





clayoquot  
BIOSPHERE TRUST | EST. 2000

Globally-minded.  
Ecosystem-oriented.  
Community-driven.



We acknowledge the territories of  
hiškʷiiʔath (Hesquiaht First Nation),  
ʔaʔuukʷiʔath (Tla-o-qui-aht First  
Nation), Yuuʔuʔitʔath Government  
(Ucluelet First Nation), and tukʷaaʔath  
(Toquaht Nation) in the spirit of truth,  
healing, and reconciliation.



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# Creating a better future through biosphere stewardship, philanthropy, and community building.

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The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) is a registered charity based on the west coast of British Columbia. Established in 2000, the CBT is the only organization in Canada that is both a community foundation and a UNESCO Biosphere Region. We pair the spirit of community with the power of global networks to bring more people together for a shared understanding. Our team works to strengthen the development of all citizens, communities, and the ecosystems on which we all depend, for a future we can all be proud of.

# From the Co-chairs

This year, the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region celebrated a remarkable milestone: 25 years as a UNESCO Biosphere. For a quarter-century, this region has been a place of collaboration, connection, and a shared commitment to a brighter future. This anniversary offered a meaningful opportunity to reflect on how far we have come, while also looking ahead to the next chapter of stewardship and care for this remarkable place.

To honour this moment, we invited community members, Elders, families, youth, and visitors to gather for a special celebration at the end of September. It was a day filled with appreciation, reflection, and joy as we came together to honour Indigenous knowledge and leadership, recognize decades of collaborative conservation and sustainable development, and share a hopeful vision for future generations.

We also reflected on the deeper history of stewardship by the central nuučaañut (Nuu-chah-nulth) Nations, as well as the many grassroots champions who have cared for this place long before 2000. The theme of the day, *Taking Pride in Working Together*, suggested by our board member Lorena Frank of ʕaʔuukʷiʔaḥ (Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation), reflected both the spirit of the gathering and the foundation of the biosphere itself. Collaboration has always been at the heart of this work, and the celebration served as a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when communities come together with shared purpose.

Beyond the anniversary, this year was also one of meaningful progress. We moved towards our goal of building the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Centre, with important advances in planning, community engagement, and support for this project. Grounded in local priorities and shaped by public input, the Centre will represent a collective investment in the long-term strength and resilience of the region.

2025 brought change within our Board. Several longstanding Directors stepped down, and we are deeply grateful for their years of dedication and leadership. At the same time, we welcomed new Directors, whose vision and energy will guide us forward. We now carry the passion of those who have stepped away while embracing the ideas and enthusiasm of all who have joined. We would also like to recognize Rebecca, our Executive Director, who has celebrated 20 years with the CBT. As a Board, we strongly value her contributions and are grateful for her ongoing strategic vision, steady leadership, and unwavering commitment to the organization and the region.

As we reflect on the past year, we do so with gratitude for the people, partnerships, and shared commitment that continue to sustain this work. We look ahead with optimism and anticipation, confident in what we can continue to achieve together.

## Nicky Ling and Naomi Mack

Co-chairs, Board of Directors, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust



# Vision

The community of the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Region (CSBR) will live sustainably in a healthy ecosystem, with a diversified economy, and strong, vibrant, and united cultures, while embracing the nuučaanuł (Nuu-chah-nulth) First Nations living philosophies of iisaak (living respectfully), qwa' aak qin tiič mis (life in the balance), and hišukniš čawaak (everything is one and interconnected).



# Co-leading

Sustainability Knowledge  
Development & Education



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The CBT's growing online library of Vital Conversations, Vital Signs, and Vital Snapshots provides accessible insights into the social, economic, cultural, and environmental well-being of the region.

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## Vital Conversations

As part of the Vital Signs program, the CBT hosts Vital Conversations to explore priority issues, gather community insights, and connect lived experience with local data. These sessions foster meaningful dialogue and collaboration, helping shape responsive strategies to local challenges. The collected insights inform granting priorities, help donors understand community needs, and raise awareness about important issues. Over time, Vital Conversations have deepened partnerships and advanced collaborative action on what matters most to local communities.



Access our  
online library here  
[qrc0.de/VitalData](https://qrc0.de/VitalData)

## Regional Climate Adaptation

In April 2025, we partnered with the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District to host a Vital Conversation on regional climate adaptation planning. Attending the conversation were multiple Indigenous and Municipal governments, as well as representatives from the private and non-profit sectors. Participants built a shared understanding of regional projects and priorities, discussed the challenges facing our small communities in addressing climate change, and formed the foundation for a successful collaborative application from 5 west coast communities to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for \$350,000 to support cross-community, cross-sector climate adaptation planning and implementation.



Read more:  
[qrco.de/VCClimate](http://qrco.de/VCClimate)



## Clayoquot Archive Digitization Project

The CBT stewards a unique archive collection from the “war in the woods” era, spanning the 1980s to the early 2000s. This period marked a nationally and globally significant shift from the resource economy into the modern era. The archive contains photos, environmental research, nuučaañuṭ (Nuu-chah-nulth) perspectives, forestry and early tourism planning, news clippings, and so much more. It’s an invaluable resource for a time when nuučaañuṭ communities, tiny logging and fishing towns, municipal, provincial, and federal governments were all trying to find a sustainable path forward. After nearly being lost in a basement flood at our office a few years ago, we have begun digitizing the collection with funding from the BC History Digitization Program. We look forward to connecting this important resource to current projects and initiatives across the region.



To learn more about  
the project, listen to  
our segment on  
Tuff City Radio  
[qrco.de/ArchiveProject](http://qrco.de/ArchiveProject)





WEST COAST  
**NEST**

**West Coast N.E.S.T.**

Nature.Education.Sustainability.Transformation.

The West Coast NEST connects visitors and residents with meaningful learning experiences led by local experts, building local capacity and expanding the region's education tourism economy. The CBT leads this regional collaboration to strengthen education and learning opportunities, while supporting a resilient and diversified local economy.

“After eight years of the West Coast Fibre Art Retreat, it’s become an anchor for fibre artists on this side of Vancouver Island. Living on the west coast can sometimes feel far from the larger creative centres, but this retreat has helped build a strong local community and has shown that there is incredible talent here. It also brings visitors from further afield, many of whom make the retreat part of a bigger trip to explore the region. For local instructors, it creates meaningful work close to home while supporting the wider creative economy and local businesses.”

— Faye Kennington, Fibre Art Retreat Instructor and co-creator.

**Key  
Highlights**

**900+**

People participated in West Coast NEST's educational programs

**755+**

Education programs were promoted on our website at [westcoastnest.org](http://westcoastnest.org) throughout the year

**30%+**

Of the participants of our 8th annual Fibre Art Retreat were returning from previous years

**1,500+**

Jobs were supported either directly or indirectly

**\$23k**

Provided in financial and logistical support for youth land-based learning opportunities, impacting over 660 local youth and their teachers

## Program Spotlights

### Place-Based Experiential Learning

The West Coast NEST facilitates place-based, community-connected learning opportunities for local elementary and high school students. Through hands-on, experiential learning, students explored whale and wildlife ecology, took part in invasive species removal and habitat restoration, engaged with guest speakers on salmon and marine ecosystems, participated in Indigenous poetry workshops, and contributed to community stewardship activities. In the fall, we engaged approximately 60% of local high school staff in a Professional Development Day. We fostered greater awareness of West Coast NEST's current programming and educational support opportunities and gathered feedback on how we can best support local educators.



### Visiting Groups

The West Coast NEST offers customized programs for visiting groups seeking immersive learning in the region. This summer, 15 agriculture students from Tamagawa University's Nanaimo satellite campus participated in a three-day field experience. Partnering with organizations including the Raincoast Education Society, Tribal Parks Allies, the Association of Wetland Stewards for Clayoquot and Barkley Sounds, and WildSafeBC Pacific Rim, the program combined science, culture, and hands-on activities. From forest ecology to invasive species removal, students gained practical skills and a deeper connection to the local environment. The NEST looks forward to continuing to bring learners into the field, fostering meaningful connections between people and place.



### StoryMaps Collection

The West Coast NEST maintains a growing collection of ArcGIS StoryMaps showcasing research in the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region. Developed collaboratively with experts, this digital story collection serves as a rich resource for understanding the region's ecology and history. In 2025, a new feature was added: *Amphibian Underpasses for the Pacific Rim Highway*. This is the fourth StoryMap exploring amphibians on the West Coast and the second sharing information about the effectiveness of underpasses in reducing road mortality during seasonal migrations. The *Star Citizens Saving Sea Stars* StoryMap was also updated to mark ten years of monitoring sea star wasting disease in the region, and offers insights into its impact on local populations. In the fall, we also began developing lasting, classroom-ready curriculum resources based on the StoryMaps collection.



# Biodiversity

Conservation in the  
Biosphere Region



The CBT is currently leading a five-year initiative aimed at enhancing biodiversity conservation efforts in the region. The project seeks to identify areas of importance and provide support for stewardship, restoration, and conservation of these vital zones.

## Indigenous-Led Stewardship

Areas being recognized for Canada's conservation targets are expanding beyond traditional parks and protected areas to include Other Effective Conservation Measures and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas.

In 2025, the CBT supported Indigenous-led stewardship and restoration projects across the region. By lifting up Nation-led stewardship programs, this funding added capacity to biodiversity monitoring, including marine monitoring led by Yuutuʔitʔatʔ Government (Ucluelet First Nation) and tukʷaaʔatʔ (Toquaht Nation), and Indigenous-led conservation work, including Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks guardians.

One highlight of this stewardship funding was supporting the hiškʷiiʔatʔ (Hesquiaht First Nation) fisheries team to take staff and students from Hesquiaht school out on the water to experience the herring spawn and learn about biodiversity monitoring programs. The group also learned about the grey whale migration and the history of their territory.

## Biosphere Region Gatherings

Connecting with other biosphere regions offers important opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective action. By engaging with our provincial and national networks, we strengthen relationships, exchange ideas, and learn from one another, demonstrating the power of working together to ensure a better future for both people and nature.

In late May, we hosted a BC Biosphere Gathering, bringing together partners from British Columbia's other two UNESCO-designated biosphere regions: Mount Arrowsmith and Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound. In the fall, we joined representatives from Canada's 19 UNESCO Biosphere Regions in the Fundy Biosphere for a national gathering organized by the Canadian Biosphere Regions Association. These events reinforced connections across the network and highlighted the importance of partnerships in advancing biodiversity conservation.



## Regional Forum

In the spring, the CBT hosted its fourth regional forum. This annual gathering brings together representatives from First Nations, local governments, and organizations involved in environmental research, stewardship, restoration, and sustainable development. These events provide a space to share projects and priorities, foster meaningful connections, and exchange insights. The CBT is incredibly grateful for the interest and enthusiasm that participants bring to the forum.

## Networks for Biodiversity

This project is stronger thanks to the collaborative spirit of people across the region. The CBT is grateful to support formal networks, such as the lisaak Sin Hay Tiičmis – Regional Wildlife Coexistence Network and the Clayoquot Sound Salmon Roundtable, as well as informal collaborative efforts through the work of our staff and board.

## Wetland Assessment Guidance Doc.

In 2025, the CBT partnered with regional and provincial organizations to develop a *Wetland Assessment Guidance Document for the Central West Coast of Vancouver Island*. Provincial wetland assessment guidelines can be challenging to apply in this region, which experiences significantly higher annual rainfall than most of British Columbia. Without region-specific guidance, environmental assessments risk being inconsistent or incomplete, potentially leading to both wetland degradation and costly development delays. This guidance document supports environmental professionals, planners, and developers in understanding how to navigate current environmental standards.

## Biodiversity Discovery Days

In the spring of 2025, in collaboration with the West Coast NEST and local partners, we hosted our first Biodiversity Discovery Days to celebrate the International Day for Biodiversity. Nearly 600 people joined the three-day event, taking part in expert talks, guided nature walks, a region-wide BioBlitz on iNaturalist, hands-on habitat restoration, and enjoyed a free visit to the Ucluelet Aquarium.

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"I especially appreciated the time to network with representatives from other organizations whom I had not met before. These connections are important for figuring out how to deliver our program across the region."

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— 2025 Regional Forum Participant



**2025**  
**BioBlitz**  
**at a glance**

**50+**  
Observers  
engaged

**1,000+**  
In person  
observations

**130+**  
Online participants  
assisting with  
identification

**400+**  
Identified  
species

# Strengthening

Healthy Communities, Ecosystems,  
and Diversifying Economies



## Eat West Coast

With rising food costs, the need for emergency preparedness, and increasing interest in food system resiliency and sovereignty for the region, the CBT's regional food security initiative, Eat West Coast, supports community-led action so everyone can have physical and economic access to adequate amounts of nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate food. Eat West Coast supports partnerships to access resources, funding, and collaboration while also participating in advisory groups and policy development related to food, health, and climate change through the Island Health Food Hubs network.

## Eat West Coast 2025 Highlights:

- Advanced regional and provincial emergency food planning efforts, including participation with the Coastal Foods Roundtable.
- Strengthened food affordability, accessibility, and distribution systems to better support seniors across the region.
- Invested in and supported the development of future food production and processing infrastructure to enhance long-term food security.



## Neighbourhood Small Grants

## Neighbourhood Small Grants

Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) provide individuals with \$50 to \$500 grants for grassroots community-building initiatives. NSG supports empowering, accessible opportunities for residents from all demographics to make their communities more inclusive and vibrant places to live. Our local programs awarded 43 grants (\$17,790) in 2025.

Spring



**\$7,440**

19 grants

Fall



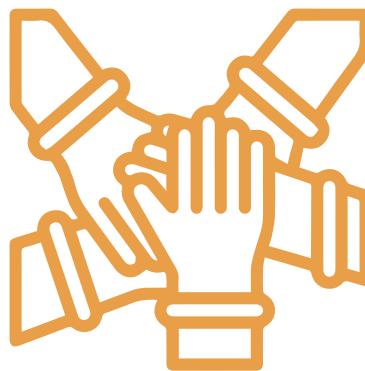
**\$10,350**

24 grants

## Spotlight: 10 years of NSG

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region NSG program. NSG has empowered individuals to share their gifts, bring neighbours together, and make community events more accessible to all. Over the years, we have seen inspiring success stories of projects that began as small ideas and grew into long-term initiatives sustained by passion, partnership, and creativity.

The NSG program reminds us that small grants can have a powerful impact, creating ripple effects that extend far beyond a single event. It has also been a key stepping stone for the CBT, shaping our approach to asset-based community development and grassroots granting. We are honoured to be able to carry this program forward and witness the positive difference it continues to make for individuals, neighbourhoods, and communities.



Since 2015, the program has supported more than 380 projects and invested over \$150,000 locally, supporting everything from youth-led initiatives and cultural gatherings to environmental stewardship efforts.

Thank you to the **Westcoast Community Resources Society** for continuing to partner with the CBT in support of this program and to all the funders and project leaders for making 2025 such a successful year for Neighbourhood Small Grants!



## Tofino Summit Highlight

Each year, the NSG Island Network Summit takes place in a different community on the Island, offering a chance to highlight local programs and learn from place-based experiences. In spring 2025, alongside the Victoria Foundation, co-leads of the NSG Island Network, we hosted the annual Summit in Načiks (Tofino). The gathering brought together familiar and new faces from across the Island, creating a space filled with energy,

curiosity, and connection. Project leaders, NSG community coordinators, committee members, and partners came together for the fourth NSG Island Summit to share stories and knowledge, engage in inspiring conversations, and learn from dynamic speakers. Participants also experienced several NSG projects firsthand and explored how NSG continues to support more inclusive and equitable communities across the region.



# Empowering | Youth

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The CBT awards two \$22,000 post-secondary education awards annually to high school students. The scholarships are awarded based on community involvement, personal reference letters, a proposed education plan, and academic achievement.

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## Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region Education Award

Iris is currently pursuing a diploma in Environmental Studies at Okanagan College, where she also plays on the basketball team. A lifelong athlete, she balances her love of sport with her passion for the outdoors, finding ways to train and stay active while enjoying nature. In high school, she championed women's sports as a leader, role model, and mentor to younger athletes. Her community involvement has been wide-ranging, including coaching a Grade 6/7 club basketball team, volunteering as a water safety responder during a local surf contest, serving as President of her Student Union, participating in the Surfrider Youth Club, and organizing multiple school events. Today, she continues to coach young athletes and plays in recreational leagues to keep her skills sharp.



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**“One of my goals is to continue promoting healthy, active lifestyles. A huge part of my life is balanced on and off the court, making sure to find ways to train outside and continue my love of nature.”**

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— Iris Sylvester



## Central Region nuučaanuł (Nuu-chah-nulth) Education Award

Adam is currently enrolled at UBC, pursuing a four-year Bachelor of Arts with a major in Visual Arts and a minor in Political Science. He has always been deeply involved in his community, attending Culture Nights and practicing and performing traditional dancing and drumming. During his time at Ucluelet Secondary School, Adam served as Student Council Secretary, helped organize school events, and assisted with the school's breakfast program. After completing his undergraduate degree, Adam plans to pursue a master's in visual arts. He is also working toward a third-level Red Seal in cooking, gaining skills he hopes to use to prepare food for community dinners and events.



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**“I’ve decided to go to post-secondary to gain skills I can use to support my community. I want to grow as an artist while also learning about Political Science, so I can one day help the Ucluelet First Nations government through legislation. I want to provide a fresh perspective to my government with a dedication to fulfill my duties to the best of my ability. I want to change my community for the better and carry my culture as I go.”**

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— Adam Randall-Touchie

## Youth Internship

During the summer, we had the pleasure of welcoming Braedon Nerpio as our youth intern. Braedon brought enthusiasm, curiosity, and a fresh perspective to a wide range of initiatives, making a meaningful impact on our work. He played a key role in our archive project, carefully cataloging documents spanning from the 1900s to the early 2000s, to help preserve the rich history of the region. Beyond our projects, Braedon had the opportunity to engage with initiatives led by our partners, gaining hands-on experience while supporting important community efforts. We are incredibly grateful for Braedon's dedication and the passion he brought to the team this summer.



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**“The things I love about this region are the wildlife and ecosystems. I have been interning for the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust for more than a month, as I wanted to learn more about ecosystems in the region.”**

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— Braedon Nerpio



## Youth Leading Education for Reconciliation

For a fourth year in a row, the CBT coordinated an initiative to recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in partnership with the Ucluelet Secondary School (USS), the Legacy of Hope Foundation, Tourism Tofino, and Canadian Heritage. Throughout September, USS classes explored the history and the lasting impacts of the Canadian Indian Residential School System. Students designed orange shirts to honour both the survivors and the children who never returned. They also listened to survivors' stories, crafted poetry in response, and examined the 94 Calls to Action.

The artifacts of learning were featured in a powerful youth-led event on September 30th at USS, alongside the Legacy of Hope Foundation's mobile exhibition: *A National Crime: Canada's Indian Residential School System*. Over 200 students and community members toured the exhibit, and thanks to Tourism Tofino, more than 1,300 visitors experienced it at the Tofino Visitor Centre in the weeks that followed.

If you would like to learn more, USS students created podcasts featuring interviews with local Knowledge Keepers and Elders, exploring the legacy of residential and day schools and reflecting on the meaning of truth and reconciliation.



Listen here:  
[qrco.de/StudentPodcast](https://qrco.de/StudentPodcast)



# Establishing | The Biosphere Centre



This is not about proving the vision, it is about building it.

In 2025, the CBT reached a defining milestone in the journey to establish the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Centre (CSBC) in ʕaʕuukʷiʔath (Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation) territory. The project secured its building permit, making the Centre shovel-ready pending final capital commitments.

## 2025 Progress

With \$12.5 million raised to date, this achievement reflects extraordinary collaboration across governments, philanthropic leaders, local businesses, and community champions. We extend deep gratitude to our federal and provincial partners, private foundations, corporate supporters, and individual donors whose early confidence has brought the Centre to this pivotal stage.

The CSBC represents 25 years of stewardship, partnership, and community vision. As we move toward full funding and construction, we do so with deep appreciation for those who have invested early and with confidence that this Centre will generate lasting benefits for local communities and ecosystems.

This is not simply an investment in the CBT. It is a long-term investment in the social, cultural, environmental, and economic resilience of the region.

## Project Status



Building Permit Secured  
December 2025



\$12.5M raised  
(63% of total project cost)



Class A construction  
estimates completed



Construction start date  
contingent on full  
capital funding

## A Regional Investment with Generational Impact

The CSBC is a rural economic resilience and climate infrastructure project that advances Indigenous partnership, workforce development, clean energy innovation, and year-round tourism diversification while leveraging significant federal and private investment.

As a shovel-ready project with secured permits and Class A construction estimates, the Centre now stands positioned to deliver tangible regional returns, including:

### Economic Diversification & Rural Resilience

- Drives year-round tourism
- Supports culinary tourism and food systems
- Incubates local business and research activity
- Attracts 55,000+ annual visitors

### Skilled Trades & Workforce Development

- Provides workforce training via the education workshops and teaching kitchen
- Supports reskilling in food systems, sustainability, and tourism
- Serves as a regional education and innovation hub
- Increases employability in region by providing place based training opportunities

### Indigenous Economic Benefit

- Centrally located in the biosphere region
- Purchasing policies prioritize Indigenous-owned and operated suppliers
- Embeds Indigenous knowledge, art, and cultural programming
- Provides space for intergenerational knowledge transfer

### Clean Energy & Climate Infrastructure

- Zero Carbon Building™
- Living Building Challenge certification
- Federally funded through Green and Inclusive Community Buildings
- Demonstrates climate-forward construction

### Tourism & International Networks

- Part of a global UNESCO visitor centre network
- Elevates BC's environmental leadership nationally and internationally
- Strengthens sustainable tourism infrastructure
- Showcases mass timber design and local wood

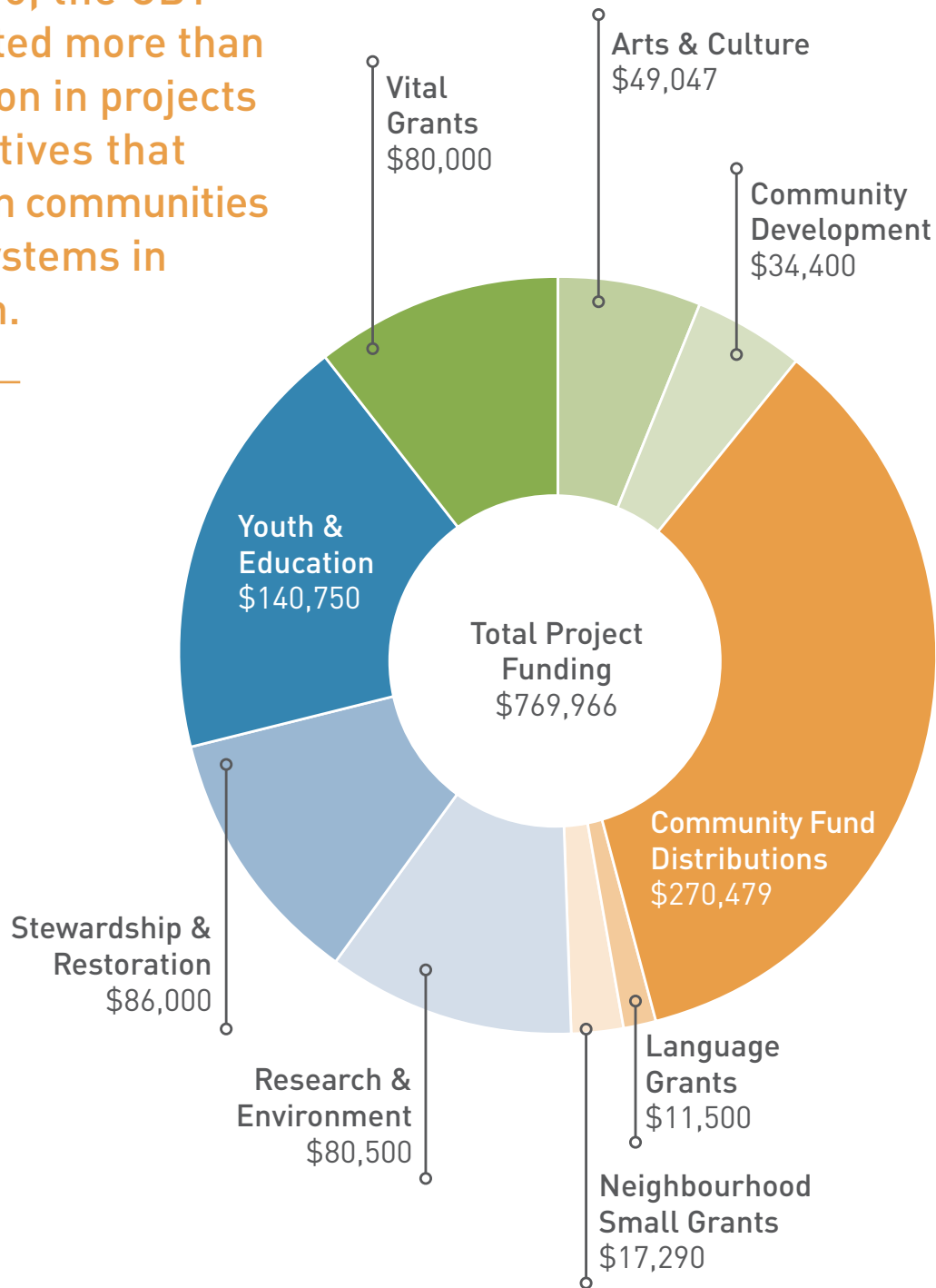


Learn more about the  
Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Centre  
[qrco.de/BiosphereCentre](http://qrco.de/BiosphereCentre)

To get involved or contribute to this  
transformative project, contact Michelle Hall at  
[michelle@clayoquotbiosphere.org](mailto:michelle@clayoquotbiosphere.org)



Since 2000, the CBT has invested more than \$6.2 million in projects and initiatives that strengthen communities and ecosystems in the region.





**108**

Local projects funded



**10**

Students supported through education awards



**54**

Organizations funded



**3**

Organizations funded for the first time



**43**

Neighbourhood Small Grants



**160**

Volunteers



**\$1,283,848**

Estimated partner contributions



**5**

nučaañut  
(Nuu-chah-nulth)  
Language Grants



**\$764,229**

Estimated in-kind leveraged

# Funded | Projects

We recognize the contributions that all CBT grant recipients make to the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere designation. Supporting projects like these is one way we can work together to meet our shared mandates.

## Arts & Culture

### **Cultural Heritage Festival: Celebrating 55 Years**

Pacific Rim Arts Society

### **Paddling in the Right Direction**

Spirit of the Canoe Society

### **Public Art Poetry Book**

District of Tofino

### **Salvaged Art Project**

Pacific Rim Arts Society

### **New Collaborative Workspace**

Tofino Arts Council Society

### **Culture Group (Clayoquot Salmon Festival)**

Friends of Clayoquot Sound

### **Tofino Jazz Festival: Indigenous Artists**

Tofino Community Enrichment Society

### **Tofino Market Workshop Series**

Tofino Public Market Society

### **Traditional Indigenous Arts Workshops**

Carving on the Edge Festival Society

## Community Development

### **Benches to Enhance Accessibility and Wellness**

Sea View Housing Society

### **Opitsaht Ceremonial Sweat Lodge**

Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation

### **Professional Development Series**

District of Tofino

### **Tofino Beach Ambassador Program**

Tofino Surf Lifesaving Society

### **WEPAC Lunch Program**

Wickaninnish Community School

## Research & Environment

### **Inspiring Action for Biodiversity and Habitat Protection**

Ucluelet Aquarium Society

### **Seabird Counts from Amphitrite Lighthouse**

Raincoast Education Society

### **Shellfish Toxicity Monitoring in Ahousaht Hahoulthee**

Maaqtusiis Hahoulthee Stewardship Society

### **Stewardship signage for Yuutu?it?ath Lands**

Yuutu?it?ath Government

## Youth & Education

### **Earth Keepers Rhythms & Rhymes Workshops**

Friends of Clayoquot Sound

### **Maaqtusiis Recognition and Achievements**

Maaqtusiis Elementary School

### **Neurodivergent Teen Mentorship and Empowerment**

Learn. Develop. Succeed.

### **The Salmon Trail**

Redd Fish Restoration Society

## Biosphere Research Award

### **Tla-o-qui-aht Nation Kelp Restoration**

Redd Fish Restoration Society

## Vital Grants

### Critical Incident Stress Management Team

Westcoast Community Resources Society

### Reducing Human-Bear Conflicts

BC Conservation Foundation/WildSafeBC Pacific Rim

### Shifting Frameworks

Coastal Queer Alliance

## Stewardship and Restoration Support (2025-2026)

### Healthy Harbour

Ucluelet Aquarium Society

### Marine Mammal Biodiversity

Yuutu?it?ath Government

### Marine Stewardship Program

Toquaht Nation

### Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks

Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation

## nuučaañut (Nuu-chah-nulth) Language Grants

### Harvesting Cedar Bark and Medicinal Plants

Beverly Martin

### Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Language Revitalization

chuutsqa Layla Rorick

### Language and Making Cedar Hats

Elizabeth George

### Supporting Beginner Learners Through Games

Gale Johnsen

### Queer Language from Creation

Naas

## Grants supported by the:

## West Coast Sustainable Tourism Assoc.

### Afterschool Central Dialect Program

Wickaninnish Community School

### Afterschool Inclusion and Support Worker

Wickaninnish Community School Society

### Collaborative Youth Literacy Initiative

Ucluelet Secondary School

### Inlet Tour and Whale Watching Trip

Wickaninnish Community School

### Land-Based Learning

Ucluelet Secondary School

### mutaa Cultural Steward and Food Sovereignty Camps

mutaa Rising Tide Surf Society

### Queer Youth Connections

Coastal Queer Alliance

### Reawaking our Cultural Identity

Maaqtusiis Elementary School

### Youth Resiliency Groups

Pacific Rim Hospice Society

### Youth Traditional Indigenous Arts Development

Carving on the Edge Festival

### Youth Voices in Motion: Recreation through our Lens

West Coast Multiplex Society

## Tofino Community Fund

### Hang 21 Surf Event

Greater Victoria Down Syndrome Society

## Clayoquot Sustainability Fund

### A Feast Bowl, Ha'uukmin: Abundant Futures

Ha'oom Fisheries Society

### Grey Whale Drone Photogrammetry Project

Marine Education and Research Society

\*Also provided additional funding to support the ongoing work of Redd Fish Restoration Society, Raincoast Education Society, and the Tofino Salon Enhancement Society.



Thank you to our community partners whose generous support strengthens our granting program. In 2025, we leveraged over \$100K in funding, increasing our capacity to support local organizations doing meaningful work across the region. Together, we are advancing a shared vision for a resilient and thriving region.

# Awards

Lifelong  
Learner

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Each year, the CBT supports lifelong learning in the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region through the Lifelong Learner Award. This \$5,500 one-time award is given to residents pursuing further education, recognizing their community involvement, personal references, proposed education plan, and academic achievement. We were excited to recognize Cynthia Fitton, Emily Collins, Jeneva Touchie, and Nora Boileau Morrison with this award.

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Cynthia has been working on the West Coast for the past decade and is currently pursuing a Master of Science as a Family Nurse Practitioner. Since completing her Bachelor of Science in Nursing at the University of Northern British Columbia in 2011, she has worked extensively in First Nations communities. She is committed to providing high-quality health care. Over the past ten years, Cynthia has practiced as a Registered Nurse, integrating cultural practices into the treatments she provides. While advancing her studies, she aims to collaborate more closely with cultural healers and learn how to walk alongside them. Her research will focus on how healthcare professionals and traditional healers can break down barriers to working together, ensuring culturally respectful and effective health services for First Nations communities.

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**“I aim to contribute to standards of practice that will support Nurse Practitioners in lifting traditional healers in the Western medicine world, offering them the respect and designation equal to Western doctors. This is a deeply personal pursuit to uphold and respect people I hold dear to my heart.”**

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— Cynthia Fitton



Emily has worked as a Mental Health Support at Ucluelet Secondary School (USS) for four years. In addition to this role, she is a passionate volunteer basketball coach for the USS Senior Girls team and supports Coastal Queer Alliance through grant writing and campaign development. Emily is currently enrolled in the Master of Social Work Advanced program at the University of Victoria, which emphasizes social justice, Indigenous approaches, and anti-oppressive practices in work with communities, families, and individuals. She plans to expand her capacity to provide direct service, advocacy, and support that centers local voices and values. She is especially committed to supporting youth and elementary-aged children, as well as queer community members, by advocating for increased resources, systemic change, and accessible clinical services in the region. For her practicum in Spring 2026, she joined the West Coast Primary Care Initiative to learn and contribute to their team-based, culturally centered model of care.

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**“As I look forward to my future social work practice, I aspire to continue working alongside youth, focusing on building and fostering resilience as an investment in a youth's lifelong journey.”**

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— Emily Collins



Jeneva is pursuing a master's degree in Indigenous Language Revitalization at the University of Victoria. With only one remaining fluent speaker, her language is at a critical stage, making her work in revitalization both urgent and deeply meaningful. Jeneva holds two bachelor's degrees, one in Hospitality Management from Vancouver Island University and the other in Indigenous Language Revitalization from the University of Victoria. This master's program will help her build skills, expand her network, and develop a community of practice outside her home community of Hitacu, giving her the strength to continue this important work. She has been learning her language for seven years, a journey that has allowed her to feel deeply connected to her family, culture, and self.

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**“My first goal of this educational journey is to complete my master's degree and then move on to a Doctorate in Indigenous Language Revitalization. Teaching is my ultimate goal, but I also hope to share my experiences and inspire others to follow my path into post-secondary education.”**

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— Jeneva Touchie



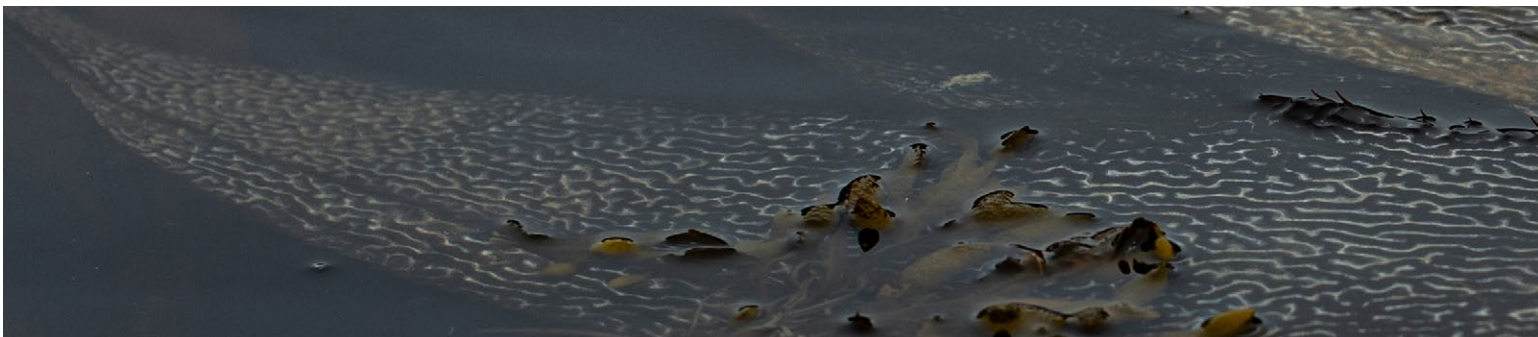
Growing up in Tofino, it was clear to Nora from a young age that she wanted to return to the West Coast after completing her education. A passion for the human body sparked after Biology 10, and shortly thereafter, she decided to pursue a career in medicine. In 2022, she worked with the Coastal Coalition and Divisions BC on a project assessing the need for emergency youth housing on the West Coast. The experience reinforced her conviction to gain the education and skills needed to give back locally. Nora is motivated by the opportunity to bring resources and knowledge home, which is at the heart of her dedication to community health. She is currently in the final stage of a long educational journey, having completed an Honours BSc in Biology at the University of Victoria and a Doctor of Medicine at the University of British Columbia, and is now specializing in Pediatrics at the University of Manitoba.

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**“I hope to have a long career as a doctor in Tofino, Ahousaht, Ty-Histanis, and Ucluelet, serving patients from babies to early adulthood.”**

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— Nora Boileau Morrison



## 2025 Business Excellence Awards

The Tofino Chamber of Commerce hosted the 2025 Tofino Business Excellence Awards, recognizing the outstanding achievements of local businesses and organizations. The community submitted nominations and selected recipients through a process combining 50% public voting and 50% evaluation by a panel of judges, including government officials, Chamber managers from across BC, and community leaders.

The CBT is honoured to have received the 2025 Non-Profit of the Year Award. We were nominated alongside many inspiring organizations doing meaningful work in the region, and we were grateful to stand with them. This recognition reflects not just an organization but a collective effort by volunteers, donors, partners, and community members who believe in collaboration, care, and long-term impact. We extend our congratulations to all nominees and are deeply grateful to our community for this meaningful show of support.

We are also proud that our incredible Executive Director, Rebecca Hurwitz, was recognized as Business Leader of the Year. For more than two decades, Rebecca has led with integrity, empathy, and a strong commitment to community. Her inclusive, community-first leadership has helped guide CBT's evolution as both the steward of the UNESCO Biosphere Region and the regional community foundation.

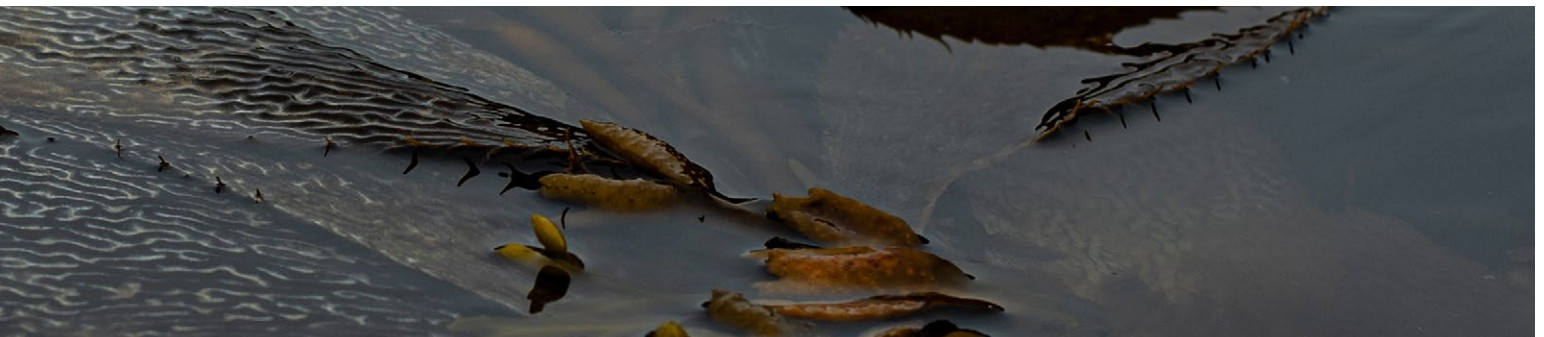


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**“These recognitions belong to our team, board, partners, volunteers, and to the communities we serve. The work we do is rooted in collaboration and care, and I am grateful every day to work alongside people who believe in building a stronger future together.”**

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— Rebecca Hurwitz



# Regional | Programs



The CBT is home to several regional programs, including Leadership Vancouver Island and the Coastal Family Resource Coalition. By taking on the critical, but time-consuming, administrative tasks, we help partner networks and initiatives focus on their missions in areas where there is strong alignment with the CBT's mandate.

**Throughout the year, the Coalition met monthly and supported several community health initiatives and working groups, including the:**

- Youth Working Group
- Harm Reduction Working Group
- Early Years Working Group



## Coastal Family Resource Coalition

The Coastal Family Resource Coalition (CFRC) is a network of West Coast health service providers that develops capacity to improve overall health in local communities. Administered by the CBT, the CFRC facilitates collaboration to achieve social and cultural sustainable development.

A key focus of the CFRC is hosting the Coming Together Forum every two years. The 11th forum was held in May 2025 on Yuuṭuʔitʔaṭh (Ucluelet First Nation) territory. The event brought together a diverse group of community members from across the region, including service providers, local leaders, and youth, for a day of meaningful connection and collaboration. Over 90 people attended the forum at the Ucluelet Community Centre, participating in roundtable discussions where they provided input on community health priorities.

Feedback from the forum, along with insights gathered from other community engagement initiatives, was compiled into the Coming Together Forum report. The data from this report is critical for advocating for rural and remote health issues and highlights the ten community priorities that participants identified. These priorities will help guide future community health planning and inform meaningful action across the region.

# Top 10 Community Priorities:



Access to Health Care and  
Primary Providers



Mental Health  
Support for All



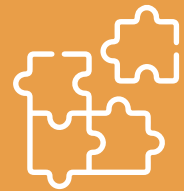
Food Security and  
Self-Reliance



Youth Empowerment  
and Retention



Cultural Safety, Indigenous  
Sovereignty and Healing



Health Equity and  
System Navigation



Community Recreation and  
Wellness Infrastructure



Transportation Access  
and Equity



Education, Literacy,  
and Life Skills



Affordable and  
Inclusive Housing

Read the Coming  
Together Forum report:  
[qrc0.de/ComingTogether](https://qrc0.de/ComingTogether)





## Leadership Vancouver Island

Guided by the steering committee and in partnership with Vancouver Island University, the CBT delivers Leadership Vancouver Island (LVI), a community-focused, value-based leadership development program that inspires and builds capacity for outstanding leadership, learning, and service.

A heartfelt congratulations to the 19 students who graduated in June 2025, and to the local businesses that supported their employees in participating. This unique program brings together emerging leaders to foster meaningful connections and a bright future for the region.





## Participant Spotlight: Ben Reckner

Ben lives, works, and plays within the traditional nuučaanúł (Nuu-cha-nulth) territories of Clayoquot Sound and Načiks (Tofino) as an educator, sea kayak guide, and conservationist.

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“My LVI journey has been one of deep humility, connection, and transformation. I’ve learned that ‘leadership’ is not a destination but a process of continual self-reflection, learning, and relationship-building. I am now more aware of the invisible threads that bind our communities: trust, respect, and shared purpose. I’m deeply grateful for the opportunity to spend time learning alongside such incredible teachers and an amazing group of people. Thank you to the LVI team for the experience. It truly meant a lot.”

---

— Ben Reckner



# GIVING

Lasting  
Impacts



Inspired by the 100 Who Care Alliance, this event aimed to elevate women's voices in the community and highlight the power of collective giving, as women are still underrepresented in philanthropy.

## 100 Women Who Care

In May 2025, the CBT hosted the third regional 100 Women Who Care event, bringing together 109 women who each contributed \$100 to support a local program. After hearing from three organizations doing incredible work in the region, the group chose to donate \$10,900 to the Westcoast Community Resources Society.



# Spotlight: Holiday Giving Catalogue



**5<sup>th</sup>**

Giving Campaign



**22**

local charities  
participated



**\$37,616**

raised



**44**

donors



**112**

donations



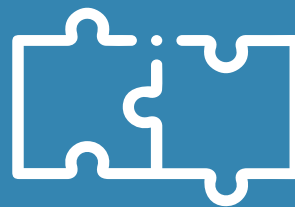
**10+**

Community Funds  
included



**165**

TipTap donations at Tofitian Cafe  
supported the Holiday Giving Catalogue



**\$10,000**

donations matched by  
Pacific Sands Beach Resort



# New Community Funds

In 2025, three new funds were established:

## Coastal Queer Fund

Supports programs, events, and training that create resources, increase representation, and provide opportunities community connection.

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“The heart of our queer community is the ability to gather in spaces where people feel welcome, seen, and like they truly belong. With the support of the Coastal Queer Fund, meaningful events, programming, and resources become possible for queer youth, adults, and elders across our coastal communities. At a time when funding for queer organizations is increasingly uncertain, community-led donations help ensure this vital work can continue - fueling connection, visibility, and care, and ensuring our queer community can continue to grow and thrive together.”

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—Sully Rogalski (they/them), Coastal Queer Alliance  
Co-founder, Executive Director



### **Muḷaa Rising Tide Fund**

The Muḷaa Rising Tide Fund supports educational and social surf programs for Indigenous youth.

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"The muḷaa, Rising Tide community fund directly and indirectly addresses the historical and ongoing legacy of colonization on Indigenous communities within our region. While breaking down barriers to access surfing and outdoor play, muḷaa creates a space for laughter, joy, and medicine for nuučaañuḷ youth. Through participating in our program, we see increased resilience, a sense of belonging, and confidence among our team. This positive impact ripples out to their families, friends, and encourages others in their community to enjoy the beach, bringing hope and light back to this region."

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—Cass Hale, Muḷaa Program Coordinator, and  
Ivan Wells, Jr, Muḷaa Youth Leader

### **Tofino Arts Fund**

The Tofino Arts Fund supports the creation and sharing of art through arts programming, workshops, training, and events.

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"The natural beauty of Clayoquot Sound has been inspiring artists for millennia, and these art and cultural activities have been and continue to be essential to the vitality and sustainability of our remote communities. The Tofino Arts Council champions the creation of local artworks and productions, thus supporting the livelihoods of artists, creative industries, and expanding the creative economy in the whole of the Outer Coast region. We want to see the creation of a community art space in Tofino and a thriving residency program for artists of all disciplines as part of this growing creative economy, and see the Tofino Arts Fund at the CBT as a way to make that happen."

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— Maureen Fraser, Tofino Arts Council President

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# Thank you for Giving

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Our 2025 donors join a group of committed funders who invest in our region through their donations, grants to our program, or in-kind contributions. We thank each of our donors for placing your trust in us to steward these funds and maximize their impact.

A founding contribution from the Government of Canada has supported the CBT programs and grants since our beginning in 2000. We are grateful for their investment in our region through the gift of the Canada Fund, a \$12-million endowment.

## Ways to Give

A donation to the CBT makes meaningful and lasting impacts in areas that are important to you. From arts and culture to research, education, and the environment, donors and funders come to us to simplify and enhance their charitable giving in the region.

## CBT's 18 community funds:

- Biosphere Centre Fund
- Biosphere Research Fund
- CBT Operating Endowment Fund
- Clayoquot Sound Wild Salmon Fund
- Clayoquot Sustainability Fund
- Coastal Queer Fund
- Debbie Mundy Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Mutaa Rising Tide Fund
- nuučaañut (Nuu-chah-nulth) Language Fund
- Pacific Rim Arts Society Fund
- Pacific Rim Foundation Fund
- Tofino Arts Fund
- Tofino Children's Swimming and Water Safety Fund
- Tofino Community Fund
- Tofino Saltwater Classic Fund
- Warrior Program Fund
- West Coast Multiplex Fund
- West Coast N.E.S.T. Fund



The CBT is one of Canada's 191 community foundations.



The CBT is the only organization in Canada that is both a community foundation and a UNESCO biosphere.



The CBT is an active member of the Canadian Biosphere Regions Association as one of 19 UNESCO biosphere regions in Canada.



**Today for Tomorrow**  
 If you have questions about leaving a lasting legacy, whether through contributing to a fund or starting your own, our executive director,

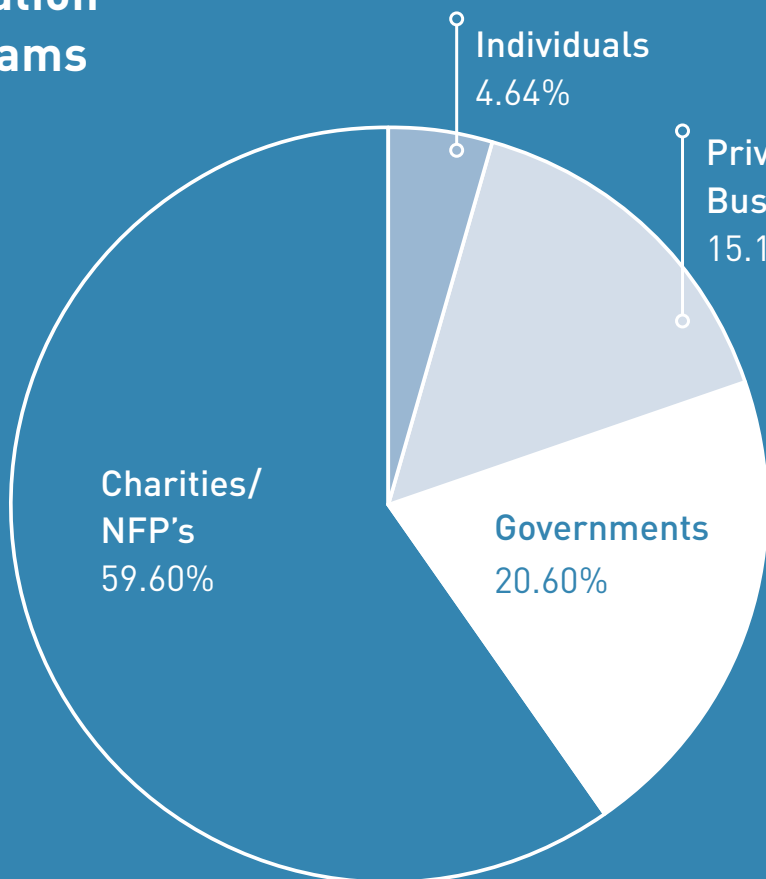
Rebecca Hurwitz, would be pleased to meet with you. As a donor, you can work with the CBT to identify your philanthropic goals, matching your interests with community data and needs.

The CBT's fully audited financial statements are available on our website.

Registered charity number:  
 #870641727RR0001



## Donation Streams




155 New donors



125 Recurring donors

**280**

Total donors



Champions,  
change-makers,  
builders, stewards.  
Researchers,  
helpers, advocates,  
allies.

# Our Team

## Board of Directors

**Caitlin Pitre**

At-large, Director

**Celena Cook**

At-large, Director

**Kayla Lucas**

hiškʷiiʔath (Hesquiaht First Nation), Director

**Mike Davis**

District of Tofino, Treasurer

**Naomi Mack**

tukʷaaʔath (Toquaht Nation), Co-chair

**Nicky Ling**

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, Co-chair

**Sarah Evalina**

District of Ucluelet, Director

**Savannah McCarthy**

Yuutuʔitʔath Government, Director

**Tiitstiitskauuksuup, Lorena Frank**

ʕaʔuukʷiʔath (Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation), Secretary

## Alternate Board of Directors

**Clare Stone**

District of Ucluelet

**Dennis Nerpio**

Director at-large

**Gertrude Touchie**

Yuutuʔitʔath Government (Ucluelet First Nation)

**Noreen Frank**

tukʷaaʔath (Toquaht Nation)

**Vaida Siga**

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

## Non-voting Board Advisors

**James Proteau & Allison Chen**

Province of British Columbia

**Kendall Woo**

Environment & Climate Change Canada

**Liam McNeil & Dave Tovell**

Parks Canada

**Steve Newton & Denise Koshowski**

Department of Fisheries & Oceans Canada



We are a catalyst for positive change and a sustainable future.

### Staff

**Brooke Wood**  
Director of Community Initiatives

**Chris Weller**  
Executive and Finance Assistant

**Colin Robinson**  
Program Coordinator

**Erika Goldt**  
Eat West Coast Lead

**Janessa Dornstaeder**  
Conservation Partnerships Coordinator

**Jason Sam**  
Program Coordinator

**Justice Manson**  
Literacy Coordinator

**Marianne Lowin**  
Communications Coordinator

**Michelle Hall**  
Campaign and Donor Relations Lead

**Nicole Gerbrandt**  
Director of Education, West Coast NEST

**Rebecca Hurwitz**  
Executive Director

**Robinson Cook**  
Visual Arts Program Coordinator  
(Biosphere Centre)

**Verena Merkel**  
Finance Manager

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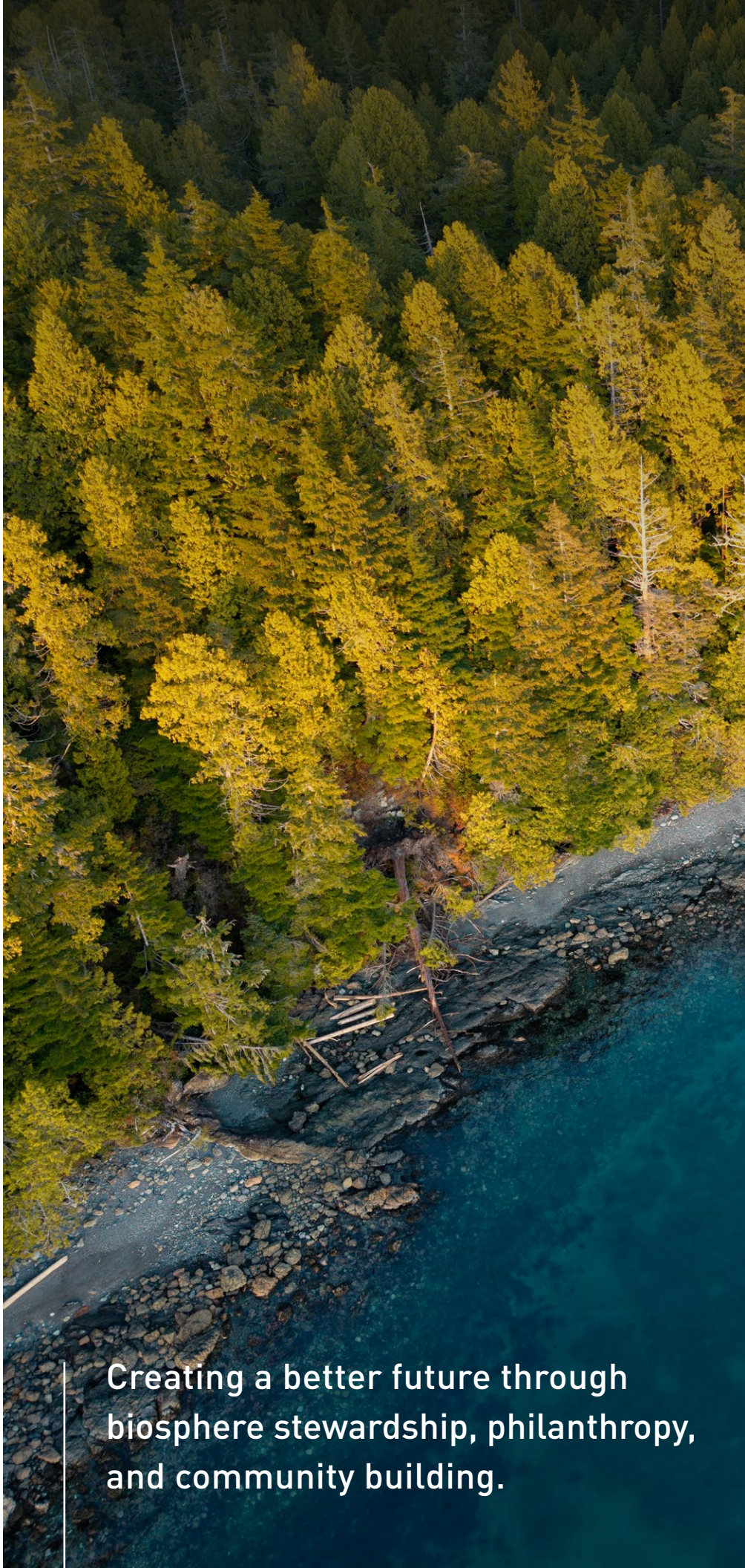
Bri Walker  
Coastal Queer Alliance  
Liv Beaupre  
Marcie Callewaert  
Marianne Lowin  
Melody Charlie

Motiv Architects  
Mutaa Rising Tide  
Nicole Gerbrandt  
Nina Moodley  
Sam Rose Phillips  
Tofino Arts Council

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-  [clayoquotbiospheretrust9324](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)



Creating a better future through  
biosphere stewardship, philanthropy,  
and community building.