

Indigenous Internship Program (IIP)

Nov–May 25/26 Cohort



8 interns



8 projects



\$80,000

in research stipends

The Indigenous Internship Program

The Indigenous Internship Program (IIP) is an initiative to facilitate inclusive Indigenous-led knowledge sharing that prioritizes Indigenous community concerns, incorporates Traditional Knowledge, and builds internal research capacity. Designed to break down barriers and create meaningful change.

Key Funding Partners



Interwoven Crossings



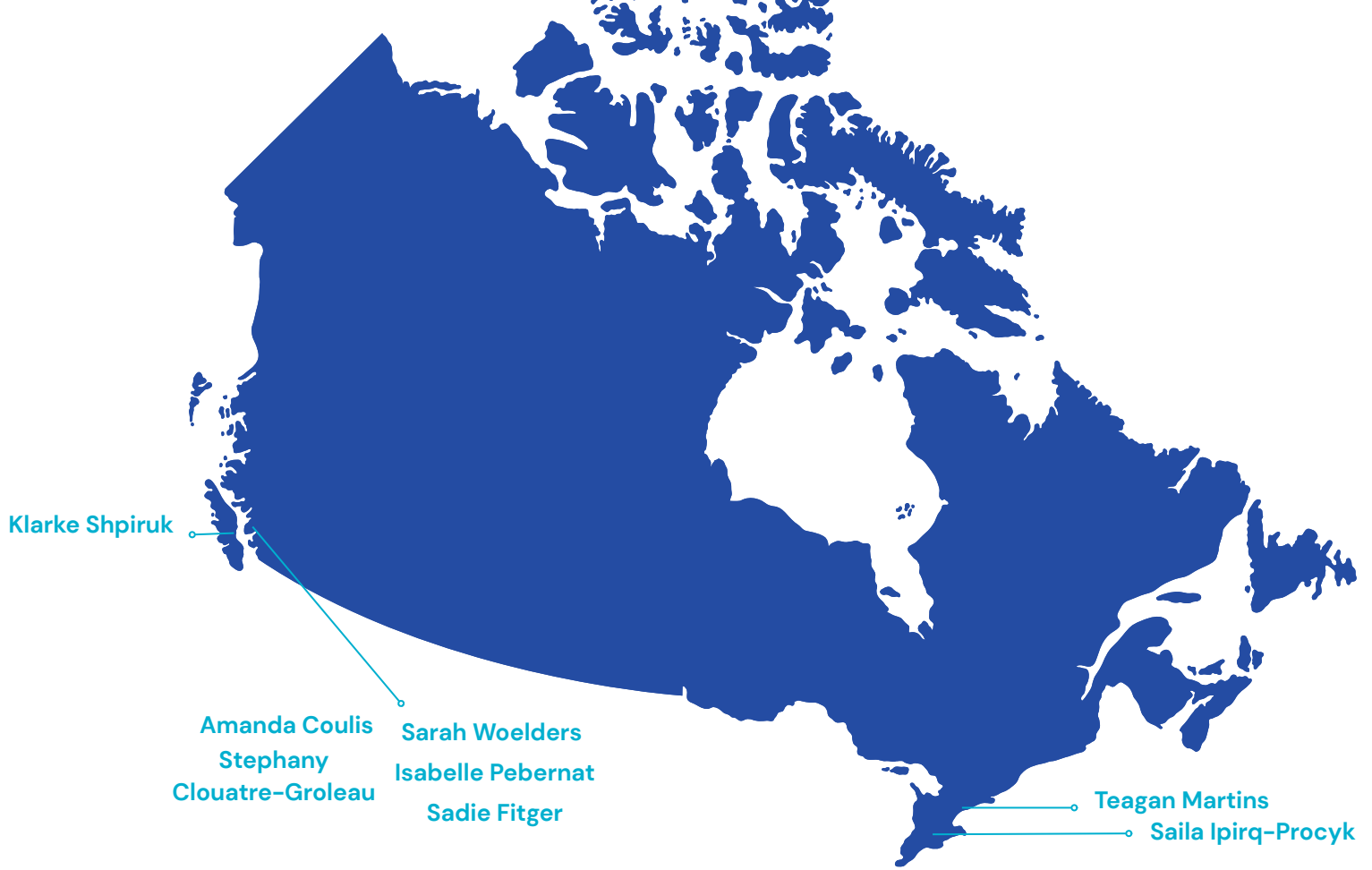
Credit: Stephany-Clouatre Groleau

Highlights & Achievements

Strong partnerships were central to the success of this cohort. Each intern was paired with an external expert whose mentorship, technical knowledge, and professional networks strengthened their research and enriched their learning experience. These collaborations connected interns with real-world expertise while fostering relationships between Indigenous youth, communities, and organizations working across the marine sector.

We extend our sincere thanks to **Ocean Tracking Network, SmartICE, Metro Vancouver Park Programs, Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance, Raincoast Conservation Foundation, the Orca Behaviour Institute, and K'ómoks Natural Resource Department** for their invaluable contributions. Their commitment to mentoring the next generation of Indigenous marine professionals demonstrates the impact that collaborative partnership can have in advancing Indigenous-led research, capacity building, and stewardship.





Their Stories

From the November 2025 cohort

1 Isabelle

Marine Emergencies on the West Coast

Recognizing that increased marine traffic also increases demands on emergency response systems, Isabelle investigated the resources currently available for marine emergencies on Canada's West Coast and assessed their effectiveness in serving Coastal First Nation communities. Grounded in the lived experiences of Coastal First Nation communities, her work identified key areas for improving marine emergency response. Isabelle's work demonstrates that collaborative and innovative research opportunities will build an equitable and sustainable marine shipping industry.

2 Saila

SmartIce Safety Training in the Arctic

Saila's project represents an important milestone in SmartICE's ongoing commitment to creating a culture of health, safety, and continuous community building in the Arctic. Through the creation of a comprehensive Health and Safety history and planning document, major incidents, lessons learned, and future priorities have been outlined to guide the organization's growth and strengthen policies and programs. Saila expressed that "this work has meant a lot to [her] as it has allowed [her] to explore health and safety in a larger capacity as well as introducing concepts of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge into this work.

3 Amanda

Youth Workshops from an Indigenous lens

Amanda's research involved the development and acquisition of several Indigenous learning resources for the Metro Vancouver Youth Regional Park Workshops. "It was truly an honour to meet and learn from so many people in the local Indigenous community who so generously shared their knowledge, their time, and their relationships with me. Their guidance shaped each next step. I leave this internship not only with new knowledge, but with relationships that I will carry with me for a lifetime. I have learned more than I can put into words and am so grateful for the opportunity to have been part of this work" – Amanda

4 Klarke

Disappeared at the Water's Edge

Klarke began exploring a highly relevant but often dismissed area of research; that of the hundreds of missing persons along the coastline of Vancouver Island. Her initial project involved gathering evidence and the proof of concept. She will be continuing this work into a second internship that will involve layering the data presented in the BC Coroner's Service Interactive map with her own map of marine incidents, frequent routes, and relevant marine spaces (ports, terminals). This map will inform environmental analyses, potential high-risk zones, and gaps in surveillance and response. She highlights that this work is not to assign blame, but to begin asking better questions and having resources that can better support findings answers. Her initial report can be found on the Clear Seas website.

qéθə́p

Ocean Spray

holodiscus discolor

(hənqəminəm)
Musqueam Language

(English)

(Latin)

The wood is extremely hard and flexible, so it is used to make splitting sticks which are used to split roots and withes (small branches) in preparation for basket making. The shafts of the Coast Salish spindle whorls are often made from this wood. Long needles used in the making of bulrush mats are also made from Ocean Spray.

Examples of resources from Amanda's project. Credit to MOA Education Fonds (above), MOA Hilary Stewart Fonds (below)



5 Sadie

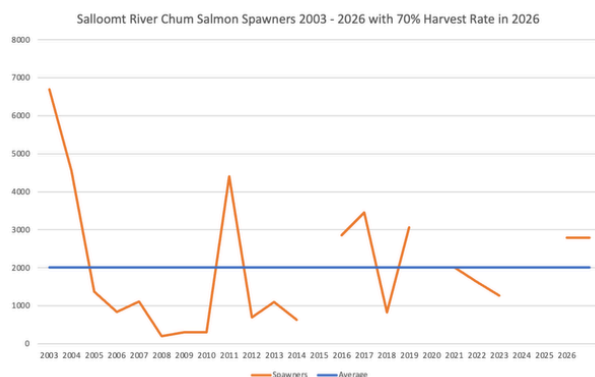
K'ómoks Harvesting and Innovations

"Growing up connected to the lands and waters of K'ómoks territory, I felt drawn to learn more about the ingenuity of our ancestors and the teachings held within these systems. Through the Clear Seas Indigenous Internship Program, I studied the tree species traditionally used in trap construction, learned how the wood was prepared, and explored the cultural knowledge embedded in these technologies. This experience strengthened my relationship to place and deepened my appreciation for the engineering and stewardship practices that supported our Nation for over a thousand years" – Sadie

6 Teagan

Salmon Population Predictions

Through the development of an interactive ArcGIS StoryMap, Teagan created a powerful tool that illustrates the complex factors driving the decline of Chum Salmon populations across British Columbia. By combining spatial data with accessible storytelling, the project highlights the impacts of natural disturbances, industrial development, and climate change on the Chum populations and the accompanying harmful outcomes for First Nation communities. The StoryMap includes a predictive model for Chum returns in the Salloomt River, providing valuable insights to support future stewardship and management. This co-creation project bridges Western science, Indigenous perspectives, and innovative technology to strengthen understanding and action around one of British Columbia's most culturally and ecologically significant species. Teagan's StoryMap can be found [here](#).



7 Sarah W

Collaborative Research and Future Management Efforts

Sarah has been studying Chinook abundance patterns in the Lower Fraser River. Working in partnership with several environmental organizations and First Nation communities, her work will showcase the cultural importance of Chinook Salmon through data-driven analysis and the lived experiences of salmon returns from elders and fishers to support future management efforts. Due to timing constraints, Sarah will be finishing her work this summer and we hope to share her findings in the fall.

Continued Research

Stephany Clouatre-Groleau started her research in the May 2025 cohort and continued her work into a second internship in November 2025. She will be completing her third and final conclusion to her comprehensive analysis of whale strike mitigation through the lens of Indigenous priorities and practices by November 2026. Stephany has been documenting her journey engaging with Indigenous knowledge on her [LinkedIn](#) and most recently discussed her presentation at the Gulf of Georgie Cannery for Orca Action Month. We look forward to sharing her full report in the next cohort report.

The Internship Program would not be as successful without the support, mentorship, and expertise of the numerous Indigenous communities, organizations, and industry partners who collaborate with our interns.

We are extremely thankful for the contributions from our funders, as this program would not be possible without your help.

To learn more about our program or to become a partner, check out our [website](#) or email us at iip@clearseas.org



Total internships to date



Total interns to date



Total awarded to date

63 projects

39 interns

\$945,000

Partners

19

Indigenous
Communities

- Tsleil-Waututh Nation
- Squamish Nation
- Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Doig River First Nation

- W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation
- Kwiakah First Nation
- Heiltsuk Nation
- Kanien'kehá:ka

26

Organizations
Industry

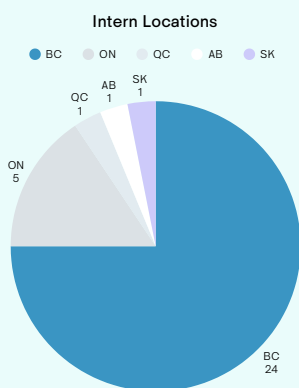
- Sharing Our Stories
- Invasive Species Council BC
- Coastal Nations Coast Guard Authority
- DFO
- Port of Montreal
- Port of Vancouver
- University of British Columbia

- Salt Spring Friendship Centre
- Vancouver Maritime Museum
- British Columbia Institute of Technology
- Vancouver Island University

Targets for the future

- Expand skill-building opportunities
- Amplify Intern stories and research
- Integrate interns into Clear Seas projects
- Increase partner contribution

Geographic Distribution



Sponsors

- Teekay
- Zim Integrated Shipping
- BHP
- CSL
- Students on Ice



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