



Georgia Strait Alliance

FALL 2018

STRAIT TALK

Caring for Our Coastal Waters

www.GeorgiaStrait.org

Pivoting to New Pathways

Plans and initiatives don't always unfold as they're initially conceived. But changes often bring unexpected opportunities that can provide new possibilities if you can pivot and quickly react, and also adapt.

At Georgia Strait Alliance, we can do just that. We're lean and nimble—and when the need arises, we're able to effectively redirect our efforts to where they'll have the biggest impact for communities like yours, as we work together to protect our coastal waters.

We're continually engaging, refining and swiveling to advance our influence and make a difference that matters. We've escalated our work on Southern Resident orcas, are intervening in the new environmental assessment for the Trans Mountain project, and our climate liability initiatives are expanding throughout the region.

These are examples of how, with your support, we're able to get beyond obstacles to find effective ways to have an impact and advance marine conservation.



photo: Flickr user, o-v104



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STRAIT THOUGHTS

Connecting with Communities



by Christianne Wilhelmson, Executive Director

I was recently asked by one of our funders to participate in a workshop focused on shared learning in the environmental sector. I spoke about the importance of being connected to community, and how we can empower, inspire, and activate on-the-ground efforts. As I was preparing for this workshop, it occurred to me that so much of the work Georgia Strait Alliance does today is rooted in the work we did at our very beginning—and that means we're staying true to the unique character of being a regionally-focussed group.

The takeaways from my presentation were that it's so important to develop your efforts and campaigns in communities, with communities, as we are doing with our Climate Justice work ([p3](#)). Years ago, I led GSA's Toxic Smart program, where we trained people to provide information about toxic home cleaning products so that they could share those learnings with their communities. We provided the information and support, but remained in the background because: who better to lead in a community than a member of that community?

I also talked about how we need to be hopeful in how we tell our stories to supporters, because it can take

decades to see real change. We must keep ourselves and those around us buoyed for the long journey so we can make change that lasts (read about our return to the open net cage salmon farming campaign on [p5](#)).

Connecting with people of diverse backgrounds and lived experiences means we need to be innovating with the tools and approaches that we use. As a very early adopter of the new technology of websites in the 1990s, along with email and tele-commuting, GSA remains an organization that challenges itself to adapt, while we invest more time and energy in understanding how to connect with the communities that rely on a healthy Georgia Strait. This also applies to conversations taking place in the wider world around equity and diversity, which we are also undertaking within our own organization today.

It's always a gift to be able to reflect and it reminds me of the importance of knowing our history here at GSA, so we never stray far from what makes us unique and effective as a voice for the Salish Sea.

Thank you for continuing to make it possible for us to innovate and keep making a difference for this beautiful inland sea.

CLIMATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Taking on the Majors *with municipalities*

The heyday is over for the Carbon Majors—the 20 companies responsible for one-third of global and historic fossil fuels. It's time for them to pay their fair share for the impact their operations have on the climate and the damages caused to our communities. Whether [climate impacts](#) manifest as emergency response to storms, wildfires and displacement, destruction of storm water systems, or infrastructure for drinking water and low lying roads, municipalities are the first responders.

The reality is that right now municipal tax payers are on the hook, and responsible for 100 percent of community costs. But, it doesn't have to be this way; we have options to fight back—and that's part of what Georgia Strait Alliance's Climate Accountability campaign is looking to achieve. GSA is asking local people and organizations to join us on a path to action that's supported by climate law, while encouraging the carbon majors into a future with renewables.

With momentum from this campaign, we've seen 15 municipalities in BC send letters to the Carbon Majors.

These letters are as varied and unique as the communities that have sent them, and they're the first step in putting the corporations that have profited the most from fossil fuel development on notice that the polluter must pay for the billions that were made while externalizing the costs to us. These letters briefly capture local impacts and allows councillors to take stock of the impacts they are already experiencing.

Carbon Majors graphic (top) courtesy: Antony Turner, [Real World Visuals & Climate Accountability Institute](#)

photo (bottom): Talia MacDonald



What is Climate Accountability?

It's about fossil fuel carbon-producing companies being accountable for the harm that their operations and products are having on communities and the environment.

What is Climate Liability?

It's about bringing far-flung global stakeholders into conversations about the local impacts their products are having.

Bring your community onboard

GSA is looking for the next community to bring into this campaign, which works best when locals take the lead! We've supported community delegations to two councils by convening public and planning meetings, supporting locals interested in their own meetings, and by partnering with other organizations in the community. Sign up for your community or email Anna.

www.georgiastrait.org/SavetheSalishSea
anna@georgiastrait.org

ORCAS CAN'T WAIT

Refusing an emergency order for orcas

Following a lawsuit filed in the Federal Court by Georgia Strait Alliance—in coordination with four other conservation organization, and with representation by Ecojustice—the Ministers of Fisheries and Oceans, and of Environment and Climate Change recommended Cabinet issue an emergency order to protect endangered killer whales under the Species at Risk Act.

But the federal cabinet refused even though time is running out for [Southern Resident orcas](#). These apex predators are vital to our marine ecosystems and the population has dwindled to a mere 74 killer whales.

WHAT NOW?

The federal government has committed to implementing tangible changes by next April to help the plight of Southern Resident killer whales. An emergency order would have allowed more actions to happen faster, but the \$61.5 investment is encouraging news—and it has come about because of your support for our litigation and from your advocacy!

DID YOU KNOW...?

- Southern Resident orcas have had no successful births in three years
- Only five female orcas in this population are reproducing with consistency
- Mating is being done exclusively with the same male
- None were seen in May 2018 in their critical habitat—a first in 42 years

***An emergency order** is a powerful tool that can rapidly cut through bureaucratic red tape to implement the most effective and timely actions required to protect endangered species under the Species At Risk Act.*

In the 15 years since Southern Resident orcas were listed as endangered under the Species At Risk Act, 54 whales have died

Hosting events around the Strait

From tadpoles and tattoos to craft beer and pottery, Georgia Strait Alliance is connecting with communities with diverse events to raise awareness about the beauty and the threats to our marine ecosystem.

Read more: www.georgiastrait.org/summer2018

EVENTS

- Festival of Ocean Films, Pender Harbour & Victoria
- Pods & Pottery Paint Night, Victoria
- Tide Pool School, Victoria
- Splash & Flash Tattoos, Victoria
- Ales for Whales, Victoria
- Orca Vigil, Victoria
- Lessons Learned from Killer Whales—a presentation by The Marine Detective Jackie Hildering, Nanaimo

Thank you to everyone who helped make these events a success!



SALMON FARMING

Putting fish farms on notice Rallies and the Province's big decision

With our partners Living Oceans Society and Watershed Watch Salmon Society, Georgia Strait Alliance co-hosted rallies at the constituency offices of five MLAs in BC to urge the Province to let fish farm leases expire when they came up for renewal in June.

The BC government decided **to introduce new rules for renewing fish farm leases** starting in 2022. At that time, tenures will only be granted when operators satisfy two conditions:

- Approval is granted from First Nations whose territory would house the farm operations
- Proof is provided to show that operations will not adversely impact wild salmon.



photo: Simon Ager



Peaceful rallies were held in:

- **Victoria** at Premier John Horgan's Constituency Office
- **Vancouver** at Environment Minister George Heyman's Constituency Office
- **Courtenay** at the Constituency Office of MLA Ronna-Rae Leonard, Chair of the Agriculture and Fish Committee
- **Campbell River** at Transport Minister Claire Trevena's Constituency Office
- **Port Moody** at MLA Rick Glumac's Constituency Office

Fish farms in the Broughton Archipelago

In the Broughton area, fish farms on First Nations' territories are now operating on month-to-month tenures as government-to-government negotiations, between the Province and Broughton-area First Nations, continue. Tenure agreements may change depending on the outcome of these conversations.



photo: Nick Procylo

WATERFRONT INITIATIVE Widening the waterfront conversation

Georgia Strait Alliance's Executive Director Christianne Wilhelmson and Urban Land Institute's Vice-Chair Duncan Wlodarczak (who's also a GSA Board member), along with Andrew Pask of the Vancouver Public Space Network, led the best attended open-air conversation that SFU's City Conversations has ever had! The discussion centered on the future of Vancouver's waterfront, with a focus on our [State of the Waterfront findings](#).

DOWN AT THE DOCK

Getting things shipshape

While Clean Marine BC (CMBC) certified our first marina for environmental best practices in 2008, the highest-anchor rating proved to be elusive for many years until False Creek Harbour Authority secured the distinction as the only top-rated facility in 2014. However, beginning this year, that five-anchor rating is an accolade that's now shared with seven more marinas!

CLIMBING TO 5

Maple Bay Marina was initially CMBC certified at four anchors. After a few years of hard work on eco-improvements, it achieved the top five-anchor rating this summer. So too did the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, which moved the dial on environmental stewardship at its facilities from three anchors to five. Both have:

- ✓ Programs well underway to upgrade docks to enclosed flotation, and replace toxic creosote pilings with concrete or steel
- ✓ Replaced lighting with high efficiency units and solar LED elements
- ✓ Float-home communities connected to sewage systems
- ✓ Waste reduction and recycling programs that divert multiple waste streams from landfills



Sewage system connection and energy efficient heat pump at float home in Maple Bay Marina



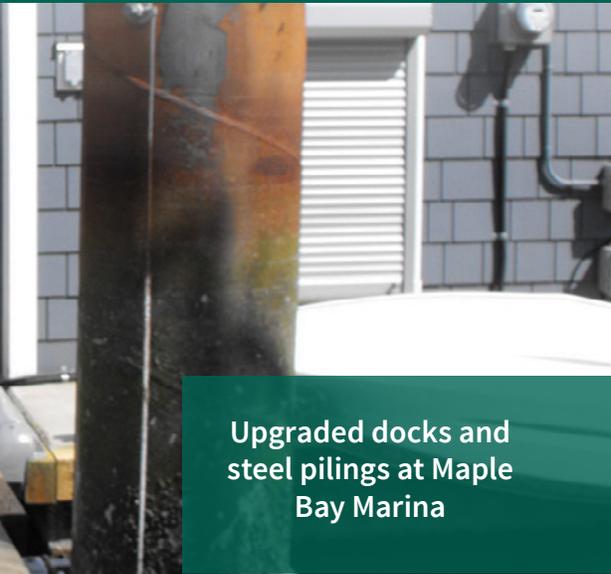
We've certified seven facilities with the top ranking this year!

- Greater Victoria Harbour Authority's four marinas in Victoria Inner Harbour
- Maple Bay Marina in Duncan
- RVYC's Scott Point Outstation on Salt Spring Island
- RVYC's Secret Cove Outstation on the Sunshine Coast



photo: Michelle Young

GVHA's pumpout boat provides sewage disposal service to boaters in Victoria Inner Harbour



Upgraded docks and steel pilings at Maple Bay Marina



Spill response kit on dock & boat sewage pumpout system at RVYC's Scott Point

photos: Chris Boulsbee

The Royal Vancouver Yacht Club has earned the top-anchor rating at two of its eight outstations. Actions that helped to nudge the Secret Cove and Scott Point outstations to five anchors include:

- ☑ Upgrading docks to eliminate any exposed foam flotation and replacing with more environmentally friendly materials
- ☑ Installing a new boat sewage pumpout station and disposal facility
- ☑ Maintaining properties in a natural parklike state, and avoiding toxic chemicals in landscaped areas

www.georgiastrait.org/CleanMarineBC



GOING BEYOND

CMBC-certified facilities continue to raise the bar by their commitment to reducing contaminants from entering our waters, conserving energy and water, and protecting the marine environment and wildlife—but many don't stop there. They're also:

- ☑ Installing and monitoring Purple Martin nesting boxes
- ☑ On pilings yet to be replaced, wrapping toxic creosote pilings to increase the survivability of herring eggs
- ☑ Hanging nets under docks to provide additional herring spawning habitat
- ☑ Protecting and restoring eelgrass beds
- ☑ Supporting municipal air quality monitoring
- ☑ Deploying reefballs in habitat restoration project
- ☑ Preserving Garry Oak meadow

photos: Eelgrass bed next to Maple Bay Marina (David Messier), Garry Oaks at RVYC Tugboat Island (Michelle Young)

WATER'S EDGE DAY

This year's community celebration of Vancouver's waterfront in Kitsilano started off a bit wet, but the sun came through to close out a fabulous day! There were over 700 people enjoying the free, family-friendly celebrations, with canoe and kayak tours, Coast Guard vessel tours, puppet shows and storytelling, as well as free admission to the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

Special thanks to our event sponsor Port of Vancouver as well as to media sponsor The Georgia Strait and event co-host Vancouver Maritime Museum. We would also like to thank the Bullitt Foundation and Lush for their support, and to acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia.



photo: Gavin Kennedy

GETTING CREATIVE & increasing YOUR IMPACT

Your support helps GSA to be adaptable and to respond when new opportunities emerge within our continually changing social, environmental and political context. Supporters like you are finding innovative ways to increase the impact of their personal donations to advance marine conservation through ideas like these:



BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Brielle Smith raised \$105 for whales for her fourth birthday because she's "very concerned about the whales—they don't have enough to eat." Brielle's father topped up her donation to a total of \$300 to specifically support Georgia Strait Alliance's initiatives to protect Southern Resident orcas.

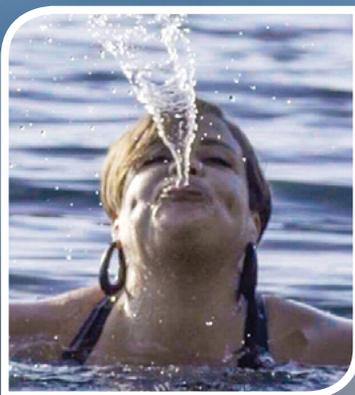
Garret Siemens, who turned 12-years-old, also donated \$50 of his birthday money to Georgia Strait Alliance. We suspect Garret knows a whole lot about whales and the importance of healthy marine ecosystems since his mom, Suzanne Siemens, used to be a GSA board member and is part of GSA's Advisory Council.

Thank you Brielle and Garret, our newest Young Stewards of the Strait —you're making a big difference!



Brielle proudly shows off her Young Steward of the Strait certificate

\$350 RAISED!



SWIM-A-THON

Salt Spring Island resident Rama Delarosa spent six days swimming 86 km around the entire island. She organized the event in which she swam for 40 hours in waters that are 15° Celsius to support orcas! Through the accompanying peer-to-peer fundraising campaign, **Rama and donors raised over \$12,700 (with the first \$10,000 matched by a long-time GSA donor)** for Georgia Strait Alliance's initiatives and advocacy work for this critically endangered species.

\$12,700 RAISED! Read more about Rama's swim and how her support is helping protect orcas in this blog:
www.georgiastrait.org/Swim2018



EMPLOYER MATCHING PROGRAMS

Some employers have formal Employee Giving programs in which they match personal donations to organizations that are close to the hearts of their staff members. Seattle-based **Amy Weiner** recently took advantage of such a program which saw her US\$500 donation to Georgia Strait Alliance matched 3-to-1 by her employer, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.



US\$2000 RAISED! Does your employer have a corporate matching program? www.georgiastrait.org/EmployerMatch

“The work GSA does is incredibly important and I’m grateful that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is so generous with their matching funds program which makes the funding of GSA projects go so much further! The health of the Salish Sea is critical for the sea life, people who depend and enjoy the sea and our climate. We are so lucky that the dedicated people of GSA are working so hard to protect this part of the world.”

~Amy Weiner

LEARN MORE

Legacy Giving:

www.georgiastrait.org/LegacyGiving

Corporate Giving:

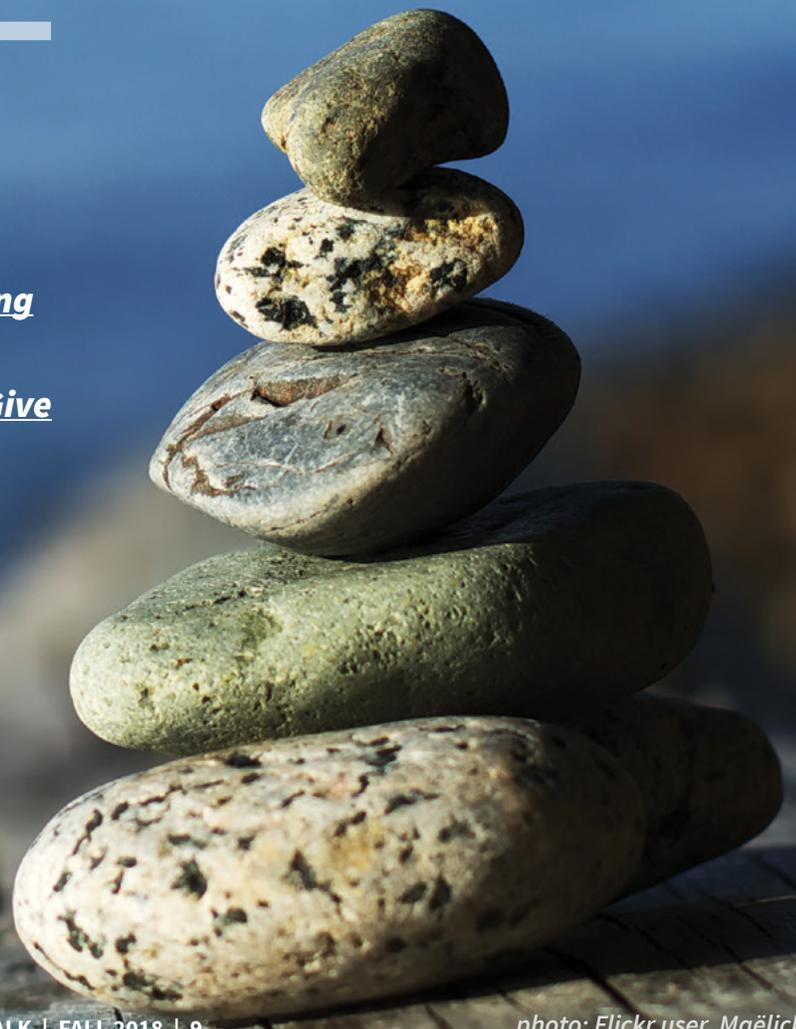
www.georgiastrait.org/CorporateGiving

Other Ways to Give:

www.georgiastrait.org/OtherWaysToGive

HAVE ANOTHER IDEA?

Contact us! giving@georgiastrait.org



TRANS MOUNTAIN

Re-examining Trans Mountain FOR ORCAS

After the recent quashing of the Trans Mountain approval, the National Energy Board is once again assessing the threats of this risky tanker-and-pipeline project. The Federal Court of Appeal required Prime Minister Trudeau's government to re-examine the impacts of project-related marine shipping, and provide a report to cabinet. Prime Minister Trudeau has indicated that this project, one that's now owned by Canadian taxpayers, "will get built."

Georgia Strait Alliance is once again an intervener in the new NEB process. We are seeking to influence the Board's recommendation, standing up for coastal communities and the marine ecosystems that shouldn't have to bear the brunt of this unnecessary expansion or be forced to accept significant climate impacts of new heavy oil infrastructure.

OUR SUBMISSION

Despite the short timeline, we coordinated with our allies and engaged with technical experts, to consider the evidence introduced in the last round to ensure that GSA presents the best evidence possible under this round's limited time and scope constraints. Many questions remain unanswered, including:

- Will the impacts of additional tanker noise on Southern Resident orcas further push this endangered species towards extinction?
- What is the behaviour of spilled bitumen in the Salish Sea?
- Do we have sufficient ability to respond to a diluted bitumen spill?



DID YOU KNOW....?

The Federal Court of Appeal found the NEB's environmental assessment considered only the pipeline and the marine terminal in its decision that granted approval to the Trans Mountain expansion project—not the impact of marine shipping on Southern Resident killer whales. The Court said this failure was "a critical error."



Find us on social media

@GeorgiaStraitBC

Sign up for Strait Up

Get timely info on important issues and actions needed to protect our waters with GSA's monthly e-newsletter.

www.georgiastrait.org/StayInformed

COMINGS & GOINGS

Welcome to...

Coralie Charland is our new Fundraising Assistant and **Erin Edwards** has joined as our Volunteer Coordinator.



Coralie holds a BSc in environmental science and an MSc in hydrogeology. She lives in Victoria, where she enjoys being among the old growth trees or along the coast, writing and reading, and practicing yoga.

Erin brings an educational outreach, strategic planning and volunteer management background to GSA where she's committed to connecting skilled professionals and passionate individuals with meaningful opportunities. She lives on Vancouver Island where she enjoys camping and hiking, with her loyal, new puppy!



We are also welcoming two new board members into the GSA fold: **Tess Acton** and **Zoe Greenberg**, who both live in Vancouver.



Tess is a lawyer with Maynard Kischer Stojicevic, working on immigration, refugee, and citizenship matters. She's lived in British Columbia for the last five years, and appreciates every day she gets to breathe the salt air and see the Georgia Strait waters.

Zoe is Regional Administrator at Esri Canada and a Geographic Information System (GIS) student, making her adept with geospatial mapping. She's excited to use her geographic skills and environmental passion to help solve critical environmental issues in BC.



Farewell to...

Rachael Merrett, our beloved Species Protection Coordinator and whale expert, is packing her bags for the sunnier skies of Mexico. We thank her immensely for the knowledge and passion she brought to our organization, and wish her well in her new adventures with sea turtles and humpback whales. We look forward to catching up with her in the summers when she'll be back in Victoria.

Alexandra Woodsworth, who was GSA's Energy Campaigner for four years, had decided to dedicate additional time to her two young children after her parental leave. We wish her and her family all the best!

We also bid farewell to directors **Marisa Cruickshank**, **David Lane**, and **Leslie Nolin**—and thank them for their invaluable contributions to the organization and its Fundraising, Personnel and Strategic Planning Committees.

Thank you to some of our recent funders and partners...

glasswaters
foundation



Tides Canada
President's
Discretionary Fund



PORT of
vancouver

THRESHOLD
FOUNDATION

CANADA SUMMER JOBS 2018

We also acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia.

YOU MAKE IT POSSIBLE!

Georgia Strait Alliance is proud of our recent accomplishments, which are possible because of your support, and the support of special people like Malindi Taylor.

“As a fifth generation shellfish farmer, it’s important to me and my family that shellfish is being grown and harvested in an environmentally sound way and without negative impacts on the waterways.

At Fanny Bay Oysters and Taylor Shellfish, we’re always working to ensure there is clean water for British Columbia and all of the Pacific Northwest because we wouldn’t be able to work if the marine environment wasn’t healthy.

I work really hard to ensure the communities where my family’s business has operations know the value of good water quality and are able to see that in the reflection of the product that gets farmed in areas of California, Hawaii, Washington and BC. And making people aware of issues, and getting them involved is something that Georgia Strait Alliance does well.

You have to care about the environment, if you want to have the seafood that you love to eat.”

~Malindi Taylor, fifth generation shellfish farmer, Fanny Bay Oysters and Taylor Shellfish



Read more:

www.georgiastrait.org/FannyBayOysters

Your business can make a difference too!

Contact us to find out how: giving@georgiastrait.org

Join Us!

Your tax deductible donation to Georgia Strait Alliance is an investment in our shared vision for our local waters, for today and future generations.

To donate today, call 250-753-3459, email gsa@GeorgiaStrait.org or visit

www.georgiastrait.org/donate

Strait Talk © Georgia Strait Alliance, 2018

photo: Fanny Bay Oysters