

Chapter Seven: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Summaries

Ts'ishaa Main Village

This large archaeological site, with its distinct house platforms and deep shell midden deposits, was clearly once the location of a major Nuuchah-nulth village. Oral traditions, particularly as recounted by knowledgeable Tseshaht people to the anthropologist Edward Sapir in the early twentieth century, provide extensive information on this village, including the names and histories of major social groups and chiefs and detailed description of the *taayii hawilh's* house which once stood there (Chapter Two). For approximately two millennia, this was the major village of the Tseshaht ancestors. Then, as a result of the extensive changes in Native life in the decades following first contact with Europeans, the Tseshaht dramatically expanded their territory and Ts'ishaa was reduced to a summer fishing and sea mammal hunting location.

In contrast to the rich ethnographic details, the archaeological record seems relatively meagre. It does, however, document details about everyday life. The people who lived at this location relied extensively on the sea for their survival, with the vast bulk of the food that sustained them available from the immediate intertidal and subtidal locations around their rocky island home. California mussel was a major part of their diet, as evidenced by the huge shellfish accumulations, of which that species is the primary constituent (Appendix C). Fishing clearly was a paramount activity, with rockfish and other fish species which were available immediately off the rocky shores dominating the faunal assemblage (Appendix D). The artifacts confirm this reliance on fishing in the culture, as over half of all recovered implements are small bone points, bipoints, or the fragments of such tools, which are almost all parts of composite fishing gear.

The loss of implements of wood, bark, root, and other perishable materials from the archaeological record, however, greatly limits our understanding of the past. It is evident from Nuuchah-nulth ethnography that the great majority of all implements were made of such materials. Where waterlogged conditions have preserved artifacts of otherwise-perishable materials, such as at Ozette and at the

Nitinat Lake sites (Eldridge and Fisher 1997), these form the vast majority of recovered items. Sites such as Ts'ishaa provide only a glimpse into past material culture, with common artifacts such as bone points representing only part of composite tools that also included wood and bark.

The oral histories tell of the great whalers who once lived at Ts'ishaa, and nearby rocks and reefs were known as favoured whaling locations. Archaeology confirms the importance of whaling, with whale elements found throughout the midden deposit. The discovery of a partially-intact mussel shell harpoon cutting blade embedded in the back of a whale skull demonstrates that active whaling was taking place over 500 years ago, and likely throughout the occupation of this portion of the site. DNA analysis indicates that most of the whales taken were humpbacks, a conclusion also reached through examination of whalebone from other major sites in Barkley Sound (Monks et al. 2001). The large stack of whalebones on the lowest terrace of EA 2 may have been a memorial to the whaler's successes, placed just above the beach in front of the house.

Remains of other sea mammals affirm the maritime lifeways of the people who lived at Ts'ishaa. Fur seals were a major part of the diet, as is the case for virtually all major excavated Nuuchah-nulth village sites (McMillan 1999:140; Crockford et al. 2002:152). Although these animals today only appear along this coast during their annual migrations, discovery of newborn and juvenile fur seal bones at Ts'ishaa indicates that these animals were being taken from a local breeding population (Crockford et al. 2002). Remains of several species of porpoise and dolphin were found in some abundance, indicating that the inhabitants of Ts'ishaa had well-developed marine hunting skills and technology. Sea otters, while of great significance historically, only rarely occur in the archaeological faunal assemblage.

Himayis

Tseshaht oral history tells us that this site was first occupied later than the main village. Overcrowding at Ts'ishaa led chiefs to send their slaves and other lower-class people to establish a new residential area nearby. The initial occupation, at the southern end of the site today, occurred about a thousand

years ago. Continued growth led to expansion northward along the beach, until nearly the entire space to Ts'ishaa was filled. This low-lying area was less suitable for habitation and the archaeological deposits are shallow and more recent.

Although this residential area is known to have been low-status, little evidence of this can be seen in the archaeological remains. The artifact yield is very low and is lacking any status items, yet it represents the same types of items as the main village, with bone points and bipoints comprising over half the total. Detailed faunal analysis is restricted to the column samples (Appendix E), which reveal a similar range of fish species as at the main village. Fishing was clearly a dominant subsistence activity, but bones of whales and other sea mammals, generally associated with high-status activities, were also found.

Ts'ishaa Back Terrace

This small site area on an elevated landform behind the main village provided information on human use of this region at an earlier time, when sea levels were perhaps three to four metres above the present tides. A series of radiocarbon dates establishes the age of these deposits as from roughly 3000 to 5000 cal BP. An upper black silt layer contains the greatest number of artifacts and features encountered. Shell deposits range from traces only to the deep 2.5 m deposit on the eastern slope, yet where they occur they span the same age range despite greatly differing rates of accumulation. The initial occupation was on a surface that varies laterally across the excavated area, from a red-brown clay to a grey-brown silt-clay, which sits directly on bedrock at the back of the excavated area. Stone artifacts and a small quantity of other cultural materials were found in the upper portion of this matrix. Dates of up to about 5800 cal BP came from the clay, although it is not certain that this earliest date refers to human presence.

The occupation of this area appears to have been very different from that at the later village. The area encompassed and the average depth of deposit are much smaller, suggesting only occasional use by a small group. No evidence of house structures was detected. Instead, this area may have served primarily as a burial location. A number of burials, from different time periods, were encountered, including one case where the human remains had been placed under a large rock cairn which would have been prominently visible on the land surface. However, people seem also

to have lived at least temporarily at this location. Many of the abundant chipped stone implements are simple expedient tools for immediate use, and the numerous flakes present demonstrate that tool manufacture was taking place at that location. The deep shell accumulation at the eastern end also indicates that some subsistence activities were taking place there.

Unlike in other areas of the site, stone dominates the back terrace artifact assemblage. Quickly-made tools such as choppers, along with unmodified flakes, show use of free-hand percussion on larger rocks, while a bipolar reduction technique was used for chert, vein quartz, and other pebble-sized materials (Magne, Appendix B). Most are simple expedient tools made of locally available materials. Major exceptions, however, occur in the upper layers, where they may be associated with use of this area for burials. These include the large lanceolate biface made of obsidian from southern Oregon, the two large ground slate "bayonet-type" points, and the five large bone points with shallow barbs. In addition, an Oregon obsidian blade-like flake and a finely-decorated abrasive stone fragment came from the lower matrix, just below a layer dated to about 4600 cal BP.

Although shell does not occur across the entire back terrace, where midden deposits are present they consist overwhelmingly of California mussel, followed very distantly by several species of barnacles and clams (Appendix C). Fish, particularly rockfish, greenling, and ling cod, dominate the vertebrate fauna, although not to the extent of the later component (Appendix D). Herring was also a major resource in the diet, as shown by examination of the column samples (Appendix E). All these resources could have been obtained from the rocky shoreline and nearshore waters in the immediate site vicinity. Advanced sea hunting technology is also indicated by the fairly abundant remains of whales and dolphins. In addition, the people who once lived in this early part of the site kept dogs, in two distinct size ranges (Appendix D). The status of these animals as pets is indicated by two partial skeletons which may represent deliberate burials.

Intrasite Spatial and Component Comparisons

Within the main village site, the three excavation areas intersected different types of archaeological deposits. The EA 1 trench strata consisted primarily of loose shell, much of it largely intact. The density of both faunal elements and artifacts was much lower than in EA 2. A very rapid accumula-

tion rate is indicated for these deep shell deposits (McKechnie, Appendix E). This appears to have been a dump area, possibly between two house locations. By contrast, in EA 3 and the lower trench of EA 2 there is evidence of possible house floors. This is suggested by more compacted surfaces with less shell, more abundant artifacts and fauna, and presence of such features as intact hearths.

Although sampling may be an issue, a few anomalies in artifact spatial distributions are evident. One example is that, of the 190 bone bipoints recorded, 170 came from EA 2, while none came from EA 3. Even compensating for their differing contributions to the artifact total, this is a significant difference. It is interesting in this regard that EA 2 also had by far the greatest density of fish bones at the site (Appendices D and E). EA 3 appears to be somewhat distinct, containing most of the decorative shell (dentalium and *Olivella* beads). It also differs by type of harpoon valve, as four of the five valves with a slotted point bed came from that location, while none of the more common channelled valves occurred there. While these apparent differences may not be meaningful, it is possible that they represent different social groups, as were known through oral tradition to have occupied these areas.

Artifact distributions provide limited evidence for temporal change over the 2000 year occupation span of the village. Faunal remains, however, show a late shift in emphasis on some species. The upper levels of EA 2, dating to about the last 500 years, show a fairly marked difference from the lower layers of that trench and from EA 1, in that sea mammals and birds comprise a much greater portion of the total assemblage, with a corresponding drop in the importance of fish (Appendix D). Fur seal elements are particularly abundant, indicating a late period emphasis on that resource. A marked shift is also evident within the fish category, as salmon remains, which elsewhere in the site comprise less than 3% of the total fish elements, jump to 27% of the total (Appendix D).

Much more pronounced change is evident when the early component on the back terrace is compared to the later village. This is particularly evident in the artifact assemblage, where stone comprises 68.8% on the back terrace, compared to 10.6% in the village, and chipped stone (including flakes) accounts for 43.4%, compared to only 0.7% in the later deposits. The chipped schist knives, choppers, and cores in the early component have few or no parallels in the later village. Similarly, implements such as the large ground slate points

and the large bone points with shallow barbs are unique to the early portion of the site. Except for the common occurrence of small bone points and abrasive stones, these two assemblages seem markedly dissimilar.

Examination of faunal remains also suggests differing patterns between the two areas. Land mammals are much more prominent in the earlier period; in fact, 84% of the total land mammal sample from the site came from the back terrace (Appendix D). The vast majority of dog remains came from this area, suggesting that this animal played a greater role in Native life during the earlier period. Fur seals were an important part of the Native economy throughout the entire 5000 year occupation span at this location, but became increasingly important over time, with the lowest occurrences in the back terrace and the highest in the upper levels of EA 2. At all time periods, fish elements dominate the vertebrate fauna, although the relative proportion is somewhat reduced for the back terrace because of the importance of mammals.

California mussel played a major role in the diet at all time periods at this site and its shell comprises the vast majority of the midden deposits (Appendix C). This marked emphasis on mussels is also characteristic of other "outside" Nuu-chah-nulth sites such as Yuquot (Clarke and Clarke 1980). Barnacles and clams are the next most important shellfish categories, but in quantities far below mussels. Clams become more important over time, with relatively low occurrence in the back terrace and highest occurrence in the upper levels of the village site. This may reflect environmental change over time, as higher sea levels at the time the back terrace was occupied would have resulted in more rocky shores suitable for mussel and barnacle collection, while the emerging land at more recent times would have exposed suitable beach habitat for clams (Sumpter, Appendix C). Sea urchins and chitons also become more evident in the diet in later times, and species diversity in general is much greater in the village deposits than the earlier back terrace.

Discussion

The extensive ethnographic information, the rich and detailed oral histories that refer to Ts'ishaa, and the archaeological data collected through the research of the Tseshah Archaeological Project can be integrated to present a more complete picture of Tseshah culture and history than would

otherwise be possible. We know details of the large plank houses that once stood at this site and the painted designs that once adorned them, as well as the names of great whaling chiefs who once lived there. The excavation units across the site provided information on distinct social groups (*ushtakimilh*) known to have occupied different parts of the site. The site itself can be seen as part of a cultural landscape, a set of lands and resources that were the *hahuulhi* of a particular Nuu-chah-nulth chief.

Throughout the entire 5000 year occupation span of this site, the people who lived there were heavily dependant on intertidal and near-shore resources. The diet relied heavily on California mussels collected from the rocky shoreline and on near-shore fish such as rockfish, greenling, ling cod, and perch. The numerous herring and anchovy likely also were harvested close to the shore, where they congregated in kelp beds. The large sea mammals found at the site could also have been taken in the area immediately surrounding Benson Island. Ethnographic accounts identify important fur seal hunting areas in the outer islands of the Broken Group, and sea lions seasonally congregate today in great numbers on favoured rocks near Ts'ishaa. Even whales could have been taken close to the site, as ethnographic accounts identify the rocks immediately west of Benson Island as major whaling and sea otter hunting locales. In all, the faunal remains from Ts'ishaa indicate that the site residents were intensively exploiting a range of resources available in the immediately surrounding area.

This faunal pattern suggests that the people of Ts'ishaa occupied a relatively small and culturally constrained territory, with the vast majority of resources of all kinds coming from a small area around their main village. The ten large village sites or site clusters identified for the Broken Group islands (Haggarty and Inglis 1985:37–38) could be interpreted as representing as many as ten separate political units occupying this archipelago, each with its own restricted territory. This fits well with the ethnographic information, which documents the original Tseshaht territory as being restricted to the islands between Benson and Turret (Fig. 9), in the southwestern portion of the Broken Group, while the remaining Broken Group islands were in the territories of other independent Nuu-chah-nulth local groups (Chapter Two).

Occupation of such a restricted territory would mean that there would have been no need for a seasonal pattern of residence, as all resources could have been obtained in a short journey from one

central location. The main village would have been occupied year-round. Faunal remains, however, provide only limited support for this conjecture, primarily because relatively few seasonal indicators are represented in the faunal assemblage. Only spring and summer occupation can be demonstrated for the early component on the back terrace, but this occupation was clearly more limited and of a different nature than later use of the main village. The Ts'ishaa village deposits provided evidence for a more seasonally extended occupation, with strong indicators for spring and summer but some evidence of winter as well (Appendix D). The ethnographic accounts clearly establish Ts'ishaa as a year-round community, with all economic resources within the local group's territory being exploited from this permanent base (Chapter Two).

Limited evidence for trade may also reflect this focus on use of resources from a restricted territory. Overwhelmingly, artifact production was based on locally available raw materials. The abundant chipped stone artifacts in the early component are primarily based on materials that would have been available in the immediate vicinity of the site, although a few rock types, such as schist, might have been brought in from sources to the southeast of Barkley Sound (Appendix A). The major exceptions are the three artifacts of obsidian, which were all traced to sources in southern Oregon, with the earliest (a microblade core ridge flake) showing that such long-distance trade existed by about 4600 cal BP. Even fewer indicators of trade exist in the late component, although this may partially reflect the limited use of stone in artifact manufacture. Several mammal species present, such as wapiti (elk) and beaver, were not available in the immediate vicinity of Ts'ishaa but could have been obtained from the mainland shores of Barkley Sound. Their small numbers in the faunal assemblage indicate that they played only minor roles in the diet, but they may have been sought more for their use in tool production (Hodgetts and Rahemtulla 2001). Evidence for this includes a beaver incisor cutting tool and a number of large antler artifacts, including waste materials from on-site tool manufacture.

Access to a wider resource base, possibly indicating use of a larger territory, is suggested by a marked shift in faunal frequencies in the upper layers of EA 2, dating to within the last 500 years. Sea mammals and birds are much more common relative to earlier layers, with a corresponding drop in the importance of fish (Appendix D). Fur seals, although an important part of the diet at all time

periods, make up the greatest portion of the total in these layers, indicating a particular economic focus on hunting that species. A marked shift also occurs within the fish as salmon leap to 27% of the fish total, while for the site as a whole they comprise only 2%. In contrast to other fish species, salmon are represented only by postcranial elements, suggesting that they were brought to the site as preserved fish that had been caught and processed elsewhere. If these were river-caught fish taken during their spawning runs it would indicate that the people of Ts'ishaa at that time had access to locations along the shores of Barkley Sound, or major ties of trade or kinship with people who resided there.

The dramatic expansion of Tseshaht territory and consequent shift in seasonal settlement pattern that occurred rapidly after contact with Europeans is not evident in the archaeological record at Ts'ishaa. The historic period is minimally represented at this site. Only a few artifacts of introduced European materials were recovered, and these could have been left by the early twentieth century Euro-Canadian occupants. The possibility that Ts'ishaa was largely abandoned prior to European arrival does not fit with our knowledge of Tseshaht amalgamations. Expansion of Tseshaht territory to the upper shores of Barkley Sound did not occur until the final decades of the eighteenth century, as oral traditions indicate that European firearms played a role in the conflict. Even after Ts'ishaa no longer served as a year-round centre, the Tseshaht continued to use it as a summer fishing and sea mammal hunting location. Historic accounts indicate that the Tseshaht continued to camp at both Ts'ishaa and Himayis into the twentieth century, even after Benson had taken up residence there (Chapter Three). Yet, despite extensive excavation across the site and little evidence for major disturbance of the upper layers, that part of the archaeological picture is missing.

Several mid-Holocene occupations are now known for Barkley Sound. A number of the earliest radiocarbon dates from the Ts'ishaa back terrace cluster around 5000 cal BP (age ranges of 5260–4870, 5320–4870, 5310–4830 cal BP at two sigma, 95% probability), with one slightly older date (5920–5650) which may or may not be cultural. A very similar date (5320–5050) was recently obtained from a charcoal sample taken in a probe into a raised landform at one end of Kiix7in village (DeSh-1), on the east side of Barkley Sound near Bamfield (Sumpter et al. 2002). On the west side of the sound, Ch'uumat'a (DfSi-4) has basal deposits from an elevated area at the back of the

site which date to about 4500 cal BP (McMillan and St. Claire 1996). Ts'ishaa and Kiix7in now have the oldest radiocarbon dates for archaeological sites from Nuuchahnulth territory, although only Ts'ishaa and Ch'uumat'a have excavated data for this period. All three early site components are on elevated landforms immediately adjacent to later large village sites and indicate occupation of the area at a time of somewhat higher sea levels (Chapter Five).

The artifact assemblages from the early components at Ts'ishaa and Ch'uumat'a, plus those from the Little Beach site near Ucluelet (with dates equivalent to the lower levels at Ch'uumat'a), appear markedly dissimilar to those from the later village sites. Traits shared by all three sites that distinguish them from later assemblages include abundant chipped stone tools, including large bifaces, and cairn burials. Materials from these three sites show a resemblance to the late Charles and Locarno Beach stages in the Strait of Georgia region (McMillan 1998a; 2003). Certainly the large faceted ground slate points and large bone points with shallow barbs from the upper layers of the Ts'ishaa back terrace find their closest parallels in the Locarno Beach stage.

Several explanations could be advanced for this apparent culture change between the earlier components and the later village sites. Cultural replacement is one possibility, with the ancestors of the Barkley Sound Nuuchahnulth arriving from further north on the coast about 2500 BP and displacing or absorbing earlier populations. Later Nuuchahnulth population movements are known to have involved absorption of other populations (McMillan 2003), which would mean that the modern communities could still trace an ancient heritage in that area. However, a decline in the importance of the chipped stone technology and the shift away from midden interment under cairns are features of the later precontact period along much of the British Columbian coast and don't necessarily involve population movements or replacements. The Hoko River site, on the Olympic Peninsula, has a situation similar to Ts'ishaa, with a Locarno Beach-like earlier component and a distinctly different later occupation (Croes 1995). Croes (1995:227–228) argues that the shifts in bone and stone artifact assemblages represent stages in economic adaptation, while he uses the preserved basketry in the waterlogged portion of the site to make the argument for direct ethnic continuity from the earlier occupation to the historic inhabitants of the area. We still have too

little excavated data of the requisite age from Nuu-chah-nulth territory to resolve this issue.

At the main site area, Ts'ishaa clearly shows that a large Nuu-chah-nulth village stood at this location for at least 2000 years. A lifestyle highly adapted to the maritime resources of their outer coast home is evident throughout this time. Ethnographic accounts that indicate the importance of fishing and sea mammal hunting are confirmed and given greater detail through study of the excavated faunal remains. The artifacts recovered can be placed in the West Coast culture type, believed to be the archaeological remnant of Nuu-chah-nulth culture (Mitchell 1990; McMillan 1998b). Most of the key traits that identify this culture type are well represented at Ts'ishaa: numerous bone points and bipoints; single barb points; bone and antler harpoon valves, including self-armed and ancillary valves; bone splinter awls; sea mammal bone foreshafts; ground stone fish hook shanks; ground mussel shell tools; and abrasive stones. The absence or rarity of flaked stone tools or detritus, as at Ts'ishaa village, is also seen as an identifying trait. The West Coast culture type, however, was defined on assemblages from Yuquot and Hesquiat further north in Nuu-chah-nulth territory, and some differences seem to exist in Barkley Sound. Ground stone celts are considered one of the defining traits of the culture type (Mitchell 1990:356), yet none were found at the Ts'ishaa main village, nor at the major site of T'ukw'aa on the western side of Barkley Sound (McMillan and St. Claire 1992). In the Barkley Sound sites, stone celts are limited to the older deposits, while more recent periods contain only celts of mussel shell (McMillan and St. Claire 1996:57). Small numbers of ground slate points and chipped stone tools also occur in the late deposits of both Ts'ishaa and T'ukw'aa, distinguishing these sites further from the Yuquot and Hesquiat assemblages. While clearly part of the same cultural pattern, some regional differences seem to characterize the Barkley Sound sites.

National Parks and Indigenous Histories

Background

The relationship between indigenous peoples and national parks has been fraught with tensions and conflicting needs, not just in Canada but in many places throughout the world (West and Brechin 1991; Stevens 1997). North American Aboriginal groups have strongly criticized past parks policies that focused almost exclusively on the abundant

natural resources while neglecting the human history of the park (Keller and Turek 1998). Such policies have resulted in a distorted or misleading view of modern Native communities in areas adjacent to the park, the traditional activities carried out within the park, and the history of relations between Native people and the more recent arrivals in the area. Native cultures simply disappeared from the picture presented to park visitors, their presence not even evident in the names assigned to the land. Past policies which ignored Native heritage, however, are changing. Keller and Turek (1998:233) describe a series of stages in the relationship between parks and Aboriginal communities in the United States, from neglect of tribal cultures and needs, to Aboriginal resistance and protest, to a new commitment to cross-cultural cooperation and increasing interpretation of Aboriginal culture and history within the parks.

The relationship between Aboriginal peoples and national parks in Canada has also changed dramatically over the past few decades. Brechin et al. (1991:26) note a revised Parks Canada policy that "now stresses the importance of protecting living cultural heritage as part of the national park mandate." Expansion of the national park system, particularly in northern Canada, has required Parks Canada to negotiate new types of agreements with the Aboriginal stewards of the land. Many protected areas were designated national park reserves, pending final settlement of comprehensive Aboriginal land claims. In contrast to earlier parks in the Canadian system, where no allowance was made for continuing Aboriginal rights, the newer parks developed plans for on-going Aboriginal use and management of the land and resources within the park. A planning document for the national park system refers to "a new type of national park where traditional subsistence resource harvesting by Aboriginal people continues and where cooperative management approaches are designed to reflect Aboriginal rights and regional circumstances" (Parks Canada 1997:10). Many of the newly-established northern parks have entered into co-management agreements with the affected Aboriginal groups (Stevens 1997:57).

Such relationships also raise the issue of "who owns the past?" (e.g. Layton 1989; Zimmerman 1994; Watkins 2000). Native groups in various areas are entering agreements to ensure that they have a strong voice in the management of their heritage sites and the interpretation of their history within the park. Such interpretations must reflect Native perspectives, particularly as maintained

through oral traditions. Despite rejection of such traditions as “non-scientific” throughout much of anthropology’s history (Thomas 2000:91–101), there is renewed interest today in respecting oral histories as primary data sources and integrating them with archaeology to understand the past more fully (e.g. Whiteley 2002). A Nuu-chah-nulth perspective can be seen in a position paper by the Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nations, who seek recognition that they are authorities in the interpretation and dissemination of knowledge concerning their past. They state: “Our own histories, passed down through oral tradition from generation to generation, constitute our record of the ‘true’ past” (Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nations 2000:15–16). Although they do not reject the historic and archaeological data, they seek to ensure that their voices, reflecting their ways of knowing, are heard.

Pacific Rim National Park Reserve

Pacific Rim National Park Reserve came into being through a federal-provincial agreement signed in 1970 and renegotiated in 1987 (Parks Canada 1997:13). Because the entire area of the park is subject to the comprehensive Aboriginal claims of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council and the Ditidaht First Nation, it was proclaimed a national park reserve pending resolution of those claims. All the islands of the Broken Group are claimed by the Tseshah First Nation in these treaty negotiations. Despite these unresolved Aboriginal claims on lands within the park, the Tseshah and other affected Nuu-chah-nulth groups feel that they have little input into planning and management in the park (Peepre and Dearden 2002:342). By contrast, at Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve on the northern British Columbia coast Parks Canada has entered into a co-management agreement with the Haida Nation, resulting in a level of Native involvement that is much higher than that at Pacific Rim (Peepre and Dearden 2002:343). In fact, the present superintendent of that park is a Haida.

Pacific Rim is a popular park, with many boaters, kayakers, and others using the Broken Group islands. The large number of park visitors has raised concerns among the Tseshah of threats to their heritage sites and reserve lands in the Broken Group. Moreover, despite the popularity of their traditional homeland, the Tseshah have not significantly benefited from increased employment through tourism (Peepre and Dearden 2002:342). However, Parks Canada has taken some initiatives

to increase employment opportunities for Nuu-chah-nulth people in the park and to enhance awareness of Native heritage. The park is also committed to promoting Aboriginal tourism ventures (Budke 2000; Peepre and Dearden 2002:342). Although a number of tourism initiatives have been developed within the park (Budke 2000:33), none yet involve the Tseshah or the Broken Group islands. Also, such initiatives have tended to involve transportation or accommodation, while little has been offered to parks visitors in the way of cultural experiences, performances, or arts.

Despite the paucity of cultural programs, park employees report a significant public interest in learning more about the Aboriginal cultures in the park area (Budke 2000:32). Cooperative endeavours such as the Tseshah Archaeological Project provide an effective way to introduce park visitors to Native heritage. In total, in the three summers of excavation at Ts’ishaa, 2254 park visitors were given guided tours of the site by a Tseshah interpreter and were introduced to both archaeological research and Tseshah culture and history (Fig. 66). The public education potential of such programs is clearly considerable.

A basic problem is that the Nuu-chah-nulth presence in Barkley Sound has been downplayed or ignored in recent history. Many islands in the Broken Group, such as Benson, Clarke, Wouwer, Cooper, Cree, Hankin, and Jaques, are named for recent Euro-Canadian settlers (Scott 1972), while the Nuu-chah-nulth names have disappeared from the official maps. Since the creation of the park, the emphasis has been on the natural environment and an attempt to provide a “wilderness” experience for the park visitors. To the Tseshah, however, these islands are not a wilderness but a homeland. Numerous traces of their past presence are evident across the present landscape. Eighty shell middens in the Broken Group alone (Haggarty and Inglis 1986:247) mark former village or camp sites, while rock-wall fish traps in the inter-tidal zones and culturally modified trees inland testify to past native use of every portion of the park. It is vital that interpretation programs incorporate the human role in the park’s ecosystem and history, and recognize traditional activities and the cultural landscapes which reflect them. In addition to enhanced interpretation of Aboriginal culture in the park programs, other initiatives might include wider use of Aboriginal place names within the park and recognition of Aboriginal knowledge in the management of park resources.

As the origin place of the Tseshah in their oral

traditions, Ts'ishaa continues to play an important role in Tseshaht culture. This was emphasized during the excavation, as the project provided an opportunity for a number of Tseshaht people to investigate their heritage, as well as to learn about archaeological research. In addition, several groups of Tseshaht people made the boat journey from Port Alberni to the village of their ancestors while the research reported here was underway. Tseshaht crew members met these visitors with drumming

and singing on the beach, and the welcome song was heard at Ts'ishaa perhaps for the first time in over a century (Fig. 67). This place is where their ancestors once lived, the location at which their large houses once stood and where famed whaling chiefs directed communal activities. Although the Tseshaht today do not occupy their traditional territories in the Broken Group, the site of Ts'ishaa continues to provide a vital link to their cultural identity and history as a people.



Figure 66. Luke George, Tseshaht and Parks Canada interpreter, discusses Tseshaht history and archaeological research with site visitors.



Figure 67. Tseshaht visitors to Benson Island singing the welcome song on the beach in front of Ts'ishaa.