

Georgia Strait Alliance

# WINTER NEWSLETTER

GeorgiaStrait.org

2023

## A BIG BIODIVERSITY THREAT

**Opposition is strong against the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 project – and it's getting stronger.**

Opposition was reinvigorated and renewed in late September when the Province of B.C. granted its environmental approval. The rationale was weak: the project will move forward regardless of what the Province does because most of the project is within federal jurisdiction. Therefore, provincial Ministers Heyman and Fleming approved it.

However, the federal approval is not final: it's currently being challenged by two separate judicial reviews. **At GSA, we're behind one of those legal actions, alongside three ENGOS, represented by Ecojustice.**

Lummi Nation in Washington State also filed a judicial review in Canada's federal court. The Nation was not included in the consultation process, despite holding transboundary rights.

*Story continues on next page ...*

### Did you know?

Premier Eby showed public support for the project before the provincial consultation began



**We acknowledge with respect the Coast Salish peoples** on whose traditional, ancestral and unceded territories we live and work. We are committed to the struggle against the systems of oppression that have dispossessed Indigenous people of their lands and denied their rights to self-determination.



## ... A Big Biodiversity Threat

*continued*

Our legal argument is that the federal approval is unlawful because a project cannot be deemed “justified” under environmental assessment legislation when it is contrary to another statute – the Species at Risk Act (SARA).

The Fraser River is the largest estuary in North America, it is a Key Biodiversity Area in B.C., and it is categorized as being of global importance. There are some 100+ at-risk species that call this delicate area – where river and ocean meet – home, including the Southern Resident orca, which are protected under SARA and whose critical habitat will be affected by the project.

At GSA, we ensured the Province of B.C. knew the extent of the cross-sector opposition to this mega marine infrastructure project in North America’s largest estuary. The proposal for a new shipping berth requires human-made modification to natural habitat equivalent to 170 football fields at the mouth of the Fraser River.

We joined forces with more than a dozen nature organizations, including Birds Canada and Wilderness Committee, and also teamed up with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union of Canada, and the BC General Employees’ Union. **We recognize that this project will be equally devastating for jobs as it will be for the environment and it needs to be stopped!**

**At GSA, we are incredibly disappointed by the lack of leadership from the Province in their decision not to oppose a project that will kill thousands of local jobs and have permanent adverse environmental effects on local biodiversity, including at-risk species like Pacific salmon.**

**Together, we publicly and directly asked the Province to reject this project because of the impacts it will have on:**

- » **Species-at-risk**, including Southern Resident orcas and wild Pacific salmon,
- » **Biodiversity loss**, which is accelerating due to human-made degradation, and
- » **Dock workers** who are likely to lose family-supporting jobs to complete automation in the new terminal.

Until colonial governments act in recognition that a robust economy and healthy environment are interdependent, we won’t be able to significantly halt biodiversity loss.

**We facilitated 3377 people sending letters to the Province to reject the project.** Thank you to all of you who did: your voices will not go unheard as the fight continues to stop this project!

The fight against this massively destructive project continues and we hope we can count on your support with our next steps, which we will share with you soon!

## Message from Executive Director

### Christianne Wilhelmson



As I write this, I am still processing the news that the Province of B.C. has issued the certificates required for the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 (RBT2) expansion project to move forward. We’ve seen this before – the approval of a major industrial project in the Salish Sea that will cause harm, including irreversibly impacting critical habitat of endangered species. The conditions put forward by the Province as reassurance are unlikely to mitigate against harm as intended, and the key concerns from a growing number of First Nations, unions and conservation organizations, on both sides of the border, are being ignored.

As wildfires, caused by climate change, devastated the province this summer, the need to protect the biodiversity of this region has never been stronger: it is pivotal to mitigating against climate impacts. But governments are not getting the message: they can no longer support business as usual and protect this region. We are not learning our lessons, and the waters that support all of us continue to pay the price.

We need to flip the script. The Province may not have stood up for this region – but Georgia Strait Alliance will, as we have for more than 33 years. We will do that by connecting with individuals, Nations, groups – anyone around the region who knows, loves and relies on these waters, working together to fight these kinds of projects, yet again.

**As we turn to the courts to fight the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 project, we also turn to you – who support our efforts year after year – to say thank you. Because the better future we imagine wouldn’t be possible without your consistent and generous support. Together, we’ll continue to forge the pathway into that future.**

**WILL  
POWER**

## Would you consider adding a charity to your Will?

A donation of as little as one percent of your estate to a charitable organization, such as GSA, can result in a bigger contribution than you ever thought possible. It’s about giving in a different way, one that supports the change in the world that matters to you, while also taking care of your loved ones.

At GSA, we’re part of Will Power – a national campaign that educates Canadians about the power of leaving a charitable gift in their Will. Over three million Canadians have left a gift in their Will to charity, including to Georgia Strait Alliance. The impact of funds we’ve received in the past, because someone included Georgia Strait Alliance in their Will, is being seen in the success we are having today.

Try the Will Power Legacy Calculator to see for yourself what even 1% of your estate can do; you’ll be surprised!

[willpower.ca/legacy-calculator](http://willpower.ca/legacy-calculator)



# CLEAN MARINE BC



Right now, there are **45 facilities across the province that are Clean Marine BC-certified.** We have one re-certification in progress and welcomed enrollment by **Gibsons Landing Harbour Authority.** It's encouraging that recreational boating facilities are recommitting to keep local waterways clean.

## In the Works

We're making progress on bringing new technology to Clean Marine BC, with an app to support enrollments, certifications, and tracking facility and program metrics! We've started beta testing and hope to be able to share more with you soon.



Pump-out service at Greater Victoria Harbour Authority. Image: Rob Campbell



## Another Season of Dock Walking

Tom & Jacob dock walking in Powell River. Image: Sara Goncalves

Our Dock Walking Program over the summertime was very successful – and that was because we had **Zoe Taylor**, who was GSA's representative on docks in the Lower Mainland and at events during summer's busiest months.

Zoe and **Jacob Banting**, our Clean Marine BC Coordinator, paired volunteers with marinas, boat launches and community events, enabling connections with recreational boaters. We have already shared 350 Clean Boater Kits, filled with spill supplies and clean boating informational tools – and each one can play a role in keeping local waters cleaner.

**We're looking forward to building out the reach of our Dock Walkers even more in summer 2024.**

## Pump, Don't Dump

It's easier than ever for recreational boaters to avoid dumping sewage into the marine environment, particularly in this region, because GSA has an online and search-friendly map for pump-outs.

**It's easy to use:** You can filter results for pump-outs that are public, as well as those that are available only to specific marina customers. Pop-up boxes provide the cost, whether the facilities are self-serve or by appointment, the hours of operation, the dock location, and other tips for using the service at each location. Give it a try!



Find a pump-out near you [georgiastrait.org/PumpoutMap](http://georgiastrait.org/PumpoutMap)

# CLIMATE & ENERGY

As we continue to fight against expansion projects like Roberts Bank Terminal 2, the TMX project reveals what happens to government promises.

TMX has ballooned to more than \$31 billion, up from the \$4.5 billion purchase price, and the federal government plans to forgive upwards of \$17 billion of public money owed to residents, who are even paying some of the pipeline's construction costs.

Environmental groups, First Nations, scientists, civil society and individuals across B.C. have raised the alarm about TMX for years – and so many of these concerns have come true.

**We are witnessing the ongoing pattern where the federal government gaslights opposition in the name of elusive economic prosperity. It's time for this to end.**



# ORGANIZING

We're working on an exciting **new project supporting Cowichan Tribes**, sparked by a previous collaboration GSA worked on with the Howe Sound/Atl'ka7sem Marine Reference Guide, to host a Stewardship Network Workshop with Squamish Nation members.

We are currently focused on doing outreach and establishing engagement opportunities with Cowichan Tribes' youth – who represent a large percentage of the population – supporting them in exploring and articulating their vision for management

and protection of their marine territory.

Over the Summer, we've been at events and other opportunities on the ground getting to know the community. We have also been reaching out to local folks and projects in order to establish connections and explore ways for us to support existing efforts that aim to empower and engage youth in the ongoing stewardship of Cowichan Tribes territories.

**Stay tuned for more exciting updates as this project continues!**



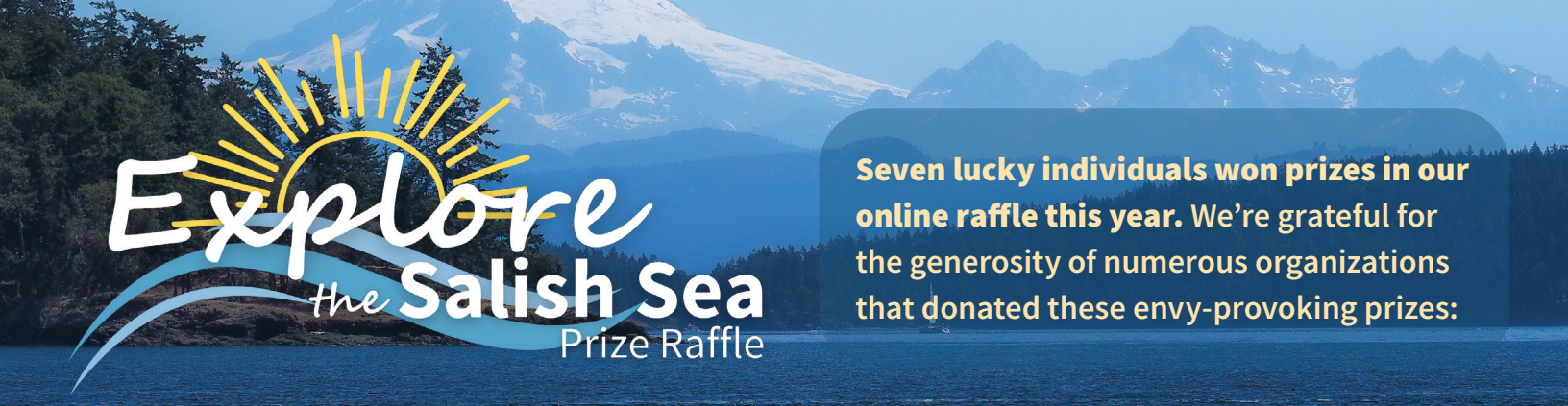
**Cowichan Tribes is the largest single First Nation Band in so-called British Columbia, with more than 5,000 members, and about half live on the Cowichan Tribes Reserve.**

Tim Kulchyski (right), a biologist and member of Cowichan Tribes, helps at a beach survey hosted by Lulumexun, the Lands and Self-Governance Department of the Nation.



Cowichan River estuary. Image: Adobestock





# Explore the Salish Sea Prize Raffle

Seven lucky individuals won prizes in our online raffle this year. We're grateful for the generosity of numerous organizations that donated these envy-provoking prizes:



**Grand Prize. B. Massons (Gibsons)** won a Sea Kayak Package donated by **Valhalla Pure Outfitters**, including 15.5 Delta kayak, a light-weight Werner full carbon paddle for effortless paddling, and NRS accessories worth over \$3,600!

**Adventure Under the Stars: D. Chorney (Williams Lake)** won a Friday Night Lights Kayaking tour for two at **Deep Cove Kayak** including a coveted **Patagonia** backpack and hat.

**Beachfront Getaway: D. Leggatt (Burnaby)** won a 2-night stay for two, with breakfast included, at the **Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort** on Vancouver Island, plus **BC Ferries** tickets.

**Urban Oasis Getaway: B. Charron (Richmond)** won a luxurious overnight stay at the **Westin Bayshore Vancouver**, with dinner at **Cardero's Restaurant**.

**The Ultimate BBQ Celebration Package: V. Elderton (North Vancouver)** won a portable 1560W Weber electric grill, a year's supply of **Earnest Ice Cream**, and a \$100 gift card from **Fanny Bay Oysters**.

**Ultimate Spa Retreat: V. Elderton (North Vancouver)** will also enjoy **Scandinave Spa Whistler**, and a collection of premium natural skincare products from **Salish Sea Botanicals** – a very lucky winner indeed, winning two prize packages!

**Art Package: R. Zacharias (Victoria)** received a limited edition canvas print – Rise – by **Art By Di** that embodies the strength, resilience, and recovery of the species of the Salish Sea.

**Sustainability Package: K. Dawson (Comox)** won a premium Beachcomber Fleece Throw from **Tofino Towel Co.**; a \$200 gift card for ethically-made apparel from **Ecologist**; and a bundle of eco-friendly **Tru Earth** laundry strips!

## The biggest winner was .... the Salish Sea!

All proceeds – **more than \$23,000** – go directly to **GSA's work to protect marine habitat and endangered species** like the Southern Resident orca and wild salmon from long-term dangers, like the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 project.

## COMINGS & GOINGS



We are happy to welcome three new directors to the Board: **Mairin Shields-Brown**, **Siobhan Powlowski** and **Gabrielle Savage**.

**Mairin** works at a women-owned impact consulting firm that supports purpose-driven organizations to define, measure, manage, and communicate their social and environmental impacts. **Siobhan** is Executive Director of Gordon Neighbourhood House, a non-profit dedicated to building

healthy and just communities in Vancouver's downtown neighborhoods. **Gabrielle** is a Project Manager for BC Emergency Health Services, driving change towards equitable and accessible emergency healthcare in rural and remote areas, and weaving Indigenous health strategies into paramedic work across the province.

Learn more about all of our Directors on our website.



Left to right: Yasser Sanobar, Byron Lee, Zoe Taylor, Megan Raitt & Shubhdeep Gill.

For eight weeks over the summertime, we were fortunate to have five youth contributing their awesome skills and deep passion to two of GSA's initiatives. **Byron Lee, Megan Raitt, Shubhdeep Gill, and Yasser Sanobar** were Community Assistant Organizers, dedicated to our Extreme Heat project, and **Zoe Taylor** was our Clean Marine BC Dock Walker.

We're sad to have said goodbye to three long-time members of our team but so grateful for the positive impact they had during their time with GSA.



As Energy Campaigner for six years, **Andrew Radzik** brought his keen research and campaigning experience to GSA. He was instrumental in securing stronger provincial marine conditions for the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion, and the inclusion of community knowledge for oil spill response, and in advancing community-led initiatives, such as Sue Big Oil and our Extreme Heat Project.

**Cheryl Onciul** was an important part of our leadership team and led the growth and expansion of our fundraising initiatives, which supported the organization's financial stability and growth over the last 12 years. We're so grateful to have had her expertise and skills in grant writing and donor engagement, and for her many creative ideas, projects, and partnerships that she nurtured in support of marine conservation.

**Erin Edwards** was the lead liaison with our passionate volunteers for over five years, helping us build new systems to support our efforts to better engage with the volunteer community. She recently welcomed her first child and, as such, the role of Volunteer Coordinator has moved into the portfolio of our Community Organizer Dana Taylor.

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



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



# Keeping communities safe from **EXTREME HEAT**

When we consider the damage that climate change is having right now, and the cost of climate adaptation and remediation, we tend to focus our conversations on dykes, bridges, roads and other types of infrastructure, but ... what about the impact on people?

**In 2021 the Heat Dome cost more than 600 lives in BC**, with most being from marginalized communities (such as the elderly, folks with lower income, or mobility considerations). The mitigation available like cooling stations simply sidestepped the severity of the problem. Climate change is here and it's having life or death impacts on people.

As an environmental organization committed to tackling environmental threats to the Salish Sea through a justice lens, we've been doing deep community engagement around climate change, extreme heat and its impact on low-income communities so we can better understand these issues and advocate for change - this is our Extreme Heat Initiative.



## WHAT WE LEARNED



**Resources for you & your community**  
[georgiastrait.org/PreparingForExtremeHeat](https://georgiastrait.org/PreparingForExtremeHeat)

Over the past 2 summers, **we have knocked on over 4,000 doors and have had hundreds of conversations** with people directly affected by the Heat Dome of 2021 and the subsequent heat waves, including those we experienced this summer. We've also **gathered over 400 surveys**, detailing the experiences of

those most affected by these extreme weather events.

What we found was that an overwhelming number of **respondents wanted to have conversations, beyond just providing data - they wanted to share their stories with us**. This was a huge incident in their lives and they want to be prepared

for the next life threatening heat waves that we know will come.

We've also seen that **when people connect a personal experience to climate change, it broadens their perspective about environmental health and climate change**. They see that climate change impacts their day to day life in dramatic ways.

## BC NEEDS EMERGENCY ACTION ON **EXTREME HEAT**

As a result of these conversations, we have put together three asks for the Province to better protect our communities from extreme heat - and 1,000 people have signed on.

**Add your name to the petition!** Together, we can protect communities from extreme heat.

[georgiastrait.org/ExtremeHeatAction](https://georgiastrait.org/ExtremeHeatAction)

