

June, 2025

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IISAAK OLAM FOUNDATION

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

IISAAK



OLAM

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# Message from the President

It has been a great honour to represent the IISAAK OLAM Foundation (IOF) in supporting Indigenous Nations and their allies in healing lands and communities. IOF remains committed to Nation-building efforts that protect Indigenous ways of life, ensuring the well-being of people and the environment.

The Indigenous-led conservation movement is gaining remarkable momentum on a global scale. As part of this movement, IOF is dedicated to fostering unity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally to advance healthy solutions for the intensifying biodiversity, climate, and economic crises.

By holding space for important conversations around our shared responsibilities among Indigenous Nations, local communities, and like-minded organizations, we are fostering stronger relationships that lead to collective strategies to address the challenges we face today.



IOF Team, January 2025

IOF will continue to champion efforts to uplift Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) and other land and resource stewardship approaches that honour ancestral rights and responsibilities.

We are deeply thankful to all our relations, partners, allies, and supporters who have walked alongside us on this historic healing journey for Mother Earth and all living beings.

In Strength and Unity,



Terry (Seit-cha) Dorward, President  
IISAAK OLAM Foundation

# Purpose

The IISAAK OLAM Foundation (IOF) fosters respect for diverse ways of knowing and cultivates our shared responsibility for the places, people, and species whose health and well-being are interconnected.

**?iisaak:** respect; observe, appreciate, and act accordingly

**tikkun olam:** healing/improving the world



# Vision

IOF envisions a world where diverse ecosystems, communities, cultures, and economies are connected, healthy, and thriving. We believe Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) are a powerful pathway for repairing and restoring balanced relationships with each other and with the Land.

**Ćawaak nish:** we are all one

**hišuk?iš Ćawaak:** everything is one, everything is interconnected





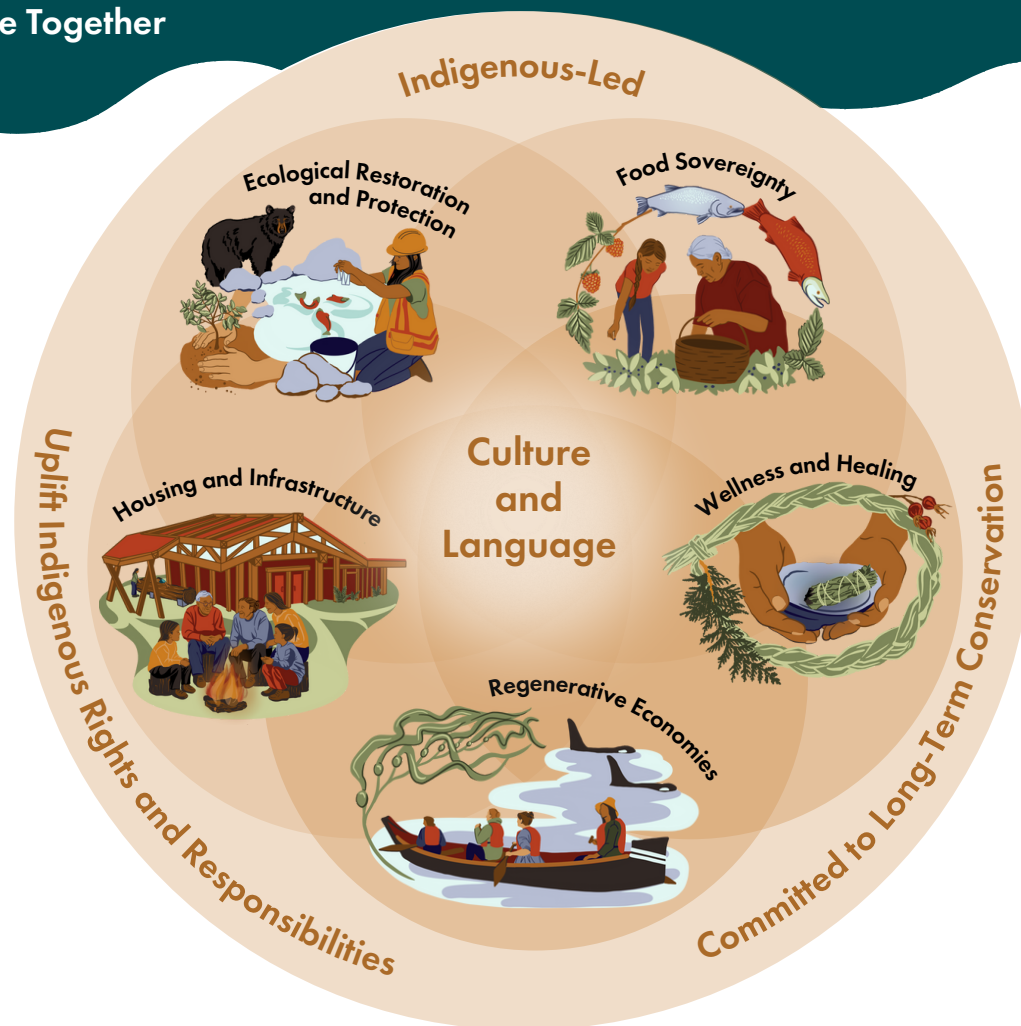
# Mission

IOF's mission is to support Indigenous Peoples' leadership and capacity in the establishment of IPCAs and guide the transformation of nature conservation in Canada.

**mamuukniš:** working together to weave connections

**Ethical Space**

**We Rise Together**



Available on the IPCA Knowledge Basket, the [Understanding Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas \(IPCAs\)](#) infographic illustrates some of the key elements of IPCAs and how they are interconnected, with culture and language at the heart.

# Our Leadership and Approach

IOF is an Indigenous-governed not-for-profit society registered in British Columbia (B.C.). Since our establishment in 2017, our team has grown steadily and includes an Indigenous Circle of Advisors, a majority Indigenous Board of Directors, staff, key collaborators and partners, and interns.

We operate with a blend of project-based funding, contracts, and tailored services, including productive retreats, custom workshops, and the design of custom resources on IPCAs, Ethical Space, and approaches to reconciliation.

We are grateful to our past and present advisors, directors, staff, and key collaborators.

## Core Team in 2024

Eli Enns, Co-Founder and CEO  
 Monica Shore, Co-Founder and Executive Director  
 Terry Dorward, West Coast IPCA Conservation Director  
 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  
 Kristy Tomkinson, Communications Director  
 Abby Sparling, West Coast IPCA Conservation Coordinator  
 Isabel Simons, Research and Engagement Coordinator  
 Candice Steven, Ethical Space Education Coordinator  
 Lauren Bernardi, Food Sovereignty and Education Coordinator  
 Anaïs Brusel, Cross-Cultural Relations Coordinator  
 Mackenzie Ross, Outreach and Engagement Coordinator

## Circle of Advisors

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

## Board of Directors

Terry Dorward (Tla-o-qui-aht Nation),  
 President  
 Eli Enns (Tla-o-qui-aht Nation and Dutch Mennonite), Co-Founder and Vice President  
 Carol Anne Hilton - incoming (Hesquiaht Nation), Director  
 Joseph Tutakwisnapšil Martin - incoming (Tla-o-qui-aht Nation), Director  
 Jeremy Williams - incoming, Director





# Our Work

Here are the projects and initiatives we focused on in 2024:

## IPCA Knowledge Basket

The IPCA Knowledge Basket creates space for Indigenous leadership to share, learn, and collaborate across a fragmented and emerging landscape of information and resources for IPCAs and similar initiatives. In 2024, the IPCA Knowledge Basket team, composed of staff from the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership (CRP) and IOF, took time to reflect, take stock, and refine our vision for the initiative guided by the wisdom of the CRP Leadership Circle.

We hosted seven engagement sessions with 36 representatives of Indigenous governments, environmental organizations, philanthropy, academic institutions, Crown agencies, and online learning platforms. These conversations helped us identify areas for improvement, take stock of the fast-changing Indigenous-led conservation movement, and plan the next phase of the IPCA Knowledge Basket. Read a summary of the results in the 2022-2024 IPCA Knowledge Basket Impact Report.

Download the [IPCA Knowledge Basket Impact Report](#)

As the steward of the IPCA Knowledge Basket, IOF will ensure the platform remains Indigenous-led, providing executive leadership, fostering its growth and impact, and strengthening its connections with communities, IPCA support initiatives, and like-minded, collaborative organizations dedicated to Indigenous-led conservation.

Our goal moving forward is to bring life to the IPCA Knowledge Basket as a connector and activator of knowledge to rise with the tides of this powerful movement.

Stay tuned for  
the launch of  
IOF's Knowledge  
Sharing  
Studio!



## IPCA Knowledge Basket

## Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership



2024-2025 marks the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership's (CRP) sixth and final year of funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The CRP was launched in 2019 by IOF, the Indigenous Leadership Initiative, and the University of Guelph to advance Indigenous conservation leadership, including IPCAs, and transform the conservation sector in Canada.

IOF is proud to have taken the lead on two of the CRP's four legacy projects: The IPCA Knowledge Basket and the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre. Learn more about these initiatives below. IOF will also continue the CRP's successful Virtual Campfire Series, which produced 24 webinars from 2020-2024, each attended by an average of 300 people.

## First Nations Dialogues on Culturally Significant Species

Since 2020, IOF has been supporting the Assembly of First Nations in the coordination, design, and facilitation of a series of virtual dialogues focused on First Nations' perspectives and approaches to species management and conservation planning. We have also been supporting the development of educational tools about IPCAs for a First Nations audience. The goal of this initiative is to advocate for First Nations' voices and approaches to be communicated more clearly and influence Crown (federal) policies on species management.

In 2024, we published a visual and interactive summary report, entitled 'All Our Relations,' on what we heard from the three previous years of virtual engagements.



Graphic recording from the 2023 Atlantic dialogue (Kelly Foxcroft-Poirier, White Raven Consulting, Tseshah Nation).



## First 30x30 Canada

The First 30x30 Initiative supports Indigenous governments in securing long-term funding for land stewardship through nature-based solutions and carbon finance. The program is collaboratively led by three organizations: Nature For Justice, Nature Focus Development, and IOF.

The name 'First 30x30 Initiative' reflects the initiative's support for Indigenous governments as they lead efforts to meet the Global Biodiversity Framework goal of protecting 30% of land, water, and oceans by 2030. First 30x30 supports Indigenous Nations with new income streams to strengthen their rights and responsibilities to lands and waters, and advance their visions for healthy relationships with the living world.



The First 30x30 team and collaborators are committed to fair, community-driven projects that create real benefits for Indigenous Nations. We work with transparent agreements and governance that ensure Indigenous Nations lead decision-making. Our goal is to support long-lasting, high-quality projects that help fight climate change, protect nature, and bring social benefits.





## Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre

The Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre is the first of a growing 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 collectively build capacity for IPCAs. Partners include Indigenous leaders, academics, practitioners, civil society organizations, Crown government agencies and organizations, and philanthropy.

Beyond the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre, IOF has engaged in early conversations about the establishment of an IPCA Innovation Centre in Manitoba. Capacity development efforts have also been supported in the Northwest Territories and Southern Ontario, helping to lay the groundwork for future regional centres. Exciting momentum is continuing to build in the Atlantic region, where interest in creating an Innovation Centre is steadily growing.

Watch the [Introducing IPCA Innovation Centres video](#)!



## Mamuukniš Curriculum Project

a project of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre

The Mamuukniš Curriculum project addresses the need for the Canadian education system to meet the needs of Indigenous students. It achieves this through the creation and implementation of culturally relevant, decolonized educational programming and learning opportunities for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. It also supports teachers who have been called to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Curriculum is designed to connect teachers, students, and their learning to the natural world by honouring and understanding Indigenous ways of knowing and relating to the land, through hands-on, land-based learning experiences.

In 2024, our team focused on designing an Ethical Space framework that can be applied in different learning environments and territories. The framework offers flexibility for teachers to gather and incorporate existing resources rooted in Indigenous teachings and worldviews. It also suggests ways to approach lesson planning from a seasonal, place-based perspective, rooted in existing relationships with Indigenous knowledge holders and Elders.

In 2024, we began building a community of practice among B.C.-based educators seeking guidance to make their teaching more place-based and culturally relevant. In 2025, the program will focus on designing seasonal curricula and piloting them at two sites: Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary in Songhees and Kosapsum Territories, and the Clayoquot Campus of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre in Tla-o-qui-aht Territory.



## Clayoquot Campus: Place-based Learning, Retreats, and Programs

a project of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre

In 2024, the Clayoquot Campus, located on Tla-o-qui-aht territory, continued to grow as a vibrant hub for IPCA innovation, learning, and cultural exchange. As the inaugural satellite campus of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre, the campus is managed and operated by IOF. The campus hosted a range of impactful programs, including university field courses, Nuuchahnulth language programs, carving festivals, cultural tours, and IPCA Productive Retreats.

A major focus in 2024 was the expansion and improvement of campus infrastructure. The IISAAK Learning Lodge underwent a deep energy and accessibility retrofit, significantly enhancing its environmental performance and making it a more inclusive gathering space. Ground was also broken on a new carving studio and art gallery, creating opportunities for Nuuchahnulth and local artists and community engagement.



Building on shared values of stewardship and knowledge exchange, Sister Garden Agreements were established in 2024 between the Naa'Wayá'Sum Gardens at Clayoquot Campus and the Cwelcwelt Kuc Garden in Secwépemc Territory, deepening sister Nation relationships.



Photo Credit: Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty





## Productive Retreats and Training

a project of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre

Despite growing recognition of Indigenous-led conservation, many organizations, governments, and communities lack a clear understanding of what an IPCA is and what it looks like in practice. To address this gap, IOF provides productive retreats and training opportunities that build capacity, share knowledge, and support the establishment of IPCAs in other territories.

In 2024, one milestone was hosting a portion of the Local Conference of Youth Canada (LCOY) – coordinated by the University of British Columbia (UBC) – at our Clayoquot Campus. Students engaged with Tla-o-qui-aht Elders involved in Tribal Parks and nation-building efforts. This experience offered young leaders first-hand exposure to the principles and treaties of Indigenous-led conservation in the Tla-o-qui-aht context.

In addition, we hosted the Kanaka Bar ʔəqʔáqɪnmux (T'eq'taqtnmux) Indian Band. This retreat brought together community members, Elders, leaders, and partners to advance plans for a new IPCA, integrating cultural revitalization and sustainable stewardship. Discussions focused on blending traditional and Western conservation practices, legal frameworks, and the IPCA declaration process. Facilitated by IOF, the gathering fostered collaboration among cultural leaders, legal experts, and conservation professionals.

By offering these tailored retreats and training, IOF continues to bridge knowledge gaps, strengthen intergenerational leadership, and support the development of new IPCAs rooted in Indigenous governance and stewardship.





## Westcoast IPCA Support Program

a project of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre

The Westcoast IPCA Support Program (WISP) is a keystone program of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre. The program brings Nations together and creates spaces for collaboration around our shared responsibility to enhance and restore lands and waters for future generations. WISP aims to uplift and connect Indigenous conservation leadership through relationship building, capacity development, and direct IPCA planning support, so that we may all rise together for the well-being of future generations.



### Estuary to Old Growth Gathering

In 2024, WISP organized the second annual Estuary to Old Growth (E2OG) Gathering in Snaw-Naw-As and Kwalikum Territory. This year's Gathering welcomed 168 attendees, including Elders, youth, hunters, gatherers, Guardians, elected officials, staff, leadership, students, watershed restoration practitioners, community leaders, advocates, educators, and relatives. The discussion focused on the interconnection between IPCAs, Indigenous Food Sovereignty, and Ecological Restoration. The event was attended by 34 Indigenous Nations located along the Pacific West Coast. To learn more, see the [2024 E2OG Report](#).



[Read the 2024 E2OG Report](#)





## IPCA Planning Support

a project of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre

IOF supports IPCA planning through deep listening, collaboration, and iterative design. We co-create culturally grounded and inspiring plans that lay the foundation for long-term success. We work alongside Indigenous Nations to develop plans that not only protect lands and waters but also strengthen governance and community capacity. Our approach prioritizes trust, reciprocity, and respect, embedding skills within communities so they can lead their conservation efforts with confidence.

In 2024, IOF supported individual Nations with their IPCA plans through strategic guidance, declaration planning, project meeting facilitation, community engagement support, communications design for outreach, and research support. IOF staff also held instructor roles as part of the Vancouver Island University Planning Advanced Certificate, helping to prepare a community of planners who can support IPCA processes.

## VIU IPCA Planning Certificate

a project of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre

The IPCA Planning Advanced Certificate at Vancouver Island University (VIU), developed in partnership with IOF, equips Indigenous governments and their supporters with the knowledge and skills to plan and establish IPCAs. This program builds capacity for a new generation of planners dedicated to advancing Indigenous-led conservation initiatives in Canada.

In 2024, the program proudly celebrated its first-ever graduates from Cohort 1 and Cohort 2! That same September, it welcomed a new chapter with the exciting launch of Cohort 3.



### Our IPCA planning support can include:

- Project management and coordination.
- Communications design for community engagement and outreach.
- Coaching and workshop services.
- Local and regional event planning.
- Designing financial programs for sustainable revenue (e.g. Ecosystem Service Fee [ESF] program).
- Seeking match funding to enhance IPCA planning efforts.



This program is designed for working professionals to complete within ten months (September to June). The program consists of one field course in Tla-o-qui-aht territory (Tofino, B.C.) followed by six virtual courses. It covers Indigenous knowledge systems and principles of land use planning, history, law, and politics, as well as ecological, social, and socioeconomic opportunities related to IPCAs.



## IPCA Research Program

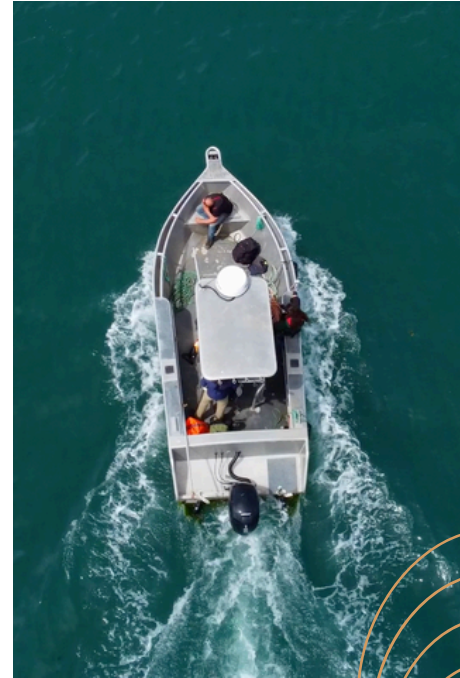
a project of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre

The IPCA Research Program is an Indigenous-led research program hosted at [VIU](#) in collaboration with IOF. The IPCA Research Program is a research and knowledge-sharing component of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre.

Indigenous Nations, advisors, and IPCA planners routinely identify complex issues affecting their proposed or existing IPCAs. The IPCA Research Program supports Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) leaders to establish and advance IPCAs in the Pacific region of Canada through knowledge sharing and applied research.

Development of the IPCA Research Program began in 2024. We intend for it to investigate issues that IPCA initiatives and Indigenous governments identify as important and timely, and to share research findings and facilitate knowledge sharing among interested IPCA initiatives, Indigenous Nations, and their supporters.

In its early stages, the IPCA Research Program aims to build relationships with Indigenous governments, organizations, educational institutions, and IPCA initiatives, while establishing a Research Advisory Group and securing funding. These efforts will bolster research and knowledge sharing, and support IPCA Innovation Centres and the IPCA Knowledge Basket.



## UPEACE Indigenous-Led Conservation and Peace Certificate

a project of the Pacific IPCA Innovation Centre

There is a growing recognition that Indigenous-led governance models, such as IPCAs and Peace Parks, offer valuable tools for addressing the global challenges we face today. However, academic programs that meaningfully uplift Indigenous perspectives in peace and conflict studies are limited.

The [Certificate in Indigenous-Led Conservation and Peace](#), co-developed by IOF and the [University for Peace \(UPEACE\)](#), seeks to fill this gap by equipping future leaders with the knowledge and skills to weave Indigenous worldviews and Ethical Space into peacebuilding and environmental governance.

The certificate will consist of six micro-courses (12 credits) offered primarily online, with a two-week field course on Indigenous perspectives. IOF will contribute a three-credit course on 'conservation through reconciliation', highlighting Indigenous-led governance models and their role in peace processes, and two half-credit courses introducing and reflecting on key concepts like Ethical Space, Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs), and IPCAs.

## Partners and Supporters

We work hard to foster the “we rise together” ethos that the Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE) described in their watershed 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. These relations and responsibilities must be grounded in respect, reciprocity, generosity, peace, and friendship.

**We are honoured to have worked with many committed individuals and groups in 2024.**

**These include:**

- Assembly of First Nations’ Environment Sector
- Braiding Knowledges Canada
- Canadian Indigenous Conservation Innovation Centre Association
- Clayoquot Biosphere Trust
- Clayoquot Indigenous Conservation Innovation Centre
- Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership (special thanks to Allison Bishop and Dr. Robin Roth, as well as members of the Leadership Circle)
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- First Peoples Cultural Council
- Infrastructure Canada’s Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program
- Island Coastal Economic Trust
- Indigenous Leadership Initiative
- Kanaka Bar ʔəqʔáqtnmux (T’eqt’aqtnmux) Indian Band
- MakeWay Charitable Society
- Métis Nation British Columbia
- Vancouver Island University’s Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (special thanks to Dr. Pam Shaw, Graham Sakaki, Anna Lawrence)
- Nature For Justice (special thanks to Steven Nitah, Robin Barr and Michael Weiss)
- Nature Focus Development (special thanks to Jeffrey Brown)
- Olam Films (special thanks to Ben Hazel)
- Parks Canada
- Projects with Grace (special thanks to Grace Bergen)
- Restore, Assert, Defend (RAD) Network
- Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia
- Read Jones Christofferson Engineers (special thanks to Terry Bergen and the Indigenous Projects Group team supporting the IISAAK Learning Lodge retrofit)
  - AES Engineering
  - AME Consulting Group
  - Farmer Construction Ltd.
  - Number TEN Architects
  - Special thanks to Don MacKinnon, Engineer
  - Lewkowich Engineering Associates
  - Surepoint Group
- Redd Fish Restoration Society
- River Voices Productions
- Saulteau First Nations’ Treaty Rights & Environmental Protection Team
- Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary
- T’Sou-ke First Nation’s IPCA Team (special thanks to Michelle Thut, Bonnie Hill, and the Marine Team)
- University of Victoria (special thanks to Drs. Kris Dubrawski, Phalguni Mukhopadhyaya, and Pearce Jones)
- University of British Columbia (Drs. Hannah Whittman and Don Carruthers Den Hoed)
- University of Guelph
- University for Peace, Costa Rica
- White Raven Consulting
- Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty (special thanks to Dawn Morrison and the Secwépemc team)



## Moving Forward

In 2024, we deepened our commitment to Indigenous-led conservation by expanding programs, nurturing partnerships, and creating spaces for learning, collaboration, and reconciliation.

As the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership's legacy projects enter a new phase of commencement, IOF is proud to foster the continued growth of the IPCA Knowledge Basket, the development of regional IPCA Innovation Centres, and the delivery of dynamic, culturally grounded training programs that equip the next generation of Indigenous conservation leaders.



Painting by Nuu-chah-nulth artist, Ivy Cargill-Martin

As we build on this momentum in 2025 and beyond, we'll remain grounded in Ethical Space and guided by iisaak, tikkun olam, peace and friendship, and generosity. We will continue to expand our circle of collaborators and partners in the journey to support Indigenous Peoples' leadership and capacity in the establishment of IPCAs and guide the transformation of nature conservation in Canada. We welcome opportunities to deepen existing relationships and cultivate new ones.

Together, we are fostering a more resilient future for all — one that is rooted in reciprocity, guided by ancestral knowledge, and dedicated to the well-being of many generations to come.

May we rise together! Thank you for being on this journey with us.

## Connect with Us

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

### Follow us on social media:

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



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LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/iisaak-olam-foundation/>



YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@iisaakolam>