



# Coastal Voices

## Community update



October 2016



### Project background

The *Coastal Voices* project brings together Indigenous leaders, artists, scientists and journalists in British Columbia and Alaska to discuss the profound transformations triggered by the recovery of sea otters. Through the lens of traditional knowledge and western science, our goal is to share information and help better equip coastal communities with strategies to navigate the ecological and socio-economic changes that come with the recovery of sea otters.

Project supported by:



The core project team is composed of a Steering Committee of Hereditary Chiefs and traditional knowledge holders, cultural advisors, and a Simon Fraser University researcher team.

#### Steering Committee



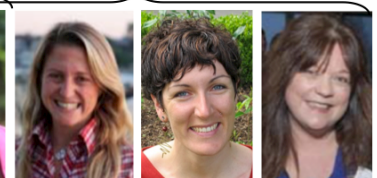
Wigvilhba Wakas Bella Bella Heiltsuk  
Gitkinjuaas Skidegate Haida  
Hupinyuk Port Alberni Nu-u-chah-nulth  
Skil-Hillans Old Masset Haida  
Nick Tanape Sr Nanwalek Sugpiaq Alutiiq  
Wii-tsts-koom Toquaht Bay Nu-u-chah-nulth

#### Cultural Advisors



Geetla Bella Bella Heiltsuk  
Kii'iljuus Vancouver Haida

#### SFU Research Team



Anne Salomon Vancouver SFU  
Jenn Burt Vancouver SFU  
Laurie Wood Burnaby SFU

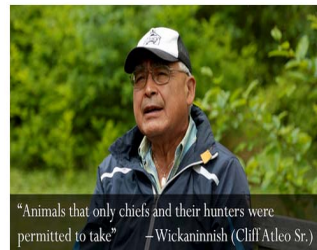
In 2014, *Coastal Voices* held a 4-day international workshop - "Visioning the Future of Kelp Forest, Sea Otter & Human Interactions" - at the Hakai Institute on Calvert Island, BC. This workshop gathered participants from 20 First Nations, 2 Alaska villages, 10 academic institutions and federal agencies as well as artists, journalists and videographers. Following the workshop, *Coastal Voices* launched their website: [www.coastalvoices.net](http://www.coastalvoices.net) and [mini documentary film](#) (directed by artist Ilja Herb).



Website



Mini documentary



"Animals that only chiefs and their hunters were permitted to take" - Wikaninnish (Cliff Atleo Sr.)



"Sea otter were hunted by chiefs in their own territories" - Kii'iljuus (Barb Wilson)



"Kelps as a sink for carbon" - Nancy Turner



"Kelp forest fishes becomes more abundant when kelp forests become more abundant" - Jim Estes

Online Story Room

### Explore our Learning Platform!

In 2015, we synthesized and analysed the main ideas and perspectives shared at the workshop and produced a [story room](#) on our web page. Here you can find a wealth of information from knowledge holders and scientists about the ancient use and management of sea otters, traditional governance principles and practices, the cascading effects of sea otters, and potential solutions - like integrating traditional stewardship and contemporary management. We also developed a survey to explore potential adaptation strategies with Nations and Tribes currently living with sea otters.



## What's NEW in 2016?

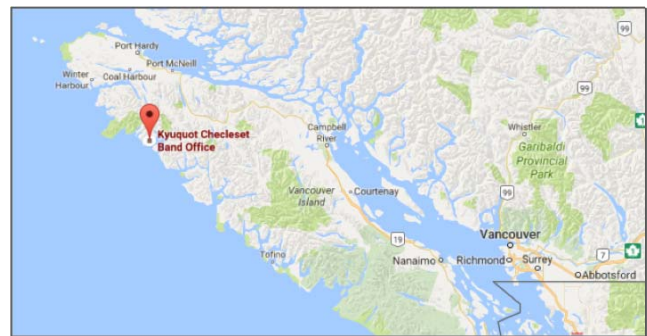
In 2016 the *Coastal Voices* team travelled to 3 communities to learn directly from people who are living and co-existing with sea otters (details below). We were honoured to have Chief Wii-tsts-koom Anne Mack join us on these visits as well as the project Steering Committee. We also enjoyed the company of SFU researcher Eveylyn Pinkerton on our Kyuquot visit, who has been studying resource governance issues in this community for the past decade.

**We also have a Facebook page!** Check out [Coastal Voices on Facebook](#) and 'like' the page to stay connected with what's going on! You'll find photos, videos, links and the most recent project updates! Please share!



## Coastal Voices Team Visits Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Chek'tles7et'h'

In May 2016, the *Coastal Voices* team (4 researchers, 3 Hereditary Chiefs, and a videographer) was invited to Kyuquot/Checleset territory. We travelled there to learn and share information in a place that has experienced recovering sea otter populations for the past 40 years. Our journey began when Tony Hanson, the community Fisheries Manager, picked us up in his boat from Fair Harbour and drove us down the inlet and around the corner to beautiful Kyuquot, situated on the outer west coast of Vancouver Island.



We spent our first day out on the water with Tony Hanson, Keith Cox, and Danny Short, exploring the seascape, visiting old village sites, learning about clam bed restoration, and observing sea otters. Chiefs Gitkinjuaas and Skil-Hillans observed their first ever sea otters in the wild, as they are not yet established in Haida territory!



The next day we worked with the KCFN Fisheries team to co-design the evening workshop - *Adapting to Sea Otters and Changing Access to Shellfish and Fish*. We established an agenda based on key topics of interest and the video footage that the community would be most interested in viewing.



We had a great turn out for the workshop! It started with a formal welcome from Chief Peter Hanson followed by a fantastic potluck feast with lots of delicious 'chumas' (desserts and sweets)!



People engaged in a lively discussion, sharing stories and vocalizing their experiences and ideas on the topic of "adapting to living with sea otters". We watched the *Coastal Voices* mini documentary, followed by some [knowledge holder video clips](#) (check them out on the website or FB page) and ended the evening with gifts for our hosts and door prizes.



In our last days in Kyuquot, our team worked hard to document the voices of the people living in Kyuquot. Jenn conducted 40 surveys asking people what enables and constrains their ability to co-exist with sea otters. Anne, Ilja, and the visiting Chiefs did video interviews with several community members to record their stories and knowledge.

Thank you / ̱eekoo to the Kyuquot community for your knowledge and inspiration!  
We look forward to our next visit! (More photos available [here on the FB page](#))



Portraits  
by artist  
Ilja Herb



## Visit to Port Graham & Nanwalek in Alaska

**In June 2016**, the *Coastal Voices* team was invited by Chiefs Pat Norman and John Kvasnikoff to visit their Sugpiaq/Alutiiq communities in south central Alaska where sea otters returned over 65 years ago. We travelled to Anchorage, then Homer, and took a small bush plane to arrive at near tip of the Kenai Peninsula in the beautiful villages of Port Graham and Nanwalek, where we received an incredibly warm welcome!



As soon as we arrived in Port Graham, we got out on the water to see, smell, listen and learn about the area. Our guides Tim Malchoff and Nick Meganack showed us the area and explained some of the history. We saw lots of sea otters and Tim even retrieved a big spring salmon for us from his family set net!



During our time in both villages we worked with local knowledge holders to co-create the content of our “*Adapting to Sea Otters and Changing Access to Shellfish and Fish*” workshops. Nick Tanape Sr. - a respected hunter and community knowledge holder (also on the *Coastal Voices* steering committee) - provided invaluable ideas and was a major driver in the workshop co-production. We were also fortunate to work with Tim Malchoff in Port Graham to create the agenda and hone in on the discussion points that were of greatest interest to the community, and also to the education projects that Tim is working on with the Chugachmiut tribal organization.



Both the Port Graham and the Nanwalek workshops were a success: great attendance, *incredible* food, insightful discussion, and lots of sharing and learning! In Port Graham, community members brought incredible sea otter pelts and crafts to display and try on. The Haida and Nuu-chah-nulth Chiefs loved the soft and beautiful sea otter cloaks! In Nanwalek, we were fortunate to have the local Seal Dancers perform for us! The traditional dances and music told stories of hunting, sea birds, and even sea otter!



During our time in both communities, we conducted more surveys and video interviews to capture people's stories, opinions and perspectives. We completed 34 surveys and many fantastic interviews. A BIG thank you to everyone we spoke with, and to everyone in Port Graham and Nanwalek who helped make our visit here so very special! See more photos on the [Port Graham workshop](#) and [Nanwalek workshop](#) Facebook albums.



Portraits by artist Ilja Herb

### Stay tuned for updates!

The *Coastal Voices* team has lots of work ahead of us and we look forward to sharing what we have learned! Stay in touch by checking the [Facebook page](#) or visiting the website: [www.coastalvoices.net](http://www.coastalvoices.net)