



Georgia Strait Alliance  
Caring for Our Coastal Waters

September 2015

# ANNUAL REPORT

www.GeorgiaStrait.org



Photo: Evan Leeson - flickr

## Recognizing 25 years of successful conservation

My husband and I spend many months of the year in our Vancouver garden where we take advantage of every square foot we can, expanding our crop space a little bit every year. When you garden, you're in a continual state of balance between observation and action. You plan your garden based on past learning, and then you watch as those plans come to fruition, adjusting to the unexpected along the way. Your goal is to harvest a diverse and delicious crop – having learned from the experience while making an incredible contribution to your family's health and wellbeing.

The ebbs and flows of an environmental charity like ours are no different than life in the garden and, after a period of change and strengthening, this past year has seen our efforts bear fruit – all signs of a healthy and effective organization that is celebrating

25 years of making a significant difference to these waters we call home.

You'll read in these pages the many successes we've had and how our voice – and your message – is reverberating further and having an impact. By telling these stories and sharing our vision for this region, we are inspiring people of all ages to speak for the Strait and be part of the solution to what threatens it. Our unique regional focus remains as important and necessary as it was when a group of concerned citizens started "Save Georgia Strait Alliance" in 1990.



Photo: Tim Matheson

In each of these examples, you'll see that we did not achieve these accomplishments on our own. Collaboration is at the heart of how Georgia Strait Alliance has led these diverse initiatives to protect these waters, because our belief is that for every threat, there is a solution. We believe that change comes from not simply opposing things but by being for something. In our case, that something is our vision of a Strait of Georgia where we have clean water and air, healthy wild salmon runs, rich marine life and natural areas, and a viable and protected shoreline, with sustainable communities that have healthy economies.

After 25 years, awareness about the importance of this body of water and the role it plays in our way of life has never been higher. For me, this recognition is truly gratifying. Having been involved with GSA for 13 years, I've seen programs start, evolve and change. At GSA, we've learned from each initiative, but together – with you and alongside our communities – we have grown into a strong, trusted, experienced and successful conservation organization. Today, we have a new generation of people speaking for the Strait – and we at GSA will too, thanks to your generosity and support.

Thank you for the last 25 years, and we look forward to sharing more with you in the years to come!

~ Christianne Wilhelmson

### OVER THE PAST YEAR, WE HAVE:

- **Registered** a 23 per cent increase in the number of marinas participating in our [Clean Marine BC program](#), which was recognized with the President's Award from the Environmental Management Association of BC.
- **Launched** our first annual [Water's Edge Day](#) in Vancouver, with upwards of 1,000 attendees.
- **Witnessed** a growing understanding of the risks and impacts of [oil spills](#), coupled with recognition that our region's current [capacity to respond is limited](#). This is only strengthening our resolve to oppose the proposed dramatic increase in bitumen tanker traffic.
- **Worked** with scientists, managers and a wide range of professionals on solutions to contaminants in the marine environment that impact [at risk marine mammals](#).
- **Created** a network to help build a viable and [healthy shoreline](#) for Vancouver - 150 representative stakeholder organizations engaged.

25  
YEARS



Photos: Michael Wheatley (left), Chris Brownlee (right)



## TANKERS & SPILLS

This year, we have been squarely focused on protecting the Strait of Georgia from oil spills by ramping up advocacy for stronger prevention and response, and campaigning to stop the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline expansion and other new fossil fuel projects that would increase the risk of a spill. The high profile fuel spill in English Bay validated what GSA has been saying for years: we are not prepared to cope with even a relatively small spill of bunker fuel, let alone a catastrophic spill of diluted bitumen. On the positive side, the spill further invigorated public concern and created opportunities for us to continue effectively protecting vulnerable coastal communities from oil spills.

### OVER THE PAST YEAR, WE HAVE:

- **Contributed** as [intervenors](#) in the National Energy Board's Kinder Morgan review, working with an expert research team to investigate the capacity that Georgia Strait municipalities have to prepare for and respond to oil spills. We interviewed emergency managers around the Strait, examined spill response plans, and learned lessons from US local leaders who have spill experience. We also used our intervenor status to keep the GSA community informed about key developments in the review, and to speak out about the serious flaws in the NEB process.
- **Surveyed** 125 candidates on Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast during the 2014 municipal election for [their views](#) on Kinder Morgan and oil spill response, and shared their positions with local voters. We secured commitments from 10 newly-elected councillors to call

for strengthened local spill response planning. We also collaborated with the City of Vancouver to put forward a resolution that calls for additional resources to assist local governments in strengthening their oil spill preparedness, and secure meaningful involvement in planning initiatives. The City Council passed the motion unanimously and sent it forward to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association for endorsement.

- **Continued** our [Salish Sea Spill Map](#) partnership with Raincoast Conservation Foundation, using drift cards to map the path of a potential oil spill in the Salish Sea to highlight the risks of an oil spill along the Kinder Morgan tanker route. Last fall, we launched a new round of drift cards at the pipeline crossing point in the lower Fraser River. We asked people to snap a 'selfie' to report where they had found a drift card. These photos

are a stark reminder of the places, environments and activities that are at stake.

- **Pledged** to Save the Salish Sea by launching our [cross-border campaign](#) to stop new fossil fuel exports through our shared coastal waters. With the Wilderness Committee and allies south of the border, last summer we organized an epic and inspirational rally at the Peace Arch. Over 600 Americans and Canadians committed to work together to stop the Salish Sea from becoming one of the world's largest exporters of fossil fuels and, ultimately, from being transformed into a global gateway for climate change. We now have 2,500 people signed on to an action pledge, allowing the cross-border community to stay connected, share stories and ideas, and reach out to decision makers at critical moments.



Photo: Teddy Courtaux

# CLEAN MARINE BC



This year, our Clean Marine BC (CMBC) green boating and [marina eco-certification program](#) continued its incredible growth. We focused on having a strong green boating presence at boat shows and community events, and saw sound boating practices being adopted by thousands of boaters in the region. A growing number of marinas, yacht clubs, boatyards and harbour authorities embraced the program's environmental best practices, contributing to the protection of our cruising waters for future generations.

## OVER THE PAST YEAR, WE HAVE:

- **Expanded** the number of members in our voluntary eco-certification program to 26 (10 certified and 16 enrolled for certification), representing 32 marinas, government wharfs, boatyards, and yacht clubs. Okeover Harbour Authority is the latest to be flying the CMBC flag, having passed their site verification audit in March 2015. Crescent Beach Marina, Stones Boatyard, and the West Vancouver Yacht Club have

all adopted the CMBC policy and are aiming to move from enrollment to certification.

- **Continued** our membership in the Pacific Oil Spill Prevention Education Team (POSPET), a working group of the Pacific States - British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force. POSPET has a mandate to certify environmentally sound marinas and clean harbour authorities, and to collaborate on industry best practices and small fuel spill prevention.
- **Spread** the word on environmental best practices to marinas and boatyards through distribution of our practical and informative Marina Best Practices Handbook, which provides support and advice to certified members and other boating facilities.
- **Promoted** the green boating ethic to thousands of boaters, including those at the Vancouver International Boat Show where we had a booth. We also engaged in conversations on social media, we were called on for media interviews, and published articles in Pacific Yachting and SunCruiser West Coast Boating Guide.



Photo: Ryan Butler

## WATERFRONT INITIATIVE

It was a big year for the Waterfront Initiative. We celebrated our iconic waterfront, defined key goals for the program and initiated [collaborative discussions](#) on how we can shape the future of Vancouver's waterfront together.

### OVER THE PAST YEAR, WE HAVE:

- **Hosted** our second forum that brought together representatives from varying levels of government, First Nations, the industrial and commercial sectors, as well as environmental groups and civil society to discuss how social, ecological and economic interests can be integrated into all planning processes along the City of Vancouver's waterfront.
- **Facilitated** a roundtable discussion among key waterfront stakeholders regarding opportunities to collaborate within the regulatory and policy frameworks that relate to the waterfront.
- **Held** the first annual [Water's Edge Day](#), in partnership with the Vancouver Maritime Museum, to celebrate Vancouver's shoreline. Over 1,000 citizens gathered along the waterfront to take part in a variety of fun, free, family-friendly activities on and by the water such as First Nations canoe tours, kayaking, harbour tours, bird walks, children's activities and art workshops.
- **Identified** key goals for the Waterfront Initiative, which strive to establish a waterfront that is:
  - » **thriving** and sustainable to support current and future needs for recreation, access to nature, healthy ecosystems and a strong economy that benefits all citizens;
  - » **diverse** to protect and enhance the cultural, economic and ecological diversity of our shoreline;
  - » **connected** to link our community, economy and ecosystems, ensuring the distinct elements of our shoreline harmonize with one another;
  - » **resilient, well-designed and well-managed** so that it is able to absorb and respond to sudden and long-term changes.



Photos: Gavin Kennedy



# SPECIES PROTECTION

Our success at gaining protection for our most vulnerable species can be seen across our programs, as we focus our efforts on ensuring that the devastating impacts of pollution such as oil spills – large and small – are mitigated and that increased threats from catastrophic spills are entirely avoided.

This past year, we also focused on partnerships, working with scientists and communities to better understand the growing pollution risks to orcas and other species at risk, and to identify real solutions to contaminants that threaten marine mammals. We also focused on building partnerships across sectors to build capacity for expansion of this program in the coming years.

## OVER THE PAST YEAR, WE HAVE:

- **Submitted** comments to the federal government on a draft action plan for resident orcas.
- **Celebrated** four new southern resident baby orcas and a rise in the number of this population to 81.
- **Partnered** with [InFORM](#), a University of Victoria-led monitoring network involving academics, government, non-profit organizations and citizen scientists, to promote community involvement in gathering data to understand and assess the environmental and health impacts – if any – of the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster on our local waters.
- **Collaborated** with the Vancouver Aquarium’s [Ocean Pollution Research Program](#) to bring together a cross-section of scientists, academics, non-profits and managers to identify solutions to ocean contaminants that impact our at risk marine mammals.



# OCEAN LITERACY

Connecting with the public in communities around the region remains a key part of the work we do. With the help of volunteers and our summer students, we were able to attend community events hosted by our partners as well as host a growing number of GSA events.

We are so proud to broaden the ways and the platforms from which we tell stories and discuss key issues with the three million people who live in this region. Whether online or in person, our reach and impact is expanding.

## OVER THE PAST YEAR, WE HAVE:

- **Launched** a brand new [website](#) that has created a more effective and accessible channel to share our stories.
- **Hosted** world-renowned orca researcher [Erich Hoyt](#) at a free public event in Vancouver.
- **Presented** the [Wild and Scenic Film Festival](#) in Victoria, showcasing the adventures of ocean lovers as well as the growing threats to the oceans that we love.
- **Partnered** with the [Vancouver Festival of Ocean Films](#) for the third year, bringing hundreds of film and ocean lovers together to celebrate our oceans and to reflect on the global issues that our waters currently face.
- **Hosted** a [Water’s Edge Day](#) lecture with local historian John Atkin in Vancouver as part of our Waterfront Initiative.
- **Presented** at events throughout the region, including the [Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference](#) in Seattle and at gatherings hosted by groups such as Nature Vancouver and others.

# YOU make it possible!



Photos: Tamara McGill (top) and Lesli Boldt (bottom)

As an independent, charitable society, GSA depends on your support to continue working to protect and restore our coastal waters. Each year, funding for our programs comes from a variety of sources including grants and donations. We are honoured to have your support. Thank you! The list below includes grants, partnership contributions, donations and gifts in-kind in our 2014 - 2015 fiscal year. Our sincere apologies if there are any errors or omissions (please let us know).

## **SUSTAINERS (\$25,000 or more)**

Province of British Columbia, Global Greengrants Fund, MEC, New Venture Fund, The Bullitt Foundation, Vancouver Foundation.

## **GUARDIANS (\$10,000 - \$24,999)**

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Photos: Tamara McGill (top), Teddy Courtaux (bottom)





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Photos: Michael Wheatley (top),  
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Photo: GSA

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***Thank you to each of our more than 1200 members!***

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**Ginnie Mathers**, Vancouver  
**Susan Miller**, Victoria (as of February, 2015)  
**Kate Storey**, Vancouver

\* will enter second year of term in September 2015 (in office until Fall 2016)

## ADVISORY COUNCIL

**John Cashore**, Coquitlam  
**Dr. Larry Dill**, Victoria  
**Dr. Robert Elnor**, Delta  
**Chief Robert Joseph**, North Vancouver / Hopetown  
**Dr. Donald McQueen**, Nanaimo  
**Suzanne Siemens**, North Vancouver  
**Douglas White III, Kwilasultan**, Snuneymuxw / Nanaimo

## GSA STAFF April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015

**Christianne Wilhelmson**—Executive Director  
**Cathy Boler**—Administrative Director  
**Michelle Young**—Financial Coordinator / Clean Marine BC Program Coordinator  
**Rebecca Adams**—Graphics and Web Development  
**Cheryl Onciul**—Development Manager: Grants & Major Gifts  
**Alexandra Woodsworth**—Energy and Shipping Campaigner  
**Michelle Gaudry**—Waterfront Initiative Lead (as of February 2015)  
**Ryan Butler, Natalie Drope** (Summer Students 2014)

## CONTRACTORS

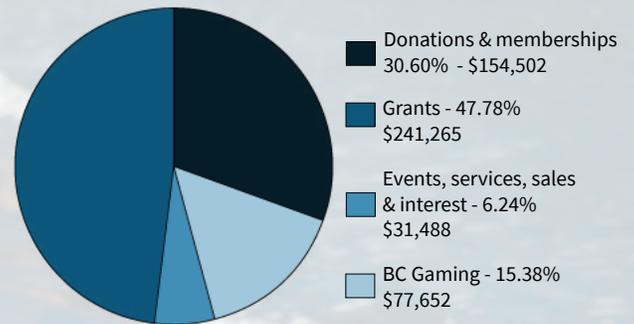
**Karen Gordon**—Research and writing  
**Madeline Hatch**—Communications  
**Ted Leather**—Webmaster / Technical Support  
**Laurie MacBride & Alan Wilson**—Publications  
**Sebastian Merz**—Waterfront Initiative Lead (until February 2015)  
**Pat Nordin**—Office cleaning services

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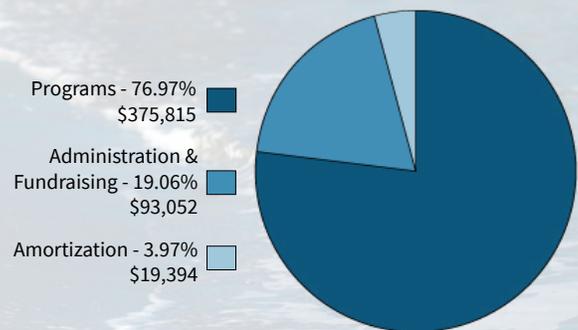
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## 2015 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Year ended March 31, 2015



**Revenue total: \$504,907**



**Expense total: \$488,261**

### Financial Position as of March 31, 2015

Current Assets	\$846,788
<i>(includes bequeathed land held for resale of \$552,350)</i>	
Long-term Investment	47,426
Capital Assets	21,651
Payables & Accruals	(308,565)
<i>(includes half of land held for resale due to another charity upon sale)</i>	
Deferred Contributions	(278,753)
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$328,547</b>

**In-Kind Contributions:** In addition to the revenue above, GSA received an estimated value of \$25,607 in donated goods and services and \$38,500 in volunteer time during the year ended March 31, 2015 for a total of \$64,107.

The above report is a summary only and not intended to reflect the complete financial status of the Georgia Strait Alliance. Members who wish to receive the full financial statements should contact our Nanaimo office at 250-753-3459.