

Coastal Guardian Watchmen Network

“Looking Back, Looking Forward”

Prince Rupert
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Looking Back

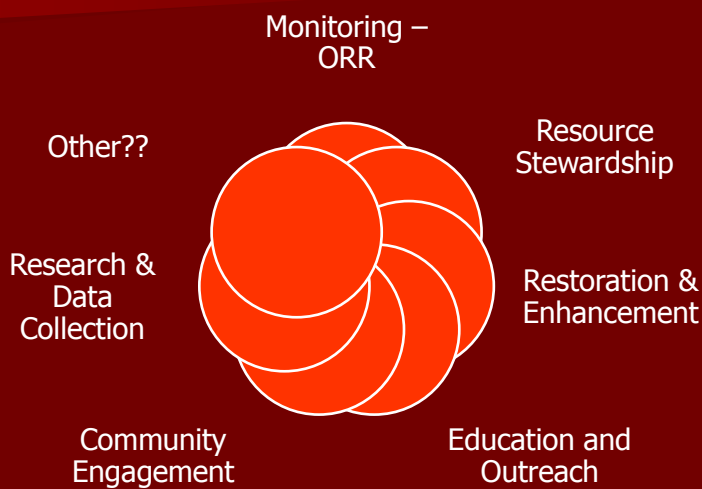


- First Nations have always been the Guardians and Watchmen of their lands
- Now, most communities have some sort of Guardian/Watchmen (GW) program
- GW programs often associated with government agencies (DFO, BC Parks, etc) and some community driven
- GW have different responsibilities depending on community and on program but have shared purpose

Guardian/Watchmen =

- Term used broadly to describe people and programs working to ensure that their territories are taken care of through their involvement in on-the-ground monitoring and stewardship
- Examples - Kitasoo Guardians, Haida Heritage and Forest Guardians, Nuxalk River Guardians, Haisla Watchmen, etc.
- Are the eyes and the ears of their territories making sure that activities on lands and waters are consistent with plans and rules

GW Roles and Responsibilities



Shared Themes



- Coastal communities want stronger GW programs
- Monitoring and authority critical to First Nations control over land and resources
- Role of GW programs essential for implementing First Nations' Marine and Land Use Plans

2005 GW Workshop

- QQS Project Society (Heiltsuk Nation), Sierra Club BC, and Coastal First Nations Turning Point Initiative organized a workshop for Guardian Watchmen practitioners
- Purpose: Identify ways to support and strengthen Guardian Watchmen programs
- Clear message from communities about vision of GW Programs and about specific training needs



Vision for GW Programs



- Integrate cultural values
- Function year round
- Adequate staff & resources
- Comprehensive training
- Outreach & education
- Monitor multiple resources
- Enforcement authority

Common Issues for GW Programs



- Limited resources and funding
- Inadequate authority
- Unclear roles and responsibilities
- Needed stronger relationships with government agencies
- Lack of consistent training
- Desire for more regional collaboration

Priorities from Workshop



- Establish **network** of GW so that people can connect, learn from each other, and strengthen work
- Develop **training program** to build capacity for community-driven GW programs

Coastal GW Network

- We are a network of Coastal Guardians and Watchmen from the central and north coast working together to protect and restore our natural and cultural resources by:
 - Sharing information
 - Collaborating on programs and activities
 - Supporting and learning from each other, and
 - Promoting and encouraging the development and expansion of coastal Guardian/Watchmen programs

GW Training

- Training based on local needs, reflect reality of north and central coast, and is regionally consistent
- Identified themes and skills, made recommendations on design and delivery
- Communities need to be involved in the development and delivery of training

What happened after 2005 GW Workshop?

- Coastal Guardian Watchmen Network
 - Informal communications
 - Website (awareness raising, networking, sharing information)
 - Conference
- GW Training
 - Established process and structure for training development
 - Northwest Community College involved
 - Network members and Community Advisory Group participated in design
 - Certificate program emerged and piloted

Looking Forward

Things are changing ...

- New agreements between First Nations and the province on Land Use Issues
 - Increased decision-making authority
 - Conservancies (Protected Areas)
 - Forestry (Ecosystem-based Management)
 - Adaptive Management
- Marine Use Planning underway

Potential Opportunities for GW?

- Increased authority through new agreements?
- Increased role in monitoring and managing territories?
- Opportunity to become less agency driven and more community driven?
- Options for building strength through regional coordination?

Time to talk ...

- How do we strengthen Guardian/Watchmen Programs?
- What is required to create more support for community-based monitoring and stewardship?
- How can we work together to protect our lands and waters?

Time to talk ...

**“EYES AND EARS
OF OUR TERRITORIES”**