



**COASTAL
FIRST NATIONS**
GREAT BEAR INITIATIVE

**ANNUAL
REPORT 2018**

Protecting our Coast. Building our Economy.



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:

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

The Nature Conservancy

Nature United

Tides Canada

Wilburforce Foundation

Coast Funds

Government of British Columbia

Government of Canada

BC Hydro



TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	Our Vision
	Governance
	Board of Directors
5	President's Message – Marilyn Slett
7	Protecting Our Coast
8	Marine Planning
9	<i>Story: Oil Tanker Ban Becomes Law</i>
10	Land Planning
13	<i>Profile: Laadaa - Haida Stewardship Director</i>
14	Stewardship Directors Committee
15	Coastal Stewardship Network
17	<i>Story: Foundation for Stewardship: Indigenous Laws Workshop</i>
19	Building Our Economy
20	Great Bear Rainforest Essential Oils
22	Climate Action
23	<i>Story: Fisheries Agreement Will Get Fishers Back on the Water</i>
25	<i>Story: Coastal Shellfish: Sustainable Seafood and So Much More</i>
26	Financial Summary

OUR VISION

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

Our Nations have thrived within these coastal ecosystems for thousands of years. 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 sacred responsibility to care for this region—known throughout the world as the **Great Bear Rainforest**, but to us as our homeland.

Collectively, we have committed to work together to build a **conservation-based economy** in our territories; one that will provide for all future generations.

GOVERNANCE

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).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jason Alsop – President, Council of the Haida Nation

Arnold Clifton – Chief, Gitga'at

Marilyn Slett – Chief Councillor, Heiltsuk Tribal Council

Roxanne Robinson – Chief Councillor, Kitasoo Band Council

Harold Leighton – Chief Councillor, Metlakatla Governing Council

Wally Webber – Chief Councillor, Nuxalk Nation

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

Billy Yovanovich – Chief Councillor, Skidegate Band Council

Frank Johnson – Chief Councillor, Wuikinuxv

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CHIEF MARILYN SLETT



Coastal First Nations has been making progress toward building a sustainable economy for many years, and last year was no different. Examples of our collective success include the recent passing of the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act by the Federal Government and progress in two of our sustainable businesses: Coastal Shellfish and Great Bear Rainforest Essential Oils.

After a 40-year fight to protect our waters from tankers, the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act was passed on June 20, 2019. We believe the Act will provide protection for our waters and territories, and help preserve our cultural and spiritual way of life.

Coastal Shellfish, in Prince Rupert, has experienced highly rated sales for its farmed scallops. The Great Bear Scallops' Oceanwise sustainability certification is a reflection of its commitment to protecting the environment and at the same time bringing fresh, clean seafood to customers around the world. Likewise, the goal of Great Bear Rainforest Essential Oils is to create an economic model that enhances quality of life for coastal communities, while incorporating traditional sustainable practices and respecting cultural protocols. This year it expanded sales and marketing efforts through all channels—distributor, retail, e-commerce and corporate/government—in order to reach new targets.

Coastal First Nations has an ownership stake in both enterprises.

It is evident that keeping up with the rapid changes on the coast will provide both challenges and opportunities over the coming years. In particular, the increased focus on our economy and the need for greater controls in stewardship are integral to our work.

We understand that our power as an organization comes from the passionate people who live and breathe our shared vision in all the work they do. CFN-GBI is committed to supporting member Nations, strengthening collaboration with key stakeholders, enhancing community engagement and assessing and updating our projects to meet changing environments.

I want to express my sincere thanks to our Board of Directors for their continued leadership and guidance throughout the past year, and to our dedicated professional staff, project managers and other partners for their continued support as well. We would not be here without your hard work and dedication. Our success is our communities' success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marilyn Slett'.

Marilyn Slett
Chief Councillor, Heiltsuk Tribal Council
President, Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative





PROTECTING OUR COAST

MARINE PLANNING

Upcoming Priorities

- **Strengthen response capacity in coastal communities by supporting Nations' efforts to develop community-level Geographic Response Strategies and operational plans.**
- **Support the advancement of First Nations interests in Marine Protection and the development of the Network of Marine Protected Areas.**
- **Secure agreement with the BC Government on the longer-term commitment to MaPP.**
- **Support discussions with Canada on implementation of the Reconciliation Framework Agreement and the inclusion of BC.**

The marine ecosystems that surround CFN-GBI member Nations are among the most biologically diverse on Earth, and they have supported coastal communities for thousands of years. From the productive kelp forests and seaweed, to the salmon, herring, halibut and other marine species that thrive here, these marine ecosystems are both our bread basket and the foundation for our cultures and economies.

The CFN-GBI Marine Planning team provides coordination, support and strategic advice to regional-level governance processes and projects that will ensure these resources are managed with all future generations in mind. Working with a range of partners—from senior marine planners within CFN-GBI member Nations to other government stakeholders—we help to advance important marine planning initiatives at the regional, sub-regional and Nation level.

Over the past year, we provided regional support for a range of collaborative marine planning initiatives, including implementation of the Marine Plan Partnership (MaPP) and the Reconciliation Framework on Oceans Management and Protection, ongoing efforts to create a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) for the Northern Shelf Bio-region, and the development of a Marine Response system, which involves operational and tactical plans, and regional response plan.

We also worked closely with CFN-GBI member Nations and collaboratively with other stakeholders including Canada, to begin implementation of the Reconciliation Framework Agreement (RFA). Signed in June 2018, this new collaborative governance framework has already achieved several shared objectives and will guide future marine planning and conservation through a common understanding of how Nations and the federal government can work together.

Our Marine Planning team also made significant progress on co-developing regional and sub-regional marine response plans with federal and provincial partners. We complemented that with support for developing Nation-level marine Geographic Response Strategies, including field training exercises and new resources, such as marine spill response kits, which will empower communities to quickly respond to and mitigate impacts from marine pollution incidents.



STORY

Oil Tanker Ban Becomes Law

After decades of fighting to protect our waters from oil tankers, CFN-GBI Nations and other coastal communities celebrated the passing of Bill C-48 in June.

The Oil Tanker Moratorium Act prohibits oil tankers carrying more than 12,500 metric tons of crude or persistent oil along BC's North Coast. It replaces a voluntary ban that was in place since 1985.

It took almost half a century of strong and unwavering leadership and several commissions to ensure the protection of our coastal waters from oil tankers. As we fought for a permanent ban, our resolve was strengthened by one of the core principles our Elders had taught us: If we take care of the ocean, the ocean will take care of us.

First Nations have existed along the Pacific North Coast for more than 14,000 years. As always, healthy marine environments will remain economically, culturally and environmentally integral to the well-being of all coastal communities, which is why we will never waver in efforts to protect our coastal waters.

Unlike other coasts in Canada, there is no existing tanker traffic on the North Coast and formalizing the moratorium will not disrupt any existing jobs or economic activity in the region. Rather, it will help protect existing industries, including fisheries, aquaculture and eco-tourism, while preserving the cultural and spiritual way of life of coastal First Nations.

After almost five decades engaged in these seemingly endless consultations and negotiations, we can finally turn our full attention to building a healthy, sustainable coastal economy; one that recognizes the needs of all future generations.

LAND PLANNING

Upcoming Priorities

- **Support CFN-GBI Stewardship Directors in engaging with BC on several committees and working groups related to land-use planning and implementation, including advancing a review of EBM implementation in the Great Bear Rainforest.**
- **Continue to improve CFN-GBI Nations' ability to accrue forestry economic opportunities and benefits.**
- **Engage with BC to develop a new and more flexible form of protected area designation.**

The coastal ecosystems of the North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii form one of the world's last remaining temperate rainforests. The region features an abundance of species and diversity, and vast land-based resources that have supported coastal communities for thousands of years.

To help ensure these resources are managed responsibly and with future generations in mind, CFN-GBI's Land Planning program provides support to all member Nations in efforts to implement effective and strategic land-use planning agreements with BC.

Receiving a mandate from the 2006 Land and Resource Protocol, 2009 Reconciliation Protocol and the 2016 EBM Implementation Term Sheet, the Land Planning team focuses on the implementation of existing land-use agreements, as well as the negotiation and development of new agreements and commitments that will advance the role of CFN-GBI members Nations in lands and natural resource governance, stewardship and economic development.

This work includes providing support for CFN-GBI Nations to engage in various forums and working groups focused on protected area planning and management agreements, and for ongoing Reconciliation 2.0 discussions with BC, which focus on co-governance of lands and resources; a stronger, more proactive role for Nations in protected area management and monitoring; and negotiating new forestry economic measures that will create new business development opportunities.

Over the past year, the Land Planning team helped to advance forestry-related economic opportunities for CFN-GBI member Nations by completing timber supply analyses for each Nation's territory, a detailed scan of new economic opportunities that could be developed via cooperation among the Nations' forest companies, and by negotiating an MOU with other leaders within the forestry industry.

We have engaged BC in efforts to develop a more flexible protected area designation that enables a stronger co-governance model, and made progress in ensuring new provincial protected area legislation to enable formal designation of new protected areas in Kitsoo/Xai'xais, Heiltsuk and Nuxalk territories. We also made progress in developing a standards manual for identifying Cultural Heritage Features, which will provide detailed direction to forest companies and government staff regarding proper identification and field procedures for the inventory of Indigenous cultural heritage resources and features on forested lands.





PROFILE

Laadaa - Haida Stewardship Director



When you meet Laadaa, Stewardship Director for the Haida Nation, you'll know immediately where he stands and where he's coming from, and it won't be long before he'll share a few deeply held beliefs that provide the foundation for his work.

As with all Stewardship Directors for CFN-GBI Nations, Laadaa (Colin Richardson was his English name) has a lot on his plate, and what he's tasked with on a daily, weekly and yearly basis would make your head spin. He provides overarching direction for stewardship activities throughout Haida Gwaii and directs four departments for the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN)— Fisheries, Marine, Heritage and Natural Resources, and Protected Areas—ensuring all efforts meet the Nation's expectations.

In addition to that already full slate, Laadaa meets quarterly with the Stewardship Directors Committee—where senior directors from each Nation can work together with CFN-GBI Program Managers, Senior Policy Advisors and the Board to help implement strategic land and marine use agreements from regional perspective.

"It's a great way to open up dialogue and also keep it going," says Laadaa, adding that the regular meetings bring in expertise from all Nations and ensure the best available knowledge is used. Regarding his specific role on this and other regional committees, Laadaa says it's important to share updates with other Nations and lessons learned based on the unique "Haida way" to stewardship. "We have great strength in our culture and we've never lost that identity," he says, adding that the concept of *Yah'guudang* ("respect for all things") is at the heart of all Haida land and marine planning.

Yah'guudang is about respect but it's also about responsibility, says Laadaa, and every Haida person is born with a life-long responsibility to protect this place—just as other coastal people are compelled to care for their homelands as well. "I see that same burning passion for protecting these lands and waters in all the people that I work with," he says.

Laadaa points to Coastal Guardian Watchmen and stewardship training programs run by CFN-GBI (see pages 15-17), as clear examples where that passion is being brought to the surface. "These programs are great for building new skills, but more importantly, they build confidence," he says. "I see some students start off shy, lacking in self-esteem, but by the end of training or a bit of time on the water, they're far more confident. It's a beautiful thing to see."

For Laadaa, confidence was never an issue. But like anyone who's lived within the past century or so, there have been many threats to it. "I remember waking up as a boy and feeling hopeless; just a general lack of well-being," he recalls. "But my father instilled values and tenacity in us, so we could deal with any situation. It gave us the will and confidence to make our way, and I never lost that."

Laadaa says he loves to see a growing pride and determination in the stewardship work that's happening throughout Haida Gwaii and along the North and Central Coast—it's critical for establishing sovereignty and authority, but also for keeping young people connected to the land. "I see true hope in this," he says. "It's very powerful to see."

Asked whether the unique "Haida way" has positive lessons to share beyond Haida Gwaii and other coastal First Nations, Laadaa gets straight to the point, as always: "Of course it does. We kept this island intact for thousands of years just fine, and in the last 100 years the industrial machine has wreaked havoc on these ecosystems. I believe our way is far more balanced and logical."

STEWARDSHIP DIRECTORS COMMITTEE

Upcoming Priorities

- **Continue to coordinate and facilitate quarterly SDC meetings, workshops and policy conference calls, and monthly SDC conference calls.**
- **Finalize a 5-10-year Guardian Strategic plan that outlines how CFN-GBI Nations will work together to increase stewardship authority.**
- **A comprehensive review to increase effectiveness of CFN-GBI Guardian Watchmen programs and the Coastal Stewardship Network.**

The Stewardship Directors Committee (SDC) was established to create a venue where Stewardship Directors and other senior lands and marine managers from each Nation can work together with CFN-GBI Program Managers and Senior Policy Advisors to advance implementation of strategic land and marine use agreements.

Through quarterly meetings, workshops and conference calls, the SDC provides direction and support for regional initiatives of the Nations' stewardship/integrated resource offices, and an SDC Project Manager works closely with other CFN-GBI Project Managers to carry out these projects so they are aligned with mandates of the CFN-GBI Board.

The ultimate goal of these initiatives is to strengthen the capacity of CFN-GBI Nations to implement land and marine use plans and agreements, and to increase the capacity and authority of stewardship staff, including Guardian Watchmen, to effectively manage and protect their cultural and natural resources.

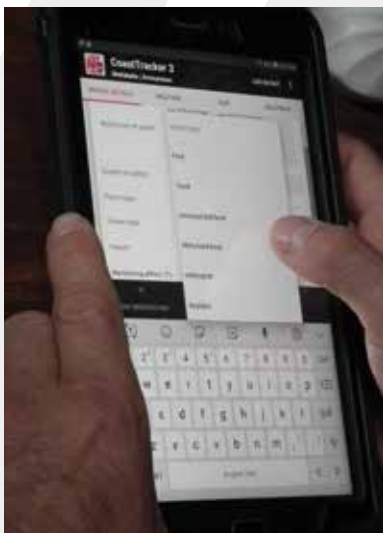
Throughout 2018, the SDC hosted regular monthly conference calls, in-person meetings and workshops to help guide regional stewardship initiatives, including a Land Reserve Design workshop in April with senior managers from of CFN-GBI Nations, and a strategic planning session to guide CFN-GBI Coastal Guardian Watchmen programs.



COASTAL STEWARDSHIP NETWORK

Upcoming Priorities

- **Host the next CSN annual gathering in July 2019.**
- **Update the RMS web-portal and introduce more survey-based forms in CoastTracker.**
- **Deliver advanced monitoring and compliance courses in collaboration with Vancouver Island University.**
- **Support the development of a Coastal Guardian Watchmen strategic plan.**



The Coastal Stewardship Network (CSN) supports Coastal First Nation communities in building stewardship capacity and asserting authority throughout their territories.

CSN provides networking and other support for the Coastal Guardian Watchmen, including monthly calls, learning exchanges and an annual gathering; coordination of a Regional Monitoring System (RMS) for collecting and managing field data; facilitation of stewardship training programs to help build skills and knowledge; and other support related to outreach and communications.

In April, CSN launched a new CoastTracker 3 App for the RMS, which provides Stewardship Offices a more user friendly and effective system for collecting and monitoring data. We also supported the Nanwakolas Council in joining the RMS and developed a module for Cultural Feature Identification Surveys with the Kitasoo/Xai'xais Nation.

In early May, we hosted the 10th CSN annual gathering, which brought Coastal Guardian Watchmen and other stewardship staff together to share community updates and lessons learned from the past year, and discuss priorities for the upcoming season. Participants at the gathering received whale disentanglement training from international whale experts and engaged in a full-day search and rescue training exercise with the Canadian Coast Guard. CSN also hosted monthly conference calls to ensure the Guardians could stay in touch and further discuss regional concerns throughout the year.

Throughout the year, CSN developed and delivered custom stewardship training programs to support CFN communities. Highlights include a Safety Policies and Procedure Workshop with stewardship managers and directors, which informed in-community safety training visits for Gitga'at (February), Nuxalk (July) and Wuikinuxv (August), and will guide future safety training efforts; an inspiring graduation ceremony in Prince Rupert in March, where 11 students received certificates for completing the two-year Stewardship Technicians Training Program (STTP); and an intensive week-long Professional Development training course for other STTP alumni students.

In 2018, CSN completed eight trips to communities throughout CFN communities to meet with stewardship staff, support work planning; assist in development of policies and procedures; provide training; review RMS data; and learn more about the training and other needs of Coastal Guardian Watchmen and other staff. We also provided Coastal Guardian Watchmen uniforms, flags and brochures for use by Coastal First Nations stewardship offices.



STORY

Foundation for Stewardship: Indigenous Laws Workshop



In the longhouse at the Museum of Northern BC in Prince Rupert, graduates from the Stewardship Technicians Training Program (STTP) gathered together for an intensive four-day workshop. To be here, the students had travelled from communities all along the North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii, and they came for the kind of invaluable training that could never truly be reflected on a spreadsheet or a piece of paper.

Led by respected educator, Hilistis Pauline Waterfall, a Heiltsuk Elder and knowledge keeper, the workshop focused on Indigenous laws, and how they guide stewardship efforts throughout the coast—a perfect complement to the more technical and applied stewardship skills they had acquired throughout their time with STTP.

Hilistis drew on the many examples of Indigenous law that are directly related to the work of Coastal Guardian Watchmen, including the Haí zaqv Nation Oceans Act, and welcomed students to share examples from their own communities. The students quickly identified several other instances where Nations are asserting their laws in the context of stewardship—the Nuxalk Sputc (eulachon) ceremony and handbook, Central Coast crab closures and joint management of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais Mussel Conservancy with the province, to name a few.

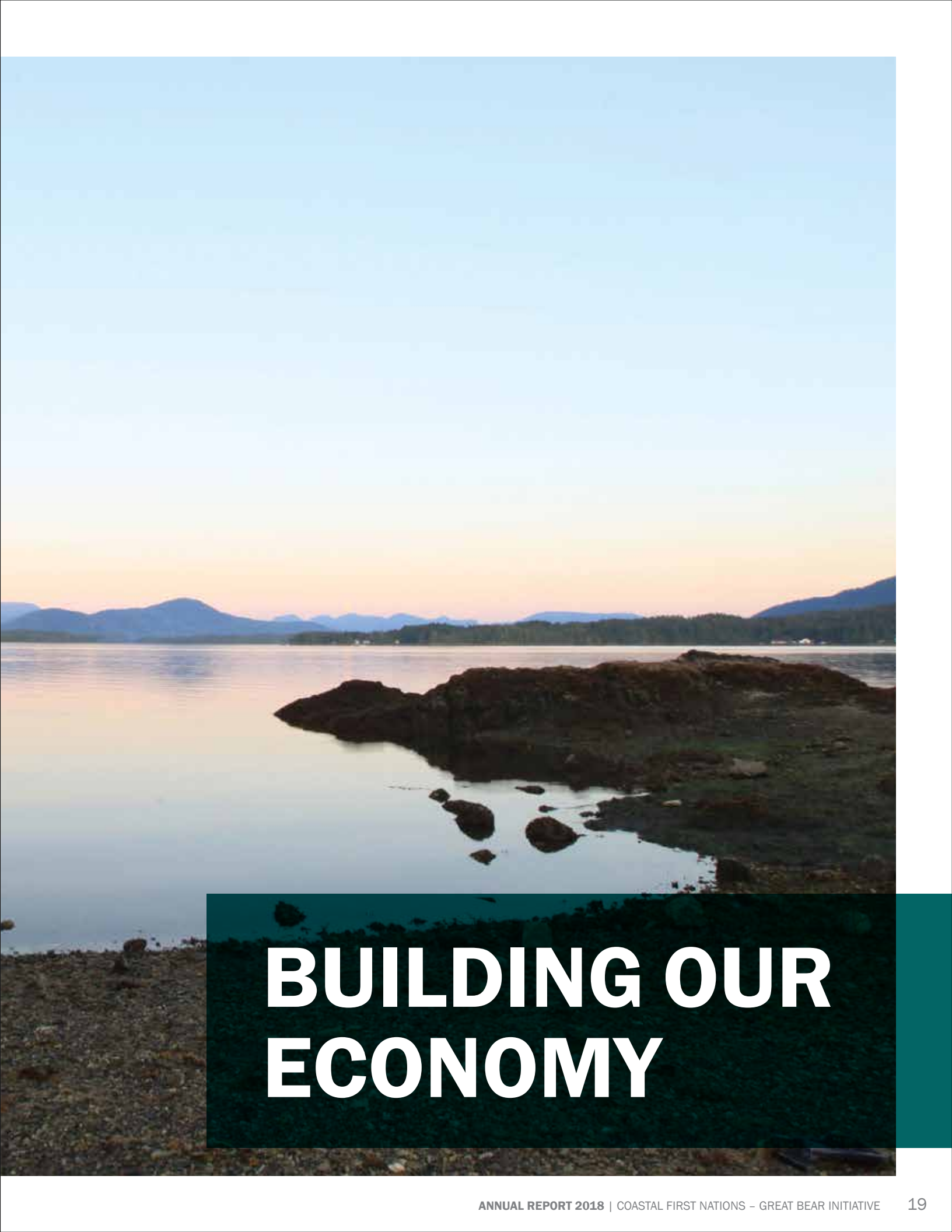
The workshop drew upon the knowledge and understanding of several experts, including representatives from the Gitxaala Fisheries and Marine program, who spoke about the Gitxaala Harvesters Handbook and their RELAW program funded by West Coast Environmental Law, and Tsimshian and Dene-Metis lawyer Christina Gray, who helped frame the conversation about Indigenous laws through an activity involving a legal case review of a traditional story. The students also joined Metlakatla Elder Franny Nelson on a hike to learn about medicinal plants in the area, and their many uses, and to search for local culturally modified trees (CMTs).

All guest trainers were supported at the workshop by facilitators from CFN's Coastal Stewardship Network and Vancouver Island University, who have partnered to run STTP. Since the program began, three separate cohorts and 52 students have graduated from the program, and each one of those students has gained invaluable knowledge from local community members and tangible skills to support their stewardship work—many of them now working as Coastal Guardian Watchmen, fisheries technicians, environmental monitors or in other stewardship roles.

“The workshop was created to reunite STTP students and to build on the skills and knowledge they acquired through the program,” says CFN training coordinator Elodie Button, who helped design the training along with Hilistis and others. She says the students chose their favoured training themes ahead of time, and clearly wanted to focus on Indigenous laws in the context of stewardship, along with team-building and communication skills. “It was the perfect extension of the varied themes taught throughout STTP,” adds Button, “and provided opportunities for continuous learning and relationship building, while deepening the students’ shared understanding of Indigenous laws as a group.”

When the intensive training was over, each student left with a renewed understanding of Indigenous laws and their commitment to upholding those laws in their stewardship work on the coast. “For me, the best part was the openness from everyone, the respect shown and given, the laughter shared, and all the presentations,” one student remarked. “I learned a lot about how I think and feel about Indigenous law, about how much I know or want to know. I learned that it involves a lot, and that we have similar values and understandings across all Nations.”





BUILDING OUR ECONOMY

GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST ESSENTIAL OILS

Upcoming Priorities

- **Expand sales and marketing efforts through all channels—distributor, retail, e-commerce and corporate/government.**
- **Research new products and blends to meet our customers' needs and wants, and expand our product offerings.**
- **Continue to explore international markets, including funding support, compliance requirements and shipping options.**
- **Reach out to other funding sources that can support the Nations' economic development activities and goals.**

Great Bear Rainforest Essential Oils (GBREO) is a social enterprise that markets locally harvested essential oils and related products nationally and internationally. It's a sustainable business that utilizes culturally appropriate value-added products from the Great Bear Rainforest and provides long-term employment for CFN-GBI Nations. The overall objective is to create an economic model that enhances quality of life, while incorporating traditional sustainable practices, respecting cultural protocols and preserving the natural environment.

Key benefits for the Nuxalk and Metlakatla First Nations, the two participating communities in this social venture, are the potential for increased employment opportunities and economic development due to production of the oils, as well as the possibility for additional work to locally produce the cedar boxes that are used as gift kits.

Over the past year, the GBREO team developed and began implementing a marketing plan for essential oil products, which included extensive outreach, cold-call sales pitches and a broad email campaign to connect with potential retailers. Through this intensive process, the team developed a list of more than 300 stores that could potentially carry the products within BC.

The marketing and outreach also included attendance at an Indigenous business conference June 2019, which provided further exposure with many Canadian businesses, and a tour of potential retailers throughout Vancouver and the Lower Mainland with product distributor.



CLIMATE ACTION

Upcoming Priorities

- **Ensure there is a team of Community Climate Action coordinators within each CFN-GBI community.**
- **Develop training opportunities and curriculum for the Climate Action Peer Network, which supports decarbonization of coastal communities.**
- **Create more career opportunities in the clean energy and renewable sector throughout coastal communities.**

CFN-GBI supported the Nuxalk Nation in sharing their knowledge and expertise of energy-efficient building techniques through a video series called the Wet West Coast.



Preserving cultural and natural resources is only one aspect of ensuring a sustainable future; we must also build economies and cultivate local businesses that improve community well-being without degrading the environment.

The Climate Action program, previously called Community Energy, aims to support CFN-GBI member First Nations in achieving their energy and climate related goals, including clean energy, energy efficiency, and climate change adaptation initiatives. We work closely with coastal communities to increase clean energy production, which enhances local economies, while also reducing dependency on fossil fuels, and decreasing overall carbon emissions the likelihood of spills related to fuel transport.

CFN-GBI recently secured funding to hire climate action staff positions in eight CFN-GBI communities, and the resources to facilitate a peer-to-peer network for providing personalized training, mentorship and project support to communities.

Over the past year, local workers in Hartley Bay received dedicated training to audit and improve existing homes in the community, and several other communities received similar training that will reduce energy costs and local contributions to climate change, while improving occupant health as well.

Kitasoo/Xai'xais, Gitga'at and Nuxalk Nations have also taken advantage of in-depth energy measurement training, including the use of blower door kits and other equipment to test and measure air leakage in homes. These home-grown skills ensure economic opportunities remain in the community, providing tools to measure building energy performance before paying external contractors.

The Nuxalk Nation has continued to enhance its innovative housing project, which has built several new energy-efficient, mold-free homes in a very wet climate, while cultivating new home-building skills for local workers.

Last year, CFN-GBI helped to share the Nuxalk success story and lessons learned with other communities, including production of five educational videos and the development of a full-length APTN television show that was viewed by a broad Indigenous audience.

These efforts in climate action have already led to 14 direct jobs within CFN-GBI communities, with potential for many, many more.



STORY

Fisheries Agreement Will Get Fishers Back on the Water

Coastal First Nations recently signed an historic fisheries resources agreement with the Federal Government that will help revitalize fisheries throughout our coastal communities.

The fishing industry has always been an integral part of our economies, and healthy fish and marine ecosystems are fundamental to our economic and cultural wellbeing. However, for many years licensing regimes led to a conglomeration of licenses into investor and corporate hands without any regard for coastal communities and people.

The Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement will create conditions where First Nations can fully participate in the fisheries economy that has been so foundational to our communities in the past, and it will re-establish a small boat fleet in our communities.

By working together with the Federal Government—on a nation-to-nation basis—we will provide opportunities for our communities to fully participate in this revitalized economy, which will create new jobs and investments, increase economic opportunities and build capacity. The agreement will also generate own-source revenue, additional licenses, associated vessels and gear, processing infrastructure and support management.

The agreement will ensure First Nations have an enhanced role in collaborative governance, management and decision-making processes for fisheries throughout the North and Central Coast, and will allow for flexibility in community-based fisheries to support their long-term viability.

The seven First Nations participating in the agreement are: Heiltsuk Nation, Kitsoo/Xai'xais First Nation, Metlakatla First Nation, Nuxalk Nation, Wuikinuxv Nation, Gitga'at First Nation and Gitxaala Nation.





Photo Credit: Chelsey Ellis Photography

STORY

Coastal Shellfish: Sustainable Seafood and So Much More



Coastal Shellfish, a bustling First Nations-owned aquaculture facility in Prince Rupert, may produce loads of fresh, tasty Great Bear Scallops, but the positive spin-offs from this operation go far deeper.

“Our mission is not just to restore economies for First Nations, but to restore the ocean as well,” says Michael Uehara, Coastal Shellfish CEO and President. “It’s about building a sustainable fishery, but it’s also about food security and long-term restoration.”

Uehara says that the company’s profits will flow back to the local community, and that year-round work to run the operation will provide great long-term job prospects as well. The facility currently employs about 40 staff—70 percent of them First Nations—and the number of full-time employees is expected to grow to 80 or 100 people once it’s in full swing.

Although efforts to re-establish sustainable fisheries along the coast have been ongoing for decades, the seeds for Coastal Shellfish go back about 15 years—to the early days when CFN-GBI was still called the Turning Point Initiative. Given his extensive background in sustainable businesses, Uehara was on the committee tasked with looking into the marketability of shellfish aquaculture in the region, and he and others saw a clear need for the ethically-sourced seafood that has finally come to fruition.

Coastal Shellfish is one of three sustainable operations—along with Great Bear Rainforest Essential Oils and the Great Bear Carbon Credit Corporation—that are part of the Great Bear Business Corporation. Incorporated in 2009, the regional business entity was created by the seven-Nation alliance that make up Coastal First Nations, and was designed to help usher in a conservation-based economy throughout their ancestral territories.

“This goes right back to the historical DNA of Coastal First Nations,” says Uehara. He adds that the leaders of coastal First Nations, who spearheaded the Great Bear Initiative, recognized early on that it wasn’t enough to just protect their home in the Great Bear Rainforest through conservation—they also had to rebuild conservation-based economies to support their communities long-term.

Uehara says those leaders focused on cultivating key industries, such as ecotourism and sustainable fisheries, that would provide meaningful employment and improve community well-being. “The goal was to create non-extractive, sustainable businesses that would bring First Nations back to the ocean,” says Uehara, and to do so without depleting natural and cultural resources for the sake of future generations. These businesses, he adds, would also generate increased revenues to support future stewardship activities and efforts leading to self-determination.

True to that guiding vision, Coastal Shellfish is more than just an aquaculture operation. Not only do they seed, grow and harvest the shellfish locally, says Uehara, they also process everything in Prince Rupert—meaning more jobs for the community, and reduced shipping costs and carbon footprint as well. The innovative operation combines modern technology and best practices with the traditional knowledge of Coast Tsimshian people, who have lived and harvested in the region for millennia.

But Uehara and the Coastal Shellfish team are not content quite yet. “We’re going to take the business beyond scallops for sure,” he says. “We’re establishing an industry, not just a company.”

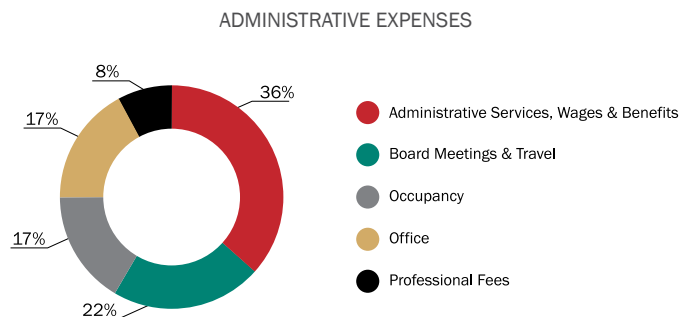
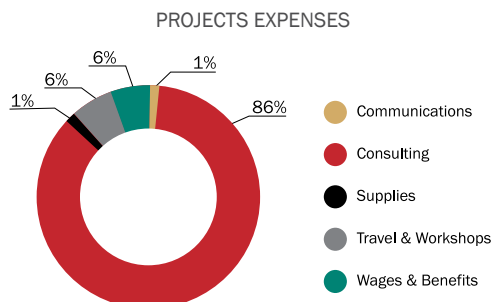
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

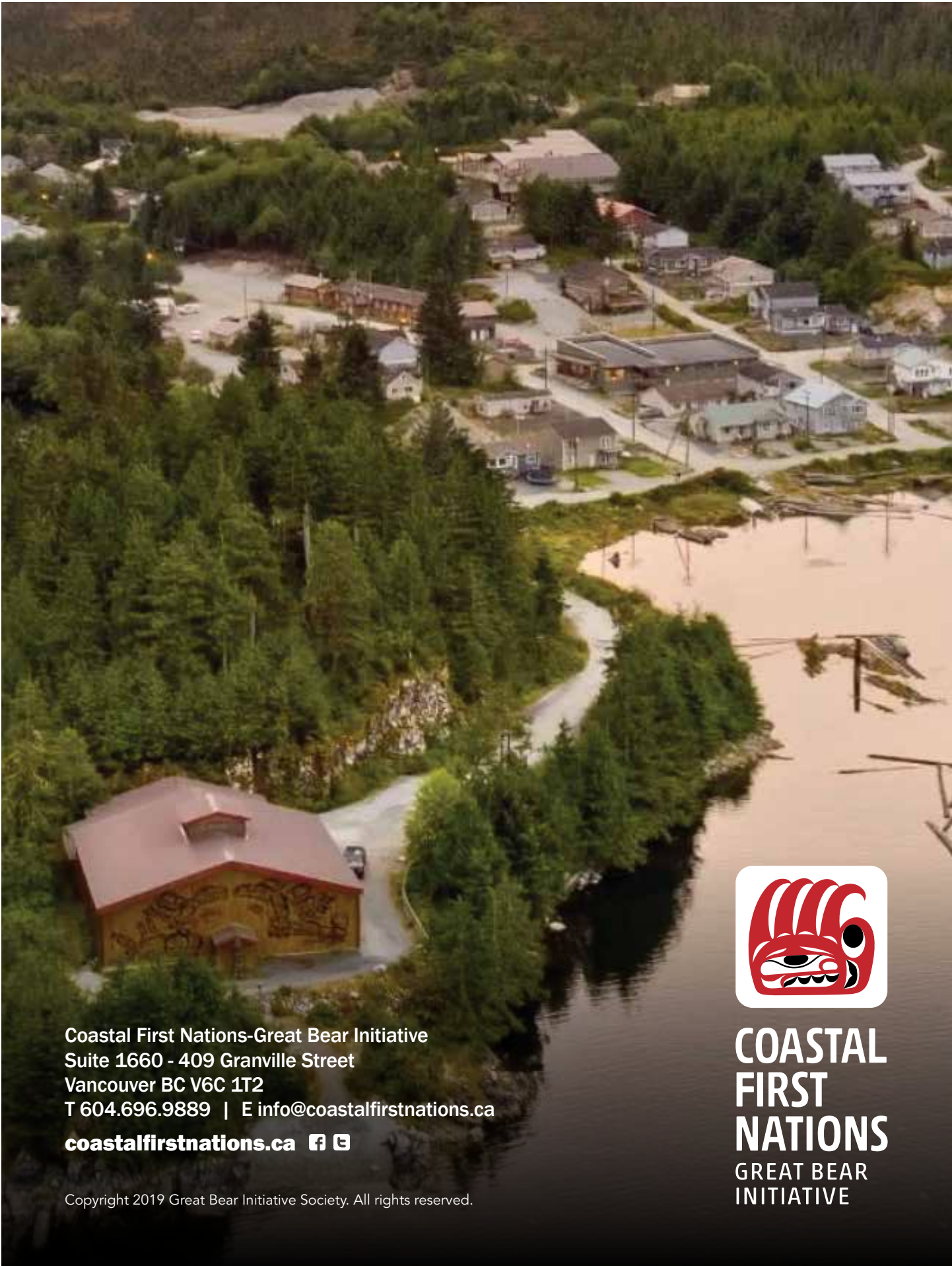
Great Bear Initiative Society Statement of Financial Position

March 31	2019	2018
Assets		
Current		
Cash	\$ 2,697,512	\$ 4,912,240
Term deposits	4,819,809	-
Grants and other receivables	424,957	1,495,247
Prepays	53,581	30,908
	7,995,859	6,438,395
Equipment	17,810	10,147
	\$ 8,013,669	\$ 6,448,542
Liabilities and Deferred Contributions		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 441,710	\$ 260,141
Deferred contributions		
Expenses of future periods	7,554,149	6,178,254
Unamortized equipment	17,810	10,147
	7,571,959	6,188,401
	\$ 8,013,669	\$ 6,448,542



Great Bear Initiative Society Statement of Operations

For the year ended March 31	2019	2018
Grants and contributions	\$ 8,519,036	\$ 5,600,600
Projects		
Communications	98,380	105,446
Consulting	6,579,971	3,936,278
Supplies	110,099	39,499
Travel and workshops	477,083	491,466
Wages and benefits	424,980	365,891
	7,690,513	4,938,580
General and administrative		
Administrative services, wages, and benefits	334,718	304,203
Board meetings and travel	202,085	112,354
Occupancy	151,540	135,920
Office	155,901	85,065
Professional fees	72,455	39,945
Amortization of equipment	10,318	29,277
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	(10,318)	(29,277)
	916,699	677,487
Deficiency of revenue over expenditures before interest income	(88,176)	(15,467)
Interest income	88,176	15,467
Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$ -	\$ -





Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative
Suite 1660 - 409 Granville Street
Vancouver BC V6C 1T2
T 604.696.9889 | E info@coastalfirstnations.ca

coastalfirstnations.ca  

Copyright 2019 Great Bear Initiative Society. All rights reserved.



**COASTAL
FIRST
NATIONS**
GREAT BEAR
INITIATIVE