



Tla'amin Nation to map Desolation Sound Marine Park

Archaeological project will protect ancestors and visitors to the Territory.

Tla'amin and Klahoose Territory
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Tla'amin Nation is starting work this week on a project to identify, protect, educate, and divert visitors from vulnerable archeological sites in Desolation Sound.

Hegus John Hackett says that the project is urgently needed “We are proud of our territory and want to continue to share this special place with visitors in responsible ways. The fact is, 50 years, and millions of visits after the establishment of the park, we continue to see the resting places of our ancestors damaged and pillaged. Since 2010 alone, eight of our burial boxes have been desecrated.”

The two-year project will include approximately 83 days of archeological assessment and is made possible with a \$0.5 million investment from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport – Destination Development Fund, and with additional investment from Tla'amin Nation.

“Our government is committed to protecting culturally significant sites and supporting reconciliation in action,” said Lana Popham, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport. “By supporting the Tla'amin Nation through the Destination Development Fund, we are protecting important ancestral archeological sites, and creating a sustainable tourism industry that everyone can enjoy for years to come.”

The first phase of the project includes archeological mapping, site work, carbon dating and cataloguing of artifacts. This project team will also revisit 93 archeological sites recorded during the establishment of the park in 1973. The oldest of which is 7800 years old.

Director of Lands, Kwyem Tomolx Denise Smith explains that the second and third phases of the project include essential land use planning, zoning and public education activities. “Cataloging is just the beginning, having laws with teeth and monitoring in place will ensure our ancestors and their belongings are protected and can rest in peace.”

Tla'amin acknowledges BC Parks for their ongoing partnership with Tla'amin to carry out this important work and thanks Destination BC for their help in achieving the grant.

Council member Tiy'ap thote Erik Blaney says that he recognizes and appreciates the growing interest, care, and awareness that visitors bring to the territory. “Visitor education, kiosks and wayfinding installations will be in place to move visitors away from sensitive sites,” he explains “Disturbing a burial site changes the course of a person’s life and can even impact their children and grandchildren. This work will protect both visitors and our ancestors.”

The public is encouraged to learn more about [Tla'amin Culture and Heritage Law](#) and report culturally significant sites by contacting Connie Graham connie.graham@tn-bc.ca.



Additional Background

- Established in 1973 without the permission of Tla'amin and Klahoose, was then the largest Marine Park in BC and was marketed as a place to explore the unspoiled beauty of the coast.
- There are over 250,000 visitors to Desolation Sound Marine Park every year
- Desolation Sound Marine Park has multiple confirmed village sites located within its boundaries where thousands of Tla'amin people lived year round
- Tla'amin Nation's Culture and Heritage Law sets standards and processes for the establishment, conservation, protection, and management of Heritage Sites on Tla'amin Treaty Lands, including public access to those sites.

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A tent platform in the heart of Desolation Sound Marine Park. Image courtesy Destination BC.