

Weaving together  
the threads of  
conservation  
and community  
wellbeing



# The Talking Stick

## NEWSLETTER OF THE COAST OPPORTUNITY FUNDS

COAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (CEDS) AND COAST CONSERVATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION FUND (CCEFF)

## Happy New Year!

Welcome to the first issue of the Talking Stick for 2014—our eighth issue since we first started publishing our newsletter!

As a recently appointed Director and the new Chair of the Coast Funds Communications Committee, I am looking forward to overseeing the vital work of communications with Participating First Nations, regional First Nations groups, Members, Funders, and the other partners, governments, organizations and institutions with whom we work.

Since the last issue of the Talking Stick, the last two remaining vacancies on the Board have been filled—see page 8 for short bios and photos of new Directors Wallace Eamer and Gerald Wesley. We also undertook an in-depth review of our Strategic Plan and developed up-to-date Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives to take us forward over the next three years of our organizational cycle. The Plan is posted on our website, [www.coastfunds.ca](http://www.coastfunds.ca), and key highlights are set out on page 6.

Usually we cover one or more project stories in every issue. This time, since we have been so busy with strategic planning recently, we thought that we'd share some of our observations of trends and themes that have emerged in our work with the Participating First Nations over the last few years, and our vision of where we go from here over the next three years. As always, we welcome your thoughts on what you read here.



**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.

Darcy Dobell, Chair, Coast Funds Communications Committee

### WHAT'S INSIDE

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## Looking back, looking forward

Since Coast Funds was created, the Participating First Nations have embarked on a wide range of economic development and conservation projects, from creating economic development corporations to planning for conservation management. Projects under way include forestry, fish processing, tourism businesses and accommodation, integrated resource management, feasibility studies and more.

We usually profile one or more project stories in every issue. In this issue, we decided to do something a little different: to look back over our first six years of operations, and look ahead to the future and what we aim to accomplish in partnership with First Nations.

As part of the development of our new Strategic Plan, last fall the Board and staff of Coast Funds took an in-depth look at the past, and used this as a starting point to set a course for the next three years. Here are some of the trends and themes we've observed, and highlights of our vision for the work ahead.

## What We've Observed—CEDS

### Positive progress and partnerships

Since 2007, CEDS has invested more than \$21 million in economic development work and projects in the Project Area. These funds have been powerfully leveraged, with other financial partners contributing three times that amount.

### New economic development institutions

Infrastructure to support economic development in the region is growing. First Nations have established several new economic development corporations, and a number of existing EDC's have expanded.

### Success in collaboration

The application process has been working well. Many of our First Nations partners have told us that they appreciate the effort Coast Funds staff put into helping with the application process for awards and with eligibility requirements, as well as linking First Nations to potential business, financial and organizational partners. Independent reviews also saw this collaboration as a factor in the success of project applications, and in the achievement of Coast Funds' strategic goals.







## The challenges

All the same, uptake of allocations has been slower than we originally anticipated. We believe several things have contributed to this.

**IT MATTERS WHERE YOU ARE** One of the things we've noticed is that it's easier for some First Nations to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities and their Coast Funds allocations than it is for others. That's true, for instance, of First Nations located in geographic centres with greater access to economic opportunities, and with larger populations that are living in a community setting.

**BUSINESS PLANNING CAN BE CHALLENGING** Even those First Nations who are strategically located can sometimes face challenges in preparing effective business plans in order to provide an eligible CEDS project application. CEDS responded to that need in 2012 by offering funding (up to \$6,500 per project) for "early engagement" to help develop the necessary supporting materials for a project.

**IT TAKES TIME TO BUILD UP INFRASTRUCTURE** Some First Nations have used their allocations to help start or enhance economic development corporations. It was expected that these start-ups may take a number of years to show profits, and need a substantial level of management and board attention.

That has also been challenging. The development corporations face some typical issues that can significantly limit their ability to pursue new economic opportunities or expand their existing businesses. Those challenges can include high management and Board turnover, a lack of necessary experience in some cases, not enough staff resources and insufficient administrative capacity to request funding from CEDS or other financial organizations early enough to take advantage of time-limited economic opportunities.

**BARRIERS TO FINANCE** We started work back in 2007 knowing that First Nations have access to a limited range of project financing options. That hasn't changed significantly since. There are few government and private funding sources available to support First Nations through the start-up of development corporations. Additionally, the current state of the global and Canadian economies has made access to capital more difficult for all businesses.

... OUR FIRST NATIONS PARTNERS HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY APPRECIATE THE EFFORT COAST FUNDS STAFF PUT INTO HELPING WITH THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR AWARDS AND WITH ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, AS WELL AS LINKING FIRST NATIONS TO POTENTIAL BUSINESS, FINANCIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS.





## What We've Observed—CCEFF

### Strong financial performance has led to record allocations

A total of \$17.3 million has been allocated to Participating First Nations over the last five years. Thanks to strong financial performance, this amount is substantially more than our expected minimum annual allocation of \$2.25 million. In 2013, CCEFF allocated a record \$5.5 million.

### Positive results from investments

Significant investments of more than \$11 million have been made from the conservation allocations. Awards from CCEFF have largely fueled First Nations' growth in resource management capacity, providing many First Nations with stable funding for stewardship activities. In the last five years, 8 new stewardship directors, 6 of whom are community members, were hired across the region.

### Regional allocations have been used collaboratively

In 2007, \$2 million was allocated to three regional organizations, of which \$1.8 million has been used so far to support regional terrestrial, marine, and conservancy planning, the Coastal Guardian Watchmen Network, and other collaborative activities.





## The challenges

As noted above, the flow of CCEFF funds into investments by Participating First Nations in conservation activities was initially quite slow.

**START-UPS ARE ALWAYS TIME-CONSUMING** Each of the Nations with the largest CCEFF allocations had to secure its mandate for an integrated stewardship office, establish governance structures and hire key leaders before it could grow its organizations.

**ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL** There remains a handful of First Nations with relatively small allocations who lack sufficient funds or for whom it isn't a priority to develop their own stewardship office. Most are looking for alternative ways to address their resource management needs through collaborative work at the regional level.

**IT STILL ISN'T ENOUGH MONEY TO DO IT ALL** At this point, most Nations have sufficient funding to cover core operations, but insufficient funds to adequately address their capacity challenges or to expand to carry out their desired level of research and monitoring.



# Vision for the Future: THE 2014–2016 STRATEGIC PLAN

*Last* October, with six years of experience under its belt, the Board decided to review every aspect of Coast Funds' direction in order to develop a vision and strategic plan for the future that reflects those experiences and the evolution of the organization over time while remaining committed to the purposes of Coast Funds as set out in our governing documents.

In December, the Board adopted a 2014–2016 Strategic Plan with the following vision and mission:

**VISION:** Participating First Nations enjoy sustainable community prosperity while maintaining the integrity of the coastal ecosystems of the Central Coast, North Coast and Haida Gwaii areas of coastal British Columbia.

**MISSION:** To assist Participating First Nations in achieving their goals for sustainable economic development and conservation management.

## Key principles

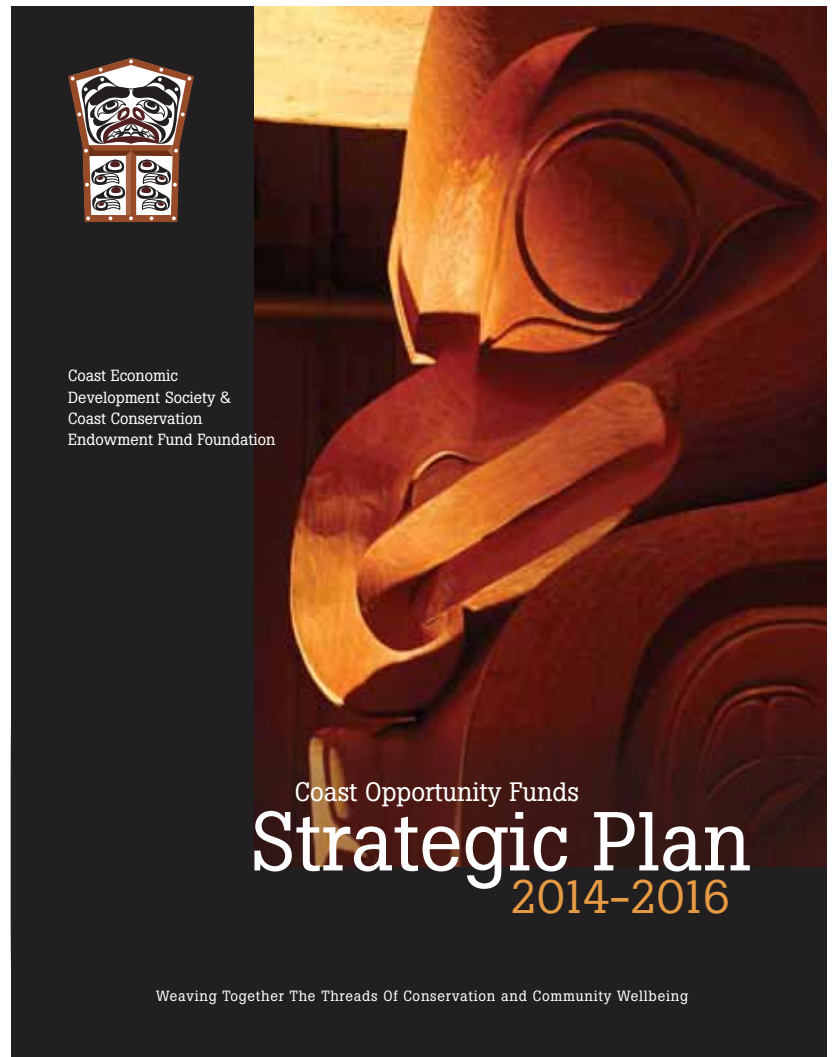
We also reviewed the key organizational principles and core values that guide us in our work, and included those in the Plan. Examples of those principles and values include providing support through mutually respectful relationships, responsible stewardship of the funds, and transparency and accountability.

## Planning context

In determining our goals for the next three years, the Board kept in mind its decision last year to extend the term of CEDS to June 2017, and asked itself two key questions:

- Given the challenges we have seen so far, what can we do to successfully complete the CEDS mandate by June 2017?
- What happens after 2017? That is, how should Coast Funds transition to a post-2017 context in a way that is consistent with our vision and mission?

In answering those questions, Coast Funds needs to ensure it maintains a clear understanding of the kinds of challenges we talked about earlier. Coast Funds must also address the post-2017 needs and goals of the Participating First Nations, and ongoing post-2017 service delivery as required or desired.





## Goals

With that context in mind, the Board developed the following goals for 2014–2016:

### GOAL 1

To foster resilient Participating First Nation community economies throughout the region.

### GOAL 2

To foster Participating First Nations' leadership in conservation activities, and management of protected areas in the region.

### GOAL 3

To increase the capacity in First Nations' communities to realize sustainable economic development opportunities and lead conservation management, project development and workforce development.

### GOAL 4

To transition to a post-2017 structure and process that respects the requirements of the organization's governing agreements while supporting Participating First Nations' needs.

## Objectives

The Plan also sets out objectives to support each goal. For example, supporting Goal 1 is the following objective, among others: "Increased numbers of sustainable and diverse First Nation-owned and/or operated businesses and individual enterprises creating jobs in communities in the region."

Another example is this objective, supporting Goal 4: "Develop efficient and effective organizational strategies and structures to give effect to the transition to a post-2017 structure and process."

The full Strategic Plan can be found on our website under "About the Funds: Governing Documents." See [www.coastfunds.ca/coast-funds-strategic-plan](http://www.coastfunds.ca/coast-funds-strategic-plan).



## Coast Funds News

In the fall, we welcomed two new Board members to the Coast Funds table:



**WALLY EAMER** was born and raised on Vancouver Island, and lives in Metchosin. He has a Bachelor of Arts from University of B.C. and Master of Business Administration from Harvard. He worked for over twenty years in the provincial government, including Ministry of Environment and BC Parks. In the Central Coast process from 2002, he was the provincial Table representative, provincial negotiator with First Nations in 2004 and 2005, and since 2006 has worked on EBM implementation with the Nanwakolas Council. In 2008, he was ordained as a deacon in the Anglican church.



**GERALD WESLEY** is the Vice-Chair of the Northern Development Trust, and chief negotiator for the Tsimshian First Nations Treaty Society. He is also past director for the Northwest Community College, Kalum Ventures Ltd., and the Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations in northern B.C. Gerald has previously served as a director on the Federal Advisory Committee on Softwood Lumber Community Assistance Initiative and BC Transmission Corporation, and is the past secretary-treasurer of the Tsimshian Tribal Council. He was an elected task group member of the First Nations Summit, served as one of the original members for the University of Victoria, Administration of Aboriginal Governments Program Advisory Committee from 1986 until 1995 and spent seven years in the forest industry before moving on to become executive director/band manager for the Kitamaat Village Council (Haisla) and then executive director of the Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council. He and his wife Angela are partners in Wes-Can Advisory Services which provides consulting services for First Nations and other governments. Gerald is also a hereditary chieftain from the Kitsumkalum First Nation just outside of Terrace, B.C.

## 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).

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