



TAKU RIVER TLINGIT  
First Nation



## **T'akú Tlatsini** *Places that Make Us Strong*

### **Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area**

**We are the Taku River Tlingit.** Our relationship to our territory is sacred, and over millennia it has made us who we are. The T'akú River has always taken care of us as we take care of it - the T'akú is our promise to future generations.

Tlingit law affirms our responsibility to protect and care for the T'akú and all that live and thrive there, and through reciprocity, the T'akú supports us as healthy Tlingit, today and forever into the future. We are strong partly because our lands and waters depend upon us; stewarding our lands and waters is an essential part of being Tlingit and of Lingít Kusteeyí (Tlingit way of living).

*It is our responsibility to pass on healthy land so that the Tlingit remain healthy and survive forever. Therefore, we have a responsibility to pass Tlingit Laws which shall protect our Traditional Territory and way of life.*

*Taku River Tlingit Constitution*

**We declare the T'akú Tlatsini Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area, according to Tlingit law. T'akú IPCA includes all lands that bear waters flowing into the T'akú River.**

This Declaration is an invitation to other governments and to interested parties to support and witness us in developing a sustainable and resilient future for the T'akú, a future that respects the global significance of the T'akú watershed and our inherited rights and responsibilities as Taku River Tlingit, including to sustain ourselves and Lingít Kusteeyí today and forever.

## With this Declaration,

- We call on the governments of British Columbia and Canada to recognize the T'akú IPCA by aligning Crown laws, workings and decisions in the T'akú with Tlingit law and to recognize the Taku River Tlingit as decision-makers in our territory. This is a duty that the Crown bears according to its own legal and constitutional obligations to recognize our inherited rights and title.
- We invite other governments with interest in the T'akú to support and witness us in ensuring a thriving and abundant shared future that provides for all who cherish and rely upon this mighty watershed.
- We invite all who propose activities in the T'akú to work with us to learn their responsibilities under Tlingit law, and to join us in developing a sustainable and resilient economic future for the T'akú that respects its cultural and ecological significance thus ensuring our people and our neighbours thrive spiritually, culturally, and economically now and forever.

*It is the land from which we came that connects all life. Our land is our lifeblood. Our land looks after us, and we look after our land. Anything that happens to Tlingit land affects us and our culture.*

*As Tlingit, we accept that we are part of and responsible for our land. Everything that is part of the land has life and spirit. Thus, we respect, protect and preserve all life and land.*

### *Taku River Tlingit Constitution*

We have developed a fair, responsible and respectful mapped vision for the T'akú Tlatsini Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (T'akú IPCA) that represents generations of knowledge and decades of work (see attached Map).

The T'akú IPCA protects critical landscapes while providing for a diversified economic future. It includes protecting 60% of the T'akú watershed including our salmon rivers and spawning areas, and landscapes needed for wildlife, for clean water, and for Lingít Kusteeyí. These landscapes are appropriate for a diversity of non-extractive developments such as tourism, research and restoration. The T'akú IPCA provides opportunities for respectful mineral and other development in specially managed landscapes covering 40% of the T'akú watershed. These specially managed areas include vast landscapes of the highest mineral potential.

We invite those interested in economic development to work with us in respect of our laws, standards and protocols that will ensure developments are undertaken in sustainable and honorable ways for a shared and thriving future.

The T'akú is a wild salmon stronghold encompassing nearly 2 million hectares and is the largest roadless watershed of the Pacific Coast of North America. The T'akú salmon that fill our waters and global oceans allow life to flourish, from giant trees, to grizzly bears, to our people and others across the world. From the Pacific coast to the inland boreal forests and plateaus, the T'akú's size, diversity and intact network of life provide a foundation for its resilience, supporting the future of all of us who depend upon it.

While the T'akú is mighty and enduring, it is also vulnerable and is suffering the effects of climate change. Glaciers are melting at increasing rates, our waters are warming, trees are dying or burning, and wildlife are suffering from new diseases and changing habitats. Our salmon face more and more challenges to return to their birthing places. We are acting on the inherent right of self-governance to uphold our responsibility to support the resilience of T'akú even as decisions well beyond our territorial boundaries effect our lands and Lingít Kusteeyí.

We are using our indigenous laws and inherent jurisdiction to govern our lands and waters to protect and conserve the T'akú waterways and landscapes essential for salmon, wildlife, and Lingít Kusteeyí to thrive today and forever. Our salmon and wildlife will have the space and time to move and adapt to climate change. Our cultural landscapes will always provide for Lingít Kusteeyí, ensuring we thrive as Taku River Tlingit.

Respectful and responsible land relationships have allowed us to thrive within our territory since time immemorial. This has always included careful harvesting of minerals in ways that do not impact the resilience of our lands and waters to recover. Economic development carried out in a sustainable manner that preserves healthy lands and supports thriving communities for present and future generations will continue to be part of our future.

We will not consent to disrespectful developments that cause lasting impacts to our lands, waters and all that rely upon them, including ourselves. These threats build on generations of harm caused to our people and our lands through Crown government legislation, decisions and actions that tried to erase Tlingit law and culture and reap the riches of our territory without our consent.

Historically, our laws and customs governed our Traditional Territory, protecting it for future generations, just as today we are the caretakers for those yet to come. As our ancestors have always done, we are using our Indigenous laws and inherent jurisdiction to govern our lands and waters. We now act decisively for current and future generations. Our Constitution speaks our truth:

*We are Tlingit because we know that this place, this land, is our Traditional Territory. We have an eternal spiritual relationship with this land, this place.*

*The history of our relationship with the land is sacred and we shall always protect the spiritual places that help us to be Tlingit. We have no where else to go; THIS IS OUR HOMELAND!!!*

*Taku River Tlingit Constitution*

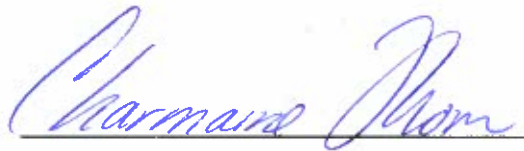






**J**oin us to fulfill the promise of the T'akú IPCA as it will benefit us all. It is only through respect for Tlingit law and governance that the well-being of the T'akú and all who depend upon it can be ensured for thousands of years to come.

**We make this Declaration as  
Taku River Tlingit Leadership Council and Clan Leaders**



Spokesperson, Charmaine Thom



Wolf Clan Director, Louise Gordon



Crow Clan Director, Vivian Mahoney



Crow Clan Director, Shirley Reeves



Crow Clan Leader, Vernon Williams



Wolf Clan Leader, James Williams

*Note: Final decisions are through Taku River Tlingit Joint Clan mandates*



# Taku River Tlingit First Nation

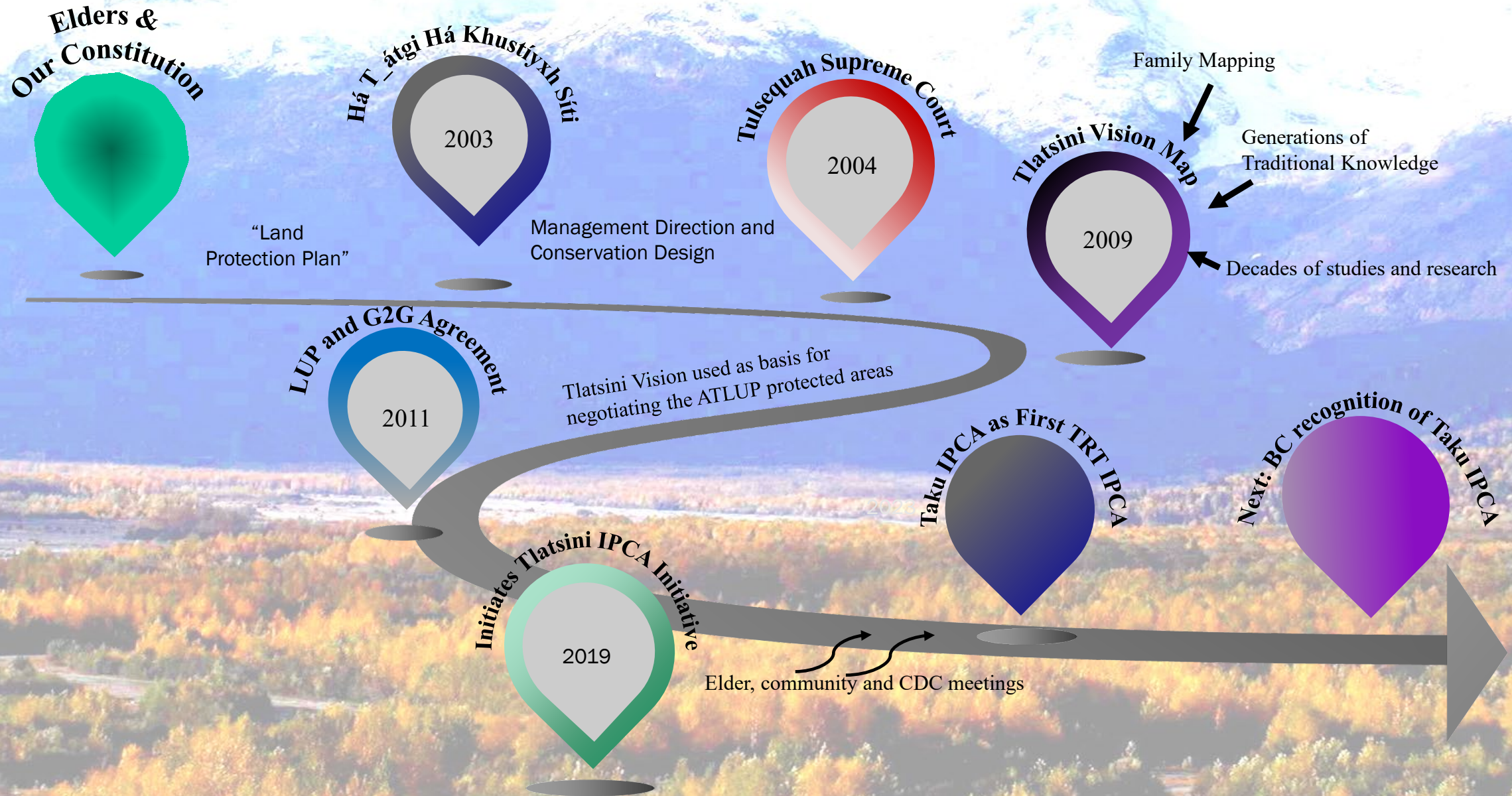
Tlatsini  
Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas Initiative  
(TIPCA)

Spokesperson Jinik (Charmaine Thom)

June 20, 2023



# Taku River Tlingit Land Protection Path is Long!





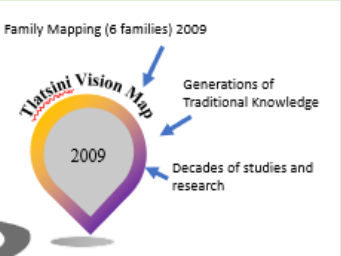


**The Taku River Tlingit have never ceded, released or surrendered any of our aboriginal rights and title to our Traditional Territory and have worked tirelessly over many generations to protect our culture, land and wildlife;**

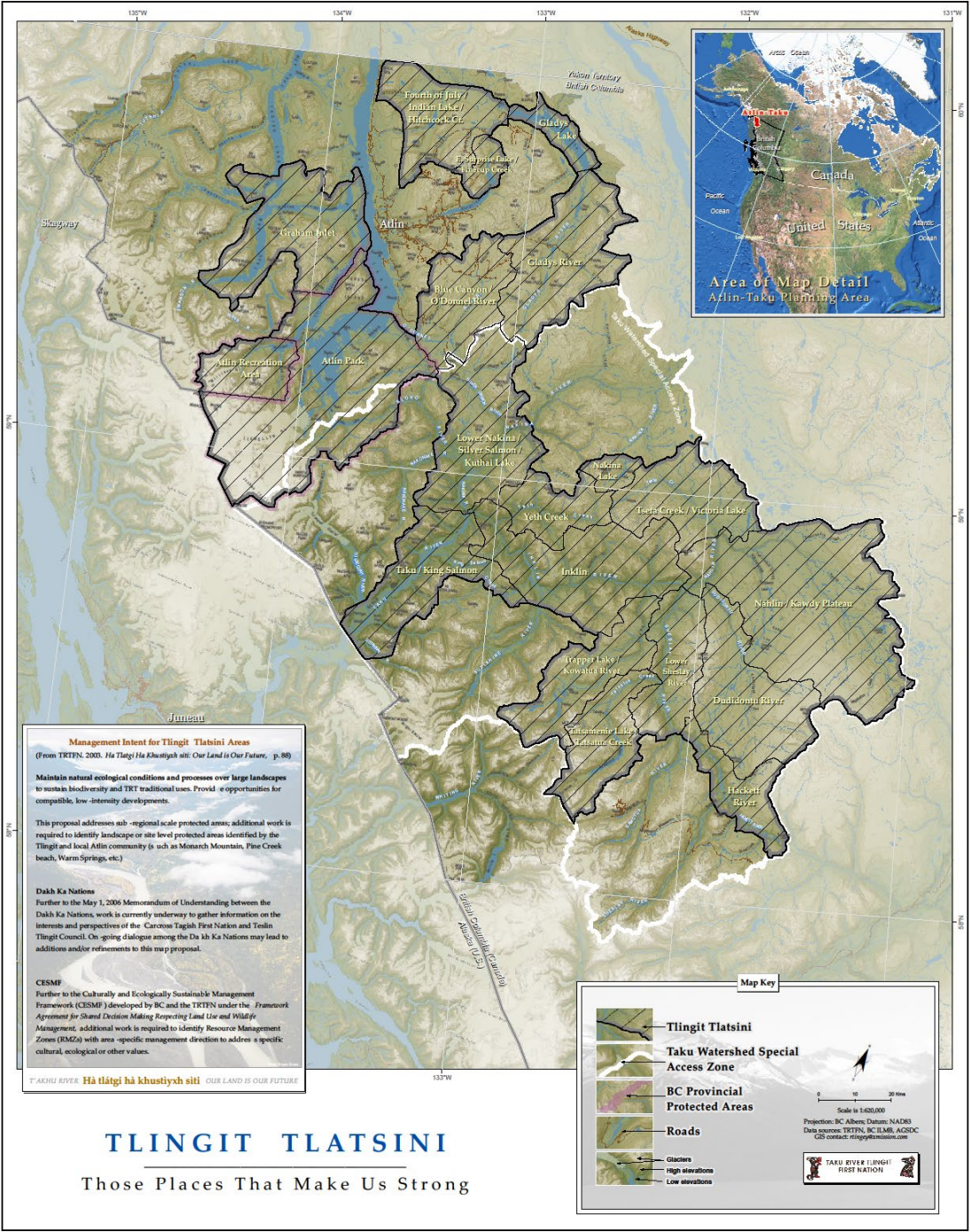
**The TRTFN Constitution is clear about our responsibility to protect and govern our lands for today and future generations;**

*It is our responsibility to pass on healthy land so that the Tlingit remain healthy and survive forever. Therefore, we have a responsibility to pass Tlingit Laws which shall protect our Traditional Territory and way of life.*

*Taku River Tlingit Constitution*



The *Tlatsini Vision* map developed in 2009 identified the Taku River Tlingit vision for protecting our important cultural and natural landscapes across our Traditional Territory based on extensive community engagement and mapping, generations of Traditional Knowledge and decades of scientific research;





## 2009 Printed Map Poster



## TLINGIT TLATSINI

Those Places That Make Us Strong

*Tlatsini Vision* was made public in 2009

## From 2009 Printed Brochure

*The Tlatsini map represents the work of our people to understand the places that are important to us — for the salmon, for the wildlife, and for the practice of Tlingit Khustiyxh, our way of life.*

*We look forward to an on-going and respectful dialogue on how to bring this vision into reality for us and for others who make our territory their home.*

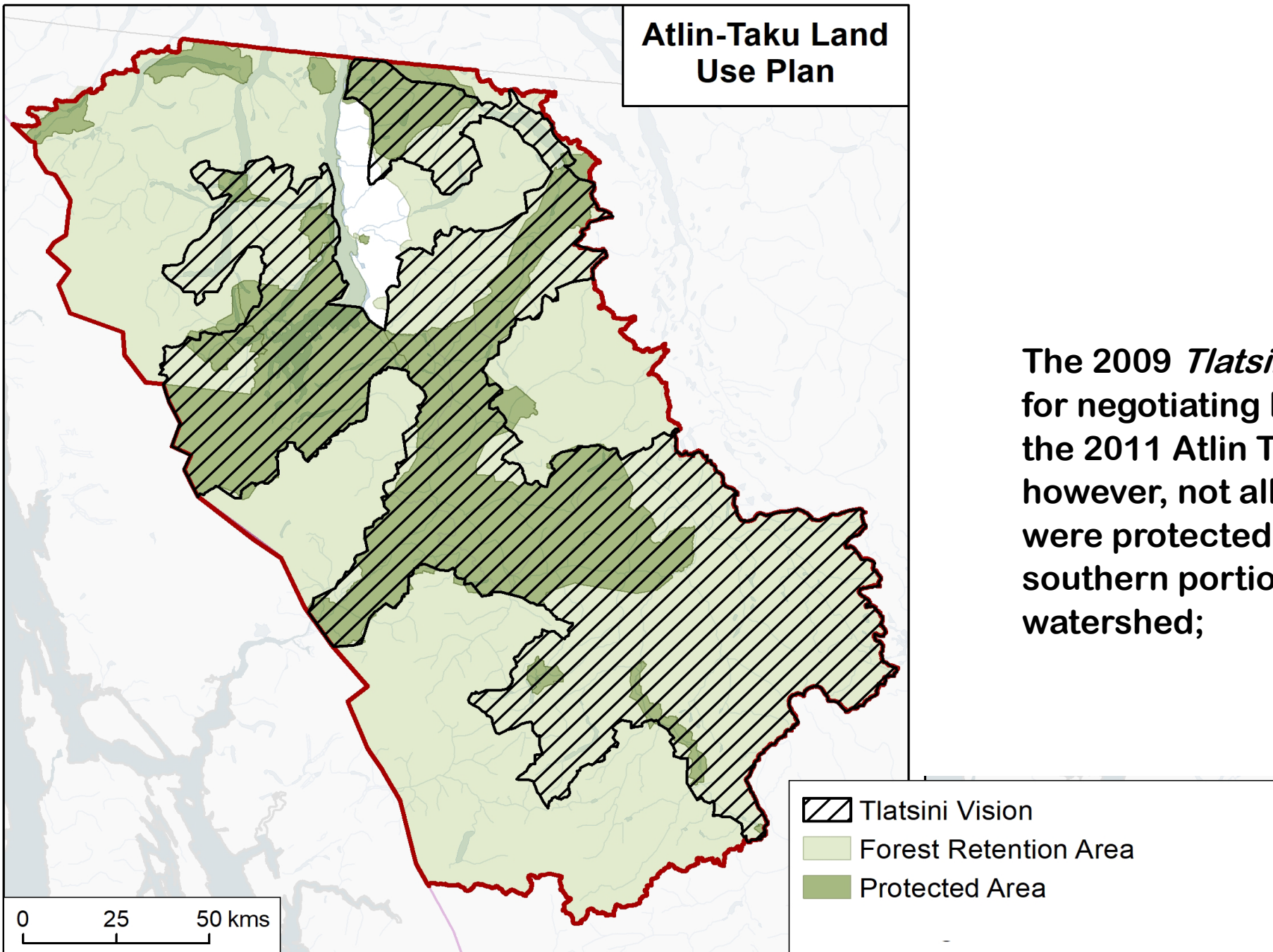
*Kunek, John D. Ward, Spokesperson  
Taku River Tlingit First Nation*

*It is our collective responsibility to care for the land and ensure that our uses are sustainable. The Tlatsini map brings to life the stories of our ancestors and Elders and offers a hopeful vision of the future for all our children and grandchildren.*

*Brian Jack, Land and Resources Director  
Taku River Tlingit First Nation*

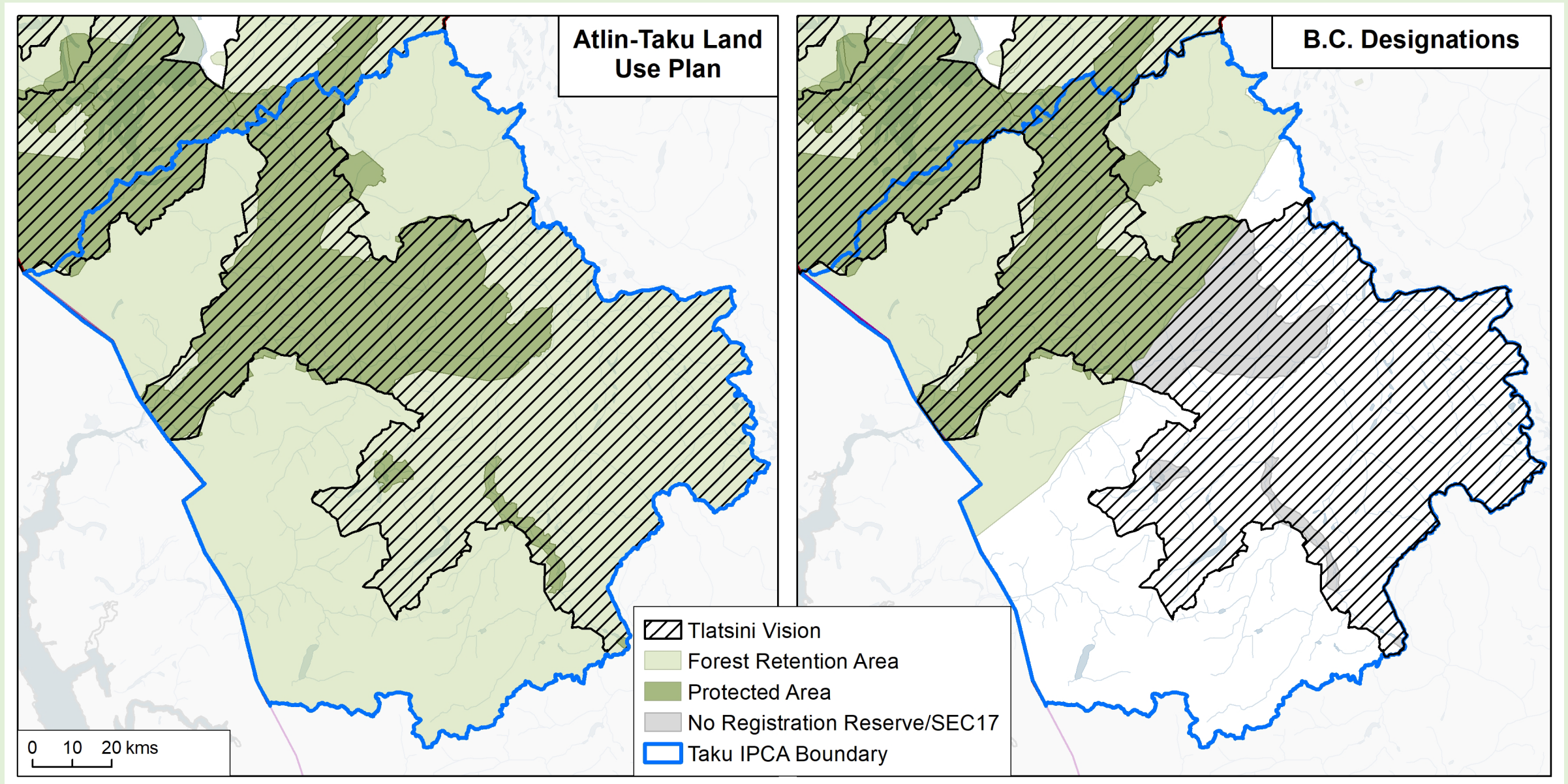
Our Elders named our vision *Tlatsini*: Places That Make Us Strong



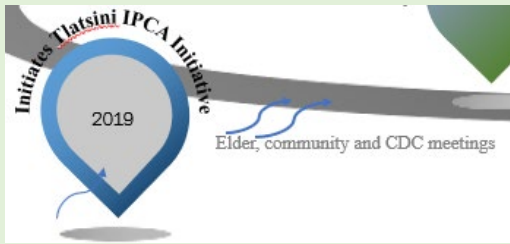


The 2009 *Tlatsini Vision* was the basis for negotiating land protections under the 2011 Atlin Taku Land Use Plan, however, not all *Tlatsini Vision* areas were protected, particularly in the southern portion of the Taku watershed;

To date, the protections BC agreed to for the southern Taku have not been legally designated







Work to confirm and further develop the *Tlatsini Vision* has been on-going since 2019 under Clan Director Council direction and with Elder guidance and citizen engagement, particularly in the Taku Watershed;



Community direction has included:

- ✓ Need to protect more water and our water sources, the icefields,
- ✓ More protections for salmon – salmon crisis real
- ✓ Concern about climate change



TIMELINE  
2019

## Community Engagement

Feb 13, 2019

Mar 18-19, 2019

Covid

Spring Newsletter

May 26, 2022

July, 2022 @ Inklin Camp

Sept 27, 2022

Oct 12, 2022

Fall Newsletter

Jan 16, 2023

Jan 18, 2023

2023

## Clan Directors Council

Mar, 2019

Dec, 2019

Jan, 2020

April, 2020

Sept, 2021

Mar, 2022

Aug, 2022

Dec, 2022

Jan, 2023

Taku Tlatsini IPCA Declaration

## Elder Engagement

Monthly  
April, 2021  
thru  
Feb, 2022,  
with  
Elder's  
Taku Trip  
Aug 2021

Apr, 2022

Elder's Video Finalized

Dec, 2022

# Building upon the long history of work to protect Tlatsini lands, the Clan Director Council approved release of the T’akú Tlatsini Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (“T’akú IPCA”) Declaration on January 21, 2023, publicly asserting TRTFN’s Tlatsini Vision for the Taku Watershed under indigenous law



## T’AKÚ TLATSINI PLACES THAT MAKE US STRONG INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREA

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Tlingit law affirms our responsibility to protect and care for the T’akú and all that live and thrive there, and through reciprocity, the T’akú supports us as healthy Tlingit, today and forever into the future. We are strong partly because our lands and waters depend upon us; stewarding our lands and waters is an essential part of being Tlingit and of living our kusteeyí (way of life).

**It is our responsibility to pass on healthy land so that the Tlingit remain healthy and survive forever. Therefore, we have a responsibility to pass Tlingit Laws which shall protect our Traditional Territory and way of life.**  
— Taku River Tlingit Constitution

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### WITH THIS DECLARATION,

• We call on the governments of British Columbia and Canada to recognize the T’akú IPCA by aligning Crown laws, workings and decisions in the T’akú with Tlingit law and to recognize the Taku River Tlingit as decision-makers in our territory. This is a duty that the Crown bears according to its own legal and constitutional obligations to recognize our inherited rights and title.

• We invite other governments with interest in the T’akú to support and witness us in ensuring a thriving and abundant shared future that provides for all who cherish and rely upon this mighty watershed.

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### WE MAKE THIS DECLARATION AS TAKU RIVER TLINGIT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL AND CLAN LEADERS

Spokesperson, Charmaine Thom

Wolf Clan Director, Louise Gordon

Crow Clan Director, Vivian Mahoney

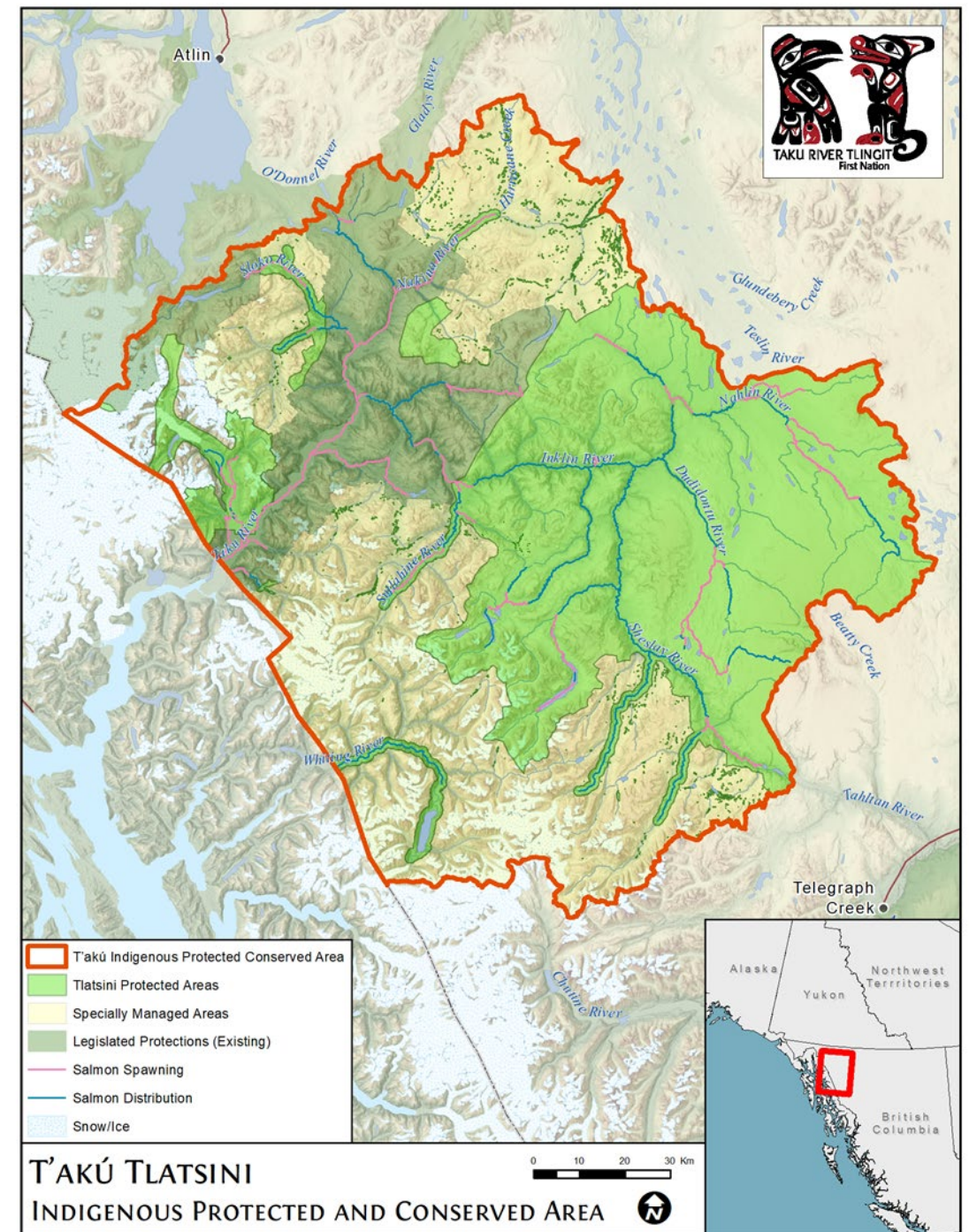
Crow Clan Director, Shirley Reeves

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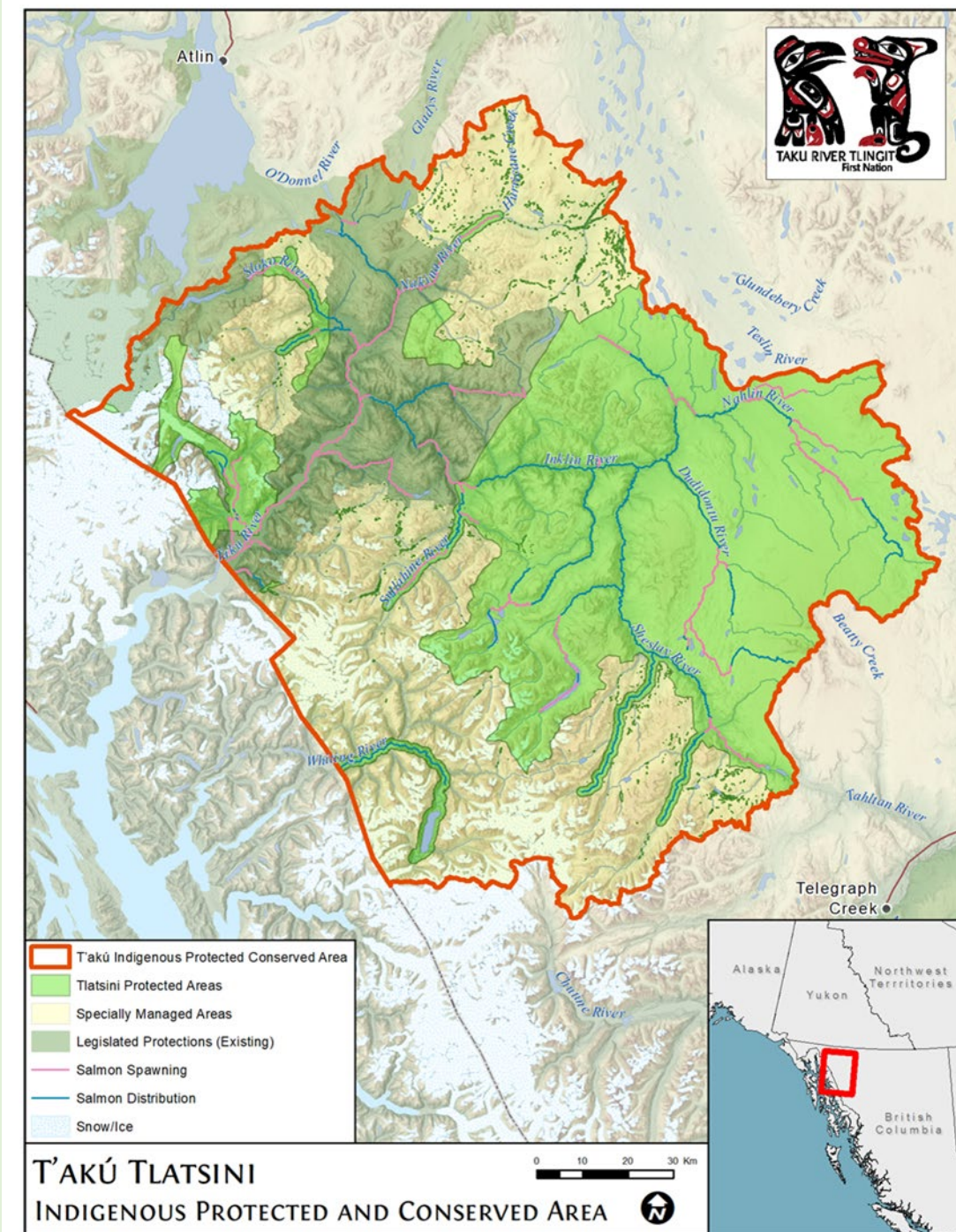
Note: Final decisions are through Taku River Tlingit Joint Clan mandates

**The T'akú IPCA identifies 60% of the Taku watershed as Tlatsini protected areas including the existing protected areas (16%) along with new indigenous protected areas that protect all salmon rivers and spawning areas, important wildlife habitats, culturally important landscapes, and that provide for climate change resilience now and into the future;**





10. The T'akú IPCA proposes approximately 40% of the Taku Watershed as Specially Managed Areas where industrial development, including responsible mineral exploration and development may occur, subject to TRTFN free, prior and informed consent to ensure projects are developed in an environmentally and culturally sensitive manner that generates meaningful employment and benefits for TRTFN members over the long term;



TRTFN have engaged with the Tahltan Nation in a spirit of respect and cooperation to explore interests in protection and conservation of lands important to both Nations in the Taku Watershed and both parties wish to continue these discussions;

March 27, 2019

To: Harp Gill  
Regional Coordinator – Pacific  
harp.gill@canada.ca

**RE: Taku River Tlingit First Nation and Tahltan Central Government Joint Letter of Support for Submission to the Canada's Nature Fund's *Pathway to Target 1 Challenge*.**

Taku River Tlingit First Nation and Tahltan Nation are engaged in developing proposals for the Canada's Nature Fund's *Pathway to Target 1 Challenge* to further our engagement in the Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas process.

The overlap in our shared territories has been at times contentious. The IPCA process represents an opportunity to work together to protect and ensure stewardship over lands that are of vital importance to both the Tahltan and Tlingit Nations. Our Nations have been working together through the Collaborative Stewardship Framework, as well as other 3Nations initiatives, we fully understand the importance of land protection and are willing to explore each other's interests for the IPCA process and potential designations.

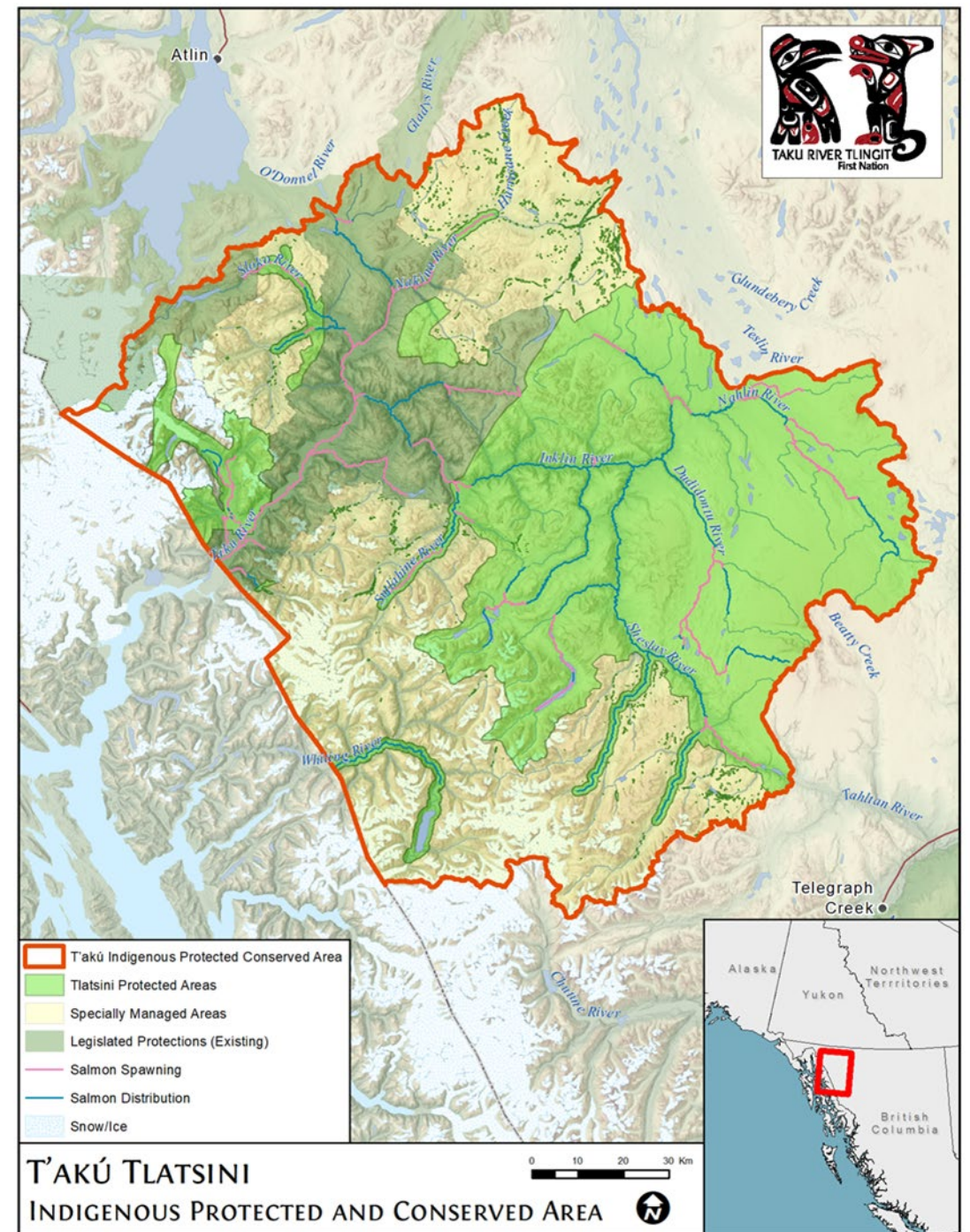
Through this joint letter, we the Taku River Tlingit First Nation and Tahltan Central Government, acknowledge each other's application for funding to the IPCA process and commit to further discussions through this important process.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
TRTFN Spokesperson, John Ward

\_\_\_\_\_  
TCG President, Chad Day



**TRTFN have engaged with Crown governments (BC and Canada) with an interest to identify legal mechanisms and governance arrangements that provide for Crown recognition the T'akú IPCA.**



*Gumalchéesh*

Questions?

