



CONNECTING WITH CULTURE: OUTDOOR CAMPS ARE FLOURISHING ON HAIDA GWAI

Since the late 1970s, thousands of youth from Haida Gwaii and around the world have attended outdoor camps here, taking advantage of a unique opportunity to live on the land, learn about Haida culture, practice traditional skills, and build new friendships. Haida Gwaii now has three outdoor camp organizations, offering different experiences but sharing the common goal of bringing young people together in a remote wilderness setting.

- At the north end of the islands, Rediscovery Haida Gwaii offers cultural camps at T'alaang St'laang, within the Duu Guusd protected area.

This past summer, all camp sessions were full, with 167 young people and three elders attending the revitalized program.

- At Swan Bay, within Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site, the Swan Bay Rediscovery Camp offers youth the chance to spend eight days living in traditional longhouses, learning to survive off the land, and practicing Haida stewardship laws.
- The Mount Moresby Adventure Camp Society operates a camp facility at Mosquito Lake on Moresby Island, and also organizes outdoor education experiences for students in local

communities. Last year, grade 5 classes at Tahayghen and Sk'aadgaa Naay schools enjoyed full-day excursions every three weeks with local experts, exploring food harvesting, fishing, fire making, surfing, swimming, kayaking and more. At the Mosquito Lake facility, the society once again offered week-long camps for all district students in grades 5, 9 and 11. A partnership with Gwaii Haanas allowed the grade 9s to spend three days and two nights at Windy Bay, exploring old-growth ecology and Haida cultural history.

The Gwaii Trust is a strong supporter of these camps. We know they bring enormous benefits, to individual campers as well as the islands community. We know that stable funding is important, allowing staff to leverage additional grants, and focus on strengthening their programs instead of fundraising. In 2016, we distributed \$90,000 in regular funding to the three camps - \$30,000 to each. In addition, we approved a Major Contributions grant of \$137,467 to Rediscovery Haida Gwaii to replace the old and unsafe cookhouse building at T'alaang St'laang.

