

TALKING STICK

A GREAT BEAR
RAINFOREST
PUBLICATION



Coastal Stewardship Network Connects Guardian Watchmen
Haida Nation Reflects on Kunst'aa Guu-Kunst'aayah Implementation
Coast Funds' New Annual Report and Strategic Plan

SPRING 2017

Updates from Coast Funds

Welcome to the first issue of Talking Stick in 2017. Published throughout the Great Bear Rainforest and Haida Gwaii since 2011, the Talking Stick explores conservation science, stewardship, sustainable development, and community well-being initiatives led by First Nations. All of the inspiring stories we're privileged to share here are capsules of what is now online at www.coastfunds.ca: in-depth interviews, videos, community well-being outcomes, and direct contact with storytellers, as First Nations highlight their lessons, best practices, and exciting new initiatives.

Since our last issue, we've announced that over \$200 million has been invested in the region since Coast Funds began in 2007. Further, we've learned that **approximately 10% of working-age First Nations citizens in the region are employed by projects that have been supported by Coast Funds.** It's encouraging to see the level of positive change occurring across the coast in just 10 years.

Our last issue announced the Board's decision, following engagement with First Nations community and business leaders, to continue the economic development fund beyond 2017. We're pleased to confirm that the

fund was formally extended with the Province of British Columbia in March 2017. We also published **a new strategic plan** to guide us through to 2020, and in April, **a new annual report.** As well, a major milestone was achieved last year: **the amount disbursed to First Nations for economic development in 2016—\$8.2 million—was higher than in any prior year.**

We are honoured to present the stories First Nations are sharing about the origin of the **Coastal Stewardship Network** and the Haida Nation's ongoing efforts to implement the **Kunst'aa Guu-Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol.**

If you would like us to publish your story, please reach out to us at: talkingstick@coastfunds.ca.

Darcy Dobell
Communications Committee Chair

Brodie Guy
Executive Director

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SPRING 2017
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COVER

As head of his Nation's integrated stewardship program, Kitsoo/Xai'xais Chief Councillor Doug Neasloss leads Guardian Watchmen.

PHOTO BY
Brodie Guy

OPPOSITE PAGE

A Guardian Watchman from Nuxalk Nation educates visitors on applicable regulations, Indigenous laws and First Nations stewardship.

COURTESY OF

Coastal First Nations / Sandra Thomson



Powering Up Guardian Watchmen Programs

The Coastal Stewardship Network is making waves far beyond the Great Bear Rainforest.

A NEW FEATURE ON

WWW.COASTFUNDS.CA explores how several distinct Coastal Guardian Watchmen programs developed into a nine-Nation network of resource stewardship offices, supported by stable funding and a robust regional monitoring system—in under a decade. Drawing from conversations with key staff at the Coastal Stewardship Network and the people that brought it into being, the story discusses the Network’s goals and history, and the key learnings gleaned from its startup. Some highlights:

- The term Guardian Watchmen—now synonymous with programs in which First Nations undertake environmental stewardship activities in their traditional territories—was inspired by the three Watchmen figures carved into the top of many Haida totem poles.
- The training program offered to Guardian Watchmen, which offers university credits, is seen as very successful. It brings students to the territories of several member First Nations. This makes it more accessible, sparks new friendships among Guardian

First Nations leadership really wants [Guardian Watchmen] to take over, legally, the enforcement of stewardship plans that are done in the conservancies.

Watchmen and technical staff across Nations, and enhances their effectiveness at work.

- The Network spearheaded a regional monitoring system in 2010. The widely-used system allows Guardian Watchmen to use tablets in the field to collect data offline, feed it into a coast-wide system for deeper analysis, and learn from all member Nations in the Network. An external evaluation and the hiring of a dedicated Regional Monitoring System Coordinator has allowed for significant redevelopment of the system to make it even more useful for answering users’ stewardship-related questions.
- The Network must continually evolve to keep pace with changes in data management, the internet, and broader developments in planning—like implementation of the Marine Plan Partnership for the North Pacific Coast.
- Applicable lessons from the Coastal Stewardship Network are generating interest from First Nations across Canada, social scientists, and journalists.

The story also explores why the Coastal Guardian Watchmen Network changed its name to the Coastal Stewardship Network in 2012. Staff report that it reflected members’ desire to incorporate a broader range of stewardship office staff and skills, and to bring marine- and land-use planning together. It’s also a nod to the fact that Guardian Watchmen, and the technical staff that support them, have inherent rights and capability



to do more than simply “observe, record, and report”—and that they seek to strengthen their roles in stewardship of their whole territories.

Coastal First Nations senior policy advisor Garry Wouters elaborates: “Over a period of time, First Nations leadership really wants [Guardian Watchmen] to take over, legally, the enforcement of stewardship plans that are done in the conservancies, particularly,” he says, referring to the areas set aside for conservation by members of Coastal First Nations when the Great Bear Rainforest was established. **TS**

VISIT WWW.COASTFUNDS.CA AND SEARCH **COASTAL STEWARDSHIP NETWORK** TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ITS REMARKABLE ORIGINS AND ACHIEVEMENTS.

ABOVE

Guardian Watchmen, Elders, and stewardship directors confer during the 2017 Annual Gathering at Hakai Institute of the Coastal Stewardship Network
COURTESY OF
Coastal First Nations / Bessie Brown



Implementing the Kunst'aa Guu-Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol

Citizens of the Haida Nation reflect on their experiences of implementing the groundbreaking agreement signed with the Province of B.C. in 2009.

ABOVE

The Reconciliation Pole, carved by 7idansuu *James Hart*, was carefully hoisted into place using ropes, pulleys, and human effort at UBC. It stands as a testament to the resilience of Indigenous people and a shared commitment to a better way forward.

PHOTO BY
Brodie Guy

WITH THE RAISING OF THE TOWERING new Reconciliation Pole at UBC in the news of late, it's an opportune time to share insights from the Council of Haida Nation (CHN) on implementation of the Kunst'aa Guu-Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol.

The protocol followed years of negotiation with the Province of BC to change exploitative logging practices, and eventually reconfigured a system that was problematic on many levels.

"Signing the Reconciliation Protocol with the Province of BC was a huge feat," affirmed CHN President Peter Lantin. "It took a lot of work to get to that point, but everything that came after—building a robust plan and a framework for how to implement the protocol—has been a monumental task, and is still ongoing."

Part of the agreement established a Solutions Table, which includes two representatives each from the Haida Nation and the Province of BC. Representatives from both parties review all new land-use applications to ensure that they include best available information. Together they decide which applications suggest little or no potential environmental impact, allowing them to be processed in 14 days or less. Those which pose greater potential impact are slated for processing within 60 days. The assessments provide input to the Council of the Haida Nation's Heritage and Natural Resource Committee, which makes decisions on applications on behalf of the CHN.

"We have tasked our Heritage and Natural Resource Committee to be decision-makers on our behalf," explained CHN Vice-president Trevor Russ.

The involvement of the CHN's Mapping Department and the Nation's forestry company, Taan Forest, also helps ensure that referral approvals and planning is on track with Haida conservation and resource management plans.

Lantin, Russ, and Colin Richardson—who served on the Solutions Table for many years before becoming Stewardship Director of the Council of the Haida Nation—freely shared their experiences. They've found that:

- Fully integrating the Protocol into the Haida's existing departments and governance system was critical but time-consuming. In this, the Haida allocation from Coast Funds helped. "It's amazing to be in the place we are ... but building it on the ground takes work and financing, and it's been a key part of where Coast Funds has been able to support us," reported Lantin.
- The Solutions Table generates a lot of work for the CHN. Richardson said that Haida representatives work closely with Provincial members to get through it, with each party taking on more or less work with an

"ebb and flow" that depends on each party's current staffing capacity.

- Working together in an integrated space and consciously building a respectful working relationship between the two parties taught everyone more about working through disagreements. "It was great for me to understand what the Province is trying to accomplish, and for them to have a Haida around to understand how we reach our decisions," recalled Richardson.

Richardson lauded the still-evolving process: "Before the Reconciliation Protocol, the process was very divisive between the two governments. Now when we look at doing something, we start right at the beginning, together, and it's been very positive."

While the Protocol has enabled substantial reductions in the allowable annual cut, created new training and jobs, protected heritage sites and culturally modified trees, and restored the Islands' original name Haida Gwaii, the Haida Nation is very aware that much remains to be done. "Kunst'aa Guu—Kunst'aayah means in the beginning," emphasized Lantin. "This protocol is one step in the reconciliation process, but the first of many." **TS**

**Kunst'aa Guu —
Kunst'aayah means
in the beginning.**

VISIT WWW.COASTFUNDS.CA
AND SEARCH **KUNST'AA GUU-
KUNST'AAYAH** TO LEARN MORE.

Community Well-Being Outcomes Get Spotlight

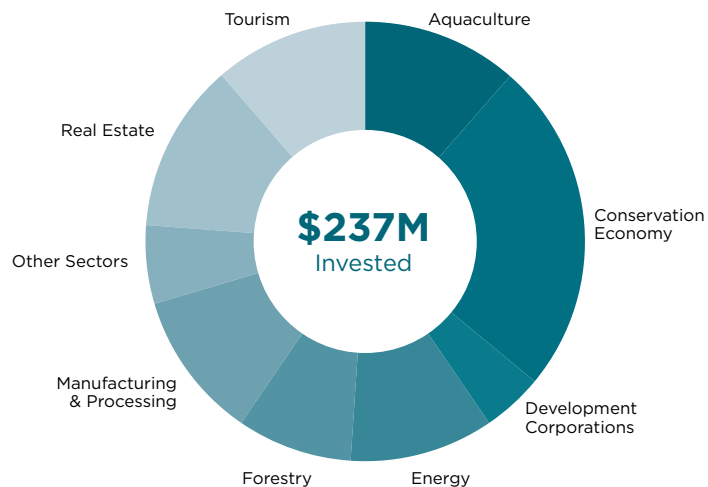
First Nations work closely with Coast Funds to measure the contributions that each of their investments makes to their communities' well-being. Cumulative totals of the positive environmental, economic, social and cultural vitality outcomes of First Nations' investments since Coast Funds' inception in 2007 were a highlight of our 2016 Annual Report, published in April.

Some key outcomes: First Nations have **conducted conservation projects in 80 protected areas**

in the Great Bear Rainforest and Haida Gwaii. They've **invested \$237 million** in sectors diverse as energy, manufacturing, tourism and real estate. Through **275 workforce**

training and development initiatives, 706 people have received training. Revitalization of First Nations languages has been supported by **22 projects**.

INVESTING TO DIVERSIFY BRITISH COLUMBIA'S COASTAL ECONOMY



VISIT WWW.COASTFUNDS.CA AND GET THE HIGH-LEVEL VIEW BY SEARCHING **ANNUAL REPORT**, OR EXPLORE STATS IN-DEPTH BY SEARCHING **COMMUNITY WELL-BEING**.

New Faces At Coast Funds



Larissa Ardis, Communications Specialist Larissa has a BA in Communications, a Master's degree in Resource and Environmental Management (Planning), and several years' experience in journalism, copywriting, editing, communications and research. She helps Coast Funds engage First Nations, partners, funders and the public through all our print and digital publications, and supports First Nations sharing their project stories on www.coastfunds.ca.



Serena Innes, Executive Administrator Serena applies more than 20 years of progressive experience in increasingly strategic roles for organizations such as Garibaldi Glass, BlueShore Financial, and the office of the CEO of the BC 2010 Olympic Games Secretariat. Serena offers critical organizational and administrative support to the entire Coast Funds team, and assists First Nations as they develop project funding applications for Coast Funds.



COAST FUNDS

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