

Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor

Research and
Communication Project
Summer 2022



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Executive Summary

The Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor is an initiative aimed at restoring healthy relationships with the land, waters, plants, animals, people and Creator.

Grounded in the Nuu-chah-nulth guiding principles of Hishuk'ish tsawalk, (interconnectedness), Uu-a-thluk (the responsibility to take care of), tisaak (respect for all things living and nonliving), and the Coast Salish principle of Naut'sa mawt (together as one), the Stewardship Corridor is founded on the vision of bringing together Indigenous and non-Indigenous land and water stewards across the west coast of Vancouver Island to collaborate, share knowledge, and plan for greater ecological, cultural, spiritual, and economic connectivity.

The Stewardship Corridor initiative is being led and directed by a steering committee of Indigenous and non-Indigenous volunteers, with a common understanding that the initiative must be led by the First Nations who hold ancestral and traditional rights to govern and steward these territories. Non-Indigenous steering committee members acknowledge that their role is to support Indigenous leadership in the spirit of "right relations", as understood by the Nuu-chah-nulth and Coast Salish guiding principles.

In early 2022, the Steering Committee initiated this

Stewardship Corridor Research and Communication project, seeking to connect with representatives from each of the thirteen First Nations on the west and south coasts of Vancouver Island from Hesquiaht to Scia'new (Beecher Bay), to introduce the concept of the initiative, to better understand each Nation's stewardship visions and values, and to develop a Stewardship Corridor vision that best aligns with each Nation's vision. This research also identifies both regional and Nation-specific challenges to participating in the initiative, along with opportunities and areas for future collaboration.

Participants shared perceived barriers, challenges and opportunities that participating in the Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor might present. Major themes include ensuring their Nation's endorsement and consent was documented before proceeding; having the right people involved; having the time, resources and capacity to meaningfully engage; cultural differences between each Nation and culture groups and being able to identify and build upon shared interests.



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Key findings of this research include:

- The principles and vision behind the Stewardship Corridor initiative align with nearly all of the participating Nations' goals for taking care of their lands and waters;
- It is critical that Nations' governance, rights and authority to pursue their unique interests is respected and for Nations to see their values and visions reflected in the work that partners bring to them. Nations will challenge any work in their territories that doesn't align with their values or follow appropriate protocols; Pursuing stewardship and conservation while also securing sustainable economic opportunities for community members is of high priority to all participating Nations;
- Major impacts on Nations' traditional territories are primarily anthropogenic in their causes, including forestry, tourism, access limitations, climate change, overharvesting, and invasive species. Nations are actively pursuing restoration activities in their territories to support enhancement of the ecological and cultural

- functions of the landscape;
- Having support and endorsement from Indigenous leadership, as well as centering Indigenous stewards and decision-makers is imperative to ensuring that the Stewardship Corridor initiative is genuinely Indigenous-led;
- Each Nation is unique in their values, visions and approaches to governance and taking care of the lands, waters, and people. Unifying guiding principles foster Nation-to-Nation collaboration where outcomes are perceived as mutually beneficial; and
- It is important that the Stewardship Corridor initiative takes a flexible approach and meets each unique community where they are at.

This report explores the key findings of the research in a way that reveals the next steps for Nations, organisations, and the Steering Committee to move forward on this visionary Stewardship Corridor initiative. Detailed research methods, results and interview notes, including an inventory of each Nations' stewardship initiatives and partners, and a brief literature review of Nations' land use values and visions inventories can be obtained by contacting coexcarnivores@gmail.com.

Introduction to the Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor

As urban development, resource extraction and climate change impacts continue to increase worldwide; recognizing areas that are ecologically sensitive, culturally and spiritually sacred, and of value to wildlife is essential for maintaining biodiversity.

The Stewardship Corridor initiative seeks to restore and rebalance healthy relationships between the land, waters, plants, animals, people and the Creator. The Stewardship Corridor is an initiative being led at this stage by the Yuułuꞑiꞑath Government, Toquaht Nation and T'Sou-ke Nations. In February 2020 a Gathering was hosted by the Yuułuꞑiꞑath Government during which participants (including individuals from numerous west coast First Nations, local governments, and non-profit organizations) expressed a need for action to address the growing impacts of climate



PHOTO CREDIT: SANDER JAIN

change and development. A Steering Committee composed of Indigenous and non-Indigenous volunteers was struck at the 2020 Gathering to advise this work and consists of representatives from the Maa-nulth Treaty Nations, T'Sou-ke Nation, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, and the Coexisting with Carnivores Alliance. The Steering Committee holds a common understanding that the initiative must be led by the First Nations who hold ancestral and traditional rights to govern and steward these territories. Non-Indigenous steering committee members acknowledge that their role is to support Indigenous leadership in the spirit of "right relations", as understood by the Nuuchahnulth and Coast Salish guiding principles.

The concept of the Stewardship Corridor is based on large-scale landscape connectivity projects similar to the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, which aims to connect and protect habitats so that people and nature can thrive. The Westcoast Stewardship Corridor is seen as the first phase of a bigger initiative to connect Indigenous stewardship priorities and initiatives throughout the territories spanning the length of Vancouver Island.

Thirteen First Nations were identified in the Westcoast Stewardship Corridor area: Ahousaht, Ditidaht, Hesquiaht, Hupačasath, Huu-ay-aht, Pacheedaht, Scia'new, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Tseshaht, T'Sou-ke, Uchucklesaht, and Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ. Many of these Nations currently have working relationships with one another through their involvement in the Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council, Maa-nulth Treaty, and/or Te'mexw Treaty Association.

This initial research and communications project serves to kick-off the Stewardship Corridor initiative by interviewing representatives from each of the First Nations in the Stewardship Corridor area to understand their visions for lands management and stewardship. Experts interviewed included individuals in positions such as chiefs, councillors, lands staff, and stewards. Participating First Nations include Ahousaht, Hupačasath, Huu-ay-aht, Pacheedaht, Scia'new, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Tseshaht, T'Sou-ke, Uchucklesaht, and Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ. The interviews resulted in a better understanding for how the Stewardship Corridor can support important ecological, cultural, and governance work

across the landscape and can align with each Nation's vision and approach to taking care of the land and waters. An inventory of partners and existing stewardship-related projects was compiled in addition to the identification of potential challenges and barriers to pursuing the Stewardship Corridor. The partner and project inventories, alongside the research and communications project goals and objectives, can be obtained from coexcarnivores@gmail.com.

 We know we have disrupted the forest, the house of the wildlife, and we would like to be part of restoring 'the house'. We need to be able to have all living beings living in a healthy way and we can learn from our ancestors how to restore the land. That is our birthright.
(CHIEF GORDON PLANES, T'SOU-KE, 2021)

¹Hesquiaht and Ditidaht were contacted and invited to participate multiple times but were not interviewed due to lack of response during the timeline of this project

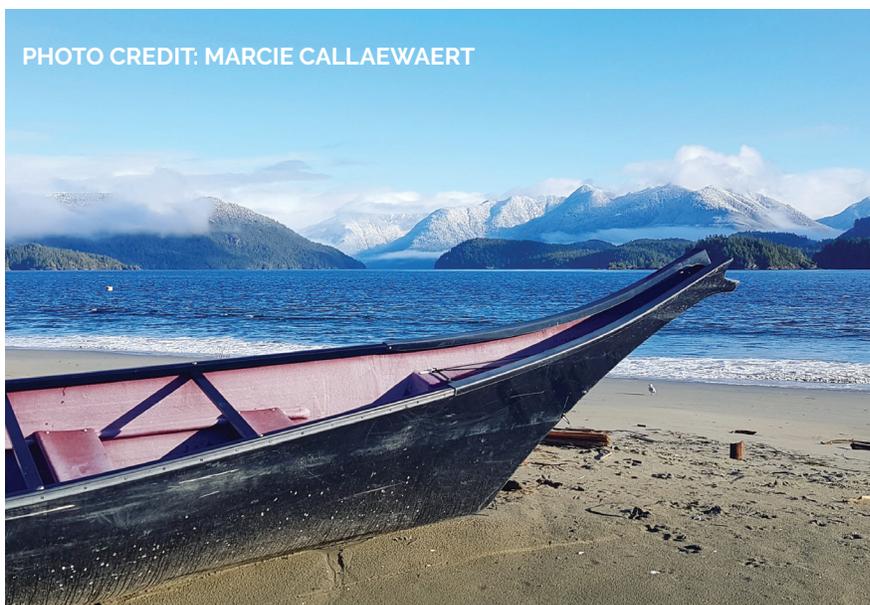
A Vision for the Indigenous- led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor

Guided by the ancestral Coast Salish principles of Naut'sa mawt (together as one) and Nuu-chah-nulth principles of Hishuk Ish tsawalk (interconnectedness), Uu-a-thluk (the responsibility to take care of) and lisaak (respect for all things living and non-living/ utmost respect), the Indigenous-Led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor is a uniquely connected place on Vancouver Island where the priority is to continually enhance and restore the lands waters and wildlife across the territories. Through our collective wisdom, Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities will thrive culturally, ecologically, spiritually, and economically for generations to come.

(Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor Vision, 2022)

The draft vision for the Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor was developed using themes from the First Nations' land use visions literature review, notes from the Stewardship Corridor 2020 Gathering and the input of the Stewardship Corridor Steering Committee. The draft Stewardship Corridor vision was shared with representatives from each First Nation during the engagement interviews; nearly all of the participants indicated that the Stewardship Corridor vision was in alignment with their Nation's goals for taking care of their lands and waters. Some of the feedback includes:

- *“It [the vision statement] is wonderful. Culturally, spiritually...I think it would be received quite genuinely if I brought this vision statement to the Tla-o-qui-aht Ha'wiih, and, I think they could get behind it. The Ha'wiih would want to see this and stand upon it. This is a statement that we can start propagating... I think that if you explain that the corridor means you stand behind these principles, other nations would be empowered to join.”* (Saya Masso, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, 2022)
- *“The Stewardship Corridor vision aligns with our core values, and the Ahousaht Land Use Vision. Addressing the needs of protection, protection, protection.”* (Ha'wiih Hasheukmiss, Ahousaht First Nation, 2022)
- *“[The Vision] Sounds like what we all want. So many generations of not having control over our land, now we can finally take advantage and do some stuff to benefit our citizens wherever they live.”* (Councillor Duane Nookemis, Huu-ay-aht First Nation, 2022)
- *“Having these guiding principles is important for the work.”* (President Chuck McCarthy, Yuułu?ił?ath Government, 2022)



One participant suggested that spirituality be included in the list of outcomes for future generations in the Stewardship Corridor vision; this has been included in the vision above.

Some participants explained that while the values expressed in the vision might align with their Nation's values, they were wary of having an external land vision imposed on their territories. This wariness is explored further in the *Respecting Indigenous Governance, Authority and Rights* section on p. 12. Furthermore, some participants expressed concerns and provided suggestions on the scale of the Stewardship Corridor. One participant suggested that all of Vancouver Island should be included as part of the vision and that invitations

to participate should be extended to all Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw Nations with interests on the Island. Meanwhile, another participant suggested that keeping to one language and cultural group (e.g. Nuu-chah-nulth) would be imperative for success. Through the interviews it became clear that achieving agreement from all thirteen nations on the vision and structure of the Stewardship Corridor would likely require flexibility and accommodations based on sensitivities and concerns of each of the Nations. A Terms of Reference and more thought around scoping of the initiative may help to address some of the concerns above; these ideas are explored in *Next Steps for Collaboration Towards a Stewardship Corridor* on p. 22.

Major Land and Water Impacts

The responses from the interviews indicated that major impacts on Nations' traditional territories are primarily anthropogenic in their causes, including forestry, tourism, access limitations, climate change, overharvesting, and invasive species. The cumulative effects of these activities combine to substantively affect the Rights and Interests of Indigenous Nations across the Stewardship Corridor region. The following comments on land and water impacts were identified by the participants:

Forestry. Prevalent across all of the Nations' territories, forestry is the most impactful activity affecting First Nations' land use values and visions. Many participants described logging, road building, access, and slash burning, as adversely affecting their lands and waters. Such activities are causes of slope destabilisation and landslides, increasing sedimentation and erosion in rivers and creeks, increased fire risk, altered species interactions, and loss of terrestrial and aquatic habitat including critical spawning habitat for salmon. Chemical applications to roads propagate harmful substances in often sensitive ecosystems. Together these impacts reduce the ability of First Nations to interact with large parts of their territories for the practice of harvesting, cultural,

and spiritual practices; much of which rely on healthy, intact, and biodiverse ecosystems.

Access Limitations. Whereas Indigenous peoples would have exercised unimpeded access across their territories prior to colonisation; today, private property, parks regulations, and industrial activities limit areas that Indigenous land users can access. Industry-controlled gates and active logging roads prevent harvesters from accessing much of their traditional territory. Parks regulations and private property prevent access to terrestrial harvesting grounds. For coastal Nations, shorelines and waterways are important access points necessary for reaching the broader territory. However, these too are often private or parks-regulated. Access limitations force Indigenous land users to travel further and even outside of their territories to practice harvesting, cultural, and spiritual traditions, and increase associated transportation and time expenses.

Tourism. Access and use by visitors and tourists support a burgeoning and increasingly Indigenous-operated eco-tourism economy. Conversely, tourism can cause adverse impacts to ecosystems and places of importance, which reduce local First Nations' ability to practice traditions across their territories. Participants

estimated that over 4 million people visit Vancouver Island annually; 750,000 of whom make their way to visit the Pacific Rim. This estimate includes thousands of tourists who use the West Coast Trail area every summer. Backcountry users and dispersed campers typically live in camps and vehicles on the backroads of traditional territories for prolonged periods of time and degrade ecosystems by using these backroads for unauthorised recreational activities such as dirt biking. The use and inhabitation of the backcountry also pose an increasing forest fire risk. Trash, waste, and reduced privacy are further causes of degradation and avoidance of use in previously desirable areas for First Nations land users when practising harvesting, cultural, and spiritual traditions.

Climate Change. For some First Nations, impacts from climate change are a major threat to food security and the continued exercise of Indigenous rights and traditions. Severe weather, warming trends, increased risk of forest fire, and sea-level rising, were the main trends of concern identified by participants. Rivers are warming and drying up which adversely affects the ability of salmon (a key cultural species) to spawn. A warming climate is altering forest ecology which potentially reduces the availability and predictability of culturally valuable plant species and increases the risk of forest fires. Severe weather including atmospheric rivers, have washed out roads, caused prolonged power outages, and have caused sudden and intense flooding in some communities. Rising seas bring a threat of coastal erosion and degradation of sensitive

coastal ecosystems of value to First Nations. **Overharvesting.** Harvesting is an important cultural tradition for all of the west coast First Nations; for whom elk, deer, grouse, a wide variety of salt and freshwater fishes, berries, mushrooms, cedar bark, and medicinal plants provide a means of continuously connecting to ancestral lands, waters, knowledge and ways of life. Non-Indigenous overharvesting causes dwindling populations of key species including elk, salmon, and bottom-dwelling fish, which prevents First Nations harvesters from exercising their Indigenous rights and culture. Overharvesting of dwindling populations may also be exacerbated by other landscape impacts listed here. Enforcement of harvesting regulations is thought to be lacking particularly given the remote and privately-owned nature of many terrestrial and aquatic harvesting grounds.

Invasive Species. Although only identified as a major impact by a few participants, invasive species are of high concern for several Nations. Invasive species drastically alter intact and healthy ecosystems to the point that those ecosystems can no longer functionally provide the ecosystem services that First Nations communities value. European green crabs were identified as a significant threat in Ahousaht, Scia'new, and T'Sou-ke aquatic ecosystems. Green crabs live in shallow waters and are particularly damaging in the estuarine habitats where they pull up and eat eelgrass. In doing so, they destroy eelgrass beds which are a critical habitat for many marine species of marine invertebrates and juvenile fish including culturally significant salmon and herring.

Nation Visions, Priorities, and Core Values

Each participant shared their knowledge of their Nation's visions, priorities, and values relating to land and water use within their territory. A wide range of Nation priorities were reported, including environmental protection, economic development, food security, housing, and asserting sovereignty. In many cases, Nation priorities were explicitly stated to be driven by community member priorities. The diversity of Nation priorities reflects the different geographic, social and economic pressures experienced by each Nation and their communities. Some pressures shared include proximity to urban centres and services; percentage of territory that is Crown or private fee-simple; tourism interest and potential; intactness of forests and watersheds; impacts from climate change; development pressure; community cultural values; and status of government-to-government and industry relations (i.e. Treaties, Agreements, Memorandums of Understanding, etc.).

Despite the variety of priorities and visions shared, several overarching themes and broad core values emerged which link many of the Nations' approaches and visions for future

land use (described below). Understanding shared themes across each of the Nations' land use visions will help to align the purpose and approach of the Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor in a way that supports Nations' efforts and which offers a compelling opportunity for Nations to engage and participate.

BALANCING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT and STEWARDSHIP

Sustainability is a big focus. Clean water, connecting the social and economic aspects to the lands and the waters, and preserving that for the future. (Interview Participant, Toquaht Nation, 2022)

There is a mosaic of priorities and opportunities - we're not just boxing in conservation 100%. There are environmental, societal, and economic priorities that are all important to incorporate into the landscape... There has to be balance between where we're going, and what the Stewardship Corridor looks like - what are the impacts it would have on the average person? What are the negative impacts on the average person? (President Chuck McCarthy, Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government, 2022)

Balancing economic development and stewardship is a major priority for Scia'new. (Chief Russ Chipps, Scia'new First Nation, 2022)

We are always open to having conversations that will help benefit our community. (Chief Ken Watts, Tseshah First Nation, 2022)

Pursuing stewardship and conservation while also securing sustainable economic opportunities for community members was a major theme in conversations around Nation values and priorities. Stewardship, restoration, monitoring, research, enforcement, and cultural and spiritual conservation were described by many participants as high-priority actions. Abundance, diversity, and quality of ecosystems were identified as important ecological values. Concurrently, those participants also described pursuing fishing, forestry, industrial development, eco-tourism, and aquaculture as a means of creating sustainable economic development for their communities. Sustainable and desirable jobs for community members and adequate and sustainable housing and services were identified as important economic values.

The concept of "Working Forests" was shared by one participant as a type of forest management in which mixed uses occur, including managed burns, berry harvesting, cedar bark harvesting, wildlife habitat protection, forestry, and mixed-stand age and species regeneration. The purpose of a "Working Forest" is to manage forests in a way that allows for a diversity of community uses, similar to how forests were used and managed prior to colonisation (Eva Shaffer, T'Sou-ke Nation, 2022). This is similar to Hupačasath's approach to woodlot management, in which culturally and ecologically valued areas are buffered from forestry activity; alternative tree species like white pine, alder, maple, and cedar are planted; and multiple uses like syrup production and forestry continue to occur (Chief Brandy Lauder, Hupačasath First Nation, 2022).

Important steps being taken by Nations for pursuing this balanced approach include:

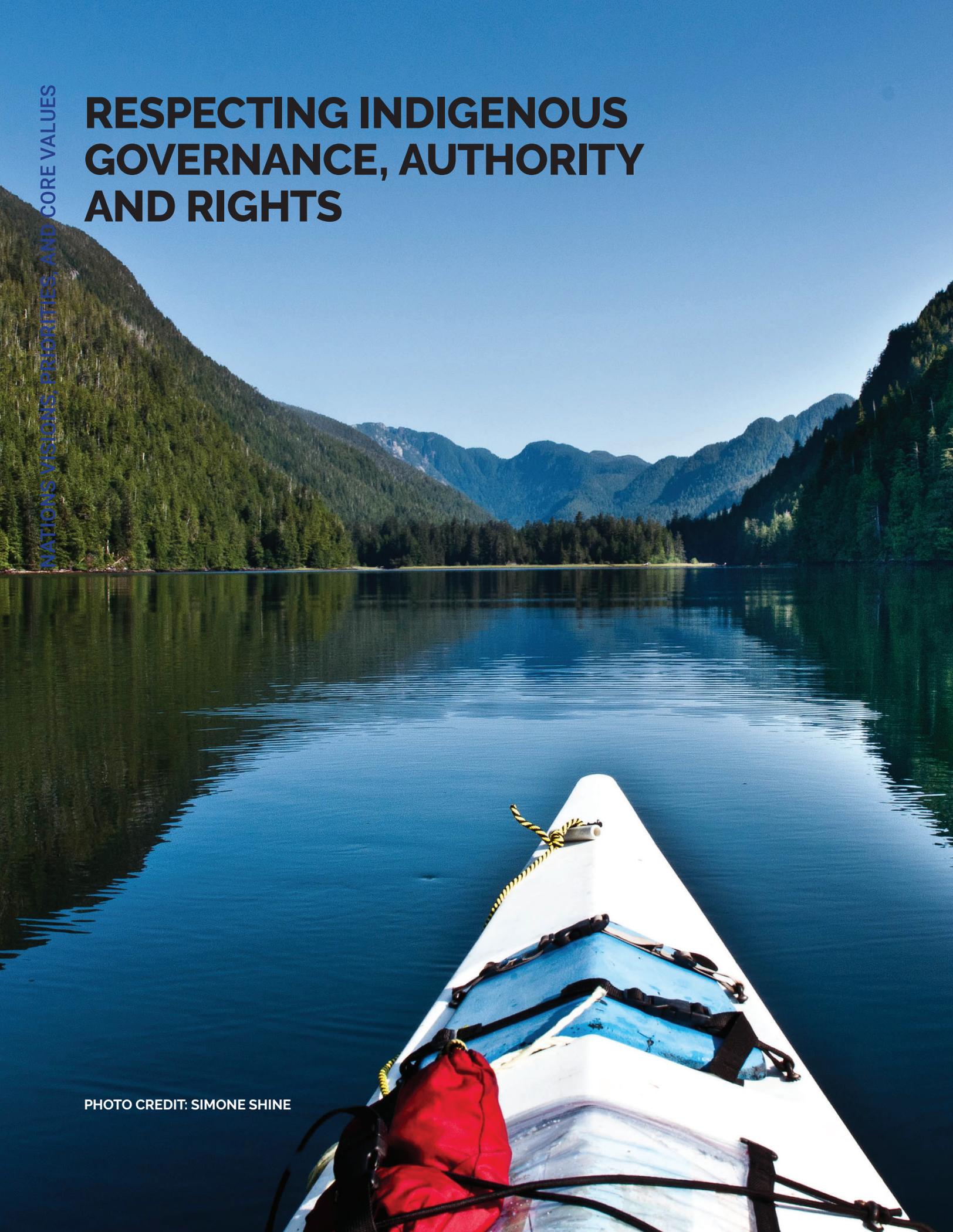
- Research, monitoring and surveying to understand more about the state and health of the land;
- Developing government and industry partnerships to further Nation goals;
- Securing funding including through own-source revenue to apply resources to initiatives; and
- Acquiring rights to land through Treaty, Agreement, or purchase.



NATIONS VISIONS, PRIORITIES, AND CORE VALUES

RESPECTING INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE, AUTHORITY AND RIGHTS

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What nations do in their territories is their business, it's not up to us to say what others can and can't do. We feel the same way about others thinking about us... We won't be told what to do. (Chief Ken Watts, Tseshah, 2022)

Hereditary systems are the ones that have the voice when it comes to taking care of their resources. (Ha'wiih Hasheukmiss, Ahousah First Nation, 2022)

If nations want to pursue logging then you hope that they can do that too. (Saya Masso, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, 2022)

Respecting each Nation's authority to pursue their unique interests was recognized by many of the participants as an important value with regard to the Stewardship Corridor. While many Nations share guiding principles of interconnectedness and respect for all living things, each has their differences in how they approach governance and decision-making around stewardship, conservation, economic development and wellbeing of their people and these differences should be respected (Duane Nookemis, HUU-ay-aht First Nation, 2022). Rather than bringing prescribed approaches and projects such as the Stewardship Corridor to Nations, organisations should start the conversation with, "What do you want to see happening in your territory?" (Ken Watts, Tseshah, 2022). Several participants indicated that Nations need to see their values and visions reflected in the work that partners bring to them or will challenge any work in their territory that doesn't align with their values or follow appropriate protocols.

We have a vision of ownership. We never signed a treaty. We plan on ownership of all of the territory. (Chief Ken Watts, Tseshah, 2022)

It's important that we regain rights and access to land so that we can manage them... For us, stewardship is an act of sovereignty. (Eva Shaffer, T'Sou-ke Nation, 2022)

[What matters most?] Asserting Scia'new rights. (Chief Russ Chipps, Scia'new First Nation, 2022)

The collective Nations' visions of asserting sovereign rights over their territories is closely connected to the topic of respecting governance authority. For many Nations, the pursuit of rights and sovereignty is closely connected to how they choose to pursue stewardship work.

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION TO SUPPORT CULTURAL VALUES

We've seen the depletion of a lot of our animals and habitat over the years. Forestry has had big impacts over time. The lifespan of a lot of these resources is coming to an end, and now stewardship responsibilities are being handed back over to the Nations. (President Chuck McCarthy, Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government, 2022)

With fallowed sites we can experiment – with kelp, sablefish for example. (Ha'wiih Hasheukmiss, Ahousaht First Nation, 2022)

The conversations indicated that restoring degraded lands to a state that supports cultural values and uses is a land vision shared among the Nations and that the restoration of traditionally harvested species such as elk and salmon are high-priority for many of Nations; as well as culturally important species like bears, wolves, medicinal plants, and other Species at Risk. Habitat restoration work is ongoing in many Nations' territories due to the strong desire to return lands and waters either

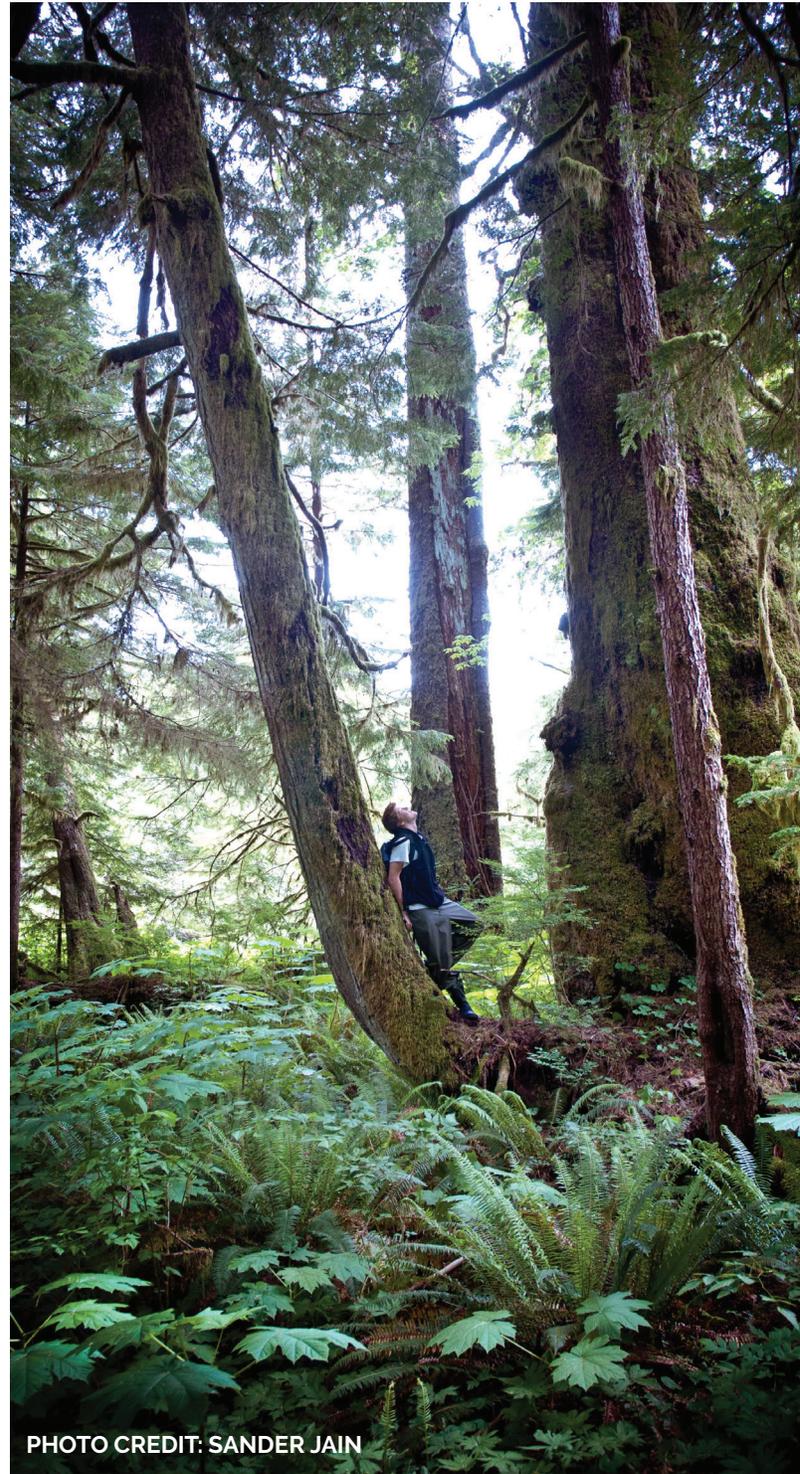
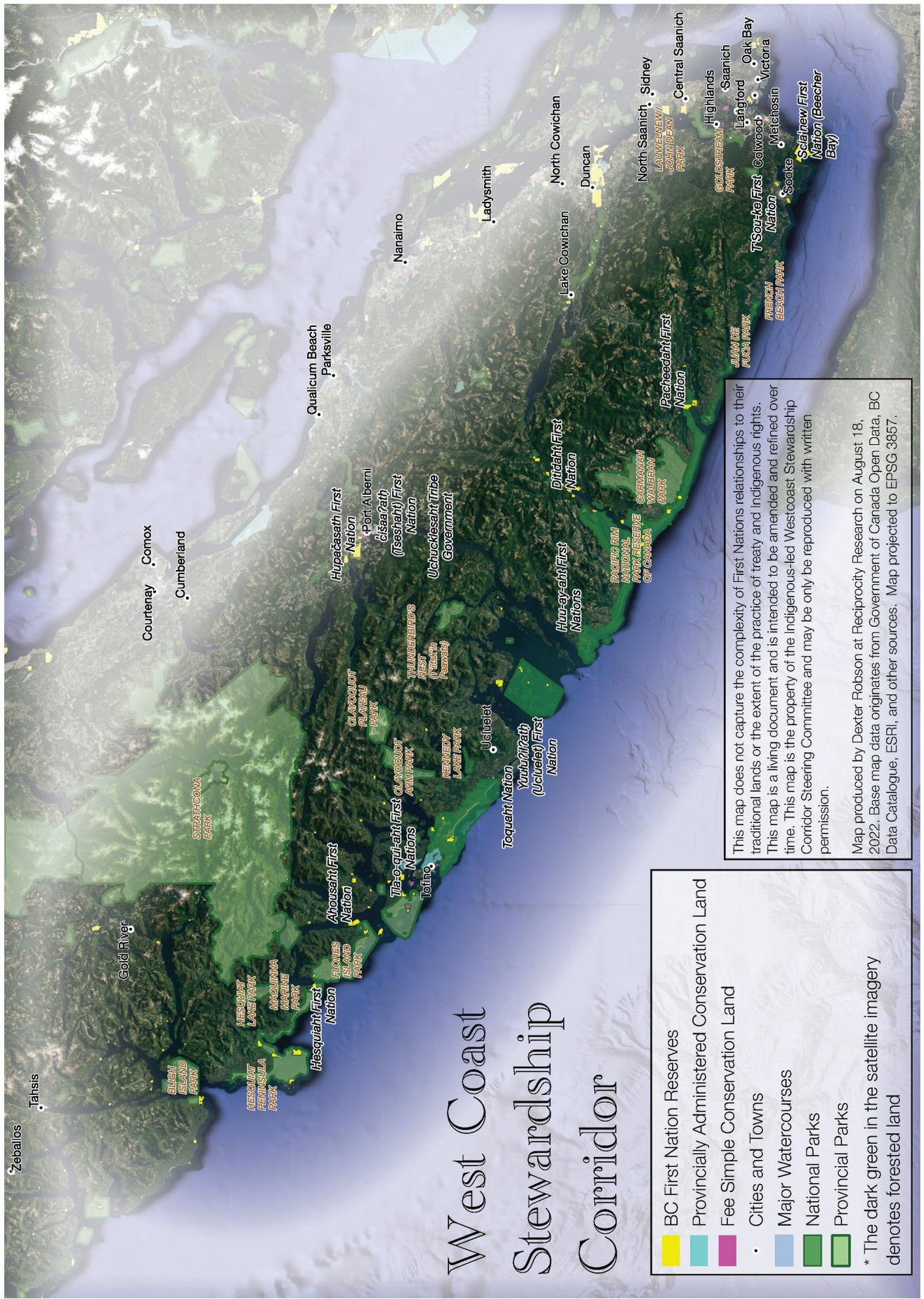


PHOTO CREDIT: SANDER JAIN

to their original state or to a level that sustains community members' usage. Restoration activities span habitat restoration, area closures, access limitations, species reintroduction and monitoring, and site reclamation feasibility studies.



West Coast Stewardship Corridor

- BC First Nation Reserves
 - Provincially Administered Conservation Land
 - Fee Simple Conservation Land
 - National Parks
 - Provincial Parks
 - Major Watercourses
 - Cities and Towns
- * The dark green in the satellite imagery denotes forested land

This map does not capture the complexity of First Nations relationships to their traditional lands or the extent of the practice of treaty and Indigenous rights. This map is a living document and is intended to be amended and refined over time. This map is the property of the Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor Steering Committee and may be only be reproduced with written permission.

Map produced by Dexter Robson at Reciprocity Research on August 18, 2022. Base map data originates from Government of Canada Open Data, BC Data Catalogue, ESRI, and other sources. Map projected to EPSG 3857.

Challenges & Opportunities

Participants shared perceived barriers, challenges and opportunities that participating in the Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor might present. Major themes include ensuring their Nation's endorsement and consent was documented before proceeding; having the right people involved; having the time, resources and capacity to meaningfully engage; cultural differences between each Nation and culture groups and being able to identify and build upon shared interests.

LEADERSHIP ENDORSEMENT

"Getting hereditary chiefs and chief and councils to a point where they endorse the [Stewardship Corridor] declaration is something that is going to be a lot of work." (Saya Masso, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, 2022)

"We still need to get direction at the leadership level to see if they agree that this is something worthwhile."
(Interview Participant, Toquaht Nation, 2022)

"It's easier for us to participate if we can tie it into the work that we are already doing. It's easier to justify spending time on a project like

this, rather than it being something outside of our job description and scope."

(Eva Shaffer, T'Sou-ke Nation, 2022)

Participants expressed that receiving endorsement from leadership is an important step to moving forward with participating in the Stewardship Corridor. Staff have a mandate to work on particular issues and projects, and need to have approval from their leadership to spend time on the Stewardship Corridor.

Opportunities

Participants suggested that depending on the Nation's protocols and decision-making processes, securing a mandate to engage and participate in the Stewardship Corridor initiative could be achieved through either a hereditary or elected leader endorsing the work of a staff manager. Alternatively, some staff shared that they may be working on existing projects that align closely enough with the Stewardship Corridor that they find they have the flexibility to engage and participate in this collaboration initiative. Engaging leaders and decision-makers at the Nation level can help spread awareness and understanding of the purpose of the Stewardship Corridor. Funding the engagement in the Stewardship Corridor Initiative may also help address some of the capacity issues that Nations commonly face.

HAVING THE RIGHT PEOPLE INVOLVED

Having the right people involved to begin with is a challenge... You need people that are dedicated to the stewardship of the land, who understand issues on the land. (President Chuck McCarthy, Yuułu?if?ath Government, 2022)

There is a high concentration of governing bodies and authorities in a small space on the west coast, particularly in the Tofino and Ucluelet area. Navigating this can be difficult. (Interview Participant, Toquaht Nation, 2022)

[Who needs to be involved in supporting stewardship of your territories?] Having the crown come to the table in good faith and actually consult with us, actually listen to us. (Eva Shaffer, T'Sou-ke Nation, 2022)

Just on principle alone, working with people who are going to inherit the land, it is getting us set up for best practices. (Saya Masso, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, 2022)

Placing Indigenous stewards and decision-makers at the centre of this initiative is imperative to ensuring it is genuinely Indigenous-led. Interview participants highlighted the importance of recognizing that all Nations are at different stages of interest, readiness and engagement capacity, as well as the importance of having the right people engaged in this work.

Opportunities

This initial research and communications phase of the Stewardship Corridor initiative represents a first step towards ensuring that

the right Indigenous leaders are involved in the initiative moving forward. Suggestions for building on these relationships and including appropriate protocols for engagement and collaboration are discussed in the Next Steps for Collaboration Towards a Stewardship Corridor section below.

Participants suggested that re-evaluating the decision-making structure of the initiative would be of value once Nation-specific protocols have been followed for securing endorsement from leadership and individuals have been appointed to engage on further Stewardship Corridor planning work. This could include opening participation in the steering committee to include representatives from each interested Nation, including youth and knowledge keepers, or re-defining the collaborative approach to better reflect Indigenous ways of working together in a good way.

Participants suggested that engaging with non-Indigenous stakeholders such as local, regional, provincial and federal government entities, private land holders, industry and non-profit partners, etc. will be required as the Stewardship Corridor initiative progresses. For government engagement, this might be achieved through existing government-to-government tables, requiring relationship and awareness building at the Nation-leadership level. One participant suggested lobbying the Province to update the Vancouver Island Plan to emphasise connectivity at the landscape level (Chief Brandy Lauder, Hupačasath First Nation, 2022). Other partnerships may be formed between government agencies, non-profit and private funders and stakeholders.

NATION AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Historically we haven't worked a lot together. We have more in common with our Coast Salish neighbours in the States than we do with Nuu-chah-nulth people.
(Eva Shaffer, T'Sou-ke Nation, 2022)

It's easier to co-manage areas where there are neighbouring nations that have similar laws, principles, and structure.
(President Chuck McCarthy, Yuułu?it̓ath̓ Government, 2022)

While the research participants from each Nation along the proposed Corridor route all found that the vision for the Westcoast Stewardship Corridor resonated with their own Nation's land use values and visions, some expressed that collaborating in the proposed way presented considerable challenges from both governance and cultural standpoints. Existing examples of Nations working successfully together (e.g. Central Coast Indigenous Resource Alliance; Hišuk ma cawak Declaration) are often grounded in relationships developed through years of collaboration and cooperation. These relationships have allowed participating Nations to move beyond governance and cultural differences. At this point in time, relationships of this nature do not exist between all Nuu-Chah-Nulth and Coast Salish communities engaged in this research. For Nations within these cultural groups, it is important that the initiative recognizes that each

Nation is a unique and distinct society with its own history and that this history often involved warring, and territorial and resource use disputes, the latter of which in many cases are still on-going. These disputes are exacerbated by the impacts of settler colonialism and contemporary colonial governance, which continue to divide and antagonize Nations including through some of these tenuous historic relationships.

For some research participants, the participation of their Nation in the Stewardship Corridor rests on the governance and cultural relationships with other Nations participating in the initiative. Governance and decision-making as a part of the Stewardship Corridor needs to respect each Nations' understandings of territory and authority, including spatial understandings of boundaries. Research participants acknowledged the likely challenge of separating the technical, ecology-focused planning work of the Stewardship Corridor from broader and more contentious issues around governance, rights and interests, especially in areas of shared use or territorial overlap. Where Nations are in disagreement around this, conversations are needed to find mutually agreeable terms for how the Nations will work together on neighbouring stewardship initiatives – this precludes any other collaboration as a part of the Stewardship Corridor.

Culturally, protocols of meeting, engagement, stewardship and decision-making within the initiative need to respect both Nuu-chah-nulth and Coast Salish protocols. Cultural differences described as potential barriers to collaborative stewardship work include different land management approaches, language, and perception of history

“When you start talking about elk, you also end up talking about fishing areas and other contentious issues.”

(President Chuck McCarthy, Yuułu?it?ath Government, 2022)

Opportunities

Discussion tables and relationships around stewardship exist between some of the participating First Nations, and several participants suggested that these would be good places to bring forward the idea of the Stewardship Corridor (i.e. Maa-nulth stewardship committee, Hišuk ma cawak Nations, Hupačasath/Huu-ay-aht/Western TFL 44 management, Te'mexw Land and Waters Department). Where Nations already meet to discuss collaborative land use management can provide fruitful ground for advancing the initiative.

General Challenges

In addition to the challenges discussed above, interview participants shared additional perceived barriers and challenges to working collaboratively on the Stewardship Corridor initiative. The potential barriers and challenges identified include:

- A concern that the Stewardship Corridor could potentially harm economic opportunities and self-determination of the Nations whose territories it transects;
- All Nations are at different places in terms of their readiness to participate in a collaborative initiative such as the stewardship corridor;
- Not having human or financial capacity to

- adequately address issues arising on the lands and waters, let alone to meaningfully participate in a complex multi-Nation and multi-jurisdictional planning process;
- An inability to effectively communicate priorities between Nations so that overlapping goals can be identified in a way that sufficiently fosters inclusiveness;
- Ensuring that smaller Nations' voices and interests are heard on equal ground, rather than being lumped in with larger neighbouring Nations; and
- Being forced to work within a colonial system that does not inherently recognize Indigenous authority, and needing to work with colonial institutions and authorities who have various and sometimes opposing land values and visions to those of the participating Nations.



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Next Steps for Collaboration Towards a Stewardship Corridor

Participants shared what they thought would be good opportunities for collaboration towards a future Stewardship Corridor. This includes opportunities where the Stewardship Corridor can support Nation-to-Nation collaboration to achieve mutual benefits, and opportunities where the Stewardship Corridor partnership can lend support to one Nation.

"I've seen a lot more interest in standing together. The wildlife corridor by necessity needs this to happen. We are beginning to understand that we are stronger together. Changes

we can no longer ignore are forcing us to work together."
(Eva Shaffer, T'Sou-ke, 2022)

"A major benefit of having people come to the table is to be able to create priorities that hold up major conservation values like an elk herd."
(President Charles McCarthy, Yuulu?ii?ath, 2022)

Participants expressed that through Nation-to-Nation collaboration, each Nation would be stronger in advocating for funding, conservation standards, and Indigenous authority. Understanding and articulating shared standards,

values, and concerns can be a valuable and compelling tool when seeking stewardship funding, area closures, political endorsement, and other types of Indigenous enforcement. Such an articulation would typically be used alongside other supporting Nation or region-specific land use plans, laws, and policies. With regards to industrial practices, shared Indigenous understandings of best and desired practices can be developed and shared with industry partners. As Duane Nookemis (Huu-ay-aht, 2022) said, "We're stronger if we're all asking for the same thing. We can raise the bar of the

minimum standard if we have a group of Nations working together”.

The interviews indicated that stewardship collaboration can also help to avoid redundancy in work, and improve the efficacy of work undertaken. Similar methods of data collection between Nations can facilitate easier data sharing, and this can be achieved through data sharing and collection agreements. Nations can share best practices and lessons learned with Nations beginning similar programs, helping them to

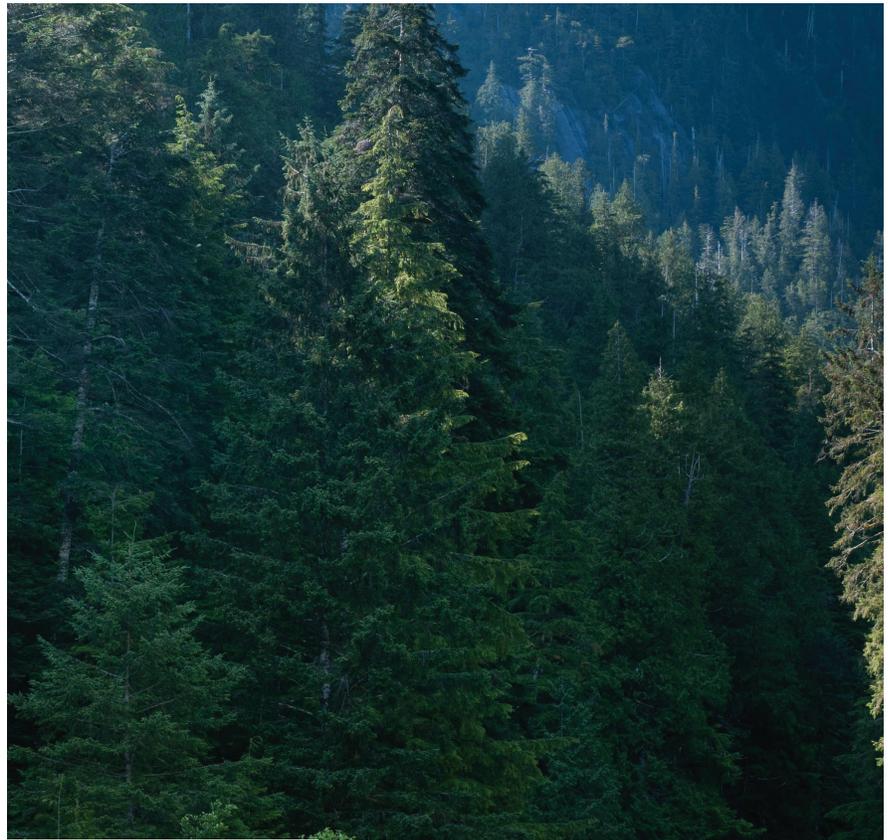


PHOTO CREDIT: SANDER JAIN

avoid mistakes and to pursue the best path forward. In favour of Nation-to-Nation collaboration, Moses Towell (Uchucklesaht, 2022) said, “When we work together with our neighbours, we end up getting more value out of our work”.

We heard multiple suggestions, detailed below, on the best ways that the Stewardship Corridor can begin to bring leadership and stewardship staff together from neighbouring Nations to collaborate. **These areas also constitute the next steps that the Stewardship Corridor can take to move toward the initiative's vision.**

- **Relationship Building.** While many staff are involved in stewardship work, not many currently know or work with similar staff from neighbouring Nations. Bringing people together is important for understanding each others' priorities and approaches, building trust, and generating ideas for working together. Existing examples include the Maa-nulth Treaty and Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council stewardship sub-committees, both of which might be good places to pursue engagement around the Stewardship Corridor.
- **A Gathering** around the Stewardship Corridor would facilitate relationship-building and information sharing. All participants interviewed expressed interest in attending, though several expressed limiting participation commitment to 1-day maximum.
- **Facilitating Data Collection and Sharing.** Many Nations are engaged in surveying and monitoring their territorial lands and waters, and participants expressed the importance of "knowing what is out there" to conduct effective stewardship.
 - Supporting surveying, monitoring, and data collection was identified as an important step that the Stewardship Corridor could take in supporting and bringing together stewardship staff. Smaller Nations are in the early phases of building up surveying and monitoring programs, while other Nations have experience establishing and running Guardian and research programs. While some Nations will be ready to engage in stewardship and connectivity planning, others (including their neighbours with whom they would do such planning) may need to conduct more monitoring and prioritisation before they feel prepared to collaborate.
- Opportunities for Nations to learn from each other exist; including sharing of stewardship approaches and methods. Some participants expressed a keen willingness to share this knowledge with other Nations.
- Participants suggested that surveying and monitoring work is best carried out by community members who live in their territories, including youth, who are perceptive of long-term ecological changes and who can champion stewardship efforts.
- Data sharing was identified as a valuable practice to support stewardship work and would enable better-informed decision-making. Being able to understand easily what stewardship work has, is, and is yet to be done in shared territories would be helpful.
- Several participants suggested a spatial data portal from which stewardship data could be viewed and downloaded, or some accessible repository of shared data. Having a coordinator to facilitate data sharing might be of value.
- Stewardship Corridor-related spatial data layers (e.g. priority connectivity areas) would be a useful tool for some Nations.
- A Symposium of stewardship activities can facilitate knowledge sharing.
- **Communicating a Clear and Inclusive Process.** In order to overcome Nations' barriers to participation, participants

suggested as clearly as possible articulating the process for Nation engagement and involvement in the Stewardship Corridor initiative, including an explanation of the expected workload and commitments required. Inclusivity involves practising respect for each of the Nations' positions on land use and stewardship goals, and respecting different ways of making decisions.

- A **Terms of Reference** or Protocol Agreement was suggested as a tool for enabling Nation-to-Nation collaboration. This would help Nations to address and overcome cultural differences and governance barriers to participating alongside one another in the Stewardship Corridor. For some Nations, these conversations are needed before further participation in the initiative.
- A **Stewardship Corridor Declaration** was suggested as a way of communicating

shared interests and providing the mandate for Nations' staff to pursue connectivity and stewardship activities.

- **Advocacy, Outreach, and Funding.**

Provincial and federal governments were identified as important partners that must be engaged in Stewardship Corridor and connectivity planning. As such, advocating for conservation and connectivity to the Province was suggested as a potentially useful next step. In particular, lobbying for updates to the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan (2000) was suggested as a starting point for engaging the Province in supporting, pursuing, and funding ecological connectivity initiatives. Outreach to other interested organisations (e.g. conservation organisations, and regional governments) was suggested to facilitate capacity, funding, and political will.



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Appendix A: Interview List

First Nation	Participant Name	Contact Role	Contact Email and Phone	Interview Date	Interview Format
Ahousaht (ᑕᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎ)	Hasheukumiss	Ha'wiih / MHSS	hasheukumiss@mhssaho.usaht.ca	June 17, 2022	In person
Ditidaht (ᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎ)	Brian Tate	Chief Councillor	btate@ditidaht.ca ; 250-745-3333	n/a	n/a
Hesquiaht (ᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎ)	Vince Ambrose	Ha'wiih	250-466-4656	n/a	n/a
Hupačasath	Brandy Lauder	Chief Councillor	brandy@hupacasath.ca ; 250-724-4041	May 19, 2022	Zoom
Hupačasath	Ricky-Lee Watts	Councillor	ricky-lee@hupacasath.ca ; 250-724-4041	May 19, 2022	Zoom
Huu-ay-aht	Duane Nookemis	Councillor	duane_n@huyuayaht.org ; 250-728-3414	June 10, 2022	Zoom
Pacheedaht	Kristine Pearson	Referrals Coordinator	referrals@pacheedaht.ca ; 250-647-5521	June 28, 2022	Zoom
Scia'new (Beecher Bay)	Russ Chipps	Chief Councillor	bb.fn@telus.net ; 250-478-3535	May 26, 2022	Zoom
Tla-o-qui-aht (ᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎ)	Saya Masso	Director of Lands	lands@tla-o-qui-aht.org ; 250-726-6401	June 14, 2022	Hybrid in person/Zoom
Toquaht (ᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎ)	Brett Freake	Manager of Lands and Resources	brettf@toquaht.ca ; 250-878-1707	June 22, 2022	Zoom
Toquaht (ᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎ)	David Johnsen	Director of Lands, Public Works, and Resources	davidj@toquaht.ca ; 250-726-4230 ext. 233	June 22, 2022	Zoom
Tseshahat (ᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎᑎ)	Ken Watts	Chief Councillor	kenwatts@tsesahat.com ; 250-720-6100	June 27, 2022	Zoom
T'Sou-ke	Eva Shaffer	Marine Liaison	marineliaison2@tsoukenation.com ; 778-352-0011	June 24, 2022	Zoom
Uchucklesaht	Ryan Anaka	Director of Lands and Resources	Ryan.Anaka@uchucklesaht.ca ; 250-724-1832	n/a	n/a
Uchucklesaht	Moses Towell	Resource and Development Manager	moses.towell@uchucklesaht.ca ; 250-724-1832	July 19, 2022	Zoom
Yuułuʔiłʔatᐩ (Ucluelet)	Jonquil Crosby	Manager of Fisheries and Wildlife	jonquil.crosby@ufn.ca ; 250-726-7342	May 16, 2022	Zoom
Yuułuʔiłʔatᐩ (Ucluelet)	Charles McCarthy	President	charles.mccarthy@ufn.ca; 250-726-7342	May 16, 2022	Zoom

Appendix B: Initiative Inventory by Nation

Note that the list of initiatives below is not exhaustive but reflective only of what was shared in interviews and which were found in desktop research. Some participants were willing to share extensively their stewardship activities, and others were not as willing or did not have the time to elaborate.

Ahousaht First Nation

- **Salmon Strategy.** Ahousaht's approach to salmon enhancement is multi-pronged. It includes monitoring, data collection, and analysis; enhancing wild populations with hatchery fish and expanding the number of hatcheries; and restoration of critical salmon spawning habitat in rivers and watersheds throughout the haḥuulii.
- **Watershed and River Restoration.** In partnership with the Redd Fish Restoration Society and the Healthy Watersheds Initiative, Ahousaht Stewardship Guardians have been working to restore salmon habitat in primary watersheds throughout the haḥuulii. The restoration work is immediately effective, and the restoration plan for all impacted rivers and side-channels is being implemented.
- **Stewardship Guardian Program.** The Ahousaht Stewardship Guardians support the Ha'wiih to monitor and steward Ahousaht haḥuulii. The Ahousaht Stewardship Guardian Program is responsible for a variety of stewardship activities, including monitoring the impact of industry on local ecosystems, conducting research projects such as surveying the rebounding sea star population and building and maintaining infrastructure for visitors to the territory. The program combines western science and Ahousaht knowledge to support the preservation, restoration and protection of Ahousaht resources and culture for generations to come.
- **Ahousaht Stewardship Fund.** This fund was established as a voluntary ecosystem-service fee for recreationalists, tourists and guide outfitting businesses that operate within Ahousaht territory as a way to recognize the stewardship, monitoring and patrol work. The Ahousaht Stewardship Guardians program is in part supported by this fund.
- **Land Use Vision.** Ratified in 2017, the Ahousaht Land Use Vision sets a path for the Nations' long-term sustainable economic development for their haḥuulii. The Land Use Vision guides management planning and decision-making with the intent to protect Ahousaht cultural and heritage resources, maintain and enhance the Ahousaht way of life, protect and maintain biological diversity and natural environments, and provide community development opportunities for both economic and social well-being. Implementation of the plan is underway with support from Nature United and B.C.

Hupačasath First Nation

- **Watershed Restoration and Management.** Hupačasath are restoring salmon habitat in the Great Central Lakes area and in Lowry Creek, where coho are running again. They are working with BC Parks to reduce motor vehicle usage and associated impacts in

salmon-bearing creeks, by installing anti-vehicle boulders and taking out boat launches. They are also aiming to restore Sproat and Taylor River salmon habitat.

- **Species at Risk Management.** Hupačasath is constantly working with the Ministry of Environment to identify and manage listed species, including painted turtles, eagles, northern goshawk, and marbled murrelets.
- **Old Growth Management.** Through a Memorandum of Understanding industry agreement with Western and Mosaic, Hupačasath is protecting cultural, sacred, and ecologically important areas through “Old Growth Management Area” planning. They have doubled the amount of old growth management areas in the Nahmint watershed to protect deer, elk, goshawk, and marbled murrelet habitat. They are trying to triple the amount of old growth management area in the Sproat and Taylor Rivers.
- **Eco-Tourism Development.** Hupačasath is co-managing the Loon Lake campground with Mosaic, and seeking management contracts for Lowry Lake and Scott Creek campgrounds.
- **Cultural Site Protection and Programming.** Hupačasath is setting aside areas in their woodlots for cultural use. These areas are accessed by membership including youth and elders for swimming, BBQs, camping, etc. Members are taken out bark stripping, but good harvesting areas have become more scarce as flat areas are needed for access and there is a 10-15 grow back period.
- **Mapped Data.** Hupačasath has Traditional Use Study data which is being used to ensure connectivity in the Nahmint watershed. They are hoping to use this approach to ensure connectivity in the Sproat, Taylor, and Great Central Lake areas. Western is open to a connectivity approach.
- **Other Potential Interests.** Hupačasath is interested in pursuing IPCAs, expanding youth programming as a part of a Young Warriors program, and language revitalization (in need of a language champion).

Huu-ay-aht First Nation

- **Integrated Resource Management Plan.** Huu-ay-aht’s IRMP has been going on for 8 months with Western Forest Products and Mosaic, as a way to take care of the land and waters and do logging sustainably. The IRMP’s focus is on using the land in a way that is beneficial to Huu-ay-aht. It includes provisions for protecting elk habitat and travel corridors.
- **Old Growth Protection.** Huu-ay-aht values saving patches of old growth so that cultural uses (e.g. dugout canoe building) can be protected into the future. Protection takes place on Tree Farm Licence or Treaty Settlement Lands.
- **Watershed Restoration.** Salmon habitat enhancement on the Sarita, Pacheena, and Sugsaw Rivers (e.g. creating pools, channels, removing log jams) has been carried out by Huu-ay-aht. Their forestry practices aim to avoid impacts to deer, bear, medicines, cultural uses and sites (e.g. basket weaving material harvesting). Huu-ay-aht closed Sarita Bay to enhance the Sarita River. Funding for restoration comes from enforcement of a \$5 per cubic metre harvesting fee.

- **Parks Co-management.** Huu-ay-aht co-manages the West Coast Trail with Parks Canada.
- **Nation Agreements.** Huu-ay-aht engages in resource management planning with Pacheedaht and Ditidaht. See the Hišuk ma čawak Declaration.
- **Mapped Data.** Huu-ay-aht have done many TUS studies over many years, including around clam digging sites, fishing sites, and for other uses.

Pacheedaht First Nation

- **Rehabilitation, restoration, and monitoring.** Pacheedaht ecological programming is aimed at trying to understand ecological trends so that they can best plan for the future.
- **Cultural Programming.** Includes culture camps and language programs.
- **Governmental Negotiations.** Pacheedaht is actively sitting at the table with BC and Canada on harvesting and land use issues.
- **Mapped Data.** Pacheedaht has done GIS work on existing conservation areas. Cultural and spiritual mapping has been occurring for 20 years. Their conservation layers from their perspective already make up a large percentage of the territory. Pacheedaht decision making with respect to conservation areas relies on their cultural, spiritual mapping data, and old growth data.

Scia'new First Nation

- **Ocean Protections Monitoring.** Scia'new has an oceans protections monitoring building, out of which monitoring work occurs. This monitoring work includes 9 divers who monitor the sea floor. It is funded by the Salish Sea Initiative.
- **Spill Response Base.** Scia'new is the only Nation with a spill response base close to Victoria. They are 30 minutes away from a spill response.
- **Tug Escort Group.** Scia'new's "Cotug" escorts ships from Vancouver to Port Renfrew.
- **Shipping Traffic Monitoring.** Scia'new monitors ship speeds and connects this data with dangerous cargo information found online.
- **Mary Hill IPCA.** Located beside Pearson College. For Scia'new, this wasn't a huge priority, but it became attractive when it offered opportunities for youth cultural education.
- **Comprehensive Community Plan.** Scia'new's CCP has been wrapped up for years but has not yet been ratified. It should be ratified soon, and it will be the first major planning document for the Nation.
- **Cultural Programming.** Scia'new holds a culture camp every year or two. There is a youth group that meets regularly. Language programs are taught in schools and led by Shirley Alphonse.

Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation

- **Tribal Parks.** Tla-o-qui-aht's vision is to protect these forests, not to log them. The 1984 Tribal Park Declaration was an explanation on how to share Aboriginal title land, and how these areas on Meares Island would provide medicines, waters, hunting areas on the mudflats and nearby areas. This became the model for Tla-o-qui-aht's second and third Tribal Parks. Their entire territory was declared a Tribal Park in 2018.
- **IPCAs.** For Tla-o-qui-aht, IPCAs are like a land vision 2.0. Tla-o-qui-aht understands that their members still need to have a livelihood from this forestry, but that their culture also needs to survive. Tla-o-qui-aht wants to use its government-to-government relationships to take out the Tree Farm License and put in an IPCA. They are going through the process of having a land vision, and using IPCAs as a tool to implement it. Implementing IPCAs is expensive.
- **Carbon Offset Credits.** Tla-o-qui-aht is at the reconciliation table and they are pursuing carbon credits for the Provincial parks, and would like to do the same for Federal parks. Aboriginal Rights aren't recognized in BC Parks or Canada Parks. From the Tla-o-qui-aht perspective, park land should be their land and they should decide if they log those forests or protect them for carbon credits, and thus earn revenue from any carbon credits generated from these lands. There's a benefit from trees standing, and there's an environmental and economic service coming to your people with carbon credits.
- **Junior Guardian Program.** Tla-o-qui-aht has a strong training program for youth which exposes them to guardian work and teaches them how to care for the land.
- **Cultural Programming.** Includes a language program that is going strong in its third year. The language program does outreach and community Zoom meetings. Tla-o-qui-aht would like to pilot a hunting camp with their Young Warriors youth group.
- **Mapped Data.** Tla-o-qui-aht really aggressively pursued TUS mapping in the 90s for the Clayoquot Sound science panel, but this level of effort has not been done since then. Always ongoing is engagement with elders and knowledge keepers to record and map community knowledge.

Toquaht Nation

- **Lands Technician.** Recently hired to conduct monitoring, and the only staffer to really focus on this.
- **Youth Camps.** Administered by Community Services. Before COVID, youth were taught how to catch and cook salmon over a fire.
- **Language Program.** David Johnsen's mother is the language coordinator for the Nation.
- **Community Development.** Toquaht is developing a community hostel to host community members when they visit from out of town. This will lay the groundwork for getting people back to the land, speaking the language, harvesting wild food and being together.
- **Mapped Data.** At the beginning of Treaty the Nation did lots of TUS work which is "probably still relevant". It has been digitised. There hasn't been any mapping since.

Tseshahṭ First Nation (Ćiṣaaʔaṭḥ)

- **Beach Keepers.** Tseshahṭ's Beach Keepers are just like Guardians, in that they look after the haḥuulii in the Broken Group. They patrol, monitor, and do assessment work. This is in collaboration with BC and Parks Canada.
- **TFL Management.** Tseshahṭ partners with Huu-ay-aht and Western, who hold the TFL in the territory.
- **Eco-friendly Development.** Tseshahṭ is exploring seaweed aquaculture with Cascadia. They are working with other Nations on eco-development. They are looking at having a campground on Tseshahṭ ALR lands.
- **Community Energy Plan.** Tseshahṭ's Building Efficiency Strategy is being developed with Barkley Group, and will help to install renewable energy and charging stations at the Administration Building and Tseshahṭ Market, as well as to get electricity to the remote reserves.
- **WCMRC Oil Spill Response.** Tseshahṭ is working to develop a remote response station with the Beach Keepers.
- **Land Use Planning.** Tseshahṭ is in the middle of land use planning, and this is based on their Comprehensive Community Plan.
- **Community Gardens.** Tseshahṭ is operating community gardens on their fee-simple private lands and lands in the ALR.
- **Partnering with Land Holders.** Tseshahṭ is looking at all opportunities for economic development, including partnership with Timberlands, Mosaic, and the City of Port Alberni. They are talking with Province on BC treaty settlement areas and other nations' treaties.
- **Other Potential Interests.** Tseshahṭ is interested in pursuing carbon offset credits.

T'Sou-ke Nation

- **Ecological Monitoring.** T'Sou-ke is tracking changes in forest health as nutrient flows change with reduced salmon runs. They are monitoring on the Sooke River, up to the mountains, over to Port Renfrew with Shift Environmental. They want to monitor scat to track genomes of salmon on the land.
- **Ecological Surveying.** T'Sou-ke is surveying to get an inventory of what is in the territory. They are working with Beecher Bay to do aerial near infrared surveys of forests and eelgrass beds for ecosystem health. They are doing terrestrial ecosystem health surveying with Malahat and Beecher Bay to understand carbon capture potential, also with Shift Environmental.
- **Guardian Program.** Funded through the Salish Sea Initiative, the main focus of the Guardian program is to monitor and track Southern Resident Killer Whales' food (i.e. salmon).
- **Marine Monitoring and Restoration.** T'Sou-ke conducts dive wreck investigation and derelict vessel removal. They are trying to get a monitoring program setup, but licensing is difficult because whales cannot be tracked with a drone. T'Sou-ke wants to do this to understand their movement. The Clear Sees Initiative supports monitoring impacts from

shipping vessel traffic. T'Sou-ke is trying to hire a marine scientist, but it is difficult because it is expensive to live in the area. They want cameras and divers to monitor shoreline development and associated impacts (e.g. dumping of construction materials).

- **Invasive Species Management.** T'Sou-ke is partnered with the Coastal Restoration Society to manage green crab in the Sooke River estuary, which is an important eelgrass habitat for salmon forage species.
- **Land Reclamation and Restoration.** T'Sou-ke is looking to recover old village sites (previously industrial log sorting and mine runoff sites) as well as Whiffin Spit to restore them to good health.
- **WCMRC Oil Spill Response.** T'Sou-ke's oil spill response work is funded through the Oceans Protections Plan in response to increased tanker traffic. They are putting together a table top exercise to test marine response efforts and responsibilities.
- **Solar Program.** T'Sou-ke's solar farm produces electricity for the community and for sale.
- **Greenhouse Program.** Grows foods including ginseng.
- **Te'mexw Treaty Association.** The Treaty Association supports member nations, including T'Sou-ke, in negotiating Treaties.
- **Cultural Programming.** T'Sou-ke youth programming includes traditional harvesting, field trips, and presentations with school kids. T'Sou-ke does SENCOTEN language revitalization programs, where participants can sit down and speak with a language speaker.
- **Other Potential Ideas.** T'Sou-ke is interested in developing a culture camp on glamping grounds around Smokehouse Lakes and Leech Falls, but has no capacity to get it off the ground.

Yuułu?if?ath Government

- **Conservation Science and Wildlife Monitoring.** For Yuułu?if?ath, this is important for rounding out the knowledge of what is on the landscape and what areas are up for development. They are currently monitoring black bears, pine marten, and elk (in the Nahmint watershed). They are partnered with Uchucklesaht to put 40 cameras in the Nahmint Valley to monitor elk.
- **Wildlife Restoration.** Yuułu?if?ath worked with Toquaht to move 40 elk into the Toquaht/Yuułu?if?ath area. They are exploring black bear habitat restoration and monitoring using cameras in restored stump den sites.
- **Watershed Restoration.** Yuułu?if?ath is restoring habitat to reduce sedimentation from forestry in creeks and rivers. They are focused on the Nahmint and Effingham watersheds.
- **Intertidal Restoration.** Yuułu?if?ath Nation citizens' priority is to have safe marine shellfish access. This involves some restoration on the intertidal, as well as access work. Ucluelet Inlet is a bigger job, and restoration mostly involves garbage cleanup and eelgrass health. Yuułu?if?ath is working with Ucluelet Aquarium and Parks Canada on an overall Inlet health strategy.

- **Oceans Conservation Science and Monitoring.** Yuułuᑭiᑭᑭᑦᑦᑦ's marine mammal monitoring has to do with transport vessel impacts. They conduct whale monitoring and surveying. Yuułuᑭiᑭᑭᑦᑦᑦ is researching impacts of eels and sea lions at river mouths to better understand salmon population health - some funding for this and other monitoring comes through the Salish Sea Initiative.
- **Enforcement.** A Yuułuᑭiᑭᑭᑦᑦᑦ Natural Resource Management Officer patrols the lands, but they have a huge territory and the Officer is tasked with other work. There is some excitement over Guardian Steward Programs, but no one at Yuułuᑭiᑭᑭᑦᑦᑦ has time to take this up. They maybe need to hire a coordinator to get it off the ground
- **Cultural Programming.** At Yuułuᑭiᑭᑭᑦᑦᑦ this is led by the Culture and Heritage Department. Programming includes the Young Warriors youth engagement programming. Elders programming includes an elder's group that meets to talk about foods and animals.
- **Maa-nulth Land Use Round Table.** The most recent roundtable on marine stewardship, which Yuułuᑭiᑭᑭᑦᑦᑦ participates in, had 20-25 participants. This was suggested as a good venue for discussing the Stewardship Corridor.
- **Treaty Protected Areas.** Within the Treaty area there are protected areas for different uses, including harvesting. Yuułuᑭiᑭᑭᑦᑦᑦ has a special engagement protocol for anyone wanting to do work in special use areas (e.g. Reasonable Opportunities Areas).
- **Traditional Foods Coordinator.** The coordinator plans and implements traditional foods programming for the Nation.
- **Mapped Data.** Yuułuᑭiᑭᑭᑦᑦᑦ has Traditional Use Study data that are available to be shared, based on two studies in the haᑭuuᑭii. Treaty areas and zones are mapped and can also be shared.

Appendix C: Key Partners in Territorial Management by Nation

Note that the list of partners below is not exhaustive but reflective only of what was shared in interviews and which were found in desktop research. These lists are intended to be illustrative of the broad range of partnerships formed by each Nation and the unique approaches that each has taken in pursuit of stewardship. Commonly cited key partners include BC (Parks, Environment, Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development), Canada (DFO, Parks), Regional Districts, Treaty Associations, and prominent industry/forestry operators (Western and Mosaic).

Ahousaht First Nation

- BC Parks
- Cermaq
- Nature United
- Redd Fish Restoration Society

- Ha'oom Fisheries Society
- NTC Fisheries (Uu-a-thluk)
- Cascadia Seaweeds
- Bottom Dwellers
- Cedar Coast Field Station
- UBC
- Coastal Restoration Society
- Clayoquot Wilderness Resort
- Surfrider Pacific Rim

Hupačasath First Nation

- Western Forest Products - Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- HUU-ay-aht & Western Forest Products - on TFL 34
- BC Timber Services - harder to work with
- Mosaic - they put a halt to all old growth logging for 25 years
- BC Parks
- City of Port Alberni - putting HFN Land Use Plan standards in the city's Official Community Plan
- Alberni Clayoquot Regional District - hoping they will follow City of Port Alberni's acceptance of HFN Land Use Plan standards
- Pacific Salmon Foundation - funded river restoration, along with funding from Mosaic and WFP
- Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
- Provincial and Federal Governments - need to be involved

Huu-ay-aht First Nation

- Department of Fisheries and Oceans - salmon enhancement programs
- Province of BC - provides us with funding
- Forestry companies - provide us with funding
- Western Forest Products and Mosaic - putting money in for the Resource Management Plan

Pacheedaht First Nation

- BC
- Canada
- Parks Canada
- Ditidaht and HUU-ay-aht - [Hišuk ma c'awak Declaration](#)

Scia'new First Nation

- Salish Sea Initiative
- Pearson College
- Habitat Acquisition Trust

Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation

- Nature United
- Alberni Clayoquot Regional District
- District of Tofino
- Parks Canada

Toquaht Nation

- Redd Fish Restoration Society
- Maa-nulth Treaty Nations - variety of tables from Maa-nulth
- Canada - Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
- BC - Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship
- Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government
- Barkley Community Forest - creating sustainable forestry practices and opportunities
- District of Ucluelet
- MaMook Natural Resources - still a partner, but not really sure how it is operating right now. Most of the TFLs are outside of Toquaht settlement lands. We have a rep on the board.
- Private landowners - they have less stake as individuals
- District of Tofino
- Clayoquot Alberni Regional District
- Parks Canada
- BC Parks

Tseshah First Nation (Ćišaaʔatḥ)

- Canada
- BC
- Vancouver Island Economic Alliance

T'Sou-ke Nation

- Te'mexw Treaty
- Malahat First Nation
- BC and Canada - have not been helpful

- Clean Coast Clean Waters Initiative Fund
- University of Victoria
- First Nations Fisheries Council - They have a marine spatial planning group, marine science committee, and cumulative effects of marine shipping. They provide funding at regional and sub regional levels for marine spatial planning, emergency preparedness and response.
- Oceans Protections Plan
- Western Canada Marine Response Corporation - For shoreline cleanup efforts

Yuułu?if?ath Government

- Parks Canada - monitoring on the West Coast Trail
- Cooperative Management Board
- Marine Stewardship Program
- Maa-nulth Treaty Nations - we work a lot together (e.g. Roberts Bank, marine traffic, etc.)

Appendix D: Literature Review

A literature review of the 13 west coast First Nations’ publicly available land use plans, community plans, resource management plans, and missions and goals was conducted to identify common and divergent themes in territorial land use visions, goals and guiding principles. Together with discussion notes from the 2020 Stewardship Corridor Gathering, prominent themes were identified and included in the drafting of the Stewardship Corridor vision. Commonalities between visions were focused on, rather than differences, to support the drafting of a vision that would align with as many nations as possible.

Methods for the literature review included:

1. Scanned literature and notes for visions, goals, ideas, principles related to stewardship, land use, visions, and the corridor project; recorded these in Google Sheets.
2. Clumped data by general type (process, principle, goal, vision, etc.).
3. Themed and sorted recommendations within each type.

Major themes and values identified were combined and wordsmithed to draft a vision for the Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor.

Table X. Land use vision themes contributing to the Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor draft vision	
Major themes in First Nations’ land use visions*	Major values identified in the Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor 2020 Gathering discussion notes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Balancing economic development with environmental protection ● Recognizing the past and practising cultural traditions as a means of securing the future ● Assert authority over the broader territory ● Prioritise protection of important cultural and harvesting areas ● Following sacred principles including Hisuk'ish tsawalk, Uu-a-thluk, lisaak, and Naut'sa mawt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Combining traditional knowledge and western science ● Strengthening individual nation capacity ● Building partnerships ● Restoring degraded landscapes ● Balancing ecological and economic goals ● Interconnection and the importance of place
<p><i>*Sources contributing to major themes include: Ahousaht Land Use Vision Press Release 2017, Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks Report 2021, Uchucklesaht Tribe Government Official Community Plan 2015, Uchucklesaht Land Use Plan 2008, Yuułuꞵitꞵathꞵ Official Community Plan 2013, Ditidaht Community Plan Working Document 2017, Toquaht Nation Official Community Plan 2016, Hupačasath Mission & Vision (webpage), Tseshaht Comprehensive Community Plan 2021, Huu-ay-aht Integrated Resource Management Plan Info Sheet, Our Community, Our Circle, Our Voice (Huu-ay-aht CCP).</i></p>	

Appendix E: Interview Guide

Indigenous-Led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor (ILWSC) Project Introduction

As urban development, resource extraction and climate change impacts continue to increase worldwide, recognizing areas that are ecologically sensitive, culturally important and of value to wildlife is pertinent to the health and longevity of ecosystems. Creating greater landscape level awareness and connectivity aligns with the Nuu-chah-nulth guiding principles of Hishuk'ish tsawalk, (interconnectedness), Uu-a-thluk (the responsibility to take care of) and lisaak (respect for all things living and nonliving) (Crosby, 2020).

The west coast Indigenous-led stewardship corridor is an Indigenous-led initiative to restore healthy relationships with the land, waters, plants, animals, people and creator in order to re-balance what is now out of balance. This initiative began with a Gathering in February 2020 hosted by the Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government in the community of Hitacu.

This eventful Gathering included members from a number of Nations including Ahousaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Huu-ay-aht, Dididaht, and T'sou-ke, as well as several other organisations including the Districts of Tofino and Ucluelet, and members of the Coexisting with Carnivores Alliance, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, the B.C. Conservation Foundation and Parks Canada. There was consensus that we are out of balance, and that land relationships between people, the four-legged, the two-legged and plants and trees have changed considerably. The ecosystems that were present 150 years ago have been disrupted and it is time to learn from the ancestors to reverse these changes. The attendees spoke to a sense of urgency given the impacts from climate change and development and that something needed to be done within the next 10 years or the opportunity will be lost.

These discussions led to the proposal for and vision of a connected large-scale landscape Indigenous-led stewardship corridor (similar to the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative) extending from the southern to the northern regions of Vancouver Island. A Westcoast Indigenous-led Stewardship Corridor (see attached map) was seen as the first phase of this bigger initiative.

A steering committee was convened with representatives from across the region and some initial goals were outlined that would advance the vision of an ILWSC to work collaboratively to restore and protect the health of the landscape between the ocean and the mountains along the Westcoast of Vancouver Island.

“We know we have disrupted the forest, the house of the wildlife, and we would like to be part of restoring ‘the house’. We need to be able to have all

living beings living in a healthy way and we can learn from our ancestors how to restore the land. That is our birthright". ~ Chief Gordon Planes November 9, 2021 Steering Committee meeting

The ability and authority of First Nations to pursue economic development across their territories has been identified as a major theme across many of the Nations' Land Use and Community Plan visions. At the same time, many of these visions express a desire to protect culturally and ecologically significant areas for current and future generations. The ILWSC initiative can support Nations to share best management practices, identify areas of collaboration and where they can be implemented for greatest ecological continuity, grow their stewardship programs, and be confident that economic development decisions align with regional environmental values.

The main goal of this present project is to build on the work completed by the Steering Committee and engage collaborating First Nations in a 2nd Regional Gathering for the purpose of having an informed dialogue of building a Nation to Nation framework that includes shared interests, opportunities and challenges related to stewardship and resource management actions that work towards achieving the vision for a collaborative Indigenous-led stewardship corridor.

Draft Vision for the Indigenous-led West Coast Stewardship Corridor

Guided by the ancestral Coast Salish principles of Naut'sa mawt (together as one) and Nuu-chah-nulth principles of Hishuk'ish tsawalk (interconnectedness), Uu-a-thluk (the responsibility to take care of) and lisaak (respect for all things living and non-living/utmost respect), the Indigenous-Led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor is a uniquely connected place on Vancouver Island where the priority is to continually enhance and restore the lands waters and wildlife across the territories. Through our collective wisdom, Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities will thrive culturally, ecologically

and economically for generations to come.

Who is involved in this work?

The early research and planning for this project is being led by the Yuułu?it?ath, Toquaht and T'Sou-ke Nations. A Steering Committee was struck at the 2020 Gathering to advise this work and consists of representatives from the Maa-nulth Treaty Nations, T'Sou-ke Nation, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, and Coexisting with Carnivores Alliance. The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust is managing this phase of the project. George Van and Sarah Reid of Reciprocity Research have been contracted to support initial research and planning stages of this work.

Funding for this research and communications project is provided by Nature United and the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust.

Consent & Confidentiality

The intent of this interview is for you to learn more about and inform the Indigenous-Led Westcoast Stewardship corridor Initiative. The information gathered through interviews will inform the steering committee about your approach and vision for stewardship, opportunities for alignment and collaboration, and potential barriers and challenges in advancing the ILWSC.

This interview will be recorded. Should you request it, your personal information and responses to the questions will be kept anonymous.

You are not required to answer all of the questions and you are welcome to end the interview at any time.

Your experience and knowledge is valued. For your time, you will be gifted an honorarium to thank you for your time and expertise.

The information and knowledge that you share in this interview belongs to you. By completing this interview, you give consent to the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, the ILWSC Steering Committee and ILWSC initiative partners to use your responses for the purpose of informing the Indigenous-Led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor initiative. You are free to retract your consent to share your information at any time.

For further information, please contact:

Sarah Reid, Contract Research Manager, at sarah@reciprocityconnects.ca or on 778-874-0022
OR Rebecca Hurwitz, Executive Director of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust at rebecca@clayoquotbiosphere.org or on 250-266-0106.

1. Is there anything else you would like to share?

2. **Would you like your responses to be kept anonymous or would you like to have your name attributed to them?**

Interview Questions

What Matters Most/ Core Values

1. Introductions
 1. Please share your name, what you do for work, any roles you play in your community, and something that makes you feel proud of your Nation/community
2. What matters most to you personally when it comes to taking care of the lands and waters?

Nation's Vision

3. What matters most to your Nation when it comes to the lands and waters in your territory today and towards a long-term future?
 - a. How do you/your Nation envision pursuing economic development alongside environmental stewardship, traditional harvesting and protection?
 - b. What major landscape impacts have or are affecting your livelihood and way of life now and in the future (natural hazards, climate change, industrial, commercial, economic)?
 - c. Is there a place/role for conservation or stewardship in your territory?
 - d. Are there any specific areas and/or species you would like to see prioritised for restoration/conservation/stewardship? [look at map together]
4. What do you think of the proposed Vision for the Stewardship Corridor? Does it work/not work with the Nation's Vision?

Initiative Inventory

5. What past and present activities/initiatives/projects/programs has your Nation undertaken to take care of the lands and waters?
 - a. Indigenous protected areas/Tribal parks/ co-management of parks or protected areas

- b. Stewardship initiatives (e.g. Guardian program, monitoring, patrolling, ecosystem-based management, enforcement of Indigenous laws and principles, etc.)
- c. Culture camps, harvesting camps, language revitalization, youth engagement, elder/knowledge keeper engagement
- d. Use and occupancy mapping or other studies with elders and knowledge keepers that documents wildlife travel routes, hunting and harvesting areas, etc.
- e. G2G agreements/negotiations, Industry/business agreements or protocols
- f. Other

Partners and Neighbours

- 6. Which partners have been the most helpful to you in stewardship or conservation?
- 7. In what ways do you see cross-territory stewardship projects affecting your Nations approach to stewardship and long-term planning for your community?
- 8. Do you see value in your Nation working collaboratively towards establishing an Indigenous-led stewardship corridor along the Westcoast of the Island?
- 9. Who needs to be involved in supporting stewardship of your territories? (e.g. valuable external partners, internally, etc.)

Barriers and Challenges

- 10. What challenges do you foresee in pursuing the vision of an ILWSC?
- 11. What specific barriers would you/your Nation potentially have to participate in a stewardship corridor initiative?
- 12. What are some ways that we can have information sharing and communication to move towards a shared vision of such a corridor?

Closing

- 13. Would you/your Nation be interested in continuing to be engaged on this project? If so, how would you like to be engaged?
- 14. Would you be interested in taking part in a Gathering of all the Nations within this Corridor at the end of 2022?

14. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Appendix F: Project Goals and Objectives

Understanding of the Project

It is our understanding that the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust is working to support and facilitate the next steps and action items coming out a 'Westcoast Stewardship Corridor Meeting', hosted on February 27th 2020 on the lands of the Yuułu?it?at in Hitacu. This kick off meeting was attended by representatives from Indigenous communities, crown government entities and organisations interested in ecological and human well being across the Westcoast of Vancouver Island. This led to the formation of a steering committee and a commitment to work together to further pursue the merits and strategies to establish a large-scale landscape stewardship corridor across the Westcoast of Vancouver Island, from T'Sou-ke to Hesquiaht territories.

Convening Indigenous Nations, all levels of Crown governments, and likely dozens of interest groups to a point where an Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor becomes a recognized designation is no small feat. We understand the work requested is one small, but foundational, piece of the puzzle. Based on RFP No. 2022-001, we have identified a strategic approach and work plan to accomplish the following objectives within the allocated timeframe and budget:

1. Identify and document the various Indigenous stewardship related interests, objectives, initiatives, and collaborations already underway within the Westcoast Stewardship Corridor area, and:
2. Identify areas of shared interest that could form the basis for future collaboration towards the vision and learning between Nations across this region and other interest groups.

Strategic Approach & Work Plan

Based on the RFP and initial initial discussions, it is our understanding that the goals for this scope of work include:

1. Engaging with First Nations in the region to explore and identify potential areas, shared visions, and opportunities that can form the basis of future collaboration in pursuit of an Indigenous-led Stewardship Corridor;
2. Reporting to the Steering Committee and participating Nations areas of shared interest and opportunities for future collaboration.

We propose the following strategic approach to meeting the project's objectives:

Task 1 – Project Initiation

The first task at hand is to convene a virtual kickoff meeting to establish working relationships, lines of communication and to ensure that the project is initiated in a good way.

In order to meet the tight timeline of this project, it will likely be important for the CBT to re-engage the project Steering Committee ahead of this initial meeting, and ensure that all committee members are positively engaged and informed about the work underway. Guidance from a strong and engaged steering committee will be of critical importance to the success of this project, and to accomplishing the larger goal of establishing a designated Indigenous-led Westcoast Stewardship Corridor.

Task 2 – Corridor Scan & Inventory

Engage with the Steering Committee and supporting individuals, and draw on documentation including previous meeting minutes to confirm a concise description of the intent of this project. Existing community, regional, and territorial plans related to land use within the Stewardship Corridor will be identified through engagement with the Steering Committee and supporting individuals and groups, past meeting minutes, and through web research.

Visions and goals articulated in existing plans, minutes, other documents, and by the Steering Committee and supporting individuals will be used to form a draft vision for the corridor designed for consideration by First Nations and other key partners in the region. The document review (including attention to shared or conflicting stewardship visions and objectives of the region's First Nations), engagement with the Steering Committee and its supporting individuals, and the generation of a broad corridor vision will contribute to the creation of a list of questions for engagement with involved First Nations along the corridor as a part of this project.

Engagement with the Steering committee and supporting individuals will also be used to identify key First Nations contacts for interview as a part of the next task in this project. The concise description of the project, the broad stewardship corridor vision, and the engagement questions will be shared for review and input from the Steering Committee prior to direct engagement with First Nations.

Task 3 – Engagement

Outreach and communication with First Nations contacts identified by the Steering Committee and its supporting individuals. Our planned budget includes completion of up to 13 interviews by Zoom or phone, with up to two individuals per interview. Invitations for participation will be extended to the top 13 identified contacts up to three times each. If participation cannot be confirmed, we will provide additional invitations to other names identified. Should identified contacts not respond or be unable to participate in the short

timeline of this project, we will look to an alternate representative of the Nation. Engagement will involve the following:

- a. Introduce the concept of the Westcoast Stewardship Corridor;
- b. Document verbal informed consent for participation in the interview process, including confirmation of data ownership and sharing based on CBT guidance;
- c. Share the draft broad stewardship corridor vision;
- d. Receive feedback on how the draft corridor vision relates to each Nation's visions for their territory and relationship to their lands and waters;
- e. Identify related stewardship work already happening or planned in each Nations' territory, as well as overarching and cross-boundary interests and objectives;
- f. Document major landscape impacts or changes that, from a community perspective, are currently or likely to affect or challenge their vision for long-term land relationships within the corridor;
- g. Identify challenges, and areas of success, for each Nations' visions along with potential areas, opportunities, or ideas for collaboration to advance a shared vision of a stewardship corridor.

Task 4 – Analysis & Reporting

Information shared during the engagement interviews will be thematically analyzed. The findings of this analysis will be compiled in a 6-8 page visual, community-oriented report, alongside an internal memo for the CBT that will include technical appendices including documentation of methods and summary notes from each meeting and interview included in this scope of work. written report that will include summaries of responses to the above listed points of inquiry and will aim to highlight areas of shared interest and opportunities for future collaboration. The report will also identify where there may be conflicting visions or other significant challenges to the concept of a stewardship corridor identified by the First Nations.

Task 5 – Verification & Finalization

The draft report will be submitted to the Steering committee for review and verification prior to finalization.

The primary deliverable will be a community-oriented report, designed to showcase Indigenous-led stewardship initiatives in the area and identify areas of shared interest and opportunities for future collaboration.