

MARCH 2023

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# 5 YEAR IMPACT REPORT 2017-2022

## IISAAK OLAM Foundation





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Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks, Tla-o-qui-aht territory (Tofino, B.C.)

Cover photo: VIU IPCA Planning Certificate cohort (2022-2023), learn more on pg. 14

# MESSAGE FROM THE CO-FOUNDERS



**We are at a pivotal time.** We are well into a decisive decade where the actions we take—or do not take—have repercussions for Mother Earth and future generations. Canada has made bold commitments to protect 30% of our lands and waters by December 31, 2030 to address the biodiversity crisis. The interconnected climate crisis also necessitates bold actions.

Indigenous Peoples have the knowledge, approaches, and experiences instrumental to usher in a more abundant and resilient world. In this abundant world, we centre thriving—not just surviving—and not just for people but for all beings.

The IISAAK OLAM Foundation is an Indigenous-led educational not-for-profit that embraces Ethical Space. This is a concept elaborated on by Dr. Reg Crowshoe, Willie Ermine and others who challenged the supposed superiority of Western institutions and ways of thinking at the expense of other systems. More recently, this concept was adopted in the conservation sector and advanced by Danika Littlechild and the Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE) for the Pathway to Canada Target 1.

At IISAAK OLAM, our commitment to Ethical Space transcends our programs into the DNA of our organization through our core values of *iisaak* (respect) and *tikkun olam* (to heal the world).

Since our establishment in December 2017, we have had the opportunities to support Indigenous Nations, governments, and communities, as well as Crown governments, universities and researchers, and civil society organizations. We have worked in Indigenous territories across the country. Through our collaborations we have collectively advanced projects that reorient laws, policies, and actions towards a stewardship mindset rooted in relationships and reciprocity.

We are grateful to all of our partners and collaborators for the opportunity to work collectively towards a healthy future and planet where all peoples and beings thrive. We invite you to join us as we reflect on our journey over the past five years and share our vision for the future.

Kleckooo Klecko Na-as! (Deep gratitude to Creator.)

Chuu,

**Eli Enns**

Co-Founder, CEO and President

**Monica Shore**

Co-Founder and Executive Director

# ORIGIN STORY

**IISAAK OLAM means to “respect the world forever,” embodying the cultural values of the organization’s co-founders.**



Photo: Jeremy Williams, River Voices Productions

In December 2017, Eli Enns (Tla-o-qui-aht and Dutch Mennonite ancestry, born in Victoria, B.C.) and Monica Shore (Jewish and Euro-Canadian descent, born in Montreal QC) co-founded the IISAAK OLAM Foundation. At the time, Eli and Dr. Danika Littlechild were co-chairing the Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE). ICE was an Indigenous-led advisory group that made recommendations to the Canadian government on increasing biodiversity conservation while advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in Turtle Island/Canada.

The work of ICE culminated in their 2018 report, [We Rise Together](#), which continues to profoundly influence the conservation sector.

ICE’s overarching recommendation was to establish Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), a modern expression of Indigenous conservation and governance.

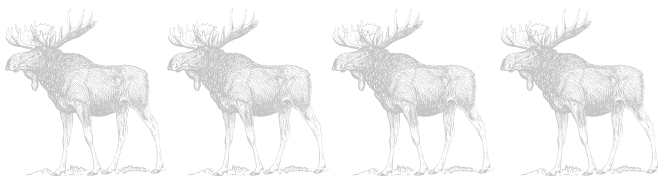
## Three key characteristics of IPCAs:

- They are Indigenous-led
- They represent a long-term commitment to conservation
- They elevate Indigenous rights and responsibilities



**IPCA's are a corrective measure to hold the Crown to account for the commitments that were made in the Peace and Friendship treaties going back to the Treaty of 1764 at Fort Niagara and many others before and since then.**

ICE identified **four “moose”** (i.e. “elephants in the room” or uncomfortable truths) that required addressing in order for Indigenous-led conservation to flourish. One of these moose was **capacity development** or the support needed to advance IPCAs while benefiting communities and their lands and waters. ICE noted that increased capacity is needed among Indigenous Peoples to navigate Western systems and among non-Indigenous individuals to respectfully interact with Indigenous knowledge systems.



ISAAK OLAM Foundation was born out of the desire to build capacity and relationships for the “paradigm shift in conservation” that ICE called for.

Acting as a spawning ground for new ideas, organizations, projects, and initiatives, IOF applies social innovations to bring about this transformation. We bridge Indigenous and Western ways of knowing and doing to heal the world through respect, peace and friendship, and generosity.



Totem poles are an expression of Indigenous laws and governance, equivalent to a constitution.

# PURPOSE & VALUES

**We work at the intersections of nature, society, and culture, all of which come together in IPCAs.**

IOF supports the establishment and long-term capacity of IPCAs and educates Canadians about their value and relevance. We do this by building relationships, supporting partnerships, incubating initiatives, and through knowledge mobilization and capacity building. We work with Indigenous Nations and communities and their partners, as well as with Crown governments, academia, and the conservation sector. We recognize that a paradigm shift in conservation requires the hearts, minds, and energy of many individuals, leaders, and governments.

**IISAAK OLAM is an exercise in reconciliation and Ethical Space. We are a values-driven organization guided by the following principles and teachings:**

## IISAAK

*Iisaak* is a Nuu-chah-nulth word and reflects the highest law of the Nuu-chah-nulth constitution, represented at the top of the totem by the sun-moon crest. *Iisaak* roughly translates as “To observe, appreciate and act accordingly.”

## PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP

Canada is a multinational Euro-Indigenous state built upon sacred treaty relationships between European and Indigenous Nations in the spirit and practice of peace and friendship.



***Iisaak* is the highest law of the Nuu-chah-nulth constitution, represented at the top of the totem by the sun-moon crest.**

## OLAM

*Olam* means ‘world’ and ‘forever’ in Hebrew, and the Hebrew phrase ‘*Tikkun Olam*,’ means “to repair, heal, or perfect the world.” It is a Jewish ethic of responsibility for the health of people and nature.

## GENEROSITY

Respect that which has been provided, walk in the world with a grateful heart, and be generous with others.



# LEADERSHIP

The IISAAK OLAM Foundation is a majority Indigenous-governed not-for-profit society registered in British Columbia (B.C.). Since our establishment in 2017, our team has grown significantly and includes an Indigenous Circle of Advisors, a majority Indigenous Board of Directors, staff and interns, and numerous contributors and partners.

We rely on grants, contributions, and contracts for our core funding. We also host paid productive retreats, trainings, and workshops on topics ranging from IPCAs to Ethical Space and reconciliation.

We are grateful to our past and present team of advisors, directors, and collaborators.

## Circle of Advisors

Dr. John Borrows (Anishinabe/Ojibway)  
Marilyn Baptiste (Xeni Gwet'in First Nation)  
Levi Martin (Tla-o-qui-aht Nation)  
Chief Gordon Planes (T'Sou-ke Nation)  
Barbara Todd (Métis/Cree)

## Board of Directors

Eli Enns (Tla-o-qui-aht Nation and Dutch Mennonite)  
Pierre Iachetti (Afro-Caribbean and Italian)  
Carol Anne Hilton, incoming (Hesquiaht Nation)  
Art Napoleon, outgoing (Saulteau First Nation)  
Stephanie Rathwell, former (Euro-Canadian)

# IN THE FIELD

## Core Staff

**Eli Enns**, Co-Founder, President and CEO  
**Monica Shore**, Co-Founder and Executive Director  
**Terry Dorward**, Director of West Coast IPCA Conservation  
**Dr. Justine Townsend**, Director of IPCA Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization  
**Dr. Soudeh Jamshidian**, Director of Education and International Relations  
**Eric Wilson**, Director of IPCA Infrastructure and Systems Design  
**Carl Haynes**, Administrative Coordinator

## Special Projects Team

**Abby Sparling**, MA  
**Allyson Menzies**, PhD  
**Anaïs Brusel**, MA Candidate  
**Andrew Paul**, PhD Candidate  
**Astra Lincoln**, MSc  
**Ben Grayzel**, Olam Films  
**Eduardo Sousa**, MA  
**Gregg Brill**, PhD  
**Jeremy Williams**, River Voices Productions  
**Jessica Lukawiecki**, PhD  
**Kate Fenton**, MCP Candidate

## Past Contributors

Christina Croce, Crystal Oberg, Janice Alton, Jee-Ho Paik, Jonah Sam-Young, Julia Buchan, Katie Hargus, Liane O'Keefe, Matias Golob, Noémie Foley, Dr. Toktam Sajedi, Zoë Mager

# KEY MILESTONES

**2016-7**

ICE hosts 4 gatherings across Canada to develop a definition for Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs).

**2017**

IISAAK OLAM Foundation (IOF) is established on December 11.

**2018**

ICE publishes their foundational report, "We Rise Together," on IPCAs with recommendations for allies. National IPCA Gathering hosted in Canmore, AB.

**2019**

IOF launched the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership (2019-2026) with the Indigenous Leadership Initiative and the University of Guelph.

**2020**

IOF co-hosts a Housing Solutions Lab with T'Sou-ke Nation looking at housing policies and planning within an IPCA framework.

**2021**

IOF invited by Prince William of the British Royal Family to be an official nominator of the International Earthshot Prize.

**2021**

IOF inaugurates the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre with the opening of the Clayoquot Campus and a dedicated Knowledge Hub.

**2022**

The IPCA Knowledge Basket launches with IOF and other partners collaborating to support and coordinate the initiative.

**2022**

IOF and Vancouver Island University launch the IPCA Planning Certificate, Canada's first post-secondary program dedicated to IPCAs.



# OUR WORK

Here are the projects, initiatives, and collaborations we've worked on over the past 5 years.

**Some of these projects are described in greater detail in the following pages.**

## NATIONAL

- **Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership** (host partner)
- **IPCA Knowledge Basket** (design, development, coordination)
- **IPCA Planning Certificate** at Vancouver Island University (program and curriculum design and instruction)
- **Ethical Space and Reconciliation trainings** (design and delivery of tailored workshops)
- **First Nations Dialogues on Species at Risk and Culturally Significant Species** (Assembly of First Nations; convener and subject matter expertise)
- **IPCA Development Fund** (design and development of the fund)
- **IPCA Stories Project** (curating stories of Indigenous-led conservation)
- **#Meares35 Campaign** (marking the 35 year anniversary of the declaration of the Meares Island Tribal Park)
- **Climate Action Youth Ambassadors Canada** (youth engagement and empowerment)
- **Métis National Council Conservation Leadership** (research and advising on the centering of Métis perspectives on conservation and IPCAs)
- **Valentine's Day Zaagidiwin Event** (annual virtual event celebrating Indigenous resilience and love)
- **Building a Foundation for Reconciliation** (annual event for Architecture, Engineers, and Construction professionals)

- **Mitacs partner** (hosting and mentoring graduate and post-graduate research interns from across Canada)

## INTERNATIONAL

- **Earthshot Prize** (nominator)
- **Canadian Committee for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature** (member)
- **Organization for Tropical Studies** (support for IPCA establishment in Costa Rica and Central and South America)
- **University for Peace in Costa Rica** (course development and instruction)
- **Salazar Centre for North American Conservation** (honourable mention and featured speaker)
- **Transboundary Conservation Canada-US** (advising state actors on collaborating across borders)
- **Nature Champions Summit** (Eli Enns invited to participate as 1 of 100 global leaders to boost global action on biodiversity crisis)
- **Biodiversity Revisited Symposium** in Vienna (contribution to an integrated five-year global research agenda to sustain life on Earth)
- **Women's Honour Canoe**, side event of Women Deliver 2019 Conference (ceremony leading and event planning to uplift the role of women in Indigenous-led conservation)

# OUR WORK (CONTINUED)

## WATERSHED LEVEL

- **Productive Retreats** (planning and coordination of on-the-land IPCA education)
- **T'Sou-ke Housing Solutions Lab** (convener, subject matter expert)
- **Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre** (conceptualization of the centre and co-lead of the Knowledge Hub)
- **Indigenous Climate Action Program** (transforming early childhood education curriculum)
- **IPCA Intro Dialogues** (facilitation and knowledge sharing for some Coast Salish Nations)



Women's Honour Canoe gathering at the Women Deliver Conference, Vancouver, 2019.



Left to right: Eli Enns, Harrison Ford (Actor & Vice President of Conservation International), Will Goodon (Manitoba Métis Federation). Part of the #Meares35 Campaign.



Anniversary celebration of Cedar Man ([see blog here](#))



## Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership (CRP)



conservation  
through  
reconciliation  
partnership

In 2019, IISAAK OLAM Foundation, the Indigenous Leadership Initiative and the University of Guelph launched the [Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership](#) (CRP). With funds from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada between 2019-2026, the CRP's goal is to support Indigenous-led conservation in Turtle Island/Canada by:

1. Creating a network for conservation through reconciliation;
2. Ensuring ethical and collaborative research; and
3. Increasing capacity among Indigenous Nations and communities, the conservation sector, and the general public.

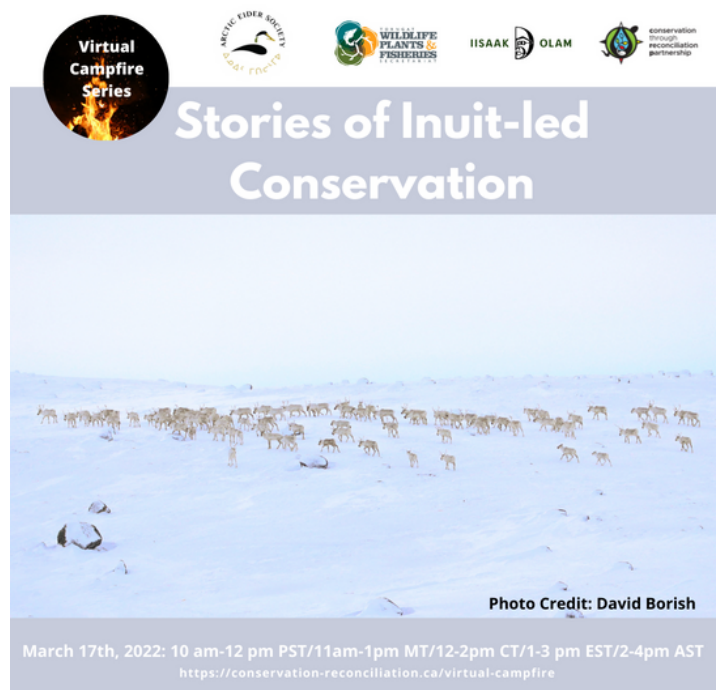
The CRP is a strong example of an Indigenous-led and collaborative research partnership that uplifts Indigenous knowledge, governance, and legal systems in conservation. IOF has been an active host organization shaping the CRP. Some of our contributions have included participating in the Leadership Circle, co-hosting the [Virtual Campfire Series](#) webinars, and chairing a collaborative work stream on IPCA economics, infrastructure and finance and a working group on knowledge mobilization.

INDIGENOUS  
LEADERSHIP  
INITIATIVE

IISAAK  
OLAM



UNIVERSITY  
of GUELPH



Examples of co-hosted Virtual Campfire Series webinars.

## Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre

[www.ipcainnovation.ca](http://www.ipcainnovation.ca) 

With support from the Canadian Mountain Network and in collaboration with the CRP and MakeWay's IPCA Innovation Program, we launched the [Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre](#) in 2021.

The Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre is the first of what will become a network of regional IPCA Innovation Centres across the country. These centres are places of learning and inspiration for IPCAs. By supporting partners to come together to develop relationships, collaborate, strategize, and share, we will continue to build capacity for IPCAs.

In 2022, a generous donation by an anonymous philanthropist enabled the purchase of the Tofino Botanical Gardens in Tla-o-qui-aht territory (Tofino, B.C.). In its new phase of life as the Naa'Waya'Sum Gardens, these beautiful lands are now the site of the Clayoquot Campus—a satellite campus of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre.



Left: Joe Martin Carving at the Clayoquot Campus  
Right: Child wearing a cedar woven deer headdress.

We convene the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre Knowledge Hub, a group of collaborators that focuses on capacity development, research, and knowledge mobilization. Hub members support each other, share resources, and collaborate on projects in support of IPCA establishment and governance. Our members include Indigenous leaders, academics, and practitioners, university researchers, and environmental non-governmental organizations.



Naa'Waya'Sum Gardens, Tla-o-qui-aht territory

Activities that have taken place so far at the Clayoquot Campus include university field courses, IPCA retreats hosted by IISAAK OLAM Foundation, a Nuu-chah-nulth language nest program, and a Tla-o-qui-aht carving shed and internship program. With the support of a major grant, the Clayoquot Campus will undergo a major green retrofit in 2023-2024.



CANADIAN  
MOUNTAIN  
NETWORK





## IPCA Knowledge Basket

In 2022, IISAAK OLAM Foundation supported the CRP with the launch of the [IPCA Knowledge Basket](#), a website that honours, celebrates, and catalyzes Indigenous-led conservation and IPCAs in Canada. Designed with Two-Eyed Seeing to uplift Indigenous knowledge systems, this multi-media basket contains stories, videos, songs, reports, articles, and much more.

IISAAK OLAM Foundation plays an active role in fundraising and supporting this important tool, working with partners across the CRP to ensure the relevance and longevity of the site. We are excited to continue to grow this incredible resource and support capacity building for IPCAs.

In 2021 and 2022, with funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada, we worked with multiple Nations and communities to showcase stories on Indigenous-led conservation. Some of these stories are now available on the IPCA Knowledge Basket and others will be live in early 2023.

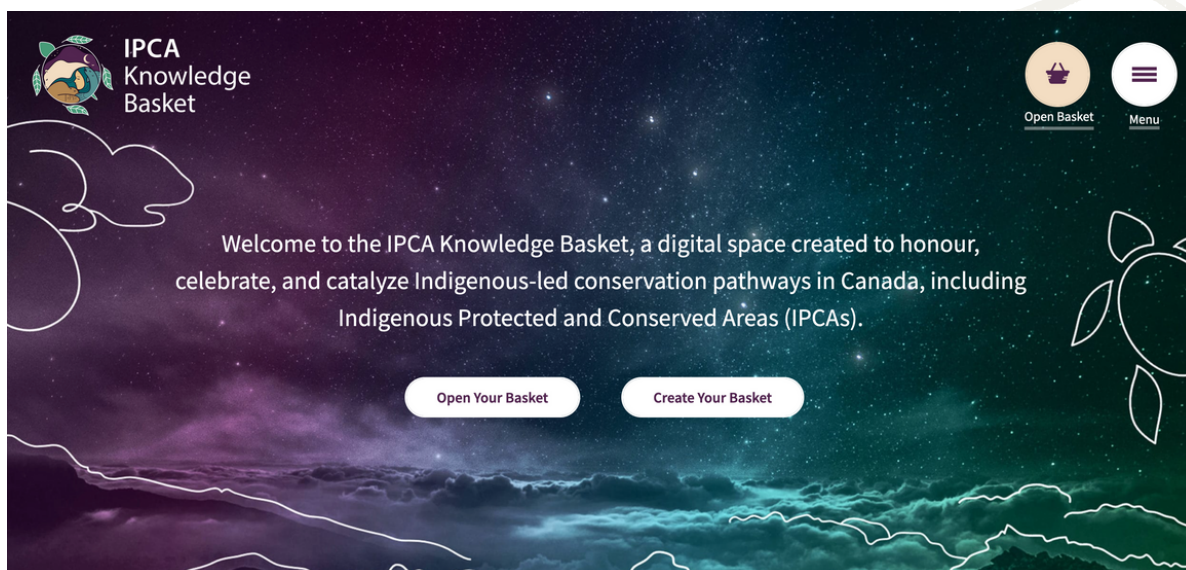
## IPCA Development Fund at MakeWay

IOF helped launch the first donor advised fund that financially supports the establishment of IPCAs in Turtle Island/Canada. MakeWay Canada houses the fund. For more information and to donate, visit:

<https://makewaygifts.secure.force.com/donate/?id=a303i0000007u8W>.



Photo: Jeremy Williams, River Voices



Design de Plume, an Indigenous and woman-owned Canadian design firm designed the website.

## IPCA Planning Certificate

In September 2022, the founding cohort of Vancouver Island University's (VIU) [IPCA Planning Certificate](#) had their first in-person field course at the Clayoquot Campus of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre. IOF partnered with VIU to develop the six course (predominantly online) certificate program. This is the first post-secondary program specializing in IPCAs in Canada.

The program is designed to support the next generation of leaders who will support the planning, establishment, management, and governance of IPCAs in B.C. and Canada. IISAAK OLAM's core staff are instructors in the program.



From left to right: Dr. Soudeh Jamshidian, Dr. Justine Townsend, Dr. Pam Shaw, Monica Shore, Eli Enns, Eduardo Sousa, Dr. Allison Menzies, and Eric Wilson.



Apply at:  
[viu.ca/ipca](https://viu.ca/ipca)

## First Nations Dialogues on Species at Risk and Culturally Significant Species

Since 2020, IISAAK OLAM Foundation has been working with the Assembly of First Nations to host virtual dialogues on [species at risk and culturally significant species](#). First Nations' input from these dialogues inform recommendations to Environment and Climate Change Canada on the [Pan-Canadian Approach to Transforming Species at Risk Conservation in Canada](#). For many First Nations, current species at risk legislation and management strategies are inadequate and do not reflect Indigenous worldviews and priorities.



Graphic recording from 2021 national dialogue by Kelly Foxcroft-Poirier of White Raven Consulting

We continue to hear through these dialogues that having a space for First Nations to discuss these topics is critical, and often lacking. We also hear again and again that the connections between culture, species, and places are important but overlooked in Crown government management strategies. In February and March 2023, we will co-host our third round or three online dialogues on culturally significant species.



## T'Sou-ke Housing Solutions Lab

In 2019, IISAAK OLAM Foundation and T'Sou-ke Nation launched a [social innovation lab](#) in partnership with the District of Sooke, SHIFT Collaborative, and RJC Engineers. This solutions lab was funded through the National Housing Strategy's "Solutions Lab Initiative" with the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The lab explored housing strategies aligned with Indigenous worldviews of home and that foster peace and friendship among all residents residing in T'Sou-ke territory. Over three years the lab worked together using experimentation, prototyping, and co-learning to come up with creative housing solutions.



From left to right: Chief Gordon Planes (T'Sou-ke Nation), Mayor Maja Tait (District of Sooke), Monica Shore, B.C. Minister Murray Rankin (Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation)

2019 IPCA Productive Retreat. Download the full report on the IPCA Knowledge Basket site.

## IPCA Productive Retreats and Training

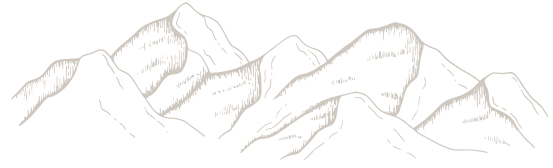
In 2013 IOF Co-Founder Eli Enns began hosting productive retreats on Indigenous-led conservation. In 2018, IOF took on the organizational role that Eli previously played. Called [IPCA Productive Retreats](#), these facilitated gatherings are for groups that want to learn more about IPCAs. These multi-day retreats are hosted at the Clayoquot Campus and use a mix of land- and water-based learning, storytelling, and discussions with Tla-o-qui-aht knowledge holders. These retreats are inspirational learning and networking opportunities for participants.

We host retreats for Indigenous Nations and communities, environmental organizations, Crown governments, academics, and the private sector. Retreats are tailored to the needs of participants.

IOF also delivers half-day to multi-day trainings on topics such as Ethical Space and reconciliation. Participants to date have included environmental organizations as well as the health sector. We tailor these interactive and engaging sessions to the needs of participants. These trainings are delivered online or in-person.



# PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS



We work diligently to foster the “we rise together” ethos that ICE described in their 2018 report by the same name. To truly realize a paradigm shift in conservation we must come together across organizations, sectors, and cultures to collectively steward our lands and waters while cultivating good relations with one another and the Earth.



From left to right: Dr John Borrows, Tzeporah Berman, Eli Enns, Gisele Martin, Moses Martin, Terry Dorward, and Joe Martin (#Meares35)



April 2019 Productive Retreat, Victoria, BC

We are honoured to have collaborated with and served many committed organizations since our establishment, including:

- Assembly of First Nations
- Canadian Mountain Network
- Canadian Parks Collective for Innovation and Leadership
- Capital Regional District of Victoria
- Clayoquot Wild
- Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership
- David Suzuki Foundation
- District of Sooke
- Dossier Creative's Railyard Lab
- Government of Canada
- Indigenous Leadership Initiative
- IPCA Innovation Program at MakeWay
- Ktunaxa Nation
- Maliseet Nation Conservation Council
- Manitoba Métis Federation
- McGill University
- Métis National Council
- Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region
- Nature Canada
- Organization for Tropical Studies
- Pacific Peoples' Partnership
- Parks Canada
- Patagonia
- Province of British Columbia
- RJC Engineers
- Roots2Roofs
- Shift Collaborative
- T'Sou-ke Nation
- The Polis Foundation
- University for Peace, Costa Rica
- University of British Columbia
- University of Victoria
- University of Guelph
- Vancouver Island University
- Victoria Foundation
- West Coast Environmental Law
- White Raven Consulting
- Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty



## PATH AHEAD

As we step into 2023 and deeper into the decisive decade, we look forward to continuing our work in Ethical Space, guided by *iisaak*, *olam*, peace and friendship, and generosity. We will continue to expand our circle of collaborators and partners in the journey to inspire and build capacity for Indigenous-led conservation and IPCAs.

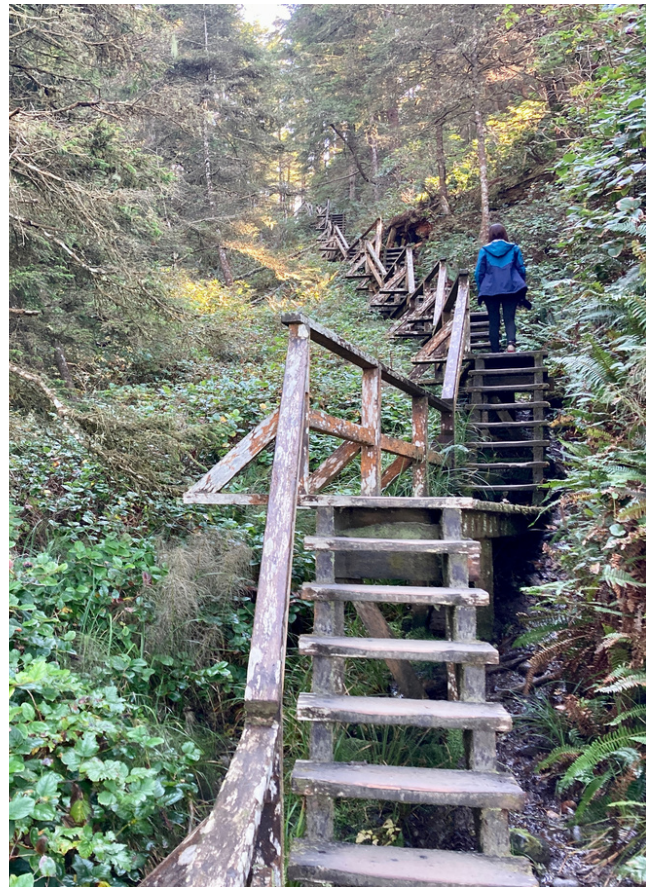
**We welcome opportunities to deepen existing relationships and foster new ones.**

As we learn and grow, we will continue to reflect the wisdom of Mother Nature and Creator in our work. We will continue to walk the talk of our ancestors who observed nature and replicated it in their social structures to increase resilience.

We will continue to act as an incubator, convener, facilitator, and leader that empowers Indigenous-led conservation.



IPCA Planning Certificate Cohort (2022-2023)



**As we evolve, we seek new collaborations with like-minded and like-hearted individuals and organizations to multiply our collective impact.**

## CONNECT WITH US

 [www.facebook.com/iisaakolam/](https://www.facebook.com/iisaakolam/)

 <https://twitter.com/iisaakolam>

Visit our website at: <https://iisaakolam.ca>

Contact us at [management@iisaakolam.ca](mailto:management@iisaakolam.ca) to have a conversation about how we can work together.