



HLK'YAK'II: *to Start a Fire*

Long before there were matches to strike, fossil fuels to burn, or switches to flip, id Kuuniisii *our Ancestors* created and used energy in many ways, ts'aanuu *fire* being one of the most critical. It is said SGaanagwaay *Supernatural Beings* lit their fires by rubbing together hard white stones. Id Kuuniisii first obtained ts'aanuu from Guuxagang DaaGa *Owner-of-the-Fire*, a Supernatural Being. Used for heat, light and cooking, canoe and box-making, forest and agriculture stewardship, feeding id kunGasda ga xaaynang.ngas *those that came before us*, and much more, id Kuuniisii would start a fire by striking certain rocks together, or by using a fire drill. Id Kuuniisii would also carry fire with them, using a torch or clam shell, to easily start a fire at their next destination.

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Prepared by Swiilawiid Sustainability Society and Saahlinda Naay *the Haida Gwaii Museum*



1850s – 1900s

This era represents an intense increase of colonial industrialization and exploitation built upon cultural and biological genocide of Indigenous peoples throughout the Northwest Coast, including purposefully introduced disease with vaccines withheld, the formation of colonial governments, Indian Act, potlatch ban era and residential schools. Colonial exploration and exploitation of Haida Gwaii's energy sources begins in the 1850s when Europeans attempt to prospect and mine coal.

1850s European prospectors take coal samples from *Xaana Kaahlii Skidegate Inlet*, west of Tllgadu *GawGa Kagan Bay* and around Yaaguun *Gándlee Yakoun River*. Kerosene, distilled from coal, starts replacing whale oil lamps for lighting in the 1850s.

1870 After five years of operation in *Xaana Kaahlii*, the Queen Charlotte Coal Company manages to ship one partial load of coal after implementing measures to stop Haida youth from taking wild midnight roller-coaster rides in empty coal-cars down the rickety tramtracks.

1878 Geologist George M. Dawson reports hearing of seeps of "bitumen" on islands near T'aanuu. Dawson's work greatly contributes to colonial resource extraction and settlement.

1898 The first Hydroelectric plant in the colonial state of British Columbia (BC) is built near Misdolly *Victoria*.

In the later part of the 1800s, oil is drilled for the first time and kerosene distilled from petroleum starts to replace coal oil.



1900 – 1930s

Colonial industries including whaling, logging, mining, fishing and fish processing continue to increase. Coal oil and kerosene lamps provide lighting; boilers fueled by wood or coal provide heat and power, as do water wheels and woodstoves.

1908 Hospital opens in Daajing Giids *Queen Charlotte*. Power is generated by a Pelton Wheel at a nearby creek.

1909 Three different companies proposed railways to transport coal from Yaaguun Gándlee to the ocean.

1911 – 1916 Coal is drilled along Yaaguun Gándlee by William Barton for the New York Metropolitan Trust Company.

1913 Canada's McKenna-McBride Royal Commission hear from Haida testifiers who stand firm on the Haida Nation's Rights and Title to Haida Gwaii.

1913 – 1915 The colonial state of BC begins exploring for oil, the first test wells are developed at Tian Bay, Haida Gwaii by BC Oilfields Limited.

1916 In response to the McKenna-McBride Commission, numerous Indigenous Nations organize the Allied Tribes of BC to pursue legal cases on Indigenous Rights and Title. Haida citizen Peter Kelly serves as both President and Treasurer.



1940s – 1960s

1919 The Allied Tribes formally reject the McKenna-McBride findings. The McKenna-McBride Royal Commission has a significant impact to Indigenous reserve lands in what is known as BC.

1927 Canada amends their Indian Act, making it illegal for Indigenous Peoples to obtain funds or legal counsel for the purpose of pursuing Aboriginal Title.

Small communities start to be powered by diesel generating stations and for the first time, households on Haida Gwaii are hooked up to the electrical grid.

1941 Masset gets electricity through a diesel generator.

1949-1951 Eight oil wells are drilled onshore Haida Gwaii. No discoveries are reported.

1949 "Indians" can vote in BC elections.

The largest earthquake on record in the colonial state of Canada occurs off the coast of Haida Gwaii with a magnitude of 8.1.



1950s HlGaagilda, Daajing Giids, K'il Kun *Sandspit*, and Masset get electricity.

A water wheel powers the Skidegate Community Hall in HlGaagilda.

1951 Canada revises its Indian Act, removing the prohibition against the Potlatch and the pursuit of Aboriginal Title.

1959 Following almost 10 years of offshore seismic activity on the coast, BC sets a moratorium on exploration drilling for oil and gas in coastal waters between Vancouver Island and Alaska.

1960 "Registered Indians" are granted the right to vote in Canada's federal elections.

1964 *Gaw Tlagée Old Massett* gets electricity.

1964 'Wáan kún/Gamadiis *Port Clements* gets electricity through a deal with logging company Macmillan Bloedel.

1966 BC lifts its moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration.

1967 BC Hydro takes over diesel generator in 'Wáan kún/Gamadiis.

1967 Between 1967 and 1969, Shell Canada drills 14 exploratory wells from Barkley Sound north into Hecate Strait, where they experience 65 feet waves. Non-commercial levels of oil are found off of Haida Gwaii.

1968 BC Hydro acquires generation and distribution facilities in Masset from C. Martin Utilities.

1970s

Colonial oil and gas exploration continues to increase around Haida Gwaii, as do proposals for large-scale energy projects from off-Island corporations. At the same time, the Haida Nation and neighbours increase efforts to protect Haida Gwaii lands and waters from fossil fuel projects.

1970s Coalition Against SuperTankers (CoAST) is created by locals to oppose crude oil tanker traffic.

1970 BC re-imposes its moratorium on oil and gas exploration in Juan de Fuca and Georgia Straits.

1971 Under pressure from the public, the BC legislature passes a resolution opposing tanker traffic off the West Coast.

1972 Due to a groundswell of public support for coast-wide protection, Canada makes a policy decision not to approve any new exploration permits or programs, and suspend all work obligations under existing permits. Canada also puts a moratorium on crude tanker traffic from Alaska through the Hecate Strait.

1973 In their ruling of the Calder case, the Supreme Court of Canada recognizes the existence of Aboriginal Title in principle.

1974 The Council of the Haida Nation (CHN) is formed to negotiate land settlement and uphold Haida Title and Rights throughout Haida Gwaii.



Canada establishes an "Office of Native Claims" to receive claim submissions.

1976 BC Hydro sets up a wind turbine experiment on North Beach.

1978 After years of public refusal, a proposed oil port in Kitimat and pipeline from Edmonton is quashed by the Canadian government.

1980s

The 1980s is a time of increased assertion of Indigenous Rights and Title, as well as environmental protection. The resistance to fossil fuel projects on Haida Gwaii is further fueled by the Exxon Valdez oil tanker spill in Alaska.

1980 The Haida Nation files its comprehensive land claim with Canada.

1980 – 1981 Subsea cables installed from T'aaxwii XaaydaGa Gwaay.yaay linaGwaay *Moresby Island* to XaaydaGa Gwaay.yaay linaGwaay *Graham Island* to deliver power to the southern grid.

1982 The Canadian Constitution is amended to include Section 35, which recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.



1982-83 Petro-Canada acquires three blocks of exploratory permits on the Central Coast, in exchange for the relinquishment of certain northern blocks. Petro-Canada, Chevron and BC attempt to have the moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration lifted.

1983 Canada and BC sign an agreement to undergo a joint public review of the environmental and related social effects of potential renewal of petroleum exploration on the West Coast, north of Vancouver Island.

1984 A BC Hydro study recommends designing a 10MW wood-fired thermal generating station on Haida Gwaii that utilizes waste wood.

1984-85 Public offshore oil and gas hearings are held with Indigenous Nations and northern coastal communities to consider lifting the moratorium on oil and gas exploration. A full research review was also conducted.

1985 The Haida Nation upholds Haida Law and stops unsustainable, industrial logging in the Gwaii Haanas region.

1986 Colonial findings from the offshore oil and gas hearings conclude offshore oil and gas exploration could proceed if specific requirements were met and begin to negotiate a Pacific Accord that lays out revenue sharing and management of offshore petroleum resources.

1987 Canada and BC commit to joining the Haida Nation in protecting Gwaii Haanas.



1990s

1989 Exxon Valdez oil tanker spills 11 million gallons of crude oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound. The environmental, social and economic impacts are still felt today.

British Columbia announces there will be no drilling offshore for at least five years. Canada announces it will not consider any offshore development until requested by BC.

The south grid on Haida Gwaii is partially powered by hydro for the first time.

1990 A reservoir-based hydroelectric generating station commences at Gawu Kuns Siiwaay 'Yuujuu *Moresby Lake*.

1993 After five years of negotiations, the Haida Nation and Canada sign the Gwaii Haanas Agreement setting out a framework for co-management of the region.

1994 Canada and BC end the formal prohibition on offshore drilling, but maintain an administrative policy (which could be easily lifted) to reject new proposals or work under existing licenses.



2000s

1996 The last residential school in Canada closes.

Queen Charlotte Power Corporation proposes constructing a tunnel to draw water from *SGaay Taaw Siiwaay K'aadjuu *Takakia Lake* to Gawu Kuns Siiwaay 'Yuujuu reservoir.*

1997 Shell relinquishes underwater oil and gas rights within the proposed Gwaii Haanas Marine Conservation Reserve in return for tax benefits. Shell, Petro-Canada and Chevron still hold on to offshore oil and gas rights in the waters around Haida Gwaii.

As off-Island corporations continue to pitch energy proposals, Haida Gwaii residents increasingly insist that any energy projects must be sustainable and in the best interest of Haida Gwaii.

2001 BC appoints an independent scientific panel to examine whether offshore oil and gas can be extracted in a scientifically sound and environmentally responsible manner.

An Offshore Oil and Gas Task Force holds public hearings in nine northern coastal communities, including Masset.

50,000L of diesel spill into *Gámdas Gándlee *Kumdis River** when an Esso truck has an accident.



2002 The SGaay Taaw Siiwaay K'aadjuu power plan is given a final "no" after public hearings indicate the significance of the area in Haida history and culture.

BC's scientific panel finds there's no "scientific" or "technical" justification for a blanket moratorium on offshore oil and gas activities.

2003 The Offshore Oil and Gas Task Force finds all participating Indigenous Nations feel that lifting the moratorium would not be in their best interests, with a small number qualifying their response with "not at this time."

2006 The Haida Nation hears murmurings of Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline and will dedicate years to protecting Haida Gwaii from the pipeline and supertanker project.

Through assertion of Haida Rights and Title and the movement Islands Spirit Rising, logging on the central Northern Haida Gwaii is shut down, resulting in several years of negotiations regarding land stewardship of Haida Gwaii.

2007 The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is adopted by the General Assembly. Canada votes against adoption.

NaiKun Wind Development Inc. proposes to develop an offshore wind energy project of 110 turbines in the Hecate Strait, 8 km from northeastern Haida Gwaii.

2008 A Community Electricity Plan commissioned by the Council of the Haida Nation and BC Hydro looks into both the use and supply of electricity on Haida Gwaii.

2009 Gaaysiigang: An Ocean Forum for Haida Gwaii is held to encourage dialogue on the current condition of Haida Gwaii's marine ecosystems and marine-based economy, and to identify solutions to improve the health of our surrounding ocean and local communities. The event is hosted by the Council of the Haida Nation in partnership with Gwaii Haanas/Parks Canada, the World Wildlife Fund, and Fisheries & Oceans Canada.

SGaay Taaw Siiwaay K'aadjuu is protected under SGaay Taw Siiwaay K'adjuu Management Plan.

NaiKun Wind Development Inc. and the CHN sign a tentative partnership when NaiKun promises to hook up Haida Gwaii to power generated by the wind project. NaiKun gets provincial environmental assessment approval.

Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline is on the radar of Coastal and Interior Indigenous Nations, and our Canadian neighbours. A united front emerges to protect land, waters, and communities.

The Haida Nation and BC sign the Kunst'aa Guu–Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol acknowledging the Haida Nation's authority over Haida Gwaii.



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2010 - present

Haida Gwaii continues to fight against energy projects that are not in the interest of the people, lands, or waters of Haida Gwaii. Locally-owned sustainable energy projects begin to grow, such as solar panels on buildings, a tidal-generated power prototype, and small wind power installations. Communities strengthen their commitment to work together to create a diesel-free Haida Gwaii.

2010 The Haida Nation respectfully repatriates the name "Queen Charlotte Islands" back to the Crown.

BC Hydro rejects NaiKun Wind Development Inc.'s proposal for a long-term power purchase agreement as it is too expensive relative to other options.

To protect their lands and waters, and to assert ongoing Title to their lands, the Unist'ot'en build a camp along the proposed pipeline corridor in Wet'suwet'en territory. This corridor is the proposed route for Enbridge, and Coastal GasLink and the Pacific Trail Pipeline.

BC passes the Clean Energy Act, which includes objectives to conserve energy, reduce BC Hydro's expected increase in demand by 66% through demand-side measures by 2020 and reduce BC greenhouse gas emissions to 33% below 2007 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050.

2011 Haida Gwaii CoASt is resurrected – the acronym now stands for *Communities Against Supertankers* – to fight the Northern Gateway Pipeline project.



Members of the Haida Nation vote overwhelmingly “no” to partnering with the NaiKun offshore wind project over ecological, cultural, and financial concerns.

2012 An Island Energy Plan is developed for the Haida Nation. The publication advocates for community energy focused on four main areas: energy and waste reduction, heating, and transportation.

The people of Haida Gwaii say a resounding “no” to the proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline at the Joint Review Panel hearings held in Gaw Tlagée and HIGaagilda; over 200 people, including children as young as five, testify.

The second largest earthquake on record in the colonial state of Canada occurs off the coast of Haida Gwaii with a magnitude of 8.1. This event reminds the world that offshore drilling is not logical, let alone good for the environment.

The Village of Port Clements in ‘Waan kún/Gamadiis raises funds for five solar installations in four Island communities. The solar installations save more than 150,000 kilowatts of power annually.

2012 A young Haida photographer begins working with Haida citizens on an Anti-Enbridge campaign, which spreads like fire on social media.

2013 Inspired by the JRP Hearings and the Anti-Enbridge campaign, Saahlinda Naay *the Haida Gwaii Museum* puts on the exhibit *Thanks, but no Tanks*, a critical inquiry into the social, spiritual, environmental and economic impacts of the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline.



2014 Despite widespread opposition by Indigenous Nations and the greater public, Canada approves Enbridge's Northern Gateway Pipeline.

First turned down in the 1980s, BC approves the Site C hydroelectric dam despite opposition by Indigenous Nations and the greater public. The dam would flood 83 km of the Peace River Valley to fuel LNG projects.

The fuel-laden Simushir loses power in Haida waters during gale force winds. With extreme weather and no emergency vessels on Island, it takes 39.5 hours for the Barbara Foss tug to take it safely in tow.

In response to the approval of the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline, a group of Haida and Island citizens help create a stop motion animation, *Haida Raid 3: Save our Waters*, to send a message that people on the coast are united against all fossil fuels, including LNG, through Haida Territories.

2015 Haida Gwaii raises \$20,000 for the Pull Together campaign that unites seven coastal Nations against the Northern Gateway Pipeline and the Trans Mountain Pipeline.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission releases its report with ninety-four calls to action.

The Haida Nation and BC release the Haida Gwaii Marine Use Management Plan.

2016 Canada adopts UNDRIP, promising to implement it within their laws.

The Canadian courts quash Enbridge's Northern Gateway stating that the federal government has failed in its duty to properly consult affected First Nations.



The Skidegate Saints callout corporate sponsorship at the beloved All Native Basketball tournament. The reigning champs raise critical awareness about oil and gas proposals that threaten the Northwest Coast. The team distributes information and gives away blue NO LNG shirts stating, A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT = A HEALTHY COMMUNITY.

The Haida Nation and Haida Gwaii CoASt host an Island-wide event in Gaw Tlagée celebrating the end of the Northern Gateway. Friends from across the coast join Haida Gwaii in the victory.

Two days after Canada approves the Pacific Northwest LNG project on Lelu Island (in Tsimshian territory near Prince Rupert), citizens of Haida Gwaii let their opposition be known by wearing blue "NO LNG" t-shirts during the royal visit of Prince William and Kate.

The president of the Haida Nation advises BC Premier Christy Clark, a vocal promotor of LNG, that she is not welcome to join the Royals.

A delegation of Haida citizens travel to join with the Standing Rock Sioux and water protectors to stand against the proposed and partially built Dakota Access Pipeline. Haida Gwaii holds a solidarity rally in support in HIGaagilda.

Directed by Haida citizens, the CHN declares opposition to the bulk transport of all fossil fuels through Haida Territories. "It is the Nation's responsibility to steward the land, sea, and air so that future generations are able to enjoy what we have today," states the Nation's public announcement.



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Swiilawiid Sustainability Society is formed by local residents to help create and innovate sustainable solutions that maintain Haida Gwaii's well-being.

American tug and fuel barge Nathan E. Stewart sinks in a rich harvesting and cultural area of the Heiltsuk Nation, spilling 100,000 litres of diesel fuel and 3,600 litres of heavy oil after a lone crew member falls asleep. The sinking demonstrates Canada's and BC's inability to respond to even what was considered a "small" fossil fuel spill.¹⁶ Canada's emergency response demonstrates lack of capacity, and the Heiltsuk take matters into their own hands.

2017 HIGaagilda installs solar panels on the Xaaydas Giinaa.ah Naay *Haida Heritage Centre* at Kay Llnagaay, making it one of the largest community-owned installations in the colonial state of BC.

After years of the Tsimshian Nation and supporters defending salmon in the Skeena Estuary, Malaysian company Petronas cancels the \$36B LNG project, putting an end to one of the largest industrial projects proposed in Canada.

A carved cedar pole is raised on Lelu Island as the Tsimshian continue to uphold their inherent Rights and Title and declare permanent protection for the Skeena Estuary and salmon within.

With Kinder Morgan on the verge of pulling out of its massive crude oil pipeline proposed to Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw *Squamish*, səlilwətaʔ Tsleil-Waututh and x^wməθk^wəyəm *Musqueam* territory, the colonial state of Canada announces it will buy the TransCanada pipeline for \$4.5B of taxpayers money with a further \$3M bonus to top executives.

Canada passes a private member's bill, Romeo Sanganash's Bill C-262, to bring UNDRIP into Canadian law. Five days later the Liberal and Conservative parties vote that UNDRIP shouldn't be applied to the Kinder Morgan Pipeline Expansion project.

BC confirms the construction of the Site C hydroelectric dam will go ahead.

2018 Swilawiid Sustainability Society and the Haida Nation host Building Community Power Together: a Renewable Energy Symposium in Gaw Tlagée. Three themes emerge at the gathering: We know what kind of energy we don't want (oil and gas) and need to chart a different path; Haida Gwaii must look to the past to lead us into the future; local ownership and control is a must.

At the symposium, local governments and Island citizens sign the Island Energy Declaration that commits to making Haida Gwaii energy sovereign by 2023.

Federal Court of Appeal overturns the Canadian government's approval of the Trans Mountain Pipeline, saying Canada "fell well short of the mark" consulting with First Nations. Court orders Canada to go back to the drawing board and redo the approvals process: construction halted.

2019 A decade after Gaaysiigang: An Ocean Forum for Haida Gwaii, a second Gaaysiigang is held to look at actions taken, to celebrate what has been achieved and to write the next chapter.



With threats from the RCMP and Coastal GasLink in Wet'suwet'en territories, Haida Gwaii holds solidarity rallies and raises thousands of dollars to send to Wet'suwet'en land and water defenders, specifically the Unist'ot'en Healing Centre.

Canada re-approves the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Expansion project that will carry oil from the tar sands to the coast.

After almost half a century of public resistance to oil tankers on the North Coast, Canada passes Bill C-48 *Oil Tanker Moratorium Act* that prohibits oil tankers carrying more than 12,500 metric tons of crude oil or oil products as cargo on the North Coast, and around Haida Gwaii.

It is the minimum protection that the federal government can provide to align with existing Indigenous laws prohibiting oil tankers from this coast. The ban does not include liquefied natural gas (LNG).

2020 RCMP violently raid Wet'suwet'en territories at Unist'ot'en and the Gidimt'en checkpoint and arrest land defenders. In response, Shut Down Canada organizers hold demonstrations, occupy buildings, and bring roads and railways to a standstill.

In response to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, the Haida Nation declares a State of Emergency. In order to keep our Elders safe, Haida Gwaii is closed to non-residents for over a year.



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2020-21 Swiilawiid Sustainability Society and Saahlinda Naay *the Haida Gwaii Museum* partner on a new program, Hlk'yak'ii: *To Start a Fire*. Created to support food, clean water and energy independence through language, arts and culture.

A team of enthusiasts start to develop an Island-wide food and clean water strategy that is informed by Elders, youth, leaders, farmers, gardeners, and food harvesters and producers. This work includes a series of online webinars. Excerpts of the webinars can be viewed in this exhibition; the strategy continues to be developed.