

Q^wii-q^wiq-sap: ‘Standing Tree to Standing Home’



Introduction / After a visioning exercise in 2008 organized by Ecotrust Canada, five Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations agreed on one common need across Clayoquot Sound: improved housing. The Q^wii-q^wiq-sap (pronounced Quay-quick-sup in the Nuu-chah-nulth language and meaning ‘transformation’), the ‘Standing Tree to Standing Home’ initiative is a direct response to that shared need.

Co-managed by Tla-o-qui-aht, Hesquiaht, Ahousaht, Yuutuʔitʔaht and Toquaht First Nations, together with Ecotrust Canada and the Clayoquot Forest Communities Program, Q^wii-q^wiq-sap empowers communities to define and create their own circles of wealth.

Through the thoughtful integration of forest management, community design, value-added production, alternative technology development, construction and training, the initiative demonstrates how regional resource

extraction and use can directly benefit local communities.

The Circle of Wealth /

The five participating Nations wanted to solve the riddle of how to create jobs, social wealth and environmental health from resources in their territories — resources that historically have been harvested to benefit far-away interests first. As the Ahousaht people explain the circle of wealth concept, “Step One is thoughtfully designing our forest

*PHOTOS /
Progression from
local wood to local
homes that respect
local traditions and
knowledge*

practice so we can grow what we need. Step Two is harvesting timbers with our own building needs in mind. Step Three is designing our homes so they address our climate and cultural needs and so they make use of the products we know we can produce on the land. And Step Four is training our own people to manage the full cycle of activity, from forestry to construction so we gain ground at every level.”

With this in mind, Q^{wii}-q^{wiiq}-sap designs homes with a view to weather, culture and energy efficiency. Architects and designers incorporate materials and products that are locally available. The Nations then deploy their sawmills and artisans to produce value-added products that meet design specs. Timber harvesting is targeted to produce logs for local housing, and on-site training programs ensure that local residents can compete successfully for the full range of associated employment opportunities.

Guiding principles /

Ecotrust Canada’s work is premised on the need to diversify local economies, actively involve and engage local peoples, and use local labour and local materials for local needs. As such, Q^{wii}-q^{wiiq}-sap’s guiding principles are to:

- Take a subsistence approach to developing long-term opportunity;
- Create and support the circle of wealth, allowing businesses and benefits to stay in the region and move towards resilience;
- Support new business development;
- Ensure that the demographics of ownership/benefit reflect the local population;
- Facilitate collaboration between First Nations and non-natives;
- Build shared infrastructure and collaborative institutions wherever possible.

Transformation in practice /

Q^{wii}-q^{wiiq}-sap reflects a kind of social innovation embedded in the cultural traditions of the Nuuchah-nulth First Nations. Based on old and tested principles such as ‘take only what you need’ and ‘allow community values to dictate development’, the work:

- Maximizes the value to the community of the timber harvested from their forest;
- Designs practical, more energy efficient buildings for the wet rural west coast;
- Designs homes that use local materials and that are green, affordable and culturally appropriate;

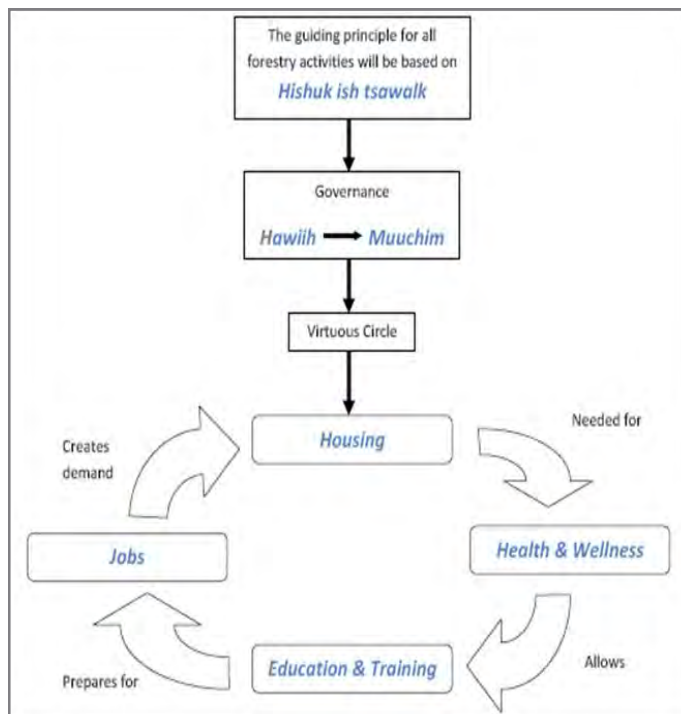
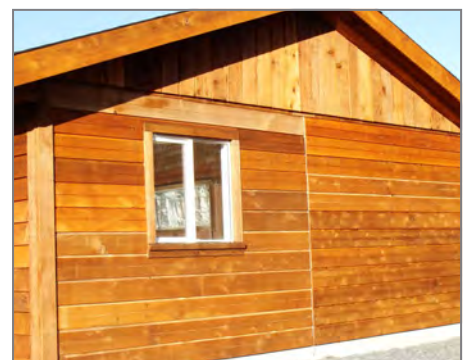


CHART / Q^{wii}-q^{wiiq}-sap 'Circle of Wealth' schematic; PHOTOS top and bottom / Local wood, milled by local business, to build local housing





Ahousaht Sawmill: A Success Story

On September 7, 2010, the Ahousaht Sawmill in Clayoquot Sound started cutting their local timbers for the very first time, having received their first order from the local Ahousaht Fisheries. Since then, the mill has also been contracted to supply the cedar used in the new school in Ahousaht. Our team worked closely with local leadership to develop a business plan

and partnered with FPInnovations for technical assistance and training. The success of this project is a significant first step towards achieving real transformation in the community, proving that valuable change can be made by adopting the principles of Q^wii-q^wiq-sap. Part of the NRCan-funded strategy to diversify forest community economies across Canada, the program is directed by the Clayoquot Forest Communities Program, co-managed by Ecotrust Canada and the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations.

PHOTO /
Ahousaht
Sawmill in
Clayoquot
Sound

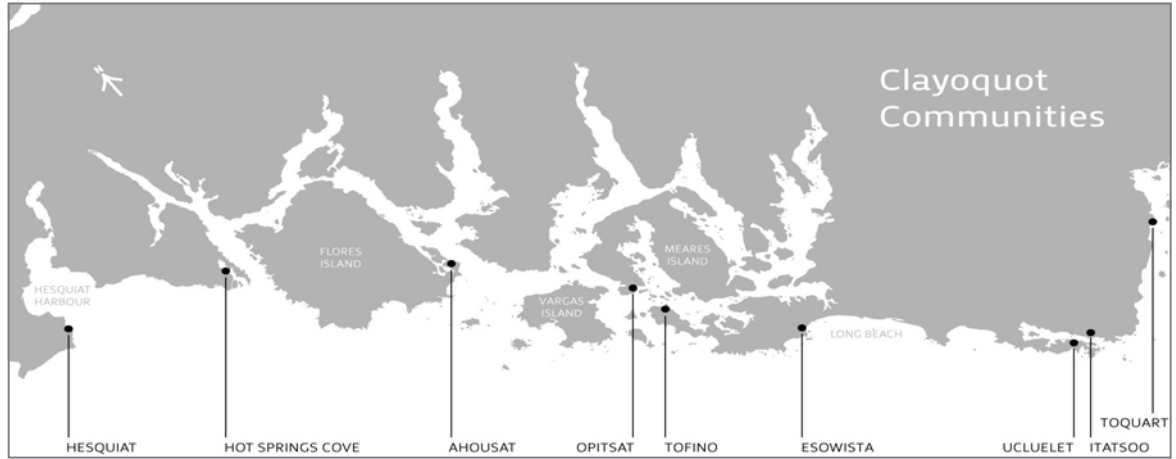
- Starts an education and training program that focuses on the ‘tree to home’ concept and builds the skills needed for the region to be resilient;
 - Promotes training of local people in construction trades, providing jobs and income;
 - Increases capacity and technology to support value added wood products to be used in local homes and identify other market opportunities in the long-term;
 - Builds an integrated policy framework to practically support adjacent resource use;
 - Designs viable business planning for forest management approaches that will support local use of products;
 - Increases awareness of sustainable living to achieve results in waste reduction, water conservation, composting, etc.;
 - Assists communities with investing in themselves by securing funding and coordinating partnerships.
- Looking to the future /**
- Q^wii-q^wiq-sap’s success hinges on supporting all aspects of the circle of wealth. This includes helping to design forest management plans that see local markets integrated as major economic drivers rather than afterthoughts; plans that would see local mills providing as much material as possible into local projects driven by local people who are skilled tradesmen, sawmillers and forestry workers. As this project grows, we will continue to:
- Help the Ahousaht produce materials for local buildings;
 - Assist completion of showcase homes built from local materials and labour;
 - Partner with ISIS Sauder School of Business UBC, UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, and Canada Mortgage & Housing Corp in the ‘Green and Culturally Appropriate Housing Design Project’, that began in 2011.
 - Partner with FPInnovations to provide technical assistance to lisaak Forest Resources and Ahousaht First Nation, and with other First Nations’ long-term value added market opportunities, including opportunities to introduce wood traceability projects;
 - Support the Raincoast Sustainable Living Program to deliver well-researched, locally relevant, and practical information about sustainable living to communities, to increase understanding of environmental issues and provide potential actions;
 - Develop and distribute reports and materials detailing the linkages and methodologies in the ‘circle of wealth’



KNOWLEDGE SHARING /

We are building a showcase for true ecosystem based management that other communities can use as a blueprint.

MAP /
Clayoquot Sound
Communities



Partners /

Working at the intersection of conservation and economic development to provide innovation and services to communities, we understand the importance of partnering with experts in industry, environment and community wisdom. Q^wii-q^wiq-sap has benefitted from valuable partnerships with:

- Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations: Ahousaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Yuutu?it?aht, and Hesquiaht
- Nuu-chah-nulth Employment and Training Program (NETP)
- Natural Resources Canada, Forest Communities Program
- Ahp-cii-uk Community Society
- UBC School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture
- Clayoquot Biosphere Trust

- North Island College
- Vancouver Island University
- Raincoast Education Society
- ISIS, Sauder School of Business, UBC
- FPIinnovations

Funders /

Ecotrust Canada and the Clayoquot Forest Communities Program continue to work with our partners to seek the funding needed to deliver the training required at local level for the success of this project.

Training programs would offer courses such as: introduction to plumbing, introduction to electrical, introduction to carpentry levels one to four, residential maintenance program, milling, project administration/management and heavy equipment operation.

More information /

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Ecotrust Canada is an enterprising non-profit whose purpose is to build the conservation economy. Working at the intersection of conservation and community economic development, we promote innovation and provide services for communities, First Nations and enterprises to green and grow their local economies. Our work is innovative, entrepreneurial, partnership-based and relentlessly practical.