



Coastal Guardian Watchmen Network

The Coastal Guardian Watchmen Network, or CGWN, was created in 2005 by the Great Bear Initiative Society, an alliance of coastal First Nations on British Columbia's north and central coast and Haida Gwaii. First Nations Guardians are the eyes and ears of the First Nations in their territories, observing and monitoring natural resources and their use. They receive training at Northwest Community College and gather standardized information about the impacts of human activities such as tourism, logging, and commercial fishing, as well as collect scientific data.

The information is collected in the CGWN's database and helps to inform resource management decisions for each territory. This supports not only long term conservation efforts, but social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the First Nations communities. Through forums set up by the CGWN, Guardian Watchmen from each community are able to engage in dialogue, cooperate on projects and learn from each other.



Coast Funds supports this work in two ways: first, by providing core funding for Guardian Watchmen programs in seven communities; and second, by working to develop the CGWN into an effective and financially stable network. Prior to Coast Funds' involvement, it was very difficult for communities to establish long term, consistent funding for an office and staff.

Because Coast Funds' conservation funding is permanent, First Nations can build lasting capacity to steward their territories. By taking control of resource management, the First Nations can take control of the agenda and expect better long term outcomes for the territories and their communities.