

Haida Gwaii

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Here we are at the beginning of September already closing the chapter on one of the sunniest summers on record. You can often find kids playing in the ocean bays, watch the eagles and ravens compete over the choicest fish, not to mention the Haida from the Eagle and Raven clans competing in one of the many canoe races during the summer.



Haida Gwaii is a group of isolated islands in Northwest British Columbia that is home to some of the most interesting and welcoming people. We are also one of the largest and most isolated archipelagos in western North America and exhibits a rich diversity of biologically unique plant and animal species.

We boast the largest and friendliest black bear species in the world – not recommended to hug!

There were some significant successes and milestones accomplished in the Haida community that we would like to honour. Some old news is the official name change of the islands from “Queen Charlotte Islands” to the original name of “Haida Gwaii” back in December 2009. A ceremony celebrating the name change was held in Old Massett in June with Haida Dance groups performing with Premier Gordon



Campbell in attendance. As well, the “Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve” was legislated this June as the new seabed conservation area extending 10 kilometres offshore from the existing Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, the world’s first step to extend park protection from mountain tops to ocean floor. Well done Haida Nation in keeping your culture strong and working to protect the natural environment!

Surfing is still a quiet gem up here in Haida Gwaii. Although the season for surfing the waves is generally in the winter time when the swells create the higher waves rolling into the beaches, one surfer from off island decided to circumnavigate the largest of our islands, Graham Island on his self made surf board by paddling one hand stroke at a time. It is a feat that will take him approximately 50 days to complete. A crowd of well wishers formed on the beach in front of the Haida Heritage Centre on the morning of July 23rd to witness the young man from Oregon start his adventure. He was blessed by the chanting of



a Haida Spirit Song to give him luck and safe passage as well as the Welcoming Canoe song sung by some of the Haida people in attendance. Good Luck Eli!

If paddling a surfboard around an island over 6,000 km² doesn't appeal to you as a relaxing vacation, come discover the living Haida culture with potlatches and totem pole raisings, join the self directed Art Route all around the islands and sit at kitchen tables of the artists discussing their work or meander through one of the museums here full of history. There are lots to do on the islands, even in the wintertime you only need to know where to look....

For more information, check out the website www.goHaidaGwaii.ca

We look forward to your visit!