

Weaving together  
the threads of  
conservation  
and community  
wellbeing



# The Talking Stick

NEWSLETTER OF THE COAST OPPORTUNITY FUNDS

## Managing for the Future

Welcome to the October issue of the Talking Stick! I would like to thank former Director Cindy Boyko for her work in overseeing the publication of the Talking Stick since the first issue was published two years ago. Cindy stepped down from the Board of Coast Funds in June this year, along with Merran Smith, Paul Richardson, Barry Stuart and Merle Alexander. On behalf of Coast Funds, I would like to acknowledge their contributions to the success of the organization, especially Merran, Paul and Cindy, who all served on the Board from 2006 when Coast Funds was created. We wish them all the best for the future.

We have a new slate of experienced and enthusiastic Directors eager to carry on the work—see page 12 for short bios and photos. By the time the next issue is published in January next year, we expect that we will also have filled the remaining two vacancies on the Board. I also expect that there will be a message in it from the new Chair of the Coast Funds Communications Committee, yet to be appointed. Watch this space!

In this issue, we cover some of the work that is taking place by and on behalf of Participating First Nations in the realm of Conservancy Management Planning. Much has been learned on this topic over the last few years, and the First Nations involved have much to share and some good advice to offer others negotiating Conservancy Management Agreements with the provincial government.



Don't forget you can download the newsletter from the website, or any stories in it that you would like to share or reproduce in your own publication or on your website. If you have ideas on where else we should distribute the newsletter, or you would like it to be emailed to you whenever it comes out, please contact [info@coastfunds.ca](mailto:info@coastfunds.ca) or call Mary Speer at 1.888.684.5223. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this issue.

Merv Child, Chair, Coast Funds

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### WHAT'S INSIDE

Conservancy Management Planning | Taking Back Control | Coast Funds News



ONE OUTCOME OF THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST AGREEMENTS WAS THE CREATION OF COAST FUNDS. ANOTHER WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SERIES OF PROTECTED AREAS IN THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST, COVERING 21,120 SQUARE KILOMETRES OR ONE-THIRD OF THE LAND AREA OF THE CENTRAL AND NORTH COASTS OF B.C.

# Conservancy Management Planning

Negíł/Nekite Estuary Conservancy



# Background to the Conservancy Management Planning Process

**The** story behind contemporary Conservancy Management Plans, or CMPs, begins in the 1990s. That's when the provincial government initiated a strategic land-use planning process in B.C., hoping to resolve escalating tensions over large-scale forestry activity in the Great Bear Rainforest region.

A detailed history of this time can be found in an article called "From Conflict to Collaboration: The Story of the Great Bear Rainforest," co-written by former Coast Funds Director Merran Smith and Art Sterritt of the Coastal First Nations, (downloadable at <http://sfgreenwash.org/downloads/WWFpaper.pdf>).

Here's the short version. Over the next decade, First Nations, environmental groups, forestry, mineral, and tourism companies, communities and government sat down together to work out solutions to the conflict between logging and environmental protection, while recognizing the rights and title of First Nations in the region. Finally, in 2006, all involved stood together to announce what became known as the Great Bear Rainforest Agreements.

One outcome of the negotiations was the creation of Coast Funds (you can read all about that on our website, [www.coastfunds.ca](http://www.coastfunds.ca)). Another was the establishment of a series of protected areas in the Great Bear Rainforest, covering 21,120 square kilometres or one-third of the land area of the central and north coasts of B.C.

New legislation was required to designate the protected areas as "Conservancies," administered by the provincial Ministry of Environment through B.C. Parks. The newly-designated Conservancies would protect the environmental values of the areas and guide economic opportunities while respecting First Nations' cultural and traditional land use values.

The parties also reached a ground-breaking agreement—that the First Nations and provincial government would collaboratively develop the CMPs, and collaboratively manage each conservancy.

Nanwakolas Council utilized Coast Funds' regional funds to provide planning and technical support to member First Nations Mamalilikula-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em, Da'naxda'xw Awaetlala and Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw in development of CMPs. Many other Participating First Nations have also completed or are in the process of completing CMPs with the provincial government.

To see some typical CMPs, and a list of completed and draft CMPs in progress by all Participating First Nations, go to the Ministry of Environment's parks management planning web page: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/planning/](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/planning/).

Neg̱i̱ł/Nekite Estuary Conservancy

## Project Stories

SINCE COAST FUNDS WAS CREATED, THE PARTICIPATING FIRST NATIONS HAVE EMBARKED ON A WIDE RANGE OF PROJECTS, FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION CREATION TO CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANNING. PROJECTS UNDER WAY INCLUDE FORESTRY, FISH PROCESSING, TOURISM BUSINESSES AND ACCOMMODATION, INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, FEASIBILITY STUDIES AND MORE. WE PROFILE ONE OR MORE PROJECT STORIES IN EVERY ISSUE.



... NOW WE HAVE A WAY TO DEAL  
WITH OUR CONCERNS DIRECTLY, TO  
MAKE SURE THINGS ARE HAPPENING  
THE RIGHT WAY IN OUR TERRITORY."

GWA'SALA-'NAKWAXDA'XW ELECTED CHIEF  
COUNCILLOR PADDY WALKUS

Ug"iwa"/Cape Caution Conservancy

## What is a Conservancy Management Plan?

What's in a typical Conservancy Management Plan, or CMP for short? Perhaps the most important thing is what isn't in one: any loss of Aboriginal rights, title, or jurisdictional authority on the traditional territories of the First Nations concerned.

For example, the 2007 Collaborative Management Agreement between Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw and the provincial government commits them to collaborative management, planning and use of the Conservancy areas in Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw's territory in a manner that expressly recognizes and affirms Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw's Aboriginal rights.

The agreement also outlines other important values to be embraced in the six CMPs in Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw territory, including:

- Protection of natural, cultural and recreational values for future generations;
- Provision of enhanced access to economic opportunities (EAEOs) for Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw that are compatible with protection of key values (e.g., tourism, or commercial harvesting of botanicals);
- Integration of both ecosystem-based science and traditional ecological knowledge into planning;
- Capacity-building for Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw;







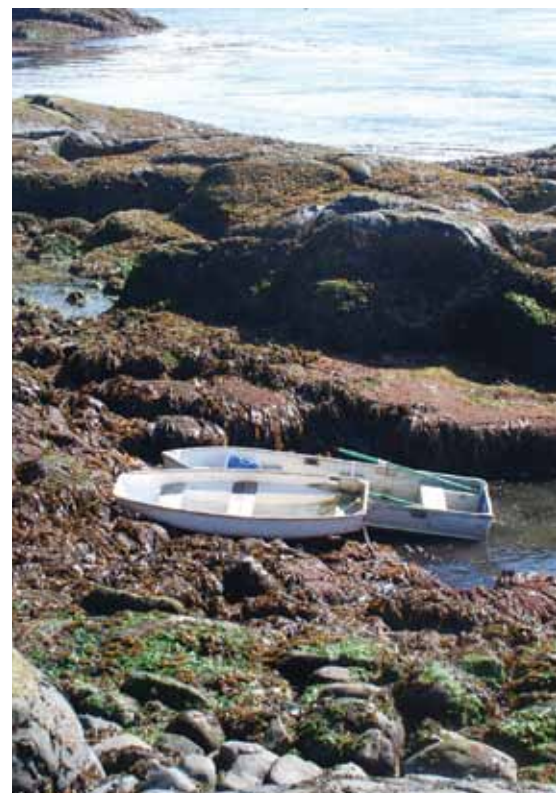
Top and bottom: Mahpahkum-Ahkwuna/  
Deserters-Walker Conservancy

- Good communication, and
- Public access to the Conservancy area for recreational use and enjoyment.

CMPs set out the long term strategic direction for the Conservancy areas, and provide guidance on how they are to be collaboratively managed by the First Nation and the provincial government. The plans describe the area's cultural heritage, natural and recreational values, and the vision for the future of the area. They also:

- Deal with issues from time to time that may affect that vision;
- Guide day-to-day operational management;
- Identify appropriate recreational activities and management direction for use of natural resources in the area, and
- Identify different types of zones (e.g. for certain types of activities, such as First Nations cultural use, camping, or wilderness protection).

Hand in hand with a CMP, a First Nation may enter into an economic opportunities agreement. For example, Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw and the provincial government have agreed to develop an implementation strategy for access to economic opportunities that address Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw's interests in guided wildlife viewing, access for commercial harvesting of botanicals, shellfish aquaculture and general tourism.



# Taking Back Control: Experiences in Conservancy Management Planning

**"THE MAIN THING IS THAT WITH THESE CMPS WE ARE CONTINUING TO DO WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING ALL OF OUR LIVES IN THESE AREAS, RESPECTING WHAT OUR ANCESTORS DID BEFORE US, AND ENSURING OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL BE ABLE TO KEEP DOING THEM."**

**HEREDITARY CHIEF THOMAS HENDERSON**

"The main thing," says Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw hereditary chief Thomas Henderson, "is that with these CMPs we are continuing to do what we have been doing all of our lives in these areas, respecting what our ancestors did before us, and ensuring our future generations will be able to keep doing them."

For Henderson, that was the bottom line for entering into a collaborative process with the B.C. government to develop CMPs for the seven Conservancies in Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw territory. "We would rather be in complete control of the territory, of course, as we always used to be. But the work on the CMPs in our territory has been good. It has helped our Nations to take back much greater control over what happens in our lands and waters, and to undertake our traditional activities without interference. It's also given us the chance to get access to economic opportunities we never had before, and employment for our people."



Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw hereditary chief  
Thomas Henderson

## A positive opportunity

Six Conservancies were created in Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw territory in 2006 and 2007. CMPs for all six areas were approved in March this year, after many years of negotiations with B.C. Wally Eamer, terrestrial planning coordinator for Nanwakolas Council, assisted Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw in the development of the plans. "These plans have created a positive new opportunity for the First Nation," observes Eamer, "both at a strategic level and at the operational level."

Sharon Erickson, Section Head for Planning for the Ministry of Environment, B.C. Parks, West Coast region—Vancouver Island, is equally positive: "For us, we see having so many CMPs completed as the culmination of a great deal of hard, valuable work and a great success for everyone. All the work we have done together, all the negotiations have been good for our communication and our relationships with the First Nations. I think there is also going

to be a real benefit for both parties having worked on the strategic vision together and on the management direction for each Conservancy. We both know what to expect and how things should unfold. That's a very good thing."

## The strategic vision

The strategic vision for the Conservancy is set out in the plan itself, explains Eamer. It's a high level vision that guides all of the specific management strategies for the Conservancy, and activities that will take place in the area. In Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw's Tsa-Latl/Smokehouse Conservancy plan, for example, the vision states that the Conservancy will continue "to support the cultural heritage values, biological diversity and ecological functions associated with the Conservancy's old-growth temperate rainforest, lake and river ecosystems," and sets out the principles of that vision that govern the plan in its entirety [See Sidebar: The Tsa-Latl/Smokehouse Conservancy Vision, page 11, for the full text].



## Day-to-day management

On an ongoing operational basis, a joint management group (comprised of representatives of both parties) also develop annual operational plans for each Conservancy. Amongst other things, the operational plans target risks and regulate specific activities, including when and where those activities can take place (or sometimes even prohibitions on some activities at certain times). “For example,” says Henderson, “we now can ensure that recreational fishers are not in traditional Gwa’Sala-’Nakwaxda’xw fishing grounds when we are fishing. We didn’t have any forum before for doing that.”

Both parties monitor the operational plans to ensure compliance, and meet regularly to discuss on-the-ground activities in the Conservancy. The joint management group also meets with third parties like tour operators, to discuss issues and concerns and develop solutions that work for everyone. “The results are already positive,” says Henderson. “The forestry companies, for example, they’re working with us now and creating employment for our people, instead of importing workers from other places. That’s because we told them bluntly we needed jobs for our young people.”

Henderson points out that third party business operators in the Conservancies often have shared interests with Gwa’Sala-’Nakwaxda’xw and B.C., and the group is a good forum for talking about how to jointly protect those interests. “None of us want illegal kayaking companies out there, for example. We’ve already come up with some very practical ideas together to deal with that, like colour-coding the legal operators so we know straight away when someone is legitimate or not,” says Henderson.

## Hard work, good results

Getting to this point wasn’t an easy process, however, either for Gwa’Sala-’Nakwaxda’xw or the province. “This was all new, so both sides struggled at the beginning as to how to go about it in a way that respected everyone’s interests,” observes Eamer. Sharon Erickson agrees. “This was a brand-new scenario,” says Erickson. “The Conservancy designation was new to the province, and protected area planning of this kind was new to First Nations. The framework for developing CMPs collaboratively was also new. Both parties had to work together to establish a collaborative process for developing the plans and to determine together what that collaborative product would look like at the end of the day.”

The end result, however, was worth the hard work, adds Erickson: “I think we now have really good plans in place because of it.” With everything that has been learned out of negotiating the first few plans, she says, progress is faster on the ones coming to the table for discussion now. “We understand better what is required of us as the provincial government and what we need to do.”

As to the ones that have been completed, concludes Erickson, in practice—while it’s early days yet—she expects the day-to-day process of managing the areas to be smoother than in the past. “I think things will be much better for both parties. Together we’ve created an opportunity for effective, efficient management of these areas in general in a way everyone can be happy with.”

**“THE CMP PROCESS OFFERED US AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE BACK CONTROL OVER A LARGE PART OF OUR HOMELANDS ONCE AGAIN.”**

CHIEF COUNCILLOR PADDY WALKUS



Gwa’Sala-’Nakwaxda’xw elected  
Chief Councillor Paddy Walkus

**"NOW WE HAVE CONTROL AGAIN. THE GOVERNMENT CAN'T JUST TELL US WHAT WILL HAPPEN ANYMORE, THEY HAVE TO RESPECT THIS PROCESS NOW."**

**CHIEF HAROLD SEWID**



Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em  
Band Chief Harold Sewid

Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw elected Chief Councillor Paddy Walkus believes any challenges involved in negotiating the CMPs has been worth it. "You have to understand our history. We were forced out of these lands in the 1960s when the government relocated our people to Vancouver Island. The CMP process offered us an opportunity to take back control over a large part of our homelands once again. We did have to work out how to understand and address the limitations on provincial government policy and processes. But we did that and now we have a way to deal with our concerns directly, to make sure things are happening the right way in our territory."

Thomas Henderson agrees. "The benefits definitely outweigh everything you have to go through to get final plans approved. Before we had the plans, and a table to discuss the ongoing management of these areas, we basically didn't know what was going on all the time. Tour companies were often using our sacred sites, some people wouldn't even talk to us about our concerns. Now there is much better respect, and listening to our concerns."

## The Mamalilikulla experience

Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em Band have completed a CMP for the Qwiquallaag/Boat Bay Conservancy, and have another three in the works. "The first one was tough," confirms Chief Harold Sewid, "but now we have a pretty good idea about what we all want, I think the rest will go a lot faster."

One of the challenges that Mamalilikulla have to deal with, unlike Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw, is the fact that other First Nations have interests in the Conservancy areas as well. "That slows things down," says Sewid, "because of course government wants to consult and we need to address any concerns that arise. But we've worked on it and it looks like we have that figured out now."

Like his Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw colleagues, Sewid sees the collaborative management role created through the CMP process as a step in the right direction, even if it doesn't spell complete control over the areas concerned. "It's still a huge improvement. In the past, we basically had no say over what happened. Now we have much more control. For example, in Boat Bay, we sat down

with the kayaking companies to discuss what they wanted to do there. I listened to them talk about their sustainable, eco-practices and then told them that the word 'ecotourism' is an oxymoron to me, because it relies on the natural beauty of the area but I have seen so much damage done by the companies and their clients."

Sewid told the companies about a beautiful passage on the east side of Compton Island, known as "White Beach Passage." After decades of visitors removing the sun-bleached clamshells from the beach as souvenirs, says Sewid: "You may as well call it Black Beach Passage." The shocked kayaking companies saw his point, and immediately committed to ensuring they would minimize such impacts in future.



## Similar challenges, similar results

Sewid encountered similar frustrations to Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw in negotiating the CMP for Boat Bay. "Oh yes, it was difficult sometimes because the government has policies and they can't step out of line. They would send lots of drafts back and forth all the time. But I still wouldn't hesitate to do it all over again. Now we have control again. The government can't just tell us what will happen anymore, they have to respect this process now."

Sewid has confidence in that process: "We've already had to test it out. At our first operational meeting with B.C. Parks, we disagreed with one of their proposals for the conservancy. We also wanted a campsite designated for the exclusive use of Mamalilikulla people, which was a new concept to them, and after we talked about both things we reached agreement quite quickly. It's a good forum for doing that, and a good process."

## What's most important

The key, says everyone involved, is to make sure that everything that is important to the First Nation is included right in the CMP. "Each plan is going to be different of course, depending on the unique characteristics of the conservancy and the cultural history of the Nations who lived there," says Wally Eamer.

"The management objectives will be different. But many issues are very similar. I would suggest to anyone sitting down to start work on a collaborative CMP with B.C. to ask themselves three main questions. What kind of relationship do you want to have with the government through this process? What cultural activities do you want to maintain, or start doing again, and how do you want to do them? And what kind of economic opportunities in the area are important for the First Nation to be able to own and operate, and which ones could be undertaken by third parties instead? The answer to the last two questions will help set the stage for developing the answer to the first question, and your goals for the CMP itself."

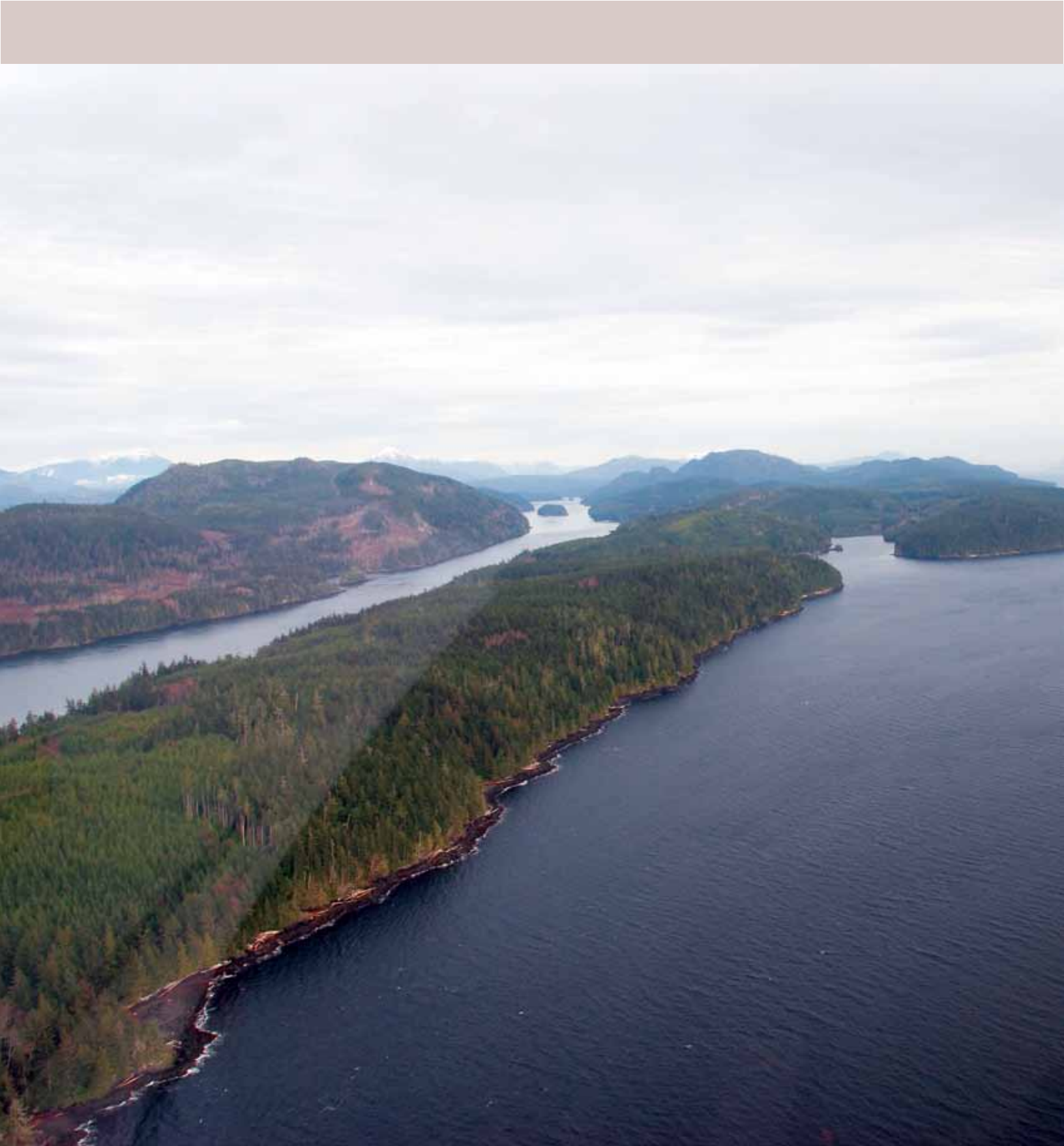
"It has always been a dream and aspiration of our people to go back into our homelands and actively participate in their protection and use of the resources there," concludes Paddy Walkus. "Through this CMP process, we're doing it. There is a real sense of ownership again in the community, and of responsibility for the management of our lands and resources. I believe this is a really important step on the way to fulfilling our dream of taking back our homelands in a really meaningful way. I'm glad we've done this."

**"IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A DREAM  
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**CHIEF COUNCILLOR PADDY WALKUS**

Seals at Mahpahkum-Ahkwuna/  
Deserters-Walker Conservancy





Qwiqualaag/Boat Bay Conservancy





## The Tsa-Latl/Smokehouse Conservancy Vision

Tsa-Latl/Smokehouse Conservancy continues to support the cultural heritage values, biological diversity and ecological functions associated with the Conservancy's old-growth temperate rainforest, lake and river ecosystems. Habitats are maintained or restored and support abundant fish and wildlife, with thriving populations of Grizzly Bear, Pacific salmon, Northern Goshawk and other regionally important species.

Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw members have access to, and are reconnecting with, the former village sites, and passing on their traditional knowledge of this area to future generations. Visitors enjoy the remote

wilderness environment, and are gaining an appreciation of Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw cultural heritage in this area.

The collaborative relationship between the Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation and B.C. Parks is strong, with the First Nation actively participating in Conservancy management activities. Both traditional ecological knowledge and scientific knowledge are utilized in the management of the Conservancy. B.C. Parks and the Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation work together to ensure the Conservancy is managed into the future for the enjoyment of all visitors.



## Send Us Your Stories

If you have stories to share, project photos, ideas about Coast Funds projects and community activities, or other interesting information, we want to know. We'll publish stories and photos on the website and in this newsletter whenever we can. You can send them to us any time at [communications@coastfunds.ca](mailto:communications@coastfunds.ca).

## Photo Catalogue Project

From time to time in our materials—including this newsletter—we showcase the projects and communities of the First Nations we work with in articles and with photographs. To that end, we are collecting suitable images for a catalogue of photos that we can draw upon when we need them. If you have good quality, high resolution digital photos of your community or of projects that we can use, we'd be delighted to hear from you—please get in touch with Katherine Gordon at [communications@coastfunds.ca](mailto:communications@coastfunds.ca).



Left to right:  
Percy Crosby,  
Garth Davis and  
Darcy Dobell

- In June, we welcomed three new Board members to the Coast Funds table:

**PERCY CROSBY** represents Skidegate at the Haida House as an elected official for the Council of the Haida Nation. In this position, he has acted as Chair and Committee Member on the Executive, Heritage and Natural Resources, Cultural Wood, Protected Areas, and HaiCo Recommendations Committees. He has held an executive position on the boards of Gwaii Trust and Gwaii Forest Charitable Trust and sits on the board of Haida Gwaii Community Futures. He also works for the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations as a First Nations Liaison and is responsible for developing the first co-managed cultural wood access program. He acts as the coordinator and board member for the Haida Gwaii Cultural Wood Advisory Board, representing the Province. In all positions Percy uses his knowledge of cultural values, Haida Gwaii geography and history, and provincial laws and practices.

**GARTH DAVIS** is the CEO of New Market Funds and has spent more than 20 years in capital deployment. He has leadership experience in impact investing (Vancity Community Capital), private equity (Turtle Creek and Scotia Merchant Capital), and corporate and leveraged finance (Scotia Capital). As a founding member of each of these teams, Garth also developed significant start-up and growth expertise. He has a Master of Arts in International Economics from the Paul H. Nitze School for Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, a Master of Science from the London School of Economics

and Political Science, and a Bachelor of Arts from Simon Fraser University. Garth also has extensive experience serving as a director on private and public company boards.

**DARCY J. DOBELL** is the Vice President, Conservation and Pacific, of the World Wildlife Fund, Canada. Her previous experience includes serving as a director and co-Chair of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, a director of Canopy (a non-profit organization promoting use of green product lines and supply chains) and founding Chair of the Raincoast Education Society. Darcy also has a consulting company, The Wabe Consulting, providing leadership, strategic planning and communications advice to foundations, NGOs and community organizations.

- Before our December Board meeting, which will take place over two days in Port Hardy and Port McNeill, we hope to have filled the two remaining vacancies on the Board. The Board will be reviewing our Strategic Plan for 2014–2016, and the results of the work that we have been undertaking on project outcome evaluation. Watch for more details in the January issue of *The Talking Stick*.
- In September, Coast Funds also welcomed **CHRIS EARLE** as our new Director of Finance and Administration. Chris has a BCom and is a CMA. Immediately prior to joining Coast Funds Chris was Director of Finance at St. Michael's Centre Hospital Society in Burnaby, and he brings with him extensive experience in financial management, business analysis and strategy, risk management and operational and governance processes.