



A L D E R H I L L

Exploring Policies and Priorities in the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Region

Indigenous Engagement

For the VICC CLP Steering Committee

By Alderhill Planning

June 2, 2022

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Introduction

This progress report was prepared for the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Climate Leadership Planning (VICC CLP) Steering Committee to provide an update on the Exploring Policies and Priorities in the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Region, Indigenous Engagement as of June, 2022.

Project Description

The VICC CLP Steering Committee is working to build a ten-year climate adaptation and mitigation leadership plan that draws on and builds from the unique circumstances of our individual communities—rural, urban and First Nations—while thinking of Vancouver Island and the surrounding Coastal Communities as one region.

Alderhill Planning has been brought on to this project to help lead the preliminary Indigenous engagement, which has been broken down into three phases, detailed below:

Phase 01

Development and deployment of a letter of invitation and survey or interview for all First Nations in the region. Nations will be invited and encouraged to indicate their current climate and community resilience priorities and actions, as well as how they would like to be involved in regional scale climate planning going forward.

Findings from this phase will be summarised in a report and used to guide next steps in the process.

Phase 02

Development and facilitation of a half-day virtual forum with the communities who have expressed interest in ongoing collaboration. The forum's focus will be dependent on what is learned from phase one. However, the overall intent will be to bring together interested First Nations collaborators with the VICC CLP Steering Committee and representatives from the Resilience Summit and Youth Climate Summit to establish a foundation for collaboration going forward.

The identified shared goals and priorities will be summarised in a report and used to develop a process that supports the ongoing involvement of First Nations—potentially with a commitment to near-term action items to build momentum and substantive collaboration.

Phase 03

Translate the data collected throughout the forum's and translate the information into a shared action plan for next steps, which will inform the third and final phase of the VICC CLP process—the development of the Climate Leadership Plan.

Progress Summary

Research Ethics Board Approval

With support from Kara Shaw, an application was submitted to the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (HREB). Included in the application was a detailed overview of the project team, engagement methodology, recruitment process, data collection methods and materials. HREB approval was received on April 22, 2022.

Data collection materials submitted alongside the HREB application:

- Recruitment Email
- Invitation letter
- Consent form
- VICC CLP Recruitment Follow-up Email
- Semi-structured interview script, guide & email
- Online questionnaire



First Nations



Indigenous Tribal or Treaty Associations

Were identified as being on Vancouver Island or a surrounding Coastal Community. A community communication list was compiled while the HREB application was under review. The below list notes the communities that have been contacted, an asterisk has been placed next to communities we are in communication with or have been able to collect data for.

List of First Nations & Tribal Councils on Vancouver Island and the Surrounding Coastal Communities.

Adapted from the Province of BC First Nations A-Z Listing

Ahousaht First Nation	Kwakiutl Indian Band	Snaw-naw-as First Nation
Cowichan Nation Alliance	Kwiakah First Nations	Snuneymuxw First Nation
Cowichan Tribes	Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation	Songhees First Nation
Da'naxda'xw/Awaetlala First Nation	Laxkw'alaams Indian Band	Stz'uminus First Nation
Ditidaht First Nation	Maa-nulth First Nations Treaty	Te'mexw Treaty Association
Dzawada'enuxw First Nation	Malahat Indian Band	Tla'amin Nation
Ehattesaht First Nation	Mamalilikulla First Nation	Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation
Esquimalt Nation	Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation	Tlatlasikwala First Nation
Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation	Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw Tribal Council	Tlowitsis Nation
Gwawaenuk Tribe	'Namgis First Nation	Toquaht First Nation
Halalt First Nation	Nanwakolas Council	Tsartlip First Nation
Hesquiaht First Nation	Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council	Tsawout First Nation
Homalco (Xwemalhkwa) Indian Band	Nuchatlaht First Nation	Tseshah First Nation
Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council	Tseycum First Nation
Hupacasath First Nation	Pacheedaht First Nation	T'Sou-ke Nation
Huu-ay-aht First Nation	Pauquachin First Nation	Ts'uubaa-asatx First Nation
Ka:yu:'K't'h'/Che:ktles7et'h' First Nation (Kyoquot)	Penelakut Indian Band	Uchucklesaht Tribe
Klahoose First Nation	Qualicum First Nation	Yuu'lu?i'ł?at'h First Nation
K'ómoks (Comox) First Nation	Quatsino First Nation	We Wai Kai Nation
Kwakiutl District Council	Scia'new First Nation	Wei Wai Kum First Nation
	shíshálh Nation	

Participant Recruitment

Recruitment emails and letters were sent to the primary administrative email of 61 First Nation Communities and Treaty Associations on May 10, 2022—no responses were received from this initial round of recruitment.

Follow-up phone calls aimed at connecting with a member of staff currently working in climate preparedness or a related field were made on May 20, 2022. Eight direct connections were made, and recruitment emails were sent to them directly. Where a direct contact was not possible, follow-up emails were sent to the general administrative email for the Nation.

When possible, the project team spoke with office administration to provide additional project details so that they could be connected to an appropriate member of staff. Generally, there was uncertainty around which staff members or departments were working on climate preparedness or adaptation. Most office administrators requested that the project details be sent to the general administration email for circulation.

Some communities had pre existing climate documents available for public use and directed us to their appropriate locations. Most of the public facing documents available are outdated, but provide insights into general areas of concern and what climate change preparedness and adaptation strategies are currently underway.

Four communities responded to the second round of recruitment emails, requesting additional project details. Respondents have expressed interest in the project but note concerns around internal capacity. The project information is scheduled to be presented to staff or council, and the Alderhill team are waiting to hear back from communities on how they would like to be engaged.

Document Analysis

Sixteen publicly available Comprehensive Community Plans (CCPs), climate preparedness, or climate planning related documents have been found and are currently being reviewed using a content analysis framework based on the interview and survey questions. Additional research is also being done into other public sources, such as news articles, which will be used to gather further insights into the current climate strategies being undertaken by First Nation Communities in the VICC region.

Preliminary Data

VICC First Nations Communities face many impacts from climate change, including:



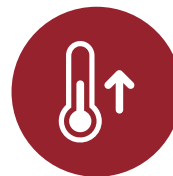
**Sea Level Rise
And Flooding**



**Extreme Storm
Events**



**Changing Ocean
Temperatures**



Extreme Heat



**Wildfire And
Wildfire Smoke**



Food Insecurity



**Access To Clean
Water**



Energy Insecurity

For many island communities, the extreme weather events of 2021—exacerbated by the health, social, economic, and logistic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic—were a stark reminder of the severity and risks that climate change poses.

Food and energy insecurity, alongside a need for extreme heat and wildfire smoke infrastructure, were noted as particular areas of concern. One community representative shared the successes associated with community food programs, such as the community garden, which allowed residents to grow their own traditional foods in their own community. Similarly, many CCPs note the establishment of community gardens as essential for ensuring and maintaining local food security.

To protect the lands and waters and support food security through fishing, hunting, and gathering, some Nations have implemented various stewardship programs that monitor and help care for the land. By cultivating the land, gathering information about activities occurring in territories, and monitoring efforts, stewardship programs combine lived experience, traditional knowledge, and sciences to help mitigate the impacts of climate change and provide climate data.

Climate change can significantly impact the conservation and restoration efforts set in place by First Nations communities designed to mitigate the impacts of the changing climate. Most climate adaptation plans for Vancouver Island highlight the importance of implementing comprehensive restoration projects to aid in the protection of the island's vital ecosystems.

Installing cooling infrastructure and establishing community cooling stations is a high priority for some communities—particularly if they are not able to easily access cooling infrastructure in urban centres. Remote communities are also preparing for power outages through knowledge sharing and installing energy infrastructure.

Although many Nations have or are taking steps to prepare for or mitigate the effects of climate change, many still lack the capacity or funding to plan or support the implementation of comprehensive climate actions.

Obstacles to Progress

This project is currently faced with three obstacles:

Staff Capacity

Based on the preliminary phone calls, all respondents, and many of the office administrators expressed concerns about staff capacity to participate in this project—particularly throughout the summer season, as this is a busy time for both staff and community members.

One respondent shared that, in light of last year's extreme heat event and wildfire smoke, their attention is currently focused on establishing community cooling stations and procuring portable air conditioners for Elders. As such, they did not anticipate being able to take part in this project until later in the summer.

Limited Resource or Coordination

A few office administrators, over the phone, shared that their communities have not had the opportunity or resources to dedicate towards specific climate preparedness or mitigation actions; rather, isolated projects have occurred across various departments as funding became available. As such, there was uncertainty as to whom to connect the research team with.

One recruitment email respondent shared that, in light of their community not having a dedicated climate plan or champion, they would share the project at their next staff meeting and use it as an opportunity to catalyse discussion and coordination before following up with the project team.

Limited Publicly Facing Documents

The limited number of publicly available and community specific climate related planning documents is restricting the quantity, reliability and validity of data that can be collected.

Interim Recommendations

With consideration to the above project obstacles, we propose either of the following two approaches:

Option 01

Continue with the current project plan, collecting what data is available, to produce a final report and recommendations in time for the 2022 UBCM convention in September.

This would include sending a further round of invitation emails—perhaps leveraging organisations that have a stake in climate change, such as the First Nations Health Authority, the BC First Nations Forestry Council, or the British Columbia Association of Emergency Managers—and utilising snowball sampling to recruit more respondents.

This direction maintains the project timeline, but might result in fewer Nations being able to participate, reduced reliability and validity of the final results.

Option 02

Continue with the current project plan; however, shift the final project deadline, making the UBCM deliverable as an interim report. This working document would then be used as a basis from which additional feedback and insights can be collected.

This would include sending another round of invitation emails—perhaps leveraging organisations that have a stake in climate change, such as the First Nations Health Authority, the BC First Nations Forestry Council, or the British Columbia Association of Emergency Managers—and utilising snowball sampling to recruit more respondents.

Crucially, this phase of engagement will be framed as preliminary, with the interim reporting being sent to the list of 61 First Nation Communities and Treaty Associations for review and feedback. These inputs would be woven into a final report and recommendations.

This direction extends the project timeline, but ensures that deliverables are produced for key project milestones. The additional feedback on the interim report would allow for increased data validity and reliability.

Next Step

At the June 13, 2022, VICC CLP Steering Committee meeting, the group opted to move forward with the second interim recommendation. Alongside endorsing the suggestion to connect with organisations with local Indigenous representation and who might be supporting local climate adaptation and mitigation projects, the Committee suggested that the project team connect with Tribal Councils. Below is a list of the additional organisations that Alderhill has connected with:

- Kwakiutl District Council (KDC)
- Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council (NTC)
- Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council
- Nanwakolas
- First Nations Health Authority
- BC First Nations Forestry Council
- British Columbia Association of Emergency Managers
- West Coast Climate Action Network

The aim is to use snowball sampling to support participant recruitment. Alongside providing insight into climate adaptation and preparedness work happening in the VICC region, the hope is that these organizations can connect the research team with other communities or organizations doing similar or complementary work—potentially adding to the above list.