

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

Connecting with the Water's Edge

by Sebastian Merz

Awarm October sun reflected off Vancouver's downtown towers, while two First Nation canoes pulled up on the beach. On the grass above, people watched birds through a big scope, and just a little further up the shore, a giant squid played the guitar.

This unusual scene sounds like one we might have only imagined—but it actually took place on October 5th, Water's Edge Day in Vancouver. For this day-long event, GSA invited the city's residents to celebrate and learn about their urban shoreline, as part of our Waterfront Initiative.

> See page 7 for more on this story and additional photos.



First Nation canoes launching on GSA's Water's Edge Day.

Photo: Gavin Kennedy

Drift cards showing up all over

by Alexandra Woodsworth

n August Georgia Strait Alliance and Raincoast Conservation Foundation teamed up with the City of Vancouver, for a new phase of our ongoing oil spill mapping project.

We released 1200 new drift cards at sites in Burrard Inlet, the Strait of Georgia and downstream of the Port Mann Bridge, where the proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline would cross the Fraser River. Each card bears the message, 'This could be oil', and members of the public are asked to report cards they find on our mapping website (www. SalishSeaSpillMap.org).

This season we have been asking people to snap a "selfie" when they find a drift card. The photos are a stark reminder of the places, environments and favourite activities that are at stake in Kinder Morgan's expansion plans: sport-fishing on the Sunshine Coast, kids playing at low tide on Kits Beach, a sunset boat cruise in the Gulf Islands, and much more. See more, page 3.



Ambleside

Strait Thoughts: Where governments fail, communities lead

by Christianne Wilhelmson, Executive Director

Every day I read about the federal and provincial governments' vision for our province and our country, and more and more, I realize that this vision has little to do with what most British Columbians and Canadians want.

Our governments want more fossil fuel resources dug up and sold overseas, despite the risks, impacts and increasingly small and questionable economic benefit, while we want government to stop ignoring climate change and to take decisive action to make our economy and environment sustainable for the long term.

I am more and more convinced of this fundamental disconnect between government and communities. Through our various programs and initiatives, GSA staff and volunteers have the privilege of talking with thousands of British Columbians every year about their concerns and hopes for their communities. I can say without a doubt these hopes rarely include more fossil fuel tankers on our coast.

In a time where visionary leadership is woefully lacking, GSA is helping communities to lead. In the pages of this newsletter, you will see how we are focused on supporting communities in taking steps to better understand what's at risk, and what can be done to make sustainable communities a reality.

Read about our incredibly successful inaugural Water's Edge Day in early

October, part of our ongoing Waterfront Initiative. This day-long public celebration of Vancouver's waterfront brought nearly 1000 people to our shores, to learn about our waterfront's past and enjoy the diversity of its present. Our Waterfront

"...we want government to stop ignoring climate change and to take decisive action to make our economy and environment sustainable for the long term."

Initiative was only an idea two years ago, and I am so proud to see how it has since become a reality, thanks to the hard work of so many. Our stakeholder and public engagement process is moving ahead and we look forward to sharing its progress with you in the coming months and years, as we work towards a more balanced approach to managing the interface between land and sea.

You'll read about our engagement with local mayors and councils to help them take leadership on the pipeline and tanker issue in their communities, including their actions at this year's Union of BC Municipalities Conference to oppose the undemocratic National Energy Board process on Kinder Morgan's expansion proposal. Our efforts are also crossing borders through our Save the Salish Sea cross-border pledge campaign. And that's just some of what we have to share with you. I hope you enjoy reading about all of the recent successes your support has helped to achieve.

GSA's mission demands an ongoing balance of hope and urgency. I can't think

of a more vivid illustration of this dynamic than the fact that about two months ago, we celebrated the news that a baby had been born to the endangered southern resident Orca population—then to our dismay, learned in late October that the baby was missing and presumed dead. Only 78 individuals remain in the southern resident pods, so

it's clear that we must do much more to protect these whales' critical habitat, which effectively means the entire Strait of Georgia and Salish Sea. Your ongoing support, along with the help of other friends and partners, will allow us to grow and strengthen GSA, increasing our ability to focus on this urgent issue. Where leadership is lacking, we will

stand with all of you to ensure that our coastal waters are protected and our communities can thrive—in the sustainable way that the vast majority of British Columbians and Canadians truly desire.



"As issues of democratic reform and loss of democracy in this country bubble over, it is clear to me that the apathy that Canadians show regarding voting has left our governments with a false sense of empowerment. Contrary to what Canadians say they want, governments are deregulating our environmental protection laws and giving over environmental stewardship to industry whose primary driver is profit, not protection...

"Many of us are heartbroken about the Mount Polley incident, devastated by what we know will be impacts on our waters, salmon and other wildlife—for years to come. But we can't stop at hand-wringing. If we want accountability, we must demand it... because if we don't, in a few weeks when this disaster fades from the headlines, things will go back to the new normal, where projects are approved without proper environmental assessment and monitoring of laws are left to this system which puts industry in charge. And then, it's just a matter of time before our communities, our environment and our economy pay another ultimate price."

Excerpted from Christianne's August 8th article Another environmental disaster-how do we say "enough"? This is one of the many great articles on GSA's blog pages: http://GeorgiaStraitAlliance.blogspot.ca Strait Talk © Georgia Strait Alliance, 2014 www.GeorgiaStrait.org

EDITING & LAYOUT Laurie MacBride and Alan Wilson

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Glad it's not oil-yet!

As the oil spill drift cards we released in August (see page 1) began floating down the Fraser River—one of the world's largest salmon bearing waterways—we initially tracked them by boat. We discovered that they travelled over three kilometres in less than an hour, showing that a lengthy stretch of the river could be affected by spilled oil before even the fastest oil spill response could be mobilized.

Although most cards flowed down the Fraser and out into the Strait of Georgia, one was actually found 12 km *upstream* in Pitt River, well beyond the outer limits of Kinder Morgan's oil spill model.

And it's not just the Fraser River system that could be affected: a week after the cards were released, cards from our Port Mann bridge drop were found as far away as Texada Island and Comox.



Lighthouse Park

As with our earlier studies last fall and spring, drift cards encircled Vancouver's shoreline within 24 to 48 hours after their release in Burrard Inlet. This time, however, they arrived faster and in greater numbers along the Sunshine Coast and northern portion of the Strait, including Powell River and Campbell River.

Follow the project and see how your area could be affected at www.SalishSeaSpillMap.org and watch for cards washing up on your local beach!

West Vancouver

Bowen Island

San Juan Island (USA)

Third Beach

Spanish Banks



Stanley Park

Vancouver

THIS COULD BE O

Cross-border campaign takes flight

by Alexandra Woodsworth

Join the movement at www.SalishSeaAction.org

n a glorious September day, 600 Canadian and US citizens came together at the Peace Arch to make a shared commitment: to work across the border to stop new fossil fuel projects on the Salish Sea.

Georgia Strait Alliance co-organized the rally as part of the global People's Climate mobilization-and there can be few more important places to realize action on climate than here in the Pacific Northwest.

Right now, more than a dozen new or expanded oil, coal or LNG facilities have been proposed or recently approved on the shores of the Salish Sea, primarily aimed at exporting land-locked North American fossil fuels to Asian markets. If all of these proposals were approved, the Pacific Northwest would become one of the largest fossil fuel exporting regions in the world.

We can't let that happen. For too long, thanks to the imaginary line drawn on a map, we've been battling each fossil fuel proposal in isolation. Whether it's Kinder Morgan's tar sands pipeline expansion in BC, the Gateway Pacific coal terminal in Washington, or any of the other projects, each one comes with a raft of community and environmental risks to be deeply concerned about. Put together, the scale of this juggernaut of development and the combined impacts and risks are truly staggering.

We know that an oil spill anywhere in the Salish Sea would be devastating to all of us. We know that the recent success of Washingtonians at defeating new coal terminals would be effectively erased if Canadians allow the coal to be shipped through our ports instead. Above all, we know that to ensure a safe future for our grandchildren here and around the world, we need to keep the majority of global fossil fuel reserves in the ground.

Sign the Pledge at www.SalishSeaAction.org

Here in our region, we share one coast, one ecosystem and one climate, and we need to work together to demand a different future. That's why it was inspiring to see so many people who share our vision come out to the Peace Arch, and why

we have launched a pledge campaign to build a cross-border community to take ongoing action aimed at stopping these fossil fuel projects in their tracks. Together, we will push for real climate leadership on both sides of the border, and ensure that fossil fuel companies meet a wall of opposition up and down the West coast. If we are successful, we will have collectively made a significant dent in global emissions, and protected our shared waters and regional economy for generations to come.

GSA and our partners in Canada and the US are inviting everyone who cares about this magnificent place we call home to take the pledge at www. SalishSeaAction.org. We'll provide you with opportunities to take action at critical moments and help build our shared power across the border-so that we can ensure that projects under review in BC and Washington are rejected by decision-makers. Join us!







⁶ Local leadership to the fore

by Alexandra Woodsworth

At the Union of BC Municipalities Convention in September, I found it surprisingly easy to talk with local leaders from across the province about pipelines and tankers. Along with allies from several other organizations, I was there to encourage mayors and councillors to support a series of resolutions expressing community concerns about Kinder Morgan's pipeline expansion proposal and its review by the National Energy Board (NEB). Three of the four proposed motions passed, for the same reason that the conversations I had were so productive: local governments, along with many of the individual citizens they represent, feel cut out of the NEB review process, and they are standing up to demand a voice.

The right of communities to have a say—and to say 'no'—is also at the heart of the legal battle over Kinder Morgan's attempts to conduct surveying work on Burnaby Mountain, including cutting down trees on conservation lands. This fall, the City of Burnaby successfully used its municipal bylaws to stop the work and then Kinder Morgan asked the NEB to intervene, which raised a Constitutional question with ramifications for resource projects all across Canada. The NEB sided with Kinder Morgan, effectively striking down laws enacted by a democratically elected local government in favour of the interests of a Texas-based private company. Burnaby is now going to the federal court, arguing that the NEB does not have jurisdiction in this issue; the outcome of this case was not yet known as we went to press.

The issue has understandably galvanized many local leaders to avow that municipalities do indeed have jurisdiction over these projects, and to demand that they and their citizens be provided with a truly democratic review process that is inclusive of all voices and all issues.

We need more local champions like these. Fortunately, this fall's municipal elections are providing an opportunity to spark community debates about the risks and benefits of Kinder Morgan and other energy projects, and for citizens to choose representatives who will stand up for the rights of communities over fossil fuel companies. Georgia Strait Alliance is working with community partners in strategic locations around the Strait to encourage such debate and to further the understanding by candidates and voters of the risks coastal municipalities would face in the event of a major oil spill.

For many of us concerned about the local and global impacts of fossil fuel development, it increasingly feels like the provincial and federal governments are simply not listening. Here in BC, local leadership could fill the vacuum—

Are you a registered commenter in the Kinder Morgan review?

The National Energy Board has extended the timeline for its review of Kinder Morgan's pipeline expansion. This means that the deadline to submit letters of comment is now **March 16, 2015**. We'll provide more info and tips for commenters on our website and in our next issue of *Strait Talk*.

and not just on tar sands pipelines. In recent months, six municipalities have passed resolutions opposing the Woodfibre LNG project in Squamish, and 14 have passed motions expressing concerns about the Fraser Surrey Docks coal export facility. Communities like Burnaby, along with Kitimat (where last April, citizens rejected the Northern Gateway project in a plebiscite) have shown us what local power can look like. We look forward to the next victory for local leadership.

Find out more about the municipal elections and our ongoing efforts at the local government level to protect our coast from oil spills at www. GeorgiaStrait.org/LocalElection2014.

Where Land and Water Meet An exhibition of art & historical photographs exploring the water's edge

until December 31st, 2014 at the Vancouver Maritime Museum (TK Gallery) 1905 Ogden Avenue (in Vanier Park)

What does Vancouver's waterfront mean to you? This exhibition of historical photographs and contemporary artwork by local artists invites you to explore our complex relationship with the shoreline. The exhibition is a joint project of the Vancouver Maritime Museum and Georgia Strait Alliance.



Water's Edge Day

by Sebastian Merz

On October 5, Georgia Strait Alliance invited the public to come down to the Vancouver Maritime Museum for the first-ever Water's Edge Day, to celebrate the city's shoreline.

Thanks to the help from our many wonderful partners, close to 1,000 visitors were able to enjoy the waterfront and see it from new angles.

Those on guided boat tours watched seals catching salmon and more than 1,000 Surf Scoters flocking into English Bay. People who boarded the Tsleil-Waututh Nation's ocean-going canoes learned about First Nations culture and the history of the area at the mouth of False Creek.

Others were able to paddle a kayak for the first time, create art, interact with sea urchins and other ocean critters, and learn about shoreline design and Port operations. Inside the Maritime Museum, they enjoyed the displays including our new art and photo exhibition called "Where Land and Water Meet", which opened on Water's Edge Day (see facing page).

Building a strong connection between the city's residents and their shoreline is a key goal of our Waterfront Initiative. Captain Rod MacVicar of the Pacific Wildlife Foundation, who guided our Water's Edge Day boat tours, put it this way: "People can only care about that which they know about."

Many thanks to our Water's Edge Day Sponsors and to Intact Insurance for partial support of our Waterfront Initiative program.

Join the Conversation!

What is important to you about Vancouver's shoreline? What should its future look like? We want you to get involved in the Waterfront Initiative.

In January 2015, we are hosting a Citizens' Forum to envision what a positive future for Vancouver's waterfront could look like and what can be done to make it a reality. Get together with other citizens for a fun, interactive Forum and become part of our effort to build a shoreline for all.

Sign up now at www. GeorgiaStrait.org/ WaterfrontInitiative_ JoinTheConversation. All participants will get a chance to win a zodiac tour of the harbour with SeaVancouver!





Down at the Dock Another Successful Summer

What an amazing summer it was for GSA's *Clean Marine BC* (CMBC) program! Our summer students, Ryan

Butler and Natalie Drope, spent

some lively time dock-walking at

several marinas, engaging with boaters on ways we can minimize our impact while enjoying one of

our favourite pastimes—boating, of course! They shared valuable

information and tips with boaters,

including GSA's ever-popular

and highly practical Guide to

Green Boating, as well as our

more recent publication, Think

Before You Float: 10 Tips on

by Michelle Young



Ryan at the Ladysmith Maritime Society Marina. Photo: Michelle Young

Saving Fuel, Money and Georgia Strait. Both are available online at http://georgiastrait.org/GuidetoGreenBoating.

More good news

Our network of CMBC marinas continues to grow, with three more marinas enrolling in the program. Welcome aboard to **Cedar Grove Marina** in Tsehum Harbour, Surrey's **Crescent Beach Marina**, and the **Ladysmith Maritime Society Marina**, who joined the program recently. These marinas, along with 13 others enrolled in the program, are now working to become *Clean Marine BC*-certified for their environmental best practices.



Westport Marina is one of twenty-five marinas participating in GSA's award-winning Clean Marine BC program. Photo: Laurie MacBride

In addition, nine other marinas in our region are proudly flying the *CMBC* flag, having already achieved their certification:

- False Creek Harbour Authority
- Greater Victoria Harbour Authority
- Harbour Authority of Pender Harbour
- Maple Bay Marina
- Royal Vancouver Yacht Club Jericho
- Shelter Island Marina
- Taku Resort and Marina
- Westport Marina
- White Rock Harbour Board

Is your marina, yacht club, harbour authority, or boatyard a part of *Clean Marine BC* yet? If not, put them in touch with GSA, and we'll help them steer a course to improve their environmental best practices and win recognition for their efforts! You can reach me at *cmbc@georgiastrait.org*, or call our Nanaimo office at (250) 753-3459.

Catch you soon, Down at the Dock—or perhaps we will see you at GSA's booth at the **Vancouver International Boat Show**, running **January 21 to 25**.

Clean Marine BC Program Coordinator

Michelle Young took a trip to Saturna Island this summer, to talk about green boating practices at the "Living on an Island" forum. The event—which also included speakers from the Vancouver Aquarium—was organized by the Saturna Island Marine Research and Education Society (SIMRES), and was held at a picturesque vineyard on this lovely southern Gulf Island. But it wasn't all work! The next day all the speakers and SIMRES researchers were taken out sailing by SIMRES chairman **Captain Larry Speck** (*right*).

Photo: Michelle Young





Michael Mehta (top) and Nancy Laird mapping the location of kelp around Gabriola Island. Photos Michelle Young



Helping the Kelp

by Michelle Young

I'm very fortunate to have had some amazing experiences in my life, and one that I had while on vacation this past summer was no exception. I'd recently moved to Gabriola Island, and was looking for ways to contribute to my new community, when *Help the Kelp* caught my eye. When I saw the group was looking for volunteers to go out and map the local bull kelp beds, I jumped at the chance, and am I ever glad I did.

Our crew—consisting of Michael, Nancy, and me—mapped an area at the north end of Gabriola. My job was to take GPS waypoints and temperature readings, while Nancy took detailed notes. She recorded the temperature of the water, whether we were mapping a single kelp, lines of kelp, or full beds, the density of the kelp beds, health of the kelp and more. Not only that, but she went beyond the call of duty, swimming out to get our 'sweet ride' and towing it back to shore!

Michael was our able Captain as we navigated the shallow waters among kelp beds, avoiding rocks and other hazards on what was a bit of a windy day. The seas were rough enough to be fun in a small boat, but rough weather also makes it more difficult to spot the kelp, and more dangerous as we had to maneuver close to shore and over reefs where the kelp beds are growing.

Not only did I have a fantastic time (truth be told, pretty much any day on the water is a good day for me), but I also learned a lot about kelp, and met some really great people. As if that wasn't enough, I was able to drive the boat!

But most importantly, this is citizen science at its best. There was no baseline data on kelp beds around Gabriola Island before this mighty and determined little group of folks came along. And baseline data is critical, since *Help the Kelp* not only monitors the health of the kelp around Gabriola, but advocates for its protection from threats (such as climate change, reckless boaters, and log booms) and they plant kelp, too.

So what we know about bull kelp around this island, and its chances for recovery, are thanks to a group started by Gabriola resident Ken Capon, who sadly passed away in 2012. What an amazing legacy he leaves behind! I only wish I had been able to meet him.

> Adapted from Michelle's article in GSA's blog: http://GeorgiaStraitAlliance.blogspot.ca

Michelle Young at the helm. Photo: Michael Mehta



FALL 2014

Comings and goings

GSA's summer students, Natalie Drope and Ryan Butler, were busy this summer on a variety of fronts and on both sides of the Strait. Natalie attended numerous special events, where she worked to raise public awareness of the risks of the Kinder Morgan pipeline and tanker expansion proposal, and to engage people with the Waterfront Initiative's #MyVanWaterfront contest, a community mapping project of Vancouver's shoreline. She also researched community oil spill response capacity around the Strait.

Ryan focussed on the recreational boating community, spending much of his time at marinas, talking about green boating and promoting GSA's *Clean Marine BC* (CMBC) program. In particular, he reached out to marinas and boatyards in the Capital Regional District, encouraging them to enroll in the voluntary program and seek certification for environmental best practices. In addition, he put his Diploma in Cinematography to good use by shooting video interviews in Vancouver about GSA's Waterfront Initiative.

Natalie is now back at VIU, working to complete her BA in Tourism Management, and Ryan is at UVic, studying for his MA. Our thanks to both of them, and we wish them success in their studies.



Natalie and Ryan with our mascot Georgia. Photo Michelle Young

Our new Board of Directors

MELINDA SKEELS (President) is an attorney who represents First Nations governments and tribal councils, focusing on litigation, governance and environmental law. She's also an Associate with UVic's Environmental Law Centre.

RACHEL S. FORBES (Vice-President) holds a law degree and is the principal of an agency providing capacity building and meeting coordination services to community based businesses and not for profits. She is a member of the Planning Institute of British Columbia and a director of the Whistler Centre for Sustainability.

JACQUELINE MCGUIRE (Treasurer) is a Chartered Accountant who provides assurance and accounting services to private companies and not-for-profit organizations. She also has a degree in Animal Biology.

KATHY FLETCHER (Secretary) founded and was for 20 years executive director of People For Puget Sound, a citizens' organization formed to protect and restore the southern portion of our Salish Sea—a role that saw her working closely with GSA over many years.

LESLI BOLDT is President of a marketing communications firm. She has close to 20 years of experience in the industry and a decade of experience in consulting with clients in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

KAREN COOLING recently retired from the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada after more than 30 years of labour and community activism. She has continued to represent labour in a number of forums, including Vancouver's Greenest City Action Team and the Climate Justice Project of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

VIRGINIA (GINNIE) MATHERS is an attorney who practices aboriginal and environmental law. A life-long coastal resident, she aims to use her legal education and love of the coast to promote greater environmental protection and sustainability for ecosystems and communities in our region.



GSA's Board of Directors elected at our June AGM. Front: Ken Coach, Rachel S. Forbes, Karen Cooling, Kathy Fletcher. Back: Jacqueline McGuire, Melinda Skeels, Lesli Boldt, Kate Storey. Missing: Dave Macdonald, Ginnie Mathers. Photo Christianne Wilhelmson

KEN COACH is President of a communications firm that provides presentation and media training to corporate and academic leaders, politicians, celebrities and not-for-profit organizations. Previously he spent 20 years working in news and current affairs in print and broadcast journalism.

KATE STOREY, who holds a MBA in Finance, works with a social venture capital fund focused on young companies in the organic and natural food, green products and environmental innovation sectors.

DAVE MACDONALD (on leave) is a Certified Management Accountant and Principal of a consulting firm that helps small businesses and entrepreneurs build sustainable practices inside their organizations. He was a founding partner of a local electric bicycle company.

Are there local impacts from Fukushima?

by Christianne Wilhelmson

learly three years ago, we all watched the devastation wrought by the Tohoku earthquake and resulting tsunami, leading to the meltdown of three reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. Since then, GSA has received many calls and gueries from citizens wanting to know if the resulting releases of radionuclides directly into the ocean would impact our local waters. Because radionuclides are known to increase in concentration thousands of times up the food chain-from plankton to fish to humans-even small increases in background levels could have impacts over time.

Your calls were the reason we created a webpage (*www.georgiastrait.org/ fukushima*) to help link you to relevant information.

GSA is still concerned about this issue, and that is why we are supporting a local citizens' science initiative, launched by the University of Victoria and led by Dr. Jay Cullen. Though government agencies have said the environmental and health risks from the accident are likely low here in the Strait, in reality any



Sampling sites.

monitoring of the ocean and wildlife has been insufficient to adequately quantify these risks. That is why we are happy to support InFORM, a monitoring network involving academics, government, nongovernmental organizations—including Georgia Strait Alliance—and citizen scientists. Through the project, citizens up and down the coast, along with University of Victoria scientists, will collect monthly data over the next three years, assess risks to our oceans associated with the Fukushima nuclear disaster and, with our help, get this information out to the public.

To learn more about this citizens' science project and how you can get involved, visit http://fukushimainform. wordpress.com/.



We send out a heartfelt THANK YOU to GSA Director Kate Storey and her sailing team, the Maritime Divas, who raised \$11,500 for our marine conservation efforts in a sailing regatta. Partnering with the Vancouver Rowing Club, the August 23rd charity regatta brought 13 boats together to race and to celebrate our beautiful ocean. Thanks to everyone involved! Photo courtesy Kate Storey

Thanks to some of our recent funders and partners...



We are so thankful for the support of our MEMBERS AND DONORS– your donations make our success possible. But why do you give to GSA? Here's how a couple of our long-time donors explain it...

"Growing up in Lower Puget Sound, we have always loved being close to the water. We fell in love with Georgia Strait when we came here in the 1970s and now spend our summers at our cottage near Lasqueti Island. We feel blessed to be able to live in such a wonderful place and want to see it preserved for the future. We are big fans of GSA and their willingness to lead with their chin as they tackle the threats to the region. We're excited to support them and appreciate all they do. "



Charlie and Theresa Walters

If you have a message and photo of your own to share, please get in touch at gsa@GeorgiaStrait.org

Become our Partner in Protection

Your tax deductible donation to Georgia Strait Alliance is an investment in our shared vision for our local water, for today and future generations. Become our Partner in Protection and we can achieve real protection for all who call it home.

> TO DONATE TODAY, call 250-753-3459 or email *gsa*@GeorgiaStrait.org or donate through our secure online form at *www.GeorgiaStrait.org/donate*

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Sea lion lunch, Brentwood Bay, by Laurie MacBride, EyeOnEnvironment.com