

## Traditional Foods Toolkit Launched



Cleaning haay'istuup (chiton) in Ahousaht.

Herring eggs, eelgrass shoots, dried fish, and gooseneck barnacles may be common foods for some families, but for others, they are the stuff of history. Enter the Nuu-chah-nulth Traditional Foods Toolkit, a new publication from Uu-a-thluk and partnering Nations that aims to change all that.

Made up of five booklets, each with a different theme, along with posters and a copy of the

Nuu-chah-nulth cookbook, the Traditional Foods Toolkit captures information about traditional food harvest and preparation for people who want to get back in touch with their traditional diet.

"This project grew out of a request from Nuu-chah-nulth Ha'wiih in Uu-a-thluk's 2006 strategic plan," said Uu-a-thluk capacity building co-

ordinator, Norine Messer. "At that time, the Ha'wiih involved wanted to see knowledge about traditional food harvesting and preparation passed on to future generations."

Acting on that request, Uu-a-thluk first researched and developed a community cookbook featuring recipes from Nuu-chah-nulth Nations up and down the island. Following the cookbook's publication in 2008, the organization led a series of elder-youth exchanges on topics such as smoking and drying salmon, building a

smokehouse, pit-cooking, and harvesting low tide foods. The exchanges took place in the summer of 2009 and 2010 in Anacle, Yuquot, Zeballos, Ahousaht, and Ittatsoo.

"During the activities with elders and youth, a lot of information kept coming up that wasn't recorded anywhere that people knew about," Messer said. "We wanted to capture this information in a resource communities and schools would find useful. We wanted to make it more visible."

The resulting Traditional Foods Toolkit has already found its way into community health and fisheries offices and community schools. Messer has also brought the Toolkit on the road, partnering with Nations to host feasting activities and traditional food exchanges throughout Nuu-chah-nulth territories.

"I think people are really proud of them," Messer said, referring to the five booklets in the toolkit. "They are a beautiful way to show a healthy diet and a respectful way of living to a new generation."

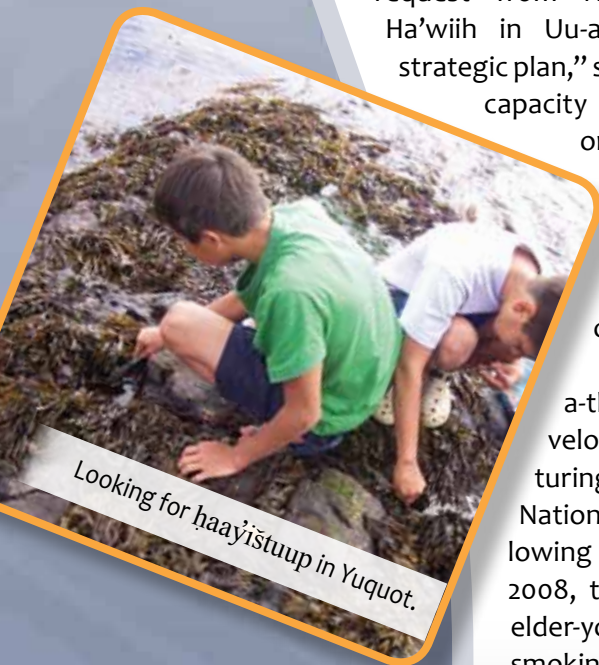
Because the booklets contain ideas for community events and classroom activities, schools and education workers have also given Messer positive feedback about the toolkit. "The schools are really excited to put these to use in the new school year," she said.

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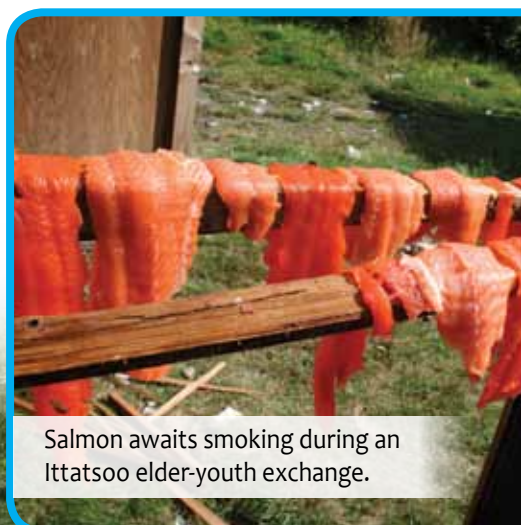
—Norine Messer, Uu-a-thluk Capacity Building Coordinator

Funded by the B.C. Healthy Living Alliance, the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, the B.C. Capacity Initiative, and the New Horizons for Seniors Program in partnership with Uu-a-thluk, the toolkit will continue expanding. In the works is an overall reference book and a DVD movie featuring snapshots of feasting activities and community programs.

Free copies of the toolkit are available to people working in community programs related to health, wellness, fisheries, and education. For more information, contact Norine (Messer at 250-735-4111 or [norinemesser@hotmail.com](mailto:norinemesser@hotmail.com)).



Looking for haay'istuup in Yuquot.



Salmon awaits smoking during an Ittatsoo elder-youth exchange.



Members of Ehattesaht First Nation take part in a traditional pit-cook led by Uu-a-thluk.

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