

CCIRA



The Common Voice

CCIRA Newsletter

April 2014

www.ccira.ca

Inside this issue

Contents

Putting our Marine Use Plans into Action with MaPP.....	2
Our Nations' Rockfish and Lingcod Research.....	5
Protecting Bears with Tribal Laws, Science and Advocacy.....	8
Big Old Fish and You.....	12
Your Community Marine Use Planning Implementation Coordinators.....	14
About This Newsletter.....	16

Central
Coast
Indigenous
Resource
Alliance



Putting our Marine Use Plans into Action with MaPP

Wuikinuxv's Danielle Shaw has been working overtime because she knows how important MaPP is for our people. Our Nations are co-leading the Marine Planning Partnership for the North Pacific Coast (MaPP) process with the provincial government, ensuring that our needs for marine resources will be met in the future.

Over the past several months Danielle, and many others in our communities, have been working tirelessly to prepare the first draft marine use plan for MaPP.

"When you have a deadline it doesn't matter if the office is closed, you need to get things done," says Danielle. Adding that she is grateful for the additional support from CCIRA. "The CCIRA team is always available and always working. When they are needed they work day and night."

Each of our communities has as many as a dozen people working on MaPP. This level of engagement ensures that, like our Marine Use Plans, our people are driving the MaPP process. "We really use a community approach for MaPP" says Danielle. "I am not comfortable bringing new ideas forward unless our community understands and approves them."

Implementing our Marine Use Plans

MaPP is one critical way that we will implement the Marine Use Plans (MUP's) that each Nation has been working on for years. "After all the work that's gone into the MUP's, it is really exciting to be part of it while it is being implemented," says Danielle.

Julie Carpenter has worked on Heiltsuk marine planning since 2006. She is also CCIRA's Community Coordinator in Heiltsuk territory. She says the MaPP process has been a way to refine our Marine Use Plans so we can implement them without compromising their key goals. "MaPP takes us several steps closer towards meeting our food and economic needs without compromising the environment," says Julie.

Working towards a healthier ocean and fisheries

Julie works closely with Mike Reid who is the Heiltsuk's Fisheries Manager and one of CCIRA's Board of Directors. As a boy in Bella Bella he says he could "go out my front door and get halibut, lingcod, rockfish, crabs and clams anywhere in our territory. Now you have to go further, spend more time and burn more fuel because the biomass of fish, crabs and clams is not what it used to be."



The MaPP process inspiring art on the beach.



Jo Smith, MaPP Science Coordinator, presenting at a marine planning meeting in Klemtu.

To learn more and participate in MaPP, watch for announcements in your community about open houses, meetings, and feasts between March and June 2014.

Mike says the increase in commercial and recreational fishing during his lifetime has caused problems for the Heiltsuk and other Nations. “Those people come here to fish for one or two months of the year. When they leave there is not enough left for us.” But Mike believes that being part of the MaPP process will make things better in the future. “We feel pretty confident that MaPP will improve things,” he says.

Among other outcomes, MaPP will recommend Marine Protected Areas to reduce competition between users for

marine resources. This step will help rebuild stocks and enhance opportunities for traditional harvesting. MaPP will also provide better enforcement in restricted areas and provide First Nations with greater economic certainty for fisheries and tourism opportunities.

Most importantly, MaPP gives us the chance to incorporate our Nations’ views on resource management into coast-wide plans. It will ensure that areas that are socially or culturally important receive protection from overharvest from other users.

Continued on page 4.



Continued from page 3: Putting our Marine Use Plans into Action with MaPP.



Marine Planning meeting at Hakai Beach Institute co-chaired by our Nations and the province.

“It has not been an easy process, but I think it is definitely progress,” says Julie. Up until now, we’ve had little say in how marine resources are managed in our territories. In the past most industries focused on short term profits with little regard for sustainability or our Nations’ needs. According to Julie, “the MaPP process has the potential to change that while working towards a healthier ocean, thriving cultures and sustainable economies in our communities.”

Guiding decision making for years to come

Danielle, Julie, Mike and many others from our Nations will continue to be busy as the MaPP plan is refined and finalized. Specifically, each Nation will be undergoing rigorous community engagement over the next few months. The goal will be to communicate how the MaPP plan is helping our Nations implement our marine use plans, and receive input from the community on how to make MaPP stronger. Community support is essential, as the MaPP plan will guide decision making for years to come.

Despite all the work required, Danielle is convinced it is worthwhile. “First Nations were not involved in these types of decisions in the past...now we are fully engaged in this partnership and we will continue working towards a sustainable marine environment that will benefit everyone.”



“First Nations were not involved in these types of decisions in the past... now we are fully engaged in this partnership and we will continue working towards a sustainable marine environment that will benefit everyone.”

**Danielle Shaw, MUP Coordinator,
Wuikinuxv Nation**

Our Nations' Rockfish and Lingcod Research

Doing rockfish and lingcod research may not be what you imagine it to be. Picture yourself diving into the ocean in your traditional territory. You swim past forests of kelp swaying in the current and brightly coloured anemones, sea stars and urchins clinging to the rocks. A sea lion appears and inspects you with its large round eyes before darting away with the flick of a giant flipper. Diving deeper, you watch rockfish and lingcod swim lazily past. But you're not here to watch the fish; you're here to study them.

Supported by CCIRA's new science coordinator, Alejandro Frid, our Nations conducted a pilot study this year to assess the health of rockfish and lingcod stocks in our traditional territories. If funds can be secured, we hope that the pilot will be turned into a long-term monitoring project run entirely by our Nations.

The main goal of this study was to gather baseline information on the health of these fish populations. Collecting this data is critical because rockfish and lingcod are an important food source for our people, and are key drivers

for areas we want to protect from commercial and recreational harvesting in our Marine Use Plans.

One fish, two fish, manage fish.

Alejandro and Ernie Mason of Klemtu don't need to imagine what it is like to swim in the underwater realm of rockfish. They've been there. They have watched bright orange yelloweye and striped tiger rockfish hover weightlessly nearby, while large lingcod patrol the depths for their next meal.

But instead of just watching, they identified and counted each species they saw, recording the size of each fish while taking notes on the habitat and prey abundance in the area.

Conducting stock assessments to inform management actions is a critical step to make sure large fish are not depleted and to help populations recover where needed. Randy Carpenter was part of the research team in Heiltsuk territory and he knows how important this work is. "You need to know what is out there to make good management decisions," he says.



"There is tremendous capacity within the communities to continue to do this work extremely well."

Alejandro Frid, CCIRA Science Coordinator

Richard Reid, Heiltsuk Guardian Watchmen from Bella Bella, measuring a Yelloweye Rockfish.

Continued on page 6.



Continued from page 5: Our Nation's Rockfish and Lingcod Research.



John Sampson, of the Nuxalk Nation, about to release a yellowtail rockfish to depth-of-capture using a weighted line and 'descender'.

Building research capacity within our Nations

A second objective of the study was to develop the skills and capacity within our Nations to continue this research in the future. Two to five people from each community worked on the study. "Throughout the study, community members brought knowledge, skills and insights to select and access study sites, troubleshoot methods and improve our approach," says Alejandro. "There is tremendous capacity within the communities to continue to do this work extremely well."

"It was a really good learning experience," says Nuxalk's Ernie Talio. "We found spots within our traditional territory that had a lot of rockfish that we didn't know about." However, in other places the team discovered an absence of large rockfish and lingcod. This discovery could mean that overfishing is affecting these stocks in some parts of our territories.

"Studies in Alaska using descenders have shown survival rates between 83 and 99 percent if fish are returned to the proper depth in less than two minutes."

Alejandro Frid, CCIRA Science Coordinator

Counting fish, not harming fish.

In addition to diving, the research team also collected information about fish at greater depths using standardized jigging techniques. But instead of filleting each fish they caught, they identified each species and took weight and size measurements before quickly returning the fish to the water to live, grow and spawn another day.

To ensure survival, each fish was quickly returned to the depth it was caught at using a descending device. “Studies in Alaska using descenders have shown survival rates between 83 and 99 percent if fish are returned to the proper depth in less than two minutes.” says Alejandro. Adopting descenders for recreational fishing in our territories could be a policy for our Nations to consider to reduce impact on rockfish populations.

Beyond rockfish and lingcod

But this is not the only research our Nations are conducting. We are also combining science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge to do research on eulachon, salmon and crabs, and hope to take on more projects in the future. Currently CCIRA is planning to expand our crab monitoring work to include the entire central coast with six research sites in each Nation’s territory.

A major focus for all of these projects is developing the capacity within our Nations to conduct research independently. Generating knowledge about our resources from our own research projects gives us greater influence with government than relying on outside sources of information.



Randy Carpenter, Heiltsuk Guardian Watchmen from Bella Bella measuring a Copper rockfish.



Protecting Bears with Tribal Laws, Science and Advocacy

Bears are an integral part of our Nations' cultural heritage and of the ecosystems that we live in and depend on. Under the leadership of the Central Coast Bear Working Group (BWG), our Nations are taking bold steps to protect bears and their habitat through a tribal ban on trophy hunting, scientific research and a large-scale awareness campaign.



Whitney Starr from the Kitasoo/Xai'Xais Nation recording bear hair sample data collected from non-invasive barbed wire hair snags for use in DNA analysis.

Coastal Nations assume authority to ban trophy hunting

In September 2013 nine coastal First Nations – including the Kitasoo/Xai'Xais, Heiltsuk, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv – announced to the world that we will no longer tolerate trophy hunting of bears in our traditional territories.

“We’re opposed to the hunt because it is inconsistent with our traditional teaching and values,” says Heiltsuk Councilor Jess Housty. “It’s not a part of our culture to kill an animal for sport and hang them on a wall. When we go hunting it’s for sustenance purposes, not trophy hunting.”

With this ban on trophy hunting, coastal Nations are assuming authority to manage bears in our traditional territories in accordance with tribal laws.

But it is not only First Nations who care about this issue. A public opinion poll conducted by McAllister Opinion Research in September 2013 revealed that 87% of British Columbians support an end to bear hunting in the Great Bear Rainforest. Furthermore, 91 percent of hunters polled agreed that all hunters should respect First Nations laws and customs when on First Nations territories.

“It turns out British Columbians from all walks of life stand behind our communities, trusting indigenous people to lead the way on bear conservation,” says Kitasoo/Xai'Xais Councilor Doug Neasloss.

Using science to accomplish culturally rooted goals.

Our Nations are not only taking a political stand on coastal bear management, we are actively conducting research on bear populations in our territories.

Under the leadership of William Housty, the Heiltsuk Nation initiated a research project in 2006. The Kitasoo/Xai'Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv Nations have all followed suit, and are now doing research in their own territories. By



Female grizzly bear and her cub caught on remote camera in Kitsoo/Xai'Xais territory.

sharing research findings with each other we are providing new insights into bear population numbers, their diets, genetics and their movements across the entire central coast. In essence, we have formed a First Nations bear research collective. This approach reflects the reality that territorial boundaries are meaningless to bears.

Jess Housty explains the value of science to our Nations: “For us, science is a way to accomplish culturally rooted goals. Our research questions are framed through a cultural lens and based on management needs to empower the people in our resource offices to make good management decisions.”

To bolster our research programs, our Nations are collaborating with Dr. Chris Darimont and his graduate students at the Hakai-Raincoast Applied Science Conservation Lab at the University of Victoria. Chris and his team are really excited to be part of this work. “Working with the BWG - and in general with communities and leaders in the cen-

tral coast territories - is by far the most inspiring part of what my students and I do,” he says.

The results of this research are creating multiple benefits. “We’re learning more about the role bears play as keystone species in these ecosystems,” says William Housty. “We are conducting sound science that is contributing to management decisions and is empowering decision makers within our territories.”

William also notes that although there are different stewardship priorities between our Nations, the BWG unites us on an issue of common interest - giving one voice for the bears. “Like salmon, protection of bears and their habitat is a common issue we all face,” he says.

In the spirit of this common cause, representatives from all our Nations met at the Kwatna Inlet in May of 2013. The goal was to share knowledge and research expertise to enhance each other’s projects. It began by discussing

Continued on page 10.



Continued from page 9: Protecting Bears with Tribal Laws, Science and Advocacy.



Members of our Nations gathered around no trophy hunting sign we erected in Kwatna Inlet.

“It turns out British Columbians from all walks of life stand behind our communities, trusting indigenous people to lead the way on bear conservation.”

Kitasoo/Xai’Xais Councilor Doug Neasloss.

scientific methodology and things like the best use of remote cameras and barbed wire hair traps. But the gathering became much more than that.

“We were just there to share technical research information, but it turned into making a statement,” says Nuxalk’s Stewardship Director Megan Moody.

Together the Nations erected a sign to notify hunters of the trophy hunting closure, asking them to respect traditional law. “It showed solidarity of the Nations on this issue,” says Megan. “We want these signs in all the territories on the central coast.” This is where the *Bears Forever* campaign was solidified.

Our Nations launch *Bears Forever* advocacy campaign.

Since the gathering at Kwatna Inlet, the *Bears Forever* campaign has gathered huge momentum. A website and Facebook page now provide information and an invitation to sign a pledge of support for the hunting ban, which has gathered over 7200 signatures so far.

The flagship of this project is a film called *Bear Witness*. The film, made in collaboration with Black Sunrise Pictures and DRR Media, has toured across southern BC and been viewed more than 40 000 times on You Tube as of Feb 2014.

“This campaign is primarily about bears. But it is also about sovereignty and self-government. This campaign helps to advance all of us as First Nations people in terms of our rights and authority to manage our territories.”

Heiltsuk Councilor Jess Housty.



Krista Duncan, of the Kitasoo/Xai'Xais Nation is a research technician with Spirit Bear Research Foundation.

“I think the film and this campaign give First Nations a glimpse of what we can do, especially if we work together as one instead of on our own,” says Megan Moody. “It is setting an example of things to come.”

Yet this project also touches on other issues of fundamental importance to First Nations. “This campaign is primarily about bears,” says Jess Housty. “But it is also about sovereignty and self-government. This campaign helps to advance all of us as First Nations people in terms of our rights and authority to manage our territories.”

As we work together on the numerous issues that affect us as First Nations, the Central Coast Bear Working Group will continue working to ensure that bears, and the ecosystems we share, are respected and protected in our territories.



Sierra Hall, from the Kitasoo/Xai'Xais Nation, collecting bear hair samples.

Bears are worth more alive than dead

Ecotourism, including bear viewing, is becoming an integral and sustainable part of the economic growth in our communities.

In January 2014, the Centre for Responsible Travel (CREST) and Stanford University released their report on the economic impact of bear viewing and bear hunting in the Great Bear Rainforest. Their findings showed that in 2012:

- » There were 53 bear-viewing operations in the Great Bear Rainforest.
- » These companies employed over 500 people.
- » Bear viewing generated \$15.1 million in expenditures.
- » There were only four Guide Outfitting operations in the region.
- » These Guide Outfitters employed just 11 people.
- » Trophy hunting generated only \$1.2 million in expenditures.

“This study reinforces what First Nations in the area have been saying for years,” says Doug Neasloss. “Bears are worth more alive than they are dead.”



Big Old Fish and You

Respect for elders is embedded in the wisdom of our cultures. And rightly so. Elders are tremendous storehouses of the experience and knowledge required to live in balance with the land and sea. When it comes to groundfish, old individuals also have a pivotal role in their “societies”. And when we say old, we mean old. In some cases, such as quillback and yelloweye rockfish, we are talking about animals that live a really long time - one hundred years or more.

The value of big old fish

As rockfish and lingcod age, they produce more and better offspring. An old mother will produce ten times more larvae or eggs per year than a young mother. (Rockfish give birth to live larvae, while lingcod produce egg masses.) On top of that, the growth and survival rates of rockfish larvae increase as mother’s become older. Also, older fish


are bigger, which means that they can be important top predators that help maintain balance within an ecosystem. When the biggest predators are fished out, smaller predators may become more abundant or change their behaviour in ways that could, potentially, impact crabs, prawns and other species farther down the food chain.

That is why estimating the abundance of big old fish is essential for gauging the health of groundfish stocks and their ecosystems. Unfortunately, big old fish are the first ones to be removed by a typical fishery. Our hook-and-line sampling last summer and fall did not record any lingcod longer than 85 centimetres, which is not big at all. Our study also found few large yelloweye, which are important predators that can live nearly 120 years.

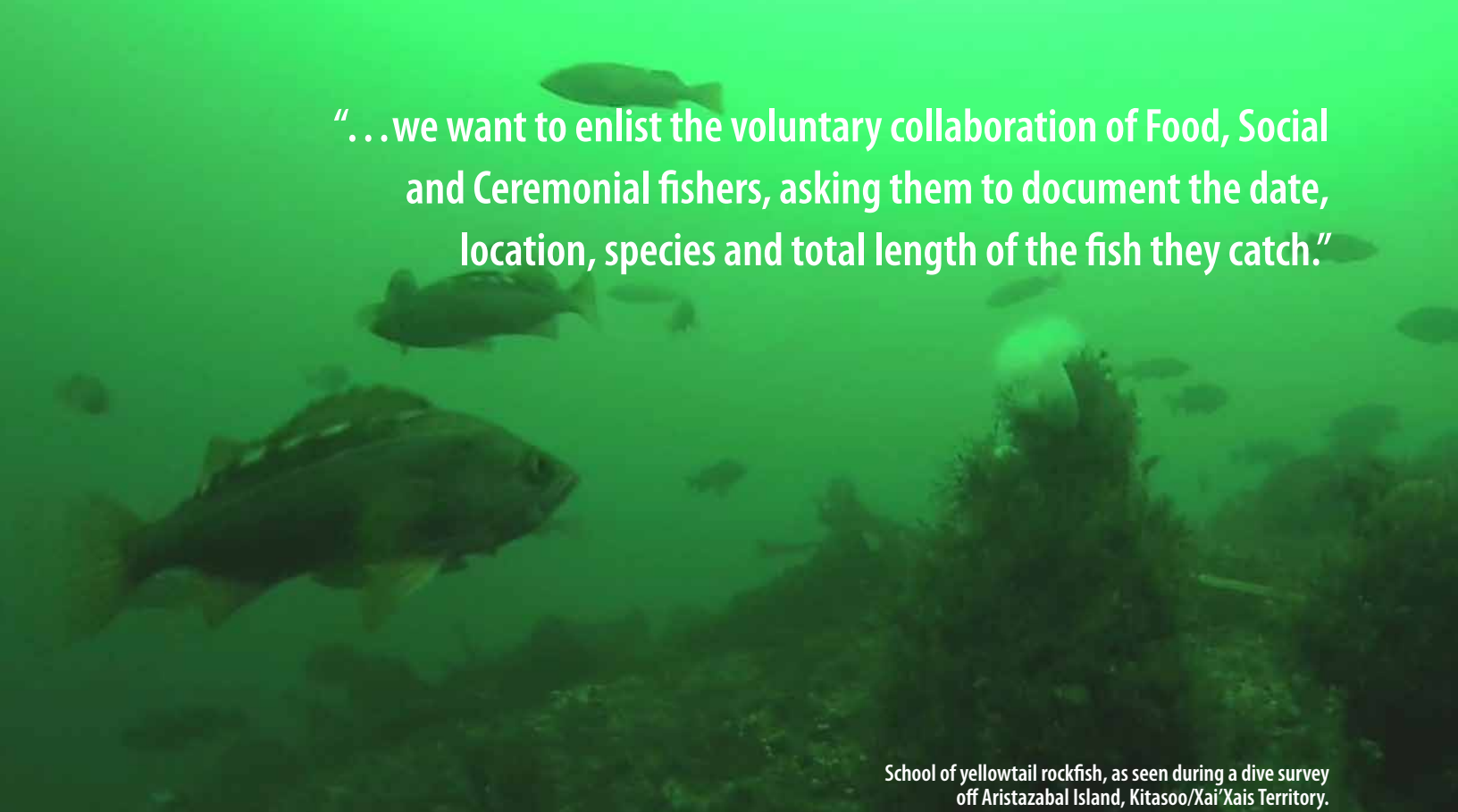
To get a sense of what this means in terms of ecosystem change, ask an elder in your community how common

Ernie Mason, of the Kitasoo/Xai'Xais Nation, about to release a yelloweye rockfish to depth-of-capture using a weighted line and 'descender'.





“...we want to enlist the voluntary collaboration of Food, Social and Ceremonial fishers, asking them to document the date, location, species and total length of the fish they catch.”



School of yellowtail rockfish, as seen during a dive survey off Aristazabal Island, Kitasoo/Xai'Xais Territory.

“bucket head” lingcod—giants with jaws big enough to swallow a human head—were 30 to 50 years ago compared to today. Ask the same for yelloweye that exceed 70 centimetres in length (we found only one last year). Sadly, what once was common now is rare.

Calling all Food, Social and Ceremonial fishers: we need your help.

This spring, we will be working with CCIRA's technical staff to expand our study on the numbers of big old lingcod and rockfish in the Central Coast. To do so, we want to enlist the voluntary collaboration of Food, Social and Ceremonial fishers, asking them to document the date, location, species and total length of the fish they catch. Fishers participating in the study will also be asked to save

and freeze fish heads, so that we can later extract otoliths (ear bones) to estimate the age of the fish. Through this community-based research, the Nations will get a better handle on the “pulse” of their groundfish populations.

We want your feedback so that we can design a research protocol that community members will be excited to be part of. Ultimately, this work will lead to better resource stewardship and more informed marine use planning by the Nations.

If you are interested in participating in this study or have ideas as to how to make this work, contact your community coordinator or aquatics manager. You are also welcome to contact CCIRA's science coordinator, Alejandro Frid, at alejfrid@gmail.com.





Your Community Marine Use Planning Implementation Coordinators

Doug Neasloss - Kitasoo/Xai'Xais

Doug Neasloss is a keen student of Kitasoo/Xai'Xais history and culture. Beginning his career as a bear viewing guide and cultural interpreter, he has spent 12 years becoming intimately familiar with Kitasoo/Xai'Xais Territory. As the Marine Use Planning Community Coordinator, Doug spent 6 years with the community, writing a marine use plan for their territory. Doug has moved on to become the Kitasoo/Xai'Xais Resource Stewardship Director and an elected Councilor. He is also acting as the community coordinator until the vacant position is filled. In the summers, Doug still finds time to follow his true passion, working as the lead guide for Spirit Bear Adventures.



Julie Carpenter - Heiltsuk

Julie is a member of the Heiltsuk Nation and has a Bachelor's degree in Biology from the University of Victoria. She has been working at the forefront of Heiltsuk marine use stewardship for over 8 years. She has helped the Heiltsuk Nation build their marine use plan since the beginning and has also led improved scientific understanding throughout her territory through clam, trap, dive and other surveys. Julie's experience with her territory and respect among her Nation's people has helped to ensure that the Heiltsuk Marine Use Plan is a foundational document that will guide marine stewardship in the area for decades to come.





Wilfred Dawson - Nuxalk

Wilfred Dawson is a member of the Nuxalk Indian Band which is located in the Bella Coola Valley. In 1991, he was the successful candidate in the Nuxalk Fisheries Training Program that was offered through the Nuxalk College. This program introduced aspects of the salmon escapement and the environment with which they spawned and lived. Wilf was involved in a number of projects while in this program, including: Creek Walks, Downstream Fry Trapping, and Atnarko Tower Count. Wilf was the successful applicant with Nuxalk Marine Planning GIS training position in the mid 2000's. This project involved mapping and data entry for the Traditional Ecological Study that was completed during this time.



Danielle Shaw - Wuikinuxv

Danielle Shaw is a member of the Wuikinuxv Nation. After growing up in Burnaby, and attending the School of Business at Capilano University for Business Administration, she moved home to Wuikinuxv in 2010. She is excited to apply her education and administrative experience to resource stewardship in Wuikinuxv Territory. Since moving home she has worked within several program areas in Wuikinuxv including treaty development, traditional foods study with the Wuikinuxv Health Station, referrals database collection, Indian Registry Administration and more. In June 2013 she started working with MaPP and is eager to learn and help move Wuikinuxv and the other central coast Nations, towards sustainable marine resource management



CCIRA



About This Newsletter

Our Nations created CCIRA to build upon our success in working together to develop and implement our Nation-level marine use plans. Today, CCIRA is involved in a wide array of projects and initiatives across the central coast. The Common Voice is one source of information about CCIRA's activities in our communities. Each issue will highlight specific projects that are underway in our communities with updates on projects and policies that CCIRA is working on. The Common Voice is distributed to all central coast First Nations and is one way we are working to ensure that our communities stay connected with each other. For more information about CCIRA and what we do, please visit our website www.ccira.ca or contact us at info@ccira.ca

Your CCIRA Community Marine Use Planning Coordinators

Danielle Shaw and Frank Hanuse – Wuikinuxv

Wilfred Dawson – Nuxalk

Doug Neasloss – Kitsoo/Xai'Xais

Julie Carpenter – Heiltsuk

Your CCIRA Staff

Ken Cripps – Program Director/Biologist

Gord McGee – Projects Manager

Alejandro Frid – Science Coordinator

Aaron Heidt – Marine Planner/Policy Analyst

Cindy Hanuse – Administrator

Penny White - Fisheries Coordinator

CCIRA would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest staff members. The CCIRA board recently hired Alejandro Frid as the CCIRA Science Coordinator and Penny White as our new Fisheries Coordinator. Alejandro has a PhD in Biology from Simon Fraser University and has been conducting focused research on lingcod and rock fish in British Columbia for the last 5 years. Penny has completed graduate work in biology and resource management and has worked extensively with First Nations to forward their fisheries interests. Penny and Alejandro will be actively engaging our Nations over the next few months to help focus their work with CCIRA. Watch for them in your community!

How to Get Involved

- » Visit your Community Coordinator or Resource Stewardship Office and ask about your Nation's marine use plan.
- » Attend local marine use planning open houses and community meetings.
- » Take advantage of training and employment opportunities.

Thank you and photo credits

Special thank you to the photographers. Photos taken by: Alejandro Frid, Ernie Mason, Kai Nagata, Gord McGee, Christina Service, Phil Charles, Tim Irvin.

Impact statement

Paper Brand	Pacesetter
Post Consumer Waste	10 %
Total Weight	204.5 kg
Carbon Dioxide Equivalent	1,012 kg

