

We acknowledge that the land where we do our work is the traditional and unceded territory of many Nations, and now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The offices of Georgia Strait Alliance are located on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwx wú7mesh and selílwitlh Nations (also known as Vancouver) and of the Snuneymuxw Nation (also known as Nanaimo). Our staff and volunteers also work on the unceded territories of many other Coast Salish Nations.

Developing long-term, climate-forward solutions to marine threats and habitat protection in the Canadian waters of the Salish Sea and its adjoining waters.



Georgia Strait Alliance
IMPACT REPORT
2020 – 2021

WHAT WE DO

- ★ **Advocate** for the protection of the diversity of marine ecosystems in the Salish Sea.
- ★ **Collaborate** with communities so they can organize and take action for local climate solutions and ocean health.
- ★ **Advance** solutions to mitigate and end pollution from oil spills, wastewater, open net-pen fish farms, boats and boating facilities, and plastics.
- ★ **Facilitate** regional climate-forward solutions that don't include new fossil fuel developments.
- ★ **Promote** increased awareness and stewardship of the Salish Sea's marine environment.
- ★ **Support** increased climate literacy and justice.



Our Mission

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

Salish Sea is a name that reflects and honours the historic and ongoing connections of the Coast Salish peoples to this place, as well as their ongoing stewardship, and to the large area of coastal waters off the south coast of present-day British Columbia.



Photo by Thomas Kelley / Unsplash

“

At Georgia Strait Alliance, we felt really called to discuss how language and science can work together, in sometimes insidious ways, obscuring both scientific facts and harming marginalized communities.”

— **Gillian Der 謝美華**,
Georgia Strait Alliance

Talking on Co-op Radio about the Asian giant hornet

NEW PATHWAYS

AT GEORGIA STRAIT ALLIANCE, we're committed to embedding our work in the principles of equity, diversity, anti-racism and decolonization, and ensuring that how we meet our mission is inclusive of all communities and people who live in this region.

To achieve our mission of protecting the Salish Sea, its adjoining waters and promoting the sustainability of communities, GSA is focused on integrating and elevating social justice into all of the climate-forward solutions and marine conservation initiatives that we undertake as we strive to care for these waters in harmony and balance with the original stewards of the land. We do this as achieving a healthy

Salish Sea is not possible without communities where everyone is able to live a healthy and fulfilled life.

And while we have much work to do, we are on an intentional journey to undo the deep and ongoing harms perpetuated by racism and colonialism in the environmental sector and within this organization.

We are learning to authentically listen to and engage with communities within this region that are disproportionately affected by climate change, pollution and other negative impacts on the environment, especially marginalized and racialized communities.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Photo by Mana5280 / Unsplash




WRITING THESE WORDS EACH year has always been something I've found incredibly beneficial because, in this busy world, how many of us have the opportunity to genuinely reflect on our successes and challenges? This year marks a period in human history that has shaken – and continues to shake – many of us to the core. As individuals, we have had to navigate the challenge of working from home while managing personal and family commitments, all while facing unprecedented stresses and concerns on many fronts. As communities, we've found ourselves assessing how our society works – and doesn't work – and our commitments and responsibilities to our local and global neighbours.

At Georgia Strait Alliance, our experience of the pandemic and racial reckoning was no less profound. It forced us to examine and re-consider how we push for protection of this region, and how we engage with individuals and communities – and to recognize those who we have failed to include in these conversations.

We needed to re-examine how we do our environmental and social change work, considering who is involved or who may be missing, and how we collaborate together within and outside the organization. This reflection has resulted in positive change as our team has developed new ways to share information that are breaking down the silos that had developed, even within our relatively small organization. It also resulted in a deep examination of internal practices, from hiring processes to how we support new team members, creating a more open and welcoming organization.

These conversations served as a reminder that we had strayed from developing and deepening our roots in community and this needed to change. You'll be able to see the results of these changes in perspective and focus in our campaigns in the months ahead.





“I am deeply grateful to our funders, who entrusted us with the flexibility to use their funding as needed.”

Our commitment to our mission and the Salish Sea remains unchanged but in being more inclusive in our actions – in every sense of that term – we will be an even more impactful organization, supported by you.

And it is because of you that even in what was at times a dark and challenging year, we had big things to celebrate. For those of you who have supported us for many years, you likely joined us in a big ‘finally!’ when the news came that Victoria had sewage treatment that is over and above the minimum legal requirements. We now have one less source of pollution in the Salish Sea and so many current and former staff and volunteers had a part in making this a reality.

The other big news was that by June 2022, we will see 19 open-net pen salmon farms removed from the Discovery Islands. As interveners in the Cohen Inquiry into the decline of Fraser River Sockeye salmon, it is incredibly satisfying to see a critically important recommendation come to fruition due to the leadership of First Nations, and work by our environmental allies and all of you who never stopped believing that we could see the beginning of the end of this industry in B.C. We’ve taken a big step towards that goal!

In addition, this year we also saw stronger protection measures for Southern Resident orcas, growing recognition of the weakness of B.C.’s spill response, and strengthened partnerships with our boating community allies. These are some of the successes that we’re holding on to as we settle into another year with initiatives that will build on that progress.

I am so proud of our staff team and volunteers who stayed committed to our work, and succeeded in gaining protections for this region during such a challenging time. I am deeply grateful to our funders, who entrusted us with the flexibility to use their funding as needed, which meant we could ensure our team stayed together and strong.

And finally, in a year where so many of our donors experienced financial stresses, I can’t thank you enough for your decision to continue to support GSA – and with such generosity. This has meant the world to us. It has given the organization the ability to be in a position of strength so it can continue to advocate for a healthy Salish Sea for years to come.

Christianne Wilhelmson
Executive Director

THE TEAM

Board of Directors

KATHY FLETCHER *President, Vancouver (as of Sept 2020)*
KRISTIN STREET *Vice-President, Port Moody*
SHELDON FERNANDES *Treasurer, Vancouver*
CHARLOTTE FOX *Secretary, Vancouver*
LESLI BOLDT *Past President (ex officio), Vancouver (as of Sept 2020)*
KEN COACH *Vancouver*
ANGHARAD DAVIES *Vancouver*
ZOE GREENBERG *Vancouver (until Sept 2020)*
CHRISTOPHER HAKES *Vancouver*
AARON NABATA *Vancouver (until Nov 2020)*
STEPHANIE SCHIFFMACHER *Vancouver*
MAYA STANO *Vancouver*
DUNCAN WLODARCZAK *Vancouver*



Meet the Board

Advisory Council

JOHN CASHORE *Coquitlam*
DR. LARRY DILL *Victoria*
DR. ROBERT ELNER *Delta*
DR. CHIEF ROBERT JOSEPH *North Van/Hopetown*
DR. DONALD MCQUEEN *Nanaimo*
SUZANNE SIEMENS *North Vancouver*
MIKE WAITES *Vancouver*
DOUGLAS WHITE III *Kwalasultan, Snuneymuxw/Nanaimo*



Meet the Advisory Council

Staff & Contractors

REBECCA ADAMS *Graphics & Web Development (on leave as of August 2020)*
CATHY BOOLER *Data & Digital Systems Manager*
CORALIE CHARLAND *Fundraising Assistant*
TESSA DANELESKO *Species Protection Coordinator (until November 2020)*
ERIN EDWARDS *Volunteer Coordinator*
GILLIAN DER 謝美華 *Community Organizer (until Sept 2020)*
LUCERO GONZÁLEZ RUIZ *Biodiversity Campaigner (as of March 2021)*
KIRSTEN MATHISON *Public Engagement Coordinator*
ALLISON MURRAY *Communications Associate*
ANITA NOON *Member Services (until October 2020)*
CHERYL ONCIUL *Development Manager*
ANDREW RADZIK *Energy Campaigner*
CHRISTIANNE WILHELMSON *Executive Director*
MICHELLE YOUNG *Director of Finance/Clean Marine BC Coordinator*



Meet GSA Staff



Incoming Board President Kathy Fletcher is no stranger to our organization: she's been on the Board for many years and is the founder and former executive director of the People for Puget Sound, where she worked closely with GSA from our earliest days. Kathy takes the reins from Lesli Boldt, who gave her passion, enthusiasm, strategic advice, and commitment to the organization for nearly a decade, including guiding it for the past two years as Board President.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

THIS WAS THE YEAR when everything had to go digital, and that meant we got creative so we could stay connected with our supporters during a very difficult time. We strengthened and grew our already active and engaged digital audiences by creating different and new opportunities that bridged some of the physical distance that the pandemic required.

- ★ Hosted informal **Zoom gatherings** to talk about orcas, boating and paddling, charitable giving, and more
- ★ Took deep dives into **documentary films** about water, wilderness, wild salmon, whales, and plastics, as well as complex issues of conflict, collaboration and sustainability at the Festival of Ocean Films and other documentary film screenings
- ★ Provided our marina spill **preparedness and response training** virtually
- ★ Led a giant **BioBlitz**: a citizen-science initiative to identify as many of the species in the Salish Sea as possible
- ★ Raised Black, Indigenous and People of Colour **voices** on our social media channels
- ★ Had **DJ Cats in Boots** spin for an ocean themed Digital Dance Party

30th Anniversary Soirée

GSA turned 30 and we threw a big virtual bash to celebrate, with a fun-filled live event that took supporters on a journey through time and place. During the evening, supporters were swept away by wonderful performances by local musicians, inspiring messages and live appearances from long-time partners and new friends, as well as some special guests who are creating change in the world beyond these local shores.

“

Anytime people have an opportunity to form connections with their environment and the creatures they share their space with, they will become more likely to want to conserve it and protect it and be aware of what's at stake.”



—Kirsten Mathison

Georgia Strait Alliance

CHEK News

Photo by Mathijs-Deerenberg / Unsplash



3000

Observations submitted in our citizen-science initiative: BioBlitz



2109

People taking first-time actions with our initiatives



936

Species identified in BioBlitz



10

Movie screenings



Rare BioBlitz discovery

Mottled Stars



5

Community Coffee Breaks



**Orca Action
Team Delivery:**
the latest orca
news to your inbox

Photo by Kimberly Nielsen

BIODIVERSITY

GEORGIA STRAIT ALLIANCE CONTINUED to play a leadership role in the protection of **Southern Resident orcas**, contributing expertise and science to the federal government's orca protection measures for 2020 – and these were the strongest and boldest yet. The importance of our ongoing commitment to this work is found in the fact that later in the year, there was a baby boom, with calves J57 and J58 both arriving in September 2020, and with L-pod adding a new calf (L125) in February 2021. We need to stay committed to keep Salish Sea waters quieter, with less pollution and more Chinook salmon so these young orcas can thrive.

**12
months a year**

Vessels must remain 400 metres from all orcas on B.C.'s south coast between Campbell River and Ucluelet.

**30
days**

One month extension of sanctuaries around Pender and Saturna Islands, and Swiftsure Bank until November 30

**1000
people**

Sent the federal government input through our website to inform orca protection measures

**250
people**

Joined our Orca Action Team through our website

“

Anytime you have a population of 72 individuals, a birth really signals – hopefully – a bright step into the future.”

—Tessa Danelesko

Georgia Strait Alliance

News 1130

“

When you have a species that's on the edge, you have to be bold.”

—Christianne Wilhelmson

Georgia Strait Alliance

CBC Radio: On The Coast

Photo by AdobeStock

BIODIVERSITY

Wastewater

STOPPING THE HARMFUL CONTAMINANTS in Metro Vancouver's undertreated sewage from flowing into local waters became a big focus for GSA, while we celebrated that sewage in Victoria has finally become cleaner.

Throughout the year, we made the case to Metro Vancouver decision-makers that they must seize the opportunity of having to upgrade the Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant in Richmond to make wastewater as clean as possible before it is discharged directly into the mouth of the Fraser River.

The Fraser River is B.C.'s most important salmon-bearing habitat and Chinook salmon is the main prey for Southern Resident orcas. The toxins in undertreated wastewater make their way into the marine environment, into fish and other species and eventually into orcas, making Southern Resident orcas one of the most contaminated mammals on the planet.

For that reason, we have advocated for tertiary 2 level treatment because it includes full nutrient removal and accelerated resource recovery.



Making Victoria's sewage discharge less harmful to the Salish Sea was one of GSA's very first campaigns . . . 30 years ago.

“

The Iona plant is discharging right into the Salish Sea, right at the mouth of the Fraser River, which is the most important salmon bearing river in the province. And it's discharging into habitat where the Southern Resident killer whale lives.”

—Christianne Wilhelmson

Georgia Strait Alliance

Richmond News

Photo by Anastasia Taioglou / Unsplash

Over the year, some of our campaign work focussed on reminding Ottawa why it's so important to reject the proposed \$2-billion **Roberts Bank Terminal 2 expansion** project in Delta, B.C.

- ★ It is located in the **Fraser Estuary**, the largest estuary on North America's Pacific coast
- ★ It puts **177 hectares** of intertidal and subtidal habitat at risk in that estuary
- ★ The estuary provides **critically important** and irreplaceable links between fish, birds and marine animals
- ★ A federal **review panel** found that the project will cause harm to Southern Resident orcas

“

We've been working tirelessly for more than 20 years to show the federal government the science that proves that fish farms cause serious harm and introduce pathogens to migrating wild salmon.”

—**Christianne Wilhelmson**

Georgia Strait Alliance

The Georgia Straight Magazine

Photo by 19162110195 / Unsplash

BIODIVERSITY

Fish Farms

RECOMMENDATION #19 OF THE COHEN COMMISSION, an inquiry into the decline of sockeye salmon in the Fraser River in which GSA was an intervenor, is set to become a reality when the 19 fish farms in the Discovery Islands are phased out by June 2022.

Getting these farms out of the water will make a tremendous difference to the health of salmon stocks that are in critical danger.

Photo by Brown Bear / Unsplash



2 public workshops

GSA participated in both of Metro Vancouver's virtual public workshops on the Iona Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade.



177 hectares

Of intertidal and subtidal habitat at risk if the **Roberts Bank Terminal 2** is approved.



Intervenors

GSA was an intervenor in the federal environmental review process for the **Roberts Bank Terminal 2** through our legal representative Ecojustice, and will be part of the judicial review initiated by the aquaculture industry regarding the shutting down of fish farms in the Discovery Islands.



June 2022

The date when **19 fish farms** in the Discovery Islands will be closed!



Seven First Nations

Work and leadership of the Homalco, Klahoose, K'ómoks, Kwiakah, Tla'amin, We Wai Kai and Wei Wai Kum resulted in getting the open-net pens out of the water.



Indigenous Guardian Stewardship

Worked to support the Squamish Nation and youth to workshop the potential design of a **Squamish Nation Stewardship Network** to increase local stewardship, monitoring, and enforcement capacity and protect local waters and the life in it.



30 years

Duration that GSA worked on getting **Victoria wastewater plant** upgrades so raw sewage wasn't flushed directly into the ocean.



25 years

Length of time **GSA has worked** with our allies to transition fish farms from coastal waters to closed containment systems on land.

ENERGY

AT GEORGIA STRAIT ALLIANCE, we continue to press for the Province of B.C. to better protect shorelines from an eventual oil spill. In particular, we recognize the potential impact of the Trans Mountain expansion project on Indigenous territories and interests, and strongly support the Province using the provisions for joint decision making in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

This year, the Province was required to re-examine the conditions for the Trans Mountain pipeline's environmental certificate, creating a significant opportunity for GSA – and we took it!

We created detailed and in-depth submissions for the Province, outlining the need to prepare for large-scale cleanup plans; develop plans to address community health impacts; plan thoroughly for spill recovery with remediation that has equitable environment, social and economic benefits; and post bonds to ensure that Trans Mountain can pay for a worst-case spill scenario.

However, we continue to be concerned that, for shorelines, the Province is choosing to rely on federal measures it has previously said are insufficient, including the Oceans Protection Plan, and voluntary measures from the industry-led marine spill response organization WCMRC.



“

We're not very ready for a major spill, and we do not have world-class spill response.”

—Andrew Radzik

Georgia Strait Alliance

Hakai Magazine

Photo by Visual State of Mind / Unsplash

**2100
people**

Used our digital tools to ask the Province to set measurable and enforceable standards for safety, preparedness and response to mitigate the dangers of the Trans Mountain expansion project.

**1993
people**

Asked Premier Horgan to defend the B.C. coast from oil spills using our digital tools.

Photo by NikIdn/ Unsplash



CLIMATE

“

The B.C. government can't expand fracking and the LNG Canada project if it's serious about meeting its climate goals.”

—Andrew Radzik

Georgia Strait Alliance

The Canadian Press

DURING THE YEAR, GSA focussed on bringing public awareness to the inconsistencies in the Province's climate plan: B.C. cannot expand fracking and subsidize the fossil fuel industry to the tune of nearly one billion dollars and still reduce its carbon emissions.

The planet is in a climate emergency. There is no more time for B.C. to pretend it is working to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions while allowing them to rise. The Province of B.C. is propping up an industry that destabilizes the climate: the oil and gas industry is now responsible for more emissions than the sum of all other industries in the province at 20 percent of all of B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions.

To achieve our objective to push the Province to take stronger, faster and accountable climate action, we must end public support for this sunset industry.

**1748
people**

Used our digital tools to ask Premier Horgan to take climate action by stopping fossil fuel subsidies and redirecting that money towards a greener economy.

Photo by Hannah Busing / Unsplash



Fossil fuel extraction is responsible for 20% of carbon emissions in B.C. It provides less than 0.5% of B.C. jobs.

Photo by Patrick Hendry / Unsplash

CLEAN MARINE BC

DESPITE THE PANDEMIC, WE were able to continue to partner with marinas, harbour authorities and yacht clubs to reduce the amount of contaminants that end up in local waterways, and other impacts on the environment. We accomplished that by supporting facilities, like Oak Bay Marina, to make operational improvements that are good for the marine ecosystem, are financially responsible and which also benefit their boaters.

“We consider ourselves the stewards of the lake. That’s why we allied ourselves with GSA. It helped us to focus.”

—Thom Killingsworth

Kelowna Yacht Club Executive Director

Pacific Yachting

Photo Willian Justen de Vasconcellos-/ Unsplash

Marinas participating in our Clean Marine BC eco-certification program earn an **anchor rating** ranging from one to five. Marinas that receive one-anchor ratings comply with federal and provincial legislation and have started to implement environmental best practices. Those that have more and stronger operational and ecosystem conservation initiatives earn five anchors.

Partners & Collaborators



Pacific Oil Spill Prevention and Education Team (a working group of the Pacific States - BC Oil Spill Task Force): We continue our long standing position on the POSPET working group to reduce small spills from recreational boating and marinas.



Marine Education and Research Society: We are collaborating with MERS to increase awareness of the risk to both boaters and whales of boating in proximity to unpredictable large whales, such as the increasing number of humpbacks.



Boating BC Association: We have ongoing collaboration on educating boaters on their responsibility to properly dispose of vessels at the end of their useful life, to reduce the number of abandoned boats on the coast.



SeaChange: We were invited to participate in an eelgrass working group to raise awareness of the impacts of boating and anchoring in eelgrass, and the need for anchoring out of eelgrass protection zones.



Invasive Species Council of BC: We continue to share the ‘Clean-Drain-Dry’ message to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species when relocating boats to different bodies of water.



Parks Canada Educators Group: We collaborate with federal government agencies, non-profit organizations, and other educators to encourage boaters to follow evolving rules implemented for the protection of endangered Southern Resident orcas.

**294
people**

Attended our virtual presentations at the Vancouver International Boat Show, and the Harbour Authority Association of B.C. and Boating BC conferences

**56
people**

We trained 56 people from 25 facilities in our first two digital Clean Marine BC marine spill response workshops

**4
anchors**

Clean Marine BC rating achieved by Oak Bay Marina

**62
boating facilities**

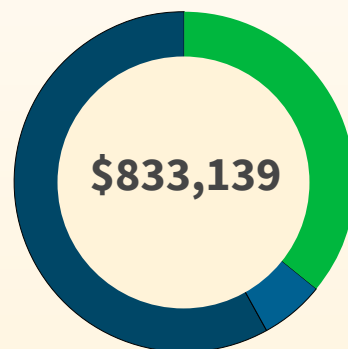
Participating in the Clean Marine BC program (33 certified, 29 working towards certification)

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS 2020-2021

Year ended March 31, 2021

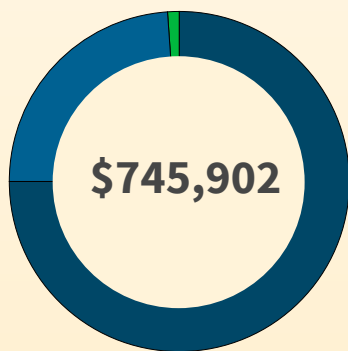
Revenues

- **Donations**
\$298,139 (36%)
- **Events, Investment Earnings & Other**
\$52,594 (6%)
- **Grants and Subsidies**
\$482,406 (58%)



Expenses

- **Programs**
\$557,483 (75%)
- **Admin and Fundraising**
\$184,414 (24%)
- **Amortization**
\$4,005 (1%)



Excess of revenue over expenses for the year
\$87,237

Financial Position

Current Assets
\$834,564

Long Term Investment
\$47,609

Capital Assets
\$10,727

Payables and Accruals
(\$38,586)

Deferred Contributions
(\$579,286)

NET ASSETS \$275,028

In Kind

Volunteers
\$32,065

Goods and Services
\$48,945

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTERS

Sustainers (\$25,000 or More)

Canada Revenue Agency, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Clif Bar Family Foundation, Global Greengrants Fund, Estate of Jocelyn Hurst, Province of BC, Sitka Foundation.

Guardians (\$10,000 – \$24,999)

Natasha Aruliah– JEDdi Consulting, EcoAction, Glasswaters Foundation, McLean Foundation, Patagonia, Sea Star Estate Farm and Vineyards Ltd., Sustainable Elements, Estate of Jo-Anne Thornthwaite, Victoria Foundation.

Restorers (\$5,000 – \$9,999)

BNQ Management, Environmental Careers Organization Canada (ECO Canada).

Navigators (\$1,000 – \$4,999)

Charles and Julie Bentall Family Foundation, Boating BC Association, Boldt Communications Inc, Coastal Community Credit Union, Cox Consulting, C-Tow Marine Assistance, Denman Island Chocolate Ltd, Employment and Social Development Canada, Helijet International Inc, MakeWay Foundation - Renewal Funds Charitable Giving Fund, Mandell Pinder LLP - Barristers & Solicitors, SunCruiser, Vantina Holdings Ltd, Waggoner Cruising Guide, We Win Together.

Mariners (\$500 – \$999)

Asparagus Magazine, Backyard Creative, BC Coast Pilots Ltd, Left Coast Naturals, Media Coach, Nada Grocery Inc, Onni Group, Pacific Yachting Magazine, Vancouver Canucks.



[Our complete donor list](#)

Donate to protect the coastal waters you love



georgiastrait.org/donate

Cover Photo by Hillary Little / Unsplash

Back Cover Photo by Brandi Deschambault

Icons by Freepik and Flaticon

Your support is needed and very appreciated as Georgia Strait Alliance works for a future where the wellbeing of everyone in coastal communities around the Salish Sea is supported by flourishing marine environments. **We are only able to do this work because of the support of donors like you.**

Thank You

Find us on your digital channels



@GeorgiaStraitBC
www.GeorgiaStrait.org



Georgia Strait Alliance

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