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Chelsea Greer Associate, MSc Student, University of Calgary Investigate. Inform. Inspire.

Raincoast is a team of scientists and conservationists dedicated to safeguarding the land, waters, and wildlife of coastal British Columbia.

Our vision for coastal British Columbia is to protect the habitats and resources of umbrella species. We believe this approach will help safeguard all species, including people, and ecological processes that exist at different scales. Central to our efforts are long-term partnerships with Indigenous governments.

Our mandate

We investigate to understand coastal species and processes.

We inform by bringing science to decision makers and communities.

We inspire action to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Cover photo by Michelle Valberg.





Tracking Raincoast artists and photographers

FERNANDO LESSA has been a very generous contributor of images to Raincoast over the years. If you've been following our communication, you've likely seen photos he's taken of salmon, underwater, from land or from the air. His dedication to documenting and bringing awareness to urban salmon in the Lower Fraser and around Metro Vancouver inspires us.

Karoline Cullen

Page 2-3 (Southern Resident killer whales)

Alex Harris

Page ii-iii (mushroom), 1 (Peter Ross), 8-9 (Steveston jetty), 11 (Rough-skinned newt), 20 (S,DÁYES, Pender Island), 21 (Barred Owl), 22-23 (youth on Achiever in the Salish Sea), 24 (Eric Pelkey, Hereditary Chief of Tsawout of the

WSÁNEĆ Nation and Drew Graham inset), 25 (Youth leaders), back cover (Northern Redlegged frog)

John Kelsey Page 24 (Achiever)

Jeremy Koreski for Nimmo Bay

Page 16-17 (Southern **Great Bear Rainforest** tenure), 26 (boat in Southern Great Bear Rainforest tenure)

Fernando Lessa

Page iv (salmon smolts), 7 (Chinook salmon), 10 (Lower Fraser)

Tom McPherson, Seaforth **Expeditions**

26 (coastal wolf)

Geoffrey Reynaud 4-5 (sea otter)

Eric Sambol 17 (grizzly bear inset)

Michael Snyder Page 6 (Roberts Bank

Steve Woods

Page 17 (coastal wolf

inset, black bear inset)

Terminal 2 inset)

Alice Sun Page 6 (Western

Sandpiper)

Michelle Valberg

Cover (black bear with salmon), 12-13 (grizzly bear), 14-15 (coastal wolf), 19 (grizzly bear inset)

Measurable results

AS SOMEONE WHO has pursued a life-long journey as an environmental scientist, I find myself wondering whether today's 'science to policy' paradigm is sufficient to safeguard British Columbia from the ravages of climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

As the fragility of our civilization is laid bare by droughts, floods, wildfires, and rising seas in 2021, my appetite for more cohesive and concrete action has increased, as it becomes apparent that the status quo no longer suffices.

And so I find myself on the doorsteps of Raincoast Conservation Foundation, an organization that epitomizes the journey from conservation dreams to reality. Raincoast has broken the mould for environmental sector non-profits by conducting and publishing rigorous peerreviewed science in ways that inform conservation policy and practice.

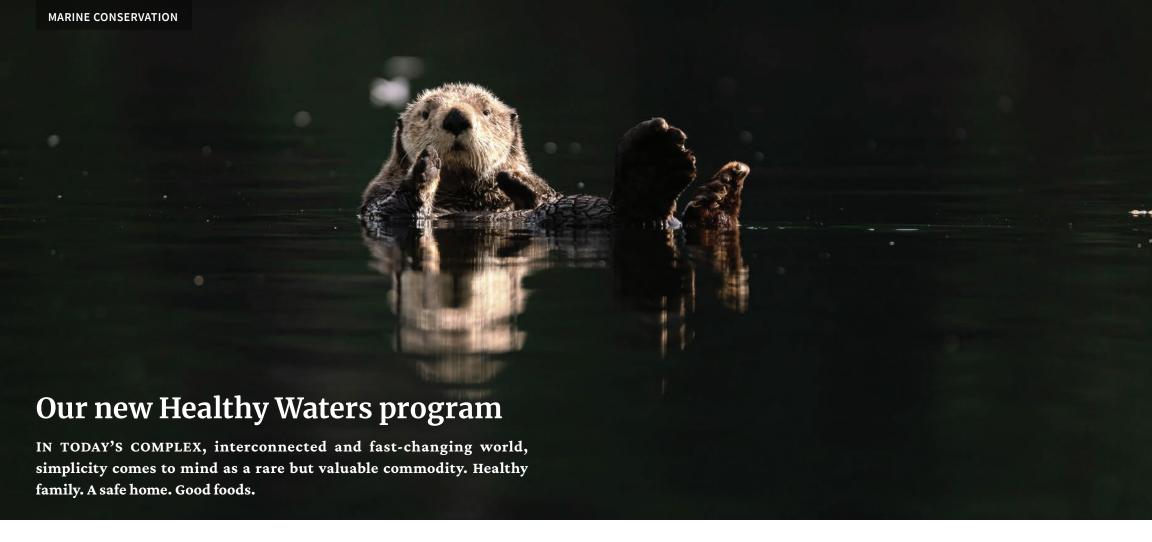
With a staff of dynamic scientists, and an applied conservation science lab at the University of Victoria, this scientific capacity

provides the foundation for Raincoast's work. On top of hard-hitting research, Raincoast delivers real-world solutions with tangible conservation outcomes. From large-scale salmon habitat restoration in the Lower Fraser River to purchasing commercial trophy hunting tenures throughout the Great Bear Rainforest to land acquisition in the endangered Coastal Douglas-fir zone, Raincoast's entrepreneurial approach generates measurable results.

Raincoast's unique blend of science, practice and community engagement offers us a chance to re-imagine conservation pathways in BC. I look forward to rolling out our new Healthy Waters program, a communityoriented water pollution monitoring initiative that will provide a unique opportunity to highlight the shared value of water to salmon, whales, and people.

Peter Ross, PhD Senior Scientist and Director. Healthy Waters program





But when pressed, what could be more immediately important than water?

We often take this precious resource (in Canada) for granted, forgetting that many remote, rural, and Indigenous communities have water that is tainted with fecal coliform, metals, or cancercausing disinfection byproducts. And while water treatment delivers clean water to millions of homes in towns and cities across the country, an estimated 20% of Canadian homes have unsafe levels of lead (Pb) that enter their water from plumbing infrastructure. One might be surprised at

what contaminants get through treatment or join the supply lines to your tap.

And that's just about water for us humans. At the end of the day, we are only intercepting water for our needs along its cycle in the environment, borrowing it from watersheds, and releasing it as liquid waste into the habitat of fish and whales... adulterated with a complex soup of pharmaceuticals, hydrocarbons, metals, flame retardants, pesticides, and microplastics.

That's where *Healthy Waters* fits in. A new Raincoast initiative that brings into focus our tacit participation in the water cycle,

our role in shaping the quality of water in our surroundings, and opportunities to construct an innovation agenda that tackles pressing pollution issues. With climate change threatening water quantity and quality just about everywhere we look, the time is right for a refresh of the water file in BC.

Healthy Waters will be a communityoriented water pollution monitoring program that operates first throughout the Fraser River and Salish Sea watersheds, and subsequently throughout British Columbia. Key elements of this program will be a mobile laboratory that provides shared access to high end technology, Indigenous Knowledge that shapes the selection of monitoring locations of cultural and ecological value, and a training platform that harnesses the power of water stewards and watershed champions.

All this in a region blessed with a rich diversity of species and habitats, an area where salmon, whales, and people share a need for a most precious and undervalued resource: water.

4 5

Rejecting the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 expansion

AS A NURSERY AND FEEDING ground, the Fraser River Estuary connects a food web linking fish, birds, and marine mammals across thousands of kilometres of the North Pacific Ocean. Even at a fraction of their former abundance, it is the rearing grounds for Canada's largest runs of Pacific salmon. Despite this, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority is proposing to double the size of its shipping terminal at Roberts Bank in the heart of the Fraser Estuary.

In 2020, a federal review panel concluded that the Terminal 2 shipping expansion project would have significant adverse and cumulative effects to populations of Fraser Chinook. This is due to the proposal's footprint in the Fraser Estuary and from the migration disruption caused by the terminal's placement. The panel also concluded that the project's increase in marine shipping would

amplify underwater noise in the Salish Sea, leading to significant adverse effects on endangered Southern Resident killer whales.

To compensate for these negative effects, the Port Authority has been considering governance options for implementing an 'unconventional offsetting' program. However, there is a lack of evidence that offsetting is an effective tool to mitigate the loss of habitat and ecological processes.

Raincoast is bringing this to the attention of the public and decision makers through impact analysis and collaborative communication efforts with other scientists, organizations, and stakeholders to ensure that the negative effects on Chinook salmon and Southern Resident killer whales that can not be mitigated are reflected in the government's decision on T2.



Recovering wild salmon through collaborative conservation

THE FRASER IS ONE of the world's greatest salmon rivers. Despite the Lower Fraser representing only 5% of the entire watershed, it supports more than half of the watershed's Chinook and chum, 65% of its coho, 80% of its pink, and significant populations of sockeye salmon. Since European colonization however, salmon habitats in the Lower Fraser have undergone a vast transformation, drastically reducing the quantity and quality of these habitats. Ongoing industrialization, urbanization, and agriculture, combined with climate change threaten to push salmon populations past a tipping point.

Raincoast is addressing these threats through our Lower Fraser Salmon Conservation program. Our goal is to see healthy populations of wild salmon returning to the Lower Fraser River to support the wildlife, ecosystems, and people that rely on them. Implementing this means having both feet in two different streams. One stream focuses on conducting scientific research to better understand habitat use, and then uses this to inform habitat restoration projects like

THE FRASER IS ONE of the world's greatest salmon rivers. Despite the Lower Fraser representing only 5% of the entire watershed, it supports more than half of the watershed's Chinook and chum, the one conducted in the Fraser estuary. The other stream engages a wide variety of collaborators to advance specific conservation efforts that would further ecological resilience.

In 2022, we will also advance our work to restore biodiversity in Lower Fraser salmon habitats. In collaboration with our Indigenous partners, the Healthy Waters program (see page 5) will create a community-based water pollution project that ensures clean water in the habitats of salmon and Southern Resident killer whales.

Our Salmon for Wildlife component will conduct research that will gather scientific data on grey wolves and grizzly bears [you read that right, we are studying these species in the Lower Fraser!] and will use this information to inform management that improves their welfare and reflects their ecological role on the landscape. Together, these approaches will help restore Fraser River salmon habitats and support the species and people that depend on them.

100 years later: Reconnecting the Fraser River with its estuary

AS WE MOVE INTO 2022, our Fraser River Estuary restoration efforts move towards the next target, the North Arm jetty. In late 2021, we finished our Coastal Restoration Fund project, a five year multi-million dollar initiative to restore connectivity between the main arm of the Fraser River and the marsh on Lulu Island's Sturgeon Bank. It was a huge success!

We created three large openings in the Steveston jetty to allow passage for juvenile salmon between the river and the marsh. From our monitoring, we know the breaches are already being actively used each spring during the outmigration. Small Chinook fry, which need the estuary marshes, are now reaching them through the breaches. Hopefully this provides them with a better outcome for survival than when the 8 km long jetty forced them out to sea.

As one project winds to an end another begins, as there is no shortage of structures

that inhibit the movement of juvenile salmon in the estuary. Similar to the Steveston jetty on the Fraser's Main Arm, the North Arm jetty was also constructed in the early 1900s to facilitate ship navigation. Ever since then, it has been a barrier to the natural movement of juvenile salmon, other organisms, freshwater, fine sediments, and nutrients that once reached Sturgeon Bank. We began investigating this project in 2018 and our research shows the North Arm is also highly utilized by juvenile salmon.

In 2022, in collaboration with a host of project partners, we plan to restore natural processes by creating three breaches in the North Arm jetty over the next three years. We will continue our monitoring program to determine the rates of juvenile passage in these new breaches and compare that to our previous work. As with the Steveston jetty, we are hoping this access to the marsh improves survival for juvenile Chinook and other salmon.



Adapting for ecological resilience

FROM EXTENSIVE BIODIVERSITY loss and a rapidly changing climate, the ecological resilience of habitats in the Lower Fraser River face unprecedented challenges. Multiple organizations and agencies support efforts to address these threats, however, no strategy, network, or mechanism existed to align contemporary interests, plans, or agendas.

In 2020, Raincoast, and several of our NGO, academic and professional colleagues began to identify mechanisms that would fill this gap. Collectively, we established the Adapting for Ecological Resilience (AFER) Network to increase coordination, communication and collaboration between organizations and individuals working towards ecological resilience in the Lower Fraser Region.

The AFER Network provides space for focussed discussion related to this broad goal of resilience through five working groups that are set up around the themes of information-sharing, nature-based climate solutions, education, funding, reconciliation and governance. The development and implementation of the Network has garnered significant community support and engaged many individuals and over 30 organizations, including local governments, Indigenous communities, NGOs, researchers, industry, and community groups. As we move forward, the legacy of this initiative includes a more coordinated and integrated approach to research, decision-making, and conservation in the Lower Fraser Region.



Applied conservation science helps inform and empower local decision-making

SHOULD A SOCKEYE salmon enter a fishing net or be left in stream to feed the grizzlies with which the Wuikinuxv First Nation have an enduring relationship? According to the Wuikinuxv, and drawing on recent work together, both humans and bears will be considered in salmon management.

'n'a'nakila is the Wuikinuxv principle that roughly translates as 'to look ahead for someone'. As the collapsed Wuikinuxv (Rivers Inlet) sockeye run rebuilds, the Wuikinuxv Nation is determined to align their Food, Social, and Ceremonial harvest with sustainability targets that allocate enough salmon to support a thriving grizzly population.

Recent research in which Raincoast's Applied Conservation Science lab helped design a harvest strategy that looks ahead for Wuikinuxv bears. A quantitative analysis of long-term salmon and bear data revealed that bears could maintain high (salmonfueled) densities if sockeye harvests were about 10% less than the 'optimum yield'. Optimum yield is a typical fisheries science target that does not consider ecosystem recipients of salmon returns.

A culturally-enlightened and ecosystembased approach is unprecedented in modernday salmon management.

Bears and people - similarly shaped by the landscape

Knowing that bears and people have shared resources and landscapes for millennia,

we reasoned that there might be a genetic signal to such a deep relationship. Working with the Nuxalk, Haíłzaqv, Kitasoo/Xai'xais, Gitga'at, and Wuikinuxv First Nations, our recent analysis revealed three genetic groups of bears, which spatially aligned with Indigenous language families in the region. Notably, the borders of the bear groups did not align with management designations as identified by the provincial government, which divides an otherwise genetically continuous population into two.

Our work draws on our lab's values

These two recent projects highlight a couple recent and tangible ways in which our research supports not only human-wildlife coexistence but also renewed self-determination by Indigenous governments. Indigenous nations craft evidence-based

policy to protect the future of their lands, waters, and resources. Our partnered research complements their own local knowledges to form needed evidence. Doing work in this way draws on our lab values, which includes commitments to evidence-based policy, environmental and social justice, mutually beneficial partnerships, and informed advocacy. In 2022, we look forward to continuing a legacy of providing evidence that helps to inform and empower local governments that safeguard nature.



The wolf as scapegoat

WHETHER CONCEALED under a smokescreen of wildlife management or in the name of protecting domestic livestock, chances are good that a wolf pack somewhere in Canada is now being (or is about to be) poisoned, trapped, sterilized, or machine-gunned from low-flying aircraft by well-intentioned government officials with a less than stellar grasp of ecology and the functioning of biological systems.

Consider the on-going decline of mountain and boreal caribou in western Canada. Of course, it is true that wolves prey on caribou today as they always have; but the role played by the wolf in the decline of mountain caribou is that of symptom and not underlying cause. Quite simply, people are the ultimate cause of caribou endangerment through the ongoing degradation imposed by resource industries on caribou habitat.

In other words, wolves are scapegoated for the decline of caribou in a morally and scientifically bankrupt attempt to protect Canada's industrial sacred cows: oil and gas, mining, and forestry. The relentless destruction of forest wilderness via industrial development has conspired to deprive caribou of their life requisites, while exposing them to levels of wolf predation they did not evolve with, and are incapable of adapting to.

Yet, governments habitually favour the destruction of wolves over any consequential protection, enhancement, or restoration of caribou habitat. As a result, mountain and boreal caribou are on a long-term slide to extinction; not because of what wolves and other predators are doing, but because of what humans have already done.

Wolf science and conservation

AS WOLVES CONTINUE to be scapegoated for the decline of caribou, research remains a key element in our efforts to protect wolves. In 2020, a peer-reviewed study, co-authored by Raincoast science director Chris Darimont, revealed poor statistical support for lethal wolf control as a conservation measure for endangered mountain caribou. The following year, a team of researchers, including Raincoast large carnivore expert Paul Paquet, examined a population model used to plan the regulated killing of wolves in Wisconsin, illustrating how natural resource management is often rooted in undisclosed value systems.

In BC, the provincial government estimates that some 1,200 wolves are killed on an annual basis for recreational purposes. In February 2021, a peer-reviewed study led by Chris Darimont was published indicating that trophy hunting large carnivores may erode a broader social license to hunt for food. Misaligned societal values played a prominent role in the 2017 ban on hunting grizzlies, and the researchers believe that similar changes to hunting policy will occur in time with wolves in BC.

Partnering with First Nations communities, 2022 will see us advancing our scientific understanding of wolves along the South Coast as part of our broader initiative to investigate the connection between land and sea in the Lower Fraser River.





Safeguarding coastal carnivores in the Southern Great Bear Rainforest tenure

OUR LONGEST running campaign at Raincoast has been our Safeguarding Coastal Carnivores campaign. We extinguish guided hunting when we purchase these tenures. We began purchasing commercial trophy hunting tenures with our First Nations partners in 2005. We now own the commercial trophy hunting rights in 5 tenures (approximately 39,000 km²) of BC's Great Bear Rainforest; we extinguish guided hunting when we purchase these tenures.

We are now raising funds to purchase the biggest tenure (18,239 km²) remaining on the central/south coast, the Southern Great Bear Rainforest tenure. Purchasing this tenure will ensure protection for all species in this region that could otherwise be hunted for trophies.

This campaign model supports a new economy. It provides rare, sustainable economic opportunities in remote coastal communities. First Nations communities have made substantial investments in bear-viewing based tourism. When buying a tenure, we consider not just current ownership and levels of hunting, but also the potential for much more aggressive owner groups, and increased levels of exploitation.

Acquiring the Southern Great Bear Rainforest tenure will bring us one step closer to our goal of ending all commercial trophy hunting in the Great Bear Rainforest.

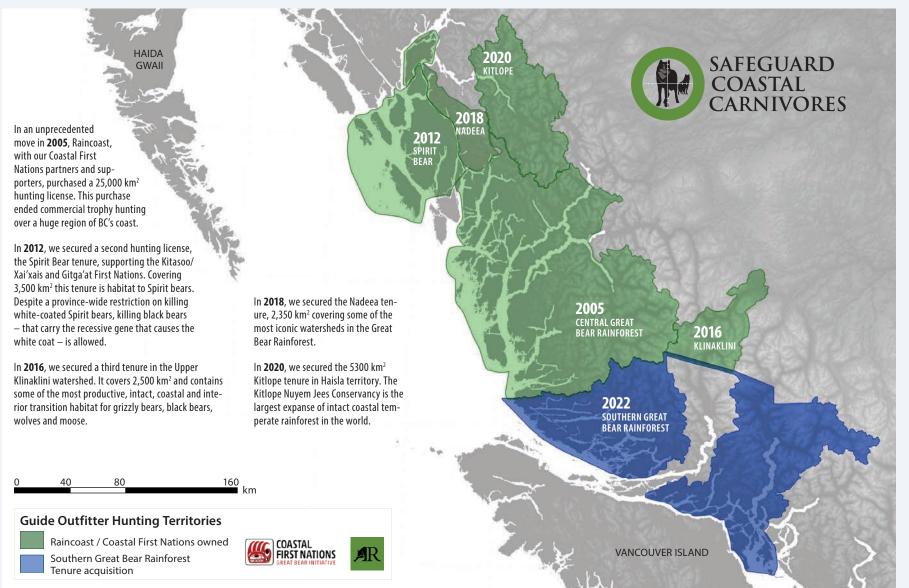


Our history of protecting coastal carnivores

to end the grizzly hunt resulted in a three- season. Recognizing that the incoming year province wide moratorium on killing government had no interest in ending grizzly bears. It was short-lived, however, trophy hunting of grizzlies, Raincoast as the BC government immediately reversed looked to a different strategy; the purchase

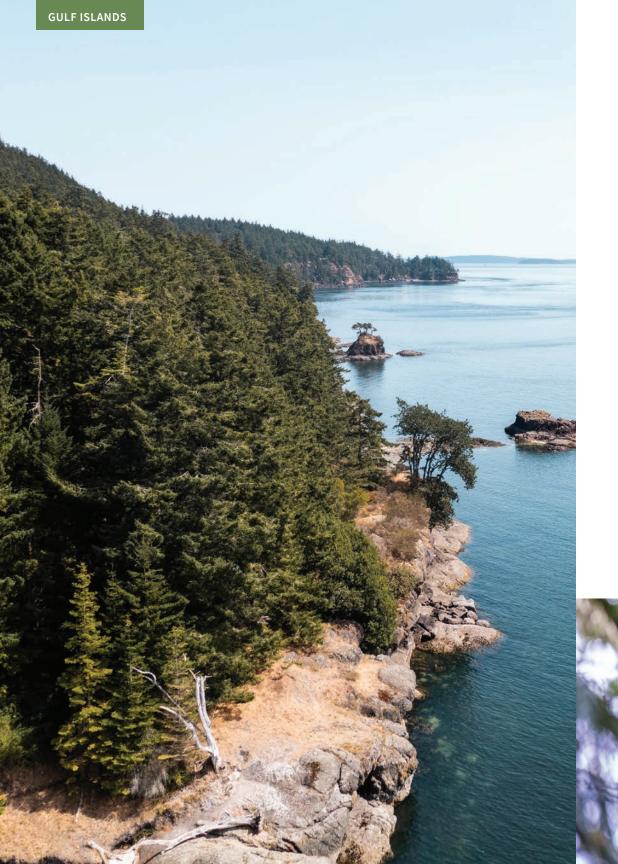
IN 2001, THE RAINCOAST-LED campaign after being in effect for one spring hunting the moratorium in the summer of 2001 of the commercial hunting tenures in the Great Bear Rainforest, Raincoast has a track record with big ideas. Given that the political landscape offered little hope for stopping trophy hunting of large carnivores, we pioneered a new approach to permanently saving bears and wolves.







In 2022, we will be working to purchase the 18,239 km² Southern Great Bear Rainforest tenure. This tenure contains significant populations of grizzlies, cougars, wolves, and roosevelt elk. It contains six major coastal inlets, over ten major salmon river systems with estuaries, and countless smaller named and unnamed watersheds, from Smith Inlet to Toba Inlet. This purchase also exemplifies the new conservation economy, as there are more than 19 ecotourism companies here who undertake wildlife viewing.



Conserving endangered Gulf Islands forests

THE COASTAL DOUGLAS-FIR (CDF) biogeoclimatic zone is the smallest and most endangered of 16 such zones in British Columbia. According to BC's Conservation Data Centre, nearly every ecological community in the CDF is provincially listed as threatened or endangered. The Gulf Islands represent 33.2% of CDF forests and associated habitats, and are the Traditional Territories of dozens of Coast Salish Nations. However, due to significant development pressure, a high proportion of private land ownership, and the impacts of climate change, the fragile ecological communities that make the Gulf Islands and the eastern coast of south Vancouver Island so unique are unravelling from former levels of diversity and abundance.

The ultimate goal of the Gulf Islands Forest (GIF) project is to secure long-term protection for CDF forests and associated ecosystems throughout its natural range.

We are employing multiple approaches to achieve this, including land acquisition and stewardship, community science initiatives, nature-based climate solutions, and improvements to the Islands Trust land use policy.

We also organized a number of online learning opportunities that focussed on topics like demystifing nature-based carbon projects, the complexities of tree and forest protection on private land, and expert panel discussions that unpack complex environmental problems currently faced by local governments.

We also released a series of "How-To" videos to assist people across BC in their big tree hunting adventures. The Pender Islands Big Tree Registry is a living database of big trees across North and South Pender Islands, which has grown to include over 100 trees. We also produced a comprehensive report on implementing tree bylaws in the Islands Trust.

One of the greatest achievements in 2021, however, was the purchase of S,DÁYES Flycatcher Forest, a 13-acre conservation property on North Pender Island with our partners at the Pender Island Conservancy Association.

Emerging stewards in the Salish Sea

SINCE 2016, our Salish Sea Emerging Stewards (SSES) program has been empowering young conservation leaders by connecting youth to place through immersive land and boat-based learning. The idea of "Two-Eyed Seeing" or the blending of different knowledge systems and ways of being, is central to the program.

Raincoast's SSES program produced the second season of an interactive online educational series known as Coastal Insights. Hosted by Peter Underwood of the Tsawout First Nation and Maureen Vo, Education Program Coordinator, the program focused on developing the concept of Two-Eyed Seeing; balancing Indigenous knowledge and contemporary science. The program was livestreamed into classrooms surrounding the Salish Sea, but it also had online viewership from around the world.

In July, Raincoast partnered with the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council to take part in the TETÁĆES (Islands) Revitalization Project. The project supports the creation of educational materials that capture the rich history of WSÁNEĆ Traditional Knowledge, their cultural revitalization and the protection of their homeland – ÁLENENEC. Achiever supported five WSÁNEĆ Elders, 91 youth, and seven teachers and knowledge holders as they traveled to culturally significant locations in the Gulf Islands to participate in restoration, ceremonies, and archaeological activities.

The SXOLE Youth Reef Net initiative, also in partnership with the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council, seeks to empower and educate youth leaders and restore the use of traditional reef net fishing practices. The reef

net team, led by Landon Underwood, joined the crew on board Achiever to visit culturally unique parts of WSÁNEĆ territory, including SISĆENEM (Halibut Island), ŁEL, TOS (James Island), and S,DÁYES (Pender Island).

2021 was the second year of the Tsawwassen Youth Stewardship Summer Work program. This eight week program supported 25 youth in developing new skill sets, and a broader understanding of the ecological importance of their home territory. In 2022, we look forward to more programming with our partners including the WSÁNEĆ Leadership School, the Quw'utsun (Cowichan) School district, and the Tsawwassen Youth Centre.





Our research and education vessel, *Achiever*

IN 2021, RAINCOAST welcomed a new marine operations manager and Captain, Drew Grav-Graham, to the team. Having made the jump from the ecotourism industry, Drew brings a wealth of experience and renewed enthusiasm for SV *Achiever* and the marine program.

Diving straight into months of seabird surveys off the west coast of Vancouver Island in the winter and spring, *Achiever* was put back to its original purpose, doing line transect work offshore. Under contract for Environment and Climate Change Canada, we have been working with a team of biologists to collect baseline data of both local and migratory seabird populations from Brooks Peninsula south and up into the Salish Sea basin.

Achiever and team also guided six weeks of trips in the Salish Sea for Raincoast's Salish Sea Emerging Stewards (SSES) program with youth and community members from the WSÁNEĆ, Quw'utsun (Cowichan) and Tsawwassen Nations, amongst pandemic cancelations and maintenance. We learned so much from these inspiring youth and knowledge holders, exploring their territories with them.

Building up to be its busiest year to date, 2022 will see *Achiever* back off shore for more seabird surveys (lasting until the end of 2024), as well as an expanded SSES program, Haítzaqv and Kitasoo/Xai'xais youth and donor trips in the Great Bear Rainforest, as well as helping to support and foster Raincoast's new Healthy Waters program.

Empowering youth leadership

WE WERE VERY PLEASED to have five passionate students join our team for the summer of 2021, through Canada Summer Jobs, a federal government initiative aiming to provide paid work and skill development opportunities to youth.

Over the summer, these five youth contributed to several of our programs, from researching policies to protect trees, to hands-on education programming for Indigenous youth, to constructing and maintaining a traditional reef net (fishing method) that helps reclaim a critical piece of WSÁNEĆ culture, to field research in the Fraser River Estuary.









Youth leaders in 2021

Kaleah Claxton
Restoration Project Liaison

Alex McLean
Tree Policy Protection Intern

Samantha Rhodes Fraser Research and Field Assistant **Jaya Scott** ForChange Education Intern

Sumeet Sidhu Tsawwassen First Nation Stewardship Program Lead

Landon Underwood Executive Coordinator, S<u>X</u>OLE Reef Net Project, <u>W</u>SÁNEĆ Leadership Council

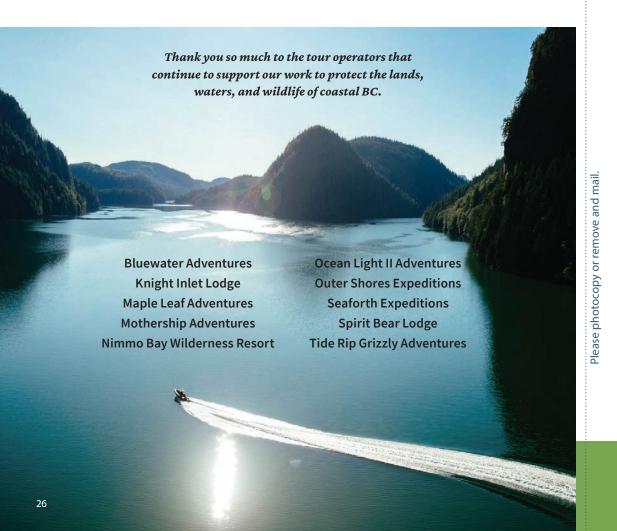




Friend of Raincoast, Mary Morrison

WE WOULD like to honour the late Mary B. Morrison, who last year passed away in her 98th year, and left, in her will, a substantial gift to Raincoast in recognition of our dedication to the protection of BC's land, waters, and wildlife.





Join the Raincoast Team



YES! I would like to support Raincoast's conservation efforts.

Tax receipts will be issued for gifts of \$10 or greater.

To make your donation: Visit our website at www.raincoast.org/donate. Our convenient and safe online service is set up to issue CRAapproved e-tax receipts immediately following confirmation of your gift.

OR complete this form and send to:

Raincoast Conservation Foundation PO Box 2429, Sidney, BC V8L 3Y3, Canada

For US supporters: Visit our website at www.raincoast.org/donate

and select Network for **Good**, a safe US based

online donation service.

Network for Good.

OR complete this form and send to:

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Thank you! Your support helps to safeguard the lands, waters, and wildlife of coastal British Columbia.

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