

UU-A-THLUK STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029:

Working Today to Secure Our Tomorrow

OUR VISION

Our vision is to manage the haahaahuufii of our Ḥawiiḥ in a sustainable way for our musčim, consistent with Nuuchah-nulth knowledge and values. This is a responsibility given by ḥaas.

Our aquatic resources must fulfill our **sustenance, ceremonial and societal needs**, and provide an **economic base** for healthy communities.

ACCESS ● MANAGEMENT ● CAPACITY BUILDING ● ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ahousaht | Tla-o-qui-aht | Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ | Toquaht | Uchucklesaht
Tseshaht | Hupacasath | Huu-ay-aht | Ditidaht | Ka:yu:k't'h/Che:k'tles7et'h
Nuchatlaht | ʔiiḥʔatis/čiinax̣int | Mowachaht/Muchalaht | Hesquiaht

Uu-a-thluk
TAKING CARE OF

<p style="text-align: center;">ACCESS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increase Food and Ceremonial (F&C) access. 2) Continue to work to implement Nuuchah-nulth economic fishing rights. 3) Continue to increase Nuuchah-nulth influence by collaborating with advocates like the AFN, FNS, UBCIC, FNFC, IMAWG, WCA, and non-First Nations groups. 4) Participate in projects that increase current access and sustain resources. 5) Promote improved communications between Nuuchah-nulth Nations and DFO. 	<p style="text-align: center;">MANAGEMENT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue to study, monitor, and document our resources within Nuuchah-nulth haahaahuuīi (Chiefly territories) to help manage and protect habitat and inform resource management decisions. 2) Continue to increase monitoring and enforcement presence, capacity and authority. 3) Improve collaborative management relationship with DFO. 4) Assist Nuuchah-nulth Nations to develop and implement strategic plans for their fisheries departments as requested.
<p style="text-align: center;">CAPACITY BUILDING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue to educate and engage youth and community members in fisheries harvest and management. 2) Continue to increase the management and technical capacity needed for Nuuchah-nulth Nations to assert their role as resource managers. 3) Continue to empower and equip Nuuchah-nulth to take advantage of opportunities in the sea resource sector through training, education, mentorship and workplace opportunities. 4) Continue to support Nuuchah-nulth Council of Ḥawīih participants to create an effective Forum on Fisheries. 	<p style="text-align: center;">ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue to incorporate Nuuchah-nulth ecological knowledge, language and culture into Uu-a-thluk activities. 2) Improve relationships with other NTC departments and external organizations to develop understanding, communicate issues and further goals. 3) Continue community outreach and communications regarding fisheries issues with support and invitation of Nuuchah-nulth Nations. 4) Continue to pursue diverse funding sources that support organizational goals.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
Strategic Plan history	4
OUR ORGANIZATION	5
What is Uu-a-thluk?	5
What does Uu-a-thluk do?	5
How is Uu-a-thluk organized?	5
WHERE ARE WE GOING?	7
Our vision	7
HOW WILL WE GET THERE?	8
Our action plan: An overview for the next five years	8
Access	8
Management	10
Capacity Building.....	11
Organizational Development	13

This Strategic Plan is without prejudice. The nuučaanuŋ (Nuu-chah-nulth) language appears throughout the plan, however, not all dialects of the 14 Nuu-chah-nulth Nations are represented.

INTRODUCTION

Nuu-chah-nulth Ḥawiiḥ (hereditary Chiefs), elected Chiefs, and representatives from the 14 participating nations provided input to develop this Strategic Plan for 2024-2029. Goals for this Plan include:

- 1) Providing strategic guidance for Uu-a-thluk over the next five years.
- 2) Honouring the input and the focus provided by communities, Council of Ḥawiiḥ Forum on Fisheries participants and the Uu-a-thluk team.
- 3) Creating a functional, easy-to-follow Plan that will influence future activities, evolve as needed and build on successes.

Strategic Plan history

In 2010–2011, the Council of Ḥawiiḥ Forum on Fisheries — guided by a volunteer committee and a Nuu-chah-nulth consultant — evaluated Uu-a-thluk. This evaluation produced several recommendations, including:

- 1) Updating the Uu-a-thluk Strategic Plan every five years.
- 2) Hosting a collaborative work session to guide its development.

Uu-a-thluk has been engaging Nuu-chah-nulth communities on the renewal of the Plan, every five years, per the recommendations.

In the later part of 2022, Uu-a-thluk staff visited communities and hosted virtual meetings to discuss Nuu-chah-nulth fisheries priorities for this iteration of the Plan. They spoke with Ḥawiiḥ, fisheries managers and technicians, Elders, knowledge holders and community members to review, discuss and assess those priorities.

The previous 2018-2023 Uu-a-thluk Strategic Plan addressed issues focused on access, management, capacity building, and organizational development. Those attending the engagement sessions for the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan reiterated the importance of these four areas of focus, desired outcomes, and indicators required to guide the work of Uu-a-thluk.

This document summarizes the results of this work. It is a living document that will be revised and updated as needed under the guidance of the Council of Ḥawiiḥ Forum on Fisheries.

OUR ORGANIZATION

What is Uu-a-thluk?

In March of 2005, Nuuchahnulth hereditary and elected Chiefs gathered at a historic meeting to launch Uu-a-thluk, a new approach to managing aquatic resources in Nuuchahnulth haahaahuufii.

Uu-a-thluk is an aquatic resource management organization administered through the Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council (NTC). Uu-a-thluk is funded through a collaborative management agreement with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and works within the policies and practices of the NTC.

Uu-a-thluk brings Nuuchahnulth-aht together to work with other First Nations, governments and groups. Its framework allows us to manage our aquatic resources consistent with Nuuchahnulth practices and principles, complimenting and reinforcing H̱awilth-patuk-H̱awiih (Nuuchahnulth governance). Together we are increasing Nuuchahnulth participation in the harvest and management of our aquatic resources.

In our Nuuchahnulth language, ʔuuʔaʔuk (uu-a-thluk) means “taking care of.”

What does Uu-a-thluk do?

Uu-a-thluk focuses on three principal areas:

1. Access (More fish for communities, sustaining our resource and people)
2. Management (More Nuuchahnulth-aht involved in managing our fisheries)
3. Capacity (More Nuuchahnulth-aht working in jobs related to the ocean)

This Strategic Plan also targets a fourth key area:

1. Organizational Development (Improving Uu-a-thluk over the long term)

How is Uu-a-thluk organized?

NTC Uu-a-thluk Fisheries

Provides fisheries resource management support to Nuuchahnulth Nations and the NTC. Uu-a-thluk Fisheries currently includes a Director of Fisheries (position is vacant), Manager of Biologists, three Regional Biologists, a Program Coordinator, a Communications and Development Coordinator, a Capacity Building Coordinator and a Marine Stewardship Coordinator/Protected Area Planner. Seasonally, Uu-a-thluk also hires Nuuchahnulth technicians and interns when funding is available.

Council of Ḥawiiḥ Forum on Fisheries

A forum where 14 autonomous Nuuchahnulth Nations' Ḥawiiḥ, elected council, and/or their representatives come together to make decisions on fisheries issues with DFO and other First Nations, agencies and organizations.

The Council of Ḥawiiḥ Forum on Fisheries includes representatives from Ahousaht, Ditidaht, ʔiiʔatis / čiinaxint, Hesquiaht, Hupacasath, Huu-ay-aht, Ka:ʔyu:k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h', Nuchatlaht, Mowachaht/ Muchalaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Tseshah, Uchucklesaht, and Yuuʔuʔiʔatḥ.

Activities of the Council of Ḥawiiḥ Forum on Fisheries, including addressing emerging and existing policy and management issues with Canada or B.C., are not a substitution for government's responsibility to consult bilaterally with Nuuchahnulth Nations on these issues. This is per Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP):

“States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.”

Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG)

Includes First Nations, Uu-a-thluk, and DFO staff. In addition to being a place to discuss fisheries technical issues, the JTWG also acts as a clearing house to direct opportunities and issues to First Nations, DFO, the JTWG itself, or the Council of Ḥawiiḥ Forum on Fisheries for resolution or further action.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Our Vision

Our vision is to manage the haahaahuufii of our Hāwiih in a sustainable way for our musčim, consistent with Nuu-chah-nulth knowledge and values. This is a responsibility given by ŋaas. Our aquatic resources must fulfill our sustenance, ceremonial and societal needs, and provide an economic base for healthy communities.

Nuu-chah-nulth Principles & Values

Through community engagement, the following principles and values were outlined to guide the work of Uu-a-thluk. Although these principles and values appear separately below, it is with the understanding they are very much connected, overlapping, and do not exist without the other.

ʔuuʔaafuk: Caring, working for next generations, healthy resources make healthy communities, sustainability and conservation

ʔiisaak: Understanding and accepting differences, community oriented, embracing Nuu-chah-nulth culture, and respecting Hāwiih's role in the management of their haahaahuufii

hišukʔiš čawaak: Everything is connected, traditional foods are medicine, sharing our history of fishing, ʔaasma (everything is precious), increasing capacity and economic opportunities

ħaħuupastat: Teaching one another, sharing our knowledge and experience, we have so much wisdom to share among the Nations

Definitions

hahuufi: *“It is the territory of the Hāwiih and everything within it, the land, air, water, people, and the responsibilities.”*

hišukʔiš čawaak: *“Literally (it means) everything is one but what it means is the understanding that everything is interconnected and through our values and teachings what we do in one area impacts another.”* – wickaninnish (Cliff Atleo), Council of Hāwiih Forum on Fisheries Implementation Committee

ħuupukʷanum: *“It is bigger and better than the Canadian Constitution. Every Hāwilth had one and in it was what they owned... we indicate that they are Chiefly treasures, but it is the governance box and holds everything you need to conduct ceremonies and uphold responsibilities of taking care of the hahuufi. It's sacred.”* – wickaninnish (Cliff Atleo), Council of Hāwiih Forum on Fisheries Implementation Committee

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

Our action plan: An overview for the next five years

Uu-a-thluk's strategic direction for 2024-2029 will focus on four priority areas:

ACCESS

1. Increase Food and Ceremonial (F&C) access

Actions:

- a. Address issues related to Nuu-chah-nulth Nations food security and to all the sea resources Nuu-chah-nulth consume to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.
- b. Increase F&C allocations of sea and aquatic resources through meaningful negotiations with DFO to meet existing and future community needs based on annual availability and dietary preferences.
- c. Support nations and Ḥawiiḥ (as requested) to develop protocols and agreements between nations that authorize F&C fishing within their haahaahuufii.
- d. Develop stock rebuilding and F&C harvesting priority areas.
- e. Support Nuu-chah-nulth Nations implementing their rights-based F&C access to sea and aquatic resources.

Action items 'a' to 'e' above are supported by the United Nations Declaration of the Right of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Article 24, #2:

"Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right."

2. Support Nuu-chah-nulth's economic access to sea and aquatic resources

Actions:

- a. Develop and implement fishing/management plans for economic fisheries where requested.
- b. Provide opportunities for people involved in different processes to learn from each other (e.g., T'aaq-wiihak negotiations, Maa-nulth fisheries, Tsu-ma-us salmon fishery).
- c. Support Nuu-chah-nulth Nations economic fishery access negotiations.
- d. Support nation-to-nation fishing protocols to support economic fisheries and socio-economic well-being where requested.

Action items 'a' to 'd' above are supported by UNDRIP Article 20, #1:

“Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop their political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.”

3. Continue to increase Nuuchahnulth influence by collaborating with advocates like the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), First Nations Summit (FNS), Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC), Island Marine Aquatic Working Group (IMAWG), West Coast Aquatic (WCA) and other First Nations and supportive organizations.

Actions:

- a. Continue to communicate Nuuchahnulth positions on fisheries issues to other governments and organizations.
- b. Identify when Canada breaks an agreement or infringes on rights. Help nations draft responses and develop strategies for holding Canada accountable.

4. Participate in projects that increase access and sustain resources.

Actions:

- a. Participate in useful advisory processes (e.g., Pacific Salmon Commission and the technical committees it includes such as the Coho Technical Committee and Chinook Technical Committee), International Pacific Halibut Commission and Halibut Advisory Board, Crab Sectoral Committee, Prawn Advisory Board, Integrated Herring Harvest Planning Committee, Area 23, 24, 25 Roundtables, Clam Sectoral, Wild Salmon Policy Committee, Tang.gwan-ḥačxʷiqak-Tsigis MPA, Salmon Coordinating Committee, Sea Cucumber Sectoral Committee, Green and Red Sea Urchin Sectoral Committees, Pacific Region Interdepartmental Shellfish Committee.
- b. Support Nuuchahnulth Nations in stock rebuilding strategies and assessment, enhancement and restoration projects.
- c. Design catch monitoring programs that address the needs and capacity of the nations.

5. Promote improved communications between Nuuchahnulth Nations and DFO.

Actions:

- a. Assist with information sharing and collaboration between nations and DFO where appropriate.
- b. Continue to improve working relationships with appropriate DFO staff.

Management

- 1. Continue to study, monitor, and document our resources within Nuu-chah-nulth haahaahuufii to help manage and protect habitat and inform resource management decisions.**

Actions:

- Incorporate Nuu-chah-nulth Indigenous knowledge in resource management decisions.
- Acquire funding to conduct assessments.
- Explore research and monitoring partnerships with universities and other organizations.
- Acquire information to increase the understanding of the impacts of activities such as fishing, aquaculture, logging, sewage treatment and predation on stocks and habitat.
- Develop and support watershed restoration plans within Nuu-chah-nulth haahaahuufii.
- Work with Nuu-chah-nulth Nations to secure and sustain water resources.
- Improve the understanding of the impacts of invasive species on sea and aquatic resources.
- Complete and implement the West Coast Vancouver Island (WCVI) Chinook Rebuilding Plan.

Action items 'a' to 'h' above are supported by UNDRIP Article 32, #2:

“States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connected with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.”

- 2. Continue to increase Nuu-chah-nulth monitoring and enforcement presence, capacity, and authority.**

Actions:

- Provide support to assist Nuu-chah-nulth Nations to develop monitoring and enforcement programs to monitor territory.
- Work with the nations and DFO to develop Enforcement Protocol Agreements to support nation fishing plans and regulations.
- Explore partnerships with DFO and service providers to develop training opportunities in catch monitoring, including F&C catch monitoring with First Nations' consent.
- Educate communities about monitoring and enforcement requirements and responsibilities.
- Build more relationships with enforcement agencies such as DFO, RCMP, Parks Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG).

- f. Learn from and build on the experience of nations (e.g., Maa-nulth, T'aaq-wiihak).
- g. Continue to provide a forum for Nuuchah-nulth to work together, and with other governments and organizations on aquatic resource management issues and opportunities.

3. Improve collaborative management relationship with DFO.

Actions:

- a. Use existing collaborative processes more effectively, such as the Council of H̱awiiḥ Forum on Fisheries and the Joint Technical Working Group.
- b. Discuss issues of common interest and means to address issues together rather than independently.
- c. Help nations develop management agreements with DFO that outline roles and responsibilities.
- d. Increase engagement with DFO staff (e.g., invite DFO staff to observe and/or contribute toward Nuuchah-nulth-led projects on occasion).

4. Assist nations to develop and implement strategic plans for their fisheries programs as requested.

Actions:

- a. Provide information and guidance to communities, fisheries staff, and elected council or H̱awiiḥ that support plan development.
- b. Help nations acquire funding to create and implement strategic plans.
- c. Develop systems to work together better; share information and knowledge and support each other (e.g., salmon building strategies, regional meetings).

Capacity Building

1. Continue to educate and engage youth and community members in aquatic resources, fisheries harvest and management.

Actions:

- a. Conduct science camps and support feasting projects and knowledge exchanges with Elders/youth and community/school education programs that include harvesting opportunities.
- b. Work toward increasing youth involvement in the Council of H̱awiiḥ Forum on Fisheries.
- c. Help young Nuuchah-nulth-aht understand fisheries management issues through targeted programs that may lead to future opportunities in fisheries management roles.
- d. Develop educational resources and opportunities for schools and communities.
- e. Strengthen partnerships with other organizations involved in resource management education, particularly in the WCVI area.
- f. Support job and career fairs.

2. Continue to increase the management and technical capacity that Nuu-chah-nulth Nations need to assert roles as resource managers.

Actions:

- a. Secure funding to develop technical and management skills for Nuu-chah-nulth-aht.
- b. Provide training and mentorship opportunities for nations' fisheries staff and others interested in fisheries management.

3. Continue to empower and equip Nuu-chah-nulth-aht to take advantage of opportunities in the sea resource sector through training, education, mentorship and workplace opportunities.

Actions:

- a. Support workshops on business planning, fund development and running a successful boat/business.
- b. Support mentorship and training programs for various aspects of fishing industries.
- c. Retain knowledge of Nuu-chah-nulth rich oral history and culture as it relates to the sea.
- d. Work with DFO, CCG and other partners to provide marine training opportunities for the nations (e.g., marine oil spill response and ocean cleanup).

4. Continue to support Nuu-chah-nulth Council of H̄awiih̄ participants to create an effective Forum on Fisheries.

Actions:

- a. Continue to have the huupuk^wanum present at all Council of H̄awiih̄ Forum on Fisheries for all H̄awiih̄ and nations.
- b. Create opportunities for H̄awiih̄, Elders, and advisors to share what they know and to learn from each other, encouraging equal speaking time for all.
- c. Continue to work with the ɬap̄at sih̄ak H̄awiih̄ (Implementation Committee) to guide the Uu-a-thluk Strategic Plan and the Council of H̄awiih̄ Forum on Fisheries.
- d. Support consensus decision-making.
- e. Address conflicts immediately to avoid future conflicts or issues.
- f. Highlight the roles of Nuu-chah-nulth.
- g. Continue to follow the "Council of H̄awiih̄ Forum on Fisheries Protocol for a Productive Meeting."

Organizational Development

1. Continue to incorporate Nuu-chah-nulth ecological knowledge, language, and culture into Uu-a-thluk activities.

Actions:

- a. Improve conduct of meetings by using Nuu-chah-nulth practices (e.g., seating Ҳawiih, encouraging songs and prayer and unveiling *ḥuupukʷanum*).
- b. Serve seafood at meetings and events.
- c. Educate DFO and others about the roles and responsibilities of speakers who communicate for their Ҳawiih.
- d. Utilize our Nuu-chah-nulth language at meetings and in documents. Have a “word or phrase of the day” for each meeting.

2. Improve relationships with other NTC departments and external organizations to communicate issues, build understanding, develop resolutions and further goals.

Actions:

- a. Identify and meet with priority groups for building relationships.
- b. Invite representatives to present and collaborate at Council of Ҳawiih Forum on Fisheries meetings.
- c. Identify opportunities to work with other NTC departments at the planning stage.
- d. Create opportunities for DFO to gain understanding of Nuu-chah-nulth traditional roles and responsibilities.
- e. Communicate Nuu-chah-nulth interests and goals to external organizations.

3. Continue community outreach and communications regarding fisheries issues with the support and invitation of Nuu-chah-nulth Nations.

Actions:

- a. Visit communities, give updates about fisheries issues and hear community priorities.
- b. Maintain a regular presence in communities.
- c. Improve communications to Nuu-chah-nulth communities and other audiences.

4. Continue to pursue diverse funding sources that support organizational goals.

Actions:

- a. Identify new funding sources and establish relationships with potential funders.
- b. Develop an information package to promote Uu-a-thluk to funders.
- c. Continue digital and letter campaigns to raise funds for youth education.