

TALKING STICK

A GREAT BEAR
RAINFORST
PUBLICATION



Nawalakw: Embarking on a Journey of Cultural and Language Revitalization
Dzawada'enuxw and **Kitasoo/Xai'xais** First Nations Advance Renewable Energy
Supporting First Nations-led Fundraising

WINTER 2021

Updates from Coast Funds

Welcome to the winter 2021

edition of **Talking Stick**, a magazine showcasing the stewardship and sustainable development initiatives led by First Nations throughout the Great Bear Rainforest and Haida Gwaii.

This issue features the **Nawalakw Healing Society and Culture Project**, a hopeful vision of Chief Maxwiyalidizi *K'odi Nelson* being constructed at Hada River in **Musga'makw Dzawada'enuxw** territory. Nawalakw will offer cultural immersion and wellness programming supported through a world class ecotourism operation. It will be the first place on earth where Kwakwaka is once again spoken immersively.

We are also pleased to provide an update on the **Renewable Energy for Remote Communities program** announced just over one year ago. In the summer of 2020, Coast Funds, Dzawada'enuxw First Nation, Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation, and the Province of British Columbia announced over \$25 million in new First Nations' investments to transition coastal communities away from dependence on fossil fuel-powered electricity.

This fall we welcomed **Trevor Loke** to the Coast Funds team in our new role of **Director, Partnership Development**. Trevor brings a passion for development and will strengthen our partnerships with First Nations as they continue building resilient economies and stewardship authorities.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on all coastal communities. Our thoughts are with our friends and families throughout the coast who are navigating the ongoing effects and challenges of the pandemic.

Coast Funds' staff continue to work closely with First Nations to ensure we are supporting their projects with flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness.

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

CEO

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EDITOR **LAURA HOPE**

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

COVER

At the *Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis* big house in *Gwa'yasdams* village, Chief Maxwiyalidizi *Kodi Nelson* gathered First Nations leaders, partners, and allies together in 2019 to uplift the Nawalakw vision.

PHOTO BY
Brodie Guy

OPPOSITE PAGE

Chief Maxwiyalidizi holds high a canoe carrying the commitments of Nawalakw supporters to see the vision through to completion.

PHOTO BY
Brodie Guy



Nawalakw Healing Society and Culture Project: Embarking on a Journey of Cultural and Language Revitalization

At Hada River estuary, in Musga'makw Dzawada'enuxw territory, Chief Maxwiyalidizi *K'odi Nelson* is bringing an ambitious, hopeful vision to life. Nawalakw will offer cultural immersion and wellness programming supported through a world-class ecotourism operation.

At Hada River estuary, in the heart of Musga'makw Dzawada'enuxw territory, a vision of cultural revitalization is becoming reality. The vision is of a place where Kwak'wala, a language on the brink of extinction, will once again be spoken immersively; a place where cultural revitalization underpins economic and social well-being. The place is Nawalakw.

Driven by Chief Maxwiyalidizi *K'odi Nelson* and the leadership of *Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation*, Nawalakw is an ecotourism destination, healing village, and culture camp that will offer healing, language, and cultural immersion programs for Kwakwaka'wakw people most of the year, while operating as a world class ecotourism resort in the summer months.

Nawalakw anticipates that over the next decade it will be poised to deliver more than 300,000 hours of Kwak'wala language and cultural programming to youth and provide

“Nawalakw will become the first place on earth where Kwak'wala will once again be spoken immersively, sparking a revival of language and culture throughout Musga'makw Dzawada'enuxw territory.”

over 200,000 hours of wellness programming, employing up to 100 people—all while protecting and enhancing the fragile ecosystem of the Hada River estuary which will serve as a hub for the stewardship and conservation management efforts of the Musga'makw Dzawada'enuxw First Nation governments.

“Nawalakw represents medicine for our people,” says Nelson. “And it represents a deep connection to the values taught by our ancestors about how to live and thrive in unity with nature and with each other.”

This is just the beginning of the Nawalakw journey. Nelson invites

supporters to join him through the next phases of development. The Nawalakw vision is a bold, multi-year and multi-generational plan. The participation of partners and allies is critical for its success.

Nelson carries with him a small carved canoe filled with the hand-written commitments of Nawalakw's partners and supporters. He often pulls it out to remind himself and others of the commitment to see the journey through to completion.

“We're going to need everyone paddling on this journey,” he says. “And we're looking for caring people who want to join us in our canoe.”



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

LEFT
Musga'makw Dzawada'enuxw youth attend the blessing ceremony for Nawalakw at the Hada River estuary.
COURTESY OF
Nawalakw Healing Society



Dzawada'enuxw and Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nations Advance Renewable Energy

This summer Dzawada'enuxw and Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nations invested a total \$25 million into the Padakus Creek Hydropower Facility Development and the Klemtu Hydropower Facility Modernization and Expansion Project. The projects will help transition their communities from dependence on fossil fuel-powered electricity to sustainable, locally-powered renewable energy systems, eliminating over 175,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

ABOVE

Kitasoo/Xai'xais Chief Councillor Roxanne Robinson and Councillor Isaiah Robinson at the Klemtu Hydropower Facility.

COURTESY OF
Chief Councillor Roxanne Robinson

Dzawada'enuxw First Nation's and Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation's renewable energy investments are financed with \$7.9 million from the Renewable Energy for Remote Communities program, launched under a partnership between Coast Funds and the Province of B.C.

Dzawada'enuxw First Nation will initiate the construction of a new hydropower expected to result in a 97% reduction in diesel.

"Dzawada'enuxw have been striving to return to renewable energy sources since we first began depending on diesel generated electricity in the 1990s," said Dzawada'enuxw Chief Willie Moon. "We look forward to returning to a clean energy source to power our community and appreciate the financial support provided by Coast Funds and the Province to construct our Padakus Hydropower Project."

Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation will expand and modernize their existing hydropower facility and anticipate a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in Klemtu by an estimated 145,966 tonnes over the hydropower facility's operating life.



"We are proud to be able to transition into a greener, more environmentally friendly community and look forward to the new opportunities that this project will bring to our community," said Kitasoo/Xai'xais Chief Councillor Roxanne Robinson.

"Dzawada'enuxw and Kitasoo/Xai'xais have sustainably cared for their unceded lands and waters for thousands of years," stated Huux Percy Crosby, Chair of Coast Funds. "The renewable energy investments we're proud to announce today are a testament to these sovereign Nations' leadership in stewarding and safeguarding their territories,

demonstrating a pathway to sustainability for all communities in British Columbia and around the world."

By moving forward with these major renewable energy investments, First Nations are reclaiming their energy sovereignty and increasing community resilience in their communities: U'kwana^{lis} *Kingcome Inlet* and Klemtu *Swindle Island*. These projects reduce the transportation of fossil fuels along the B.C. coast, decreasing the threat of spills in their unceded territories on the Pacific Coast of Canada, a region that is renowned for its globally significant ecological and cultural importance.

"The renewable energy investments we're proud to announce today are a testament to these sovereign Nations' leadership in stewarding and safeguarding their territories, demonstrating a pathway to sustainability for all communities in British Columbia and around the world."

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

ABOVE

Dzawada'enuxw First Nation's community, U'kwana^{lis}, is located on Gwa'yi *Kingcome River* on the mainland coast, northeast of Broughton Island, in the coastal fjords of British Columbia, Canada.

PHOTO BY
Google Earth

Coast Funds Creates New Role Supporting First Nations-led Fundraising

Coast Funds is pleased to announce that Trevor Loke, CFRE, has joined our team as Director, Partnership Development.

In this newly created role, Trevor will work in service of First Nations governments who are undertaking efforts to increase their access to sustainable, self-determined finance for stewardship authorities and economic development projects with Coast Funds

The Director, Partnership Development role will serve as a key element in realizing Coast Funds' strategic goals in partnership with First Nations and funders. Working closely with Coast Funds' CEO, Brodie Guy, and First Nations' leaders, Trevor will partner with First Nations to secure new self-determined sources of revenue and contributions to First Nations' investments with Coast Funds.

“This new role will strengthen Coast Funds’ capabilities to partner with First Nations to continue building resilient economies and revitalizing stewardship of their lands and waters.”

“I am grateful to have an emerging leader with Trevor’s solid background and professional experience join our team in dedication to the First Nations we work in service of,” says CEO Brodie Guy. “This new role will strengthen Coast Funds’ capabilities to partner with First Nations to continue building resilient economies and revitalizing stewardship of their lands and waters.”



TREVOR LOKE JOINS COAST FUNDS AS DIRECTOR, PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.

Trevor brings to the position a passion for development in the non-profit and charitable sectors. He was selected for the role by a committee of First Nations stewardship directors after an in-depth recruiting process.

“Access to stable and sustainable finance ensures that future generations of First Nations can continue to steward their lands and waters, as they have for millennia,” says Douglas Neasloss, Stewardship Director for Kitasoo/Xai'xais Nation who provided leadership during the hiring process for this role. “Not having to continually look for short-term funding solutions is critical to developing our governments’ stewardship authorities.

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

OVERLEAF

The Hada River estuary is the birthplace of Tsekama'yi, ancestor to the Kwikwasut'inuxw people.

PHOTO BY
Brodie Guy



COAST FUNDS

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

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