

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



Huge tanker increase planned for south coast

by Mike Richards

Pipeline company Kinder Morgan recently made an official announcement about its plans to expand its oil pipeline, and although we knew an expansion was coming, the scale is worse than we had expected.

The company wants to almost triple its future pipeline capacity, from the current 300,000 barrels/day to 850,000 barrels/day.

On the marine side this would mean a huge increase in the amount of tar sands crude oil shipped out from the company's terminal in Burrard Inlet, from about 75,000 barrels/day currently, to up to 550,000 barrels/day!

If Kinder Morgan does get its way, it could mean that each year there would be up to 360 heavily loaded huge tankers (up to about 30 ships/month), including supertankers, carrying tar sands crude oil (diluted bitumen) through our local waters, bound for Asia and US ports.

To begin this journey these massive vessels must squeeze under the Second Narrows train and vehicle bridges and the Lions Gate bridge, where tidal currents can make for challenging navigation. Then they must pass by the magnificent beaches and vulnerable ecosystems of English Bay, Georgia Strait, the Gulf and San Juan Islands, Victoria and southern Vancouver Island, on their way out to sea through the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

The ships will include the Aframax class tankers which are already carrying crude oil through our local waters. If

the Second Narrows is dredged and deepened as well, as is rumoured, they would also include the even larger Suezmax class tankers, which are up to 275 metres long and can carry more than 1.7 million barrels of oil.

Because the pipeline project would be upgrading existing infrastructure rather than building a new development, no Environmental Assessment is required by the Canadian Environmental Assessment office. Instead the project goes to the National Energy Board for approval, which gives the public much less opportunity to have its say—and if the NEB rejects the project, Cabinet could now overrule it (*see page 4*).

GSA members as well as other BC residents have strongly indicated to us that they don't want Kinder Morgan's plan to go forward. The risks of a major spill are simply too great.

It was extremely interesting that around the same time as Kinder Morgan's announcement, the media reported that the federal government is closing its BC emergency oil spill response centre. Instead of Environment Canada's Environmental Emergencies Section having a Vancouver office, all of its operations will now be based in Quebec as a cost-cutting measure under the new federal Budget.

We believe that losing this capacity in BC will wipe out Environment Canada's on-the-ground local knowledge and experience, and severely restrict its ability to be useful in the case a large oil spill in BC.

See page 9 for more on tankers and GSA's response.

Strait Thoughts: Celebrating our passion

by Christianne Wilhelmson, Executive Director

I believe in celebrating important dates, be they birthdays, wedding anniversaries, International Auntie Day—whatever. I see any day that marks a positive occasion as a day worth celebrating. In fact, I'm quite well known as a promoter of the Birthday Month!

I see each of these moments as an opportunity—to look back, to assess, and to look forward. After 45 birthdays, I still enjoy celebrating the passing of time and the important events of the year gone by. And let's be honest, it's better than the alternative.

The reason for my musings is that in September, I will celebrate 10 years with GSA. It's hard for me to grasp how that much time has passed, and how I came to be in the role I now hold. I'm reminded of a question that was posed to me last spring at a UBC Career Day. I was on a panel with other former UBC students who had earned MScs or PhDs, but had chosen not to go into academia. The question was: "So what path did you take to get where you are today?" I thought for a moment, then responded, tongue only partially in cheek, "You mean there was a path?"

Truth is I came to GSA 10 years ago as an outsider. I did not grow up near the ocean—my peace was found deep in the forest of my parents' Ontario home, watching the wind swirl through the tree tops and breathing the loamy smell of the earth.

Nor was I a long-time environmentalist: I hadn't belonged to any environmental clubs in school, and although I had summer jobs at Environment Canada and did some environmental policy work, my background also included administrative support roles and some time at a finance company and as a lab technician.

From that unlikely past, I arrived at GSA as a scientist and a keen education enthusiast—the daughter of teachers—with a deep interest in public policy, law, communications, and in understanding how decisions are made that impact citizens. I found the perfect home for all those interests!

Now as I look back, I can't help but note the similarities between 2002 and 2012. When I arrived at GSA, the provincial government was in the midst of a concerted attack on the environment, weakening environmental protection in the name of streamlining and efficiency—with more self-regulation resulting in increased pollution and habitat degradation.



Sound familiar? Today we are in the midst of a similar attack, though with a ferocity not seen before. Now it's our federal government that is weakening the pillars of environmental protection in our country, putting increasing control into the hands of political and corporate leaders and limiting the ability of the majority of Canadians to voice their concerns (see article page 4). Add to that the open attacks by government leaders on individuals and groups who choose to challenge their policy directions, and we are

living in "interesting times", to say the least.

It could all be overwhelming, but still, I haven't lost hope—after all, pessimism is not my style (nor, I expect, the style of most of you). But mainly, my hope remains strong because in the past decade GSA and our partners have had many great accomplishments even in the face of considerable opposition. To name just a few of these, for example, we:

- won a National Marine Conservation Act and a federal commitment to create the Southern Strait of Georgia National Marine Conservation Area
- defeated a natural gas pipeline proposal which would have bisected southern Georgia Strait
- helped the Xwemalhkwa (Homalco) First Nation win a Supreme Court ruling that government and industry must consult with them before siting fish farms in their territory
- won a Provincial directive and federal and provincial funding commitment for Victoria to treat its sewage
- established the Clean Marine BC marina eco-certification program, the only such program in our province, and
- won a Federal Court ruling requiring Fisheries & Oceans Canada to protect the critical habitat of BC's resident killer whales.

And finally, I remain hopeful because I believe that many more such accomplishments lie ahead. For as challenging as it can be in these dark times, we have some extremely important assets that no government can take away from us: our passion, our commitment and our belief that in the end, we can decide what our communities will look like.

Working together, we'll face and overcome the challenges that threaten environmental organizations and our ecosystems—and we'll celebrate!

Check this out!

Three students at Vancouver's non-profit PullFocus Film School have created a wonderful 2 1/2 minute online video to help promote GSA's work. Enjoy—and please share it with your friends! You'll find it at: www.GeorgiaStrait.org/video2012

Strait Talk © Georgia Strait Alliance 2012
Also available online at www.GeorgiaStrait.org as a PDF with live links.

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New Communities Atlas launched

by Rebecca Adams

We are very excited to announce the re-launch of GSA's new and improved community mapping website, which we have renamed as the 'Georgia Strait Communities Atlas'.

We chose this new name to better reflect some of the new website's features, along with our goal of creating, through education and social networking, a greater sense of community among people and organizations around the Strait. Here's a snapshot of some of the new features:



conservation, points of human impact, information about conservation efforts, services and sustainable practices for communities and industry.

A Portfolio of Local Knowledge

You can now share your story right on the website, with our new "suggest a place" mapping tool. From these stories, along with the information we continue to gather through face-to-face outreach at events in the region, we'll be able to create a geographic portfolio of local knowledge that highlights

what we care about here in Georgia Strait.

Interactive Map: Creating a Sense of Place

The new website features a more robust interactive map that will help connect concerned citizens (we mean you!) to information about conservation, natural riches, and human activities in and around Georgia Strait. We've redesigned the icons and information layers, making it easier to browse the many places of interest featured on the map. The Conservation & Sustainability, Natural Riches, Human Use & Community layers, along with Local Knowledge (see right) highlight priorities for

And more to come...

As the online atlas grows, we will be introducing more tools, including a community forum, bulletin board and mapping workshops. These tools will help us build a rich interactive resource to inspire a greater sense of community, and help us all work together for a healthier future. Check out the new Georgia Strait Communities Atlas, and share your story! You'll find the Atlas at: www.GeorgiaStrait.org/communitiesatlas.

'Celebrate the Strait' Raffle

1st prize: **LEARN TO SAIL: 3 week basic sailing certificate course**—retail value \$800
Basic Cruising course donated by Nanaimo Yacht Charters: nanaimoyachtcharters.com

2nd prize **ISLAND ADVENTURE: 2 nights for two, plus binoculars**—retail value \$465
2 nights at Yellow Point Lodge, meals, kayaking & other activities included, donated by Yellow Point Lodge: yellowpointlodge.com, plus a pair of Bushnell Falcon 10 x 50 binoculars donated by The Harbour Chandler: harbourchandler.ca

3rd prize **PADDLING PACKAGE: PFD & Paddle**
—retail value \$430
4-part lightweight, fibreglass paddle donated by Feathercraft: feathercraft.com
Betsea PFD donated by Alberni Outpost: albernioutpost.com

4th prize **HANDCRAFTED GARDEN LANTERN**—retail value \$250
Unique garden lantern donated by Crazy Duck Pottery: crazyduckpottery.com



Photo courtesy Nanaimo Yacht Charters

Tickets \$2 each or 3 for \$5
raffle@georgiastrait.org
or 250-753-3459

All proceeds to GSA's marine conservation work

Draw: Tuesday, September 18, 3pm at the GSA Nanaimo office: #201-195 Commercial St. Nanaimo, BC V9R 5G5. We do not sell or trade names with any other party. Winners consent to the release of their names by the licensee. All proceeds to marine conservation efforts. Winners must cover the costs resulting from the shipment of prizes. 4,200 tickets printed (1,200 @ \$2 each / 3,000 at 3 for \$5).

Chances at 1 in 4,200 (total tickets for sale) to win a grand prize.

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Dismantling our environmental pillars

by Christianne Wilhelmson

Late last winter, rumours began circulating as thousands of individuals signed up to speak against the Enbridge pipeline project in northern BC and, here on the south coast, the *Species at Risk Act* was once again upheld in the Federal Court. The word on the street was that the federal Government would soon react by making changes to a variety of environmental protection laws, and those changes would be dramatic.

We feared the worst, and in late April our fears became reality. The Government revealed the major changes it planned for the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and the *Fisheries Act*, along with some initial changes to the *Species at Risk Act*—all buried within an omnibus “Budget”.

Like most environmental groups, we have been wading our way through the Budget’s legislative details, with much expert help from our colleagues at Ecojustice Canada and West Coast Environmental Law. Here is a short review of what these changes mean:

FISHERIES

Amendments to Canada’s *Fisheries Act* will severely reduce (or in many cases eliminate) **fish habitat protection**, by narrowing what species are protected. The use of language is key: according to Government officials, the amended Act will protect “fish that Canadians value”—meaning some species and their habitat will likely be left newly vulnerable to harm from development projects.

The changes also appear to initially limit, and in the longer term (whenever Cabinet so decides, which DFO says might be six months from now), *eliminate* the existing prohibition on harmful alteration or destruction of habitat, other than when such harm would be “permanent”. This would leave species from coast to coast to coast open to habitat loss and population decline.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Notable among the changes in the new *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (2012)* are **rigid timelines** for resource extraction review processes, and fewer, more **narrowly focused** environmental assessments. These changes could result in environmental destruction through rushed, ill-conceived projects, with taxpayers on the hook for future clean-up costs.

Even more disturbing is the **exclusion** of concerned organizations, citizens and independent experts from the environmental review process or panel hearings for pipelines and other projects.

In addition Cabinet will now be granted **authority to override the National Energy Board** if it turns down an application—which essentially means that politics will override independent assessment and expertise. What this mean for our oceans, lakes, streams and land defies imagination, and here on the south coast, it could mean a big green light for Kinder Morgan’s pipeline expansion plan (see page 1).

UNDEMOCRATIC PROCESS

These are frightening times, when the “environment”—the very air we breathe and the water we drink—are deemed impediments to short term, narrowly focused economic growth.

But as shocking as these changes are, what is most distressing is the fact that they are **being imposed** outside of any reasoned discussion or democratic process. There were no White Papers, no public consultation, no Parliamentary Committee discussions—no effort at all to assess whether these changes were needed to ensure the best protection of our land and water, before they went into the omnibus Budget.

Instead, the federal government has presented the changes as a virtual fait accompli, written as if by the resource development industries themselves (most notably the oil, gas and mining sectors).

Discussion of how to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and implementation of environmental laws is something we would all like to see. But couching the weakening of environmental protection under the rationalization of “efficiency” is disingenuous at best, reckless at worst.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

If these changes are implemented their damage will be felt for decades to come. The new laws may be passed very soon—perhaps even before this newsletter reaches you—but that doesn’t mean the story is over.

All of the changes related to fish habitat will require either additional new regulations, or a Cabinet Order, before they can effectively replace our current fish habitat protection laws—which means that anyone who’s concerned needs to act now.

The following list of online resources has information about the planned changes, their potential impacts and opportunities for you to let our federal leaders hear your concerns:

- **Fisheries Act Under Attack:** includes links to a letter you can sign and an 8-page legal backgrounder by Ecojustice Canada on the planned changes: www.GeorgiaStrait.org/FisheriesActUnderAttack
- **Save Canada’s Environmental Laws:** website with information, further resources and an action centre: www.envirolawsmatter.ca
- **Myths and Realities**—the 2012 federal budget and environmental laws, by West Coast Environmental Law: www.wcel.org/sites/default/files/Environmental%20Assesment_Myths%20and%20Realities%20March%202009.pdf
- **EnviroLaw Watch**—information and resources from Ecojustice Canada on defending Canada’s environmental laws: www.ecojustice.ca/envirolaw_watch

New skipper at the helm

GSA is delighted to welcome **Michelle Young** to the helm of our Clean Marine BC program!

Michelle is a familiar face to GSA members: for the past five years she has been on our staff in various other capacities. But while many of you have likely met Michelle, either in GSA's Nanaimo office (as a chartered accountant she works part time as our Financial Coordinator) or during her work on our Salmon Aquaculture Campaign, you may not be aware of her nautical background.

Michelle says that salt water is in her veins. She has been a lifelong boater and she loves to get out on the water as often as she can—and when she can't, she's happy to hang out at a marina. She is a passionate kayaker and has raced competitively in outriggers and dragon boats. These days her 16-foot speedboat is the "ferry" that carries her through the tidal passes that lead to her home on the shores of remote Sonora Island—a not surprising choice of residence for Michelle, who grew up on Gilford Island and has always lived close to the ocean, on Vancouver Island's inside waters.



Photo: Brian Bishop

Michelle has launched into her new role with enthusiasm, and looks forward to working with the boating community and marinas, continuing to expand our Clean Marine BC eco-rating program. She was recently at Maple Bay Marina's Wooden Boat Festival and Nanaimo's annual Floating Boat Show. If you missed her there, you can catch her later this summer at the Vancouver Wooden Boat Festival on Granville Island (August 23-26) and other events around the Strait.

Michelle welcomes invitations to meet with marinas, boating clubs and other groups, to give a presentation or workshop, provide info or have an informal discussion about how we can all reduce our impacts on our cruising waters. You can contact her

at cmbc@georgiastrait.org, or via our Nanaimo office (250-753-3459).

Georgia Strait Alliance would like to acknowledge the generous support of our **Clean Marine BC Program partners** at BC Gaming, BC Marine Trades Association, McLean Foundation, Mountain Equipment Co-op, TD Friends of the Environment, Vancouver International Boat Show, and Victoria Foundation.

Vessel sewage law now in force

by Michelle Young

This summer the waters of the Strait of Georgia and beyond should be that much cleaner, as Transport Canada's vessel sewage regulations came into full force on May 5th, after their five-year phase-in.

While compliance may be challenging for some, especially owners of small vessels, discharging raw sewage can bring some potentially serious environmental and health impacts. A particular concern is any area where boaters congregate in large numbers, such as marinas and anchorages. The regulations aim to eliminate the discharge of raw sewage in ecologically sensitive areas such as anchorages and bays, and to prevent any risk to human health where people may swim or harvest shellfish.

Essentially the regulations state that:

- **raw sewage** cannot be discharged overboard within **3** nautical miles of shore
- **treated sewage** cannot be discharged within **1** nautical mile of shore, and
- in those cases where you are allowed to discharge overboard, you must do so while travelling at a **minimum 4 knots**, or at your fastest feasible boat speed, in the **deepest, fastest flowing waters furthest from shore** and preferably during an ebb tide.

The regulations also set out a list of specific designated areas where any discharge of raw sewage is prohibited (established as no-discharge zones by BC several years ago).



Free, solar-powered EcoBarge pump-out in Nanaimo.

Photo courtesy Nanaimo Port Authority

Sewage treatment may not be an option for smaller vessels—and even if you can afford an onboard treatment system, it may not treat to the standards required—so if you have a marine toilet, you will need to use a holding tank. It should have a deck fitting for discharging at pump-outs as well as an overboard discharge valve.

If you are unable to install a holding tank, then a porta-potty or composting toilet may be suitable. However, check with the regulations as there are specific requirements with these options as well.

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New fish farm diseases threaten wild salmon

by Ruby Berry

Our coast continues to be haunted by the specter of a massive die-off of wild salmon from diseases for which they have no natural immunity.

Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA) has wreaked havoc on salmon farms in other parts of the world, and the ISA virus was detected here in BC by independent researchers last year. Unfortunately though, the reports are sketchy and inconclusive due at least in part to what appears to be a government cover-up (see *Spring 2012 issue of Strait Talk*).

It now appears that another worrisome virus and related disease have been found in farmed salmon sold in BC supermarkets.

Scientist Alexandra Morton recently bought 45 samples of BC-raised farmed Atlantic salmon at supermarkets in the Vancouver area and had them tested at the World Animal Health lab in Prince Edward Island. She reports that 44 out of the 45 samples returned positive results for **piscine reovirus**. In some of the scientific literature, piscine reovirus has been linked to the fish disease Heart and Skeletal Muscle Inflammation, which was first detected in Norway.

Given the reluctance of our federal agencies to comprehensively monitor and test farmed fish, along with the lack of cooperation by salmon farming companies, Alexandra's unusual method of collection may prove to be the only feasible way to discover the full spectrum of disease in farmed salmon.

Fish pathologist Gary Marty of BC's Ministry of Agriculture has confirmed that in 2010, piscine reovirus was found in 75% of farmed salmon tested—but that this was not brought to the attention of the Cohen Inquiry (see page 7) because there was no indication the virus is causing disease to the farmed fish.

GSA and our colleagues in the Conservation Coalition asked for the Cohen Inquiry to be re-convened, in order to document this latest information and its potential impacts on Fraser River salmon, but our request was turned down.

Even if this specific virus or disease turns out not to be what devastated wild salmon returning to the Fraser in 2009 (the

Taxpayer on the hook

While there has never been any legal requirement for operators of open net cage farms to prevent the transfer of disease to wild salmon, government and industry officials have always assured us that the fear of financial loss would be a great incentive to keep farmed salmon free of disease.

However, it now appears that the costs of fish lost to disease will be borne not by salmon farming companies, but by Canadian taxpayers—not to mention wild salmon, which are at risk of infection from the farms.

The federal government has announced it will compensate Cooke Aquaculture of Nova Scotia for the hundreds of thousands of salmon it ordered the company to destroy, after confirmed cases of Infectious Salmon Anemia were found in the company's fish.

According to the Canadian Fish Inspection Agency, the amount of compensation is intended to reflect the reasonable market value that an owner could expect to receive for the fish, and may also include costs related to destruction and disposal of the fish.

There goes that long-assured "incentive" to keep our waters safe for wild salmon.

focus of the Inquiry), the problem of disease in our waters remains huge. Net cage salmon farms, with their massive density of fish, serve as very effective incubators for sea lice and disease—no matter whether they originate on the farm or in the wild.

The simple reality is that as long as farmed and wild fish share the same water, there is no effective means of preventing diseases from being transferred between them. The only effective means of ensuring that diseases incubating in salmon farms do not threaten wild salmon is to move the farms to closed containment.

Closed Containment

by Ruby Berry

This spring, after years of innovation and of tackling red tape, Agrimarine Holdings Inc. harvested its first batch of Chinook salmon grown entirely in a closed, floating tank in the ocean.

The company was forced to harvest a few months earlier than planned, when an unprecedented extreme storm brought hurricane force winds, damaging the containment structure and enabling the escape of about 2700 fish. Agrimarine has since redesigned the outflow technology to prevent such an escape from occurring again.

Despite this unfortunate loss of fish, the harvest was considered a success by the company. Approximately 140,000 ►

Harvest time at Agrimarine's closed tank farm at Middle Bay, near Campbell River.
Photo courtesy Agrimarine



End-run around the public: *Fish farms to expand*

by Ruby Berry

Thanks to widespread public concern for the safety of wild salmon, fish farm companies have been effectively prevented from increasing the number of open net salmon farm sites in BC, especially in environmentally sensitive areas. However, one company has found a creative way to get around this limitation—and if it succeeds, others are sure to follow.

Marine Harvest Canada plans to transfer production licenses from some of its farms that have not been operational for many years, to two of its active sites.

The Norwegian-owned company—BC's largest salmon farming company—has applied to Fisheries & Oceans Canada (DFO) to increase production at Shelter Bay, and will likely make a similar application for nearby Marsh Bay, where it has already significantly enlarged the physical size of its farm.

Unlike applications for new sites, amendments to increase size or production numbers *do not require public input*, nor are production increases subject to environmental review. If the amendments are approved, production at these sites could increase by as much as 35%.

Marsh Bay and Shelter Bay are on the mainland shore, across from northern Vancouver Island. These open net cage sites lie directly in the path of out-migrating Cultus Lake sockeye salmon—a Fraser River stock that has been recommended for emergency listing as an endangered population by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada.

Increased production at these farms will inevitably increase the risk of transfers of diseases and sea lice to wild fish. As well, the impact of chemicals and waste on the immediate marine ecosystem will undoubtedly rise.

DFO recently made a commitment to withhold any new decisions on marine finfish applications, pending the report of the Cohen Inquiry (see sidebar). Although approving Marine Harvest's applications would fly in the face of this commitment, DFO appears poised to do exactly that.

The Cohen Commission of Inquiry was recently granted a three-month extension, and is now due to deliver its final report and recommendations by September 30.

Between now and then Judge Cohen must consider the evidence before him: 900 written submissions along with 14,000 pages of transcripts and 2100 exhibits, from the more than 160 witnesses who testified at the Commission's hearings.

The Cohen Commission has been investigating the reasons behind the precipitous decline of sockeye salmon in the Fraser River in 2009, and is expected to deliver recommendations for improving the future sustainability of the fishery.

Putting it bluntly...

Finding applications for new salmon farms to be vastly unpopular with the BC public, the industry and DFO are making use of bureaucratic loopholes to increase the size of the existing farms—and they are doing it in secret.

Shelter Bay and Marsh Bay are likely just the beginning.

Any increase in production at open net cage salmon farms along the BC coast will increase the impacts of sea lice and disease on wild salmon—including threatened and endangered salmon stocks.

DFO has no mechanism for assessing even the existing impacts from open net cage salmon farms on migrating wild salmon—let alone the increased and cumulative impacts that production increases will bring.

Repeatedly the people of BC have called for an end to open net cage salmon farming and a transition to closed containment. Until our government heeds this call and the industry makes this change, any applications to increase production **must be denied**.

For more info on the Shelter and Marsh Bay issues and background, see www.GeorgiaStrait.org.

proves successful

lbs of market-sized Chinook salmon (from 4 to 6 lbs each) were gathered and sold.

As well, the grow-out proved successful in demonstrating that, as GSA has long maintained, many of the environmental concerns that plague salmon farms can be addressed through closed containment:

- the fish were grown without any pesticides or antibiotics
- sea lice were effectively controlled
- there was no interaction with or predation by marine mammals, and
- the fish waste was collected rather than being allowed to pollute the ocean.

The company feels that the harvest results prove the commercial value of the tank technology for sustainable aquaculture, and it is proceeding with the next phase of the project. New, redesigned tanks are currently being manufactured and will be installed on schedule, along with the upgraded pilot tank.

Agrimarine is a BC-based company focused on developing sustainable salmon farming, and has demonstration projects underway in Norway and China as well as here in BC. More info on their technology and projects is available at: www.agrimarine.com.

Thinking ahead to make a difference

People choose to support Georgia Strait Alliance's work financially in a variety of ways. Perhaps you are a monthly donor, spreading your contribution evenly throughout the year. Perhaps you give your donation as a single gift once a year. Or you might even be one of those who give three or four times a year, inspired by the arrival of our newsletter in your mailbox.

Increasingly—perhaps because we are all aging—donors seem to be thinking about how they would like to continue to support GSA after they have passed on. Recently, two of our supporters passed away. Both had made the important decision to leave a bequest to GSA, and we'd like to share a little about who they were and how their thoughtful planning is helping us.



Photo: Jean Wyenberg

The remarkable Jacqueline Cecil-Sears, performing at a 2006 event for Gabriola Island's rescue group "Cats Alive" (thus the leopard-skin leotard).



Jacqueline in her early days.

Jacqueline opened her own dance school on Gabriola and also taught in Victoria and Nanaimo. She became a regular performer in the Gabriola Island Singers and in Victoria's Company One Theatre, of which she was a founding member.

Jacqueline is remembered by colleagues, friends and family as gentle and disciplined, with a fun, lively spirit and charismatic spark—and as an amazing dancer right up until the final months of her life. She could still put her foot over her head at 78 years old!

Jacqueline passed away in 2010, and bequeathed a portion of her estate to the SPCA, and another to Georgia Strait

JACQUELINE CECIL-SEARS

wore many hats. Born in 1930, her love of dance led her to study at the School of American Ballet in New York City, and she became a performer and a teacher of ballet, modern dance, improvisation, voice and acting. A founding member of the Joffrey Ballet in New York City, she was a bit of a celebrity in the Gabriola Island community that she called home for her last three decades. She also turned her hand to farming after buying land on the Island, where her farm produced hay, wool and strawberries—a true renaissance woman!

A trip through the Gulf Islands soon after her marriage in 1957 led to purchasing the old farm. An experienced dance teacher (having taught in New York City as well as several other US cities and universities in the US and Canada), Jacqueline opened her own

Alliance—the largest cash bequest GSA has ever received, to date. These funds will be used to support our core work, with particular attention on our Community Atlas initiative and our campaign to oppose the increase in tanker traffic in the Strait. We believe that Jacqueline, who loved animals and nature, would approve.

STUART ARMOUR was also very generous, but unlike Jacqueline, he was a very private person. For many years, GSA gratefully received his financial donations, which he delivered in person during hurried stops at our Nanaimo office. In fact, his visits were so brief, and he was gone so quickly, that only one of our staff ever managed to meet him despite the best efforts of several others to do so!

But we all knew who he was and appreciated him: his donations made him our largest individual donor for many consecutive years. Stuart stopped donating to GSA around 2004 when he fell ill, but some time after he died, we discovered that we had not been far from his thoughts as he set out his last wishes.

As part of his estate, Stuart asked his executor to disburse certain assets to charities he cared deeply about, including Georgia Strait Alliance. To our great amazement, the asset he bequeathed to GSA (with the proceeds from its sale to be split equally with our partner organization, Ecojustice) was Harlock Island.

Just under one acre, this precious little gem is in Page Passage, southeast of Canoe Cove on the Saanich Peninsula. You can see the details, along with a gallery of photos of the island, on the realtor's listing: www.owen-flood.com/real_estate_listings/view/listing-details/304491. (Please have a look, and if you know someone who'd be interested in purchasing the island, forward the listing to them.)

From time to time during his life Stuart had written GSA to ►



Photo courtesy Marc Owen-Flood

Harlock Island. Want to own a lovely little island in the Strait? Proceeds from its sale will help us protect the Strait for years to come, thanks to the wonderful generosity of Stuart Armour.

Growing opposition to tankers

Vancouver City Council and **Vancouver Parks Board** recently added their voices to a growing list of municipalities and agencies formally opposing an increase in crude oil tanker traffic through our waters. Council agreed to create a bylaw requiring pipeline operators and oil tankers using local waters to indemnify the City and existing local industries for the full projected cost of a worst-case spill (both cleanup costs and compensation for lost business).

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson has said he will do everything in his ability to prevent Vancouver from being turned into a shipping port for the tar sands, and the **Mayor of Burnaby** has also spoken out against the plan. The **Tsleil-Waututh First Nation**, through whose traditional territory the tankers transit, are also opposed to the expansion plan.

The City of Victoria and Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities have passed resolutions opposing

Kinder Morgan's plan to expand tanker traffic, and a Union of BC Municipalities' resolution last fall asked for the highest degree of environmental assessment and meaningful public consultation. As well, eight BC mayors and the Islands Trust have written to the National Energy Board urging a "robust" public consultation for any expansion applications.

GSA continues to provide relevant information to the public and decision-makers. See our updated citizen's guide to Oil Tankers in the Strait of Georgia, at www.GeorgiaStrait.org/tankersFAQ, and check our website for updates on this issue.

GSA is working for a solution to the growing threat of increased tanker traffic. We are calling for:

- *no pipeline development that would increase tanker traffic*
- *comprehensive public consultation regarding any proposed infrastructure projects and/or oil tanker increases*
- *in-depth risk analyses that consider the full ecological, social and financial consequences of a large spill here*
- *improved spill response for all types of fossil fuels and other dangerous chemicals in the region*
- *consideration of more extensive tug escort requirements, and ultimately,*
- *solutions that move us beyond our addiction to the whole oil economy while maintaining a healthy social fabric in BC.*



Tankers such as this could become a daily occurrence in Vancouver Harbour, tying up traffic in the Port as they transit both Narrows. Photo courtesy WCEL

Thinking ahead... *continued from page 8*

encourage us to keep up our efforts to win sewage treatment in Victoria and end netcage salmon farming in BC. These were among the issues he cared about, and once Harlock Island is sold, his incredibly generous legacy will help us to strengthen our effectiveness in tackling issues like these for many years to come.

It's hard for any of us to imagine how our own estate might benefit others—let alone our communities—long after we're gone. Jacqueline and Stuart each set a wonderful example, in thinking ahead and making an important decision about how their legacy could help the region they loved. To their friends and families, we promise that GSA will put their bequests to the most effective use possible, so that the Georgia Strait we all love so much will remain beautiful for all to enjoy—in part, thanks to them.

With thanks to <http://newsitem.com/news/mount-carmel-native-remembered-for-career-in-dance-1.711838#axzz1tZe0zoZq> for the archival photo and background information on Jacqueline .

Vessel Sewage... *continued from page 5*

You may find yourself in a situation in which the waterway is less than six nautical miles wide. In this event—and only if no pump outs are available in that area—you may discharge overboard, but be sure that you are meeting the conditions required for discharging (*listed on page 5*).

The fine for "discharging a proscribed pollutant" is \$250. You can view the full *Vessel Pollution and Dangerous Chemicals Regulations* at <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2012-69/index.html> (refer to Division 4 for its sewage section).

For a list of pump-out stations on the BC coast, visit www.GeorgiaStrait.org/sewagedisposalsites (and check back again, as we'll soon be replacing the list with an interactive map).

Clearly there are not enough pump-out stations on our coast and we would like to see government funding made available to help install more. In the meantime, we hope that complying with the regulations will not prove too onerous as boaters get out on the water to enjoy our wonderful summer boating season!

Comings and goings

At the end of March we said goodbye to **Lisa Winbourne**, who had coordinated our Clean Marine BC (CMBC) program for the past year. Lisa's experience within the boating community was a huge asset and we wish her good luck in her future endeavours.

Every cloud has a silver lining, it seems—so we are excited to announce that GSA staff member **Michelle Young** has taken on the role as our new Clean Marine BC coordinator. Michelle's lifelong experience on the water and long-time enthusiasm for GSA's green boating work make her ideally suited to this position. You can read more about Michelle on page 5.

At the end of February we bid goodbye to **Kathleen Fenner and Sarah Schmidt**, Communities Atlas project team members, when their temporary positions ended. We appreciate the enthusiasm they brought to the project and wish them all the best in their pursuits.

Last but by no means least, as this newsletter went to print we were preparing to say a big thank you and goodbye to three Board members who are retiring at our AGM in June.



Brent England has served on our Board since 2006, first as Treasurer and then as President for the past five years. With his passion for the ocean and his wonderfully dry humour, Brent led the Board with ease, always available to share his knowledge and provide guidance as we addressed a broad range of decisions—especially important during 2008's economic downturn that hit us so hard. **Stan Boychuk** (outgoing Treasurer) joined our Board in 2007 and **Anne Murray** in 2010. We're grateful to

all of them for the tremendous contributions they have brought, and we hope they'll continue to be involved in GSA in other ways. (Our Fall *Strait Talk* will include info on the new Board and a report of our AGM.)

Watch for us...

Once again this summer, GSA will be at community events around the region, promoting the natural environment and offering you a variety of ways to help ensure your Strait remains healthy.

Our outreach team is looking forward to meeting you. They want to learn what you know and love about Georgia Strait—as we continue to gather input for our Georgia Strait Communities Atlas and Protection Principles project. You will be able to view our evolving Communities Atlas as well as learn about environmental protection and stewardship—including, for example, how you can help stop increased oil tanker traffic in Georgia Strait and demand better preparation for oil spills.

As well as meeting and talking with people around the Strait, our summer outreach team will be selling tickets for our 'Celebrate the Strait' Raffle, which has four great prizes. Be sure to get your tickets—they are a fun way to support our cause while giving you a chance to win some great prizes. Please see page 3 for details.



GSA and Coastal Community Credit Union cleaned beaches in Courtenay (above), Chemainus (below), Campbell River (page 11) and four more towns on Vancouver Island.

Beaches cleaned up

GSA was delighted to partner with Coastal Community Credit Union employees and their families this spring in the Georgia Strait Coastal Cleanup.

Over three separate days in April and May (including Earth Day), about 175 volunteers of all ages took part. Together we cleaned seven beaches on Vancouver Island, at Campbell River, Courtenay, Parksville, Nanaimo (both Departure Bay and the Nanaimo Estuary), Chemainus and Sidney.

As well as collecting and removing trash, volunteers completed data sheets noting the types and number of pieces of debris found. This information, once collated, will be forwarded to the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup for use in its annual report on marine debris. The international effort involves volunteers from over 150 countries who are working to rid the ocean of harmful trash, and the annual report is an important tool in educating and inspiring people to take action on marine debris.



What's new in the Strait?

The BC government has signed an agreement to purchase the land connecting **QUADRA ISLAND'S** beautiful Octopus Islands and Small Inlet marine parks, subject to securing the necessary \$6.15 million by late September. Connecting the two parks, which lie on opposite sides of the narrowest part of Quadra, has long been a goal of local residents and conservationists. The property includes an historic portage trail, a rare freshwater spring and part of the trail to Newton Lake.

Migratory **PURPLE MARTINS** began arriving on the south coast in late April, to the delight of bird watchers. Their return marks a success story: from a low of fewer than 10 breeding pairs in all of BC in 1985, the birds are now nesting in colonies in marine areas around our region as far north as Campbell River. The recovery is thanks to a major volunteer effort to install purple martin nest boxes that help to deter house sparrows, starlings, and predation by gulls.

Burnco Rock Products of Alberta is proposing a massive **GRAVEL MINE** and crushing facility in Howe Sound. The company wants to extract from one to four million tonnes annually from McNab Creek estuary, creating a 55-metre deep industrial pit covering 77 hectares. DFO says the project "presents a high risk to salmon and salmon habitat" and that the area could be home to up to 20 species at risk. The proposal is under review by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (info: www.ceaa.gc.ca/050/details-eng.cfm?evaluation=54754).

About 3,000 coho salmon were released into the **GOLDSTREAM RIVER** on Vancouver Island in April, a year after a tanker-truck crash spilled more than 40,000 liters of gas and 650 litres of oil into the river and estuary, killing much of the plant and animal life. Over 600 tonnes of contaminated soil were removed after the accident, and water quality has since shown a dramatic improvement, but the full cleanup could take several more years. The driver of the truck has been charged with three counts of environmental damage.

Gateway Pacific Terminals is seeking approval to build what would be the largest **COAL-EXPORTING TERMINAL** in the US. The facility, to be sited at Cherry Point, north of Bellingham, would be able to export up to 54 million tons of coal and other commodities. Ships using the terminal would include massive Capesize class vessels as well as Panamax, and pass through Haro or Rosario Strait—which already carry heavy traffic from Vancouver's crude oil, container and coal ports and the oil refineries at Cherry Point and Anacortes.

In a scientific paper published in the journal *Limnology and Oceanography* in April, researchers said they can now conclusively prove that ocean acidification is at least part of the cause of the massive **OYSTER DIE-OFFS** that have been observed in Oregon and Washington waters for the past eight years.

The federal government plans to provide \$738,000 from its gas tax fund to restore a stretch of **BOWKER CREEK** adjacent to Oak Bay High School in Victoria. Over the past century much of the Creek has been paved, piped, culverted and otherwise altered. The restoration was proposed by the Bowker Creek Initiative, a collaborative group that has produced a 100-year action plan to restore the beleaguered watershed. (Info: <http://www.bowkercreekinitiative.ca/>)

The Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team has launched an effort to reintroduce **WESTERN BLUEBIRDS** to Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. The brightly coloured birds were once common in the Garry oak woodland/meadow ecosystems, but are now locally extinct. On nearby San Juan Island, a similar initiative has been successful. Over the next five years the group hopes to bring in 90 pairs of birds and establish a critical mass for breeding.

Although air pollution has been generally decreasing in the Lower Mainland, **GROUND LEVEL OZONE** levels have shown a small but steady increase over the past decade, and Metro Vancouver officials are trying to determine the reasons for this. Ground level ozone is created by chemical reactions between nitrogen oxide emissions and volatile organic compounds in the presence of sunlight, and high levels can have detrimental effects on human health, crops and other vegetation.



Beach cleanup photos by Ruby Berry, Cheryl Onciul and Michelle Young

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GEORGIA STRAIT ALLIANCE IS ALSO GRATEFUL FOR GIFTS MADE IN MEMORY OF Keith Horry and for GIFTS MADE IN HONOUR OF Ralph and Lannie Keller, Tracy Myers' Birthday and the Spotted Prawns of Georgia Strait.

Thanks to all who provided support from January 31 to May 3, 2012, including others not listed due to space limitations.

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

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

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