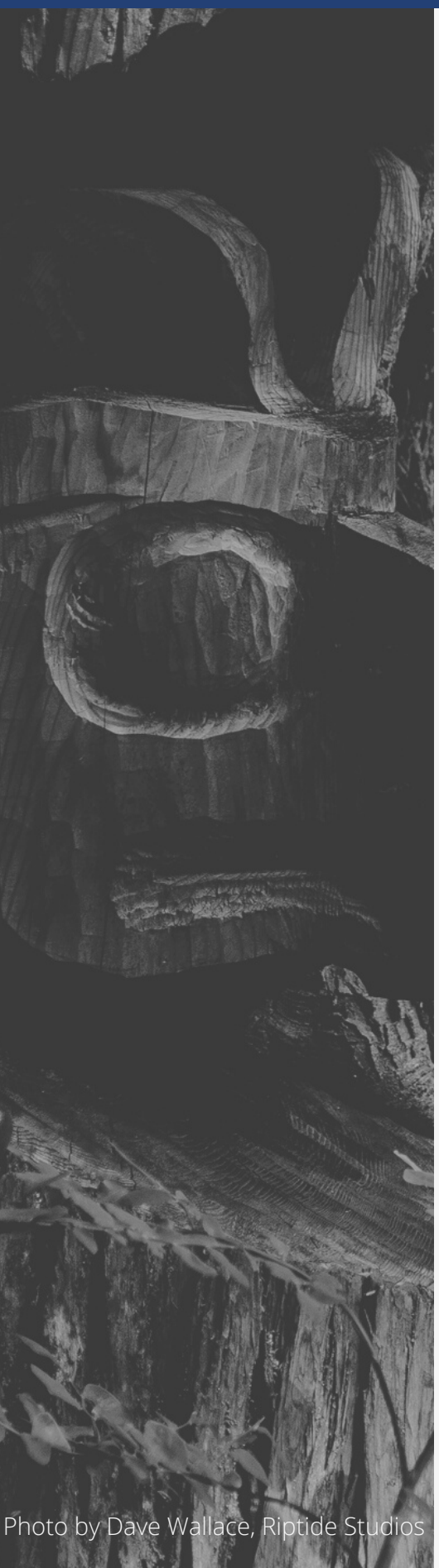


Photo by Dave Wallace, Riptide Studios

BC Parks is committed to strengthening our government-to-government relationships with Indigenous Peoples as we build upon a foundation of common interest in managing, protecting and preserving our land base, while undertaking sustainable uses that benefit everyone. BC Parks is dedicated to recognizing and respecting Indigenous Peoples and integrating our respective roles in protected areas stewardship and management.

- *Incorporate Indigenous values, laws and interests as we work together as partners in protected areas management.*
- *Collaborate with other agencies and Indigenous governments to identify and enable new land management and protection-focused models.*
- *Create opportunities to build Indigenous Peoples' capacity to participate in protected area management.*
- *Resource and implement agreements and partnerships to support ongoing stewardship and management of protected areas, and amend and clarify agreements as needed.*
- *Ensure new agreements with Indigenous partners are focused, specific and are adequately resourced.*
- *Pursue new concepts of shared stewardship and co-governance in protected area management including shared decision-making, protection designations, compliance and enforcement (e.g. guardian programs), and joint prioritization and project planning with Indigenous partners.*
- *Expand linkages to Indigenous Peoples culture, heritage, and values in projects such as signage and on our public websites.*

# INNOVATING OUR APPROACH

BC Parks will find innovative ways to streamline how we work together, increase predictability for partners, and build trust-based relationships with Indigenous Peoples in support of park management and land stewardship.

- *Identify collaborative projects and connect staff and Indigenous partners with project-specific funding and in-kind resources where possible.*

- *Review existing agreements and engagement activities with Indigenous partners to determine if they are working as intended.*

- *Participate in provincial negotiations related to BC Parks areas and ensure any new commitments made are realistic, actionable, and can be resourced appropriately.*

Photo by Ryan Yardley

- *Seek a consistent budget for reconciliation work at BC Parks to ensure programs and projects are resourced appropriately.*

- *Take the time to appropriately engage and build relationships with Indigenous Peoples, with an emphasis on face-to-face meetings when possible and demonstrating follow-through on commitments.*

- *Support Indigenous communities in their aspirations for pursuing compatible and sustainable economic activities in BC Parks.*

- *Engage proactively with Indigenous Peoples through relationship building activities or innovative models (ex. Advisory committees) outside of formal consultation obligations.*

- *Connect Indigenous Peoples and organizations with sources of capacity building funding to support meaningful participation in land management agreements and projects.*

- *Incorporate Indigenous knowledge, history and territory recognition into external communications.*

# SUPPORTING TRADITIONAL USE

BC Parks strives to enable the long-term continuation of social, cultural and ceremonial practices of Indigenous Peoples in our shared spaces. We recognize that lands currently designated as provincial parks and protected areas are important to the health and well-being of Indigenous communities, and that there are significant spiritual, cultural, and historical links between Indigenous Peoples and their ancestral lands.

Squamish Nation youth program, submitted photo

- *Support and encourage the creation of opportunities to learn from and with the Indigenous Peoples whose traditional territories staff operate in.*
- *Support the exercise of Aboriginal rights such as hunting, fishing, gathering, social, and ceremonial activities in provincial protected areas.*
- *Keep in mind sensitivities around cultural knowledge. Proactively take actions to help protect areas of historical and cultural significance.*
- *Facilitate opportunities for First Nations to share knowledge with park visitors.*
- *Leverage information from existing archaeological systems and processes to inform our work.*

Welcoming event, submitted photo