

CCIRA



# The Common Voice

CCIRA Newsletter  
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[www.ccira.ca](http://www.ccira.ca)



## Inside this issue

Revitalizing our Traditional Laws.....	2
Our Marine Use Plans: guiding all of CCIRA's work.....	5
Conservation Concerns Prompt Crab Research by our Nations.....	10
Fisheries Training Update.....	11
About This Newsletter.....	12

Central  
Coast  
Indigenous  
Resource  
Alliance





## Revitalizing our Traditional Laws

Our Nations have a rich history that is captured in our songs, stories and way of being. Many aspects of our culture contain guidance and instructions for how to live - things that western societies call laws. These traditional laws are as old as our people. As they did in the past, our traditional laws continue to guide how we manage natural resources in our territories today. But getting the provincial and federal governments to recognize our laws is a 150-year-old struggle.

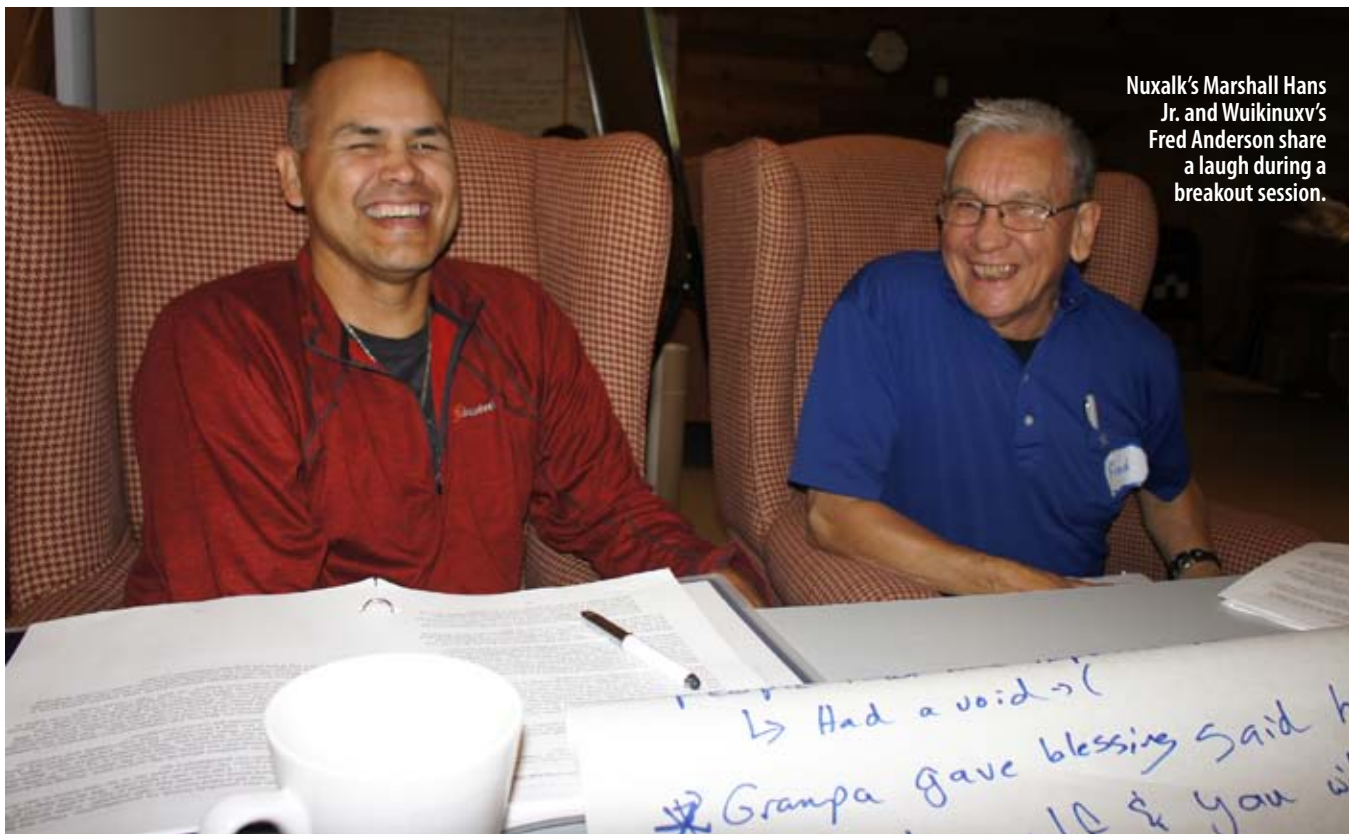
“We’re having a lot of challenges trying to get other people to understand and respect our laws,” says Doug Neasloss of the Kitsoo/Xai’Xais Nation, citing recent difficulties with sea cucumber and herring management and trophy hunting, among others.

With the intention of learning more about our traditional laws and how we can clearly express them for ourselves and others, 25 representatives from our four Nations gathered at the Hakai Beach Institute for a three-day Indigenous Law workshop this past August.

### Expressing our traditional values and laws

The workshop focused on discussing and exploring a new approach for gathering and articulating indigenous laws that has been developed at the University of Victoria (UVic). Professor Val Napoleon and the Indigenous Law Research Clinic at UVic have developed this cutting-edge methodology. This process is a rigorous, transparent and defensible way to validate and express the specific values that govern how we manage natural resources in our Nations’ territories.

“It was very inspiring to have all our Nations working together on this,” says Wuikinuxv’s Fred Anderson. “Laws exist in our stories and our elders’ memories,” he explains. But Fred also emphasizes that we must do this work quickly while the elders are still with us. “We need to tap the minds of the old people for their stories. There is a lot of knowledge out there in people’s heads that is not necessarily written down.”



Nuxalk’s Marshall Hans Jr. and Wuikinuxv’s Fred Anderson share a laugh during a breakout session.



This process is a rigorous, transparent and defensible way to validate and express the specific values that govern how we manage natural resources in our Nations' territories.



Wuikinuxv's Jennifer Walkus making a presentation to members from all four of our Nations gathered at the Hakai Beach Institute.

This workshop was organized through a partnership between CCIRA and The Nature Conservancy. Based on the success of this event, CCIRA has acquired further funding from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation to support a second Nation-level workshop aimed at identifying community research priorities.

Additional funding has been secured to train our people to conduct interviews and gather information from elders and others in our communities. These workshops will occur over the next few months.

### **Our traditional laws are relevant today**

Brenda Gaertner is a lawyer who has spent her career working on legal issues with First Nations. She was also in attendance at the workshop. "Laws evolve over time," she says, noting that the evolution of coastal First Nations' laws was interrupted by European colonization 150 years

[Continued on page 4.](#)



Mel Innes, Hereditary Chief of the Heiltsuk Nation, speaking to the group during the Indigenous Law Workshop.



Continued from page 3: Revitalizing our Traditional Laws

ago. “But this interruption does not mean these laws are not legitimate or applicable to modern times,” she says, “they just need to be articulated in a way that makes them useful for today’s society.”

For example, not wasting food and respecting all parts of life are components of many of our Nation’s stories. When interpreted in the modern context this explains why our Nations are against trophy hunters that shoot bears and leave the carcass to rot, or bottom trawling, which produces excessive by-catch and damages the sea floor.

“Gathering traditional laws will help ensure that central coast Nations are acting consistently with their own laws while helping to enhance management of natural resources in their territories,” says Brenda. She

adds that it was a pleasure to work with people who were willing to fully engage in the process and take on difficult challenges.

## Collaboration and inspiration

Fred Anderson and Heiltsuk’s Mike Reid share Brenda’s enthusiasm for the workshop. “Getting together with all four Nations at a workshop like this is great,” says Fred. “We get amazing new ideas from each other.” Mike emphasizes that all Nations were open and transparent during the workshop. “There wasn’t any hidden agenda...we were all working together on this, which was inspiring. I am really looking forward to the next workshop.”



**“We’re having a lot of challenges trying to get other people to understand and respect our laws.” - Doug Neasloss of the Kitsoo/Xai’Xais Nation.**



Participants at the Indigenous Law Workshop listening to a debrief. From left to right: Mike Reid (Heiltsuk Nation), Wilfred Dawson (Nuxalk Nation), Wally Webber (Nuxalk Nation) Julie Carpenter (Heiltsuk Nation)



# Our Marine Use Plans: guiding all of CCIRA's work

Everything that CCIRA does is guided by the objectives and strategies in our Nations' marine use plans (MUPs). These plans were created through comprehensive community-based processes. They combine our traditional knowledge with science and were guided by our commercial and food fish harvesters, elders, hereditary chiefs, councilors and community members.

The following examples illustrate how CCIRA's work is helping to implement our Nations' MUPs.

## Shared decision-making

Our Nation-level marine use plans seek to increase the influence that our Nations have with other levels of government with respect to resource management. To that end, CCIRA has been working with the Nations to achieve the following:

### *Development of Stewardship Offices*

- » Each of our four communities now has a Stewardship Department with staff dedicated to marine resource planning and management. Our stewardship offices have enhanced our Nations' capacity to execute resource management activities in our traditional territories.
- » Stewardship offices are supporting our Nations' Guardian Watchmen programs, science and traditional knowledge initiatives, negotiations with provincial and federal governments, and more.
- » CCIRA has helped fund key elements of our stewardship offices including hiring marine planning

coordinators and supporting participation in marine planning committees.

### *Engagement in MaPP and PNCIMA*

- » MaPP and PNCIMA are government-to-government marine planning processes.
- » Our Nations are co-leading these initiatives and making joint decisions about the management of marine resources that are important to us. Read more about our engagement with MaPP and PNCIMA in our April 2013, October 2013 and April 2014 Newsletters.

### *Engagement in Fisheries Management*

- » Our Nations have been involved in reviewing existing Integrated Fisheries Management Plans - identifying and addressing inconsistencies between the management practices of our Nations and DFO.
- » We are also working with DFO to facilitate in-season decision-making that is responsive to real-time fluctuations in stocks.

### *Revitalizing our Indigenous Laws (see Indigenous Law Workshop on pg. 2)*

- » CCIRA Nations have been working closely with the law firm of Mandell Pinder to gather stories and other information that support our indigenous laws. Recording and articulating these laws will help support the policies and direction we have identified in our marine use plans.
- » CCIRA has been working to secure funds for more workshops to advance the revitalization of our Indigenous laws.

**CCIRA and the Nations are working to create jobs and the necessary training our people need to take advantage of them.**



Continued from page 5: Our Marine Use Plans: guiding all of CCIRA's work



Seas interns, Sierra Hall (left) and Krista Duncan, conducting research in Kitasoo/Xai'Xais territory. Photo credit Phil Charles.

## Fisheries Restoration and Access to Food Fisheries.

Restoring stocks and improving access to food fish are key positions in our Nations' marine use plans. CCIRA is working with the Nations to realize these goals on a number of fronts:

### *Crab research (see story on pg. 10)*

- » In collaboration with DFO, CCIRA Nations are conducting research on the impact to our food fishery from sport and commercial crab fishing. In part, this involved closing key research areas to commercial and sport fishing to study the impacts of fishing on stock numbers.
- » CCIRA has secured funding and helped train Nation-level staff in stock assessment methods. All four of our Nations have been actively conducting stock assessments.

### *Creation of Protected Management Zones and Marine Protected Areas*

- » Under MaPP and the Marine Protected Areas network planning process, our Nations are working with the Provincial and Federal governments to identify key areas that require protection from human activities.
- » These protected areas will act as a refuge for marine species and create greater access to fisheries for food purposes.
- » By developing spatial plans for our territories and collecting traditional knowledge, our Nations' interests are guiding the development of Marine Protected Areas.

## Scientific Monitoring

Our Nations' marine use plans emphasize that good management requires local scientific research that incorporates traditional knowledge. It also entails increased monitoring of the effects of current practices, and better enforcement of laws and policies. CCIRA and the Nations are working together to undertake the following:

**Our marine use plans will continue to chart the course CCIRA is following as we work to protect our marine environment, strengthen our vibrant cultures and build sustainable economies in each of our communities.**



## Scientific research

- » CCIRA has been working closely with guardian watchmen and fisheries staff to develop expertise in experimental design and data gathering. Our Nations have now instigated numerous scientific projects in our territories that incorporate traditional knowledge. This work includes population studies of eulachon, crabs, rockfish, lingcod and bears. We are producing new scientific data on resources on the central coast that are important to us.
- » For example, our eulachon research is generating some of the first hard data about a depleted resource that is critical to our people. Information produced by our crab, rockfish and lingcod research may help inform decisions about the placement of Marine Protected Areas – decisions that could enhance crab and fish populations, leading to healthy food fisheries (See April 2013 and April 2014 Newsletters).
- » These projects are empowering the people in our resource offices to make good management decisions about important marine resources. Using science to back up our traditional knowledge is also leveraging our ability to negotiate effectively with other governments about how these resources are managed.

## Economic Development in our Territories

The Nations' marine use plans are clear: An ecosystem-based management approach requires local opportunities and employment. CCIRA and the Nations are working to create jobs and the necessary training our people need to take advantage of them.

### *Supporting Emerging Aboriginal Stewards Program (see April 2013 Newsletter)*

- » CCIRA secured three years of funding from the Moore Foundation to complement funds donated by The Nature Conservancy. These resources have been used to enhance existing SEAS programs and expand these initiatives into all of our communities.
- » This funding has helped expand in-school programs for kids K to 12 that incorporate units on ecology and traditional knowledge into the school curriculum. Students are also taken outdoors to connect with their local environment and elders.

*Continued on page 8.*



Nuxalk's Glen Clellamin underwater during his Surface Supply Dive course. Photo credit: Ryan Miller, DiveSafe International



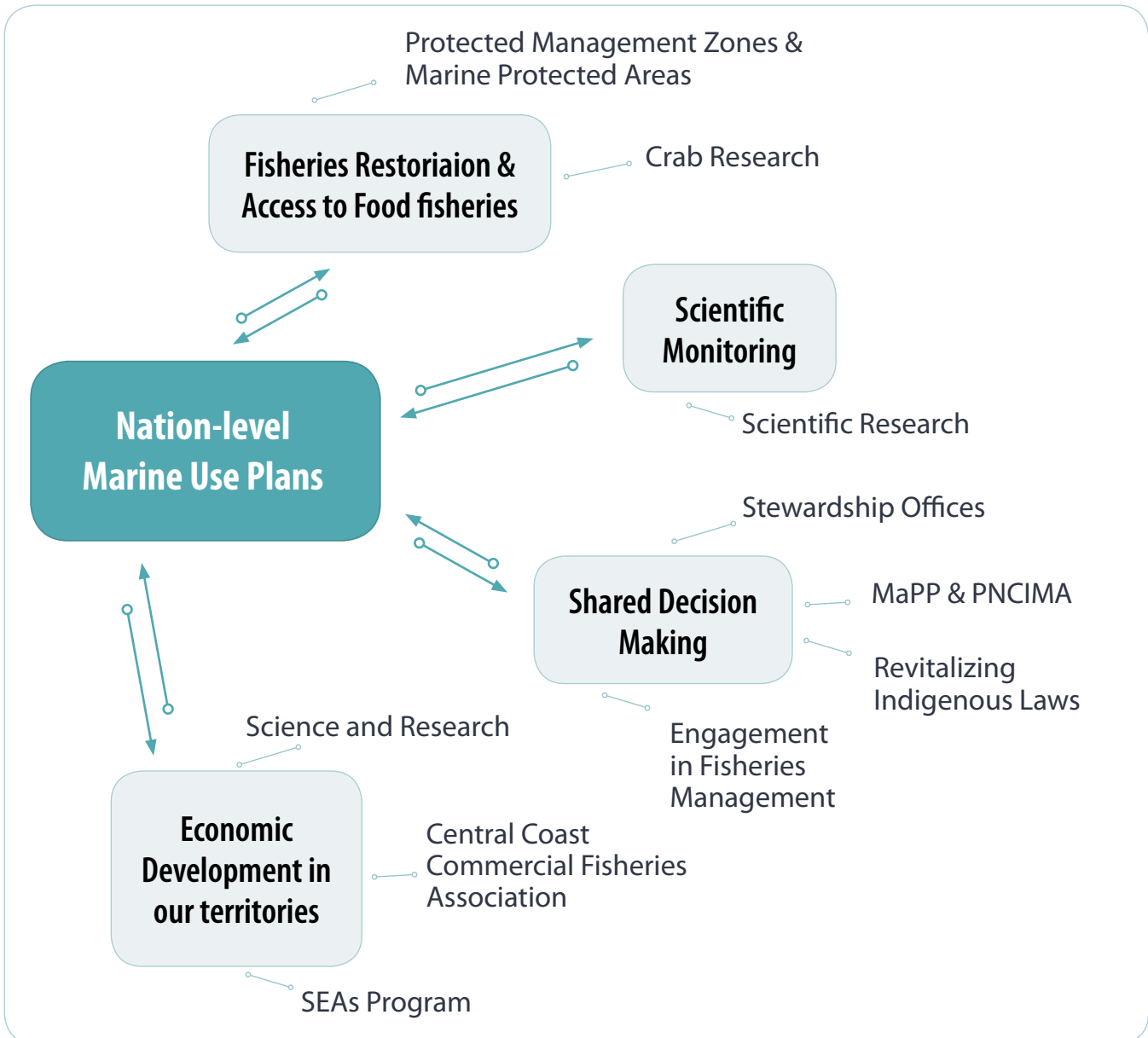
Continued from page 7: Our Marine Use Plans: guiding all of CCIRA's work

» In addition, a summer internship program for senior high school students has been extended into all of our communities. Interns have opportunities for hands-on experience working with local ecotourism businesses and hatchery managers, conducting scientific research and exploring their traditional territories with mentors from their communities.

### Central Coast Commercial Fisheries Association - Commercial Fisheries and Capacity Building

- » By working together CCIRA Nations have secured 8.5 million in license assets from the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI).
- » As part of our business plan, we aim to maximize employment opportunities for our people. We are

**figure 1. Nation-level Marine use Plans guide all of CCIRA's work.**







achieving this with local training programs and by enhancing the capabilities of our own fishing fleets (See Fisheries Training Update, page 11)

- » All this work has helped create local employment in the fishing industry. Where possible, we have also extended these employment benefits into our communities' processing facilities (See April 2013 and October 2013 Newsletters).

These are just some examples of the many projects CCI-RA is involved with. Our marine use plans will continue to chart the course CCIRA is following as we work to protect our marine environment, strengthen our vibrant cultures and build sustainable economies in each of our communities.

All our previous newsletters and more information on all of our programs and projects can be found on our website at: <http://ccira.ca/site/resources.html>



Conducting Dungeness crab research in Wuikinuxv territory. Wuikinuxv Guardian Watchmen Brian Johnson Sr. (left) and Chris "Archie" Corbett (right).



# Conservation Concerns Prompt Crab Research by our Nations

This spring our Nations began collaboration on a scientific study of Dungeness crab across the entire central coast. With increasing pressure on crabs in our territories from recreational and commercial fishers, crab populations in some areas have become depleted, raising conservation concerns for this species.

“We don’t have anything against commercial and recreational crab fishing,” says Heiltsuk’s Aquatics Manager Mike Reid, “but when boats come and go continuously it all adds up and at the end of the season there aren’t any crabs left for our community.”

This problem is not unique to Heiltsuk territory. All our Nations have seen similar trends in crab populations. In response, our Nations have created experimental closures where recreational and commercial fishers have been asked to refrain from fishing crab. These closures give an opportunity for depleted populations to recover, and they also allow us to conduct scientific surveys that generate baseline data on these crab populations.

CCIRA’s Science Coordinator, Alejandro Frid, explains that Dungeness crab ecology is well studied in southern BC, Oregon and Washington, as well as in Alaska, but there is very little scientific information about crabs on the Central Coast. The new ecological data we’re produc-

ing is filling in the gaps in this knowledge. Moreover, it may help make fishing practices more sustainable.

## Leveraging Science for Sustainability.

Conducting our own scientific research can empower our Nations when it comes to negotiating with other governments about the management of natural resources in our territories. Scientific data that supports our traditional knowledge and values leverages our opinions about sustainable use of resources. “We hope the hard data from our surveys will bolster our case with the DFO to create marine sanctuaries in certain areas to help support sustainable food fisheries for our Nations,” says Mike Reid.

Ernie Talio is a Nuxalk Guardian Watchman who has worked with the DFO in the past. When working with DFO, he was often frustrated by the lack of control his Nation had over the information they were gathering. But he also says that by conducting our own research this is changing. “With the research we’re doing now, all the data becomes our own and we don’t have to answer to anybody,” says Ernie, “we get to decide how this information is used.”

## Spreading the word about crab closures

In the meantime, our Guardian Watchmen are spreading the word among crab fishers about the new closures and asking for them to comply. Our Nations have created pamphlets to inform people of the closures and the reasons behind them.

**“We hope the hard data from our surveys will bolster our case with the DFO to create marine sanctuaries in certain areas to help support sustainable food fisheries for our Nations.”**


**- Mike Reid, Aquatics Manager, Heiltsuk Nation**



Ernie Talio and John Sampson of Nuxalk Fisheries conducting crab research in their traditional territory.



“When we see trap buoys in closed areas, we put a pamphlet in a zip-loc bag and attach it the buoys,” says Heiltsuk Guardian Watchman Randy Carpenter. “In my territory, most people comply with this request once they understand that stocks are depleted and that we’re doing research.” Although compliance with the closures is not yet widespread in every territory, progress is being made and there is every indication that cooperation will grow next season.

CCIRA will continue to support similar scientific projects that are relevant to the cultural needs of our people as described in the goals and objectives of our Nations’ marine use plans. 



**Ernie Mason (Kitasoo Fisheries) and Penny White (CCIRA Fisheries Coordinator) examining and measuring Dungeness crab.**

## Fisheries Training Update


All our Nation’s marine use plans identified the need for new training programs to help our people learn the skills they need to work in fisheries jobs on the central coast. In response to this objective CCIRA secured funding to run a variety of training courses. In our first two newsletters we reported on some of these successes. Below is a list of all the courses we have run to date, and the number of students from our Nations that have benefitted from this training thus far.

- » Fishing Master 4 (FM4) - 17 students
- » Small Vessel Operators Proficiency (SVOP) - 86 students
- » Marine Emergency Duties (MED A3) - 86 students
- » Radio Operators Certificate (R-COM) - 86 students

- » Open Water SCUBA - 39 students
- » Commercial SCUBA - 9 students
- » Commercial Surface Supply Diver - 3 students

These courses give people the skills and knowledge needed to work in a variety of fisheries-related jobs, and can also create additional opportunities for work in tourism and forestry.

But this is not all. CCIRA has also facilitated courses in Leadership and Team Building, Workshop Facilitation, GIS and Interest Based Negotiation for our community coordinators and other community staff.

Providing training and skill development is one way CCIRA is helping our Nations achieve the goals in their marine use plans. 

## Traditional knowledge enhancing bear research

Heiltsuk’s William Housty and others have recently published a scientific paper about grizzly bears in the Koeys watershed. This study not only showed the value of combining science with traditional ecological knowledge and customary laws, but also provided new information on this important grizzly bear population. The study received broad media attention and was reported on CBC and National Geographic news. Congratulations William.

The traditional knowledge of the Heiltsuk and Kitasoo’Xai’Xais Nations also played an important part of another recent scientific paper published by Christina Service and Chris Darimont from the University of Victoria. The scientists combined traditional knowledge with remote camera, genetic and hunting data to reveal that the range of grizzly bears is expanding on the central coast. Results of the study show that grizzly bears are now present on 10 islands outside their current management boundary.

# 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](http://www.ccira.ca) or contact us at [info@ccira.ca](mailto:info@ccira.ca)

## Your CCIRA Community Marine Use Planning contacts

Frank Hanuse – Elder representative, Wuikinuxv Nation Stewardship Committee

Peter Johnson – Stewardship staff responsible for Wuikinuxv Marine Planning

Megan Moody – Stewardship Director, Nuxalk

Doug Neasloss – Stewardship Director, Kitasoo/Xai'Xais

Julie Carpenter – Marine Use Planning Coordinator, Heiltsuk

## Your CCIRA Staff

Ken Cripps – Program Director/Biologist

Gord McGee – Projects Manager

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Aaron Heidt – Marine Planner/Policy Analyst

Cindy Hanuse – Administrator

Penny White - Fisheries Coordinator

## 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.

### Impact statement

Paper Brand	Pacesetter
Post Consumer Waste	10 %
Total Weight	161.5 kg
Carbon Dioxide Equivalent	801 kg

