

Tsawalk Partnership Update



Tsawalk team members pictured here in Tofino.

The Tsawalk Partnership is in full swing after a busy season of events, public education, and contests. A coastal planning initiative spearheaded by West Coast Aquatic (WCA), the partnership officially launched its activities on International Oceans Day back in June. Since that time, it has been full steam ahead.

“*Tsawalk* means ‘one’ in Nuu-chah-nulth and draws from the guiding principles of *hishukish ts’awalk*, meaning ‘everything is one,’” says Director of Marketing and First Nations Engagement, Kelly Poirier.

“The Tsawalk Partnership is about the power of one, because we know how much energy flows when people and communities speak with one voice, develop a plan, or do one good thing. It builds on both our individual and collective strength to carve out our future.”

Tapping into the tremendous energy and good work being done on the west coast, the Tsawalk Partnership is also creating an impressive list of accomplishments of its own. Following the Oceans Day barbeque at Victoria Quay in Port Alberni, Tsawalk staff partnered with Uu-a-thluk and First Nations to help organize harbour clean-ups in Ucluelet, Anacla, and Tofino.

Tsawalk staff also hosted information booths at Ukee Days, the Port Alberni Salmon Festival, and the Alberni Valley Fall Fair, in addition to the Pacific Rim Whale Fest, and Ahousaht Sports Days.

“Education and information booths are super opportunities to engage citizens,” says Poirier. “They inform people about our project in fun ways, and let them know how they can contribute to the Tsawalk Partnership spirit.”

Most recently, Tsawalk staff posted an online questionnaire on Facebook and the Tsawalk website requesting opinions on coastal planning and management. In exchange for spending time filling out the survey, participants became eligible for an impressive roster of prizes, including cash.

Besides the public events, Tsawalk staff have been busy behind-the-scenes visiting communities and gathering information that reflects community values and visions. To continue the partnership spirit and get a sense of how coastal residents want to move their visions forward, Tsawalk hosted an education forum in Tofino in

partnership with the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust.

“We are also hosting a series of community dialogue sessions that will centre around issues

such as pollution, ocean acidification, and ecosystem health,” Poirier adds.

Because the Tsawalk Partnership relies heavily on user engagement and community support, local organizations like Uu-a-thluk, First Nations, the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, and Ecotrust have helped the partnership forge its current path. Other groups such as local businesses and educational institutions have also helped move the Partnership towards its goals.

“All contributions make a difference to the project’s success,” says Poirier. “All of the feedback and contributions around knowledge and resources will ensure the resilience of the Tsawalk Partnership, as well as the resilience of our coastal communities in the long term.”

For more information about the Tsawalk Partnership and activities in your community, contact Kelly Poirier at 250-724-3600.

“It builds on both our individual and collective strength to carve out our future.”

—Kelly Poirier, WCA Director of Marketing and First Nations Engagement

What’s Your Act of Tsawalk?

West Coast Aquatic would like to know about one thing you are doing to help the ocean. To tell them about your ‘Act of Tsawalk,’ visit www.westcoastaquatic.ca/tsawalk and share your story.

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Ahousaht children learn about the Tsawalk Partnership at Ahousaht Sports Day.



West Coast Aquatic staff (left to right) Kelly Poirier, Jocelyn Dick, Warren Robinson and Jake Martens, along with Kahlilah Rampanen at the Ocean’s Day BBQ.