



Cortes Island

MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

reflect imagine celebrate

REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR OF 2023

Cortes Island Museum & Archives (CIMAS) respectfully acknowledges the toq qaymıx^w (Klahoose), t̓əʔamen qaymıx^w (Tla'amin) and ʔop qaymıx^w (Homalco) First Nations upon whose traditional, ancestral territories its programs and activities take place. Cortes Island Museum and Archives Society (CIMAS) is committed to building the foundation for mutual understanding and positive relations.

2023 was the year people came out to embrace the beauty of this island. A flurry of community offerings and a boost of visitors to Cortes kept the CIMAS Board, staff, and volunteers busy.

CIMAS was able to expand its reach to new audiences in person and digitally through a few key projects and programs. Highlights of the year include:

- **New Website.** In June 2023, we were pleased to launch a new version of our website, cortesmuseum.com. Funded by an SRD Grant-in-Aid and CIMAS Resiliency Funding, our site is easy to navigate and maintain, expands the reach of our programs and archives, and keeps members, visitors, and locals well informed.
- **Creative Spaces Garden & Studio Tour.** After a four-year hiatus, this annual fundraising and social event came back with a roar. Twenty-three artists and gardeners participated, and 147 tickets were sold. Stunning gardens from Whaletown to Smelt Bay were on the tour; beautiful handmade works, everything from textiles to paintings, were on display. Thank you to participants, local stores for selling tickets, and Gerri Davis for helping organize this very successful and fun event.
- **Visioning Workshop.** In October 2023, the Board and staff met to review our 2022–2024 Detailed Work Plan (DWP). This was an important check-in to gather feedback on several key areas: individual and committee goals and projects, succession planning, a new programming model, capacity, finances, and the vision for CIMAS. Everyone's voice was heard, and their opinions were valued. Our 2022–2024 DWP has been updated.
- **Wayfinding: Stories of Maps & Place.** This was the first exhibition since 2018 to occupy the entire gallery. Melanie Boyle (as lead curator), the Exhibition Committee, and volunteers worked closely with the collections committees to feature many maps, documents, and artifacts – many never before displayed. This exhibition was accompanied by special events throughout the year that featured a vintage or antique theme – celebrating what is old is new again!





BOARD FOCUS

In 2023, the Board identified the following priorities and initiatives:

- Expanding fundraising opportunities and memberships
- Board succession planning
- Youth engagement
- Recruiting and training a person to support current budget creation and management
- Community involvement in programming and curation
- Volunteer recruitment
- Commitment to reconciliation and repatriation
- Wild Cortes support

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023

President: Nancy Kendel
 Treasurer: Nora Disney
 Secretary: Carol London
 Directors: Laurel Bohart, Donna Collins, Ian Disney, Debbie Dragseth, Bruce Ellingsen, Rose Hanson, Donna Manson, Bonnie MacDonald
 Donna McLaren, Jill Milton

STAFF FOCUS

Melanie Boyle, our Managing Director/Curator, works on exhibitions, programs, community engagement, fundraising and office management. Melanie looks forward to working with Board, staff and volunteers in 2024.

Gina Trzesicka, our Administrative Assistant, applies her digital, design, editorial, and administrative skills to ensure smooth operations of CIMAS, and hosts the main gallery as required.

STAFF 2023

Managing Director/Curator: Melanie Boyle
 Administration/Host/Website: Gina Trzesicka
 Bookkeeper: Nora Disney
 Museum Host/Interpreter: Lilly Allen
 Wild Cortes Curatorial Assistant: Sean Nightingale
 Events Coordinator: Alex Woywitka

Nora Disney is our Bookkeeper.

Monika Hoffmann began her contract as Assistant Curator for the new 2024 exhibition.

CIMAS received an Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to partially fund two seasonal positions: Museum Host/Interpreter Lilly Allen brought energy to her role in welcoming visitors and shaping education programs; Sean Nightingale returned to his position as Curatorial Assistant at Wild Cortes to share his extensive knowledge and his friendly presence.

As the 2023 Events Coordinator, Alex Woywitka designed and delivered a series of engaging arts and music focused community special events.

GRANTS RECEIVED

- BC Community Gaming Grant – supports the Public Education and Archives Programs
- BC Arts Council Operating Assistance – funds the position of Managing Director/Curator (MDC)
- BC Arts Council Resiliency Funding – used to partially fund exhibitions, hosting wages, contract positions, and community programming and honorariums
- Employment and Social Development Canada – covers a portion of summer staff wages

**CIMAS
FUNDRAISING**

CIMAS generates income through special events, regular programs, donations, memberships, raffles, the Museum Shop, Creative Spaces Garden & Studios Tour, and Historic Cruises aboard *Misty Isles*.

In 2023 Creative Spaces Studio & Garden Tour raised \$2205 for CIMAS programs! Thank you to all who supported this event. Our historic cruises with *Misty Isles Adventures* raised \$825! Thank you to Amy and Jonas for this partnership, and to those who led these cruises: Norm Gibbons, Lisa Weyler-Gibbons, Bruce Ellingsen, and George Sirk.

MUSEUM SHOP

In 2023, we carried more local artists' works, redesigned displays and created new in-house products: tea towels and postcards (featuring archival images and photographs by Gary Fast and Christian Gronau. Wild Cortes sells handmade cards and educational materials. Suggestions for new local products are always welcome.

**TRAINING FOR
STAFF AND
VOLUNTEERS**

CIMAS provides in-house staff and volunteer training as required, including the following webinars and workshops in 2023:

- BC HERN Emergency Response & Salvage for Cultural Institutions Workshop, February 25-26
- AABC webinar on reconciliation, "Relationship Building: A Guided Workbook"
- BCMA Conference, September 25-28, Haida Gwaii, attended virtually
- Social Profit Network Gathering @ Hollyhock Education Retreat

MEMBERSHIPS

We had 217 members in 2023. We are grateful for your support!

VOLUNTEERS

132 volunteers donated 4005 hours. Thank you!

**TOURIST/VISITOR
INFORMATION
BOOTH**

CIMAS is the Destination BC Visitor Information Booth for Cortes Island. Centrally located at the Museum, we serve visitors and locals by providing maps, brochures, and information on local businesses, events, services, dining, and accommodation options. Material is available 24/7 on our covered porch and additional advertising service is available to local businesses through our ferry card rack. We will continue to expand our services and work with Cortes Community Economic Development Association (CCEDA) to support local businesses.

**EXHIBITIONS,
EVENTS AND
TOURS**

Public programming of exhibitions, special events, workshops, talks and tours in 2023 were engaging and accessible. Programs highlighted collections held at Museum and Wild Cortes and showcased the depth of talent and knowledge of community members. We had:

- 2805 visitors to exhibits at the Museum & Wild Cortes
- 1334 program participants
- 310 Wild Cortes events participants

Exhibitions

- *Wayfinding: Stories of Maps & Place* – new exhibition at the Museum featured archival maps and artifacts, community contributions and projects. It was the first time many archival materials from the collection had been on display. Doreen Thompson Gallery, March 25 – December 31, 2023
- *The Mother Tree* – new exhibition at Wild Cortes opened April 24 on Earth Day in collaboration with the Cortes Wild! partnership. Permanent

exhibits addressing the climate crisis and wildlife co-existence are ongoing at Wild Cortes.

Culture & Nature Focused Events

- *Kim Marks Tattoo Art*
- *The Locals Car Show*
- *Cardmaking*, with Donna Collins
- *Wetlands Restoration Presentation*, with Sean Nightingale
- *Spring Migration Bird Count*
- *CBC Christmas Bird Count*, with George Sirk
- *Stitch & Chat* – monthly social invitation to local textile artists

Vintage Events featuring CIMAS & Community Collections

- *Antique Car Chapter (Vintage Car Club of Canada) tour*
- *Vintage Clothing Pop-Up Exhibition* – curated by Lilly Allen
- *Antiques Show & Tell* – led by Alex Woywitka
- *Jewellery Identification Workshop* – led by Alex Woywitka
- *A Vintage Christmas Celebration*

Education Programs for Students and Families

130 students – Cortes School, Cortes Island Academy (CIA), Ecole Phoenix Middle School, Deertrails Program – engaged with our education programs.

- *Fossils* – hands-on program by Christian Gronau for CIA students
- *Insects* – live insect presentation by Sean Nightingale
- *Jenga Trivia* – at Wild Cortes, created by Donna Collins

Speakers Series

- *Sheltering in the Backrush: The Story of Twin Islands* – a dynamic visual presentation by historian and author Jeanette Taylor who introduced her most recent book



Music in the Garden Series

Summer series featuring local contemporary music in the Heritage Garden.

- Mike Desj; Stephen Antle of Ho'okani; Michael Keith / Moonclaw Music (Michael Keith, Paul Wolda, Greg Osoba); Vinyl/w Johnny Waffelz

Literary Events

Celebrating local authors at the following events

- *Marnie's 25th Anniversary Celebration* – in partnership with Marnie's Books, held in the Co-op Courtyard
- *Readings in the Garden* – Heritage Garden
- *Literary Afternoons* – two events held at Linnaea Education Centre, one in partnership with Seniors Helping Seniors

Readings by: Dayna Davis, Jane Newman, Karen McDiarmid, Irene Blueth, Margaret Verschuur, Laurel Bohart, Brian Hayden, Erika Grundmann, Andy Vine, Judyth Williams, Monica Nawrocki, Oriane Lee Johnston, Brian Hayden, Hazel Appaqaq, Heather Ogilvie, Shaena Lambert, Rex Weyler, Norm Gibbons, Ruth Ozeki, and Erin Robinsong

Guided Tours

- *Historic Cruises* – in partnership with Misty Isles Adventures
 - Low Tide Reef Exploration Cruise, with George Sirk
 - Refuge Cove, with Norm Gibbons and Lisa Weyler-Gibbons
 - Háthayim/Von Donop Cruise, with Bruce Ellingsen
- *Gumbooting the Lagoon* – two tours led by biologist Deb Cowper and artist/historian Jane Newman, in partnership with FOCI.
- Museum tours: Pacific Yellow Fin Tour, Hollyhock programs' participants tours, Deertrails Program

WILD CORTES NATURAL HISTORY CENTRE

Wild Cortes Natural History Centre is housed in the Linnaea Education building. Programming, participation, and direction are provided through the collaboration of five organizations (Cortes Island Museum, Linnaea Farm Society, Friends of Cortes Island, Children's Forest Trust, and Discovery Islands Ecosystem Mapping Project) collectively known as the Cortes Wild! partnership. Curation of the exhibits is provided by Laurel Bohart, Donna Collins, Christian Gronau and Sabina Leader Mense.

ARTIFACT COLLECTION

Committed to advancing best practices, the Artifacts Committee met weekly and accessioned 102 artifacts in 2023. We continue to work toward reconciliation with Klahoose First Nation through our overture to repatriate all Indigenous cultural objects currently held in the CIMAS collection.

ARCHIVES COLLECTION

The Archives Collection consists of unique and original documents, photographs, maps, recorded interviews, digitized films, and ephemera dating from 1880s to present day. This year, the Archives Committee:

- received 12 new donations
- processed 14 accessions
- transcribed 70 digitized oral history interviews (12 corrected transcripts are available online)
- updated the Online Archives with new descriptions and digital record
- expanded the "Cortes Family Trees" project: genealogy of 22 families, with help from volunteer Bernice McGowan, now complete
- interviewed four island elders, part of an ongoing oral history project
- fielded 18 research requests
- participated in AABC webinar on reconciliation, "Relationship Building: A Guided Workbook"

Plans for 2024: Continue processing accessions, updating the Online Archives, adding to the Family Trees project and interviewing island elders.

HERITAGE GARDEN

A warm spring, summer and fall made it possible to enjoy a long 2023 season in the Heritage Garden. The garden was the setting for diverse events during summer and fall as part of the Art in the Garden series.

A new Heritage Garden Blog was posted on the Museum website describing settlement patterns in the late 1880s and the 1900s with many apple trees planted at homesteads up and down the coast and on Cortes Island. The three heritage apple trees in the heritage garden are a reminder of that time, and the blog includes a description of the trees and photos of the apples.

The apple trees were again pruned by volunteer Murray Rae; Debbie and Chris Dragseth mowed the lawn; and Nancy and Ray Kendel transported the sawdust needed to maintain pathways around raised beds in the garden. The drip irrigation system was maintained and repaired by Inga Schumann, and two members of Steph Asbeck's crew cleared the prolific growth of weeds and grasses in the front border. Steph controlled the very vigorous wisteria on the side fence which is a big seasonal feature of the garden. Garden development and maintenance is coordinated by volunteer and board member Donna McLaren.

Soil improvements are made each year and plants are added. Additions in 2023 included: peacock orchid (*Acidanthera bicolor*), another regal lily and wild bergamot in the front border, also coreopsis, gaillardia, and lavender added to the raised boxes for summer colour. Choice of plants is influenced by drought tolerance, bloom time and historical use.

ONLINE PRESENCE

The Online Presence Committee was established to analyze the CIMAS website and our social media accounts and make recommendations for additions and improvements.

Website (www.cortesmuseum.ca and www.wildcortes.ca)

A new version of our website, partially funded by an SRD Grant-in-Aid, was implemented in June 2023. The Web Smith (Campbell River) worked closely with Melanie and Gina with input from the Online Committee and the Board. In this new design, Wild Cortes received a top menu position with much more content.

2023 saw new blogs created by Mike Manson, Christian Gronau, George Sirk, and Donna McLaren. Thank you, authors! We are always looking for new blogs and contributors.

Communications Updates

In 2023 we moved to City West fibre optic internet provider. We also created new custom domain-based email addresses – cimas@cortesmuseum.com and museum@cortesmuseum.com. This idea was facilitated by Brian Scott as domain-based emails are free to registered non-profits via Google Workspace for Non-profits. Thank you, Brian!

Online Archives (collections.cortesmuseum.com)

Users can search our archival database, view photographs, browse History Albums, stream audio interviews, send feedback, make requests, or share records.

Online platforms:

- CIMAS website <http://www.cortesmuseum.com> and <http://www.wildcortes.ca>; Tideline, <http://www.cortesisland.com>
- Facebook, Instagram; Trip Advisor; and Google for Business, featuring our main gallery at 957 Beasley Road and Wild Cortes at 1255 Seaford Road separately, with Google Maps markers

MemoryBC (www.memorybc.ca/cortes-island-museum-and-archives)

A description of all CIMAS archival holdings is available on this provincial website hosted by Archives Association of British Columbia.

imagine

In 2023, much of our programming revolved around collections, the things we gather, and those keepers of memories and dreams. In the summer, we invited people to share their collections – jewellery, tattoos, vinyl, antique cars; Wild Cortes expanded its specimen collection in the context of climate crisis; the Museum featured maps and artifacts – showcasing the extent of our collection. All these events and moments helped us travel beyond ourselves and the places we naturally inhabit; they stirred our imagination, fed our passions, and perhaps made us wonder at roads not taken.

CIMAS aspires to accomplish the following goals in 2024 and beyond:

- Expand youth engagement and participation
- Develop a fundraising strategy and new fundraising opportunities for CIMAS & Wild Cortes
- Source additional grant opportunities to support contract and permanent staff wages
- Continue to expand our online presence
- Continue processing accessions, updating the Online Archives, adding to the Family Trees project and interviewing island elders
- Increase public awareness of the Archives as a community resource
- Continue and refine our new programming model
- Enhance the Visitor Information Booth with improved listings, information, and wayfinding
- Continue to collaborate and connect with other Cortes Island organizations
- Continue to develop a respectful working relationship with Klahoose First Nation

celebrate

We have our storms and troubles – big and small – but on balance, there is so much to appreciate about Cortes. Lots of people are working hard to ensure it remains a place where we can live and thrive together – with each other and creatures who share their homes with us. We won't always agree on how things get done or even what needs doing, but we still need to pull together in the same general direction as a community.

So, this year, we celebrate your hard work to keep CIMAS moving forward. Your involvement, suggestions, experience, and memberships really keep this ship afloat. Thank you!



Thank you, our VOLUNTEERS! -- 132 volunteers donated 4005 hours. Thank you!

Some pictures from our events:



Wayfinding: Stories of Maps and Place – Exhibition Opening



Antique Car Chapter – Cortes Island Tour



Gumbooting the Lagoon