



WARMING UP TO SOLAR ENERGY ON HAIDA GWAII

Haida Gwaii may not be the sunniest place in the world, but recent advances in solar panel technology mean that even here it is possible to generate energy from sunshine. The Swilawiid Sustainability Society and the Skidegate Band Council have both been leading the way to change Haida Gwaii's dependence on diesel-generated electricity. The Gwaii Trust was proud to partner with these two organizations on projects involving solar panels to be installed on the roof at the Haida Heritage Centre and at three remote youth camps.

Swilawiid received a Major Contributions grant that allowed it to work with Rediscovery Haida Gwaii, the Swan Bay Rediscovery Camp and the Mount Moresby Adventure Camp on a plan to convert all three camps to solar energy. The goals of this project are to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions for the camps, which have been using gas, diesel and propane generators to

produce power; reduce costs; and build local capacity by hiring islanders to help with the solar panel installation.

Swilawiid also received a Community Innovation grant to install solar panels at the youth centres in Old Massett and Skidegate, a project that will be taking place this fall. A relatively new non-profit society, Swilawiid's focus is to get Haida Gwaii off diesel energy. Projects like these are important, the society says, because they show it is possible to use clean energy sources like solar here, and also because they engage youth and stimulate their thinking about what kinds of energy we will be using in the future.

The Skidegate Band Council is also a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions on a community-wide basis. One of its latest initiatives is a substantial array of solar panels on the roof of the Haida Heritage Centre - one of the largest such installations in BC. The Gwaii Trust approved a Major Contributions

grant to the roof replacement/solar panel project, which took place earlier this summer. The federal government also contributed funding.

Before the solar panels were installed, the Heritage Centre had been spending around \$8,000 a month on hydro. With the energy that will be generated by solar power, that cost will be reduced substantially, freeing up money for new economic initiatives. Skidegate sees the project as a first step to energy self-sufficiency, and one that will inspire more use of solar and wind power for future community development and infrastructure.

The Gwaii Trust welcomes grant applications for projects like these that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, move us away from relying on diesel-generated hydro power, and provide training and jobs in the new energy sector. Check out our website at gwaiitrust.com for further information, or talk to a director or staff member. The future definitely looks bright for solar energy on Haida Gwaii!