

Statement on Glditas Daquv/ Ingram-Mooto

On behalf of the Vickers Family of the Heiltsuk Nation, I would like to, at this time, acknowledge and share our respect with the people who have helped us protect and preserve Glditas Daquv/ Ingram-Mooto. With talking, and sharing the stories of this magnificent place, we keep the fires burning, that it will be preserved for future generations.

The Vickers Family has always had a strong connection to the Land and Sea Resources. We are intertwined with every family in Bella Bella: we are all related one way or another. Though when it comes to protecting what is ours, Heiltsuk Nugva! We are very resilient. We know how to pull together as families. Glditas Daquv/ Ingram-Mooto flows through the blood of the Vickers Family.

Ten years ago we witnessed almost one hundred Heiltsuk join the Vickers Family stop Western Forest Products from road building in Glditas Daquv/ Ingram-Mooto. It was incredible to see and witness the Heiltsuk pull together to support us.

The Vickers Family would like to see this place preserved for future generations. The acts of colonization have been tried and tested on many families across Canada. We have survived assimilation, and oppression. The one battle we continue, and will continue standing up to fight is the protection of our Land and Sea Resources. For 10,000 years our Ancestors maintained a way of life in what society now knows as the Great Bear Rainforest. Today we still maintain this way of life. We still continue to fight, and to protect what is Heiltsuk Nugva.

A quote from the Heiltsuk Land Use Plan: "We the Heiltsuk Nation, are the stewards of the lands and resources in our territory. This is Gvi'ilas, our traditional way, and we will ensure our land and resources can support us now and into the future."

The concerns we have for this vast area of Glditas Daquv/ Ingram-Mooto are wild salmon, forests and water. The five species of salmon all return to Western and Pine Lakes adjacent Ingram-Mooto. Wild salmon is Heiltsuk!

Herring also make their way into the inlet during spawning. Fresh water is of the essence; all human beings need water. It is clear that we must protect our watersheds. With the concern of global warming, we as Heiltsuk need to take leadership in our unique old-growth intact watersheds. The whole world is watching. You can't go anywhere else in the world to see old-growth forests like those of Glditas Daquv/ Ingram-Mooto.

by Heiltsuk Mary Vickers

4 June 2008

Another quote from the Heiltsuk Land Use Plan: "Old growth Cedar will predominantly disappear within the next 25-35 years." This is a threat to our way of life. Our connection to the forests and the land are with the Cedars. Cedar before colonization was our transportation, homes, clothing, tools, etc. Its importance to us is Sacred. We use Cedar in our ceremonies during Potlatches, Feasts, Settlement Feasts, and Blessing Ceremonies. When will Cedar become recognized as Sacred?

The Vickers Family does not oppose development. We do however oppose industrial clearcut logging which destroys the environment and is devastating to our way of life, how we hunt - how we trap - how we fish. Most importantly, how we teach the generations who follow us. We want the possibility of returning to Glditas Daquv to live some day.

Who are we to decide for the unborn Heiltsuk? My generation has spent a lot of time cleaning up the cultural genocide instilled on us by Canada. Living sustainably, with the land and sea resources has been our teaching for generations. To this day there are several Heiltsuk families who live traditionally. 70 to 80 per cent of the food that I put on my table comes from Heiltsuk Territory, whether it be traditional land or sea food.

Glditas Daquv/ Ingram-Mooto could become a sustainable Healing and Retreat Centre where people could come and see and take part in Heiltsuk cultural traditions and support ecological Heiltsuk tourism. I'm sure the generations after me will have bigger and brighter ideas. That's why it is so important we clean up the mess of colonization and allow our own First Nations an opportunity to make decisions about their own territories on their own basis. Without being pressured or having to prove ourselves in a long and drawn out court process.

In closing, what was to be protected and what was to be negotiated was not done in a just and fair process. The lack of consultation and the narrow mindedness of these three groups who played the role of colonizers - Greenpeace, Forest Ethics and Sierra Club - should be taken into consideration. The fact these groups have little knowledge of the resources of the Heiltsuk Nation speaks volumes of where their hearts are. They don't care about a Nation's Way of Life. 21st century Oppressors of the Land and of a People's Way of Life. What will they tell their children? And grandchildren. I know what I'm telling my children.

Walas Giaxsixva Gouklout, for taking the time