

Weaving together  
the threads of  
conservation  
and community  
wellbeing



# The Talking Stick

## NEWSLETTER OF THE COAST OPPORTUNITY FUNDS

COAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (CEDS) AND COAST CONSERVATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION FUND (CCEFF)

### Chair's Message: Picking Up Speed

As I read through this issue of The Talking Stick, I am struck by the broad range of good news stories. Best of all is celebrating with Gitga'at Nation the funding of high speed broadband in Hartley Bay—Coast Funds' 100th project!

It is immensely rewarding to hear that so many projects are under way. As a Coast Funds Board member, however, what matters most to me are the positive changes that these projects are driving in communities.

These changes take many forms. In Hartley Bay, as you'll read on page 7, businesses and community members will soon be enjoying the many benefits of a high speed internet connection to the rest of the world. Metlakatla (page 9) are taking the lead in designing a cumulative effects assessment management approach, to ensure that the community can keep new development in line with environmental and community values.

Further north, the Nisga'a are working on plans to recover moose population (page 2) and are collaborating with Westcoast Gas Transmission to undertake nearshore fish sampling at sites of interest to the Nation (page 4). These are just a few of the projects that make it a privilege to serve on the Coast Funds board.

Don't forget you can download these stories and archived newsletters and stories from the Coast Funds website if you would like to share or reproduce them in your own publication or on your website. If you have suggestions for other places we should distribute the newsletter, if you would like more copies sent to your community, or if you would like it to be emailed to you whenever it comes out, please contact [info@coastfunds.ca](mailto:info@coastfunds.ca) or call 1.888.684.5223.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this issue. On behalf of the Coast Funds Board I wish everyone the best for the upcoming holiday season.

Darcy Dobell, Chair, Coast Funds Communications Committee



**WHAT'S INSIDE** Nisga'a Conservation Fund Projects: A Moose in Time; Fishing for Answers | Hartley Bay Goes High Speed | Short Takes: An update on MaPP; Metlakatla: cumulative effects assessment; Nanwakolas Round Table | Coast Funds News



# A Moose in Time

A PLAN IS IN PLACE TO RESTORE THE MOOSE POPULATION IN THE NASS VALLEY  
TO ITS FORMER GLORY.



## Project Stories

SINCE COAST FUNDS WAS CREATED, THE PARTICIPATING FIRST NATIONS HAVE EMBARKED ON A WIDE RANGE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION PROJECTS, FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION CREATION TO CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANNING. PROJECTS UNDER WAY INCLUDE FORESTRY, FISH PROCESSING, TOURISM BUSINESSES AND ACCOMMODATION, INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, FEASIBILITY STUDIES AND MORE.

In our cultural practice in the Nass Valley,” says Harry Nyce Sr., Director of Fisheries and Wildlife for the Nisga’a Lisims Government, “It is traditional to have winter feasts and stone moving ceremonies that honour our loved ones that have passed. What we call ‘Nisga’a stew’ is served to the witnesses and guests. Moose meat is absolutely prized for the stew.”

If you take a look at the Nisga’a [Cultural Calendar](#), says Nyce, stone moving ceremonies take place almost constantly through the winter. “So having access to a supply of moose meat is very important to us. It’s also a staple part of the diet of many of our people who rely on it for their home use. It’s organic meat. You can understand why it is so highly valued.”

And that, says Nyce, is why the fact that the moose population in the 16,000 km<sup>2</sup> Nass Valley has plummeted in the last fifteen years—from an estimated 1600 animals in 2001 to potentially fewer than 500 in 2011—is such a problem.

Predation and overharvesting have been two of the key culprits, and tighter harvest controls put in place in 2007 were doing nothing to stop the falling numbers of moose, let alone reverse them. Illegal harvesting persisted despite attempts to regulate hunting; and hungry wolves and bears added to the problem. “It wasn’t just that the demand for moose meat was much greater than the remaining supply. Things had reached a point where the moose were at risk of irreversible decline. We had to do something.”

That something is the [Moose Recovery Plan for the Nass Wildlife Area](#): a comprehensive plan to tackle the challenges faced by Nass Valley moose, and to support the recovery of the population.

## Planning for the plan

Under the terms of the Nisga’a Final Agreement, the Nisga’a Lisims Government (NLG) exercises a number of responsibilities, including wildlife conservation and management in the Nass Wildlife Area. As part of that function, in cooperation with the provincial government, annual wildlife management plans are produced for the area.

Recognizing there was an urgent need to take action toward moose recovery, NLG chose to utilize part of its Coast Funds conservation allocation moneys to develop and implement a plan to research the causes of the decline in moose numbers, and develop a set of strategies to help restore the population in the Nass Wildlife Area to sustainable numbers.

Working with consultants LGL Limited, a crew of eight Nisga’a community members and several provincial government staff used helicopters to do grid surveys and radio-tag moose. “It was a huge project, as you can imagine,” says Nyce. “The Nass Wildlife Area is steep and mountainous. There are a number of swampy areas that are prime moose habitat up and down the Nass River and its tributaries and we had to cover it

all." One thing that was hard to take, says Nyce, was seeing from the air the impact of extensive historical logging in the area: "The extent of it is horrendous. The animals are being literally cornered, sheltering in the remaining tree cover where they can."

The recommendations coming out of the planning process, all of which have been put into the plan, were wide-ranging. They include educating hunters and the public on the importance of moose conservation and about the necessary management techniques being adopted, and regulating levels of harvest, timing, and access to the area. Enforcement capability needs to be high, to reduce illegal harvesting, and some way to manage predation needs to be considered. Habitat must be maintained, and increased if possible. Last but not least, regular monitoring of harvesting and populations is fundamental, as is annual reporting on the outcomes and success of the plan.

## Short term pain for long term gain

For the 2014–2015 winter season, the legal hunt, by Nisga'a hunters only, is limited to 25 bull moose. That's the same as last year; the real change, says Nyce, is a new limited season from December 1 to January 15. "That's significant because it will really limit access to the animals," says Nyce.

"It's based on information we received during community consultations over the last couple of years," he continues. "The window used to be a lot longer but this is also following a pattern that the provincial government has set, reducing their season from more than two months to just one week in October

now. So we're following suit, but our season is based on what our communities have told us will work best, and the provincial government supports that."

Nyce admits not everyone is pleased about the new restrictions. "We do have some disgruntled members, but that's to be expected," he says. "We realize this makes it more difficult. It isn't just the limited season, access at that time of year is harder because there is a lot more snow. But this isn't about the hunters so much as the moose. We have to do this for the moose population to have a chance to grow again. It's short term pain for a few for long term gain for everyone."

## The end goal

Population recovery targets have been set by balancing social expectations—the reality that moose meat remains a prize and always will, and that Nisga'a people still want to serve Nisga'a Stew at stone moving ceremonies—with Nisga'a's ecological values based on maintaining healthy sustainable wildlife populations in the Nass Wildlife Area.

The goal is to see 1,000 thriving moose in the area within seven years. That means a 10% increase each year, a figure that Nyce says is seen as feasible if the plan is rigorously implemented.

Success, concludes Nyce, depends in part on the collaboration of everyone involved in the Nass Valley and beyond: the provincial government, resource industries and neighbouring communities. "I hope that others will take similar action at some point," he says. "It's for the sake of the moose, in the end."



**"IN OUR CULTURAL PRACTICE IN THE NASS VALLEY," SAYS HARRY NYCE SR., DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE FOR THE NISGA'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT, "IT IS TRADITIONAL TO HAVE WINTER FEASTS AND STONE MOVING CEREMONIES THAT HONOUR OUR LOVED ONES THAT HAVE PASSED. WHAT WE CALL 'NISGA'A STEW' IS SERVED TO THE WITNESSES AND GUESTS. MOOSE MEAT IS ABSOLUTELY PRIZED FOR THE STEW."**

# Fishing for Answers:

## NISGA'A'S NEARSHORE FISH SAMPLING PROGRAM



Wild salmon have sustained people here for countless generations," observes Nisga'a Fishery Manager Edward Desson. "Everyone smokes, dries, cans and cooks salmon. It's such a big part of their lives."

That's in part why the Nisga'a Nation's Fish and Wildlife Department (NFWD) has been undertaking world-class fisheries research on the Nass River for more than 22 years. There isn't much that Nisga'a people don't know about adult salmon stocks in the Nass and its tributaries. But until this year, says Desson, next to nothing was known about what happens to juvenile salmon when they leave the river mouth and venture out to sea for the next phase of their life cycle.

It's notoriously difficult to track salmon once they leave the freshwater environment for the ocean. But in the face of expanding industrial development pressure in the region, it has become increasingly important to the Nisga'a to improve their ability to address conservation concerns by understanding as much as possible about the early life history of the salmon.

Aware that Westcoast Connector Gas Transmission Ltd. (WCGT) was beginning to evaluate marine routing options for delivery of natural gas from northeastern British Columbia to an LNG Facility at Prince Rupert, and with Coast Funds conservation moneys available, in May this year Nisga'a decided to utilize the funds to collaborate with WCGT in undertaking a nearshore fish sampling program at sites of interest to both parties. "There's still a lot of work to do on data and genetic analysis," says Desson, who has overseen the program, "but we've managed to complete all the field work within the 2014 weather window, so that's excellent."

### Netting information

The main objectives of the research project are to determine distribution, ocean-entry timing, growth and diet of juvenile salmon in the nearshore and estuarine parts of the Nass Marine Area (in particular, the waters of Portland Inlet, Observatory Inlet and Portland Canal, where the Nass, its tributaries and adjacent river systems empty out).

Understanding that information, explains Desson, will help the NFWD improve its management strategies for the salmon. "For example, we'll be able to identify important habitats for stocks that are currently of conservation concern, like Nass Chum, which is a depressed stock. Then we can do more work to ensure those habitats are well-protected.

To obtain the necessary data, NFWD conducted beach seine and purse seine sampling. "Beach seining involves having two people pulling a fine mesh net for a specified distance along the shoreline before hauling it back in so we can sample the fish," Desson makes it sound easy. "Oh, it can be quite difficult depending on the conditions," he laughs. "Our people certainly got pretty wet, wading up to their chest sometimes in fairly big waves, trying to walk over uneven rocky terrain that was obviously slippery. We encountered the whole gamut of conditions."

Purse seining wasn't necessarily easier in rough conditions. "Again, you are using a fine mesh net strung between two boats. The smaller boat runs the next out in a big circle, and then the bottom of the net has to be pulled together, or pursed, and then hauled in over the side of the bigger boat. That can be pretty hard on the back, especially when the weather isn't cooperating!"



"WILD SALMON IS THE BEST SOURCE OF FOOD IN THE WORLD AND  
THERE'S NO BETTER PLACE TO FIND IT THAN IN THE PRISTINE NASS.  
WE HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO PROTECT THE FISH."

—HARRY NYCE SR., DIRECTOR, FISH AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT,  
NISGA'A LISIMS GOVERNMENT



## Building capacity in fishery management

In 2013, the NFWD boasted eight biologist/project managers and 24 technicians working on 26 projects. A third of the staff have been with the department for more than 15 years, and several more than 20 years. That's a lot of talent and experience.

"It's very exciting to witness how much knowledge and understanding has been built up in this Department since its inception," says Desson, who joined the team in early 2014. "There's a huge amount of expertise in-house to undertake fishery management, especially adult fish assessment."

What the nearshore fish sampling program will do, he continues, is add important capacity in different capture techniques and assessment. "That's a skill that can now be expanded on and used again in the future for different purposes. We're building significant new capacity to sample and assess juvenile as well as adult salmon, in a marine environment rather than just freshwater situations."

The nearshore sampling project involved four Nisga'a technicians and crew members on the seine boats, as well as two NFWD biologists working in partnership with biologists from supporting consultants Archipelago Marine Research Ltd. and LGL Ltd. "In addition, our biologists are undertaking some preliminary analysis."

The Nisga'a team, says Desson—who has worked with First Nations all over Canada—is also "extremely dedicated and hardworking. I've been so impressed with what I see happening here. There's an immense respect for the fish, so this becomes more than just a job, it's doing something they can give back to the salmon and to the community." The exciting part, he adds, is the enthusiasm to be involved: "We have dedicated older people who've been working here for a long time but we also have the young ones who are so eager for the chance to learn new skills. It's wonderful to be part of it."

## A salmon people

Desson says the enthusiasm isn't limited to the work team. He's been impressed by the extent of the technical knowledge displayed by community members who show a keen interest in the scientific work being undertaken by NFWD.

That's not surprising, however, he adds. "This project is so important. This is an area where so little has been known about the wild fish. Gaining this information is meaningful not just in conservation terms, but it's also vital culturally and socially."

"As Harry [Nyce Sr.] has pointed out," concludes Desson, "this Nation lives and breathes the wild salmon of the Nass."

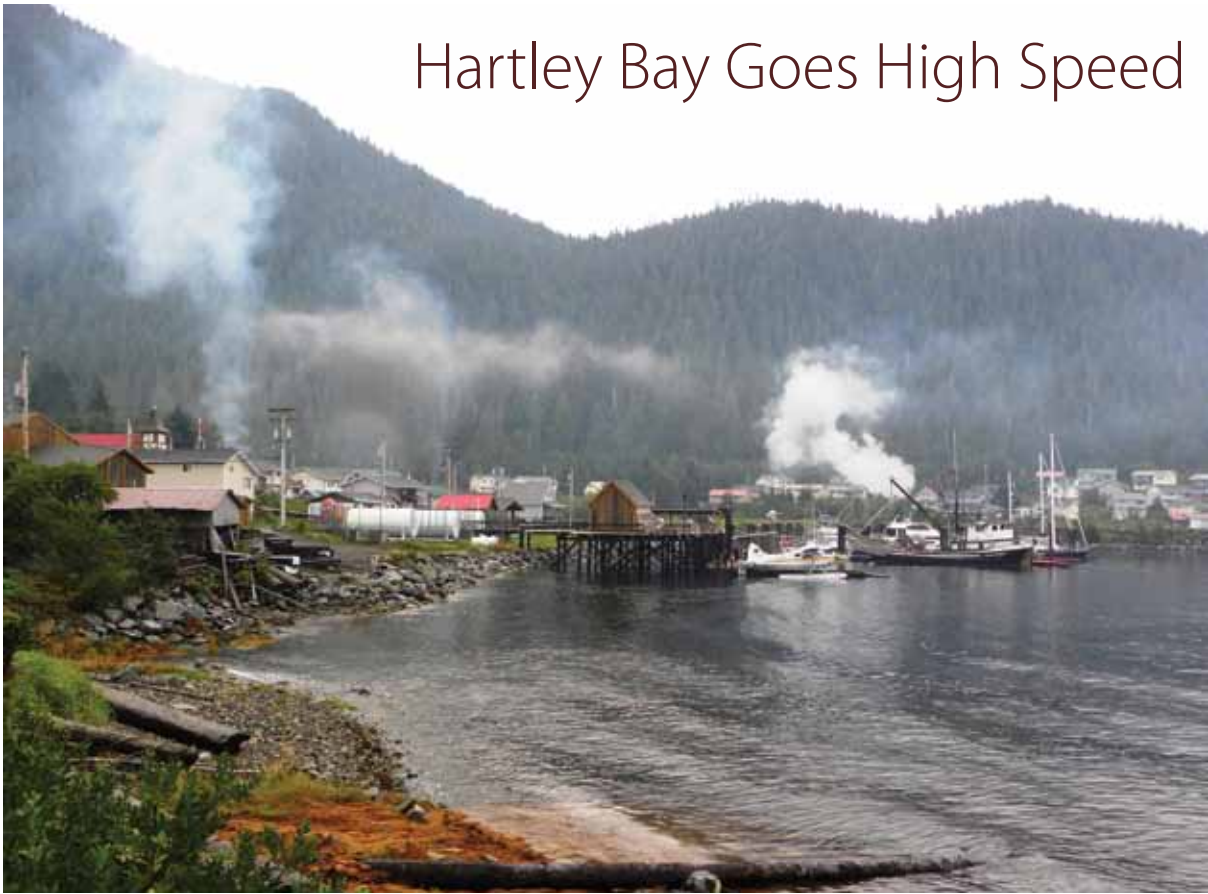
"WE'LL BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY IMPORTANT HABITATS FOR STOCKS THAT ARE CURRENTLY OF CONSERVATION CONCERN, LIKE NASS CHUM, WHICH IS A DEPRESSED STOCK. THEN WE CAN DO MORE WORK TO ENSURE THOSE HABITATS ARE WELL-PROTECTED."

—NISGA'A FISHERY MANAGER  
EDWARD DESSON





# Hartley Bay Goes High Speed



Using a portion of its economic development allocation in combination with a financial contribution from the All Nations Trust Company, Gitga'at First Nation is currently in the process of installing high speed broadband at Hartley Bay. For the first time, says Chief Executive Officer Ellen Torng, "People and businesses in Hartley Bay will be able to enjoy dependable, effective internet just like everyone else."

Until now, the existing system has suffered from low connection speeds and frequent failures due to weather conditions. The lines were often blown down in storms or heavy rain, a regular occurrence in the small coastal community.

That's been a major inconvenience, says Torng: "Not only do you lose connectivity when you need it most, but it's also meant that the administrative offices and businesses within the community haven't been able to function as effectively as they could. The First Nation and individual businesses here can't rely on internet connectivity to support economic development initiatives."

Now, internet connective equipment will be installed and cabled to every building in Hartley Bay. The costs of maintaining the new system will be significantly lower than the outdated system it is replacing, and will enable community business and

entrepreneurs to market their goods and services online and use point of sale Interac systems to receive payments.

Torng says the community stands to reap extensive economic benefits from having secure, reliable and fast internet service available: "We have a fuel station here with a small convenience store, now we can provide electrical services as well to marina users. We're planning an internet café, and of course there are many tourism-related businesses here—accommodation, guide services, boat charters and so on that will be able to receive bookings and payments online, which is so convenient for them and for the people who want to use their services."

"We're expecting significant increases in revenues coming into the community as a result of the ease with which people will be able to provide services and make sales," continues Torng. "On top of that, Telus, the RCMP and BC Hydro all will be buying internet access from Gitga'at, as will all the other government offices in the community."

Apart from the obvious economic advantages, adds Torng, there are many indirect benefits of the new system: "We won't see so much lost or down time when the internet goes out, as we do now. That's significant. We anticipate online medical conferencing which may reduce the need for members to travel

## FIRST NATIONS CONNECTIVITY IN BC

High speed internet for Gitga'at First Nation has been made possible in part thanks to The Pathways to Technology project, helping to establish reliable, high-speed Internet access for all First Nations communities in British Columbia.

In 2009 \$40.8 million was granted to the All Nations Trust Company (ANTCO) by the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada for the purpose of providing financial stewardship and project management for the Pathways to Technology project to ensure broadband connectivity to all 203 First Nations in BC. Reliable high-speed Internet access for all First Nations in B.C. is the long-term goal. It's recognized as a priority by the First Nations Leadership Council, the Premier's Technology Council and the Province in the Transformative Change Accord, which identifies connectivity as fundamental to closing the socio-economic gap between First Nations and other British Columbians. Broadband connectivity is also a key priority for the First Nations Health Council as part of their efforts to create a fully integrated First Nations clinical telehealth network.

Communities that receive either enhanced connectivity or first-time connectivity will reap benefits in many areas, says Pathways, including health, education, economic development, cultural development, land management, community growth and infrastructure monitoring.

"THIS IS A REAL STEP FORWARD FOR THIS COMMUNITY. THIS REMOVES A SIGNIFICANT BARRIER THAT'S BEEN STANDING IN THE WAY OF ACCESS TO SO MANY GOOD ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR GITGA'AT PEOPLE."

—ELLEN TORNG, CEO



out of the community for treatment. We will be able to provide job and business training and education here and save travel costs on that too."

For the Gitga'at youth, the fact that the school will be equipped with high speed internet means the students can continue and expand e-learning courses not realistically available to them right now. "That will broaden their career choices. Technology in the school is vital if students are to be industry-ready for the trades in order to avail themselves of potential jobs projected in the Pacific Northwest," she observes.

"This is a real step forward for this community," concludes Torng. "This removes a significant barrier that's been standing in the way of access to so many good economic opportunities for Gitga'at people."



# Short Takes

## Update on the MaPP process

In the July issue of its newsletter, "Aweenak'ola," Nanwakolas Council covered the marine planning process that has been underway for B.C.'s Central and North Coasts (you can read the newsletter at [www.nanwakolas.com/sites/default/files/NANWAKOLAS-newsletter-april2014-web.pdf](http://www.nanwakolas.com/sites/default/files/NANWAKOLAS-newsletter-april2014-web.pdf)).

In 2011, with funding provided by the [Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation](#), the Nanwakolas Nations helped create the [Marine Planning Partnership for the North Pacific Coast](#) (MaPP for short), a partnership between eighteen First Nations and the provincial government for the development of marine plans.

By the end of 2013, utilizing part of the Moore Foundation funding, each of the Nanwakolas Nations had completed their own comprehensive individual plans for their own marine areas, and a document called the Ha-Ma-Yas had been created to integrate the individual documents into a regional plan reflecting their collective vision, common values and principles for marine management.

The Ha-Ma-Yas was then used as to develop the joint provincial/Nanwakolas Northern Vancouver Island (NVI) plan with the provincial government. The views of third party stakeholders like recreational fishing guides and kayak tour operators were also gathered, with the final content of the NVI plan determined by Nanwakolas and the provincial government.

The NVI plan, which is in its final stages, will set the scene for future decision-making on use and management of the Northern Vancouver Island marine environment. Ultimately, along with three other sub-regional plans, it will become part of a regional framework for marine management.

Locally, each Nanwakolas Nation will use their own detailed marine plans to inform their discussions with the provincial government and tenure holders seeking their agreement on use and management of marine resources in their areas. The Ha-Ma-Yas marine vision will guide the Nanwakolas Nations as they come together to discuss issues of common regional interest and implement the NVI plan.



Photo supplied courtesy of Province of B.C.

Boat trip into the NVI marine plan area with a group to see the zoning developed in the planning process. At front: Aimee Warren and Erica Haunch (Nanwakolas staff); middle: Dallas Smith (President, Nanwakolas) and Meaghan Calcari Campbell (Moore Foundation); back: Tlowitsis Chief John Smith, Da'naxda'xw Awaetlala First Nation hereditary Chief William Glendale, Namgis hereditary Chief Bill Cranmer.

## Metlakatla's Cumulative Effects Assessment and Management (CEAM) Project

In August Metlakatla First Nation began Phase 1 of its new CEAM project: the design and creation of a Metlakatla-specific approach to CEAM in its territory.

As anyone who has visited Prince Rupert lately knows, there is a lot going on in and around the coastal city. Many industrial and commercial projects are under way already, with more on the horizon. In response, using allocation moneys contributed by the Coast Funds Conservation Fund in addition to its own funds, Metlakatla is undertaking a six-month process to develop its own CEAM approach to assessing the impacts of development on Metlakatla values.



By the end of January next year, Metlakatla hope to have created a “Values Foundation,” or set of specific priority values for the territory, designed an appropriate Metlakatla-based approach to CEAM, and be in a position to begin implementing the approach.

The goal: by identifying priority values and a mechanism to monitor how those values are being affected by development activity in the region, Metlakatla will be in a good position to make informed decisions about what projects it wants to support, mitigation measures, and strategic planning, amongst other important decisions. Watch for an update on this important work in a future issue of The Talking Stick.



## Haisla acquires strategic property

On August 15, Coast Funds Executive Director Dave Mannix (left) presented Councillor Taylor Cross of the Haisla Nation Council (right) with a cheque to fund the acquisition of a strategic property in downtown Kitimat. The property will be the site of a future commercial and residential development.



## Nanwakolas Round Table

On July 21, Nanwakolas Council signed an MOU with Coast Forest Products Association (its Board of Directors include the CEOs of Western Forest Products, InterFor, Paper Excellence Canada, and AA Trading). The MOU commits to greater skills training and capacity building for First Nations communities, creating more jobs for the region and giving more certainty to industry, and allowing more long term investment in operations that will keep mills on Vancouver Island operating.

Coast Funds contributed funding for a round table the same day entitled: "The New Relationship . . . A look back and a look forward." Speakers included former Cabinet Minister George Abbott, Haida Negotiator Miles Richardson, and Global BC's Keith Baldry. Dr. Ralph Nilson from Vancouver Island University moderated.

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## Other News

### Nisga'a Lisims Government wins 2014 Cando Award

Congratulations to Nisga'a Nation for winning the 2014 Cando award in the Community category. Cando (Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers) is a national Aboriginal controlled, community based, and membership driven organization that has been instrumental in facilitating partnerships with EDOs, academics, Aboriginal leaders and senior corporate and government representatives.

In 1995, the Cando Economic Developer of the Year was created to recognize and promote recent or long-standing Aboriginal economic development initiatives throughout Canada in three categories: Individual EDO, Community, and Aboriginal Private Sector Business. Nisga'a Nation won for work done to develop an economic development strategy. You can see a video at: <http://youtu.be/8Ajue9YZpFk>.



### Documentary on Great Bear Rainforest

A Coastal First Nations led collaboration with researchers from leading academic universities provides remarkable insights into the importance of bears and other keystone species to the ecosystems of the Great Bear Rainforest. You will see some familiar faces at: <http://vimeo.com/104956774>.

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### Art Sterritt wins prestigious award

Congratulations to Art Sterritt, winner of the 2014 Stanford Bright Award. The Stanford Bright Award recognizes unheralded individuals who have made significant contributions to global sustainability. Art's award is for the critical role he played in establishing and protecting the Great Bear Rainforest: <http://youtu.be/JMZtjwqA5ks>.

## Coast Funds News

### New staff at Coast Funds

In September we welcomed three new staff to Coast Funds. Robin Poirier, Project Analyst, is responsible for reporting and measuring impacts of Coast Opportunity Funds' conservation and economic development projects. Andrea Harrison is the Accountant and Board Administrator. Gráinne Mathews joins us as Administrative Assistant. You can read more about Robin, Andrea and Gráinne here: [www.coastfunds.ca/about-coast-opportunity-funds-staff](http://www.coastfunds.ca/about-coast-opportunity-funds-staff).



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## Send us your stories

If you have stories to share, project photos, ideas about Coast Funds projects and community activities, or other interesting information, we want to know. We'll publish stories and photos on the website and in this newsletter whenever we can. You can send them to us any time at [communications@coastfunds.ca](mailto:communications@coastfunds.ca).

## Coming Up Next

In January we will feature the collaborative work that has taken place between Nuxalk Nation and the University of British Columbia on culturally driven forest management, utilization and values, other updates on the many projects being undertaken by Coast Funds' Participating First Nations, and what to look forward to in 2015.

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