



**COASTAL
FIRST NATIONS**
GREAT BEAR INITIATIVE

2025-2028

STRATEGIC PLAN



Acknowledgements

Thank you to the CFN-GBI Board of Directors, Staff, Stewardship Directors, and Program Managers who offered their time, wisdom, guidance, and insight to create this plan.



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Message from the President

A quarter of a century ago, Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative declared our intention to protect our lands and waters while building strong and sustainable economies for our communities.

Our mission has not changed, and this year we are celebrating the incredible accomplishments of our communities while maintaining our momentum in carrying out the goals outlined in this three-year Strategic Plan.

This plan is a real-time response to the realities of our work. We recognize the need to be responsive and reflective as we work toward achieving our goals, and the shortened time frame will allow us to be nimble while remaining true to our shared values.

Our plan was built with extensive input and direction from the lived experience of our leaders, staff, project managers, and Stewardship Directors. Each goal was revisited, meticulously explored, and reflected upon to ensure it would support and benefit the work we do for our member Nations. We are grateful to you all for sharing your knowledge.

This plan represents our unwavering commitment to support our communities as they continue to navigate a complex and ever-changing environment. Twenty-five years has proven that we are stronger together, and we are confident that the goals outlined in this plan will continue to collectively guide us towards a brighter future for generations to come.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank everyone who put in the time and effort to develop the *CFN-GBI 2025-2028 Strategic Plan*. It will help us realize what is possible as we continue to work together for the betterment of our entire coast.

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

Marilyn Slett

Chief Councillor, Heiltsuk Tribal Council
CFN-GBI President



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

As Chief Executive Officer of the Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative Society, I am so grateful to present our *2025-2028 Strategic Plan*. The work of this alliance is crucial for the health of our lands and waters and the health of our people, and this plan represents our commitment to both.

For over two decades CFN-GBI has been building on the work of our leaders; challenging the status quo and delivering real change for our communities. Together, we have navigated significant barriers to come out stronger and united. It is these experiences that bring us closer and deepen our resolve to build a better future.

CFN-GBI has enjoyed some incredible successes since our *2021-2026 Strategic Plan*. The Great Bear Sea Project Finance for Permanence initiative will provide long-term, durable funding for marine conservation and stewardship; the Regional Accord will continue to build on the successful reconciliation efforts between our Nations and the BC Government; and our Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement is helping to ensure a collaborative governance process is upheld and respected when it comes to fisheries resources.

These successes are only a reflection of the dedication, time, and planning that went into them. Signing agreements is a major milestone, however; administering each one is another matter, and we know that the long-term planning efforts detailed in this plan will support the implementation work needed to achieve the collective goals we share as Coastal First Nations.

Envisioned by our Board, for our communities, this three-year Strategic Plan charts a path forward to a better future. The successful implementation of the goals and objectives of this plan will bring us closer to achieving our shared vision of protecting our coast while building a sustainable economy.

As part of this leadership team, I am committed to advancing these goals, and I look forward to working with our leadership, staff, and project managers to carry out this Strategic Plan for our communities in authentic and meaningful ways.

Thank you for your continued support on this journey. Together, we lift each other up as we carry out this important work for our future generations.

Christine Smith-Martin
CFN-GBI Chief Executive Officer



Welcome

The *CFN-GBI 2025-2028 Strategic Plan* presents the Vision and Mission of the organization. This plan includes five high-level goals and a series of objectives for each. This plan will guide the work of the organization over the next 3+ years.

About the Plan

This strategic plan was developed under the direction of the CFN-GBI Board of Directors with input from Staff, Program Managers, and Stewardship Directors. The plan came together piece-by-piece through an iterative process including questionnaires, virtual presentations, an in-person planning session with stewardship directors and senior staff to draft the plan, and an in-person planning session with the Board of Directors to further refine the goals and objectives. This plan provides a path forward for CFN-GBI over a period of 3+ years. The plan includes a vision, an updated mission, and five high-level goals to guide the work of the organization. Each goal is supported by three to six objectives that will guide us in helping to achieve our goals.



Introduction

In June of 2000, leaders from British Columbia's North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii joined together to sign the Declaration of First Nations of the North Pacific Coast.

The Declaration, amended and re-affirmed in March 2021, contains important commitments that outline how we work together. Through the signing of the Declaration, a coast-wide alliance was born. Today, 25 years later, we remain committed to the Declaration, and to our alliance. Through this recent strategic planning process, we took time to pause and look inward; to celebrate the incredible and ground-breaking accomplishments we have achieved over the past 25 years, and to determine how we want to continue working together to ensure many more years of success.

About Coastal First Nations - Great Bear Initiative

Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative is a unique alliance that includes the Gitga'at, Gitxaala, Haida, Heiltsuk, KITASOO XAI'XAIS, Metlakatla, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv First Nations. Each Nation has its own distinct culture, governance and territory located on British Columbia's North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii. Based on the inherent rights and leadership of these member Nations, CFN-GBI promotes community self-sufficiency and sustainable economic development. Together, we work to uphold our responsibility to support the wellbeing of our communities, and to protect the lands, waters, air, and all living species in our territories

Our Organization and Plans

Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative is governed by a Board of Directors composed of one representative from each of the member Nations/Councils. These leaders meet multiple times per year to provide direction and guidance on high-level goals and activities. The Executive Committee is a smaller group of leaders who meet regularly to review administrative issues and monitor project work.

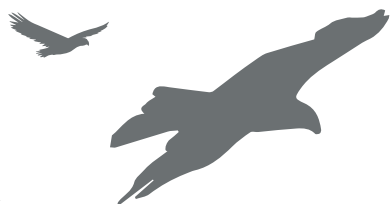
CFN-GBI has a core staff who support the Board in carrying out planning work, communications, project support, and administration. Program managers work in conjunction with staff to oversee and direct the work of CFN-GBI's many diverse programs and projects that aim to protect these unique and important territories, from seafloor to mountain top.

The Great Bear Rainforest is made up of 74,000 kilometres of rainforest and sea, stretching north to the Alaskan border and as far south as Vancouver Island. This region is made up of the unceded Traditional Territories of over two dozen First Nations who have been carefully stewarding these lands and waters for millennia.

Our Planning Context

This strategic plan exists within the broader planning ecosystem of CFN-GBI, as depicted in the graphic below. Each plan aligns with the others, and varies in depth and detail.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW



TREE-TOP VIEW



GROUND-LEVEL

**Declaration of First Nations of the North
Pacific Coast (2000)**
(The foundation of CFN-GBI)

CFN-GBI Strategic Plan

(Long-term plan, created under the direction of the Board of Directors to provide high-level direction to managers and staff)

Implementation Plan

(Delves into detail for specific action under each objective in the Strategic Plan)

**Program-specific
Workplans**
(e.g. Guardian Watchman
Strategic Plan)

CFN-GBI Operational Plan

(Annual plan that includes program-specific objectives and technical detail to provide direction to managers and staff)

**Program-specific
Workplans**

Work on the Ground

(Informed by short-term plans, created by managers and other staff members, and detailed technical information such as budgets, schedules, deliverables, guides on-the-ground implementation of higher level goals)

Our Accomplishments

Coastal First Nations - Great Bear Initiative has accomplished an incredible amount in the past 25 years since the signing of the Declaration that first brought us together. There are so many people who have played a role over the years and we acknowledge their contributions in service of this incredible work. We are proud of what we have accomplished, and see these successes as a strong base for our future work.

25
YEARS



**COASTAL
FIRST NATIONS**
GREAT BEAR INITIATIVE

**CELEBRATING
OUR MILESTONES**

2000

Declaration of First Nations of the North Pacific Coast signed by Coastal Nations

2001

Historic agreement introduces ecosystem-based forest management

2002

First Nations land-use planning process begins

2003

CFN signs protocol with BC to enhance aquaculture and commercial recreation opportunities

2005

Coastal Guardian Watchmen Network forms

2006

Strategic Land Use Planning Agreements protect ecosystems and Indigenous cultural heritage

2006

Conservancies created to prioritize First Nations' social, ceremonial and cultural uses

2007

\$120-million Coast Opportunity Funds set up for First Nations' conservation and economic initiatives

2009

CFN Reconciliation Protocol with BC gives Nations access to sell forest carbon credits

2010

1.9 million hectares of conservancies and biodiversity areas established

2010

Coastal First Nations oppose Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline

2011

Great Bear Carbon Credit Corporation launches world's largest, Indigenous forest carbon project

2011

Coastal Shellfish Corporation established

2011

CFN Clean Energy Action Plan initiated

2016

Great Bear Rainforest Act protects 85% of coastal rainforest

2016

Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline is rejected

2016

Coastal First Nations Marine Plans signed with BC

2017

CFN Reconciliation tables negotiate co-management of land and sea resources

2017

Grizzly bear trophy hunt banned in the Great Bear Rainforest

2018

Crude Oil Tanker moratorium upheld for BC North Coast

2018

Great Bear Essential Oils established

2019

Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement signed

2020

Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement is underway

2021

Christine Smith Martin joins CFN-GBI as CEO

2021

Great Bear Rainforest Agreement 5-year EBM review undertaken

2022

Great Bear Sea PFP funding announced by Prime Minister at COP 15 Montreal

2023


Great Bear Sea MPA Network Action Plan announced

2024

Great Bear Sea PFP Closing Agreements signed

2024

CFN-BC Regional Accord signed

The background image shows two individuals from behind, wearing traditional Indigenous regalia. Their garments are dark with vibrant red sections and intricate patterns of white and silver beads. The person on the left has a large, stylized red eye design on their back. The person on the right has a large, stylized red eye design on their back. The background is a clear blue sky.

The work we do as the Coastal First Nations - Great Bear Initiative is guided by the original commitments our leaders made in signing the Declaration of First Nations of the North Pacific Coast, and more recently by our work to articulate and update our vision and mission.

WHAT GUIDES US

Declaration of First Nations of the North Pacific Coast, 2000

DECLARATION

The North West Coast is a rich, and precious part of the earth. Our Cultures arise from the connection of our people with these lands and seas.

We recognize that our life source remains under the direct threat of industry and from the cumulative impacts of humanity and attendant effects on the climate.

This declaration is our commitment to protecting and restoring the natural world and in doing so, retaining our cultures while designing sustainable economies.

We live with the consequence of any abuse of our territories and the greater perils of climate change.

We commit ourselves to stand together, support each other and work together to fulfill these commitments:

- To making decisions that ensure the well-being of [our lands](#) and [waters](#).
- To retain our cultures through our tradition, knowledge, and respect of nature.
- To be respectful of each other and to all life.

PRINCIPLES

We recognize our responsibilities to future generations;

We will advance our influence through the affirmation of our Title and Rights;

Our respect for nature will continue to guide our decisions;

We seek self-reliance and will design our economies to respect our life source;

We will share our experiences and support each other to mutual advantage;

We will respect territorial prerogatives and develop protocols to formalize interplay;

Our Nations will celebrate our cultural differences while honoring our family ties.





Our 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.

Our Mission

We support the wellbeing of our communities by working collectively to protect our environment and to build a sustainable economy in our territories.

"The goal of collaborating across Nations on key priorities is essential for fostering unity and effectiveness. Keeping the strategic plan updated will help us stay aligned and focused on our mission."

- Staff Member



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1

We work in unity as a collective of strong, independent Nations.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

We make space for collaboration and coordination across Nations at regional and local scales on high-level priorities while supporting Nation-to-Nation relationship building and co-learning.

OBJECTIVE 1.2

We recognize the independence of our member Nations and support their interests, Rights and Title.

OBJECTIVE 1.3

Our Board Members are empowered and supported to articulate our organizational values, set the direction of the organization and act as informed spokespeople for CFN-GBI within their own communities.

OBJECTIVE 1.4

We engage in focused and strategic policy advocacy at international, Federal and Provincial levels in support of member Nations to advance our collective interests.

"The Nations need to continue working together to achieve bigger and better steps."

- Staff Member

GOAL 2

Respect for our lands, fresh waters, oceans, air and the interconnectedness of all life forms are incorporated into the way we exercise our decision-making authority and stewardship responsibility over our territories.

OBJECTIVE 2.1

We advance our governance and decision-making authority over lands, fresh waters, oceans, and air through reconciliation and co-governance agreements and arrangements guided by our Indigenous knowledge, values, and laws as a collective, with direction from leadership and member Nations.

OBJECTIVE 2.2

We support Nations' collaboration and capacity in advancing protection and stewardship of the lands, fresh water, oceans, air, and all life forms in CFN-GBI member territories.

OBJECTIVE 2.3

We support member Nations' resilience and independence by supporting mitigation of, preparation for, and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

OBJECTIVE 2.4

We support member Nations in rebuilding economies that align with our Indigenous knowledge, culture, and values.

OBJECTIVE 2.5

We lead in building and participate in cohesive & coherent governance structures, policy development and other processes that align with our Indigenous values and laws while upholding Nations' decision-making authority and stewardship responsibility over their territories.

OBJECTIVE 2.6

We support and advocate for Indigenous food sovereignty and sustainable community-based fisheries.

GOAL 3

Our work enhances the holistic wellbeing, skills, and knowledge of our member Nations.

OBJECTIVE 3.1

We support and advocate for capacity building, training, education, and employment that lead to Nation members, especially youth, finding lifelong careers and wellbeing.

OBJECTIVE 3.2

We support conservation-based economic development in communities.

OBJECTIVE 3.3

We support the communications and connectivity capacity of member Nations.

OBJECTIVE 3.4

We share knowledge and experience amongst our member Nations and other Indigenous Nations, organizations, and international groups or governments whose work aligns with ours.

OBJECTIVE 3.5

We support community-based pilot projects and knowledge exchanges that align with our Vision and Mission and lead to the development of best practices that could benefit all member Nations.

OBJECTIVE 3.6

We will develop a framework for improving member Nation wellbeing in a way that aligns with our Vision, Mission, and Mandate.

“Having collaboration across Nations is paramount.” - Stewardship Director

GOAL 4

Through community engagement and communications, we are connected to our member Nations.

OBJECTIVE 4.1

We meaningfully engage with communities to ensure that the values, stories, and priorities of our member Nations inform the work of CFN-GBI.

OBJECTIVE 4.2

We clearly express our organizational role, our values, and the values of our member Nations through our communications and branding.

OBJECTIVE 4.3

We celebrate and share stories about our successes and accomplishments in collaboration with the Nations.

"We need to have excellent communication with our member Nations and with the public, for our continued success, and to stay in strong alignment with community values, so that communities feel their needs are being met by CFN-GBI." - Staff Member

GOAL 5

Our organizational structure, culture, and values, together with stable funding, allow us to align our actions with our vision.

OBJECTIVE 5.1

Through a robust fundraising strategy, we ensure CFN-GBI's community programs are well-funded through stable and diversified revenue streams.

OBJECTIVE 5.2

Our strategic approach to fundraising ensures CFN-GBI's operations receive the sustainable core funding required for financial wellbeing.

OBJECTIVE 5.3

Our clear organizational structure, roles, and responsibilities ensure effective collaboration across CFN-GBI programs, projects, and sub-regional organizations.

OBJECTIVE 5.4

We are a skillful, thriving CFN-GBI team, with trusting relationships, excellent communication, and the capacity to meet our organizational needs.

OBJECTIVE 5.5

We integrate Indigenous ways of knowing and being into day-to-day operations and governance and effectively recruit and retain Indigenous staff and contractors.

OBJECTIVE 5.6

We use ongoing planning, monitoring, and evaluation of our work to ensure that our actions align with our vision, mission and mandate.

"The wellbeing of the people within the member Nations is always at the heart of everything we do."

- Stewardship Director





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