

TALKING STICK

A GREAT BEAR
RAINFOREST
PUBLICATION



West Sea Otter Water Taxi Benefits Community in Wuikinuxv
Bella Guest Cabins and the Growth of Small Business in Hałtzaqv Territory
Welcoming Three New Directors to Coast Funds' Board

FALL 2019

Updates from Coast Funds

Welcome to the fall 2019 edition of Talking Stick, a magazine that showcases the stewardship, conservation science, and sustainable development initiatives led by First Nations throughout the Great Bear Rainforest and Haida Gwaii.

This issue features remarkable entrepreneurs from the Wuikinuxv and Haíłzaqv Nations who have **overcome significant barriers to build successful small businesses in remote coastal communities.**

In Rivers Inlet, Danielle Shaw and Archie Corbett of **Wuikinuxv Nation** launched **West Sea Otter Water Taxi** to serve the needs of their community by providing affordable transportation.

In Bella Bella, Ramona and Cliff Starr of the **Haíłzaqv Nation** established and expanded their accommodation business, **Bella Guest Cabins.**

You can **find full versions of these stories online at coastfunds.ca** along with in-depth interviews, community well-being outcomes, and ways to connect directly with the individuals who develop and lead these initiatives.

We are also pleased to announce the appointment of three new fantastic directors to our board: Christina Gray, nominated by the North Coast Skeena Stewardship Society; Ts'xwiixw *Megan Moody*, nominated by the Central Coast Indigenous Resource Alliance; and Kii'iljuus *Barbara Wilson*, nominated by the Council of the Haida Nation. Each brings a diversity and depth of knowledge and experience to Coast Funds' board of directors and we are grateful to be able to learn from them over the coming years.

Finally, we thank the Haíłzaqv Nation for hosting our annual in-community board meeting in Bella Bella this past June. We deeply appreciate the generosity and hospitality of Haíłzaqv leadership and community members who contributed so deeply to our experience while visiting.

We are honoured to present the stories First Nations are sharing in Talking Stick. If you'd like us to publish your story, please reach out to talkingstick@coastfunds.ca.

Darcy Dobell

Communications Committee Chair

Brodie Guy

Executive Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Updates from Coast Funds 02

West Sea Otter Water Taxi: A Community-Focused Business with a Big Impact 03

Bella Guest Cabins: The Growth of Small Business in Haíłzaqv Territory 05

Welcoming New Directors to Coast Funds' Board 07

FALL 2019
EDITORS LAURA HOPE
AND CELINA O'CONNOR

Coast Funds
750 — 475 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 4M9
604 684 0223
talkingstick@coastfunds.ca

COVER

Danielle Shaw and Archie Corbett successfully launched a water taxi business to service the needs of their remote Wuikinuxv community.

PHOTO BY
Laura Hope

OPPOSITE PAGE

West Sea Otter Water Taxi pulls up to the dock in Rivers Inlet, Wuikinuxv territory.

PHOTO BY
Laura Hope

West Sea Otter Water Taxi: A Community-Focused Small Business With a Big Impact

After three years in operation, West Sea Otter Water Taxi, a community-focused small business, is having a major impact on Wuikinuxv Nation by making travel affordable and getting members out on their territory.



On the remote central coast—between the long, lush fjord of Rivers Inlet, and the glacial green Waanukv River—lies the central community of Wuikinuxv Nation. It is here that Danielle Shaw and Chris “Archie” Corbett launched West Sea Otter Water Taxi—a small, community-focused business with a big impact.

After three years in operation, the business provides a wonderful example of how small business benefits communities. Shaw and Corbett overcame the unique barriers faced by First Nations entrepreneurs to create a business that supports their own small family, while benefiting the larger community of Wuikinuxv by making travel affordable for

“Everyone was so super excited about having access to a water taxi. Especially a water taxi that was based out of the village.”

families and helping get community members out on their territory.

Before West Sea Otter, Shaw explains “People only had the option of flying in or barging in goods and groceries. That can get pretty expensive, especially on the plane.” Recognizing the community’s need for additional transportation, Shaw and Corbett decided to launch a water taxi business.

In 2017, Shaw and Corbett officially launched their new business. West Sea Otter Water Taxi is a comfortable 12-passenger vessel, providing regular service between Rivers Inlet and Port Hardy, as well as charters within the surrounding area.

As predicted, the business was just what the community needed. “Everyone was so super excited about having access to a water taxi,” recalls Cerelina Willie, a Wuikinuxv member who was living in Rivers Inlet when West Sea Otter launched. “Especially a water taxi that was based out of the village.”

By offering a reduced rate for children, Shaw and Corbett have made it easier for families like Willie’s to travel from Rivers Inlet. They are also helping to connect community members with their territory. “Being coastal people, a lot of the people feel more comfortable in the water than in the air,” says Shaw.

That includes her own family. “It has afforded us so many different opportunities to visit places along the coast that we haven’t been to before. It gets our kids out on the water and seeing different parts of the territory.”

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT
[COASTFUNDS.CA](https://coastfunds.ca) AND
[SEARCH WEST SEA OTTER](#)



LEFT

At Rivers Inlet, community members from Wuikinuxv village come down to the dock to help unload freight from West Sea Otter.

PHOTO BY
Laura Hope



Bella Guest Cabins: The Growth of Small Business in Haíłzaqv Territory

After just three years in business, Bella Guest Cabins found a demand for more accommodations in Bella Bella and decided to expand. Owners Cliff and Ramona Starr attribute their success to careful market research, detailed planning, and receiving the support of the Haíłzaqv (Heiltsuk) Nation.

ABOVE

Cliff and Ramona Starr, members of the Haíłzaqv (Heiltsuk) Nation, have established and expanded a successful accommodations business in the remote community of Bella Bella, helping to grow and diversify the local economy.

PHOTO BY

Laura Hope

For years Cliff and Ramona Starr knew they wanted to own a small business in Bella Bella. Years of careful market research, detailed business planning, and tireless fundraising paid off: in 2014, the Starrs opened Bella Guest Cabins.

Starting a small business is an immense undertaking under the simplest circumstances, but doing it on a First Nations reserve means overcoming a number of unique barriers: finding property, getting the support of council and community members, and locating an accountant who understands First Nations business taxes are just a few of the challenges faced by Indigenous entrepreneurs.

In spite of those barriers, Cliff and Ramona Starr have found great success: three years after opening, their business had reached a point where they were able to expand by adding a third self-contained suite, with the support of Coast Funds.

In Bella Bella, the cabins are playing an important role in diversifying the economy by capturing a growing ecotourism industry, and referring visitors to other local businesses.



Ġnıslaġıġlıs Gary Wilson, a Haıtzaqv member and former general manager of the Heiltsuk Economic Development Corporation, says small businesses like Cliff and Ramona's have an essential role to play in economic development: "I felt it was important for us to foster entrepreneurship...we needed entrepreneurs and small businesses to have a healthy economy."

The Starrs' commitment to their business, their community, and the satisfaction of their customers has played a major role in its success. "We have comment books in all of our cabins. We have wonderful comments in those books as well as on our website," says Ramona. "We're always happy to know that our guests have enjoyed their stay."

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT
[COASTFUNDS.CA](https://coastfunds.ca) AND
SEARCH **BELLA GUEST
CABINS**

"I felt it was important for us to foster entrepreneurship, because...we needed entrepreneurs and small businesses to have a healthy economy."

ABOVE

After three years of success, Bella Guest Cabins expanded, adding a third self-contained suite, with the support of Coast Funds.

PHOTO BY
Laura Hope

Welcoming New Directors to Coast Funds

We are delighted to announce the appointment of three First Nations women to our board of directors. Christina Gray (Ts'msyen/Dene), nominated by the North Coast Skeena Stewardship Society; Ts'xwixw *Megan Moody* (Nuxalk), nominated by the Central Coast Indigenous Resource Alliance; and Kii'iljuus *Barbara Wilson* (Haida), nominated by the Council of the Haida Nation, were appointed by our Members at the annual general meeting in early July.

Members expressed their support for the diversity of experience Kii'iljuus, Ts'xwixw, and Gray bring to the board and were impressed by the competencies of the new directors.

"I am thrilled with the brilliance and strong leadership they bring to Coast Funds. They are all important role models in our communities, particularly for young women and girls."

KÁWÁZIŁ MARILYN SLETT, PRESIDENT OF COASTAL FIRST NATIONS AND COAST FUNDS MEMBER.

"We are grateful for the depth of knowledge and experience each of these women bring to their work with the board," said Huux *Percy Crosby*, chair of Coast Funds' board of directors. "Their diverse skill sets will strengthen the ways in which Coast Funds can serve First Nations as they pursue well-being in their communities."



CHRISTINA GRAY

Christina is a Ts'msyen member of Lax Kw'alaams in Northern British Columbia as well as Dene-Métis from Łutselk'e in the Northwest Territories. She is currently completing a Masters of Law at the University of Victoria Faculty of Law and is a Yellowhead Institute Research Fellow, which is a First Nations-led think tank rooted in community networks and committed to Indigenous self-determination.



TS'XWIXW MEGAN MOODY

Megan works for her community, the Nuxalk Nation, as a technical advisor for the Nuxalk Stewardship Office and as a manager of Coastal First Nations' Stewardship Director's Committee. This committee works collectively to implement community land and marine plans in the Great Bear Rainforest.



KII'ILJUUS BARBARA WILSON

Barbara is an elected representative of the Council of the Haida Nation and has many years of diverse stewardship, justice, and education experience. She worked with the Legal Aid Society, was an official observer at COP21, and served as the chair of an advisory group on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools. She recently completed her Masters in Education from Simon Fraser University.

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT [COASTFUNDS.CA](https://coastfunds.ca) AND SEARCH **WHO WE ARE**

OVERLEAF

Pictograph in Wuikinuxv territory.

PHOTO BY

Brodie Guy



COAST FUNDS

750 — 475 West Georgia Street Vancouver, BC V6B 4M9
604 684 0223 info@coastfunds.ca

FIND OUT MORE AT:

coastfunds.ca



Facebook.com/CoastFunds



[@coastfunds](https://twitter.com/coastfunds)