

**DRAFT
MHSS UPDATE
October 8, 2013**

A historic meeting was held on October 2 and 3 when the Ahousaht Hawiuh and their Advisors met with elected Chief and Council and the Directors and General Manager of the Maaqutusiis Hahoulthee Stewardship Society (MHSS) and the Ahousaht Education Authority.





The purpose of this two day meeting was to recognize the role of MHSS in leading economic development for the benefit of Ahousaht. In October 2012 at Quiaht Bay, the Hawiih and their Advisors with Chief and Council formed the Maaqutusiis Hahoulthee Stewardship Society to manage economic development of all resources within the Hahoulthee of the Hawiih and for the benefit of the Ahousaht Muschim with Iisaak (a sacred respect) and the vision of Heshookish Tsawalk (that everything is one).

The Strategic Planning meeting was opened with remarks for Tyee Hawilh Maquinna (Lewis George) who thanked all for attending and stated that the Hawiih are here to support the Maaqutusiis Hahoulthee Stewardship Society and this meeting with Chief and Council. He said, "We are here to strategize economic development. We have the most beautiful place in the world and we are not using it for our benefit. We need to strategize to be self sufficient."

Chief Councilor Curtis Dick stated that it was important to be at the meeting to discuss these important matters. He thanked everyone for acknowledging the recent losses in the community. David Jacobson, Director of MHSS, noted that MHSS recognizes the importance of things happening at home and that the decisions made by the corporation will support membership regardless of where they live.

Before starting the business of the meeting it was recognized that we will follow the fundamental guiding principals of Ahousaht sovereignty:

Iisaakstalth (respecting one another)
Hahuupstalth (teach on another)
Ya?akstalth (caring for one another)
Huupiitstalth (helping one another)

An important matter that was discussed at the beginning of the meeting was Own Source Revenue. This is a very important policy of the Federal Government that was first brought forward by the Ahousaht Education Authority while they were negotiating Education Jurisdiction. This Federal policy allows Aboriginal Affairs Canada to take money away from Ahousaht if money gained from other sources (like Ahousaht owned businesses) is used to support programs that are funded by the Federal government. Own Source Revenue (OSR) includes money earned by Ahousaht from interest earned, income and dividends from investments, funding from any outside companies, revenue from any Ahousaht owned companies or businesses, revenue from Impact Benefit Agreements, and any fees, service charges or taxes received by Ahousaht.

It is very important to Ahousaht to strategize and protect itself from the impact of such clawbacks from the Federal Government. There are ways to do this. The best way is to establish an Economic Development Corporation that can generate and hold funds and then distribute it for programs that will benefit the community and are not funded through the Federal funding agreement. One example of this is food fish. Buying and distributing fish for Ahousaht membership is costly to Administration and is not funded through the federal government agreement. This is a benefit that MHSS could provide for the community and save funds for the Administration to deliver other programs. Food fish was and will continue to be funded out of the Pa-ulkt fund. MHSS will take on the role of managing the Pa-ulkt fund and insure that any added cost will not be shouldered by administration. Regular financial reports will be shared with the community so there is the transparency and accountability for funds coming and going out.

During the meeting the group discussed Vision and Goals for MHSS and the development of policies and procedures for MHSS. It was stated clearly that MHSS operating principles will ensure that the work they do is communicated to Ahousaht membership and that processes are transparent, open, fair and accountable. There was discussion about how to best communicate with all Ahousaht membership. We will use paper and electronic communications and ask membership how they would like to receive information.

A report on the two day Strategic Planning session will be completed within the next 2 weeks. The report will be posted on the MHSS web page, hard copies will be made available at the Ahousaht administration office. Copies will be sent out on request.

Any requests for further information can be sent to Cindy Stern, General Manager, MHSS at cindystern@telus.net or by calling 250-954-5711.

On Thursday October 3, 2013 a historic Protocol Agreement was signed by the Hawiik and the Chief and Council that says, "The Ahousaht Hawiik and elected Chief and Council recognize and acknowledge the role of the Maaqutusiis Hahoulthee Stewardship Society to manage economic development of all resources within the Hahoulthee of the Hawiik for the benefit of the Ahousaht Muschim, and that this will be done in a manner that is open, transparent, equitable and accountable to all Ahousaht."

Resolutions were passed by the Chief and Council and the Board of Directors of MHSS that supported the Protocol Agreement.

Ahousaht can now move forward with Maaqutusiis Hahoulthee Stewardship Society responsible for delivering economic development opportunity to Ahousaht members. The first project that will be delivered is a fuel station at Ahousaht for vehicles and boats. This will provide both convenience and savings to members at home. In addition, development of the Matsquiaht property remains a top priority. Plans to establish a campground are in development, and work is ongoing to attract investment for a major project. In the meantime the property is being maintained and improved. Chachchumhiyup continue to use Matsquiaht regularly for retreats and programs. There are other projects that MHSS are working on and we will continue to report out regularly.

Soon there will be a community celebration at home where the Hawiik, Chief and Council and MHSS will talk further about the role of MHSS and the importance of the strategy. Ahousaht will celebrate the signing of this historic Protocol Agreement that will benefit present and future generations of Ahousaht. Please watch for notices of the date for this celebration.