



## GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Our First Nations occupy the Northern and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii areas of B.C., from the Alaskan border in the north to Vancouver Island in the south. This region is the unceded Traditional Territory of over one dozen First Nations. First Nations make up a majority of the coastal population.

## REGIONAL AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

Coastal First Nations, through the Turning Point Initiative, provides a neutral venue to discuss regional economic development in a strategic manner.

Working together our communities are moving towards increased economic opportunities for all citizens throughout the region while successfully preserving our culture, lands and water.

By approaching our work on a regional level we strike the balance between cultural diversity, economic prosperity, and environmental protection.

We believe in order to have a sound regional planning process we must build coalitions of public and private interests. This is the time to develop partnerships which can draw on the talents and commitment of all citizens, leaders, and communities on the coast. By providing for efficient use of land, infrastructure, and other resources, our communities also provide critical benefits to the region's and the province's economy and environment.

## WHO WE ARE

Coastal First Nations is an alliance of First Nations on British Columbia's North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii. Coastal First Nations includes the Wuikinuxv Nation, Heiltsuk Nation, Kitasoo/Xaixais First Nation, Gitga'at First Nation, Haisla, Metlakatla First Nation, Homalco First Nation, Old Massett Village Council, Skidegate Band Council, and Council of the Haida Nation.

For many years our communities worked in isolation, but in the Spring of 2000, leaders of our communities on the Central and North Coast and Haida Gwaii came together to discuss the common problems that we face, such as high unemployment, a lack of economic opportunities in the resource sectors and a lack of access to resources in our Traditional Territories. It was clear from the outset that our strength would be to form a coast-wide united front. Together we could make progress on the socio-economic issues that we have been largely unable to do as individual First Nations.

In 2003 we formed the Turning Point Initiative Society.

## OUR MISSION

Our goal is to restore and implement responsible resource management approaches on the Central and North Coast and Haida Gwaii, which are ecologically and economically sustainable. We have several major initiatives underway: the completion of land use plans and the implementation of government-to-government negotiations; the implementation of ecosystem-based management (EBM) principles and practices; the implementation of First Nations shellfish, tourism, and forestry strategies; and the development of a new marine use planning process.

Over the past five years, Coastal First Nations has played a leadership role in bringing together a range of interests on the coast to address the unsustainable policies and practices that have damaged the environment and devastated coastal economies and communities. New partnerships have been developed with environmental groups, the federal and provincial governments, industry and other interests to begin the move to a new conservation-based economy with increased First Nations involvement through strong leadership and vision.



## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Turning Point Initiative Society operates under the direction of a Board that approves the annual work plan for the office and gives final approval to all policies and procedures. The Board of Directors consists of a representative from each of the participating First Nations - Wuikinuxv Nation, Heiltsuk Nation, Kitasoo/Xaixais First Nation, Gitga'at First Nation, Haisla, Metlakatla First Nation, Homalco First Nation, Old Massett Village Council, Skidegate Band Council, and Council of the Haida Nation.

The Turning Point board meets quarterly to review progress and provide direction on future activities. In addition, the Executive Committee of the Board meets more frequently to review administrative issues and monitor project work.

Our Vancouver office provides strategic regional planning, negotiation and administrative support to Coastal First Nations on environmental and socio-economic issues. The Executive Director provides direction for office activities and staff, following the strategic plan approved by the Board of Directors.



## CONTACT US

### Turning Point Initiative

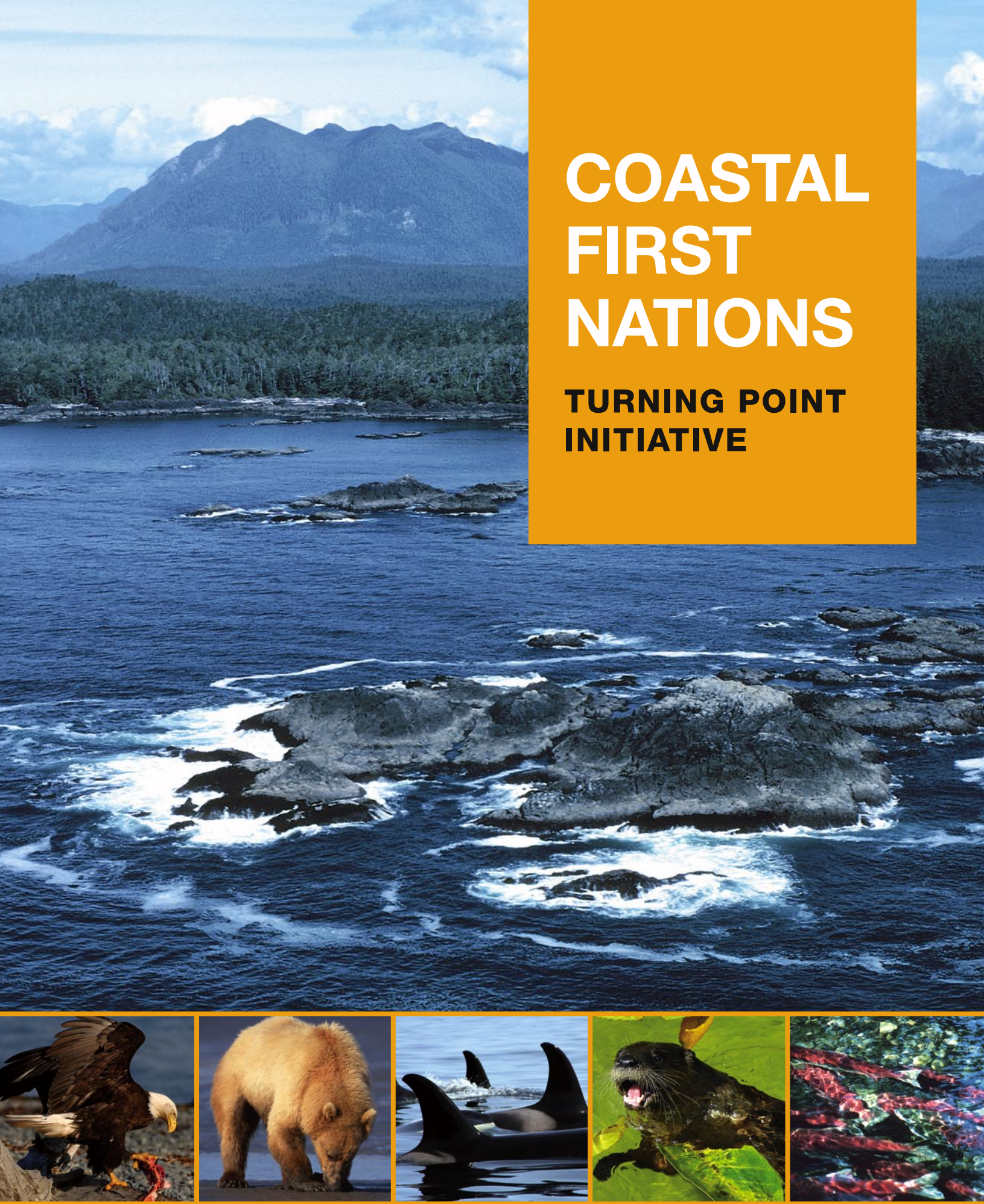
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# COASTAL FIRST NATIONS

## TURNING POINT INITIATIVE





# THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH

In the past decade concern over the destruction of the world's coastal rainforests has reached global proportions. Alarm about the extinction of species, the irreversible damage to the delicate balance of the Earth's climate control system and the tragic harm that's been done to First Nations cultures has captured the attention of millions of people around the world.

Many organizations have formed and are doing important work addressing virtually every aspect of the problem. And yet, rare coastal rainforests continue to be lost. Despite best efforts, the disappearance of our coastal rainforests, like many other global economic, social and environmental crises, seem beyond our ability to control. Obviously a new approach to the problem is needed.

Coastal First Nations believes that a sustainable economy depends on our ability to create partnerships that blend the deep and ancient wisdom of our traditional cultures with the intellectual and scientific expertise of the modern world. For thousands of years First Nations carefully managed the abundance of natural resources in the sea and on the land by relying on our knowledge of seasonal cycles to harvest a wide variety of resources without harming or depleting them.

Today, resources continue to be taken from our Traditional Territories. Yet our communities continue to suffer from weak economies and high unemployment rates. First Nations have watched as natural resources within our Traditional Territories have been exploited for maximum profit over the last 100 years. The resources have been decimated and this has caused enormous economic, social and cultural damage to our communities.

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP

The Turning Point Initiative was created with the conviction that if a conservation-based economy is to succeed, our active and meaningful participation is essential. We believe that the people who best know, use, and protect biodiversity are the First Nations people who live in these magnificent forests and waters.

Our experience has taught us that strong and thriving Coastal First Nations cultures, with recognition of our Aboriginal Title and Rights to our lands, is the key to a conservation-based economy in our Traditional Territories.

Our challenge is to develop a new conservation-based economy on BC's North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii recognizing the link between economic and ecological sustainability.

Our strategic approach to conservation-based development includes:

- sustainable ecosystem-based management of marine and land resources;
- increased local control and management of forestry and fisheries operations;
- coordinated development through regional strategic planning in forestry, fisheries and tourism with an emphasis on value added initiatives;
- partnerships and cooperative arrangements with governments, industry, ENGOs and other stakeholder groups; and
- building capacity.

# COASTAL FIRST NATIONS PROJECTS

In order to meet the conservation and economic goals and objectives of Coastal First Nations communities the following projects and initiatives have been undertaken:

**Land Use Planning** - Coastal First Nations, the provincial government and other groups worked together so that significant protection over Traditional Territories occurred and that ecosystem-based management practices would be developed and implemented. Land use plan agreements give us the right and responsibility to make decisions about and care for the lands, waters and resources in our Traditional Territories. By working collaboratively with the Province and other groups we were able to come to an agreement that recognizes First Nations Aboriginal Title and Rights, as well as recognizing the privileges held by others who live and work within our Traditional Territories.

**Marine Use Planning** - In July 2002 Canada released the Canadian Oceans Strategy that, among other mandates, is committed to developing partnerships and processes that bring together marine stakeholders, governments and organizations to develop ecosystem-based integrated marine use plans. Marine use planning will ensure that coastal development occurs in a sustainable manner. It will also provide economic opportunities while also preserving and protecting resources for future generations.

An integral part of our work is to ensure that any proposed development does not hurt or destroy the environment. Our communities mandated the Coastal First Nations to examine the potential impact of offshore oil and gas and a proposed new pipeline.

- **Offshore Oil and Gas** - Recently members of the provincial government and industry representatives have called for the lifting of the moratorium on offshore oil and gas. Coastal First Nations has raised serious environmental concerns about the lifting of the moratorium.
- **Enbridge Pipeline** - Enbridge, a major pipeline company, has proposed a new pipeline to transport increased oil production to market. Enbridge is proposing marine terminal at Kitimat to transport crude oil tankers from the pipeline to markets in the US and overseas. Coastal First Nations has undertaken a review of the Enbridge Pipeline proposal.

**Economic Activities** - Through its regional strategies the Coastal First Nations are building an economy that is both sustainable and globally competitive. Creating a global economy, which has become essential for success in today's business, will allow for the development of partnerships and alliances throughout the world.

- **Shellfish Project** - Coastal First Nations recognize that our economic development ambitions need to extend beyond current fisheries activities. The Central and North Coast Shellfish Aquatic Business Plan, prepared by the Turning Point outlines strategies for creating a viable First Nations shellfish aquaculture industry on the Coast.

- **Access to Commercial Fisheries** - A report by the Coastal First Nations, Our Future Harvest – A New Approach to Coastal First Nations' Commercial Fisheries, outlines a new approach to resource allocation that can be implemented by joint agreement between the federal and provincial governments and the Coastal First Nations. Our Future Harvest recommends a way to provide economic and employment benefits to First Nations through access to local fisheries resources.

- **Tourism** - A report has identified a compelling market demand for additional luxury wilderness lodges in British Columbia and in particular in the Coastal First Nations region. A comprehensive feasibility analysis was conducted in June, 2004 and three sites have been selected as having the ideal attributes to create thematically distinct experiences that are linked by a common brand and level of quality/service.

- **Forestry** - Individual First Nations have begun to establish their own forestry operations. Coastal First Nations leadership has directed the Turning Point office to develop various options to provide First Nations with a greater role in the forestry sector.

## Building Capacity

- **Developing First Nation Institutional Capacity** - The Coastal First Nations is working with our communities to establish economic institutions that separate politics from administration. The institutions will provide a vehicle for investment in the communities.
- **Training** - A critical factor for long-term economic capacity building for our communities is ensuring a healthy, well-educated and well-supported workforce. Coastal First Nations has embarked on a planning process to address the

capacity building needs of its communities. In order to implement our economic development strategies, it is essential that capacity assessment and development occur within the participating communities.

- **Relationships** - The Coastal First Nations works collaboratively with a variety of organizations to support our work. We strategically partner with organizations and academic institutions already conducting work in key areas to leverage resources, avoid duplication of work, and set up networks of people with similar interests.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge and honour our hereditary leaders, political leaders, elders and community members who have guided our work. They have single-mindedly struggled for the resolution of land and marine issues for decades. Our chiefs and elders have taught us that our collective responsibility is to restore and implement responsible land, water and resource management approaches that are ecologically, socially and economically sustainable.

One of the greatest tasks we have as leaders is to provide an economy that includes a diverse menu of sustainable economic opportunities for our future generations. If we are to achieve that goal we must focus on the long-term and be strategic in planning for the future. It's an enormous challenge to balance our economic needs with environmental protection, but we must to do it for future generations.

