

Our Journey, Our Choice, Our Future:
Using community-based participatory research to document the Huu-ay-aht journey to the Maa-nulth Treaty and looking at its implementation with BC and Canada

Research Project Community Engagement Session

Huu-ay-aht First Nations in partnership with
Heather Castleden, Queen's University

November 22nd, 2016 | Huu-ay-aht Government Office
Anacla Community Engagement Meeting Summary

Huu-ay-aht Advisory Committee

- Simon Dennis, Elder & Mainland Representative [SEP]
- Tliishin (Derek Peters), Ha'wiith Council Representative [SEP]
- Wisqii (Rob Dennis Jr.), Port Alberni Representative [SEP]
- Stella Peters, Ana'cla Representative [SEP]
- Jane Peters, Ana'cla Representative [SEP]
- Mercedes Williams, Youth Representative

Research Team

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1) Treaty Negotiation

Discussion Questions:

What are your strongest memories about the negotiation process? What was your understanding of what was going on, and why was the Treaty important (or not) to you? How did you keep updated about the Treaty negotiation process? What are the most important stories to share with others about the Treaty journey?

- People skeptical at first about the Treaty
- Engagement leading to Treaty was great. People came to your house to talk about Treaty
- Leadership worked with citizens to update people about Treaty negotiations and to answer concerns
- Information packs were sent via mail, along with votes for various stages of the Treaty
- Changes were proposed to government under treaty and are now in play. Ex. Criminal record checks became mandatory for people on Council
- Information on mounting loans during negotiation and with implementation should be clearer
- Having the Government Office at home in Anacla was discussed during negotiation
- Benefits to having the Maa-nulth Treaty
 - Cultural treasures finally home
 - Chance to get away from INAC and be self-governing

If you could make some recommendations about the treaty negotiation process, what would they be?

- Timeline of important moments for Huu-ay-aht during negotiation and implementation
- Include Youth who will be of voting age by effective date in Treaty negotiations; start with school age youth so they learn and they know what Treaty is about

- Plain English translation of the treaty and of updates. Ex. “Treaties for Dummies” book

Citizens Questions

- When did negotiations accelerate?
- When was the Treaty ratified?

2) Treaty Implementation

Citizen Suggestion: Send questions about implementation in survey form to citizens

Definition of treaty implementation: The process of taking what was negotiated in the treaty and making it happen. This involves replacing the policies of the Indian Act with HUU-AY-AHT’s policies as outlined in the HUU-AY-AHT constitution.

Discussion Questions: How is the treaty going for you? Is life with treaty what you expected?

- People are unsure what implementation is
- Treaty Implementation Committee support through project engagement would be helpful; they could be available to answer citizens questions at engagement sessions
- Laws, regulations, and bureaucracy block citizens
 - Ex. Told prior to effective date that laws could change if they were not working, but these changes haven’t happened.
 - Ex. No Alder harvesting and difficult hunting regulations present rules that were not in place before
- No enforcement or penalization for rules and laws, but rules, such as no Alder harvesting, are upheld
- Non-First Nations Peoples and non-Maa-nulth Treaty signatories act like there are no regulations on Treaty Settlement Lands (TSL), but HUU-AY-AHT citizens are limited by laws

Recommendations

- Enforcement should be everyone’s role. Also the possibility of an enforcement team.
- Signage on Treaty Settlement Lands to enforce laws for Non-First Nations Peoples.

Discussion Questions: What’s going well? What’s not going well?

- Peoples’ Assembly, use remotes or hands to achieve consensus rather than speaking out. Not all people are comfortable to speak in crowds. Spoken consensus is not really consensus.
- Peoples’ Assembly, quorum doesn’t work. All of those present at the time of voting should comprise quorum
 - Timing of the Assembly doesn’t work for everyone. The schedule could be reworked to have all the work on one day and cultural events on the other.
 - Option of mailing in votes on motions for people who are unable to attend
- It has always been difficult to get people to attend meetings

Discussion Questions: How is treaty different than living under the Indian Act? How is treaty the same as living under the Indian Act? Have you noticed any changes now that the treaty has been implemented?

- Still waiting on more housing
- Can’t cut Alder on Treaty Settlement Land (TSL)
- Permit needed to limb and cut trees on TSL

- Staff are in Port and not in Anacla
- Houses and housing infrastructure are not maintained by Huu-ay-aht government
 - Houses were signed over without inspection or addressing issues – “Your house now”
- Yard sizes are shrinking on TSL
- Housing on TSL is a major issue
- Grants are available to address necessary home improvements, but citizens are unsure how to access these funds; HFN government has not made options clear
 - Ex. People 60+ are able to access a home improvement grant through the Federal government
- Funds were being saved for home improvement prior to effective date (2011). What happened to these funds?
 - People were able to ‘rent’ before houses were signed over to save for home improvements but this option was not successful
- INAC assessment of current housing for improvements prior to transferred houses to citizens
- Hold INAC accountable for promises made on improving and building housing

Discussion Question: How can Huu-ay-aht citizens be more involved in Treaty-related decision-making?

- Attend meetings
- Take part in meetings
- Answer from Government of “we will get back to you” often given
- Include accountability for the process of implementing adopted motions from the Peoples’ Assembly
- Have designated speakers at the Peoples’ Assembly to speak on behalf of anyone who may not feel comfortable with public speaking
- Bring problems or issues to HFN government at any time, don’t wait until the Peoples’ Assembly.

Recommendations

- Needs to be a greater focus on healing, ex. HFN’s 2033 vision statement makes healing a priority
 - Land may be returned under the treaty immediately, but healing from the effects of colonization take time. Negotiate support for peoples’ healing as a process and respect / support those who need time for their healing journey

Discussion Questions: How have you/the leadership been exercising your Treaty rights since 2011? What is needed to help you/the leadership do MORE to exercise your treaty rights?

- Treaty rights are seen on a government level, not an individual level
 - e.g., Government is logging more, but this is not an individual right
- What are our Treaty rights?
- More employment opportunities for HFN citizens
 - E.g., The Market has new staff turnover constantly, but at times no HFN citizens are working there
- Educate all HFN staff on HFN’s vision statement and what this means for the community and for them working for the Nation

- HFN citizens are overqualified or under-qualified for positions, and therefore not given jobs with the Nation
- Mentorship and internship programs to train HFN citizens for top jobs with the Nation. Non-HFN Staff in top positions would enter the job knowing that they were in a temporary position
- Breaking regulations once, including non-disclosure agreements, have barred HFN citizens from ever being employed with HFN again

Citizen's Discussion Question: What do you like about Treaty?

- Land is returned, should more be purchased?
- Capital transfer
- Jobs
- No longer under INAC

Citizen Question:

- Will it take longer to see the positive effects of Treaty?

Discussion Questions: At the Peoples' Assembly this weekend, the Leadership reported Five Posts to be achieved by 2033. Do those posts fit with your ideas for key priorities (are their other priorities too)?

- Under 'Children' (post two), add 'citizens', especially since many citizens haven't been able to experience home, e.g., crabbing, Kiixin



Discussion Questions: What are the most important stories to share with others about your Treaty implementation experience? How do you want to be kept updated about the Treaty implementation process?

- Social media (Uyaqhmis page)
- Survey Monkey could be used for research questions so people could anonymously voice their opinions
- Option for online and mail out surveys?
- Possible question for the survey: What made you vote 'yes' to Treaty? or what made you vote 'no' to Treaty? What appealed to you with Treaty? As a way to spark peoples' memory
- Providing a timeline of major events in HFN's Treaty journey to distribute and make available with survey or online
- Statistics can be useful and helpful visuals to convey key information to people
 - Ex., People did/didn't like Treaty because: a) [insert percent]; b) [insert percent]; etc.
- Project page on HFN's website
- Link the project with the TIC to ensure they have up to date information project happenings and can engagement citizens