



Georgia Strait Alliance—caring for our coastal waters since 1990

the only citizens' group focused on protecting the marine environment in and around the whole Strait of Georgia, Canada's most at-risk natural environment

Major Oil Spill

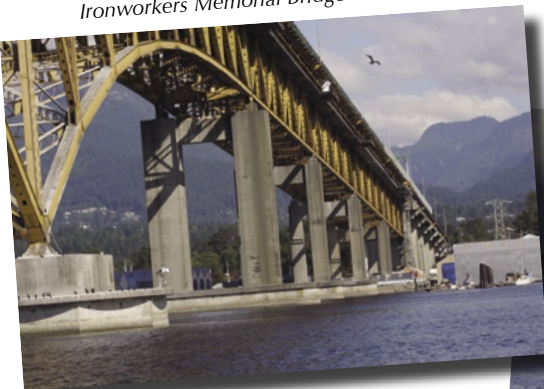
by *Christianne Wilhelmson*

Over the summer, news coverage of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill and the federal review of Enbridge's Northern Gateway project brought attention to the issue of major oil spills. British Columbians are now expressing strong opposition to the heavy tanker traffic that the Enbridge proposal would bring to BC's north coast—and rightly so.

But what many in our region have overlooked is that the risk of a catastrophic spill is not just a problem on BC's north coast or "elsewhere" (such as the Gulf of Mexico), and it's not just a concern for the future. The risk of a disaster, right here in the Strait of Georgia, *right now*, is very real and serious—and that risk is rising quickly. So far we've been fortunate—no large spill has happened here yet. But our luck may be running out.

Oil is currently transported from the Alberta Tar Sands, via Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline, to the Westridge Terminal in north Burnaby. Recently there has been a dramatic increase in the volume of oil and number of tankers carrying it out from Westridge—through the narrow span of the CN Rail Bridge, through the navigationally-tricky waters of First and Second Narrows, and out through the busy waters of English Bay, the southern Gulf Islands and Haro and Juan de Fuca Straits.

Ironworkers Memorial Bridge



Photos by Laurie MacBride

Here? Now?



Aframax-class tankers are 240 metres (787 feet) long—twice as long as the width of the channel under the Second Narrows bridges (below). Several times every week, these tankers squeeze between the narrow spans—with less than two metres of depth under their keels.

Photo by Peter Baker

What kind of increases are we talking about?

- **The volume of fossil fuels exported from Westridge has risen by almost 10 times in just five years: from about 400,000 metric tons in 2004 to nearly 4 million metric tons in 2009.**
- **The number of tankers carrying this oil has grown from 48 in 2007, to 65 in 2009 (a 35% increase).**

And the plans for growth continue. Already, the capacity at Westridge is 300,000 barrels per day—60% of what Enbridge's northern pipeline would carry for shipping out from Kitimat.

But Kinder Morgan's goal is to more than double this, to 650,000 barrels per day—which will make it 30% higher capacity than the proposed Kitimat

terminal. The company aims to do this through a combination of increased loading capacity and tanker frequency, and potentially, expansion of berths and the pipeline itself.

It's worth noting that as an existing facility, Kinder Morgan can double the capacity of the Westridge terminal with no requirement for an environmental assessment.

With the impacts of a major oil spill so evident in the Gulf of Mexico, here in the Salish Sea some basic questions need answers:

- *Is it safe to continue increasing the numbers of tankers and the amount of oil each one carries?*
- *Are we prepared for a major spill when one of these tankers has an accident?*
- *What will be the impacts on our environment, economy and communities?*

The simple reality, according to marine spill expert Stafford Reid and other knowledgeable authorities on this issue, is that we are *nowhere near ready* for a catastrophic oil spill. (See the comprehensive report by EnviroEmerg Consulting Services written in 2008 for Living Oceans Society, at www.GeorgiaStrait.org/marinevesselsreport.)

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CN Rail Bridge





Tanker traffic on the BC coast was the focus of "Oil and Water", an event held in Victoria in June. Shown from L to R: MP Denise Savoie (co-host), Will Horter of the Dogwood Initiative, who spoke about tankers on the north coast; GSA's **Christianne Wilhelmson**, who focused on tankers in our region; and MLA Rob Fleming (co-host).

Photo by Danielle Dalzell

City Responds to Rising Threat

Vancouver residents and elected officials were caught by surprise this summer when a series of media articles revealed the fact that oil tanker traffic has been rapidly increasing in local waters, with no public consultation or input. As a result, Vancouver City Council called a special meeting in June, inviting key individuals to speak to the issue. Presentations were made over several hours by the heads of the Chamber of Shipping, Port Metro Vancouver, and Burrard Clean (the company charged with cleaning up spills on our coast). Also present were a larger group of invited resource people, helping to address the many pointed questions that arose, including two environmental groups, West Coast Environmental Law and Georgia Strait Alliance.

At their next regular meeting, Council passed an extensive resolution asking that the Metro Vancouver Port Cities Committee further investigate the issue of oil tanker traffic in the region, with particular emphasis on risks, public input opportunities, spill preparedness, and liability to taxpayers for environmental and economic impacts of a spill. Meetings are to be held this fall to discuss the resolution. To date, no word has come from Transport Canada or Port Metro Vancouver on revisiting their decision to increase tanker traffic.

—CW

Oil Spill

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It's our communities that will pay the social, economic and environmental costs when (*not* "if") the big spill happens. This is why Georgia Strait Alliance is asking Port Metro Vancouver and Transport Canada to place a moratorium on any further increases in tanker traffic or oil exports through Burrard Inlet, until they have completed

a comprehensive assessment—with public consultation—of the increased risks and our ability to respond to a major spill. Watch for more on this issue in the months to come.

You can find more information at www.GeorgiaStrait.org/tankers, along with links to send your email comments to relevant elected officials.

That was then, this is now...

To put the danger of a major oil spill in our region into perspective, consider this. The largest spill that most readers will remember in our region was in 1988, when a tug rammed the tanker barge *Nestucca*, which it was towing. The accident occurred off Gray's Harbour in Washington state and winds carried the oil across Juan de Fuca Strait, landing on beaches on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The *Nestucca* spill killed an estimated 56,000 seabirds, ruined herring spawning areas and destroyed shellfish and crab fisheries. All the damage came from just 5,500 barrels of oil. Today, each tanker coming out through Burrard Inlet carries, on average, 83 times this amount—which is 700 times the rated clean-up capacity currently available in Burrard Inlet.



One of over 50,000 seabirds killed in the Nestucca spill.

Photo by Paul Fletcher

***Strait Thoughts:* many reasons for hope**

by Christianne Wilhelmson,
Executive Director



There is a question I'm asked more and more frequently when I'm talking about issues in the Strait, such as the risk of oil spills: "Do you have hope?"

The first time I was asked that question I answered, "Of course!" The answer was instinctive, because I couldn't imagine not having hope about the work that Georgia Strait Alliance does!

But as I thought about it further, I began to understand where that question comes from. When you look at the diversity and magnitude of the threats to the environment of this region—not to mention the global environment—it can feel hopeless and overwhelming.

I admit, I got a taste of this recently when on summer vacation near God's Pocket Marine Park north of Port Hardy, my husband and I landed our kayaks on a beach that seemed as close to paradise as you could imagine—only to find, on closer examination a massive amount of garbage. (Read about our impromptu beach clean-up at www.GeorgiaStrait.org/ourcleanup.)

But returning to work in late August, I found myself immersed in GSA's programs, campaigns and initiatives, and engaged with the people doing that work—and the hope quickly returned. As you read through this newsletter, or check out GSA's online blogs, you'll see why.

You can't help but feel hopeful as you read about Victoria's approved plan for sewage treatment, knowing that our hard work brought about this dramatic change (see p. 8). Or meeting new staff, some who are working to build our new Community Mapping Program that will increase people's understanding of our interconnectedness within this region (see p. 10). Or watching the growth of *Clean Marine BC*—the only program of its kind in British Columbia—as it receives increasing support from the recreational boating community and marine industry (see p. 5). And surely even the most jaded among us will be re-inspired by Michelle Young's story about her recent holiday and the revelation that came from it (www.GeorgiaStrait.org/betterperson).

And I've certainly felt hopeful this fall, watching the excitement of so many people coming together at events around the region, celebrating GSA's 20 years of hard work and success. We look forward to reporting on these events in the winter edition of *Strait Talk*.

But more than anything, we look to the Strait of Georgia itself to tell us there is hope—and that there is so much for GSA to keep on fighting for. Though our resident killer whales are still struggling, the number of transient killer whales has

increased 10-fold since the 1970s. A recent *Georgia Strait* magazine article highlighted the fact that grey whales, humpbacks and Pacific white-sided dolphins are starting to make their presence known in the Strait—with some even staying for awhile, returning to this region that they have not called home for quite some time.

Exactly why these changes have occurred is unclear, and sadly, a lack of scientific program and research funding in the Strait makes understanding the causes that much more difficult. Yet still, any sign of recovery can provide some of the impetus we all need to continue to fight for better protection of our inland sea.

As we head into this season of celebration, please take a moment to remember all that we have to be hopeful for in this region—including our organization that began 20 years ago. GSA was born from the hope that together, we can protect and restore the health of this beautiful sea that is our home. With your continued support, we'll keep faith with that hope—working hard to ensure that threats to the Strait are addressed for many more decades to come.

Cohen Inquiry: many questions to answer

In the summer of 2009, British Columbians were shocked and dismayed when the number of sockeye returning to the Fraser River fell far below even the worst predictions. This year, by contrast, we've been surprised and thrilled to see the sockeye return in numbers not seen in recent memory.

What does all this mean? It means we have a lot of unanswered questions.

In response to the 2009 low returns of sockeye, the federal government established a judicial inquiry, headed by the Hon. Bruce Cohen. After many months of gathering information and engaging with concerned citizens and groups, the Cohen Commission of Inquiry into the Decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River began hearings on October 25.

Though some are saying this year's high returns mean that there is no need for the Inquiry, nothing could be further from the truth. British Columbia's salmon are under incredible stress from a myriad of sources, and we must take advantage of this opportunity to examine all these variables in an unbiased manner.

This is why GSA applied for, and was granted, standing at the Inquiry. Since last spring, we've been working closely, as part of the Conservation Coalition, with other key groups with standing in the Inquiry (Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform, David Suzuki Foundation, Fraser Riverkeepers, Watershed Watch, Raincoast Conservation Foundation and Otto Langer). Together, our coalition has been able to access funding for

legal council (Ecojustice Canada). This is important, as it allows us to ensure the Inquiry is considering all evidence that we believe is important, including documents and witnesses. We will also have the opportunity to ask questions of witnesses and ensure that the Inquiry is getting the breadth of information it needs to fully examine this issue.

The process will be a long one, but our hope is that the Inquiry will look at all angles of the issue—from science to management—throughout the whole of the relevant region, including Georgia Strait. If so, the outcome could be a template for the kind of change that is so desperately needed. Watch our website for updates as the Inquiry unfolds.

—CW

Helping During Down Times

Over the past year, we've included information in our newsletter about how some people have used Planned Giving to help GSA, either through a bequest in their will or a major donation today, while they are still alive. Others have expressed interest in helping in a similar way, but they have indicated to us that they feel a bit daunted by the specifics of Planned Giving because they don't know enough about it, including how it can benefit the giver as well as GSA. So, beginning in this issue of Strait Talk, we'll be focusing on some of the details of Planned Giving. We hope you'll find this useful as you look for ways to support GSA in the future.

When we think of giving to a charitable organization, the first thing that usually comes to mind is a cash donation—always needed and appreciated by GSA and other charities. We all understand how this works: you mail a cheque or give online using a credit card, and in return you receive a charitable receipt, which you can use to lessen the amount of income tax you must pay.

The tax benefit of a cash donation can be useful, but it is limited to a modest percentage of your donation (the exact percentage depends on the total amount of charitable donations you have given in a tax year).

There is another way to help a charity today, while increasing your tax benefits: through the donation of securities.

Public securities can be donated to any registered charity (including GSA), 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 receiving it, since they will generally sell the securities immediately 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 to be gained 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).
- You are allowed to buy back the security only after 30 days, 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 in this way, please contact our Nanaimo office at 250-753-3459 (gsa@georgiastrait.org). We thank ScotiaMacleod for this information.

Celebrating Two Decades

This fall, Georgia Strait Alliance has been holding 20th Anniversary Celebrations throughout the region. We began by kicking up our heels in Courtenay, celebrating 20 years of activism jointly with the *Watershed Sentinel* and the World Community Development Education



Society—two groups we've collaborated with over the years, who are also celebrating two decades of work this year.

Next, we crossed the water for an evening of fun and memories in Vancouver, where we raised a glass, ate some great local appetizers and participated in a fun

silent and live auction to support GSA's important work.

We are concluding our 20th anniversary festivities in Victoria on November 6, with an evening celebration at UVIC's Faculty Club.

Watch for a report and more photos from these events in our next newsletter.



Watershed Sentinel's Dolores Broten, GSA's Christianne Wilhelmson, and World Community's Wayne Bradley cut a shared 20th anniversary cake.

Photos by
Michelle Young

20
years!
1990 - 2010

Ruby Berry (R) with Bethany Scott of World Community.



Clean Marine Wave Grows

by Mike Richards

Boaters and marinas around the region are increasingly going green. Four more boating facilities have recently signed on to our *Clean Marine BC*—Marina Eco-Rating program:

- **Royal Vancouver Yacht Club** (Jericho Beach marina)
- **Harbour Authority of Pender Harbour** (which manages three marinas in Pender Harbour, on the Sunshine Coast)
- **Portside Marina** (Brentwood Bay)
- **Pages Marina** in Silva Bay (Gabriola Island)

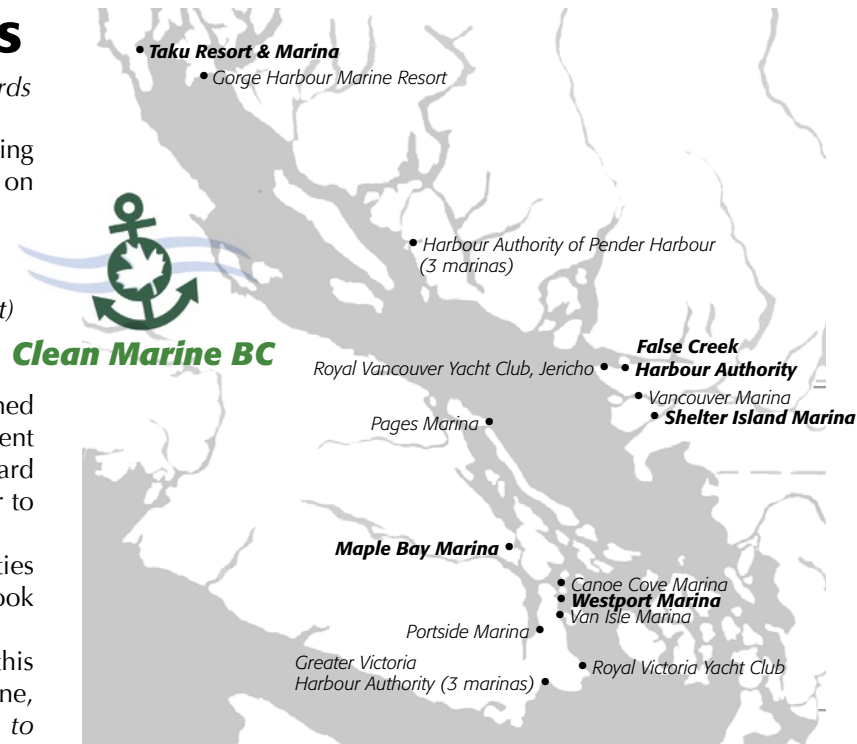
Like the eleven other marinas/clubs that had already joined the program, the new participants have made a commitment to the *Clean Marine BC* Policy and will be working toward undertaking an independent environmental audit in order to earn their *Clean Marine BC* certification.

We've talked with the managers of several more facilities who have indicated interest in joining the program, and look forward to welcoming them aboard soon.

Our boater-focused educational efforts received a boost this summer from the August issue of *Pacific Yachting* magazine, which carried GSA's updated and ever-popular *Guide to Green Boating* as an insert for its 12,000 BC subscribers. Many thanks to *Pacific Yachting* and the other generous contributors who made the printing and distribution of this many *Guides* possible, including Seaspans, Robert Conconi, Haig Farris, Willow Grove Foundation, False Creek Harbour Authority, Maple Bay Marina and Taku Resort & Marina.

As part of GSA's Green Boating work, we attended numerous outdoor events over the summer, including some focused on the boating community such as the Nanaimo Floating Boat & Marine Trade Show, Orca Day on Pender Island, and the Vancouver Wooden Boat Festival on Granville Island.

At each event, worry over the risk of oil spills in our waters dominated the conversations—undoubtedly brought on by the disastrous Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico. People told us their concerns not just about offshore drilling, but about all types of spills, including the small spills that GSA focuses on as part of our work with the Pacific Oil Spill



Bolded sites have been certified by Clean Marine BC.

The others are currently working towards certification.

Prevention Education Team. (POSPET is a forum for sharing information and strategies on oil spill prevention and boater best management practices. Its members, in addition to GSA, include representatives from state and federal agencies, industry associations, and nonprofit groups from BC and all of the west-coast US states.)

In terms of larger spills, GSA is taking part in the Pacific States/BC Oil Spill Task Force's ongoing review process, looking at our region's preparedness for a transboundary oil spill. Over the summer, however, work on this project was delayed as many of the other participants were involved in the operations going on in the Gulf of Mexico—a timely reminder of the urgency of this issue.

Gabriolans Clean Up

In late September, as part of the **Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup**, Georgia Strait Alliance joined forces with the Gabriola Power and Sail Squadron and Friends of Silva Bay, to carry out a shoreline cleanup of Silva Bay on Gabriola Island. The hardy souls who turned out for the afternoon focused their efforts on a beach that may never before have had a cleanup. Among the expected clutter of old winches, huge chunks of styrofoam, mounds of broken glass and old ropes, we also found pieces of over 40 different shoes! Over 330 kg of garbage were removed, and while there is more junk still on the beach, the cleanup was an excellent start. Thanks to all who took part. —MR

Photo by Lindsay Richards



Celebrating Abundance—Working for Recovery

by Ruby Berry

This year a miraculous combination of conditions led to the best return of sockeye salmon to the Fraser River in a century. Michelle Young and I recently travelled up the Fraser to talk with people about the impacts of net cage salmon farms on sockeye, and we were lucky enough to visit the Adams River, a key tributary of the Fraser, during the Salute to the Sockeye Celebration.

The river seemed thick with brilliant crimson fish, and we were astounded and grateful to see such abundance. People from all over the world lined the riverbanks, here to witness this amazing phenomenon. They were awed and enthralled by the persistence of the salmon against the river's strong flow, the sudden wild thrashing that signified spawning, and the ever increasing number of paling pink carcasses along the sides of the river.

These fish had swum through the waters of Georgia and Johnstone Straits twice in their lives, surviving all the many challenges those journeys presented. Luckily for us, both their trip to the sea as juveniles, and the journey back to the river as spawning adults, had taken place at very fortunate times—when specific conditions reduced the challenges. When these fish migrated out as juveniles, the level of sea lice around the salmon farms they had to pass appears to have been lower than in other years, and the ocean conditions were optimal. Their return journey was also well timed: a surprising amount of rain this year supplied enough water at the right temperature to allow the fish to survive in the rivers.



Returning salmon at the Adams River.

Photos by Ruby Berry

But despite this year's magnificent return, not all is not well with Fraser River sockeye. There are 40 different genetic subgroups of these fish. Each subgroup usually has an annual returning run, but the size of that run can vary substantially from year to year.

Each year certain subgroups are dominant, and this year, a significant portion of the return was made up of Adams River sockeye. By contrast, true "recovery" requires healthy returns across the dozens of different subgroups of Fraser River sockeye, and for multiple years in a row. Maintaining sockeye diversity in the Fraser River is therefore key, as it maximizes the ability to adapt to changing conditions over the long-term, and increases the chance of a healthy return every year.

I never expected my job as GSA's salmon aquaculture campaign coordinator to take me to the interior fruitland of the Okanagan Valley, far from my ocean-side home. But such is the nature of ecosystems, and particularly that of the Strait of Georgia. Although the Strait is considered Canada's most at-risk natural environment, there is a lot

more at stake than simply our immediate region. Watching the plight and journey of the magnificent Fraser salmon—and meeting with people in the Okanagan, who wait expectantly each year for the returning sockeye—I am reminded just how interconnected we really are.

It is the nature of a strait to be a passageway, so here in Georgia Strait we play host to many beings passing through these waters. Most of the salmon that pass our shores head up the Fraser, travelling hundreds of miles to the place where they die—and even after this, their bodies go on to provide essential nutrients to feed rivers, forests and eventually, ocean ecosystems.

We must do everything we can to ensure returns like this year's become annual events, as they were historically. Some of the necessary changes may feel out of our direct control. Here in Georgia Strait, there is one very important step we can—and must—take: to remove net cage fish farms from the pathway of wild salmon, so the wild fish never again need to face the challenge of farm-borne sea lice or disease during their amazing journeys from the river to the ocean and back again.

New Regime is Cause for Concern

GSA's aquaculture campaign work does not only involve following salmon along their spawning rivers. We spent much of the summer responding to opportunities for input on a variety of issues, and many GSA members helped, giving up moments of vacation and summer play to make sure that policy makers and regulators understand what's at stake and how to proceed.

We're facing a new regime in aquaculture management, as the federal government prepares to assume responsibility for what have been, up to now, provincial roles. As of December 18, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), which has long had clear policies of support for the growth of the aquaculture industry, will be in charge of managing salmon farming here on the west coast.

The changes are not looking good for wild salmon. The federal government's new (draft) Pacific Aquaculture Regulations are woefully inadequate; you can find GSA's submission in response to these at: www.GeorgiaStrait.org/newaquaculture regulations.

DFO has also been working behind closed doors with members of the salmon farming industry to develop standards for allowing net cage salmon farms in Canada to be certified as "organic". GSA has serious concerns with this proposal; you can find a summary of our submission at: www.GeorgiaStrait.org/organicstandards.

As DFO takes over its new roles, we must make sure they remember that they are also responsible for the health and welfare of that magnificent miracle we witnessed this fall. Not all the Fraser River salmon came back in such abundant numbers, but those that did showed us the amazing resilience and power that is possible. The wild salmon are not gone, and with our help and vigilance, they can and will return to abundance and strength. —RB



Children learn firsthand about cycles of life and death.

Industry Poses Challenge to Commission

GSA is hoping that the Cohen Commission of Inquiry into the Decline of Sockeye Salmon in the Fraser River Sockeye (see page 3) is able to offer solutions and concrete recommendations that lead to action. Judge Cohen has, effectively, the incredibly complex task of determining what influences an entire ecosystem—and he's up against some challenging odds.

For example, fish farmers have refused to release the comprehensive farm-by-farm disease and sea lice data requested by Judge Cohen (data which was also requested several years ago, under the Freedom of Information Act, by T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation). Yet they continue to deny that their net cage farms are having any impacts on Fraser River sockeye and other wild salmon.

In October GSA and other members of the Conservation Coalition appeared before Judge Cohen to ask him to expand his request and include data going back to 1988 from all farms in close proximity to Fraser sockeye migration routes. Fraser River sockeye have been steadily declining for almost two decades—since about the time that salmon farms expanded heavily across BC's south coast. Without the sea lice and disease data, the Cohen Inquiry cannot effectively fulfill its mandate to investigate and make independent findings of fact on the causes of decline to Fraser River sockeye salmon—and scientists and the public may never know what happened to these fish. Watch our website for updates as the inquiry unfolds. —RB

We want to know what you think...

What issues in the Strait do you care about? What are your impressions of GSA's programs and newsletter? We'd like to get to know you better and learn what you think about GSA's work. Please take a moment to answer our brief online survey. It will only take you five minutes, and in appreciation, we'll enter your name into a draw for a GSA t-shirt. To have your say, visit www.GeorgiaStrait.org/membersurvey. Thank you for your input!

At Long Last, Victory in Victoria!

by Christianne Wilhelmson

Over the course of this year, in celebrating GSA's 20 years of protecting the Strait, we've done a lot of walks down Memory Lane as we review our extensive archives. Looking through pictures, event materials, posters, letters, news releases and myriad other items has really brought home for me the breadth of GSA's work over the years.

I was particularly struck by two publications from 1990, released just before our first Marathon swim and paddle across the Strait: *Saving the Strait*, *Saving Ourselves* (40-page booklet) and *Save Georgia Strait*, a New Catalyst special report (16-page tabloid). What fascinated me was that among the goals these publications listed for our new organization, one important aim was clear: to bring sewage treatment to Victoria.

It was a goal that we have worked on, in one way or another, ever since. So I find it very satisfying that in our 20th anniversary year we are finally achieving that goal: Victoria now has a legally binding plan for sewage treatment.

It's been a long road leading to this achievement, including most recently, a grueling, sometimes contentious time since the BC Minister of the Environment ordered Victoria, four years ago, to plan for treatment. But finally, the Capital Regional District (CRD) submitted its treatment plan to the Province in June, and received approval from the Minister in late summer.

Unlike past "commitments" made on this issue, the CRD's approved Liquid Waste Management Plan is a legal



Photo by Peter Ronald

document that commits the region to having a sewage treatment system—with a minimum level of secondary treatment—up and running by 2016. Finally, our goal of stopping the pollution from Victoria's sewage will come to pass.

With provincial and community commitment to treatment, federal and provincial funding confirmed, and soon-to-be-finalized federal regulations that will mandate secondary treatment for communities across the country, it seems that we can finally check off "Victoria sewage" from GSA's to-do list—just 20 years after our work on this issue began!

Elsewhere in the Strait...

We hope that in the next edition of *Strait Talk* we'll be able to announce that **Metro Vancouver** also has a newly approved Liquid Waste Management Plan. As we go to press we are waiting for the Province to approve the Plan submitted by Metro Vancouver, which will mean that both the Lions Gate sewage plant on the North Shore and the Iona plant in Richmond (which treats Vancouver's sewage) will be upgraded to secondary treatment. The timelines in the proposed Plan are for Lions Gate to be upgraded before 2020, and Iona soon after that, no later than 2030.

The **Regional District of Nanaimo** is still in the final stages of developing its new plan, which will see two treatment plants (the Greater Nanaimo Pollution Control Centre and the Nanoose Bay Pollution Control Centre) upgraded to secondary treatment.

*Thanks to everyone who voted for our organization in the **RBC Blue Water Project** competition this summer, which had shortlisted Georgia Strait Alliance as one of 10 charitable organizations working on water protection. Each of the 10 groups was eligible for a portion of \$25,000, to be allocated according to the number of votes they received from the public over the three-month period of online voting. As a result of your support, GSA has been awarded \$5000, the maximum amount available to any one organization. Thanks to everyone who took part, and to the RBC Blue Water Project, for this great support.*

For up-to-date news and information
www.GeorgiaStrait.org

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Also available online at www.GeorgiaStrait.org as a PDF with live links.

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The next issue of *Strait Talk* will be our Winter edition.

We thank Western Printers for their continuing fine work in printing our newsletters.

The logo for GSA's new business partnership program, **Strait Profits**, features a sand dollar—for good reason. This interesting little marine critter serves as a reminder of two important things: the abundance of life that the Strait of Georgia supports, and GSA's practical, ongoing need for dollars to do the critical work of protecting this abundance.

With help from like-minded businesses, we can keep this region ecologically healthy and wealthy.

Businesses who sign on to **Strait Profits** contribute a percentage of their profits to Georgia Strait Alliance. The program is structured so that during good times these businesses can be generous, and when times are lean their contributions are scaled back. Participating businesses will be publicly recognized in a number of different ways.

If you, or a business you know may be interested in joining **Strait Profits**, please contact gsa@georgiastrait.org or call 250-753-3459. More information, including a detailed program guide, is available at www.GeorgiaStrait.org/straitprofits.

For Your Holiday List...

Have you visited GSA's online Gift Shop lately? We have t-shirts (short and long-sleeved), collared shirts, hats, hoodies, tote bags, messenger bags, mugs, water bottles, books and more!

You'll find something for everyone on your shopping list at

www.GeorgiaStrait.org/giftshop.

Gift memberships in Georgia Strait Alliance also make a great gift.

These are also available from our Gift Shop page, or by contacting our Nanaimo office (250-753-3459 or gsa@georgiastrait.org).



September was proclaimed Wild Salmon Month in Vancouver. GSA Executive Director Christianne Wilhelmson (L) and Musqueam Elder Delbert Guerin attended the official reading of the Proclamation by Mayor Gregor Robertson (R) and spoke to the need for Vancouver to not only be a green city, but a blue one as well—for our health and the health of our wild salmon. Photo by Don Staniford

Stay Connected All Year Round...

It's easy to stay connected to the issues we're dealing with and the actions we're taking every day—and it's fun to share the insights and reflections of the people doing the front-line work at Georgia Strait Alliance. You can find us at:

Blogs <http://georgiastraitalliance.blogspot.com/>

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=6366081462>

Twitter GSA NEWS <http://twitter.com/cwilhelmson>
FISH FARM CAMPAIGN NEWS <http://twitter.com/Wild4Salmon>

YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/user/GeorgiaStraitAllianc>

You'll find all of these features linked from the home page of our comprehensive and up-to-date website: www.GeorgiaStrait.org

Building a Green Economy



GSA was among the leading environmental organizations that joined with BC's labour movement in a landmark event in mid-September, in a search for solutions to create green jobs and build a green economy in BC.

As part of our organization's longtime focus on solutions, GSA's Mike Richards served on the facilitation team for the two-day "Building a Green Economy for BC" conference, helping to develop common priorities for future directions.

The conference, coordinated by the Columbia Institute, featured a keynote address by David Foster of the BlueGreen Alliance, a strategic partnership between US labor unions and environmental organizations dedicated to expanding the number and quality of jobs in the green economy.

Expect to hear more about the excellent work coming out of this conference. For more information see www.ColumbiaInstitute.ca.

Comings and Goings



Donna Berthiaume, our new Administrative Assistant.

Photo by Cathy Booler

We're pleased to welcome **Donna Berthiaume** to our staff, as GSA's new Administrative Assistant. Many readers will already know Donna, as she has been a regular and enthusiastic volunteer with GSA ever since she moved to Vancouver Island in 1994—helping out in a great many different ways, from tabling at community events and auctions, to intertidal quadrat studies, to data entry. Donna has extensive office experience, both in the public and private sector, and brings a sense of fun

Lesley White and Rachelle Ray of our Community Mapping program.

Photo by Cathy Booler



to all of her work. (*Donna was profiled in a past issue of our newsletter, which you can find at: www.GeorgiaStrait.org/StraitTalk-sept08.)*

We also welcome **Lesley White** and **Rachelle Ray**, who are working on GSA's Community Mapping program over the fall and winter, thanks to a Job Creation Project funded in whole through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement. The pair are reaching out to community organizations, scientists and the public in order to expand our community map, which we hope will eventually grow into a "one-stop shop" where online viewers can see the breadth of organizations working to protect the environment of the Strait, and find key species, habitats, areas of concern and sources of information.

Rachelle, who is focusing on the map research and development side of the project, has a background in environmental sciences and ArcGIS map development along with a passion for the ocean and environmental protection.

Lesley, who is focusing on the communications and outreach aspects of the project, has a background in employment services and community building, a degree in Psychology and recently completed the Applied Business Technology program at VIU. Both are very excited to be a part of the Community Mapping program and we welcome them aboard!



GSA Lifetime Member Suzanne Siemens.

Former director and Lifetime Member **Suzanne Siemens** was recently appointed to our Advisory Council. Over her eight years on our board, Suzanne played an important role in our organization's development, so we're delighted that GSA will continue to benefit from her considerable skills and experience. You can learn more about Suzanne, and the other members of our Advisory Council, at www.GeorgiaStrait.org/advisorycouncil.

We were sad to say goodbye to **Tracey Mann** when her contract with GSA ended this summer. Tracey coordinated our popular ToxicSmart program for two and a half years, taking it to a new level—expanding relationships with the Lower Mainland's Asian and South Asian communities, teaching people how to reduce toxic chemicals in their homes and gardens, and helping Punjabi and Chinese-speaking volunteers promote and adapt the program to better meet the needs of their specific communities. We'll miss Tracey and wish her all the best in the future.

Lisa Herman has moved on from GSA's staff to pursue a degree in Education. Lisa proved to be a capable and efficient organizer, bringing tremendous energy to her work along with a flair for, and love of, photography. She remains a strong environmentalist who lives her principles, and we wish her success in her future endeavours.



This summer saw the official naming of our region as “the Salish Sea”.

Photo by Laurie MacBride

Recognizing Our Connectedness

Georgia Strait Alliance has always recognized that the bodies of waters that collectively form our transboundary region—the Strait of Georgia, Haro Strait, Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound—are really one big connected ecosystem. That’s why, from the start, GSA’s mission has been “to protect and restore the Strait of Georgia and its adjoining waters”, in recognition that the health of the bodies of water and watersheds in and around Georgia Strait are inextricably linked—and conversely, that a threat to any one of them is really a threat to all.

It’s great to see that these waters have finally been given an official collective name: the Salish Sea (a name that many of us in GSA have been using informally for years). Beyond the reality of their ecological connectedness, the new name recognizes the Coast Salish peoples and

their history in this region—long before there was a political border to separate these waters.

The new name was announced earlier this year, but on July 15, Coast Salish First Nations gathered in Esquimalt for a special ceremony to celebrate the naming.

Just as “the Great Lakes” is the collective name for five separate lakes that all retain their individual names, the same holds true for the Salish Sea. The Strait of Georgia keeps its name, as does Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, but together they will be called the Salish Sea.

So for those who were wondering: there is no need to change GSA’s name in your address book. We will remain the Georgia Strait Alliance—caring for the Strait and its adjoining waters, in and around the Salish Sea.

Remembering Jim Bohlen

It was with great sadness that we recently said a final goodbye to a past GSA director who made a huge and enduring contribution to BC’s environmental movement. Jim Bohlen passed away this summer at age 84, after a lengthy battle with Parkinson’s disease. Jim was a longtime peace and environmental activist, best known for his role as a co-founder of Greenpeace (a project that began when he and several others sailed to Alaska in 1971 to stop nuclear testing on Amchitka Island). Along with Greenpeace co-founders Irving and Dorothy Stowe (also now deceased), he was also a co-founder of the first BC chapter of the Sierra Club. Jim served on GSA’s Board in the early 1990s, bringing his depth of experience and a logical, mature and thoughtful approach to environmental and organizational issues—all extremely helpful to our then-young organization.



Louise Fraser of Denman Island won first prize in this summer’s ‘Big 20’ raffle.

Photo by Cathy Booler

‘Big 20’ Winners

Our summer-long ‘Big 20 Raffle’, celebrating GSA’s first 20 years, was a great success, raising almost \$9500 to support GSA’s programs—and bringing big smiles to the lucky winners!

Louise Fraser of Denman Island won the first prize, an AmNik 14.5 TX touring kayak generously provided by Seaward Kayaks.

Second prize, a beautiful hand-crafted platter donated by Tammy Hudgeon Glassworks, went to Nanaimo’s **Mark Metanczkw**.

Another Nanaimo resident, **Mark Du Toit**, took the third prize, a weekend getaway package for two at lovely Yellow Point Lodge.

Our thanks to all of the generous prize donors, and to everyone who bought or sold tickets and helped to promote the raffle around the Strait.

A big thank you also to GSA’s summer students, **Leah Chesterman** and **Jessica Hopkins**, who did a fabulous job promoting and managing the raffle and spreading the word about GSA. They attended many events around the Strait, including a number of outdoor markets and music festivals as well as Canada Day Festivities, the Islands Organic Festival, Comox Nautical Days, and the Vancouver Island Exhibition.

Watch for another big raffle next summer!

SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Lillian & David Adams, Anne Murray and Larry Agnew, Robert Aitken, Peter & Patricia Ajello, Petra Allen, Gary & Maureen Anaka, Dr. Bill Austin, The Bank of Nova Scotia, BC Marine Trades Association, BC Provincial Employees Community Services Fund, BC Wildlife Federation—Shuswap Region, Elbert & Jean Beamer, Florence Bell, Rosamond C. Bell, E. M. & Yvonne Boehm, Catherine Boshaw, Roger Boshier, Keith & Marjorie Bower, Jennifer Bradley, Patricia Brandlmayr, The Bullitt Foundation, Don Bulmer, Alexander A. Campbell, Ron Carter, Sandi Chamberlain, Leah Chesterman, Robert Conconi Foundation, Nicholas & Janet Cooke, Coquitlam Scuba Club, Council of BC Yacht Clubs, Claude Cuff, Noreen Davies, Ramona de Graaf, Dent Island Lodge, Matthew Dilay, Alanna Dochtermann, Laura Dochtermann, Sarah Dombrose, Robert Dubyna, Dr. Robert Elner, Brent England, Gillian England, Marianne Erb, J. Farris, Dave Faulkner, Tracy Ferreira, Dora Fitzgerald, Ruth Foster, Louise Fraser, Friends of Silva Bay, The Gabriola Sounder, Gabriola Power and Sail Squadron, Brenda Gaertner, Gerry & Carolyn Gailey, Gordon Galbraith, Bryan Gallagher, Christine Gaylor, Phyllis Gidley, Gillard Pass Fisheries Association, Neil Goldsmith, Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation, Joanne & David Graham, Rodney & Pamela Graham, Darryl Gurney, Sherry Halfyard, Linda Hancock, Matthew Harcombe, Gwen Hardy, Judith Harper, Egon & Ann Holzwarth, Hornby Island Residents & Ratepayers' Association, Janis Horrell, Catherine & John Howard, Elinor Hoy, Hurricane Jack Adventures, Martha Jablonski-Jones, David Jack, Terrance & Joan James, Lawrence Jones, Kel Kelly, Kate Keogh, Judith Kirchner, Leonard Krog, Steven Kurrein, Juliette Laing, Shaena Lambert, Philip Langrish, Janice Leclerc, Jennifer Leong, Dr. Alan & Carolyn Lewis, Karl Losken, Sarah Lowry, Ms. Lowther, Laurie MacBride, Tracey Mann, Gregory C. Marshall Naval Architect Ltd., Gregory Marshall, Michael Hogan & Donna Martin, Colin Masson, Wendy & Bill Matheson, Rachel & Roger Mattice, Lisa Matthaus, Mel McDonald, Janet McGuinty, Duncan McLean, Barbara McMillan, Heather Mersey, Richard Moore, Candice Morgan & Ian MacDonald, Harold & Phyllis Mundie, Jason Nassichuk, Lisa North, Rodney & Penelope Polden, Susan Pond, Malcolm Pratt, Bill Proctor, Joanna Qureshi, Nina Raginsky, Margy Ransford, RBC Blue Water Project, Phillip & Helen Robertson, Eleanor Routley, James & Judith Saks, Seaspan International Ltd., Schooner Cove Yacht Club, Seymour Pacific Industries, Elizabeth Shannon & Clark Munro, Suzanne Siemens, Pamela Sinclair, Suzanne Smith, Richards Sones, Sonora Resort (London Enterprises Ltd.), Vivian Sorenson, Murray Steele, Sara & Dick Steil, Margaret Strike, Stuart Island Community Association, Terence Swean, George Szanto, Taku Resort & Marina, Bert Terhart, Gerry Thorne, Ann Clayson & Marjorie Urquhart, Peter Van Tankeren, Vancouver Island Roll-A-Dock, Vancouver Island South District - Canadian Power & Sail Squadron, Vancouver Wooden Boat Society, Charlie & Theresa Walters, Warm Springs Resort/Ritchie Bros, Jim Weber, Lynne Whiskin, Karen Whyte, Alan Wilson, Sheila & John Wilson, George & Monika Winn, David Wiseman, Bill Heidrick & Kathleen Woodley, John & Adele Worst, Willow Grove Foundation, Dr. James & Shirley Wright.

GEORGIA STRAIT ALLIANCE IS ALSO GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS MADE IN MEMORY OF Pat Harry, Dorothy Stowe, Richard Mirau and Hilda Mirau.

Thanks to all who provided support from May 22 through September 30, 2010, including monthly donors and others not listed here due to space limitations. As well, a big thanks you to of the sponsors of GSA's 20th Anniversary events, who will be listed individually in our next edition of Strait Talk.

Give a gift that delivers.

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Photo by Alan Wilson