For years after joining Georgia Strait Alliance as a pollution campaigner, I heard frequently from people that we ‘punched above our weight.’ It was a compliment to the efficiency of our small but mighty group of staff and volunteers, and to the impact that we were having. But it is these words that spurred me to dream about how much deeper our impact would be if we had better tools to do our work and a few more talented people to tackle threats to the region and meet our mission of a healthy Georgia Strait.

Fast forward to today and I’m thrilled to see so many of these dreams coming true. When you read about the success we’ve achieved in the last year, know that it’s because your growing support has meant being able to expand our team throughout the region. We are out in the community, connecting with government and industry, and telling our stories more effectively than ever before. Being able to deepen our engagement gives us the ability to move issues more effectively—and that has meant only good things for the south coast.

You’ll see in these pages that our incredible team was able to push for measurable and impactful action to protect southern resident orcas, work with local residents to gain council support to hold the carbon majors to account, provide oil spill response training to boating facilities in the region and produce original research that shows how our spill response abilities are woefully inadequate.

And these are just the start.

Georgia Strait Alliance’s effectiveness comes from our approach to threats to this region—we identify solutions using the best available science and advocate over the long-term for change. We’re proving that with a stronger team, this model is working more effectively than ever.

To you, thank you for always being there with your support. You are part of the strength in our team and, together, we are creating a healthy future for our region and all of the communities that call the Georgia Strait home.

Christianne Wilhelmson
Executive Director
OUR MISSION

To protect and restore the marine environment and promote the sustainability of Georgia Strait, its adjoining waters, and communities.

What we do

Through our programs and initiatives, we:

• Protect the diversity of wildlife and their habitat.
• Restore the region’s water and air quality.
• Promote the social, cultural, economic and environmental sustainability of the region’s communities.
• Foster understanding and stewardship of the marine environment.
• Raise awareness of the links between the health of ecosystems and human communities.

photos: salmon - Bureau of Land Management, Water’s Edge Day - Gavin Kennedy, heron - pawpaw67 (flickr), orca - Lissett Tschenscher, kids - GSA, rally - Liz McDowell
“I’m amazed at GSA’s ability to bring important issues into focus. This year, we deepened the connection between orca health and the impact of noise and oil spills in the Georgia Strait. We put climate accountability and the Vancouver waterfront on the agenda of municipal governments. We also had strong financial support from donors and sponsors, and we grew our staff, positioning us to meet the challenges ahead.”

Lesli Boldt
Board President
Species Protection

Southern Resident orcas are an iconic, culturally significant population that is critical to our local marine ecosystem. If this species were to disappear, the impacts would reverberate throughout the Salish Sea. There would be negative consequences on our coastal communities and economies, which depend on healthy marine environments.

Join the Orca Action Team to find out how you can get involved

5,463
Number of times supporters took action to protect Southern Resident orcas
This includes letters sent to DFO and other government officials, as well as event participants and donations to support our orca work.

200 metres
The new required distance between boats and orcas
This better supports orcas by giving them the space they need to feed, rest and communicate with their pod.

14,523
Number of people who signed the Declaration to Defend Wild Salmon
Wild Pacific salmon are facing an uphill battle. That’s why GSA helped develop the Safe Salmon campaign, and the Declaration in Defense of Wild Salmon. Thousands of people have participated in the campaign, letting B.C.’s provincial government know that salmon farms endanger the health of wild salmon. With our allies, we spread the message that open net-pen farms must be transitioned to closed containment facilities that are on land.
With your support, we made big things happen for orcas

Working with five other conservation organizations, we made the case for an emergency order to protect orcas. After nine months of inaction, we launched a lawsuit against the federal Ministers of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment and Climate Change, who play key roles in administering Canada’s *Species At Risk Act*.

In response to the pressure that we put on the federal government, the Ministers declared that Southern Resident killer whales face imminent threats to their survival and recovery and they implemented immediate fisheries closures in key foraging areas for these whales.

While the Ministers fell short of declaring an emergency order, which would have allowed them to cut through bureaucratic red tape to implement timely actions required to protect this endangered species under the *Species At Risk Act*, we were able to get the government to commit to taking further action by the time the whales return in 2019.

Some of our recommendations for immediate and long-term measures were put into force in the spring of 2019. Your support allows GSA to continue to hold the government to account to advance the protection measures for orcas.

You didn’t want us to stop there. Together, we continued to advocate for:

- New areas of protected critical habitat on the west coast of Vancouver Island
- Feeding refuges
- Closures of Chinook salmon fisheries
- Restrictions on whale-watching in critical habitat
- Mandatory noise reduction targets for all marine traffic

photo: Rachael Merrett
Tankers & Spills

The Trans Mountain project took an unexpected turn last summer when the federal government made an unprecedented decision: it made taxpayers the new owners of the Trans Mountain pipeline.

With a sticker price of $4.5 billion, plus the intention to invest another unknown billions of dollars to twin the pipeline, the federal government bailed out a giant Texas oil company. This decision did nothing to address the lack of consultation with Indigenous communities and it had no impact on mitigating the real risks of the project.

You helped us to respond with new independent research that we delivered to the National Energy Board

The technical study that we were able to produce, due in part to your support, found that oil spill response in some sections of the Trans Mountain tanker route is impossible up to 200 days a year because of regular coastal wind, wave and tide conditions.

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10,140

Number of actions taken against the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project and for better oil spill response by GSA supporters

The fact is that B.C. is not prepared for a significant oil spill on our coast.

Provincially, there was a window of opportunity to influence the B.C. government’s oil spill regulations—and we helped to ensure that your support for better oil spill preparedness, more effective response and more community involvement were heard by government.

On your behalf, we also advocated to the Province for stronger environmental assessments, with specific asks for:

- more oversight of assessments and independence from the proponent
- consideration for the cumulative effects of projects
- the rejection of projects that fail to meet climate tests and Indigenous consent

Read more about the study in our newsletter
Climate Accountability

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that, as a global community, we have 12 years to dramatically reduce our dependence on fossil fuels or we won’t limit global warming by 1.5 degrees—and fend off a host of climate-related consequences.

Climate change is the single, biggest threat to the health and livability of our coast. With your support, we were able to start working with coastal communities that are ready to make the case to their municipal city councils and staff that it is time to act on climate initiatives.

On the provincial level, we worked hard to have strong climate accountability pieces be part of the Province’s new climate plan: CleanBC. The proposals for legislated climate accountability mechanisms, requirements for reporting emissions and reductions, and providing measures that incentivize clean technologies make CleanBC among the leading plans in North America.

We continue to raise alarms, however, about the role of liquified natural gas (LNG, a problematic fossil fuel) in B.C.’s climate plan.

Right now, public funding for the LNG industry is more than five times the amount that the Province is investing in CleanBC.

Thanks to you, Georgia Strait Alliance is becoming a growing player on climate accountability.

Your support has allowed us to partner with other organizations and support grassroots leaders in bringing climate action to the South Coast Region. Municipalities are starting to include concrete corporate climate accountability measures aimed at protecting their taxpayers from bearing the financial burden of climate adaptation costs in their plans to fight climate breakdown. We are seeing more groups interested in a growing number of actions. And this is only the beginning.

Together, we will continue to advocate for ways to reduce our collective impacts as we support the climate accountability framework of CleanBC, and as we partner with municipalities to act on climate change.

Find out how you can get involved

22 BC municipalities have taken action with climate accountability

photo: Chris Chan

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Clean Marine BC

We certified eight new facilities at five-anchors in our Clean Marine BC program this year! The Greater Victoria Harbour Authority’s four marinas, Maple Bay Marina, the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club’s Secret Cove and Scott Point outstations, and the Fisherman’s Cove facility of the West Vancouver Yacht Club are the only facilities to achieve the top honour since it was first awarded to False Creek Harbour Authority Fishermen’s Wharf in 2014.

Our Clean Marine BC program earned special recognition this year when it won the Maritime Industry Award at the Vancouver Island EcoStar Awards. Acknowledgement like this is so important because it shows that our marine environment, our coastal communities and our economies can all thrive and be cared for, without prioritizing one over the others.

We’re moving the dial on environmental protection and stewardship by supporting operational improvements that reduce the amount of contaminants that end up in the ocean and helping boaters to choose low-impact alternatives.

Environmental improvements at CMBC-certified facilities have included:

- Installing sewage pump-out stations and greywater recycling
- Replacing old popcorn foam docks with HDPE encapsulated foam
- Upgrading to concrete docks and removing old treated timber floats
- Upgrading from creosote timber pilings to steel
- Upgrading vessel maintenance areas to prevent contaminant runoff
- Installing secondary containment around used oil recycling
- Installing energy-efficient windows and lighting
- Installing low-flow bathroom and kitchen fixtures

Our Clean Marine BC program has expanded to the B.C. Interior and the mid-Island region.

We certified a record 55 facilities have earned a 5 anchor eco-rating this year!
2019 Financial Highlights

Year ended March 31, 2019

Financial Position as of March 31, 2019

Financial Position as of March 31, 2019

- Current Assets: $478,364
- Long-term Investment: 41,058
- Capital Assets: 9,872
- Payables & Accruals: (88,954)
- Deferred Contributions: (221,085)

NET ASSETS: $219,255

In-Kind Contributions

In addition to the revenue above, GSA received an estimated value of $15,141 in donated goods and services and $18,134 in volunteer time during the year ended March 31, 2018 for a total of $33,275.

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

The following list includes grants, partnership contributions, donations and gifts in-kind during our fiscal year ended March 31, 2019.

As an independent and charitable society, Georgia Strait Alliance depends on your support to continue working to protect and restore our coastal waters, our marine life, and our coastal communities. Each year, funding for our programs comes from a variety of sources, including grants and donations.

We are honoured to have your support. Thank you!

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

**GUARDIANS ($10,000 – $24,999)**
Colin and Terry Armour, Employment and Social Development Canada, Environmental Careers Organization Canada (ECO Canada), Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics, RBC Foundation (Vancouver), Mike Waite, Charlie and Theresa Walters, Victoria Foundation, including from the G.F. “Pat” Dunn Family Fund and the Henley Family Fund.

**RESTORERS ($5,000 – $9,999)**

**NAVIGATORS ($1,000 – $4,999)**

**MARINERS ($500 – $999)**

**STEWARDS ($250 – $499)**
of donations this year came from people who have been giving to GSA for more than 5 years. Your long-term commitment to the health of the Salish Sea has resulted in greater protections for orcas, regional action to address the climate crisis, and marinas and boaters reaching the highest environmental standards to minimize their negative impacts. Thank you!

Ready to renew your commitment today?

DONATE NOW
Gathering together for a cause

This year people around the region came together to learn, be inspired, and raise funds for Georgia Strait Alliance. You are in good company when you gather together to celebrate the Strait!

Inspired to host an event or organize a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign for GSA? We can help!

Contact us at giving@georgiastrait.org

Honouring their legacy

It has been our honour to receive almost $400,000 in bequests from donors over the past 10 years. In remembering Georgia Strait Alliance in their wills, these generous donors have significantly contributed to our organization’s sustainability and ensured that we will continue to protect the Salish Sea, its creatures and communities into the future.

If you are interested in creating a gift in your will, please call us at 250-753-3459 or email giving@georgiastrait.org

We know that a healthy and protected marine environment is good for the economy, communities, and wildlife. … our efforts move us toward a better future for our region that includes clean water and air, healthy wild salmon runs, rich marine life and natural areas, and sustainable communities.

Find us on your digital channels!  
@GeorgiaStraitBC  
www.GeorgiaStrait.org