

Clayoquot Sound EMS Program

Context

Clayoquot Sound, British Columbia is globally renowned for its unique ecological and cultural values. However, there are threats to these values, including industrial development, tourism pressure and climate change (among others). First Nations and other sectors of the local community are working with Gathering Voices Society (GVS) to explore ways to maintain the integrity of ecosystems, to support communities and the local economy over the long term. An Ecosystem Services Fee (ESF) is identified as a way to support First Nations stewardship of ecosystems, and to support their livelihoods.

Key Elements

- A. Three First Nations call Clayoquot Sound home: Ahousaht, Hesquiaht and Tla-o-qui-aht. These First Nations have Aboriginal rights and title to the region, have growing populations and they have largely been left out of the region's tourism economy.
- B. As the First Nations explore economic development opportunities to support their growing populations, finding a sustainable balance with conservation and tourism is challenging. Any forestry or other Industrial development could harm the important forest and marine ecosystems, which would have flow on impacts to local communities and tourism.
- C. Over the last four years, GVS has facilitated workshops and worked with local First Nations to consolidate their land use vision and livelihood priorities. There is strong support among First Nations for an economy based on conservation and restoration, and a strong desire among individual members of First Nations for stewardship jobs.
- D. Drawn from workshops involving First Nations and sectors of the business and civic community, the concept of an ESF has been developed, which would involve voluntary payments from tourism being paid towards First Nations stewardship programs. The ESF and supporting institutions will be developed over the next year.