



**COASTAL
FIRST NATIONS**
GREAT BEAR INITIATIVE

ANNUAL REPORT **2021-22**

Protecting our Coast. Building our Economy.





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WHO WE ARE

The **Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative** is an alliance of First Nations along the North and Central Coasts and Haida Gwaii. They include the Council of the Haida Nation, Skidegate, Old Massett, Metlakatla, Gitxaala, Heiltsuk, Nuxalk, Gitga'at, Kitasoo/Xai'xais and Wuikinuxv First Nations.

Our communities, traditions, cultures and governance structures are as unique and diverse as the abundant species that share these lands and waters with us. We all share a responsibility to care for this region. Known throughout the world as the **Great Bear Rainforest**, it has been our home for at least 14,000 years.

Collectively, we are committed to work together to build a **conservation-based economy** in our territories.

The Great Bear Initiative Society (GBI) operates under the direction of a Board of Directors that approves an annual strategic plan for the organization. It has one representative from each of the members of Coastal First Nations (CFN).

VISION

Protected and restored ecosystems in our lands and waters, managed sustainably by member First Nations, enabling traditional and modern economies, improving the quality of life of the people in our communities, giving rise to healthy First Nations.

MISSION

Based on the inherent rights and leadership of member First Nations of Coastal First Nations, protect and conserve the environment and work in partnership with all levels of Government, NGO's and others to create a new conservation-based economy within the respective Traditional Territories.

GOVERNANCE

The Great Bear Initiative Society operates under the direction of a Board of Directors, including one representative from each of the member Nations, that approves an annual operational plan and budget for the organization. Our member nations include Wuikinuxv, Heiltsuk, Kitasoo Xai'xais, Nuxalk, Gitga'at, Gitxaala, Metlakatla, Old Massett, Skidegate, and Council of the Haida Nation.

The Board of Directors meet at least four times a year to review progress and provide direction on activities. An Executive Committee (our Society's officers - President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary) also meets regularly to review administrative issues and monitor project work.

CFN has an office in West Vancouver and main office in Vancouver, where a team of core staff support the Board of Directors with the following:

- strategic project planning;
- program administration;
- communications and outreach;
- assistance in developing economic strategies;
- community capacity-building; and
- financial management.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gaagwiis Jason Alsop – President, Council of the Haida Nation

Arnold Clifton – Chief Councillor, Gitga'at Nation

Donald (Duffy) Edgars – Chief Councillor, Old Massett Village Council

Harold Leighton – Chief Councillor, Metlakatla Governing Council

Linda Innes – Chief Councillor, Gitxaala Nation

Doug Neasloss – Chief Councillor, Kitasoo Band Council

Tlhmtimut Samuel Schooner – Chief Councillor, Nuxalk Nation

Danielle Shaw – Chief Councillor, Wuikinuxv Nation

Ḳáwáził Marilyn Slett – Chief Councillor, Heiltsuk Tribal Council

Billy Yovanovich – Chief Councillor, Skidegate Band Council



CEO'S MESSAGE

CHRISTINE SMITH-MARTIN



The past couple years have brought unprecedented challenges to coastal communities, and to our dedicated team, friends and partners who work together to support CFN member Nations. Though COVID-19 had an enormous impact on our daily lives, and forced us to adapt to constant change and uncertainty, it did nothing to sway our deep commitment to supporting our communities.

If there can be a positive take on these challenging times, it is witnessing the strength, determination and intentionality of Coastal First Nations leadership and staff as they support our communities and each other through the challenges. They did this with respect, integrity and compassion.

When confronted with unprecedented challenges, great organizations find a way to keep going. They do it by constantly challenging the status quo and striving for even greater levels of excellence. They don't stop learning, instead asking the hard questions and adapting. They are always anticipating the next challenge or opportunity, staying flexible as they move forward.

This *2021-2022 Annual Report* highlights the outstanding work that has been achieved over the past two decades. It also lays out the key objectives, outcomes and necessary first steps as we set out to achieve our long-term goals—identified in our ambitious *Strategic Plan 2021-2026*. These documents are based upon the founding mission and vision of our organization, and will allow us to embrace a bright future for all CFN member Nations.

I would like to thank our leadership and staff for their relentless pursuit of excellence throughout the last year. I am also grateful for the support and stewardship that the Board members have provided through the past year.

We have the talent, the vision and the conviction. Together, let's use them to continue building a sustainable future for our communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Christine Smith-Martin
CEO, Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative



PROTECTING OUR COAST

LAND PLANNING

Upcoming Priorities

- **Work with BC to finalize/promote GBR Land Use Order amendments and supporting policy and technical guidance: *Indigenous Heritage Features Handbook, GBR EBM Handbook and Landscape Reserve Design Methodology.***
- **Advance discussions with BC to complete LIDAR coverage of CFN territories.**
- **Negotiate with BC to resolve forestry economic policy issues (stumpage and log exports).**
- **Improve the CFN-BC shared decision-making framework.**
- **Ensure stronger commitment to G2G arrangements for collaborative land and resource decision making, including EBM implementation, stewardship and land forestry access management.**

Terrestrial ecosystems and species on the North Pacific Coast have supported coastal communities for thousands of years. CFN's Lands Program helps to ensure these resources are protected and sustainably managed by supporting member Nations as they implement land-use planning and resource stewardship agreements with BC. The Lands team also supports the negotiation and development of new agreements and commitments, advancing co-governance of lands and resources and a stronger, more proactive role for CFN member Nations in land and resource stewardship and monitoring.

Accomplishments

- Advanced a comprehensive review of EBM implementation in the Great Bear Rainforest.
- Engaged with BC to develop amendments to the GBR Land Use Order and related technical guidance, including a new *Indigenous Heritage Features Handbook*.
- Engaged with BC and major forest companies to advance a new approach to timber harvest management that ensures sustainable harvest levels in each Territory.
- Worked internally and engaged with BC to advance cooperative wildlife stewardship, and develop a Grizzly bear stewardship strategy and viewing framework.



STORY

A New Ban on Black Bear Hunting



The Kitsoo Xai'xais and Gitga'at First Nations are celebrating a new ban on black bear hunting in their territories near the communities of Klemtu and Hartley Bay, where there's the highest concentration of spirit bears in this part of the world.

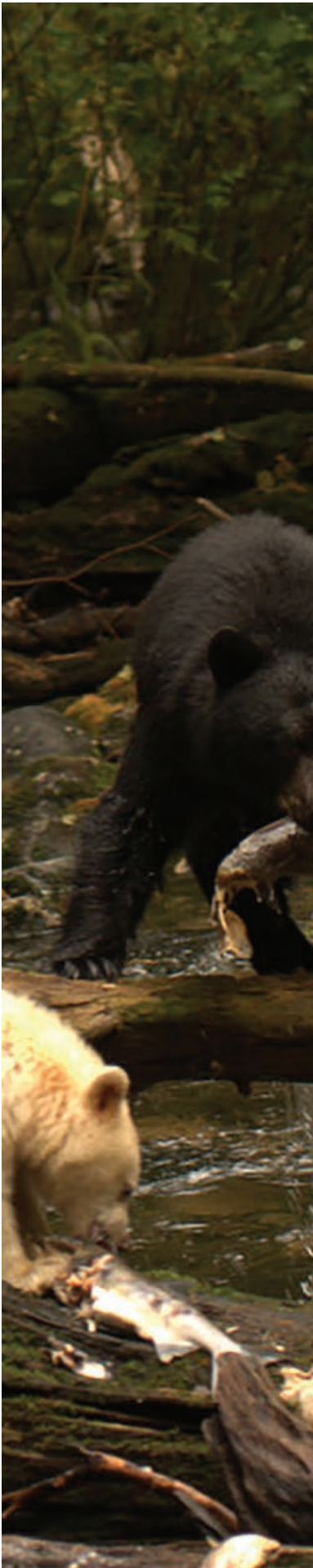
Spirit Bears, also known as Kermode bears, are black bears with a completely white coat. The bear's white coat is the result of a rare genetic mutation. It's impossible to know which black bears carry the white gene and both parents have to carry a recessive gene, in order to produce the spirit bear. Spirit Bears have been genetically isolated on the islands in Kitsoo Xai'xais and Gitga'at territories, which has allowed their gene pool to thrive. Every time a black bear is shot in the region, it could be carrying the recessive copy of the gene that produces the Spirit Bear.

Spirit Bears carry a lot of cultural significance for the Kitsoo Xai'xais people, says Chief Councillor Doug Neasloss. While it has been illegal to kill a Spirit Bear since the early 20th century, the Nations have been working for years to provide detailed evidence that black bear hunting also threatens conservation of Spirit Bears and their communities' wellbeing. "This is something we've been talking about for some time," Neasloss says. "We started this work five years ago, and now the hunt is officially closed. We're super excited about it."

The provincial government's Hunting and Trapping Regulations Synopsis includes the new closure of the black bear hunting areas, following a joint proposal from the Kitsoo Xai'xais Stewardship Authority and the Gitga'at Ocean and Lands Department. The ban outlaws black bear hunting in areas that are most significant for Spirit Bear conservation—regions where black bears have the highest likelihood of carrying the recessive gene and where black bear populations with Spirit Bears have low genetic diversity.

"This is exciting news for Gitga'at Nation and our neighbouring Nation Kitsoo Xai'xais," says Marven Robinson, elected councillor of the Gitga'at Nation, who runs an adventure tours company that explores river valleys near Hartley Bay in search of Spirit Bears. Spirit Bears are referred to as moksgmol, meaning "white bear," in Tsimshian.

"There was a lot of work done to get to this point, and it has been a long time coming. The moksgmol is highly revered by the Gitga'at people and was never talked about until we needed to ensure its protection," says Robinson.



MARINE PLANNING

Upcoming Priorities

- **Establish co-governance, management and implementation frameworks that support Reconciliation.**
- **Coordinate and support implementation of the MPA Network for the NSB and work with Network partners to complete the MPA Network Action Plan by February 2023.**
- **Support MaPP implementation.**
- **Establish world-leading collaborative marine incident preparedness and response system and marine safety and vessel traffic management regime for the NSB.**



The Marine Program supports CFN member Nations as they work with other governments and partners to implement marine planning and management, including Marine Planning Partnership (MaPP), Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area (PNCIMA) and a Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network for the Northern Shelf Bioregion (NSB). The Marine team also supports work to advance collaborative governance, management and Reconciliation through implementation of the Reconciliation Framework Agreement for Bioregional Oceans Management and Protection (RFA) and works with signatories to achieve a world-leading marine safety and incident response system for the Northern Shelf Bioregion (NSB) that protects ocean ecosystems and coastal communities.

Accomplishments

- Amended and re-stated RFA incorporating the Province of BC and Kwikwaka'wakw First Nations as signatories was endorsed by partners.
- Complete draft of the Marine Incident Preparedness, Response and Recovery Framework for the NSB was co-developed by RFA Nations, Canada, and BC.
- After long-term efforts from CFN, the next phase of Canada's Oceans Protection Plan (OPP) was announced in 2022, with a new investment of \$2 billion over 9 years to expand existing initiatives and to advance partnerships with Indigenous and coastal communities.
- Successful trilateral table-top exercises were conducted with response governance partners on notification for marine incidents and marine response plan activation.
- To date, around 500 Geographic Response Strategies have been developed by RFA Nations and approximately 150 sites are still under development.
- First Nations received significant training in all aspects of marine incident response.
- Complete first draft of the MPA Network Action Plan (NAP), including revised Network Scenario, was prepared as a technical draft for public engagement and Indigenous consultation—a communications strategy to support its coordinated roll-out was also developed.
- An Indigenous Working Group coordinated by CFN meets monthly to advance the development of culturally appropriate and culturally inclusive Indigenous-led events and activities as part of the IMPAC5 conference (February 2023).
- CFN coordinated engagement sessions with the four MaPP sub-regions to identify priority items for inclusion in BC's Coastal Marine Strategy and supported drafting of the Intentions Paper.

An underwater photograph showing a school of fish swimming in clear blue water. In the foreground, there are large, yellowish-brown kelp fronds. The lighting is bright, suggesting sunlight filtering through the water.

STORY

Managing Oceans for Future Generations



*In this excerpt from an article in the Globe and Mail, CEO **Christine Smith-Martin** highlights CFN's ground-breaking collaborative work to bring coastal stewardship into the 21st century.*

The current model for managing the coastal economy is broken and hasn't served coastal communities well. Our coast is one of the richest natural environments in one of the richest countries in the world. But too many coastal families are still struggling to make ends meet. What if we could do it differently?

Right now, Coastal First Nations, along with our neighbours and economic stakeholders, are working with our federal and provincial partners to bring coastal stewardship into the 21st century.

We are building a new marine protected area (MPA) network to reverse the declines and restore the health of our marine environment and its people. By placing conservation at its core, the MPA network will help create a new foundation for our marine environment and for all the communities who call this place home. Because this isn't just about fixing something that's broken—the science is clear that well-managed MPAs act as nurseries and safe havens that seed new populations of fish stocks. MPAs enrich the diversity and abundance of life in the surrounding waters, and an ambitious network of MPAs creates cumulative benefits that are greater than the sum of its parts.

By marrying Indigenous, federal and provincial law, and deep local knowledge with cutting-edge marine science, we will establish a new and better approach to managing the marine environment and marine resources. There is still work to be done – a dwindling few in government and industry are stuck in old approaches to managing coastal resources. But Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has made a personal commitment to work with us to establish the MPA network, and our communities have taken note.

We are committed to working with all stakeholders to create an MPA network that maximizes conservation benefits and minimizes economic disruption – goodness knows we could all use less economic disruption at the moment. But it's clear to everyone at the table that the status quo is unsustainable. If we're going to avoid the fate of the East Coast, and ensure the survival of critical marine species and food resources such as salmon, herring and eulachon, then we need to do things better. There is no time to waste.

For our communities, science-based conservation of coastal resources is an issue of basic food security and cultural survival. So as Coastal First Nations, we are unified and prepared to do what it takes to ensure the implementation of a high-ambition MPA network.

In the coming year, we look forward to standing alongside our federal and provincial partners and showcasing to the world what a comprehensive, 21st-century coastal conservation and management plan looks like.

COASTAL STEWARDSHIP NETWORK

Upcoming Priorities

- Continue to provide opportunities for networking and collaboration for CFN stewardship offices and staff, including monthly Guardian calls and an in-person Annual Gathering.
- Provide training and technical support for current RMS users and scope the expansion of RMS into a regional monitoring program.
- Host a workshop to examine what a regional monitoring program could encompass and identify what the priorities are for member Nations.
- Implement the occupational health and safety plans via in-community visits for Metlakatla, Heiltsuk, Kitasoo Xai'xais and Wuikinuxv with Raven Rescue Safety.
- Create a training specific strategic plan; deliver in-person Cultural Feature Inventory (CFI) pilot program, including program evaluation.
- Capitalize on the CGW *Case for Investment* report to build support and sustainable funding for Guardians.

The Coastal Stewardship Network (CSN) supports the stewardship offices of CFN member Nations, in particular the Coastal Guardian Watchmen, who work to protect the lands and waters of each Nation's territory. CSN support involves providing opportunities for networking and collaboration; training and professional development; coordinating the Regional Monitoring System (RMS), a set of digital data collection tools used by the Nations to monitor coastal regions; and raising awareness of the stewardship work undertaken by CFN member Nations.

Accomplishments

- Continued providing networking, collaboration and knowledge sharing opportunities via online platforms, including Coastal Guardian Watchmen calls.
- Together with Vancouver Island University, delivered the Stewardship Technicians Training Program (STTP) to 14 students from six member Nations.
- Delivered Introduction to Computers (online) and Drone Stewardship (online) with First Nations Technology Council, and the Resource Information Standards Committee archaeology course (in-person).
- Continued to develop the RMS, including updating and re-designing the web portal.
- Completed a five-part video series highlighting the work of CSN and of the stewardship offices and Coastal Guardian Watchmen (CGW), and shared extensively online.
- Completed the occupational health and safety plans for Metlakatla, Heiltsuk, Kitasoo Xai'xais, and Wuikinuxv with Raven Rescue Safety.
- Completed *Stewarding the Coast for All: A Case for Investment*, a comprehensive report produced with input from CFN stewardship leaders and other partners, which will build support and long-term funding for CGW.





STORY

Landmark Agreement Appoints Guardian Watchmen with Provincial Authority

A first-in-Canada agreement between BC and two coastal First Nations recognizes thousands of years of stewardship authority and paves the way for a new management model for coastal protection.

The Kitsoo Xai'xais and Nuxalk Nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BC Parks to launch an unprecedented pilot project that recognizes Coastal Guardian Watchmen with Park Ranger authorities under the *Park Act* and *Ecological Reserve Act*.

The MOU was signed by leadership from both the Kitsoo Xai'xais and Nuxalk Nations, as well as the BC Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy George Heyman at the Legislature in Victoria.

The shared compliance and enforcement pilot project recognizes that First Nations Guardians already assume many responsibilities of BC Parks and BC Parks Rangers, but often lack the authority required to carry out compliance and enforcement activities within parks, conservancies and protected areas within their ancestral territories.

"My community made it clear to me a long time ago that lines on a map don't protect areas, people do," says Doug Neasloss, Kitsoo Xai'xais Chief Councillor and Stewardship Director. "We monitor everything in our territory—industrial activities, commercial tourism operators, anglers, general public, helicopters and planes that go through, commercial fisheries (crab fisheries, halibut, salmon)."

While the MOU states that Kitsoo Xai'xais and Nuxalk Guardians will have authority under the *Park Act* and *Ecological Reserve Act*, to be able to write someone a ticket, for example, for illegal activity in their territory, they remain employees of their Nation. "Our staff are not Parks employees, they remain our employees, but have Parks status," Neasloss says. "This is a way to merge Indigenous law with provincial law. Our Guardians will carry both authority, Kitsoo Xai'xais law and some of the law under the province."



WILD SALMON

Upcoming Priorities

- **Provide support to complete infrastructure upgrades, repairs or rebuilds to six hatcheries for four CFN member Nations.**
- **Help facilitate community discussions in four CFN member Nations about current and future hatchery production.**
- **Determine engineering capacity and other technical requirements needed at a local and regional level to complete upgrades.**
- **Facilitate regular project management committee meetings to discuss technical details and provide a mechanism for regional technical decision making.**
- **Support Nation-level working group discussions.**

CFN's Wild Salmon Program supports the efforts of four member Nations—Haida (Old Massett), Gitga'at, Heiltsuk and Kitasoo Xai'xais—to upgrade six community hatchery facilities in their territories. To continue operating, each facility will require significant infrastructure repairs, and CFN has supported each Nation as they start to scope out each project and the scale of work required.

Future planning and direction for these facilities will be identified by each Nation in collaboration with DFO's Salmon Enhancement Program (SEP) production planning process and policies, as well as the conservation focus of the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative. By doing these repairs and utilizing new technology, the overall site operations can continue while improving the efficiency for each facility.

Accomplishments

- Each of the four CFN member Nations are working collaboratively with each other and DFO-SEP to share technical expertise and make needed repairs and improvements, while best utilizing resources.
- Work planning for all facilities is being modelled after efforts at the Kitasoo Xai'xais facilities, where significant planning in collaboration with DFO-SEP has already occurred.
- Final report for 2021-22 has been submitted to DFO-SRIF and an advance request has been submitted for 2022-23.
- Northwest Hydraulics Consulting completed condition assessments on all facilities, and final assessment reports are being completed.





STORY

Governments Must Act Now to Save Wild Salmon

*In this excerpted article, **Káwázit Marilyn Slett**, Chief Councillor of the Heiltsuk Nation and CFN President, describes the urgency of the salmon crisis and the immediate need for collective action.*

First Nations along BC's North and Central Coasts and Haida Gwaii not only depend on salmon as a major food source and livelihood for local economies; our identity is tied to salmon in ways that are hard to express. Salmon helps define who we are as people.

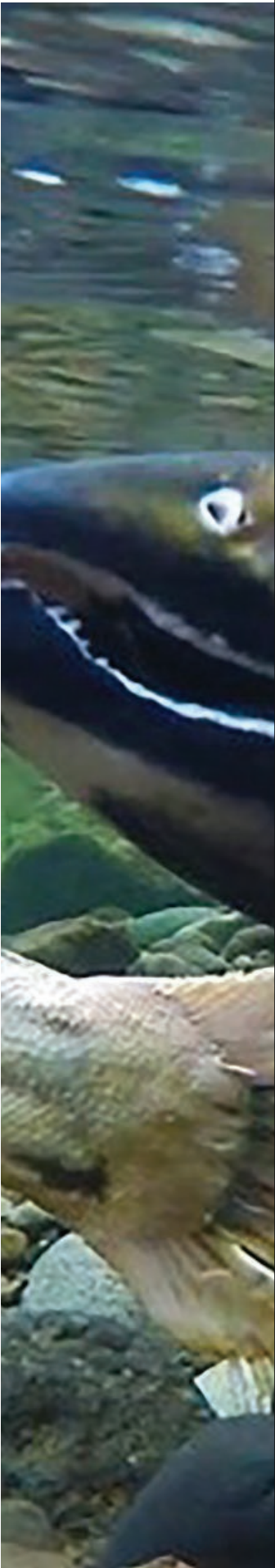
First Nations have a constitutionally protected right to access salmon for food, social, and ceremonial (FSC) purposes and our access takes priority over all other users after conservation needs are met. Declining populations are not just a tragedy for the species itself and the globally unique ecosystems of which they are a part, but a major threat to our ability to exercise our rights as Indigenous people.

Although the factors causing salmon declines are varied and complex, we know the main causes. Cumulative impacts from more than a century of mismanagement, industrial logging and overfishing, plus climate change, have led to these record low salmon returns. And just as the bottom has dropped out of salmon abundance along the Pacific Coast, we've also seen a drastic reduction in monitoring programs by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

First Nations along BC's North Pacific Coast have made progress, through the Great Bear Rainforest agreements and others, toward ending destructive logging practices and reducing exploitation of fisheries through limiting catches and enforcing strategic closures. We have protected important salmon-bearing watersheds and implemented ecosystem-based management in others, while establishing new stock assessment and catch monitoring programs across our territories.

In truth, there are no silver bullet solutions to this crisis. Restoring salmon populations will require a comprehensive effort from all governing bodies—a mix of planning and management actions that will immediately reduce impacts from both commercial and sport fishing, protect important freshwater and ocean salmon habitats, and increase monitoring and data collection. Funding has been committed by Canada and BC but money alone is not enough.

Our sustainable future depends fundamentally on healthy and thriving salmon populations. We must act now for the sake of future generations.





BUILDING OUR ECONOMY

CONNECTIVITY

Upcoming Priorities

- **Work with sub-regions to achieve “digital readiness” for the Connected Coast.**
- **Successfully establish the Community Connectivity Network and work with communities to assess needs and advance digital priorities.**
- **Implement funding agreements and attract additional funds and capacity from CFN’s 7 Gen Tech & Innovation Partners.**
- **Support CFN’s Early Earthquake Warning Program through a newly created 2-year Community Coordinator position (funded by NRCan) to deploy CFN’s regional early earthquake sensor program.**

The Connectivity team is working to build digital capacity for CFN member Nations, including establishing the Community Connectivity Network across the North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii. This collaborative work supports the wellbeing, stewardship and economies of these communities through high-speed Internet and all the benefits that digital tools and technology can deliver.

Accomplishments

- CFN’s Connectivity team has created new partnerships with innovative tech leaders, including Microsoft, Rogers, First Nations Technology Council, LlamaZOO, Vancouver Island University, Innovation Island and TakingITGlobal while securing funding to support community planning, established local tech & innovation jobs, and facilitated “digital readiness” community engagements/ workshops.
- The CFN-Rogers partnership supports communities in a range of ways, including improving and expanding cellular service in Haida Gwaii with a \$5.2-million investment in five cell towers along Highway 16, promoting community entrepreneurs through the Rogers Shopping Channel, and providing creative funding support for regional concerts and community storytelling—empowering youth voices through art, podcasts and Internet radio.
- Canada’s Digital Technology Supercluster Program continues to support the hiring, developing and training of CFN’s first Community Connectivity Network—a regional tech & innovation network focused on the digital needs of coastal communities.





STORY

New Tech Investments Celebrated on Haida Gwaii

The Connected Coast project aims to bring high-speed Internet to 139 rural and remote communities, including 48 Indigenous communities, along the North and Central coast, Haida Gwaii and Vancouver Island. The partnership between City West, the federal government, the province of BC, and Strathcona Regional District on Vancouver Island, was first announced in 2018.

Coastal First Nations, along with the Haida Nation, held a gathering with provincial and federal leaders, regional leadership and technology partners, to build relationships, celebrate the Connected Coast project and engage around new opportunities for innovation and technology.

Federal Minister of Rural Development Gudie Hutchings traveled with staff to Haida Gwaii, joined by BC Minister of Citizen's Services Lisa Beare, who brought her mother and daughter for the multi-day event. Chief Donald "Duffy" Edgars and the Old Massett Village Council hosted the ministers to an evening event, including a dinner held at carver Christian White's longhouse with songs, stories and dances.

The Ministers were joined by local leadership, including BC NDP MLA Jennifer Rice and BC Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development Roly Russell. The group started the day at the Old Massett Village Council community hall, where President of the Council of the Haida Nation Gaagwiis Jason Aslop celebrated the Connected Coast project and the progress made so far.

"It's an exciting time, so close to having high-speed Internet in each of our communities. To unlock the potential of connecting our Indigenous communities to showcase our culture, our history, and who we are," Gaagwiis said. "To transition our coastal communities with economic opportunities, education and training opportunities, benefits for our healthcare system, all of the other potential partnerships and connections we can make with people across Canada and around the world."

City West is leading the infrastructure build of the 3.5 million metres of fibre optic cable that will span from Prince Rupert to Vancouver and Vancouver Island, connecting rural communities along the way.

CLIMATE ACTION

Upcoming Priorities

- **Continue to advance capacity for Climate Adaptation for CFN member Nations, through the Indigenous Climate Action Group working table.**
- **Continue to provide CFN communities with capacity building support related to climate action projects.**
- **Continue to support the CACs to create opportunities to train local members in heat pump maintenance and repair.**
- **Support CFN in its pursuit of a reconciliation agreement with the province.**
- **Scale the Climate Action Network to support up to 16 additional CACs from non-CFN remote Indigenous communities.**
- **Enable CFN communities to act as mentors to other remote Indigenous communities looking to reduce diesel dependency.**

CFN's Climate Action Network supports member First Nations as they work to reduce dependence on fossil fuels by developing capacity in community to advance energy efficiency in buildings, develop clean energy projects and support climate resilience. This support includes a community-based Climate Action Coordinator (CAC) for each CFN member Nation, who helps each Nation develop their clean energy goals through strategic and collaborative planning, as well as work to achieve those goals.

Accomplishments

- Supported CFN communities to reduce energy use through renewable heat projects, displacing diesel consumption by approximately 52,800 litres/year.
- Advanced conversations on shared decision making on climate action funding with the Province of BC, though the MOU process.
- Secured funding for three more years of the Climate Action Network for CFN member Nations.
- Secured funding to expand the Climate Action Network, which will include hiring up to 16 additional CACs from non-CFN Indigenous remote communities in BC.
- Presented and hosted strategic planning sessions at the Renewables in Remote Communities Conference in Whitehorse, Yukon, along with CACs, leaders from CFN member Nations, and other partners.
- Completed a community-wide heat pump installation toolkit with a UBC Sustainability Scholar.
- Engaged nine new remote Indigenous communities interested in joining the Climate Action Network.
- Gathered 86 success stories of climate adaptation from member Nations to share with each other, and other Nations, through peer network activities.



STORY

Central Coast Nations Talk About Climate Change

Central Coast First Nations communities say measures to tackle a growing climate crisis must go hand in hand with strengthening Indigenous governance.

For a study published in *Ecology and Society*—undertaken by Central Coast First Nations through CCIRA, in partnership with the University of Victoria—50 community members were asked about climate impacts they've seen on marine food resources and how those changes will impact their way of life. Participants stressed that strengthening Indigenous governance and collaborative management with government were top strategies for dealing with climate impacts.

Jennifer Walkus, Wuikinuxv Tribal Councillor and co-author, says putting Indigenous rights into practice is key to pushing for climate action. Trying to get traditional and local ecological knowledge recognized by government has been a long fight for her community. "We first started to push on eulachon in the '70s when they started to decline," Walkus says. "The Elders used to say that when we had winter snow, we'd have a good eulachon year. But when we took it to government, we were told we only have anecdotal evidence and we needed the data to back it up."

This type of drastic climate impact on traditional food security was a shared concern of study participants. They reported earlier berry harvests and rapid glacial melt, warmer and drier summers, and more intense winter storms.

On the outer coast communities, members of Waglisla (Bella Bella) and Klemtu said they must travel further north to access fish than in previous decades. Across the Central Coast, members were frustrated by the decline of salmon and other cultural resources. As access to traditional food species changes, members worried about the ability of Elders to pass on traditional knowledge.

"We're in the middle of a climate crisis and a global pandemic, everything is changing. In order to be successful, we have to be able to adapt," says Walkus. "A part of that is trade—it's such a huge part of the culture."

FISHERIES

Upcoming Priorities

- **Establishment of the Joint-Executive committee, the last structure of the FRRRA to be operationalized during implementation.**
- **Further develop co-governance, management and implementation frameworks that support Reconciliation.**
- **Continue to build capacity and internal governance structures.**
- **Manage DFO Contribution Agreements and reporting with Nations and aggregates.**
- **Help Nations and aggregates fill staff positions for each sub-region and assist, as required, in development of their work plans with DFO.**
- **Facilitate and support the bio-regional management council.**
- **Facilitate and manage sub-committees, including Strategic Planning amongst Nations.**
- **Develop stakeholder engagement strategy.**
- **Develop workplans and priorities for license and quota reform discussions on Community Based Fisheries.**

CFN member Nations have negotiated a Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement (FRRRA) with Canada, finalized in 2021, which includes three main components: (1) collaborative governance, whereby the Nations will work with DFO to implement this agreement together; (2) an economic component that will allow the Nations to purchase and fish commercial licenses; and (3) the development of Community Based Fisheries. CFN will continue to support the Nations and their aggregates in 2022-23 and beyond, with the implementation of the Collaborative Governance Schedule of the FRRRA and the associated annual Contribution Agreements with Canada.

Accomplishments

- Finalized amended FRRRA agreement and schedules between the Nations and Canada.
- Collaboration between all of the representative Nations, resulting in approved resolutions to move forward with all agreements to begin implementation of FRRRA.
- Contribution Agreement from DFO and sub-agreements for Nations and their aggregates for Collaborative Governance funding managed through CFN.
- Established Bio-Regional Management Council (June 2022) and initiated two sub-committees to advance progress on the implementation of collaborative governance.





STORY

Rebuilding Fisheries and Wild Fish Stocks is Reconciliation in Action

*In this excerpted article, CFN CEO **Christine Smith-Martin** and President **Káwázit Marilyn Slett** say rebuilding fish populations through fisheries co-governance is an important step toward reconciliation.*

The historic Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement (FRRA)—signed by the Government of Canada and eight First Nations along the North Pacific Coast—is a prime example of reconciliation in action. A major step forward in co-governance and shared decision-making, the FRRA will ensure First Nations play a lead role in revitalizing coastal fisheries and in rebuilding depleted fish stocks throughout our territories.

Our siblings, grandparents and children have all spent time together along the shoreline during salmon runs. As a community, we gather to harvest, feast and preserve the salmon that sustains us; drying, curing, canning and freezing this rich food to be enjoyed throughout the year. No edible part of the fish is ever wasted.

We know that keeping ocean and river ecosystems healthy is the key to preserving our culture, food security and economic self-sufficiency, and that it is essential to integrate Indigenous knowledge into fisheries decision-making.

Yet, for more than a century, overfishing and unsustainable management practices took far more from the sea than could be replenished. Today, just a third of Canada's wild fisheries are considered healthy, and biodiversity in our oceans, lakes and rivers is at an all-time low. This unsustainable approach removed decision-making power and control from First Nations who have sustainably managed resources within their traditional waters for thousands of years.

In short, Canada's coastal fisheries and ecosystems have been pushed to the brink, just as climate change and other stressors continue to strain ecosystems.

In this context, the FRRA is a tool that promises a much-needed paradigm shift by creating a management model based on sustainability and co-governance. Supported by Indigenous place-based knowledge and stewardship, and paired with marine spatial planning and a robust network of marine-protected areas, this new co-governance framework will benefit all Canadians and show the world that we can manage resources differently, and better.

SHORELINE CLEANUP

Upcoming Priorities

- **Hire youth and Elders (mentors) to monitor key areas and survey new shoreline for cleanup.**
- **Collaborate with stewardship offices and Guardian Watchmen to conduct patrols and monitor for debris.**
- **Create financial stimulus to band or local operators in CFN member Nations.**
- **Create educational component to increase recycling and waste prevention (NetZero Waste) in coastal communities, and create awareness of its importance in keeping coastlines clean.**
- **Engage other partner organizations to develop long-term cleanup goals and ensure funding for future cleanup efforts.**

CFN's Shoreline Cleanup program aims to keep coastal habitats clean by coordinating large-scale marine debris cleanups along the shorelines of CFN member territories, ensuring safe and effective removal and responsible disposal. The program engages youth to participate in all cleanup activities, as well as a range of other activities, such as cultural rediscovery camps, efforts to ensure food security, connecting with Elders, and building or renovating coastal infrastructure. Through these educational efforts, young people learn about the importance of waste prevention and reduction; the navigational and technical skills required to undertake these cleanup efforts; and invaluable cultural knowledge gleaned from interactions with Elders and by exploring other areas in their territories.

Accomplishments

- A large volume of marine debris and plastic pollution has been removed from shorelines in CFN member Nations—more than 38,000 kg of garbage, including industrial waste, fishing gear and other marine debris removed from roughly 10,000 kilometres of coastline.
- Stewardship leaders and Elders from the Nations were engaged to help prioritize specific areas to clean up, based on Indigenous knowledge.
- Cleanup projects also helped communities identify and prioritize food gathering areas for cleanup, and provided training and jobs to community members, including youth.
- Debris collection was conducted in highly remote areas, with partners such as the Misty Isles Economic Development Society, Wilderness Tourism Association and others engaged to help carry out these tasks.
- Employment opportunities were created in communities heavily affected by the downturn resulting from COVID 19, including youth employment.





STORY

From Shoreline Cleanups to Preventing Waste

In the past couple decades, Trent Moraes has seen his fair share of marine debris wash up on Haida Gwaii's rocky shores and sandy beaches.

Trent is the Deputy Chief Councillor for the Skidegate Band Council, and he has lived and worked on these coastal waters his entire life. He has also managed cleanups along these shores since 2000, and many more throughout CFN member Nations since starting his current role leading CFN's Shoreline Debris Cleanup program. "We've been coming back to clean these beaches every year, but the debris just keeps coming back too," he says. "The cleanups need to continue but we also need to find ways to prevent this waste from ending up in our waters in the first place."

Trent says cleanup teams have scoured almost 10,000 kilometres of coastline, collecting more than 38,000 kg of garbage in the process—everything from industrial waste and recreational fishing gear to household waste. "Plastic water bottles are such a huge issue," he says, adding that it's difficult to accept, especially when we know the bottles are often coming from communities where tap water is perfectly healthy and clean.

An important step toward reducing marine debris, he says, is to implement zero-waste programs in coastal communities. The Indigenous Zero Waste Technical Advisory Group (IZWTAG), for example, offers training and resources for First Nations to start up and sustain zero-waste systems in their communities. An Indigenous-run non-profit, IZWTAG aims to protect the environment by improving waste management at the community level.

Trent says several CFN member Nations, including Metlakatla, Gitxaala, Gitga'at, Kitasoo Xai'xais, Heiltsuk and Wuikinuxv, are already working on these zero-waste programs. In order to be effective, he adds, these efforts must extend beyond simple recycling programs. "Our cleanups are focused on teaching kids too, who are able to get out on the water and in traditional areas," he says. "That youth component is so essential—it increases awareness about the negative impacts of marine waste and helps young people become part of the solution to preventing waste in the first place."

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Great Bear Initiative Society Statement of Financial Position

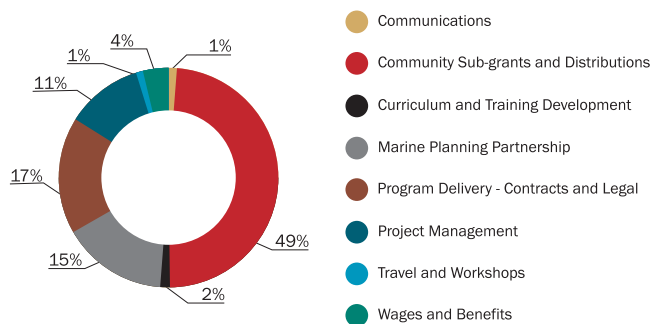
| March 31 | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| Assets | | |
| Current | | |
| Cash | \$ 5,363,685 | \$ 5,546,952 |
| Term deposits | 4,997,709 | 2,154,628 |
| Grants and other receivables | 6,380,121 | 3,795,619 |
| Prepays | 18,625 | 11,500 |
| | <u>16,760,140</u> | <u>11,508,699</u> |
| Property and equipment | <u>37,554</u> | <u>64,195</u> |
| | \$ 16,797,694 | \$ 11,572,894 |
| Liabilities and Deferred Contributions | | |
| Current | | |
| Accounts payable and accrued liabilities | \$ 4,299,953 | \$ 4,346,951 |
| Deferred lease inducements | <u>24,908</u> | <u>35,583</u> |
| | <u>4,324,861</u> | <u>4,382,534</u> |
| Deferred contributions | | |
| Expenses of future periods | 12,435,279 | 7,126,165 |
| Unamortized property and equipment | 37,554 | 64,195 |
| | <u>12,472,833</u> | <u>7,190,360</u> |
| | \$ 16,797,694 | \$ 11,572,894 |
| Commitments | | |
| Contingencies | | |

Great Bear Initiative Society Statement of Operations

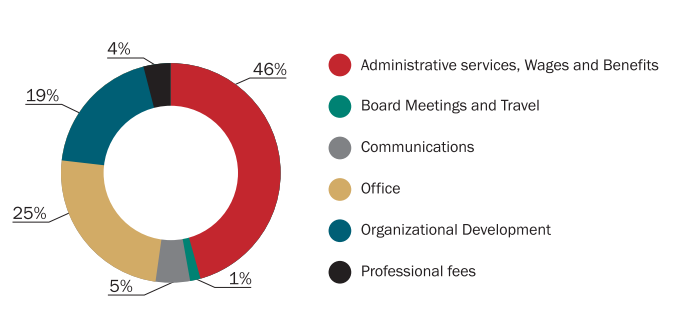
| For the year ended March 31 | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| Grants and contributions | \$ 16,859,189 | \$ 15,481,678 |
| Projects | | |
| Communications | 209,125 | 35,423 |
| Community sub-grants and distributions | 7,530,130 | 8,098,515 |
| Consultants | 2,517,552 | 1,337,167 |
| Curriculum and training development | 223,799 | 170,190 |
| Legal | 168,881 | 182,181 |
| Marine planning partnership | 2,391,240 | 2,000,000 |
| Project management | 1,712,110 | 1,648,675 |
| Research and development | - | 5,243 |
| Supplies | 49,400 | 65,338 |
| Travel and workshops | 156,932 | 98,443 |
| Wages and benefits | 591,178 | 549,184 |
| | 15,550,347 | 14,190,359 |
| General and administrative | | |
| Administrative services, wages, and benefits | 611,384 | 585,625 |
| Board meetings and travel | 18,554 | 3,410 |
| Communications | 70,251 | 123,121 |
| Insurance | 11,098 | 9,696 |
| Occupancy | 178,317 | 167,874 |
| Office | 139,599 | 145,902 |
| Organizational development and implementation | 256,020 | 259,768 |
| Professional fees | 52,969 | 43,419 |
| Amortization of property and equipment | 32,763 | 35,554 |
| Amortization of deferred capital contributions | (32,763) | (35,554) |
| | 1,338,192 | 1,338,815 |
| Deficiency of revenue over expenditures before interest income | (29,350) | (47,496) |
| Interest income | 29,350 | 47,496 |
| Excess of revenue over expenditures | \$ - | \$ - |

Remunerations

PROJECT EXPENSES



ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge and honour our hereditary leaders, political leaders, Elders and community members who guide our work. They remind us that our collective responsibility is to ensure our lands and waters are managed sustainably, with future generations in mind.

CFN-GBI would also like to thank our partners who support our work:

BC Hydro

Canadian Internet Registration Authority

Coast Funds

Fraser Basin Council

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

Government of British Columbia

Government of Canada

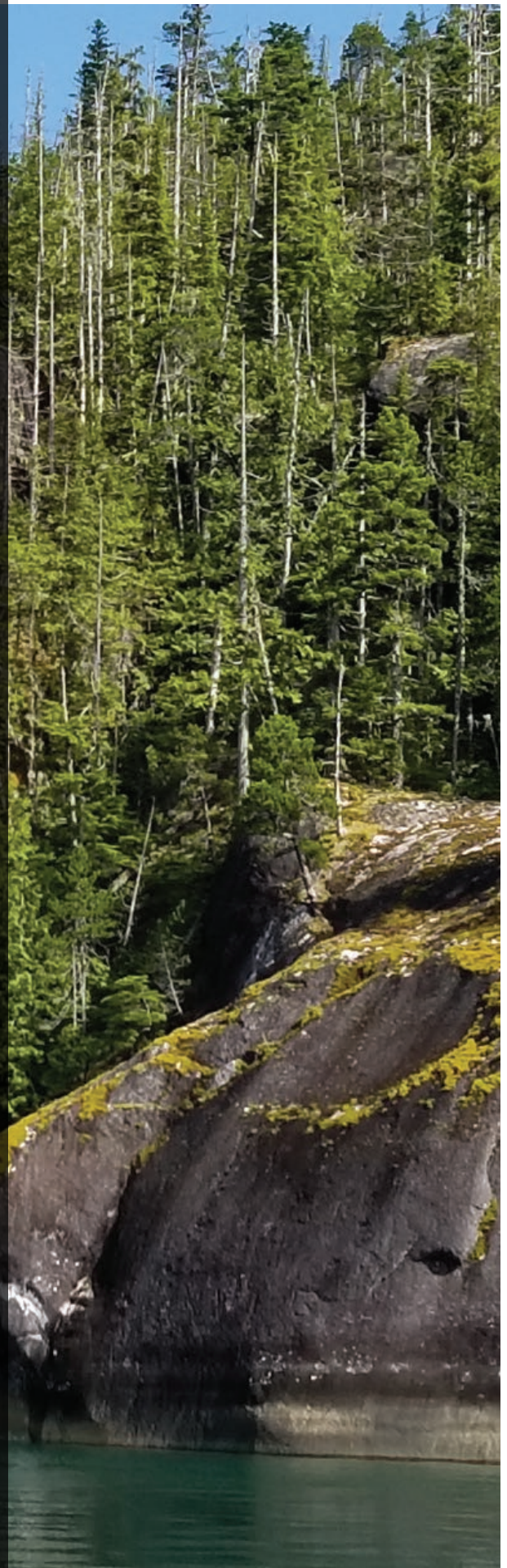
MakeWay Foundation

Nature United

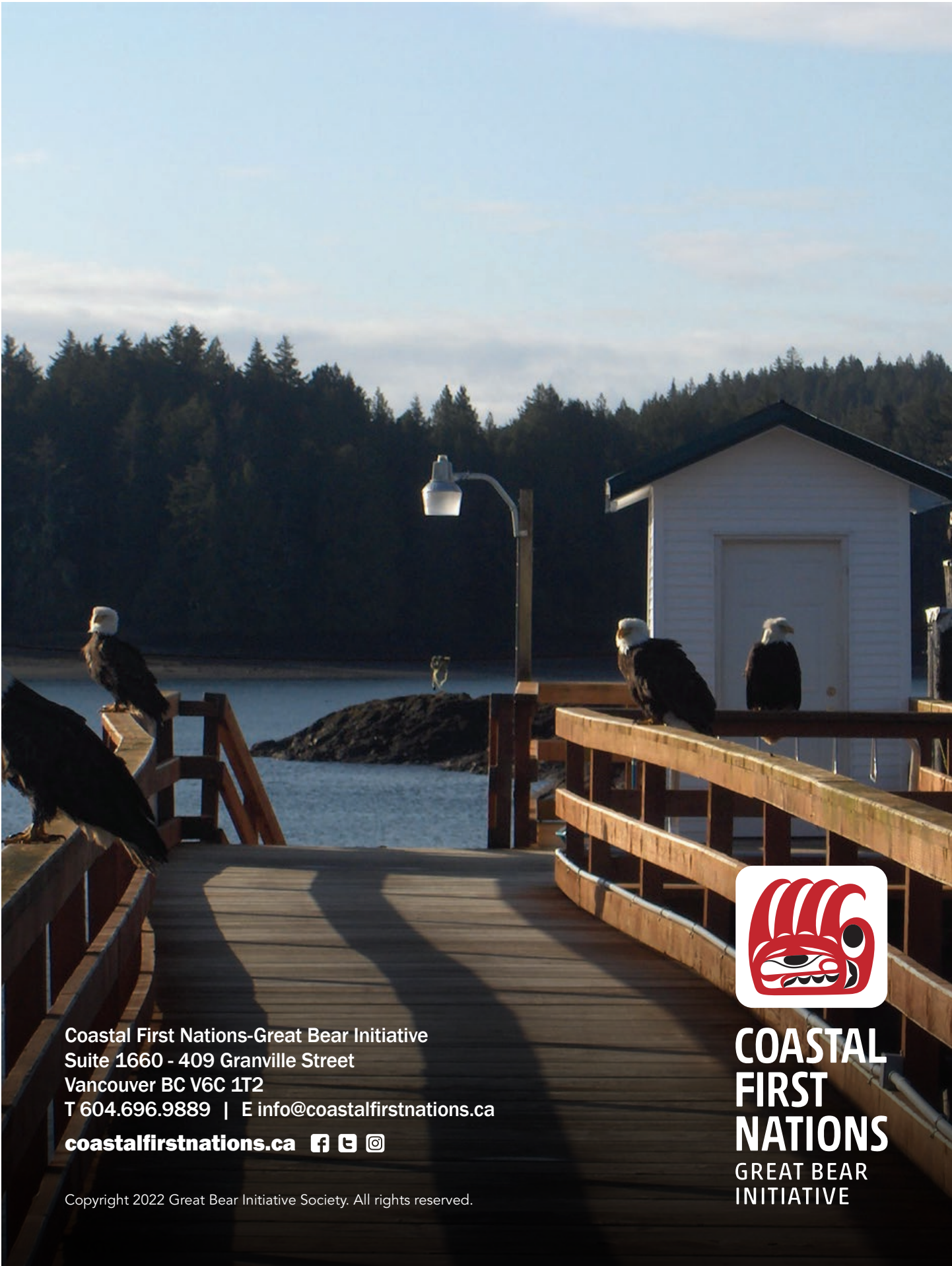
Rogers

The Nature Conservancy



Wilburforce Foundation







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