



PEOPLE | PATHWAYS | PLACES

Seeding Change

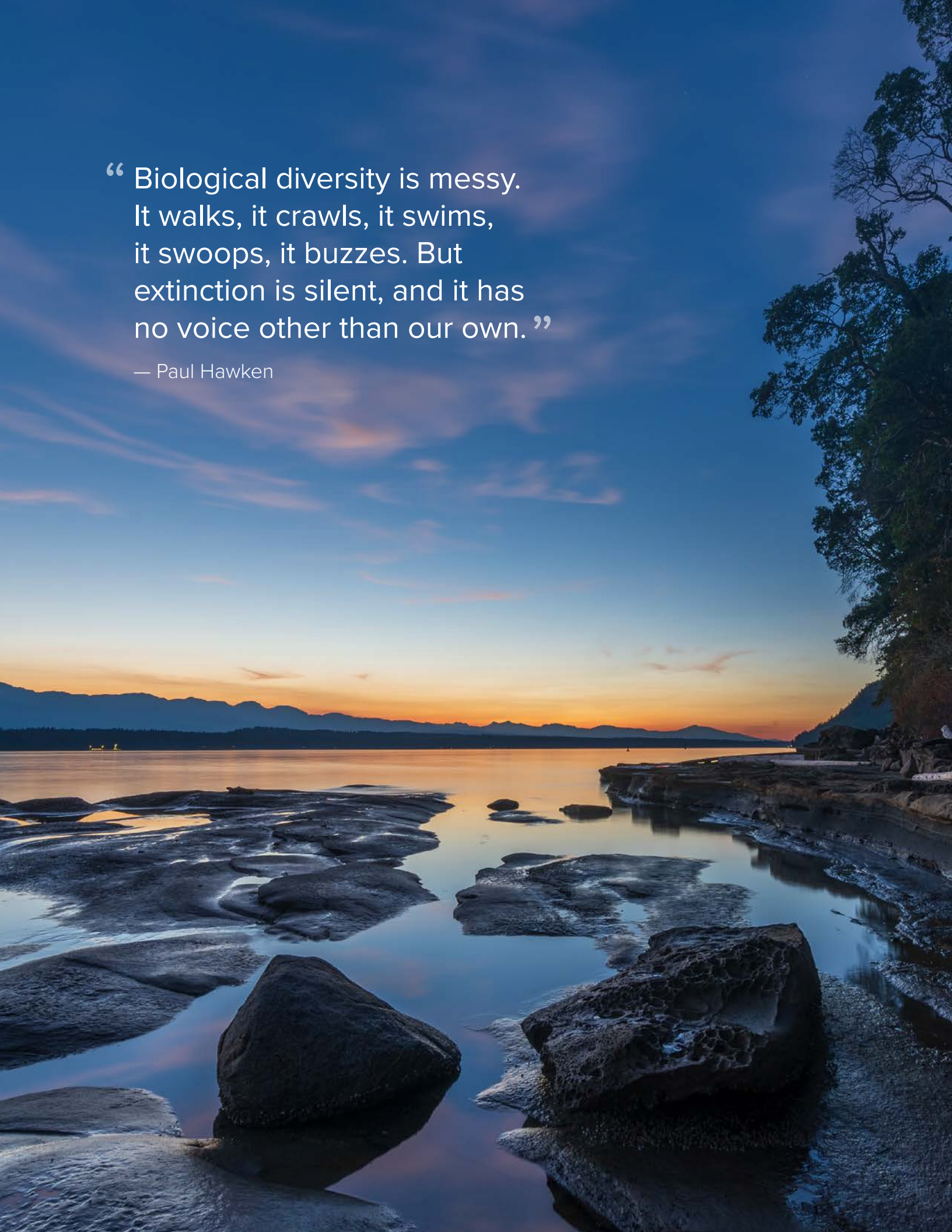
Sitka Foundation | 2023 Impact Report



sitka foundation

“ Biological diversity is messy.
It walks, it crawls, it swims,
it swoops, it buzzes. But
extinction is silent, and it has
no voice other than our own. ”

— Paul Hawken





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15 YEARS

The Sitka Foundation is dedicated to learning from and investing in those who celebrate, guard, and care for biodiversity and protected areas. The survival of life on our planet depends on their dedication to conservation and their ever-growing knowledge, experience, and impact.

Our foundation is honoured to continue the mission we began 15 years ago: supporting hundreds of outstanding people and organizations around British Columbia, Canada, and the world who, with passion and dedication, do good work that protects and restores the environment.

Staff and Board of Directors

Our Team

Carolynn Beaty
Lauren Storer
Ross Jameson
Travis Inlow

Our Board of Directors

Trisha Beaty
Ross Beaty
Dr. Sarah (Sally) Otto
Nancy Baron

Message from the Executive Director

On behalf of the Sitka Foundation team, I would like to welcome you to our first impact report.

Within this small but mighty creation is a snapshot of connection points from 2023. We share the stories of select grant partners, philanthropic and conservation movements, and Sitka's own initiatives.

We are living amidst climate and biodiversity crises that affect our lives and those of our children's children. We know there is a lot of polarization, anxiety, and grief right now; we hope that by highlighting the diverse work of our partners, we can offer an antidote. This report strives to kindle a sense of hope and connection to the lands and waters that we rely on to survive. I, for one, feel honoured to be here.

In these pages, we collectively take a big breath and slow down. We uphold and celebrate the incredible people, stories, and life's work of our grant partners and their communities. This can be seen in so many ways: partners co-creating and implementing robust [climate policy](#) with federal and provincial decision-makers; developing [natural climate strategies](#) through urban canopy planning and [just transition solutions](#) in rural and urban municipalities; campaigning for [marine and riparian policy reform](#) across coastal British Columbia; employing students to collect rare species documentation in the [South Okanagan Grasslands Protected Area](#); supporting food and [energy sovereignty](#) in Haida Gwaii; and celebrating [youth immersed](#) in the Kwak'waka language camp in Haida, also a recently declared [Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area](#). With each initiative, our partners offer more and stronger antidotes to the harrowing headlines we see.

Last year, Sitka turned 15. Since establishing as a charity in 2008, we have supported over 225 grant partners and have granted over \$70 million. Our team and board feel lucky to share this space with such incredible people. Throughout all of our work, Sitka hopes to practice transparency in philanthropy, bridge silos within our sector, and celebrate diverse dialogues that advance solutions for healthy waters, lands, and communities. This impact report will amplify our message and inspire more care—and funding—for the lands and waters that look after us.

Carolynn Beaty
June 2024



Message from the President of the Board

The year 2023 marked our Sitka Foundation's 15th year of supporting hundreds of entities with one common purpose: to protect the environment and help stem biodiversity loss, especially in our backyard of British Columbia.

We do this in manifold ways because there are manifold threats to our natural world, all driven by human-induced landscape conversion, ocean depletion and acidification, carbon pollution, and soil and water degradation (to name a few).

I am so pleased with our growth in supporting these efforts and with the wonderful work of our grant recipients—now more than 200 strong. We don't donate, we invest, and our investments seek to create a better world for all species and all people. We work with partners who we respect and trust and who share our mission. We like being a catalyst for change.

I am also so grateful for our small but mighty team who manage Sitka's affairs: Carolyn, Lauren, Ross, and Travis, supported by our office team of Deanna, Laura, Denise, and Tere. And for our Board of Directors, Trisha, Nancy, and Sally, who help guide our granting programs and funding activities. I'm especially thankful for the reputation the Sitka Foundation is gaining for excellence in its activities.

Climate change and biodiversity loss are thorny problems whose solutions take many forms, but I'm buoyed by the knowledge that so many people are now aware of the issues and are, like Sitka, working to solve them. Our allies in this mission include many in our federal and provincial governments, in our corporations, universities, and non-profit societies, Indigenous nations and people, and legions of members of the general public. I'm convinced we can see substantial positive change in our lifetime through continued dedication to this work.

In that spirit of optimism, I thank all our Sitka ecosystem for their support and look forward to more years supporting the protection of nature.

Ross Beaty, C.M.
June 2024



GRANTMAKING

Sitka's Framework and Impact

At Sitka, we fund partners in a way that engenders trust. Our objective has always been to listen deeply and then activate change by funding and enabling diverse leaders, decision-makers, and communities dedicated to protecting and promoting strategic ecosystems and biodiversity.

We see the problems impacting our natural systems as caused by the same trigger: the detrimental human impact on our planet. Solutions are myriad. As members of [Environment Funders Canada](#), the [Circle on Philanthropy \(the Circle\)](#), and [CREO](#), we know we are not alone; so many diverse communities are participating in solutions across sectors. We are signatories to the [Canadian Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change](#), which offers ways for the philanthropic sector to help mitigate these significant impacts.

Creative and place-based solutions are drawing the attention of the rest of the world. For instance, Sitka has been deeply involved in varied [conservation finance](#) initiatives, including long-term philanthropic and private sector commitments that generate investments in inclusive, regenerative economies that are sustainable for everyone. We feel this is a realistic way to create durable biodiversity outcomes.





PLACE

The places we love can't be replaced. And so we invest in the many passionate changemakers who focus their conservation efforts on place-based protection of British Columbia's ecosystems.

Supporting Place means devoting time and resources to protecting biodiversity, ensuring endangered and at-risk or vital marine and terrestrial ecosystems receive the attention and care they deserve and so sorely need. This is multi-generational work, accelerated by the polycrisis and by Canada's pledge to protect 30% of the world's lands and oceans by 2030 at the December 2022 [COP15 conference](#) in Montreal.

The partners in our Place granting program organize governments and community initiatives to introduce and improve conservation planning processes that incorporate space and connectivity. These processes protect and promote strategic ecosystems and allow biodiversity to thrive.



FEATURED GRANT PARTNER

Nature United

In British Columbia, Nature United partners with Indigenous communities to achieve lasting conservation through climate-friendly practices in spaces where old-growth forests and fisheries projects have the potential to address climate change. Spanning more than a decade and many vital ecosystems, the partnerships ensure the realization of First Nations priorities and help inspire new models of Indigenous-led conservation.

Last year, our grant helped Nature United to efficiently support their projects on the ground and play a critical role in the large-scale transformation of land and water protection. Their efforts saw the endorsement—by federal, provincial, and 15 First Nations governments—of the Marine Protected Area Network Action Plan for the Great Bear Sea, an announcement that laid the groundwork for the largest Indigenous co-designed and co-governed Marine Protected Area Network in the world. This global model of biodiversity conservation will have extensive positive effects on coastal communities.

In addition, Nature United published the Marine Protected Area Network Monitoring Report featuring collaborative research that will help inform future programs. Nature United partners with many of Sitka's other grant recipients to realize their land use visions and offer sustainable community-led economic development.

FEATURED GRANT PARTNER

Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation Salmon Parks

The Salmon Parks Initiative, driven by the ha'wiih (hereditary leaders) of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation, is dedicated to the protection and restoration of wild salmon through the recovery of key watersheds in Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island, an area severely impacted by more than 70 years of logging.

Formerly home to thousands of wild Pacific salmon, today, the region's population is vastly diminished due to the destruction of conifer tree underground root networks and canopies that once lined the banks.

In 2023, funding allowed Salmon Parks to build and strengthen partner relationships and seek additional support for their mission. The team celebrated their first successful proposal to Environment and Climate Change Canada, a milestone that led to the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation being awarded \$15 million. This commitment was met with a promise from the band's hereditary chiefs to identify and protect a string of salmon parks spanning more than 66,000 hectares of watersheds.

The organization looks forward to launching a Guardians program that will assist Mowachaht/Muchalaht community members in returning to their land and water to carry out their traditional stewardship. The program will be designed in partnership with a Community Advisory group to ensure the continued reflection of traditional values and priorities.







PATHWAYS

When we incorporate tools that give us the strongest understanding of our collected knowledge, we enhance the likelihood of true, lasting systems change.

Enduring change occurs when the successful collection and evaluation of data by conservation experts and changemakers is applied in meaningful ways to support decision-makers and communicators in our society.

Through our Pathways granting program, we provide support for every step of the process, from the generation of creative biodiversity and climate crisis solutions to the deployment of these pathways where they have the greatest potential to enact the changes that communities need.

These tools only succeed if their development and implementation are community-led and based on a strong understanding of traditional, Indigenous, and scientific knowledge. When this expertise is centred, these systemic tools strengthen the regulatory, legal, and policy systems to which they are applied. In 2023, Sitka focussed on pathways that align with Canada's plans to implement the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.



FEATURED GRANT PARTNER

Clean Energy Canada

The [Clean Energy Canada](#) program at Simon Fraser University has set an impressive goal: to accelerate Canada's clean energy transition by sharing the story of the global shift to renewable energy, clean technology, and sustainable industries. They pursue this objective by informing policy leadership and driving public engagement, contributing timely and original research.

In 2023, the organization received extensive media coverage including expansions on social media and video platforms. An [analysis](#) of the positive impact of clean energy solutions such as EVs and heat pumps on household affordability is one of their many reports that is continually referenced in the media and has been cited in federal communications.

Clean Energy Canada shares Sitka's values of community- and partnership-led granting, and this focus on values-based collaboration is at the core of much of their work. In B.C., this has included leadership towards the development of a [strategy](#) to modernize energy planning, based on an emerging climate-aligned energy framework. The organization is developing models that will further strengthen the case for a clean energy transition and anticipates that their work will translate into a significant expansion of multi-stakeholder voices advocating for a B.C. energy strategy.

FEATURED GRANT PARTNER

Marine Stewardship Initiative

Rooted in the near-urban southernmost fjord in Canada, Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound, the Marine Stewardship Initiative (MSI) focuses on protection, restoration, and preservation projects that steadfastly foster “the health, biodiversity, and human values of Howe Sound’s aquatic environment.”

Through respectful collaboration between Squamish Nation members and governments, tourism, industry, and more, the MSI strives to help communities work together to achieve positive outcomes for current and future generations.

With a strong base from which to grow and develop new programs, the MSI celebrated many successes in 2023. The Search for Slhawt'/Herring Program successfully facilitated more than 724 hours of community-led search, survey, and knowledge documentation. Our funding enabled them to significantly expand their team of volunteer surveyors.

In the coming year, plans will continue for an updated decision-making-support tool, the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Ocean Watch Report. Also ongoing is the MSI's exploration into possibilities for improved comprehensive research, reporting, and integrated technology on marine health in Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound.







PEOPLE

The many ongoing conservation projects on land and water require changemakers with a shared goal of enabling vital changes to our ecosystems, for the good of the planet and the species that rely on healthy spaces.

These creators, initiators, and leaders are the stewards of future solutions to the biodiversity and climate crises we face.

The strategic resources Sitka offers help amplify the vital work of these changemakers. But equally important are the relationships and networks these people weave as they build a community fabric resilient enough to face future challenges. Inclusion and care are important values at Sitka.

The implementation of UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) is a priority throughout all our grantmaking areas, as is a commitment to supporting Indigenous-led conservation in a respectful, reciprocal manner. Only through the voices of the people on the ground can our global community continue to halt and reverse nature loss.



FEATURED GRANT PARTNER

UBC Sustainability Hub

The UBC Sustainability Hub's Fraser Estuary Research Collaborative provides paid internships and facilitates connections between UBC graduate students and environmental NGOs for applied research projects focussed on the protection and restoration of the Fraser River Estuary. Many of these placements are with other Sitka grant partners.

The Collaborative strengthens the ties between research groups and expands the number of research assistants they can fund. These opportunities provide a huge benefit to the unique and endangered ecosystem of the Fraser Estuary and the communities that rely upon it. The amplification of young talent and the nature-centric work led by grassroots community groups is an asset to the Metro Vancouver bioregion.

In 2023, the Collaborative launched 14 new projects, and the graduate student interns worked with eNGOs such as Raincoast Conservation Foundation, WWF, and Birds Canada. In addition to vital protection initiatives, these new projects focussed on strategies to mitigate styrofoam pollution, the quantification of underwater noise produced by small vessels in the estuary's mouth, and the preparation of visualizations for an estuary restoration project.

FEATURED GRANT PARTNER

Neighbours United

Neighbours United teaches leadership skills that encourage collaborative and innovative solutions for the continued health and safety of British Columbia communities. This organization takes an inclusive view of climate and community and contributes many varied programs, from delivering thousands of bags of locally grown food to people in need to protecting vulnerable ecosystems from destructive development.

This past year, Neighbours United took advantage of a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change the way lands and waters in British Columbia are managed. The recently proposed B.C. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health framework would place ecosystem health above all else, but its success relies on the support of British Columbians, particularly those in mill town communities who often have conflicting feelings about the forestry industry.

The deep canvassing project undertaken by Neighbours United successfully trained and dispatched dozens of volunteers and staff who facilitated hundreds of conversations that ultimately helped drive dialogue and increase support for legal reform. Sitka's investments in community dialogue hope to decrease polarity and bring people together on a pivotal shared truth: that we, as animals, are deeply reliant on a healthy environment.



OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Right Relations Collaborative

The Right Relations Collaborative emerged from highly responsive funding carried out by communities during the critical early days of the pandemic. The Collaborative is rooted in the understanding that Indigenous community leaders and organizations have the deepest knowledge of what their communities and ecosystems need to heal, stay healthy, and remain connected.

The Collaborative is governed by a Council of Aunties, who hold an annual shared gift-making process that supports a cohort of incredible place-based Indigenous-led organizations. The co-leads, Cúagilákv (Jess Housty) and Kim Hardy, and the Aunties have invited all of the non-Indigenous funder partners into a trusted and generative relationship and to activate a shift of power, resources, and practices in philanthropy.



Panthera Canada

In the eight years since we began our partnership with Panthera Canada, we have watched their team continue to grow alongside their dedication to widespread jaguar conservation between Mexico and Argentina.

In 2023, Panthera and their partners:

- Celebrated continued progress toward the Jaguar 2030 Roadmap, including identifying 42 priority jaguar landscapes, and agreed to develop an intergovernmental monitoring platform;
- Established a cooperation agreement in Costa Rica with the Livestock Development Corporation to address predation and train farmers;
- Finalized the national monitoring framework for the Belize Forest Department, ensuring a national standard and database for trap monitoring;
- Hosted their program Escuela Jaguar in three schools, helping to change children's perceptions regarding jaguars and other wild cats.



Messengers of Biodiversity

In 2023, we partnered with the Science Media Centre of Canada to launch the Sitka Messengers of Biodiversity Reporting Grants. This program provides ten \$10-\$15K grants annually to journalists pursuing stories that engage the public on biodiversity issues across the province. We believe that accurate, evidence-based journalism, a foundation of our democracy, is critical to our ability to make well-informed decisions about our future.



INVESTMENTS

Alignment between investments and philanthropy is essential to our mission. We focus on continuously ensuring our investment portfolio catalyzes change and upholds the same values that guide our philanthropic efforts. By supporting the initiatives we fund, not only through our granting programs but through the allocation of our investment capital, we strive to establish an integrated approach across the entirety of our foundation.

The results of a 2022 environmental impact audit revealed to us both the areas in which our portfolio is aligned with our organization's mission and the areas where we need to continue to work to minimize harm and create more positive impact with our investments. We commit to investing in sustainable enterprises, from working with best-in-class fund managers with dedicated resources and sustainable investment strategies, to directly investing in private opportunities that generate solutions that shift us further toward a nature-first, low-carbon economy.

Equally important to our mission is to engage, learn, and partner with a community of asset owners with similar investment objectives. In 2022, we joined with other Canadian charitable foundations and private trusts to launch the Great Canadian ESG Championship. More than 60 asset managers submitted their ideas for Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investment strategies, and 11 finalists were selected to present to a panel of expert judges in Montreal.

Intended to shine a spotlight on the responsible investing choices available to Canadians, the competition also highlighted fund managers with ESG best practices. From the finalists, in 2023, we selected a multi-asset fund manager whose integration of ESG factors resonated with our foundation's mission: Jarislowsky Fraser's Fossil Free Equity and Sustainable Bonds Funds. Today, these investments have, on average, an 80% lower carbon intensity than the market benchmark, while still generating superior market returns to the 2023 benchmark.


Looking ahead, we strive to fully activate our portfolio for mission alignment by seeking sustainable investment strategies across multiple asset categories, supporting a resilient portfolio that is aligned with our mission.

2023 Grant Partnerships

Aga Khan Foundation Canada
 BC Freshwater Legacy
 BC Nature
 BC Parks Foundation
 BC Water Funders Collaborative
 Birds Canada
 CPAWS BC
 CPAWS
 Cedar Coast Field Station Society
 Clayoquot Biosphere Trust Society
 Clean Energy Canada at SFU Centre for Dialogue
 Coastal First Nations - Great Bear Initiative
 CodeBlue BC
 Comox Valley Land Trust
 Comox Valley Project Watershed Society
 Conservation North
 EcoAnalytics Research Initiative
 Ecojustice Canada Society
 Environment Funders Canada
 Environmental Law Centre, UVIC
 First Nation Wild Salmon Alliance
 Fraser Riverkeeper Society
 Friends of Forage Fish Sunshine Coast
 Galiano Conservancy Association
 Georgia Strait Alliance
 Gitanyow Huwip Society
 Gitxsan Laxyip Management Office
 Green Budget Coalition
 Harmony Foundation of Canada
 Howe Sound/Atl'kat7sem Marine Stewardship Initiative
 Huu-ay-aht First Nations
 Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries, UBC
 Kanaka Bar Indian Band
 Kootenay Connect

Kwiahah First Nation
 Living Lakes Canada Society
 Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance
 Mamalilikulla First Nation
 Mayne Island Conservancy Society
 Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute
 Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation
 Natural Assets Initiative
 Nature-Based Solutions Foundation
 Nature Canada
 Nature United
 Nawalakw Culture Project
 Neighbours United
 North Coast-Skeena First Nations Stewardship Society
 Northern Confluence
 Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust
 Oceans Collaborative, Environment Funders Canada
 Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship Society
 Our Living Waters
 Pacific Salmon Foundation
 Panthera Canada
 MakeWay Charitable Society
 Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development
 Peninsula Streams Society
 POLIS Project on Ecological Governance
 Raincoast Conservation Foundation
 Renewable Cities at SFU Centre for Dialogue
 Right Relations Collaborative
 Salmon Coast Society
 Salmon Health Program, Pacific Salmon Foundation
 Salmon Watersheds Lab, SFU

SkeenaWild Conservation Trust
 Science Media Centre of Canada
 Sierra Club of British Columbia Foundation
 Smart Prosperity Institute
 Smelqmix/Lower Similkameen Indian Band
 Society for Conservation Biology North America
 Squamish River Watershed Society
 Stein – Nahatlatch IPCA Working Group
 Strathmere Group, Environmental Defense Canada
 Swiilawiid Sustainability Society
 Terrestrial and Aquatic Conservation Lab, SFU
 The Circle on Philanthropy
 The David Suzuki Foundation
 The Dena Kayeh Institute
 The Loon Foundation
 The Narwhal News Society
 The Nature Conservancy of Canada
 The Nature Trust of British Columbia
 UBC Sustainability Hub - Fraser Estuary Research Collaborative
 Watershed Watch Salmon Society
 Wildlife Conservation Society Canada
 West Coast Environmental Law Research Foundation
 West-Kootenay Watershed-Collaborative
 Canadian Coastal Research Society
 Wildsight
 World Rivers Day
 WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council
 WWF - Canada
 Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative Foundation



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Page 2 (bottom right): Salmon Parks

Page 8: The Great Bear Sea | Jon McCormack
Nature United and partners | Jenn Burt

Page 9: Salmon Parks

Page 12: Clean Energy Canada

Page 13: Herring eggs | Kieran Brownie
Marine Stewardship Initiative

Page 16: UBC Sustainability Hub

Page 17: Neighbours United

The Sitka Foundation is based in Vancouver, British Columbia on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwəta4 (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.



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