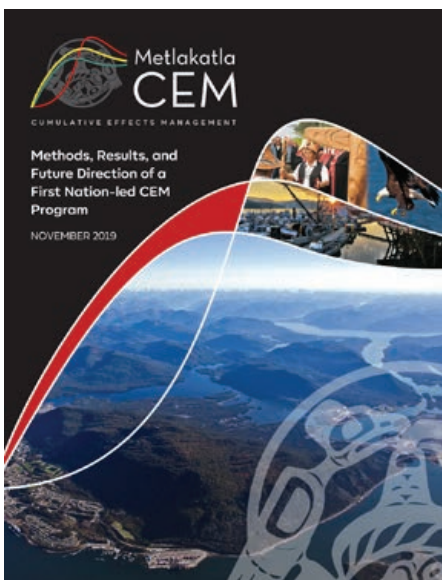




NEW STEP-BY-STEP CEM GUIDE FOR FIRST NATIONS



Online Copies will be available at:
metlakatla.ca

To order a print copy, contact:
info@coastalfirstnations.ca

A new outreach booklet by the Metlakatla Nation offers a step-by-step guide for First Nations that want to measure the full impact of development on their communities through Cumulative Effects Management (CEM).

Metlakatla Cumulative Effects Management: Methods, Results and Future Direction of a First Nation-led CEM Program was launched at the Indigenous Forum on Cumulative Effects in Calgary, February 4-6.

In 2014, northwest British Columbia was awash in LNG referrals and proposals. The Metlakatla First Nations responded through its Governing Council by establishing a cumulative effects management program. The Council directed the Metlakatla Stewardship Society (MSS) to undertake an Indigenous-informed approach to the work.

MSS Executive Director Ross Wilson says leadership wanted to understand the full extent of oil and gas industry benefits and impacts to the community, rather than examining them one by one.

"We weren't talking about one pipeline and one facility, there were numerous pipelines and facility referrals submitted," explains Wilson. "It was leadership's directive that established the CEM initiative."

There was limited cumulative effects work being done on the North Coast at the time and few examples of implementing CEM in an Indigenous context.

With funding from project proponents and MITACS, Metlakatla and Simon Fraser University's School of Resource and Environmental Management (REM) partnered to establish an "Indigenous Cumulative Effects" approach.

"As a department, we wanted to know what the community values were. How those values might be impacted by industrial activities. And how could we monitor those impacts and provide management approaches," Wilson explains.

In a first step, a series of community workshops narrowed down a list of priority values to 10, with an intent to focus on three pilot values: Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) activities; Butter Clams; and Housing.

The stewardship office soon realized it lacked up-to-date community data about all three pilot values. The Metlakatla Community Census was launched as a next step to gather information from all members over the age of 15 who lived in the territory.

"We decided to call it a census because we wanted to reflect the importance of what a census is. We wanted everybody to answer it. And we wanted it to continue in perpetuity," explains Anna Usborne, who works with Metlakatla Strategic Stewardship Initiatives.

"This now gives Metlakatla the data to take to companies to ask what their mitigation would be," she adds. "If you're a business that wants to do business here and you're proposing to bring in 5,000 additional employees to the community, then you may need to do something to ease the housing pressure in Prince Rupert."

Finding ways to link CEM to decision-making can be a challenge. The Metlakatla CEM program, Wilson says, "helped the Nation gain valuable insight into our planning strategy as we engage with industry and government."

CONNECTING OUR COASTLINE



Heiltsuk member Gary Wilson has experienced firsthand the challenges presented by limited internet service in coastal First Nations communities.

In 2012, Wilson was completing his undergraduate program online while working in Bella Bella. When assignments were due, Gary found himself competing for daytime bandwidth access with the rest of the community. “I had no choice but to go to the office at 3 a.m. to upload to the university platform, when nobody was awake, and the kids weren’t gaming.”

As a more extreme example, Wilson points to Klemtu residents who felt the impact of living without internet in December 2018. Extreme storm winds blew down a tower, paralyzing payment systems and incapacitating administrative services.

Coastal First Nations is working to bring faster and more reliable internet service to the coast to help communities deal with these challenges. Through the \$45-million government-funded Connected Coast initiative, CFN members will be among 44 coastal Nations to benefit from improved high-speed internet service.

As CFN’s Planning & Special Projects Coordinator, Wilson is helping communities visualize their priorities for a new digital economy. Opportunities for the future, he says, are endless.

The Heiltsuk Nation plans to include urban members in online language revitalization programs. “Right now, it’s not possible to livestream a language program effectively from Bella Bella to people in Vancouver,” Wilson explains. “Classes can be disrupted by wind or cold weather.”

Activities related to stewardship and coastal economies are also bottlenecked because of the inability to manage big data loads. “Programs like the Coastal Stewardship Network are collecting large amounts of raw data that can support policy change on ocean protection and enforcement, but it’s not possible to analyze all of it yet.”

Future opportunities include telehealth services, video-conferencing so Nations can reduce travel footprint, and attracting digital jobs and business to help young people stay in communities.

There are big implications for community safety as well. “We’re always concerned about reaching people for emergencies like tsunami warnings, if they’re out of cell range,” Wilson says. “And in the case of marine emergencies, even if you have a good response plan, you still need reliable internet access for it to be effective.”

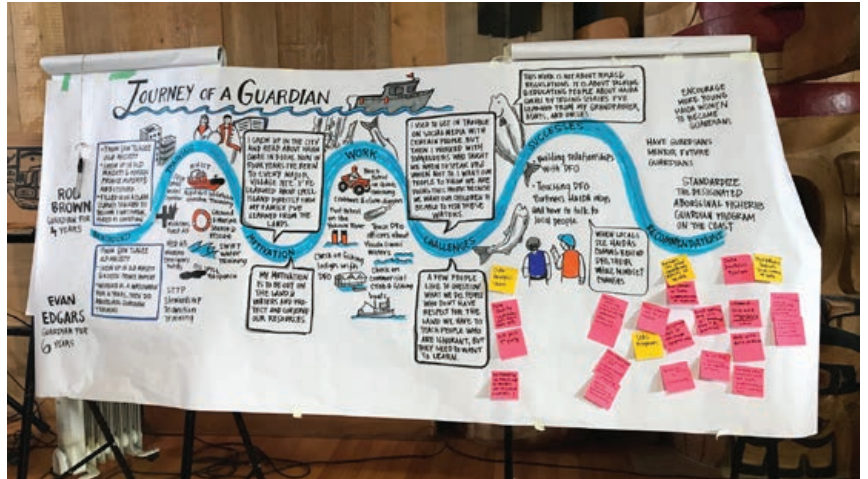
Improved service - slated for delivery next year - will reach remote coastal communities via a fibre-optic cable on the ocean floor – reaching from Haida Gwaii and Prince Rupert to the south coast, and around Vancouver Island.

Canada and BC will cover the cost of delivering high-speed service to community shorelines. Then it's up to communities to decide how to plug in to bring service to individual homes.

While all CFN communities can currently handle deliver faster internet, Wilson cautions that aging infrastructure will soon outgrow community needs. "Communities need to start

planning now for their digital future." Government funding will be available to support communities' digital visions, based on a business plan and industry partner.

CFN is also partnering with the Evergreen Smart Cities Initiative to propose a community-owned telecommunications enterprise that would supply service through a regional approach. A social enterprise model could negotiate better service and equipment rates, sell internet access to other users, and put profits back into communities.



HAIDA FILM SCREENS AT SUNDANCE



In late January, the magic of Haida art was brought to life for audiences at this year's Sundance Film Festival in a film by Haida director Christopher Auchter.

Now is the Time revisits the story of Haida artist Robert Davidson who, at 22 years old, set out to carve the first new pole in Haida Gwaii in almost a century.

Auchter spoke to Coastal First Nations before attending the prestigious festival. His short documentary was one of 74 selected from more than 10,000 submissions.

"It's really amazing to be going to Sundance," said Auchter. "I like that the film is reaching an audience that knows nothing about West Coast First Nations, but is still intrigued by the resilience, hope and strength of everyone coming together to make that day happen."

The raising of the pole in Old Masset on August 22, 1969 would be a turning point for the resurgence of Haida culture.

When Davidson set out to carve a pole for the elders, his Nonni Florence Davidson told him none been raised in his village since her birth in 1895. For decades, Canada's Indian Act had outlawed Haida ceremonies, suppressing the songs, dances and art.

"I saw the old totem poles at the museums and I saw them in photographs, and I'd come home and there was nothing,"

Davidson recounts in the film. In an archival recording, elder Joe Weir remembers missionaries saying, "If you don't get rid of these totem poles, you'll never go to heaven."

Making the film made Auchter realize how deeply asleep Haida arts had been for so many years. "I was born just over a decade after the pole-raising, so it was normal for me to see our artwork."

"I'd come upstairs and my mom and Auntie Shelly would be tracing a design on the window so they could make a button blanket. I'd go to feasts where Guujaaw and others would be singing the feast songs. Kids like Willy Russ would be in the Haida dance groups."

"I didn't know there was a time when this wasn't happening."

Interviewed in the film, Haida scholar Barbara Wilson says the act of raising the pole was important because "it was a deliberate bringing back of that part of our life."

The filmmaker credits Wilson for the film's existence. As a member of a National Film Board Indigenous film unit, she led a crew to the story in the 1960s. When the 50th anniversary approached last year, Wilson asked the NFB if a new version of the original film could be made.

Was Auchter as nervous in retelling the story as Davidson was about carving his first pole?

"Oh, big time. I didn't want to misrepresent," he admits. "I was really taken by that with Robert as well. How honest and candid he was. At first, Robert could not even bring himself to look at the log he was about to carve, he was so scared. It was beautiful his account and the way he shared the story."

Where to see the film:

Broadcast on Knowledge Network: Spring 2020

Free streaming available after broadcast at: nfb.ca

For a free community screening copy, contact:

info@nfb.ca (A Haida Language version will be available)



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