

Kinder Morgan ups its bid—and the risk...

by Mike Richards

Surprise, surprise! With Enbridge's Northern Gateway proposal under heavy fire from opponents at the Joint Review Panel hearings underway around the province, Kinder Morgan has upped its bid to be the main transporter of tar sands oil to BC's coast.

In January the US energy giant announced a massive increase in the amount of "dilbit" (diluted bitumen) it wants to ship to our coast via a completely new Trans Mountain pipeline: up from the company's current shipments of about 300,000 barrels/day and its earlier plan to increase this to 750,000 barrels, to a massive 890,000 barrels per day! That amount of oil means the equivalent of about 40 huge tankers travelling through our beautiful coastal waters each month—or about 500 each year.

While the project's supporters claim a low probability of accidents and increased risk mitigation strategies, it does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that with each and every extra tanker



travelling through our waters, the risk of a major oil spill from one of them also increases.

The consequences of a huge spill in Georgia Strait are almost unimaginable, and certainly irreversible, especially when the cargo is tar sands bitumen which is very difficult to recover. Of course we understand that tankers are not the only source of spills, but there are already more than enough oil and

chemical-laden vessels travelling our waters. So why push our luck even further?

GSA has been convening strategy sessions and working closely with many of the other groups addressing this issue, which is demanding more and more attention. Over the winter we also attended Kinder Morgan's "information sessions" on its proposal, and unequivocally told the company that we don't support its plan to bring more tar sands crude to the coast—or any other that would significantly increase the risk of an oil spill in our waters. As this newsletter goes to press we will be having a one-on-one meeting with Kinder Morgan officials to restate our position.

As the push for more tankers increases, along with the growing threat of a major spill in our region, GSA has just hired a new Vancouver-based campaigner to spearhead our work on energy and shipping-related issues. See page 3 for details.

...and taxpayers will be on the hook for spills

The ecological consequences of oil spills are well documented, so we have a good sense of what our region's ecosystem could be in store for if US energy giant Kinder Morgan's proposal goes ahead (see above). What is less well known is the financial liability when a spill does occur. An important new report aims to change that.

Released in January by Georgia Strait Alliance and three other environmental groups, *Financial Liability for Kinder Morgan* warns that the company's new Trans Mountain Pipeline proposal poses an exponential increase in the risk of a major marine-based oil spill affecting the Salish Sea's most populous region, including Metro Vancouver, Victoria and the Southern Gulf Islands.



The report analyses the damages that would be caused by such a spill and the insurance available, and concludes that Canadian taxpayers could be on the hook for as much as 90% of the cost of spill response. Although the real cost of a spill won't be known until it happens, studies suggest that BC taxpayers could be on the hook for billions because the other funds available just won't cover anywhere near the full cost.

GSA has been working to bring this important new report to the attention of decision makers and citizens in this region. You can download it at www.georgiastrait.org/Liability_Report.

Strait Thoughts: Holding the torch high—together

by Christianne Wilhelmson, Executive Director

On December 26, 2012, Rebecca Tarbotton died in a freak accident while on holiday with her family in Mexico. From everything I've read about Rebecca in the media reports that followed, she was a passionate, intelligent, committed and funny person, loved by those who knew her and respected by many more—even those against whom she battled. The Vancouver native's passing at the age of 39 was tragic and as Executive Director of the Rainforest Action Network, her loss reverberated beyond her organization to the worldwide environmental movement. We lost one of our brightest leaders, someone who had made an incredible difference in our world. One can only imagine what other great things she would have done had she had the chance.

I didn't know Rebecca, but her passing has been on my mind a lot in the last few months. Like so many of us who have chosen environmental advocacy and social change as our professions, Rebecca struck me as someone who believed that her hard work today was going to create a better, healthier world for everyone. The motivation of an 'environmental activist' is unselfish: to speak for those who cannot take action, against those who are driven by self-interest.

Just before I sat down to write this, I read a Guardian article on how the Canadian government is now using taxpayers' money—yours and mine—to spy on organizations they describe as "enemies of the state". These groups only want to ensure that the health of future generations is factored into government decision making, yet their peaceful marches and expressions of opposition are labelled "terrorism". How exactly did we get to this point?

Somehow the PR machine of our democratically elected federal government has decided that the same groups whose work resulted in the banning of toxins such as DDT and PCBs and the protection of waters and lands across this country—all of which benefit individuals in the government as well as other Canadians—are now to be viewed as impeding what is best for our citizenry.

This is scary enough, but what concerns me more is the power and influence of the vocal minority who openly agree with this assessment. When did ensuring we had clean air and water become a negative? At one not-so-distant time in history, Presidents, Prime Ministers and even industry leaders stood up for the protection of forests and rivers and oceans – and they were lauded for it. Today, in Canada, these are deemed as impediments to "progress" and those that want their protection are "the enemy".

Our country is at an important crossroad. The damage that the energy and mining sectors, with the help of our federal government, are doing to our environment will have heavy ramifications for generations to come. The vilification of environmental advocates, along with efforts to silence them through media attacks and threats to their charitable status, will give added strength to those efforts to destroy what we citizens have spent decades trying to protect.

In the face of these forces, silence is not an option, and the great news is you haven't been silent at all. You have signed petitions, attended events and made what you value clear

to our leaders. Beyond this, you have made the important decision to support groups like GSA, so that we can be an even stronger voice for you. In 2012, GSA's membership jumped by an incredible 36%, at a time when so many people's budgets are tight. We can't thank you enough for your support, as it tells us we're on the right track—and puts us in a great position to do even more.

Since there is "strength in numbers"—and the challenges facing us require a great deal of strength—we hope you will help us build our community of donors even more in the coming year. You have made the decision to support GSA because you believe in what we do. We're certain there are many in your network who feel the same, so why not invite a friend or colleague to become part of the GSA family? They can make a donation online (www.GeorgiaStrait.org/donate) or by mail (www.GeorgiaStrait.org/donatebymail), and when they do, they will be helping us grow even stronger.

This year promises to be very exciting and in the coming months we look forward to sharing more ways for you to be involved. Being a part of this great and growing community is inspiring.

Now, whenever I read about another attack on our environment or on environmental groups, I will think about Rebecca Tarbotton—and about how more and more of us are coming together to build on the amazing work she did. We are growing, and we will hold high the torch she handed us.



Enemies of the state? We think not! Delivering the important news that Canadian taxpayers could be on the hook for as much as 90% of the cost of a spill response (see story page 1): L to R, Gwen Barlee (Wilderness Committee), Karen Wristen (Living Oceans Society), Brenda Belak (West Coast Environmental Law) and Christianne Wilhelmson (Georgia Strait Alliance).

Photo: Geoff Gilliard, LOS

It's not just oil we're shipping out

by Mike Richards

While the media is full of news about the tar sands, pipelines and tanker traffic through our coastal waters, the concerns don't stop there. Two major new coal shipping plans for southern BC are deepening the threats to Georgia Strait's ecosystem—and to the world's climate.

Port Metro Vancouver has approved a plan by **Neptune Terminals**, on the North Shore, to upgrade its infrastructure in order to increase the terminal's export of metallurgical coal, from the current eight million tonnes annually to 18 million! All this coal will be brought to the terminal by rail then carried by ships through the very busy Burrard Inlet—the same waters transited by oil tankers, freighters and other commercial ships.

Another plan, currently being reviewed by the Port, is for a transfer facility at the **Fraser-Surrey Docks (FSD)**, where US coal would be unloaded from trains and moved onto barges. These would be towed to Texada Island where the coal would be stored until being transferred to ships for overseas export. FSD forecasts it would handle two million metric tonnes of coal in 2013, increasing to four million in 2014.



Neptune Terminals on Burrard Inlet.

Photo Laurie MacBride

Combined with the existing **Westshore Terminals** at Roberts Bank, these proposals could turn Port Metro Vancouver into the largest exporter of coal in North America. In addition, a huge coal exporting operation is proposed for Cherry Point, north of Bellingham and close to the BC border. The **Pacific Gateway Terminal** would be capable of exporting almost 48 million tonnes of coal each year and is the subject of a heated battle currently raging in Washington State.

Burning of all this extra coal would add many billions of tons to the total heat-trapping pollution that is feeding global climate change. Closer to home, the number of ships needed to export this coal from all these developments would increase traffic through our waters

significantly, thereby increasing the risk of accidents and oil spills.

On top of the coal issue let's remember another hydrocarbon product, **Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)**. While proposals for LNG terminals in the Strait have come before, the amount of natural gas exploration and development currently underway, along with recent statements from BC government leaders, will no doubt bring the threat of huge LNG tankers in our waters to the forefront.

GSA will continue to monitor these issues and ensure our voice is heard in the discussions and consultations. As always we will be looking for solutions that will protect the waters of Georgia Strait and contribute to a healthier and safer planet.

Kits base closure is a disaster

by Michelle Young

To call the federal government's sudden closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station a "disaster" might well be an understatement—in all probability it could lead to a number of disasters. In the absence of Kits Station (reported to be Canada's busiest Coast Guard base), boaters will rely on seasonal student volunteers from an inland base along with the Sea Island Coast Guard Station, over half an hour away. Increased response times will inevitably lead to lost lives.

Opposition to the closure has been monumental: everyone from the Premier of BC, the Mayor of Vancouver, the federal and provincial Opposition Leaders, the Police and Fire Chiefs of Vancouver, union leaders, numerous municipal, provincial and federal politicians, mariners, Search and Rescue

specialists, and the general public. Yet the government has pushed through this cost-cutting measure ahead of schedule and without notification—despite the fact that the cost savings will be arguably very low when taking into consideration the transfer of costs to Sea Island CG Station, Search and Rescue and the Vancouver Police.

Mariner safety is vital, not only to preserve life and limb, but also to protect the ocean from the pollution that so often results from boating accidents. We at GSA are dreading the day we have to say, "We told you so". But as the building sits empty, perhaps the government will consider reversing this ill informed action. Contact your MP and let them know you want this decision reversed before lives are lost.

New campaigner!

GSA is excited to welcome **Alexandra Woodsworth** as our new Energy and Shipping Campaigner. Alexandra holds a PhD in Environmental Sciences, and joins GSA with 10 years of campaigning on climate and energy issues under her belt. Having most recently rallied public transportation users to overturn transit fare hikes in the UK, she is excited to work with concerned residents of her home province of BC to protect our beautiful coast. She'll be based in Vancouver, and as the push for more tankers increases, along with the growing threat of a major spill in our region, we know she'll be kept very busy! You can see her photo and read more about her at www.GeorgiaStrait.org/staff.

Down at the Dock: What more could you ask?

Story and photos by Michelle Young

Each year, GSA traditionally launches our boating season at the Vancouver International Boat Show—and this year, what a fantastic show it was! Our friends at the BC Marine Trades Association put on an incredible event, and we are pleased to have had a great many boaters, both seasoned and new, stop by our booth to discuss green boating alternatives.

If you were there, you may have picked up one of our new keychain floats generously donated by Sean Thompson, President of Dolphin Insurance, or one of our two fantastic new burgees (all are still available from our Nanaimo office).

We also continued to spread the word about our growing marina eco-rating program, Clean Marine BC. Did you know that in addition to the nine certified Clean Marine BC marinas and yacht clubs so far, a dozen more marinas are now enrolled in the program and at various stages of preparing for their environmental best practices audit?

Clean Marine BC facilities are ranked on a Five-Anchor scale. Although we have yet to award the full Five-Anchor Rating, I've learned that at least a couple of our participating marinas are working hard towards achieving that coveted status.

It's fantastic to hear about this healthy competition, as it is bringing positive results for the environment. As marinas and yacht clubs prepare to win certification, or work to improve their Anchor Rating at the time of re-certification, the upgrades they make to their facilities will have a real and lasting impact.

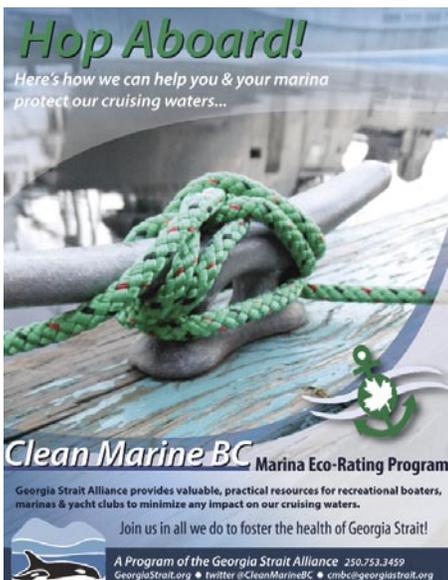
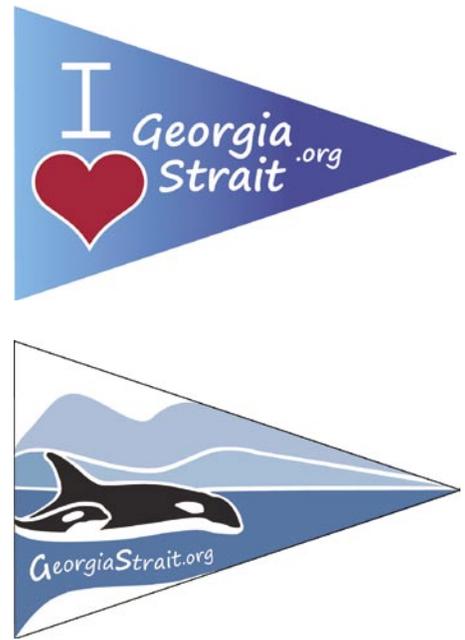
Last summer I was pleased to hear from the managers of one of the participating marinas, who said that since becoming a Clean Marine BC marina, they have personally witnessed an improvement in both their business and the environment in and around their facility:

"We believe our participation in the Clean Marine BC program has been good for our business. The practical information presented by GSA and the collaborative nature of it, has helped us to improve the natural environment in and around the marina. This has translated into better boating experiences and in turn helps us to earn and retain high quality customers. It is also very satisfying to see the eel grass beds returning naturally along with the salmon fry and other wildlife."—Maple Bay Marina

What more could you ask for, down at the dock?



Our floating keychains and new burgees were hits at the Boat Show! If you missed the Show, you can still get a keychain (free) or burgee (\$30) by contacting our Nanaimo office (gsa@georgiastrait.org, 250-753-3459).



Some of GSA's many hard-working staff and volunteers at this year's Vancouver International Boat Show. (L to R) Ruby Berry, Christianne Wilhelmson, Robert Dick, David Macdonald, Mike Richards.

Changing of the tide

by Christianne Wilhelmson

We've all heard the saying "change is hard", and that certainly rings true for one of the changes at GSA right now. After more than 12 years, first as Green Boating Program Coordinator, then Director of Special Projects, **Mike Richards** will be leaving us at the end of March.

Mike's contribution to GSA is not easy to put into a few words. A strong commitment to the organization and passion for our local waters have underscored all of his work. When he took over as coordinator of our fledgling Green Boating program in the summer of 2000—a position he embraced enthusiastically as a lifelong sailor—it was full speed ahead.

Right from the start, he was busy meeting with boaters and marina operators, talking up the new program, distributing our *Guide to Green Boating* brochure and marina signs, giving workshops and presentations and participating in various policy forums.

Not everyone he met in those early days was supportive: some marine industry officials were less than receptive to the message of Green Boating. Mike's skills in strategic planning and facilitation were important, and his wonderful Aussie humour helped break down barriers and build a great many very positive relationships.

Travelling by road and sea—reaching marine parks, marinas and anchorages via his own sailboat and dinghy, then later GSA's inflatable—Mike's work has been all about connecting with

people. And connect, he has: by 2001, GSA won a prestigious Canadian Safe Boating Award (CASBA) for the Best Environmental Campaign, and in 2008, we won a second CASBA, for "Safeguarding the Environment".

But more than anything, it's been Mike's calm, "steady at the helm" approach to social change that enabled him to transform the young Green Boating initiative into a highly-respected program that's now embraced by our region's recreational boating community. In 2007, Mike oversaw the expansion of his program into *Clean Marine BC* (CMBC), which includes eco-certification of marinas and boating facilities as well as the boater education side that was the focus of Green Boating. CMBC now includes nine certified marinas, with another dozen enrolled and awaiting certification. The program is unique in BC and it's thanks to Mike's strong relationships within the boating and marine industry community that CMBC was able to take root and grow.

Mike has been generous with his time and supportive of the work of other staff and volunteers, contributing to their successes as well. He really showed his leadership in 2009 when, with current Executive Director Christianne Wilhelmson, he successfully co-managed the organization through one of its toughest financial periods.

In 2011 Mike left CMBC in the capable hands of Michelle Young, so that he could take on new challenges within GSA. Since then he's been developing



Mike Richards: we'll miss his thoughtful, "steady at the helm" approach.

Photo by Brent Cote (ScotiaMcLeod)

a new Energy and Shipping program, with a particular focus on the Kinder Morgan proposal to almost triple the amount of tar sands crude oil piped to the south coast (see page 1). He has laid the groundwork for the new program, creating reliable information for communities around the region and building positive relationships with the variety of citizen and industry sector groups engaging in this issue.

It's been a privilege and a pleasure—and a lot of fun—working with Mike over the years. We'll miss him, and we wish him nothing but the best in whatever adventures he takes on next. "No worries, mate!"

Two of our Business Partners on why they support GSA's work...



"Maple Bay Marina and Georgia Strait Alliance have been working together for over six years, supporting Green Boating and the Clean Marine BC program. We achieved a Four-Anchor ranking in the Clean Marine BC eco-certification program in 2010. This program has been well received by our customers and has helped to improve environmental awareness of boaters who visit the marina. We believe there have been significant positive impacts on the environment directly related to our relationship. We encourage people and marinas to support GSA, to help them continue to engage British Columbians in the protection of the Strait of Georgia and inspire a new generation of citizens to protect, restore and sustain BC's inland sea."

"Denman Island Chocolate loves the Georgia Strait Alliance. It's a given that, being on a small island, we value the ocean around us, and GSA is consistent in its action and advocacy on behalf of issues that imperil Georgia Strait."



Valuing and protecting our waterfront: *an exciting*

Story by Ruby Berry, photos by Laurie MacBride

Here on the edge of the Strait of Georgia, we're blessed with mountains, rivers and ocean—a rich confluence that brings an amazing diversity of life.

Most of us are drawn to the waterfront, finding an alluring sense of mystery or magic there. Whether it be a cliffside view of watery vistas, a meditative beach walk, the creatures found in a tidepool, an afternoon paddling or surfing, a waterfront café or the bustle of a busy marina, the waterfront offers hours of entertainment.

It is the place where two worlds meet: where the life of the land rubs up against the life of the ocean, producing a rich, inter-dependent interface that stirs human imagination. The eastern shore of the Strait of Georgia is the edge of our continent, with vast land behind us and vast ocean before us. Some are inspired to sail off to faraway places—others to stay home, perhaps painting or writing odes to the ocean. Either way, these shores provide inspiration.

Georgia Strait is a tender, complex ecosystem, supporting thousands of species of marine life. Its heart lies where the mighty Fraser River meets the sea: the largest estuary on the Pacific coast, it's what makes our home one of the



How do we balance the pressures of our homes, transportation and lifestyle? (Eagle Harbour, West Vancouver)

world's most ecologically rich regions. Millions of birds rely on this estuary, either to overwinter or to feed and rest during their annual migration along the Pacific Flyway.

Of course, it's not just birds who are

drawn here: the shores of Georgia Strait are also home to over 75% of British Columbians. It's this fact—with all the pressures borne of our transport, homes, lifestyle and industry—that makes the Strait, according to Parks Canada, one of Canada's most at-risk natural environments.

With most of us living in cities, how do we see the waterfront as a whole—that place where we have our primary connection with the Strait? What do we want it to look like in 50 years and how do we prepare for that?

How do we assess competing interests? How do we balance recreation, esthetics, a maritime industry that supports our economy and all the ways we use and enjoy the waterfront, while maintaining the health of the ecosystem that supports it?

How do we protect the waterfront in the face of new and complex issues such as climate change? How do we plan for a future of rising sea levels and burgeoning populations, when most of us live so dangerously close to the water?

It is questions like these that have prompted GSA to embark on a new



Sandpipers are among the diverse species that rely on the health of our local shores.

new initiative

collaborative project—our most ambitious one yet.

Starting in the Lower Mainland, we are aiming to build what will eventually become a powerful network of protection for the Strait. We'll be reaching out to people who use and care about our urban waterfront, bringing together diverse groups and sectors to share ideas, disseminate information and develop a common vision for its future. We're aiming to bring out the most creative ideas to "design the edge"—to find a way for the marine ecosystem to remain healthy and to flourish alongside vibrant and prosperous human communities.

Inspired by New York's Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance (www.waterfrontalliance.org), an astonishingly successful organization, our new initiative is intended to address the mix of social, economic and ecological issues at the edge of our Strait, to be widely inclusive in terms of involvement, and to lead to practical planning tools that can be implemented by local governments—home-grown development and protection policies that can guide local decision making through the challenging years ahead. Most importantly, there will be measurable goals and accountability to ensure the goals are met.



Kite surfers preparing to launch at White Rock—one of myriad ways we use and enjoy our waterfront.

It won't be easy, as we'll need to reconcile competing agendas and find creative means to ensure that very diverse groups can find common ground and work together for the long haul. But GSA has always worked collaboratively to protect the health of our region's ecosystem, building and engaging grassroots networks around the region on a wide range of issues. So we're well

placed to undertake this ambitious new collaborative project.

We were inspired to look into bringing this model here last summer and we're excited to report that in the early conversations we're having with key groups and individuals, there is a great deal of excitement about this idea. In addition, we are having some wonderful conversations with Roland Lewis, the founder and CEO of the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, who is generously offering his time and advice to ensure that what we propose building is strong and fits with the needs of our region.

It is in the nature of water to flow and blend. Nowhere do we see this more than in Georgia Strait: everything we do on the land somehow, eventually, makes its way into the Strait via our rivers, streams, creeks, stormwater and ground water. Just as all that fresh water flows together and blends with the salt when it reaches the waterfront and then the Strait, it is now time for all of us to share and blend our knowledge in order to protect this amazing ecosystem. It can all start with a trip to the waterfront, to reflect upon the importance of this tidal edge in our lives.

For updates and new developments in our exciting new Waterfront Initiative, watch the "Latest News" column at www.GeorgiaStrait.org.



Brockton Point and the Stanley Park Seawall: a tranquil place in the midst of the city.



Tim Leadem and Dr. Peter Ross

On the evening of October 24th, supporters of Georgia Strait Alliance—old and new—came together in downtown Vancouver to celebrate GSA and raise funds for work in the year ahead. Along with the beautiful view of the Strait from the top floor of the Scotia Tower, participants were inspired by talks from marine mammal scientist, Dr. Peter Ross; Vancouver is Awesome founder, Bob Kronbauer; and GSA's Director of Special Projects, Mike Richards and Executive Director, Christianne Wilhelmson. Much lively conversation took place, and from tankers to killer whales to sport fishing, everyone left with a lot to think about. Thanks to the generosity of silent auction donors and a \$5,000 matching grant by ScotiaMcLeod, the night netted nearly \$13,000—an amazing show of generosity. Thanks to all who joined us!

Photos by Brent Cote (ScotiaMcLeod)



Lifetime Member Suzanne Siemens and husband Craig



Bob Kronbauer and Director Lesli Boldt



Lifetime Member Matt Kirchner and Director Don Bulmer

Michael & Ann Philpott, Don Bulmer and Dan Miskowicz



Peter Finley and Lea Bancroft



Glass art by Tammy Hudgeon was among the auction items.



Robin Puga, Jonathan Hanvelt, Chief Doug White, Director Melinda Skeels



Executive Director Christianne Wilhelmson



Finding creative ways to give

by Christianne Wilhelmson

Why do you choose to make charitable gifts, and how do you make them? There are many reasons you might donate to Georgia Strait Alliance and many different ways to give. We depend upon, and greatly appreciate, all of the donations we receive, and we try to make the process easy and efficient so that your funds go directly into the programs that mean so much to you.

Late in 2012, two couples independently decided to support GSA in a specific way: by making a donation of shares and mutual funds. We asked them to share their reasons for making this incredibly generous decision.

Many factors went into the first couple's decision. They believe that GSA does very important work and wanted to help ensure we could keep on doing it, especially in the face of recent government policy shifts that have made life more difficult for Canadian charities. They thought a single "shot in the arm", over and above their regular annual contribution, would be appreciated—which indeed it was! They also told us that by gifting shares with accrued capital gains, they were able to save at tax time, meaning their charitable resources could be stretched even further. In the end, their donation benefited GSA, the donors themselves and the other charitable organizations they support.

For the second couple, the reasons came down to an opportunity to support GSA in a way that their cash flow didn't normally allow. Last fall, they discovered an old mutual fund account that they no longer wished to keep, and realized that they would lose a lot of the value of the funds to capital gains tax if they were to simply sell it. Although not activists themselves, they appreciate GSA's work and are deeply concerned about the issues we tackle, so felt that by donating to GSA they were supporting a group that was speaking for them. It's not always easy to give a cash donation to all the groups they would like to support, but being able to give the mutual fund made it easy to help GSA.

Are you wondering if donating securities to GSA would be a good way for you to give? Here is some information we hope you'll find useful as you consider this question:

Public securities can be donated to any registered charity, regardless of whether the securities have gained or lost value during the time you have held them. Even if the value has decreased during that time, the securities will be very valuable to the charity, since it will generally sell the securities and put the funds to good use right away.

Donating securities at any time has its benefits, but when you donate them during a period of market decline, it can be particularly advantageous both to you and to the charity. There are two important tax benefits when you donate securities that have decreased in value:

1. You'll receive a charitable receipt that produces a tax credit of up to 50% of the value of the securities (the exact amount varies by province). This amount can be claimed against up to 75% of your net annual income.
2. You'll be able to claim a capital loss, which can be advantageous at tax time.

It's important to note, however, that there are specific rules that govern the selling of securities at a loss, and some of these are also relevant to donations:

- Capital losses can only be deducted against capital gains, not against other income. As is the case with capital gains, only one-half of the loss can be claimed at tax time; this is called an "allowable capital loss".
- Capital losses must first be used in the tax year that they are incurred; they can then be carried back against gains from the three previous years. Beyond this, any remaining capital losses may be carried forward to offset capital gains in future years.
- The securities you are donating must have been held in a non-registered account (i.e., not a RRSP, RRIF or RESP).
- If you wish to buy back the security, you must wait until at least 30 days have passed, in order not to disqualify the capital loss.

A donation of a depreciated public security is a tax-effective way to rebalance your investment portfolio—and a great way to support your favourite charity. If you are interested in helping GSA in this way, please contact our Nanaimo office at 250-753-3459 (gsa@georgiastrait.org).

We thank ScotiaMcLeod for this information.

Cleaning attics to Save the Strait!

Donating to our favourite charities can challenge our pocketbooks. But what if you could give without spending an extra dime, and at the same time, finally get rid of those "treasures" gathering dust in your basement or attic?

Thanks to Giftit, you can do just that. Think of it as Craig's List meets Charity Village!

How does it work?

1. Go to www.gift-it.com, click on "Donor signup" and register.
2. When you're ready to post an item for sale, go to www.gift-it.com and click on "Gift an item" and fill in all

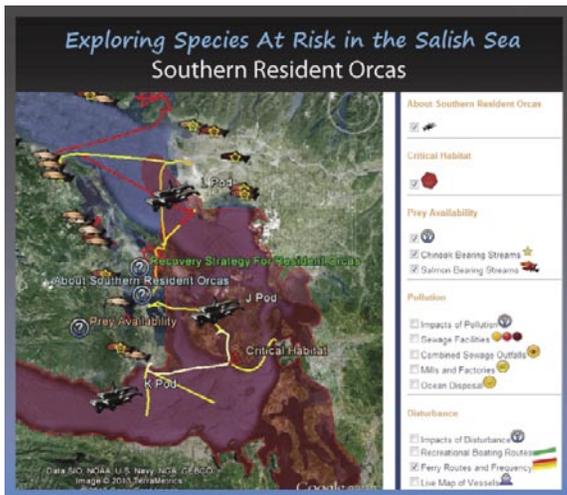
the details, including a picture. Don't forget to choose "Georgia Strait Alliance" as your charity of choice.

3. Post! When someone is interested in buying your item they will contact you directly.
4. When the item is sold, the funds will be donated directly to Georgia Strait Alliance.

It's as easy as that! Thanks for helping to support GSA!

For more info on how to sell an item: www.gift-it.com/resources/How-to-donate-on-Giftit.pdf.

For info on how to buy an item www.gift-it.com/resources/How-to-buy-on-Giftit.pdf



Telling the story of *Species at Risk*

by Rebecca Adams

We are excited to introduce a new chapter of our online Georgia Strait Communities Atlas: *Species at Risk* in the Salish Sea.

Over the coming year, GSA will be releasing a series of interactive Google Earth maps which will provide information about species at risk, including Southern Resident killer whales, Nooksack dace, sockeye salmon and rockfish. The maps will show why these animals are considered threatened or endangered and the info they illustrate will support recovery strategies for these species as mandated under Canada's *Species at Risk Act*.

With the generous support of the **Schad Foundation**, we now present the first map in this series, which shows why the Southern Resident killer whales of our region are at risk: their small population size (currently only 85 individuals), their low reproductive rate, a loss of prey availability, their exposure to pollution and disturbance from human activity.

To illustrate these factors, the map has interactive information layers that show how the whales' critical habitat and food sources intersect and overlap with human activity in southern BC waters. A static screenshot of the map is shown above, but you'll want to check out the interactive version of the *Species at Risk: Southern Resident killer whales* map at: www.atlas.GeorgiaStrait.org/SAR_southernresidentorcas

This map, and the ones that will follow, will help people see clearly that we live in close coexistence with these species, how their protection is our responsibility, and why reducing the threats that endanger them should be a priority for all of us.

Would you like to share a story, photo or video of our amazing Southern Resident killer whales? Help others learn about and witness the majestic beauty of these amazing animals by helping us build a Local Knowledge component of the *Species at Risk* Maps.

Sign up at www.atlas.georgiastrait.org/user/register to submit your contribution, and check the Georgia Strait Communities Atlas for the release of new *Species at Risk* maps and updates!

Protecting whales, beyond borders

by Christianne Wilhelmson

For many years, Georgia Strait Alliance has worked to ensure better protection for whales in Canadian waters, particularly the Southern Resident killer whales (*for details, see www.GeorgiaStrait.org/speciesatrisk*).

Right now GSA's focus is to ensure that the federal government develops a long overdue, comprehensive action plan that will truly protect these killer whales from pollution, noise and the loss of their prey. The need for protection is also a driving force in our work to prevent a five-fold (or greater) increase in "dilbit" tankers here in the Strait—those carrying the heavy tar sands cruise oil known as "diluted bitumen" (*see page 1 for more information on that campaign*).

These efforts are vital, as the Resident killer whales spend their summers in the Strait of Georgia. But what about those times when they and other whales are not in our local waters? To ensure that these whales have a real chance at recovery, they must have strong protection all year round, wherever they are found. That is why Georgia Strait Alliance, along with our colleagues at Ecojustice, Raincoast Conservation Foundation, David Suzuki Foundation and the Wilderness Committee, will appear before the **US District Court** in California in a case involving ocean noise.

The US Navy is planning to conduct underwater exercises in the Northeast Pacific, including repeated broadcasting of high-intensity sound waves into a stretch of water approximately the size of California. Later this year, the US Court will consider a lawsuit by US activists against the National Marine Fisheries Service, over the agency's approval of the Navy's plan.

The sonar exercises would have cumulative impacts on Southern Resident killer whales as well as humpback, blue, fin and sei whales—all species which are listed as at-risk under Canadian law. By disrupting everything from their migration to their feeding, the sonar exercises could threaten the recovery of these whales.

GSA and our Canadian colleagues applied for and won legal standing in the case, in order to ensure that the US Court considers these at-risk whales to be transboundary. Our goals are to ensure that decisions made in the US do not undermine Canadian efforts to protect these species, and that National Marine Fisheries Service must conform to international law.

For more information on this case, check out:

- Ecojustice's blog (with link to our legal submission): www.ecojustice.ca/blog/efforts-to-protect-whales-doesn2019t-stop-at-the-border
- Vancouver Sun news story from January: www.vancouversun.com/technology/Navy+sonar+Canadian+environmental+groups+legal+standing+court/7829800/story.html

To stay up to date on this case, subscribe to *Strait Up*, GSA's free online e-news: www.GeorgiaStrait.org/straitup-subscribe.

The plain facts on Victoria treatment

In the summer of 2012, the federal government put in place two final pillars needed to bring long-overdue sewage treatment to the Capital Regional District (Victoria): it agreed to provide its share of the cost, and brought in nation-wide regulations mandating secondary treatment. The CRD's sewage treatment plan had been approved by the Province, and finally, we could look forward to an end to the discharge of raw sewage and the increasing damage it has been causing to our local waters.

End of story? Sadly, no: those who have fought against bringing sewage treatment to our capital city for the past 40 years are continuing to fight the plan, wasting the community's energy. In addition, a new group has been gaining attention, saying they "support treatment, just not this plan"—revealing a clear lack of understanding of the efforts taken by the community over the past eight years to develop the comprehensive treatment plan.

These groups are a vocal minority and we are glad to see that most CRD residents, along with the local, regional, provincial and federal governments, support treatment for the region.

There is a great deal of misinformation, half-truths and re-writing of history currently underway on this issue. We encourage you to visit our website for the facts, including an excellent legal analysis by our colleagues at Ecojustice on why secondary treatment is not only legally required for Victoria, but is the right thing to do. You'll find this info at: www.georgiastrait.org/victoriasewage.

New land-based fish farm

The Namgis First Nation has announced that its new K'udas project is about to begin growing fish. This closed containment facility, located near Port MacNeill on northern Vancouver Island, will be the first commercial-scale, land-based Atlantic salmon farm in Canada. The first 23,000 smolts will be introduced this month. Plans are for an initial production of 470 metric tonnes of fish, expanding to 2500 MT a year. Namgis intends to show that closed containment is an economically viable alternative to open net cage farms and that by using closed tanks on land, operators can provide optimal growing conditions (e.g. control of water temperature and salinity) and prevent most of the environmental dangers associated with open net cage farms. Other companies will be watching closely to see how the project progresses.

Annual Report next up

To save on paper and postage costs, we'll be posting our new Annual Report online again this year. Once it's ready we'll send a note with the link to GSA members and supporters. In the meantime, please ensure we have your up-to-date email address by sending your full name and email address to gsa@GeorgiaStrait.org.

Time to cut your card

We know that most people's budgets are tight, so GSA is always on the lookout for ways that you can help support our work without having to reach deeper into your pocket book. Affinity programs have been part of the answer.

In 2006 GSA made the decision to join the Husky/Mohawk Community Rebate Program, meaning that every time a customer used their GSA card at a Husky or Mohawk gas station, store or restaurant, the company donated 2% of the cash value of the purchase to GSA. The affinity program was a painless way to give, and an easy way to provide GSA with much needed funding.

That decision may seem odd now, since GSA has long believed in the importance of moving to an economy that is not based on fossil fuels. However, at the time, we felt it was worth supporting companies that seemed to be taking innovative ways to lessen the use of fossil fuels, and Husky/Mohawk was one of the few companies using renewable ethanol in their fuel. And since most of us regularly bought fossil fuels for our cars, it seemed practical and sensible to encourage people to buy the blended fuel rather than gas that was fully fossil-based.

Since that time, the issue of using corn-based ethanol as a fuel source has become increasingly problematic. Add to that Husky's recent decision to support the expansion of the Kinder Morgan pipeline from the Alberta tar sands to the Lower Mainland, and you'll understand why GSA has now decided to end our relationship with the Husky/Mohawk program. As we work to prevent a second pipeline being built from the tar sands, we cannot remain in partnership with a company that is working to justify and promote that pipeline.

If you have a Husky/Mohawk Community card, please cut it up—and consider sending a letter to Husky/Mohawk to let them know why you are doing this.

We thank you for your willingness to support us through this program. If you have any questions or concerns about our decision, please contact christianne@georgiastrait.org.



Strait Talk © Georgia Strait Alliance, 2013

Linked PDF also available online at www.GeorgiaStrait.org.

EDITING & LAYOUT: Laurie MacBride and Alan Wilson

PRINTING: Western Printers and Lithographers (Burnaby), an FSC-certified shop, on 100% post consumer waste recycled paper, processed chlorine-free.

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Canadian Publications Agreement #1564129

SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Elizabeth Adam, Carolyn Affleck, Jessica Alford, Mike Allison, Michael & Rita Alton, James Alton & Hortensa Nawatzki, Aqueduct Foundation, Dr. Saul Arbess, Harvey Armstrong, Baker & Grigg, Richard Ballantyne, Lea Bancroft, Susan Bartlett, BC Coast Pilots Ltd., Jackie Lynn Bell, Dr. Lorne Berman, Joann Bessler & Dan Emerson, Brian Bishop, Darren Blaney, John Blasingame, Blue Lantern Studio, David Bodrug, Boldt Communications Inc., Ann Bonkowski, Linda & Peter Booler, David Borrowman, Elisabeth Boshier, Rob Botterell & Inga Nykwist, Lorraine Bourbonnais & Jacques Gobeil, Jan Bate & Stan Boychuk, Patricia Brandlmayr, Alice Brown, Don Bulmer, J. J. Burgerjon, Randy Burke, Gary & Sharon Bywater, Douglas & Sheila Carrick, Kevin Carter & Patrice Palmerino, Norma Casey, John & Sharon Cashore, Joan & Steve Cellik, John Chislett, Reed Clarke, Gerard Clement, Patricia Coldren, Joseph Connors, Janet & Nicholas Cooke, Heather Cooling, Mike Cormack, Council of BC Yacht Clubs, Deryck & Linda Cowling, Warren Cronan, Taannia Dancer, Krista De Groot & Peter Jacques, Cathy & Mark deBruijn, Kurstin Decker, Anne-Marie Dekker, Karin Demidoff, Jeff DeVries & Marcy Prior, Robert Dick, Elfi Dillon-Shaw, Marnie & Rod Dobell, Eileen & Theo Dombrowski, Dominion Self-Park Systems Ltd., Dolphin Insurance, Charles & Gloria Dorworth, Doran Doyle & Kate Mortimer, Trallee Dun, Dawn Dunphy, Alison & Michael Dyson, Eden Conservation Trust, Frank & Mary Elkins, Dr. Peter Elliott, Kathleen Emerson, Arthur & Karen Etheridge, Barbara & William Evans, Wayne Bradley & Janet Fairbanks, Arlene Feke, Peter Finley, Alison Fitzgerald, Thora Fleming, Kathy Fletcher & Ken Weiner, Joan Fowler, Diana Franklin, Stirling Fraser, Heather Friesen, Carolyn & Charles Gahr, Bryan Gallagher, Gaming Policy & Enforcement Branch - Licensing & Grants Division, Julia Gardner, Dave Gay, Capt. Doug Gayton, Penny Gibbs & John Willett, Global Greengrants Fund, Harvey Graham, Gray Monk, Sharon Haave, Bernard Hanby, Jean-Michel Hanssens, Jonathan Hanvelt, Heather & Rick Harbo, Eric Hartley, Sheila Hawkins & Keith Symon, Jennifer & Jon Healey, Manfred Hensel, Karyn & William Henwood, Richard Hill, Mike Hoebel, Ronald Holcroft, Egon Holzwarth, Hornby Island Residents & Ratepayers' Association, Gordon Horner, Janis Horrell, Barbara Hourston, Catherine & John Howard, Tammy Hudgeon, K. Hudson, Human Resources & Skills Development Canada, Janet Hunter, A. T. David Hutchings, Joan & Terrance James, Don Johnson, Peter Carter & Julie Johnston, Lawrence & Sheila Jones, Kari Jones, Marjorie Kamp, Kel Kelly, A. Jessie Kerr-Halls, Marilynn King, F. Matthew Kirchner & Lisa Osoba, Judith Kirchner, Alison Knowles, Angelika Koch, Lynn Krupa, Shaena Lambert & Bob Penner, James & Sally Lawrence, Tim Leadem, Robin & Shirley LeBrasseur, Kim LeDuc, David Leggatt, Karl Losken, Diana Lyon, Laurie MacBride & Alan Wilson, Alexander & Marlene Mackenzie, Kat MacVeagh, Alexandra & John Mancini, Eva & Jim Manly, Janos & Noni Mate, Allan Mather, Sheila McConnell, Jacqueline McGuire, Patricia McMahon, Thomas McPherson, Robert McWilliam, Dana Mellor, Joan Merrifield & Cathy Welch, Bob Brett & Jane Millen, Julia Mitchell, Frank & Wendy Mitchell, Faye Mogensen, Gerry Molnar, Elaine Moore & Mike Philcox, Michael Moore, David Macdonald, Ian MacDonald & Candice Morgan, Jeffery Moses, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Anne Murray, Therese Neufeld, New Data Enterprises Ltd., New Society Publishers, Carol Newell, Georgia Newsome, Patricia Nordin, Judith Cullington & Glen Okrainetz, Pacific Coast Congress Barbara Schwantes Memorial Fund, Jay & Sheila Page, John Pass, Patagonia, Patrick Environmental Inc., Howard Pattinson, Kathleen Pearson, George Penfold, Ronald Peterson & Penny Tilby, Fay Pettapiece, Lori Pickering, Celia Pidduck, David Pinel, Evelyn Pinkerton, Rhian Piprell, Rosemary Plummer, Renee Poisson, Malcolm Pratt, Allison & James Prentice, Jennie & Karl Preuss, David Prud'Homme, Mae Moore & Lester Quitzau, Harold Macy & Judy Racher, Nina Raginsky, James & Doreen Rainer, Gayle Ramsden, Dr. Hugh Rand, Margaret Ransford, Jennifer Reimer, John & Kim Rich, Mike Richards & Elizabeth Hurst, Ron Richings, Marja Riihjarvi, Daniel Rogers, Robin Roots, Eleanor Boyle & Harley Rothstein, Anita Roy, Harriet Rueggeberg, Mary Russell, James & Judith Saks, Paul & Susan Scanlon, Leonard Schein, Fred & Kathleen Schloessinger, Kathryn & Philip Schneider, John Schreiber & Marne St. Claire, Scotiabank, Scotia Tower, David Scott & Carol Sutherland-Scott, The Estate of Jacqueline Sears, Frank & June Shoemaker, Jacob Siekman, Helga & Petur Sigmundson, Ruth Simons, Courtney Simpson, Deborah Simpson, Simerdeep Singh, Genevieve Singleton, Beth Skala, Robin Puga & Melinda Skeels, Small Change Fund, Robin Smith, Joe Soluri, The Hurvitz/McMurtrie/Sonstebo Family, Sooke Harbour House, Robert Southcott, Karen Stackaruk, Elva Starr, Michael & Ron Steele, Joan Stelling, Judith Stevenson, Howard Stiff, Susan Stout, Colin Struthers, SunCruiser, Terence Swean, Tom Baker & Heidi Swierenga, Don Ewing & Barbara Swift, Elizabeth Swift, Eric Strandberg & Hally Swift, Richard Switzer, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation - Langley/Surrey/White Rock Chapter, Liisa Tella, Terra Breads, The Flag Shop, Darrell Thomas, Gordon Thompson, Alan & Linda Thomson, Alan Thornett, Tides Canada Foundation, Gordon Towne, Bob Turner, United Way of Lower Mainland, United Way of Victoria, Joyce Van Veenendaal, Vancouver Foundation, Christine Vanderree, Marielou Verge, Nicola Von Westarp, Dr. Peter Walford, Mark Waslen, Suzanne Waverley, Donald Webster, Bob & Judy Weeden, Ling & Rick Weston, Michael Whatley, Annabelle White, Robert Wild, Peter & Anita Wilhelmson, John Webber & Christianne Wilhelmson, Rosemary Williams, George & Monika Winn, Manfred Winter, David Wiseman, Rita Wong, Meredith & Ron Woodward, Eileen Wittewaall, Yellow Point Lodge, Lisa Lasagna & Rob Zacharias.

Georgia Strait Alliance is also grateful for **GIFTS MADE IN MEMORY** of Lynn Coleman and Barbara Cowling, and for **GIFTS MADE IN HONOUR** of Campbell House, Ken D. and Holly Swift.

Thanks to all who provided financial and volunteer support from September 27, 2012 to February 15, 2013, including the many others not listed above due to space limitations, and those who have indicated they wish to remain anonymous.

Do you share our view of the Strait?

One of the best ways you can help protect Georgia Strait is to become a MONTHLY DONOR.

Monthly donations provide the reliability GSA needs to plan, make strategic decisions and leverage matching funds. A donation of \$5, \$10 or \$20 a month—deducted automatically from your chequing account or credit card—makes a world of difference to our work. And it earns you a valuable tax receipt.

Harlequin pair takes flight

**To become a MONTHLY DONOR, call or email us:
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