



SIERRA
CLUB BC

SIERRA REPORT

FALL 2020

GROWING THE SIERRA CLUB BC FAMILY

As Sierra Club BC transforms to better protect abundant ecosystems and support communities, we recognize that we must open ourselves to new perspectives and ways of seeing. To help with this journey, we've grown our team.

To start, an existing team member grew into a new role so that we can extend our outreach and vision. We are excited to share that Flossie Baker, a phenomenal and empathetic listener, has permanently come on board as our Lead Organizer and will be working with volunteers to build relationships across diverse communities.

We also welcome many new faces. We are excited to welcome writer-extraordinaire Aurora Tejeida (Communications Co-Lead), brilliant and

technologically-minded Avery Halyk (Digital Systems Coordinator), warm and personable Britt Adams-Lowe (Donor Engagement Coordinator), thoughtful Coralie Charland (Donor Services Assistant), kind Munifa Ahmed (Operations Lead) and captivating Tealia Palmer-Ruben (Environmental Educator).

Our forest team is also growing. We are thrilled for Dakota Smith~MAKWALA of the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples and Karris Glendale who is Haida and Da'naxda'xw (of the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples) to be joining the team as Forest Relations Coordinator Associates. They will help bring an Indigenous lens to this work and help us foster connections with communities and forests across the province.

Working together, there's nothing we can't accomplish!



BUILDING BACK BETTER

In this time of uncertainty, COVID-19 has disrupted the way we live, work and interact with each other. But with so many things grinding to a halt, there is also **an unprecedented opportunity to stop and re-think how we do things; a chance to build a better future—one that centres healthy communities, a livable climate and the abundant ecosystems which sustain us.**

Coming out of the pandemic, we could attempt to recreate an old system built upon a flawed understanding of our place in the natural world, in which we pursue endless growth and consumption. Or we can imagine and build a better world together; one that recognizes nature's limits along with its abundant gifts, and where we understand that all relatives—not just the human ones—are part of our family.

As the B.C. government ponders its options for economic stimulus in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have a narrow window of opportunity to shape the government's plan and make sure we come out the other side better equipped to take care of each other and the planet. This means building a more just, equitable B.C. that is resilient in the face of the climate crisis.

We've been finding every opportunity we can to ensure that we can build back better.

Sierra Club BC climate justice campaigner Anjali Appadurai worked with hundreds of civil society groups across Canada to outline Six Principles for a Just Recovery which layout the most important priorities for rebuilding the economy:

- Put our health and wellbeing first, with no exceptions.
- Strengthen the social security net and ensure relief flows directly to people.
- Prioritize workers and communities—that means no corporate bailouts.
- Tackle the climate crisis and build resilience against future crises.
- Build equity across communities, generations and borders.
- Uphold Indigenous rights and work in partnership with Indigenous peoples.

With 52 other organizations, we have called on Premier Horgan to incorporate these principles into B.C.'s response. But we're not the only ones who are getting to work. Big Oil, forestry corporations and interest groups are intensely lobbying and pressuring the B.C. government to keep the status quo and even use this moment to invest further in dirty energy. So, **we created an online tool to help Sierra Club BC supporters advocate for a Just Recovery by calling on Premier Horgan and the B.C. government to make the principles a core part of the province's economic recovery. You can send a letter today to build back better at sierraclub.bc.ca/JustRecovery**

We have submitted policy recommendations to the B.C. government and offered briefings to elected representatives, focusing on how ensuring equitable access to outdoor learning across the province is a key aspect of the pandemic response. It's imperative to keep students and teachers safe while providing long-lasting mental health and physical wellbeing benefits.

Looking to join forces with local musicians and activists, we also helped organize the Build Back Better Festival. This virtual event connected B.C.-based musicians with community leaders and activists for conversations about what they imagine is possible as we heal and recover from the crises we're living through. Some of this material will be made available in the form of a podcast in coming months.

Sierra Club BC is committed to advocating for and supporting community members who are fighting for a Just Recovery that gives priority to health and wellbeing, racial justice, resilient communities, ecosystem protection and economic equality.

GVAT ADOPTS AN OLD-GROWTH CAMPAIGN!

Sierra Club BC is a proud member of GVAT—Greater Victoria Acting Together. Because of your support, this coalition of 30 organizations representing 70,000 people has taken on old-growth logging as one of their flagship campaigns!

*Photos by Caitlyn Vernon/Sierra Club BC.
Illustration by Mya Van Woudenberg/Sierra Club BC*



LEAVE YOUR LEGACY TODAY: RED CEDAR CIRCLE

What is your message to future generations? How would you like to be remembered? Did you know that leaving a gift to charity in your Will is one of the best ways to make a lasting impact that will echo through generations? Clayoquot. Carmanah. Cypress Bowl. West Coast Trail. Great Bear Rainforest. The province of B.C. would be almost unrecognizable if not for Sierra Club BC's work for the last 50 years. Your choice to leave a legacy gift to Sierra Club BC will pave the way for the next generation of climate action and environmental protection.

Contact Elisabeth Noble, our Donor Engagement Manager, at 250-386-5255 ext. 250 and at gifts@sierraclub.bc.ca, or visit us at sierraclub.bc.ca/legacy-giving for more information about joining our Red Cedar Circle and writing the story of your legacy.

NEW DATA: B.C.'S ANNUAL CARBON EMISSIONS INCREASED AGAIN IN 2018

Sadly, when it comes to climate change, B.C. is not flattening the curve. **The province's latest climate pollution data shows that emissions are going up when they so urgently need to go down.**

As we move forward, we must think and make decisions keeping in mind future generations and all the interlinked relatives that will follow—both human and non-human.

Emissions went up more than three per cent from 2017 to 2018. **Yet, the B.C. government still supports fossil fuel projects like LNG Canada which would make it impossible for the province to meet its current legislated emissions targets** let alone the more aggressive targets needed to make a meaningful difference. And while it includes some good steps, CleanBC (the provincial climate action plan) does not include clear plans to fully deliver B.C.'s climate reduction targets, much less the additional burden of eliminating the recent emissions increase.

The province's support of fracking and the export of liquefied fracked gas will worsen the destructive web of pipelines, plants, fracking sites, compressor stations and work camps across B.C. All while destroying salmon runs, polluting our climate and

sacred life-giving water, and ignoring Indigenous opposition.

We have a lot of work to do and it needs to be coordinated across different disciplines, communities and worldviews. Interdisciplinary science also tells us that forests are our best ally in facing climate change. Old-growth temperate rainforests have the largest carbon storage capacity per hectare on Earth. Unfortunately, the latest provincial data shows that uncounted climate pollution from forests in B.C., caused by destructive logging and climate impacts like fire, is now adding up to 237 million tonnes, about 3.5 times B.C.'s official emissions.

As we work to reduce climate pollution, it is important that we redirect our thinking and act as a steward of the air, land and waters we all lovingly know. We must continue to fight LNG and the Trans Mountain pipeline and tankers expansion project, while making sure our forest relatives are protected and restored as we face climate change together. We must act now and together for all future generations.

Photo by Mya Van Woudenberg/Sierra Club BC

EDUCATION GOES ONLINE

The call for outdoor learning opportunities is gaining momentum across the province from parents, guardians, teachers and students alike—and for good reason. Nature education has many immediate and long-term benefits. Forming connections to the land and water fosters a love of nature and inspires the environmental stewards of tomorrow. Time outside also reduces stress, promotes physical activity, fosters teamwork and leadership abilities, and inspires creative thinking—just to name a few.

That's why for years our education programs have focused on getting kids outside and understanding our interconnections to the natural world. And why **when COVID-19 arrived, we launched an online classroom with new resources to support parents and teachers in engaging kids in safe, nature-focused learning opportunities.**

In the spring, our Education Team also ran webinars including one about the endangered Northern Spotted Owl with the talented Dr. Julius Csotonyi who taught participants how to draw the owl in its habitat!

Thanks to a collaboration with the International Centre of Art for Social Change, we were lucky to have a dedicated Artist-in-Residence, Alyssa Harms-Wiebe, this summer. A specialist in creative writing and theatre arts, she created and led a new youth program, *Roots and Seeds*. Offered virtually due to COVID-19, the program engaged participants from across B.C. in seven weeks of creative non-fiction, flash climate fiction and plant-inspired poetry, and included interviewing older adults in their lives and connecting with place. We will be sharing the curriculum she created online here:

<https://sierraclub.bc.ca/roots-and-seeds/>

This fall, where safe, we will be returning to in-person, outdoor education programming and we will offer remote learning opportunities for classes around the province. **Our Education Team is working hard to plan safe, hands-on outdoor learning opportunities that connect our kids to nature, and will continue offering mentorship to support teachers in getting their kids outside.** Outdoor spaces are the safest for students and school staff during this time, and we're committed to supporting schools in this important transition to outdoor learning.

TAKE ACTION: MAKE OUTDOOR LEARNING ACCESSIBLE IN SCHOOLS ACROSS B.C.!

We recognize that, as students and teachers face feelings of stress and unease about returning to school amidst the pandemic, nature's mental health support has never been more needed for classes.

We've created an online letter tool that you can use to call on the B.C. government to make outdoor learning accessible for students everywhere. Outdoor learning offers many opportunities to counter increased stress and screen time, while reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. For the health of our kids and communities, send a letter today: sierraclub.bc.ca/outdoor-learning



STANDING UP FOR THE LAST REMAINING OLD-GROWTH FORESTS

Spending time amongst ancient trees is incredibly healing. It's so restorative to stand beside moss-covered ancient giants, watching dappled sunlight stream through the canopy. Time spent outdoors is a proven way to relieve stress and anxiety—something so needed these last few months. Intact forests are filled with medicines, provide us with clean air and water, reduce climate pollution and protect communities from climate-related disasters.

These old-growth forests show us that, despite climate change and stress from humans, here is a community that is still working together to stay balanced.

The pandemic has shone a spotlight on how human and ecosystem health are intricately linked. We depend on the biodiversity and natural systems that hold and support us. Protecting old-growth forests means protecting the health and wellbeing of our communities.

These ancient ecosystems desperately need our help. This spring, independent experts released a shocking report on the current state of old-growth. They found that **only 3% of old-growth forests with very big, old trees remain in B.C. and most is on the chopping block.**

As a science-minded organization, we sprang into action to amplify and promote this important

report—one that our Senior Forest Campaigner Jens Wieting says may be the most important report ever released about forests in B.C.

To get more people involved in standing up for these old trees, we launched social media and online ad campaigns that reached tens of thousands across the province. We created an online letter writing tool and a one-click call tool that connects you directly to your MLA. **Since their launch in July, thousands of you have called on the B.C. government to keep its promise and work with Indigenous governments to protect the last remaining old-growth forests!**

We also recognize that to protect old-growth and our health, we must build power within communities. That's why our new Lead Organizer Flossie Baker has launched relational organizing campaigns with people from all walks of life. We are working with Indigenous Nations, diverse and marginalized communities, faith groups, youth and rural communities to take action for these ancient forests in ways that are grounded in their traditions and worldviews.

To continue this important work supporting local leaders, we are excited to be expanding the impact of our old-growth campaign by growing our team and engaging with new and diverse communities across B.C. We'll be welcoming three new Sierra Club BC members—two Forest Relations Coordinator Associates and a Forest Community Liaison—to the forest team this fall!

WHY THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT MUST BE ANTI-RACIST

**"You can't have climate change without sacrifice zones, and you can't have sacrifice zones without disposable people, and you can't have disposable people without racism."
- Hop Hopkins (Sierra Club US)**

While our work as an organization is focused on addressing the climate and ecological crises which are a threat to millions of species and the web of life that sustains us all, we understand that the burden of ecosystem collapse and climate change is not distributed equally. **Ecological degradation is intrinsically linked with racial injustice and colonial oppression, and this historical and ongoing oppression is what causes communities of colour to feel the hardest impacts of the climate crisis.**

These links are sometimes blatant, like the exploitation of cheap labour and rampant resource extraction in less-developed countries, or Indigenous and non-white communities in Canada being used as dumping grounds for heavy industry. But the inequalities go much further than that; as climate change worsens, people who are already vulnerable, including lower-income and other marginalized communities, will have less resources to prepare for and cope with extreme weather and climate-related events like drought, floods, storms and rising oceans.

To come back to Hop Hopkins' words, if we are successful in eliminating racism, then we can't have disposable people. If there's no disposable people then how can we have sacrifice zones? If we have no sacrifice zones then the challenge of addressing the

climate and ecological crises becomes less difficult to surmount. And then we have everybody working together with a common interest in the Earth and these life systems that sustain us. In the end we all have a better quality of life, not just humans, but all living beings on this planet.

At Sierra Club BC, we have been grappling with our own history as an organization of causing harm to Indigenous peoples through failing to recognize Indigenous law and jurisdiction over their own territories.

With this in mind, we are committed to upholding Indigenous law and jurisdiction, having open conversations about our role in perpetuating colonialism, and learning from diverse communities and knowledge systems, especially those of communities most impacted by climate change and environmental degradation.

We are also working to build stronger, more respectful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous peoples as we strive for Indigenous perspectives to help us better respond to today's challenges. We're deeply grateful to Indigenous Nations and individuals who have invited us into those relationships.

Photos: (Right) Dakota Smith~MAKWALA of the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples stands in his traditional territory on northern Vancouver Island. This stand of old-growth is the last remaining valley-bottom forest in the Tessium Creek drainage. Photo by Louis Bockner.



RESILIENCY IN TIMES OF CHANGE

To nurture important discussions and support connection amidst physical distancing, we launched the popular bi-weekly webinar series, *Resiliency in Times of Change*.

Throughout this series, the Sierra Club BC team and special guests reflected on our role during this moment of transformation. Covering everything from the connections between ecosystem and human health to climate justice, we dove deeper than ever into stories from and about diverse communities and nature.



This series of eight webinars was extremely well-attended by people across the province! Thanks to everyone who joined in, the rich conversations that began made a major impact on us. If you'd like to watch these webinars, or catch up on your favourite episode, check out: sierraclub.bc.ca/webinars

PULLING TOGETHER TO STOP TMX

Since the launch of Pull Together 3.0 in 2019, in partnership with RAVEN, we've raised almost half a million dollars in support of the Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Coldwater Nations' legal challenges against TMX.

On July 2, 2020, our community watched in dismay as the Nations' legal challenges were pushed aside; Nations pressing for their Section 35 rights were denied leave to appeal by the Supreme Court of Canada. There remains a further legal challenge possibility for the Coldwater Nation, related to a needed hydrogeological study on the impacts of the pipeline on their drinking water aquifer.

While the legal challenges were not successful, our Pull Together initiative provided financial support so that the Indigenous Nations could pay their legal fees without having to divert as much funding from other important community services. **Pull Together also helped educate and mobilize people across B.C.**

and beyond to understand the risks posed by TMX to wild salmon ecosystems, endangered orca whales, Indigenous cultures and all communities that depend on a healthy coast and climate. The momentum built will continue, most immediately in an initiative calling on global insurance companies to not insure the TMX pipeline, due to the risks and the opposition.

Photo by Adam Reid.
Illustration by Mya Van Woudenberg/
Sierra Club BC

**WE'D LIKE TO
ACKNOWLEDGE AND
THANK ALL THE HANDS
AND MINDS WHO HELPED
BREATHE LIFE INTO
THIS WORK.**



301-2994 Douglas St, Victoria BC, V8T 4N4
Lək'wəḡən Peoples Territory
P: (250) 386-5255

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