



# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

## NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 3

### VISION

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*“We, the Musqueam, will work together to take care of our territory so the following generations will know how to be self-reliant. We will remember our own history and as well, use our traditional teachings to take care of everyone and everything on this earth”.*

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Happy March Everyone!

On behalf of the Environmental Stewardship Department, I hope everyone has been having a pleasant winter, despite the cold, short days. The Environmental Stewardship Department is working hard to continue being a representative voice for Musqueam and their lands, water and territory. For many, spring is an uplifting time with longer days, warmer weather, and nature blooming back to life. We hope you can all take advantage and enjoy the beauty spring has to offer. Our team appreciates feedback and comments on how we can best serve the community. Do not hesitate to reach us with questions, comments, or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Yeganeh Asadian, M.Sc., P.Ag., Environmental Stewardship Manager

## IMPORTANCE OF INDIGENOUS-LED CONSERVATION



Like many countries, Canada has conservation targets and has expressed its commitment to protecting 30% of its waters and land by 2030. Currently around 13.9% of Canada's oceans and 13.5% of its land is protected. Historically, conservation was led by either the federal or provincial governments, with little to no input from the Indigenous Peoples living on the land. Indigenous People were forced off the land and their access to natural resources was severely restricted. This method of conservation, sometimes called fortress conservation, attempted to create untouched pristine wilderness as it was thought that this was the best form of conservation. Not only did this method of conservation infringe on Indigenous Rights, it fails to incorporate something Indigenous Peoples have known for millennia, that we can use and draw resources from the land in a sustainable way without damaging the environment. In contrast,

Indigenous-led conservation relies on Indigenous People living on, and managing the land to achieve conservation goals. It allows thousands of years of knowledge to be incorporated into decision making, which often makes Indigenous-led conservation efforts more effective.

Indigenous participation in, and in many cases Indigenous-led, conservation is viewed by many experts as being crucial to Canada achieving its desired conservation targets. Indigenous groups often push governments to act more quickly than they would otherwise, helping to increase the pace of conservation. Currently, dozens of Indigenous Conserved and Protected Areas (IPCAs) have been proposed by Nations across the country. While these need approval from provincial and/or federal governments to be legally enacted, a report from the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) found that approving these IPCAs would almost double the amount of water and land protected, from 13.9% to 30.4% and 13.5% to 29.3% respectively. Involving local Nations also allows the most biodiverse and ecologically important sites to be chosen. This helps to maximize the benefits of conservations while allowing for the efficient use of limited resources.

Greater emphasis has been placed on Indigenous-led conservation in recent years along with increased funding, though there is still more work to be done. In December, the federal government announced \$800 million over 7 years to support 4 Indigenous-led conservation initiatives that could protect 1 million square kilometers. This funding will come through a new innovative funding model being used in conservation called Project Finance for Permanence (PFP). The World Bank defines PFP as an approach “that secures important policy changes and all funding necessary to meet specific conservation goals of a program over a defined, long-term timeframe with the ultimate aim of achieving the ecological, social, political, organizational, and financial sustainability of that program”. Based on an approach common in finance, it brings together all stakeholders around ambitious long-term conservation goals agreed to by all parties. It puts all the elements needed for long-term success, including governance and financial tools, together right from the beginning. It also involves all stakeholders, which concentrates resources, helping to achieve more than the individual stakeholders could individually. This unique funding model is designed to provide sustainable and accessible funds for community-led conservation projects. PFP attempts to create a long-term conservation model where economic growth comes from environmental protection. For example, through sustainable eco-tourism. This differs from previous methods of conservation which are often at odds with economic development. PFP does not attempt to prevent any changes to the area, rather it attempts to ensure the sustained health of resilience of the area over time. In this way PFP is a holistic approach which creates an adaptive and resilient framework to manage unforeseen threats and challenges. While they differ slightly from one another, PFPs all share key components, which include:

- A detailed long-term conservation plan, including closing conditions (i.e. the policies, governance arrangements, and other conditions) agreed to by all the parties.
- A robust financial model, which includes long term cost estimates and upfront commitments for the necessary funding.
- Clear disbursement conditions outlining how conservation results, and other goals, must be met for funding to be distributed each year.

These key components illustrate how PFP gets its name. Finance and conservation are directly linked, functioning to provide strong financial incentives for permanent conservation, sustainability, and environmental protection.

The most well-known example of this type of conservation in Canada is in the Great Bear Rainforest, which was championed and led by local First Nations. All stakeholders jointly created the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement, which will help protect 85% of the forest. It also raised \$120 million dollars through private and public means. Half was put into a conservation endowment fund and the other half into an economic development fund. Dallas Smith of Tlowitsis Nation, who helped create the agreement, says that “this model put more tools in our hands to actually manage the areas and develop our own conservation-based economy, whereas other traditional models were simply just about the protected area itself, not about enhancing First Nations opportunities”. For the 27 Nations involved it creates a stable source of funding. A formula was created to establish how much funding each community could receive. A community is entitled to receive more money if it is conserving a larger piece of land. Smith explains that “each of the 27 First Nations has a certain allocation that is theirs, that they can apply for on a yearly basis”. This money can be used for eco-tourism, stewardship operations and other initiatives that help achieve conservation objectives.

While the PFP model is becoming increasingly common, and can be very effective for conservation over a broad area, Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) are the more common form of Indigenous-led conservation. These are either led by Indigenous governments or involve the co-management of a protected area with a government ministry, like Parks Canada, to achieve a shared vision of conservation. Jointly managing the protected area makes governments more likely to get on board and ensures there is stable funding. It also allows Nations to be directly involved in decision making, creates employment opportunities, and gives them access to the land and its resources. IPCAs weave together Indigenous knowledge with western science, ensuring sound decision making. It also serves to decolonize conservation and creates a more equitable relationship between governments and Nations.

A good example of this type of protected area is the federal government’s newest protected area, the Thaidene Nëné National Park Reserve, which is considered a success story in Indigenous-led conservation. Created in 2019 in the Northwest Territories, the reserve is part of the larger Thaidene Nëné Indigenous Protected Area, both of which are co-managed by the federal government and Łutsël K’É Dene First Nation. The Nation’s vision is not only conservation but to see strong economic opportunities through Guardians programs, tourism, and research.

Regardless of the exact style, Indigenous-led conservation provides substantial benefits. It in part promotes reconciliation through conservation putting governments and Nations on more equal footing through shared decision making. It also allows more direct involvement by Nations in managing resources within their territories. Through daily involvement in managing the land and having access to its resources, IPCAs also strengthen cultural identity. They can promote knowledge transition, language, and sense of place. Through employment opportunities, IPCAs develop young leaders and encourage young people to get involved in conservation. IPCAs promote economic development directly through employment managing the park and indirectly through eco-tourism, scientific research, and other means.

While progress has been made in recent years promoting Indigenous-led conservation, much more is needed to continue promoting reconciliation and help Canada achieve its ambitious conservation targets.

## IMPAC5 – INDIGENOUS VOICES TAKE CENTER STAGE



At the fifth International Marine Protected Areas conference (also known as IMPAC5), many prominent people were present: The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard; the Minister of Environment and Climate Change; and the Minister responsible for Parks Canada, among others. They all issued statements recognizing the need for increased international action and collaboration. What was most striking was the representation of First Nations and Indigenous Peoples from around the world. The opening program was enriched by singers and dancers from the host nations. At the opening ceremony, Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh were represented by Chief Wayne Sparrow, Councillor Wilson Williams, and Councillor Charlene Alec, respectively. “I especially want to welcome all indigenous leaders, dignitaries that are here from other countries to our territory...our community is a fishing community, and it is so important that we protect what our ancestors passed down to each and every one of us”, said Councillor Williams, who went on to say that “In such challenging times in the world, it is the indigenous peoples who are coming together respectfully to share their teachings, their connections to not only the land, but also the water...holding up each other for the next generations... The times today will define what unity means...how we come together from international events like this. We hope you can carry this signal back to your homelands so that we can unite and come together. And it won’t be the last time.” “We had no borders here,” said Councillor Alec, reflecting on pre-colonial times. “We shared this territory as a big family. We loved the lands, the salt water, the fresh salmon-bearing creeks. We could travel anywhere you see, and it was abundant.” “Reaching back to (our traditional) knowledge, showing our children, these are the ways we uphold our indigenous law, not just at home or in school, but abroad, on a global stage.”

At the dozens of talks throughout each day, the predominant voices were those of Indigenous Peoples from around the world who shared their perspectives, challenges, and victories. Speakers did not consist just of those with scientific credentials, but those with valuable cultural experience. Common themes in the talks included increased collaboration, drawing on Indigenous knowledge, empowering local people through focus on grassroots movements, and harmonizing different perspectives in order to have more sustainable management of marine protected areas. At one talk, titled “Uplifting Indigenous Knowledge

Systems and Inclusion to Increase Capacity and Insight into Conservation”, it was stated that “Collaborations and partnerships that utilize multiple knowledge systems provide critical insight into building capacity of management to change not only how we define the world around us but better define appropriate and effective management... This major shift to integrate multiple knowledge systems in management allows us to focus on ecosystem health and abundance while including the healing journey of humanity as well.”

On Monday, the keynote addresses included Dalee Sambo Dorough, Chairperson of the Inuit Circumpolar Council; Dr. Judith Sayers, President of the Nuu-chah-Nulth Council; Asha de Vos, a marine biologist from Sri Lanka; and many others. Asha de Vos shared her experience in advancing scientific knowledge among the members of her community in Sri Lanka, and the discrimination and challenges created by parachute scientists from foreign NGOs and science groups. Parachute science, also known as colonial science, is a harmful practice where scientists from wealthier Western countries will come into a biodiverse country, and, acting from a position of expertise and means, will direct research efforts that they consider important, extract knowledge, then leave without acknowledging the important local infrastructure and expertise. In so doing, foreign researchers fail to establish long term, equitable relationships with local partners, hindering the region's growth and independence.

De Vos described the difficulty in convincing foreign researchers in Sri Lanka to allow her, a Sri Lankan, board the research vessel and take part in the work. After being accepted, she made an important discovery related to blue whales. Her discovery was met with excitement from NGOs and science groups. But rather than be offered assistance, she was pressured by these groups to give over her findings and let them continue her work for her. After turning down these proposals and facing many difficulties, she gradually built local capacities in marine conservation and found partnerships that were more egalitarian, forming Sri Lanka's first marine conservation and education organization, Oceanswell. Their team just recently celebrated putting one of their members through a PhD program in marine biology, the first of what they hope is many others in their community, leading to greater expertise and self-determinacy.

Closing remarks were given by Councillor Brett Sparrow of Musqueam, Councillor Wilson Williams of Squamish, and Councillor Charlene Alec of Tsleil-Waututh. Councillor Sparrow shared a story of a local group of students who took the responsibility of environmental stewardship into their own hands, redesigning the recycling regime at their school, leading to a cascading effect of benefits for their community, turning compost into fertile soil, which was then turned into produce at community gardens. “Everyone in the room is a role model,” said Councillor Williams. “To help explore our needs for tomorrow...it is our duty to ensure that we provide the knowledge to them.” Councillor Alec closed his remarks saying, “Half of the chairs here are filled, but half of them empty. But in our mind, they are not empty; they are (occupied by) our ancestors. They are what guided you to be here today. They are what guided us to hold this space. They give us the strength to do the work that we do, to speak when we need to speak. And before you all go home, my wish to you all, even if you live within BC, is to visit the water, touch the water, leave some of your good medicine, some of your good work with her... She needs your good words, your thoughts... Turn into that big swell, that giant mass amount of movement that she knows how to do. Turn into that strength when there are obstacles.”

## TANG.GWAN – ҺAČXWIQAK – TSIGIS MARINE PROTECTED AREA



A massive Marine Protected Area (MPA) off the BC Coast is one step closer to being realized. At the 5<sup>th</sup> International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC5) conference recently held in Vancouver, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the federal government and several First Nations (Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, the Council of the Haida Nation, Pacheedaht First Nation, and Quatsino First Nation) was announced for the **Tang.gwan – Һačxwiqak – Tsigis** Marine Protected Area. The proposed MPA will cover 133,019 km<sup>2</sup> of ocean roughly 150 km, or 95 km at its closest point, off the west coast of Vancouver Island. Once formally created, it will be the largest MPA in Canada’s Pacific Ocean, helping the country get 0.88% closer to its conservation targets of protecting 25% of marine areas by 2025 and 30% by 2030. According to CTV News, the MPA gets its name from the “Haida word meaning ‘deep ocean’ (Tang.gwan), a Nuu-chah-nulth and Pacheedaht word meaning “deepest part of the ocean” (Һačxwiqak) and a Quatsino word referring to a “monster of the deep” (Tsigis)”.

The ecological significance of the area has been apparent for years. 70% of the country’s seamounts and hydrothermal vents are found within the boundaries of the proposed MPA. It also has the only known hydrothermal vents in BC. These deep-sea features create unique ecosystems with species found nowhere else on earth. To help protect these biodiverse ecosystems, roughly half the area of the proposed MPA, 88,000 km<sup>2</sup>, was designated as a marine refuge in 2017. While marine refuges have relatively weak protection, certain fishing practices like bottom trawling were banned. Also in 2017, The Offshore Pacific Advisory Committee was established to oversee the planning and design of the MPA and included First Nations as well as other stakeholders. The work of this committee and the persistence of First Nations has driven progress on the creation of the MPA.

Despite the fact that the MPA has not yet been formally created, the signing of an MOU between the Nations and the federal government almost guarantees that it will be created in the coming years. MOUs like this one are very common in conservation and help to outline how the work will proceed. They can include details on governance structures, funding, decision making, levels of protection and other

important details. Therefore, the signing of this MOU is a key milestone to establish the MPA. Many details of the MOU are not yet known to the public, but according to the federal government the MOU “outlines how the parties will collaboratively work together in the planning and cooperative management of the proposed MPA”. One key detail yet to be determined is whether the MPA will include Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), where Indigenous governments have joint decision making and management responsibilities. Haida Nation has declared a portion of the MPA’s area as a heritage site under their legal system and other Nations involved are also looking at declaring IPCAs, though these would not carry legal weight under current systems.

Decision making, especially regarding fishing, has been a contentious topic of negotiations in the past, and it is not known if Nations will have decision making power in this MPA. The Haida Nation and Canada already co-manage the Sgaan Kinghlas-Bowie Seamount MPA off the northeast coast of Haida Gwaii. That MPA is found within the traditional waters of the Nation and contains the shallowest seamount on the West Coast. The co-management of the MPA shows that co-managing MPAs is possible, and sets a strong precedent and example for the potential future co-management of the Tang.gwan – ḥačxwíqak – Tsígis Marine Protected Area. According to the federal government, the MOU includes provisions for an MPA Management Board, with First Nations and DFO representatives, that will seek to achieve consensus on advice given to decision makers. This, along with the successful co-management of Sgaan Kinghlas-Bowie Seamount MPA, provides reasons for optimism that co-management may be included in the MPAs governance framework.

Until recently, MPAs in Canada had extremely weak protection. There was no formal nationwide standard for environmental protection in MPAs. Recently, the federal government unveiled a set of minimum protection standards that all MPAs in the country must meet. These include bans on dumping, oil and gas exploration, deep sea mining, and bottom trawling. These measures will ensure that these geologic features, and the sensitive ecosystems and abundance of marine life that depend on them, are meaningfully protected. This not only will provide ecological benefits, but also provide for the well-being of people on the coast who depend on the ocean’s resources. Gaagwiis Jason Alsop, president of the Council of the Haida Nation summarizes the multiple benefits of conservation in saying, “these species will come back to our territories and look after us if we look after the ocean”.

## WINTER EVENTS AROUND VANCOUVER

*\* Please note that all events are in accordance with BC Health & Safety Guidelines regarding COVID-19\**

### ❖ Meet Me at The Gallery, Ongoing

Meet Me at the Gallery is a new program dedicated to enriching the lives of adults and seniors through barrier-free access to art. This event takes place the first Wednesday of each month at 10:00 am. There are different activities and art on display each month with social time that follows the event. For more information visit <https://thepolygon.ca/event/meet-me-at-the-gallery/>.

### ❖ Vancouver Cocktail Week 2023, March 6 – March 11

Vancouver Cocktail Week is back for a second year and will feature some of the best award-winning bartenders in the city. This week-long event not only celebrates cocktails but the food



and drink culture of Vancouver. For more information visit <https://www.thealchemistmagazine.ca/vcw/>.

❖ **The Vancouver Sun Run, April 16**

The Vancouver Sun Run is a 10-kilometre road running event which has been held each year in April since 1985. It is one of the largest road races in North America and the largest 10k start line in Canada! With different events including a team division, mini 2.5 km sun, youth challenge, and a walk, there is something for everyone. Take part or stop by to enjoy this iconic event. For more information visit <https://www.vanoutersunrun.com/>.

❖ **Vancouver International Wine Festival, April 24<sup>th</sup> – April 30<sup>th</sup>**

Headquartered at the Vancouver Convention Centre, the Vancouver International Wine Festival is widely considered to be one of the best wine events in North America. In addition, numerous other restaurants and venues around the city will host winery dinners, lunches, seminars, and wine minglers. With delicious food and some of the world's greatest wine producers, there's something to please every palate. For more information visit <https://vanwinefest.ca/>.

❖ **Art Vancouver International Art Fair, May 4<sup>th</sup> – May 7<sup>th</sup>**

Art Vancouver, Western Canada's largest international art fair, is back at the Vancouver Convention Center May 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>. Artists and galleries from all over the world are set showcase a wide range of contemporary art to the public. Integrated with the international guests are Canadian artists from all provinces and territories. Attendees can look forward to an art runway show on opening night. Interactive activities will include a live art competition, speaker panels, and art classes. For more information visit <https://www.artvancouver.net/>.

For many more events taking place in Metro Vancouver this winter, visit Destination Vancouver's website at <https://www.destinationvancouver.com/events/calendar-of-events/>.

## CONTACT US

For further inquiries regarding the newsletter and our green initiatives, please contact:

**Yeganeh Asadian**

Environmental Stewardship Manager  
[sskapski@musqueam.bc.ca](mailto:sskapski@musqueam.bc.ca)

**Ryan Kadoranian**

Environmental Stewardship Major Projects Coordinator  
[rkadoranian@musqueam.bc.ca](mailto:rkadoranian@musqueam.bc.ca)

**Marc-Andre Hervieux**

Environmental Stewardship Analyst  
[mhervieux@musqueam.bc.ca](mailto:mhervieux@musqueam.bc.ca)

Office: 604.263.3261

Website: <https://www.musqueam.bc.ca/departments/iga/environment/>

Instagram: @envirostew

Facebook: Enviro Stewardship

