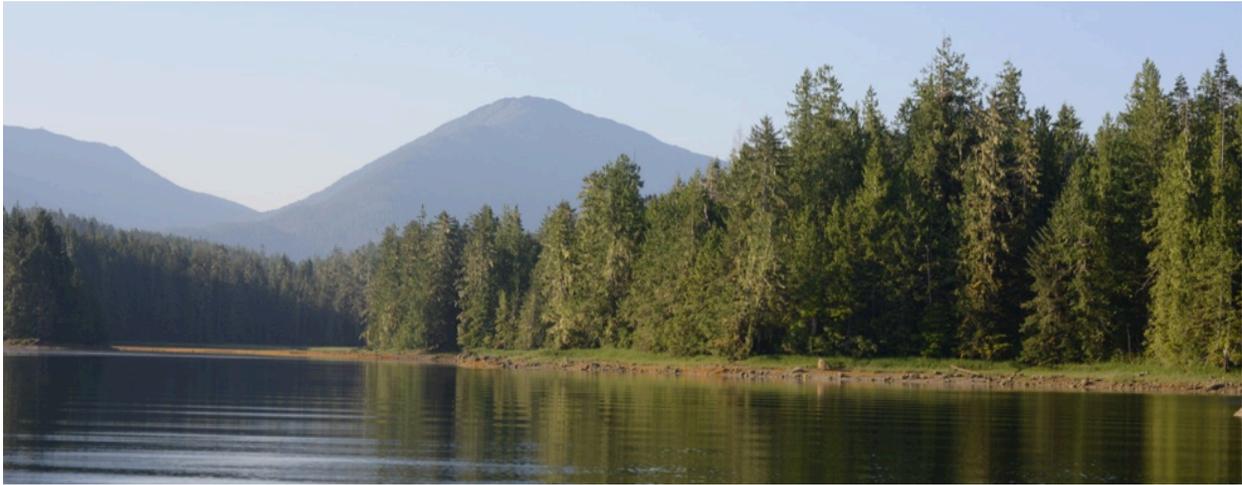


From Mountain Top to Ocean Floor: Heiltsuk History at Hauyat

Come hear more about the project! June 9, 2016 in Bella Bella. Details coming!*



For many Heiltsuk people, **Hauyat** is a very special place. This gorgeous watershed on northern Hunter Island, and the surrounding bays, hold the evidence of countless generations of Heiltsuk whose roots extend from the distant past to the present day.

This Project began in 2011, as a partnership between Heiltsuk knowledge holders and university researchers. It was inspired in part by the rich documentary history in fur trader journals, oral traditions recorded by anthropologists and the many ancient archaeological sites on north Hunter Island. More inspiring is the living history held in the fond and vivid memories of descendants of the families who had smoke houses at Hauyat in the 1950's and earlier.

This project brings together these histories, memories, and knowledge in a web site and in a large, interactive touch screen to be placed in the community. The web site and touch screen will act as an archive or “memory bank” of Heiltsuk knowledge, values, and experiences at Hauyat.



Crabapples growing at Hauyat. The people tended these trees in orchards long ago. More recently, plum trees were tended in Hauyat.

A more specific goal of our Hauyat project is to document the history “from mountaintop to ocean floor” – because everywhere at Hauyat there is evidence of Heiltsuk long-term presence. We see ancient orchards, root gardens, fish traps, and clam gardens. We see ancient villages and houses and more recent smokehouses. We see living red cedar trees that have been stripped of some of their bark, and we see berry gardens that have been tended by people. We also see the three rocks that are mentioned in the flood story told by Mrs. Charlie Windsor (Magaga), and the fish trap mentioned in many recordings of the Wolf Children story. We see “The Mountain” that anchors the whole landscape today and in oral traditions. In short, we see a landscape that has the footprint of the Heiltsuk – everywhere.



Josh Vickers and Julia Jackley examining an archaeological sample from an ancient village. This is a non-destructive way of determining how old a site is.



Team member Nancy Turner explaining about the berry and root gardens of Hauyat.

To learn about the unique culture and natural history of Hauyat, we brought together different kinds of knowledge. On the archaeology end, thanks to work of SFU student Julia Jackley, Andrea Vickers, Josh Vickers, and Elroy White, we have located the ancient sites and know their age (so far, the oldest village, at the head of Hauyat, is at least 6000 years old).



Dana Lepofsky talking to Randy Carpenter about his time in Hauyat as a youth.

We have Heiltsuk place names that tell their own story of Hauyat. We have interviewed several people who remember their youth spent in Hauyat and have lots of stories of Magaga. Other families had smokehouses there—Martin, Vickers, Humchitt, Wilson, Brown, Windsor-- to name a few. **(we're still interviewing – let us know if you're interested!)**. People have told us how they used to take care of Hauyat – careful not to take too

much, to groom trees, to fertilize berries, and to tend the river by clearing debris and adding gravel. As Steve Carpenter shared ***“That’s where we learned to be Heiltsuk”***.



Barbequing salmon on the beach.



“Hauyat Day” June 12, 2015. Archaeologist Elroy White (left) talking to the students from the Bella Bella Community School.

Stay tuned for more updates on the project as we gather more interviews and start to design the web site and touch screen. The project team will continue to take direction from the community about what will be included in the final presentations.

Please contact us if you want to know more about what we’re doing and/or you would like to be interviewed to have your connections to Hauyat recorded.

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