



COASTAL
FIRST NATIONS
GREAT BEAR INITIATIVE

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

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.

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 is a non-profit society under the Societies Act of BC and operates under the direction of a Board of Directors, with one representative from each of the member First Nations and First Nation organizations. The Board approves an annual operational plan and budget for the organization. Our members include Wuikinuxv, Heiltsuk, Kitasoo Xai'xais, Nuxalk, Gitga'at, Gitxaala, Metlakatla, Old Massett, Skidegate and Council of the Haida Nation.

The Board of Directors meets quarterly 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 offices in North Vancouver and 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
- financial management

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gaagwiis Jason Alsop – President, Council of the Haida Nation

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

Chris McKnight – Chief Councillor, Kitasoo Band Council

Elliot Moody – Councillor, Gitxaala Nation

Robert Nelson – Chief Councillor, Metlakatla Governing Council

Bruce Reece – Chief Councillor, Gitga'at Nation

Tlhmtimut Samuel Schooner – Chief Councillor, Nuxalk Nation

Danielle Shaw – Chief Councillor, Wuikinuxv Nation

Káwázit Marilyn Slett – Chief Councillor, Heiltsuk Tribal Council

Billy Yovanovitch – Chief Councillor, Skidegate Band Council



CEO'S MESSAGE

CHRISTINE SMITH-MARTIN



Celebrating 25 Years of Coastal First Nations

A quarter of a century ago, we came together as an alliance of coastal Nations to advance our shared vision for a better future for our communities. Through dedication, commitment and hard work, we have accomplished so much together.

Our communities remain the foundation of our work, and making life better for future generations underpins everything that we do. With the understanding that the wellbeing of our people is tied to the wellbeing of our lands and waters, we have worked together to protect our coast and revitalize sustainable economies.

Our Board, staff, partners and funders have always been focused on this shared vision, and we will stay focused, together, no matter what changes happen along the way.

In the past year, we celebrated two major milestones that will make a positive impact in coastal communities for years to come. In June 2024, we announced the historic closing of the Great Bear Sea Project Finance for Permanence Initiative, which will restore marine habitats and biodiversity, enhance resilience against climate change, diversify our local economies, and preserve cultural sites across the North Pacific Coast.

Last year's renewal of the Regional Accord between CFN and BC is another major advancement in the effort to implement co-governance. As was our work in Fisheries Reconciliation—a collaborative initiative that will ensure equitable resource management and sustainable fishing practices to support livelihoods in coastal communities for generations to come.

Our communities trust us to advocate for their best interests, and this trust will carry us forward as we implement these agreements—creating new jobs and businesses that will deliver ongoing social, cultural and economic benefits directly back to our people. We have an enormous amount of work ahead of us as we enter our 25th year, but I know our extended team is up to the task. We have proven it, time and time again, and I am truly excited to work with all of you over the next year and beyond, as we continue to realize our shared vision.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Martin".

Christine Smith-Martin

CEO, Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative





IMPACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

25th Anniversary: A Quarter Century of Success

Since its founding in 2000, CFN has led the way on several groundbreaking conservation initiatives, becoming a global leader in Indigenous governance and environmental protection.

In 2024-25, we worked together with leaders from member First Nations, along with our many close partners, to make achieve substantial progress on the following initiatives.



One of the most significant conservation achievements in Canadian history, the **Great Bear Rainforest Agreement** protects more than six million hectares of rainforest through a model of Indigenous-led, ecosystem-based management. The historic conservation agreement was the world's first **Project Finance for Permanence (PFP)** initiative—a trailblazing approach to long-term ecosystem protection that is now being replicated around the world.

Launched as the world's largest Indigenous-led carbon offset project through CFN, the **Great Bear Forest Carbon Project** eventually led to the establishment of Great Bear Carbon—a 100% Indigenous-owned entity that markets and sells carbon offsets, generating long-term revenue for coastal communities while safeguarding traditional territories. This pioneering project is now recognized globally as a leading model for Indigenous-led climate finance.



After years of collaborative work from Coastal First Nations and key partners, the **Oil Tanker Moratorium Act** became federal law in 2019—prohibiting oil tanker traffic on BC's North Coast and protecting vital marine ecosystems throughout the Great Bear Sea.



The landmark **Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement** establishes co-governance of fisheries resources between CFN member Nations and Canada—a groundbreaking framework for joint decision-making that restores equitable access to marine resources and community-based fisheries, and ensures Indigenous leadership in fisheries governance.

An innovative model for marine stewardship and sustainable economic development, the **Great Bear Sea PFP** initiative provides long-term funding to Indigenous Nations to protect and sustainably manage more than 30,000 square kilometres of ocean territory—featuring a Marine Protected Area Network and Indigenous-led ecosystem-based management that will preserve the health of coastal waters for future generations.



Safeguarding Our Future: The Great Bear First Nations Foundation

For more than 25 years, CFN member Nations have worked together to protect the lands and waters of the Great Bear Rainforest and Sea, and to uphold governance, stewardship and sustainable livelihoods in our communities.

From the Great Bear Rainforest Agreements to Coastal Guardians; from restoring wild salmon to advancing Indigenous marine planning and clean energy transitions—our member Nations have shown what’s possible when we lead the work, and when long-term vision is matched with long-term commitment.

The **Great Bear First Nations Foundation (GBFNF)** is being established to carry this legacy forward, and to grow new resources for the next generation.

With a Board that includes representation from CFN member Nations, the Foundation will build on decades of Indigenous-led work across this region, mobilizing shared resources, deep partnerships and long-term investments to advance the key priorities of CFN member Nations: education, stewardship, climate action and cultural revitalization.

GBFNF will act on a mandate rooted in community and driven by our inherent responsibility to govern and steward the Great Bear Rainforest and Sea for future generations—an enduring relationship built on knowledge, care and accountability.

We invest in programs that:

- Strengthen education, capacity building, and youth leadership
- Advance Indigenous-led climate action and energy sovereignty
- Restore ecosystems and protect biodiversity
- Support intergenerational knowledge transfer and cultural revitalization

Stay Connected

As we await charitable status, please visit our website at greatbearfirstnationsfoundation.ca and sign up to receive updates, stories and ways to support Indigenous-led stewardship.

Learn More

Contact Penelope Naldrett, Development Manager, Great Bear First Nations Foundation
Phone: 604.803.4400 | Email: pnaldrett@gbfnf.ca







PROTECTING OUR COAST

OUR LAND

Upcoming Priorities

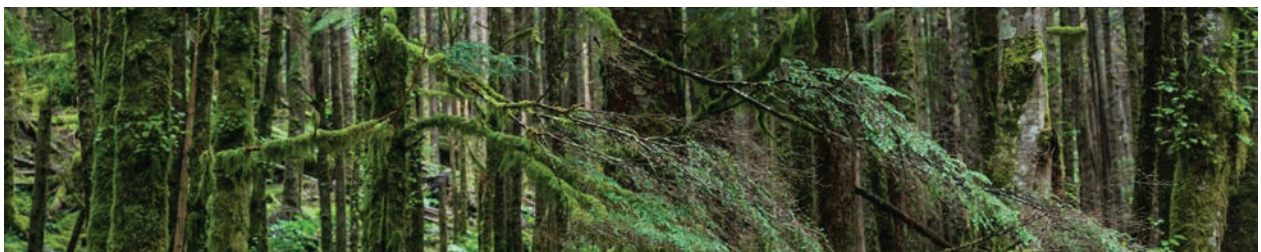
- **Engage with the BC Ministry of Forests to develop and begin implementing a forestry recovery strategy that enhances the economic benefits flowing to the Nations.**
- **Work with the BC Ministry of Forests and Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to ensure the review of the Great Bear Rainforest agreements leads to enhanced protections and stewardship of the land, and enhanced delivery of economic benefits including forest carbon credits.**
- **Work with BC to fully realize the opportunities created through the new Regional Accord, including developing a strong regional intergovernmental relationship, advancing key joint studies on transportation and climate change, and restarting negotiation of new joint decision making under UNDRIP.**

The Lands Program is a small team of policy advisors and program managers from CFN member Nations and the CFN organization who work together to support the negotiation and implementation of land and natural resource-related agreements between member Nations and BC. Key goals include: improving territorial stewardship through ecosystem-based land use planning, building community wellbeing through conservation-based economic opportunities, and protecting the cultural and ecological values of the Nations' traditional lands.

The Lands team works to implement existing agreements that recognize the Nations' right to steward lands and resources, including through shared decision-making and policy development in government-to-government forums. The team also works together to secure new arrangements and legislation where needed, for co-governance of lands and resources and advancement of lands-related economic opportunities, such as tourism and forestry.

Impacts

- Continued implementation of the Great Bear Rainforest agreements including new landscape stewardship plans, protection of cultural sites with the Indigenous Heritage Features Handbook, and enhanced forest carbon storage.
- Progress on the new CFN-BC Regional Accord, including new collaborative decision making, a regional wildlife stewardship table, initiation of regional transportation capacity and climate change adaptation studies, and continued engagement with BC to develop a forest sector recovery strategy.
- Ongoing work with BC to ensure new provincial initiatives address the Nations' interests: heritage conservation legislation, grizzly bear stewardship policies, major projects legislation and policy, and new greenhouse gas and carbon offset regulations.





STORY

Stewardship Continues to Transform the Kitisnoo Xai'xais Nation

Over the past decade, the Kitisnoo Xai'xais Nation has made great progress establishing a conservation-based economy—creating jobs in ecotourism, investing in stewardship opportunities for youth, and launching a marine protected area to protect crucial habitat.

Sierra Hall has worked in the Kitisnoo Xai'xais stewardship department since 2013, and has seen the impacts of this intentional transition throughout that time. Now in a supervisory role, Sierra initially started with the land-based youth SEAS program, and she says that shaped her future and prepared her for the work she does today.

"It's so important for us to preserve our lands and waters for our youth and future generations," says Sierra. "It gives us a sense of identity of who we are, from Klemtu, and as First Nations people. All of the things my community survives on—our traditional foods and medicines—remain strong."

Sierra currently runs the wildlife coexistence program where she educates her community on wildlife safety. Having worked for years collecting data in the field, she understands how it educates her people and others, and informs resource management decisions on all levels.

Sierra says there are countless programs and projects to support and get involved with in stewardship, but it's something people have to be passionate about and have a heart for. "There's a certain level of understanding and respect we have to work here," she says. "Respect for the lands, waters, wildlife and each other... that's what keeps stewardship so strong, valuable and pure. The growth in stewardship has transformed my little community."

OUR SEA

Upcoming Priorities

- **Renew federal Contribution Agreement funding to support implementation of the RFA and ongoing initiatives under the Oceans Protection Plan.**
- **Advance the structures, processes and strategic conversations that support Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Network implementation and site establishment.**
- **Establish MPA Network stakeholder advisory committees to support collaborative governance and engagement.**
- **Advance sustainable financing opportunities to fully capitalize the GBS Project for Finance Permanence.**
- **Explore measures to mitigate greywater and blackwater (sewage) discharge from cruise ships in the GBS.**
- **Support distributed response capacity of First Nation communities in the GBS to enable “first strike” capacity to respond to marine incidents.**

Covering more than 100,000 square kilometres, the Great Bear Sea (GBS) is among the most biologically diverse cold-water environments on Earth. For millennia, First Nations have carefully managed these marine ecosystems, and have brought that same vision, experience and traditional knowledge to modern marine use planning.

The CFN Marine team supports the efforts of coastal First Nations in leading the implementation of marine plans and related initiatives within their coastal territories, including participation on various committees and teams, and providing leadership, coordination and policy support. This includes Nation-level and regional monitoring and coast-wide planning and management initiatives with other governments and partners, such as the Marine Planning Partnership (MaPP), implementation of the Reconciliation Framework on Bioregional Oceans Management and Protection (RFA) and advancing the Great Bear Sea Marine Protected Areas Network.

Impacts

- Supported implementation of the Great Bear Sea MPA Network and site establishment by implementing co-governance agreements, collaborative governance structures and developing foundational documents.
- Rebranded the MPA Network website and worked toward developing a Network monitoring plan and strategy, including performance and reporting, adaptive management processes and outreach.
- Advanced implementation of the Northern Shelf Marine Incident Preparedness, Response and Recovery Framework and the development of four collaborative sub-regional response plans.
- Initiated a 3-year project to support decision-making tools for marine incident response that incorporate First Nations knowledge, traditions, laws and priorities.
- Shaped the development of BC's Coastal Marine Strategy with input from MaPP partner Nations, including several goals and actions that complement and build on existing collaborative initiatives.



STORY



Great Bear Sea Initiative: A Milestone for the North Pacific Coast

In June 2024, CFN, Nanwakolas Council and Coast Funds, along with the federal and provincial governments and philanthropic investors, celebrated the closing of the Great Bear Sea Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) initiative.

The Great Bear Sea PFP launches a new era of collaborative governance in marine conservation and stewardship. A total investment of \$335 million—\$200 million from the Government of Canada, \$60 million from the Province of BC, and \$75 million from philanthropic investors—ensures our communities will have access to durable, long-term funding to care for our marine territories and support sustainable economic development on the coast.

The Great Bear Sea is one of the richest and most productive cold-water marine ecoregions on Earth, home to marine life from herring and salmon to whales, dolphins, seabirds, and kelp forests. Stewarded and cared for by our Nations for tens of thousands of years, the Great Bear Sea is a source of sustenance, culture, and livelihoods for all who call the coast home.

“We believe that if we take care of the land, the land will take care of us and if we take care of the ocean, the ocean will take care of us. These are our breadbaskets,” said K’áwáził Marilyn Slett, CFN President. “Together, we have created a model that will support the conservation goals the world needs—protecting locally and globally significant ecosystems and species—and ensuring our communities have the resources, training and equipment for durable and collaborative management.”

The Great Bear Sea PFP will provide ongoing funding for the collaborative implementation of both the Marine Protected Area Network Action Plan and the Marine Plan Partnership (MaPP). These co-developed plans will support healthy fisheries, protect and conserve ecosystems and important cultural sites, enable sustainable marine economies, improve food security, and increase coastal resilience.

Coast Funds, the world’s first Indigenous-led conservation finance organization, will manage these funds on behalf of the participating First Nations. Over the next 20 years, Coast Funds expects the PFP will support more than 3,000 new jobs and 200 new businesses in marine stewardship, transportation and renewable energy, sustainable fisheries, eco-cultural tourism, and manufacturing and processing.

Our Nations also recognize the role private investors have played in reaching this important milestone. By working together with our philanthropic partners, both in Canada and across the world, we have created the model we need to ensure the viability of our coast for generations to come.

COASTAL STEWARDSHIP NETWORK

Upcoming Priorities

- Continue the external evaluation of the *Coastal Stewardship Network* program, with the final report due March 2026.
- Host the *2025 CSN Annual Gathering* in Haida Gwaii in May.
- Complete the redesign of the *Stewardship Technician Training Program* together with a Board approved post-secondary delivery partner.
- Identify and obtain Board approval for a post-secondary partner to collaborate on development and delivery of *Guardian Compliance and Enforcement training program*.
- Deliver in-person, in-community, and online training *RMS* training while maintaining and enhancing the *RMS* suite of tools.

Coastal Stewardship Network (CSN) provides programming and support to Guardian programs and stewardship offices of the First Nations along BC's North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii.

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.

Impacts

- Reviewed the *Coastal Guardian Watchmen Strategic Plan* with Stewardship Directors, confirming more than 60% of strategies complete and 20% ongoing as core CSN work.
- Strengthened Guardian capacity by delivering *Cultural Feature Inventory* training for Metlakatla, Gitga'at and Gitxaala; a *Leadership Series* in partnership with Carden Consulting; and *QGIS/Excel/RMS* training with Inlailawatash.
- Delivered a pilot *Guardian Exchange* with Nuxalk, Metlakatla and Haida Nations, fostering peer-to-peer learning and sharing of territorial, historical and cultural knowledge.
- Hosted the 2024 CSN Annual Gathering in Nuxalk territory (May 4–10), bringing together Guardians to share experiences and priorities.
- Enhanced the *CoastTracker* application through code refactoring and security improvements.
- Hosted the annual *RMS Workshop* in Vancouver, providing in-person training and gathering user feedback to guide future updates.



STORY

Guardians Gather on Haida Gwaii for the 2025 CSN Annual Gathering



At the 2025 CSN Annual Gathering, held on Haida Gwaii from May 5-8, Coastal Guardians and other stewardship staff from across the North Pacific Coast gathered to share stories, ideas and lessons learned from about their roles protecting their respective territories.

Hosted by the Council of the Haida Nation and CFN's Coastal Stewardship Network, the event featured four days of activities—including hands-on training for compliance and enforcement, discussions about working collaboratively with other stewardship agencies, plus extensive learning about Haida culture and heritage from local Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

"The gathering is a chance for Guardians to take a break from their busy stewardship work, and truly connect with each other," says Aroha Miller, Program Manager for CSN. "Building relationships takes time, but it's a vital part of this work. After the gathering, the Guardians were all reminded that they're part of a much larger family across the North Pacific Coast, and all working toward similar goals."

During the gathering, Guardians stayed at Hiellen Longhouse Village, surrounded by lush, ancient forests near Taaw Tldáaw (briefly known as *Tow Hill*), steps away from the north-facing beaches that reach out to Nee Kun Rose Spit, the location of one of the Haida origin stories. It was a perfect setting for an event that focused so heavily on Haida culture and history.

After being welcomed with speeches from Haida leadership, the Guardians made their own introductions, along with a discussion about recent accomplishments and future priorities.

On the first full day of the gathering, participants were joined by representatives from BC Parks, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), and Parks Canada for presentations at the Tluu Xaada Naay Society Longhouse, in Gaw Tlagee *Old Massett*, followed by compliance-and-enforcement scenarios, where Guardians practised dealing with conflict in challenging situations. The Guardians were able to explore their own strategies for diffusing tense situations and educating the public regarding what is (and isn't) permitted in their territories.

The next day, the group traveled to the Haida Heritage Centre at Kay 'Llnagaay, in HlGaagilda Skidegate, receiving guided tours of the spectacular 50,000-square-foot facility. It was great way for Guardians from other Nations to learn more about Haida culture and history.

The final day's activities were once again immersed in Haida culture. After weaving demonstrations in the morning, Guardians visited local carving studios to learn directly from the artists themselves, including Kihl 'Yahda Christian White and Jaalen Edenshaw.

At the end of that final busy day, the Guardians still had time to share their thoughts and perspectives about the week in a closing circle. Each participant took the time to thank the Haida hosts for sharing their culture and knowledge so willingly. That openness to share was a common theme throughout the entire gathering and reciprocated by all those who attended.

The sentiment was captured best by Yhaal Xyaalaas Curtis Brown, who attended the gathering as the CHN Protected Area Administrative Coordinator: "Growing up I was taught to sit with the Elders; to sit and listen to what they say and to hold all that in. An Elder taught me long ago that whatever knowledge you gain, you don't selfishly keep it, you share it. That's what I try to do, and that's what I see all these other Nations do too. It's what this gathering is all about, the sharing of knowledge from one person or Nation to another."

The Coastal Stewardship Network is grateful to the National Guardian Network and Environment Climate Change Canada for their generous financial support of this gathering.

WILD SALMON

Upcoming Priorities

- **Provide on-site technical support for specific fish culture activities via virtual communications and/or in-person.**
- **Provide updated status reports on the condition of the six hatcheries upgraded in Phase 1 of this project.**
- **Complete customized operations manuals for seven community hatcheries including short videos to help staff troubleshoot issues and use as a reference tool for how to operate hatchery equipment, and for some fish culture activities.**
- **Provide fish culture best management practices training opportunities for community hatchery staff (including a regional workshop, learning webinars, and opportunities to visit other hatcheries).**

The lifeblood of coastal First Nations' economies and culture for thousands of years, salmon help shape the food web of the entire North Pacific Coast—from the open ocean to freshwater rivers that reach far inland. CFN member Nations put the highest priority on stewarding and rebuilding wild salmon populations in coastal territories.

Through its Wild Salmon program, CFN is helping to advance salmon enhancement and restoration efforts across the North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii, including providing technical support and learning opportunities for community hatchery programs in CFN-GBI member Nations.

Impacts

- Coordinated and shared expertise on hatchery best practices.
- Provided on-site technical support, i.e. during fish culture activities.
- Supported Nations to troubleshoot additional infrastructure upgrades and repairs.
- Made additional fixes to the Nations' hatchery facilities in collaboration with DFO and the Salmonid Enhancement Program (SEP), including work planning for future needs.



STORY

Heiltsuk Youth Clean Their Shores



Heiltsuk Hereditary Chief láłiyasila Frank Brown, a mariner all his life, says his people have lived and died on the water and always understood the ocean as a sacred and vulnerable place.

"We live on the water; the water sustains us," he says. "We have an ancient maritime history and culture. Our people have been here since the last time the climate began to warm up... the difference is that now we're dealing with man-made climate change and the residue of the western society's marine debris that's impacting us—it's a terrible inheritance for the next generation."

Brown took part in a two-day shoreline cleanup initiative in Heiltsuk territories, where youth aged 12 to 15 and community members teamed up with partner organizations to remove up to 5,000 pounds of marine debris—fishing gear, nets, rope, polystyrene floats, plastic bottles, and more from their beaches.

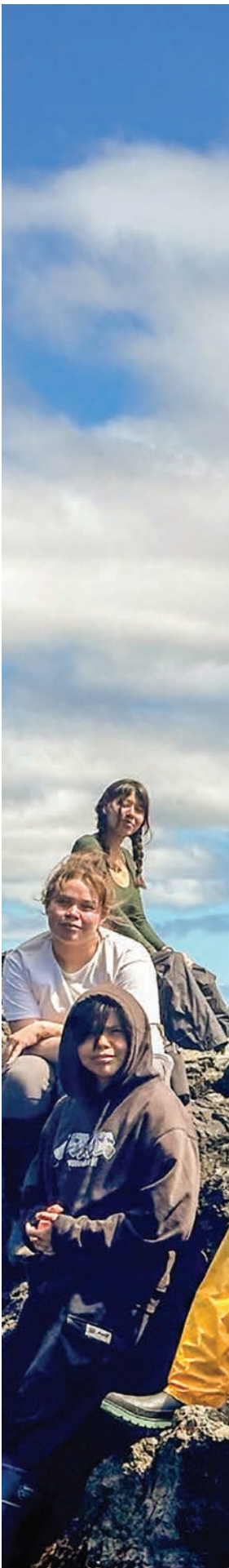
The debris they found and retrieved, if left, would pose a significant threat to the North Pacific Coast's delicate ecosystem, potentially entangling wildlife or breaking down into microplastics, where it can no longer be separated and is absorbed into everything around. The Heiltsuk shoreline clean-up initiative was a part of a larger ongoing project started by Small Ship Tourism Operators (SSTOA) members Maple Leaf Adventures and Bluewater Adventures, supported by the province through the Clean Coast, Clean Waters Initiative Fund.

William Housty, Associate Director of the Heiltsuk Integrated Resource Management Department (HIRMD), says while the majority of the debris in their waters doesn't originate from his village, the project was an opportunity to collaborate on shared values.

"This project is important because it connects Heiltsuk people, in particular youth, back to the land and water they descend from and gives them an opportunity to remove debris to help bring the land and water back to its original state," Housty says. "In doing this work, we're exemplifying Heiltsuk values of respect and reciprocity—for the land and water that give back to us in so many ways."

Brown says it's important particularly for young people and children to be involved in the work and see the impacts for themselves. "We know the ocean is our life-giver, it's what sustains," he says. "We've taken from the ocean and this is an opportunity for us to give back."

Since 2020, the Clean Coast, Clean Waters initiative has removed 215 derelict vessels and cleaned up more than 2,100 tonnes of marine debris from more than 6,400 kilometres of shoreline.







BUILDING OUR ECONOMY

CLIMATE ACTION

Upcoming Priorities

- **Secure ongoing funding for the Indigenous Climate Action Network.**
- **Publish the learning resources currently under development, including the *Training Guide*, *Network Map*, *Climate Action Guide* and *Climate Resilience* online course package.**
- **Recruit additional Climate Action Coordinators in communities that are eligible to participate in the program.**
- **Expand the program to include youth coordinators for interested communities.**

CFN supports Indigenous-led climate action by building community capacity and advancing the Regional Framework Agreement (RFA), primarily through the Indigenous Climate Action Network (ICAN), which helps member Nations lead clean energy and climate projects.


ICAN is a peer-based network that fosters collaboration, learning and leadership. Each member Nation has a Climate Action Coordinator (CAC) who guides strategic planning and implementation of local energy goals. The network provides monthly meetings and topic-specific working groups; an all-Indigenous mentorship program; annual gatherings and conference participation; and customized training for CACs.

CFN is a recognized leader in Indigenous-led community-driven climate solutions and continues to develop tools to support First Nations across BC to advance their energy and climate goals.

Impacts

- Supported relationship building and capacity development among Network participants.
- Developed and launched a robust all-Indigenous mentorship program.
- Developed and launched an Elder-in-Residence program.
- Developed and launched a heat pump maintenance training program.





STORY



BC Premier's Award Recognizes Clean Energy Innovation in CFN Nations

The 2024 BC Premier's Awards recognized a clean energy initiative that features climate innovators from across CFN member Nations. The CleanBC Remote Community Energy Strategy (RCES), spearheaded by BC's Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions, received top honours in the "regional impact" category.

A collaborative initiative, the RCES aims to drastically reduce diesel consumption in remote communities, and it has been driven in large part by the RCES Working Group, a First Nations-led working group with very strong representation from CFN member Nations. "Even though it's got diverse perspectives from all over BC, we operate as one voice," says Trent Moraes, a Haida representative and Co-Chair of the group, who is Deputy Chief Councillor for the Skidegate Band Council and also leads CFN's Shoreline Cleanup program.

Out of approximately 44 remote communities in BC that are not connected to the provincial electricity grid, most are First Nation communities that depend on diesel fuel to generate power and heat. In 2022, the RCES Working Group produced a Recommendations Report that identified actions and strategies for BC to achieve the "CleanBC goal of 80% diesel reduction in remote communities by 2030" by decarbonizing remote community electricity and heating systems.

The RCES Working Group includes four CFN member Nations (Gitga'at, Haida, Heiltsuk and Nuxalk), along with the Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis, Ulkatcho and Xeni Gwet'in Nations. Since it began, RCES has led to several community-led clean energy projects, such as the installation of energy-efficient heat pumps and large-scale solar panel installations in remote communities across the North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii.

CFN is proud to contribute to the success of the RCES initiative and will continue to play a lead role in reducing emissions through its Indigenous Climate Action Network (ICAN), which supports Indigenous leadership in climate action for communities across the province. At present there are 13 Climate Action Coordinators who drive climate action in 12 coastal communities, and the cohort is expected to grow to 24 total over the next three years.

FISHERIES RECONCILIATION

Upcoming Priorities

- Assist in the development of plans for CFN Nations aiming to launch Community Based Fisheries, with the following being considered for 2026:
 - **Prawn:** Haida, Kitasoo Xai'xais, Nuxalk, Wuikinuxv
 - **Salmon (troll):** Haida
 - **Salmon (Gillnet):** Haida, Heiltsuk, Nuxalk
 - **Groundfish:** Haida, Kitasoo Xai'xais, Gitga'at
 - **Crab:** Haida, Heiltsuk
 - **Sea Cucumber:** Kitasoo Xai'xais, Heiltsuk
- Develop a structured decision-making process for building consensus and dispute resolution, building on work already completed by the Senior Working Group.
- Continue to develop FRRA foundational communication pieces.
- Develop a terms of reference and workplan for Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Western Science subcommittee.
- Support the Joint Executive Committee and Senior Working Group in developing a FRRA vision statement and joint statement of action (mandate letter) along with DFO.

Through the Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement (FRRA), finalized in 2021, CFN member Nations began a collaborative process with Canada to ensure equitable governance of fisheries resources, including creation of the Coastal Nations Fisheries Limited Partnership to support growing access to all commercial fisheries in the region, and Community Based Fisheries to enable greater community participation in small-scale commercial fisheries.

To advance the collaborative governance dimension of the agreement, CFN's Fisheries team is building innovative mechanisms to support the Nations in implementing the FRRA, providing ongoing support for the Bio-Regional Management Council, Joint Executive Committee, and various sub-committees working together to implement the agreement.

Impacts

- Opened the groundfish Community Based Fishery for Haida and Kitasoo Xai'xais Nations.
- Worked together with Coastal Nations Fisheries and the Nations' Trust representatives to develop an implementation plan for the FRRA.
- Collaborated with other Nations and NGOs on shared policy reforms relevant to FRRA implementation, including Indigenous Knowledge Systems in fisheries management, licencing policy reforms and Salmon Allocation Policy.
- Held quarterly Bio-Regional Management Council meetings to develop a workplan for Bio-Regional and Sub-Regional Tables working on the FRRA.
- Finalized the FRRA 3-year review, established the Indigenous Knowledge sub-committee and continued to advance sub-committees for Community Based Fisheries and Communications.





STORY

Coastal First Nations and British Columbia Renew Reconciliation Agreement

In 2024, CFN and the BC government strengthened a decades-long relationship by renewing their commitment to work together through a reconciliation agreement.

The CFN-BC Regional Accord builds on the success of their 2009 Reconciliation Protocol and 2020 Pathway to Reconciliation MOU, and will continue to benefit all those who live on the North and Central Coast.

"First Nations of the north Pacific coast and the BC government have already accomplished so much together," said CFN CEO Christine Smith-Martin. "We have improved land and marine use planning throughout the Great Bear, creating one of the largest Indigenous-led carbon offset projects in the world and launching a marine protected area network that sets a new precedent for conservation and sustainable management. Our leaders look forward to working together on the CFN-BC Regional Accord, and building on the collaborative decision-making structures that continue to chart a path toward true reconciliation."

British Columbia is contributing \$1.6 million annually for implementation funding for four years to help facilitate government-to-government forums between BC and the alliance of First Nations as they work together to address shared goals related to integrated land, marine stewardship and economic revitalization in the north Pacific coast bioregion, as well as shared challenges like climate impacts and food security.

"BC and the coastal First Nations have a long history of successfully working together on marine stewardship and economic initiatives on the central and north coast," said Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. "This agreement builds on that history as we continue to work together on a strong governance framework to manage our coastal resources sustainably, so our communities continue to live off their abundance for generations to come."

The agreement includes First Nation-led sustainable economic ventures, such as shellfish harvesting, clean energy, and opportunities in coastal forestry, and reinforces CFN's conservation efforts in the Great Bear Rainforest. In addition, it further promotes CFN-led steps on improved communications and enhanced digital services and technology, benefiting the entire north Pacific coast.

SHORELINE CLEANUP

Upcoming Priorities

- **Secure multi-year, stable funding to sustain and expand shoreline cleanup operations.**
- **Develop a structured youth training and mentorship program focused on marine stewardship, debris management, safety certification and climate adaptation skills.**
- **Enhance recycling and circular-economy systems in communities, including plastics recovery, super-sack processing, and new partnerships to reduce waste-to-landfill.**
- **Expand Nation-led monitoring and research activities—especially youth-driven studies on debris return rates, seasonal trends and ecological impacts.**
- **Strengthen coastal coordination through shared standards for reporting, operational safety, vessel logistics and culturally appropriate protocol across participating Nations.**

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 Knowledge Holders, and building or renovating coastal infrastructure.

Impacts

- Coordinated multi-Nation shoreline cleanups across CFN member territories, removing large volumes of marine debris from remote coastal areas and culturally significant sites.
- Engaged youth from all participating Nations in field operations, data collection, safety training, Rediscovery Camps, and land-based learning linked to food security and cultural teachings.
- Improved operational efficiency through standardized reporting tools, vessel and safety protocols, and consistent data card systems used across all crews.
- Strengthened partnerships through the Clean Coast, Clean Waters Initiative, enabling responsible debris disposal, increased recycling capacity, and support for infrastructure needs.
- Delivered strong year-over-year participation from Nations, ensuring consistent cleanup efforts while supporting Guardian programs and community leadership in marine stewardship.



STORY

Wuikinuxv Nation Completes Major Shoreline Cleanup



During the summer and fall of 2024 and early 2025, the Wuikinuxv Nation managed to clean a good portion of the isolated and perilous coastline over a span of four separate trips.

In partnership with Rugged Coast Research Society and supported by funding from Clean Coast, Clean Waters and Price Waterhouse Coopers, the project team cleaned 96 kilometres of Wuikinuxv waters and coastline, removed over 20,000 lbs of debris and employed 20 people, 11 of which were local Wuikinuxv members.

It was not an easy undertaking, and it required the right people, partnerships, equipment, timing, and funding to complete. Due to the remoteness of the areas from Wuikinuxv village, the group had to camp out for up to two weeks at a time to complete the cleanup efforts.

"I definitely felt more of a connection with the land," said Adam Nelson, a Wuikinuxv Guardian who participated in several trips. "It was cool to get a closer look at the shorelines. All I could think of was our ancestors on these rocks and islands, and if you looked closely, you could find little artifacts everywhere."

The coastline is rough and unforgiving with huge swells crashing the shore, making the beaches incredibly difficult to access. Weather dictated the days of work, and the crew had to employ alternative methods to get their people off the sea and onto the land. It takes a competent team to take on such a daunting project, and the combination of Wuikinuxv Guardians and staff, community members, including Elders and youth, and the Rugged Coast personnel created the right mix of skill, experience and traditional knowledge required to pull it off.

"The Rugged Coast crew were amazing," said Nelson. "They are so experienced in what they do. It is quite a feat to be able to do things like that, to get on and off the boats in those conditions and walk the shorelines for hours and pick up garbage. It can be dangerous, and it's incredibly physical and demanding work."

It wasn't all about work either. The crew, isolated from the rest of the world, working incredibly long and physical days acting as a team, came to wholly depend on one another and appreciate what everyone brought to the project. "There was a lot of genuine and authentic bonding done on these trips," said Dee Walkus, a Wuikinuxv member. "It was also a beautiful experience to share our homelands with the crew from Rugged Coast Research Society. Though they were there to do a job, they took great care in what they were doing and paid necessary respect to the land, water, flora, fauna, people and our beliefs. I came out of those trips with new lifelong friends."

Collecting the debris was a challenge but moving it off the beaches was a logistical nightmare. The group had to move almost all of it by kayak back to the landing craft and ultimately into "super sacks" where it could be secured on land and hauled away by helicopter. It was sorted into recyclables and garbage, with the recyclables going to Ocean Legacy in Vancouver to be turned into products such as plastic pots or plastic lumber.

"Once we were done everything and we put it in a pile you can really get a scope on how much we found out there and how it must be on the rest of the coast," said Nelson. "It's unbelievable how much debris is out there and how much of a threat it is to the animals and everything. Every little bit helps."

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Statement of Financial Position

March 31	2025	2024
Assets		
Cash	\$ 3,797,029	\$ 6,699,106
Term Deposits	19,778,600	14,782,600
Accounts Receivable	4,746,030	4,545,761
Prepays	46,218	38,643
Property and Equipment	-	8,491
	<u>28,367,877</u>	<u>26,074,601</u>
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	2,105,186	4,001,368
Deferred lease inducements	-	3,558
	<u>2,105,186</u>	<u>4,004,926</u>
Deferred Contributions	<u>26,262,691</u>	<u>22,069,675</u>
	<u>\$ 28,367,877</u>	<u>\$ 26,074,601</u>

Statement of Operations

For the year ended March 31

2025

2024

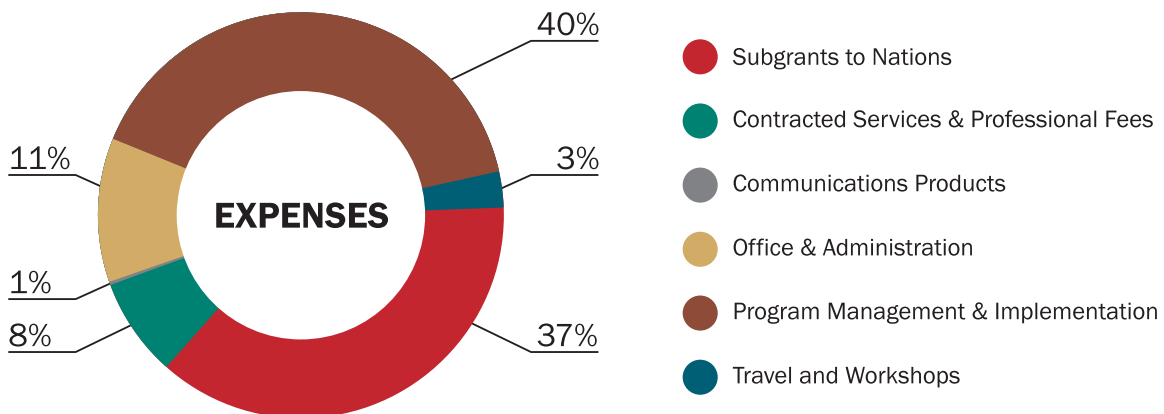
Revenues

Grants and Contributions	\$ 15,716,446	\$ 17,877,807
Interest Revenue	910,553	644,879
Rental Revenue	7,768	6,532
	<u>16,634,767</u>	<u>18,529,218</u>

Expenses

Subgrants to Nations	6,189,105	8,235,612
Contracted Services & Professional Fees	1,263,447	1,987,373
Communications Products	90,370	176,636
Office & Administration	1,890,161	1,709,763
Program Management & Implementation	6,694,677	5,928,820
Program Supplies	67,114	158,820
Travel and Workshops	439,893	332,194
	<u>16,634,767</u>	<u>18,529,218</u>

Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$ -	\$ -
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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.





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