

# DECLARATION *of* HEILTSUK TITLE & RIGHTS

- A. This declaration is based on Lhaxvai (our inherent jurisdiction that flows from ownership of our lands) and Gvi'ilas (our governing authority over all matters related to our lands and people).
- B. Throughout our history, our ancestors, Hemas and leaders have worked to reconcile our differences with Canada and BC. Each generation preserved our history and culture, and protected our territory. We acknowledge Elders who imparted teachings, stories, songs and dances that allowed us to maintain the traditions of our government institutions and our way of life. We honour our children and future generations who will carry on this important work until reconciliation is achieved.
- C. Together, we the Hemas (hereditary Chiefs) and Heiltsuk Tribal Council (elected leaders) acting in our capacity as the official governing body mandated to represent citizens of the Heiltsuk Nation, on this day, October 28, 2015 declare that:
1. We are the Heiltsuk people, descendants of ancestors who exercised sovereign authority and ownership over our land and waters for thousands of years. Today, we reaffirm the continued existence of Heiltsuk title, and our right as a Nation to exercise jurisdiction and management authority and to derive economic benefits from lands, waters and resources within our territory.
  2. The source of Heiltsuk title flows from our historic ownership, occupation, stewardship, use and control of our territory. Our title predates and survives the assertion of European sovereignty. Each generation is taught the history of our lineage and how it connects our People to ownership and responsibilities related to our territory.
  3. Heiltsuk territory includes Wuyalixv, 'Qvuqyayaitxv, Wuilitxv, Yisdaitxv and Xixis encompassing 35,553 sq. kilometers on the central coast of British Columbia. We have never surrendered title to our homeland, eco-systems and resources, as they are essential to our way of life.
  4. We continue to exercise jurisdiction and political authority as owners of our territory and resources when engaging with other governments, industry partners, First Nations and those seeking to carry out activities on Heiltsuk lands and waters.
  5. We will uphold stewardship responsibilities passed on by our Hemas and nuyem-giwa (house, crest and family systems) and allow traditional laws to evolve into our contemporary government system.
  6. To advance legal recognition of our title, we have undertaken extensive strength of claim analysis to demonstrate that our assertions are based in fact. We are prepared to launch an Aboriginal title case if this fundamental reality is not recognized or respected.
  7. We remain committed to existing agreements and to establish strategic alliances and cooperative relationships with partners who share Heiltsuk interests. These interests include the principles of ecosystem-based management over our land, water and resources, and the establishment of sustainable economic development and a conservation economy within our territory.
  8. We remain committed to seek appropriate solutions to reconcile Heiltsuk title with the Crown and engage on a government-to-government basis with Canada and BC to establish a process of reconciliation through negotiation.
  9. It is our position that reconciliation requires our free, prior, and informed consent to development on Heiltsuk territories and waters as we move forward in a collaborative-management regime.
  10. The renewed mandate from our People is to obtain a declaration of title to our lands and waters; and for Heiltsuk to exercise maximum control over our territory.

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Hemas Herbert 'Toby' Moody-Humchitt  
*Wauyala - Head Chief of Uyalitxv Territory*



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Marilyn Slett (Ga-gwi-ya)  
*Chief Councillor Heiltsuk Tribal Council*

