



SIERRA
CLUB BC

SIERRA REPORT

FALL 2021

AN INVITE TO ACTION

The lands, waters and our relatives—from the salmon to the towering cedar—are in danger. But it's not too late. Together, we can protect the breathtaking web of life which works hard to sustain us all.

One of our strategic goals at Sierra Club BC is to empower local leaders in building resilient communities and protecting abundant ecosystems. To uplift others and drive this bottom-up change, we recognize the importance of nurturing relationships across diverse communities. As part of our relational organizing approach, we launched a new online volunteer portal that completely re-imagines what "joining the movement" means.

This website asks those wanting to share their time with us to choose a stream that is geared towards their interests and gifts. Specifically, we want to invite those who may not have seen themselves reflected in the movement before to see how their unique talents can help create a better world for all. This includes artists (from

dancers to photographers to painters), benefactors (those wishing to donate or offer in-kind gifts), ambassadors (those looking to help friends, family and coworkers imagine new possibilities for climate action), nurturers (those mentoring or supporting a young person right now) and innovators (those who have an idea or passion that isn't otherwise represented). By signing up for a stream, our team will share personalized action prompts, event invitations and educational resources to help you drive change in your community.

Our hope is that this new portal, and shared wisdom from the octopus, will help us mobilize hundreds of climate leaders across B.C. from previously untapped networks. Everyone has something that can make the future better. You are so needed. Will you join our network of action takers? Sign up at InviteToAction.ca.



Photo by Mya Van Woudenberg.

INTO THE WOODS: A Q&A WITH COASTAL PROJECTS LEAD MARK WORTHING

It's been a difficult year in so many ways, but can you tell us about some of the highlights of the last year?

The last year has been the best year and the worst year rolled into one. Because of COVID and because I'm based in Northern Vancouver Island, this was the first year that we had a fully-fledged and mobilized field team. We actually had tons of presence on the ground in a lot of at-risk forests, a lot of beautiful unprotected forests. And that was pretty amazing because there was a disconnect that I've felt for years between environmental advocacy work and people on the ground. People were always on site and always doing the work in some manner. But there was a disconnect between people, land-based or forest-based projects and policy or conservation financing. And so, I would say the highlight in this last year was just how much forest we managed to get into and how many communities we connected with up and down the coast.

Can you explain what a field assessment is like and what its purpose is?

I'll give you an example. We monitor the BC Timber Sales auction schedule—they auction off all their cutblocks for the next year in the previous year, so they have a big list and by then they've done all the work for the contractors to bid on that forestry operation. We monitor those, and find all the ones that are in an area close to us. Recently, Tłálitá'las~Karissa Glendale [forest relations coordinator with Sierra Club BC of both Haida and kwakwaka'wakw ancestry] noticed one of the proposed cutblocks was near Atluck lake, which is a pretty important lake for her community. It's a spot where they do spiritual work, and it has significance in terms of their origin story.

What I typically do before we actually get out there, is I'll research everything I can find out about the place. I ask what is the real name? What is the cultural significance of the area? Is it second-growth? Is it old-growth? What industrial activity is going on there? Is this a significant spawning ground area for sockeye? With this area in particular, we quickly realized that it was a very significant karst limestone deposit area and there were tons of caves, underground rivers and springs. Just super cool hydrology.

So, we get in the trucks and get out there and we find some karst, sinkholes and little disappearing creeks and stuff like that. Also, sure enough, we find that they didn't flag it out right. We document that—you take GPS coordinates, pictures, notes of what you're observing, like how things relate to where roads are and where the waterways are.

After that, we put that data back in the hands of people who might be able to do more with it. Karissa reports back to her community about what she saw on the land, maybe she noticed there was some really good balsam bark harvesting areas or cedar bark harvesting areas. Now she has really good land-based knowledge of the area, and I have information to share with members of the Conservation Committee for the BC Speleological Federation, and they're like, "That's pretty huge. If they continue with this cutblock, they're going to destroy these two caves and this hydrological feature. And they didn't do a very good karst segment. We're going to send our people out there to have a proper karst assessment

Photos: The Sierra Club BC team and partners conducting field assessments in areas proposed for logging. Photos by Louis Bockner and Sierra Club BC.



done.” And they did. And then they managed to have that cutblock stopped.

Sounds like partnerships and allies are very important for the work you’re doing. Can you talk a little bit more about partnerships?

I approach partnerships through a kinship lens of friendship and the ethics of eventually being a neighbour. I want everyone to be supported and heard, and engaged with, and listened to, and celebrated. And so that’s my mentality. And when I do that, I locate myself in a physical space and ask what is happening to the landscape here? And who’s land is this? And how can I meet these people where they’re at in terms of what they have going on? And that could be a non-Indigenous municipal government, it could be a hereditary governance system, it could be the band council. It’s whomever I can make radio contact with and sometimes that’s simple and sometimes that’s complicated. But either way, what I find when I ask myself those simple questions and figure out what’s going on, typically it’s seeing a lot of forestry impacts. I see those impacts in salmon spawning watersheds or in high alpine bog wetland or in yellow Cedar forests. So, I can’t deny that the violence against the land that I see most directly everywhere I go in my life is logging.

Speaking of partnerships, can you tell us about the new Tree of Life project?

The Tree of Life Project is a tripartite network of folks at the meeting ground between artistic expression, Indigenous or traditional ecological knowledge and cutting-edge scientific knowledge about forests. Some of the people involved include Suzanne Simard, Makwala~Rande Cook, Tł̓q̓lita’las~Karissa Glendale, K’odi Nelson, Sm’hayetsk~Teresa Ryan, Kelly Richardson, Paul Walde and myself. In this project we try to pool the different ways of knowing, different styles of thinking about and advocating for forests, and mix them together and try to cross-pollinate each other’s work so that scientists are able to do research and communicate back

to advocates, artists and Indigenous knowledge holders. And translate what is known in Indigenous culture in scientific terms and vice versa.

We are hoping it will be a space where Indigenous knowledge holders can explain to scientists, in not so dissimilar terms, how to think about their research moving forward or how they could be articulating research questions from Indigenous worldviews. And an artist can basically take the vast complexity of these spiritual and ecological principles and try to tell that story to the world so that people can deepen their understanding about how important forests are.

We just kicked it off last month. And the role that Sierra Club BC is playing is relationship building to bring those people together and to facilitate those dialogues.



Photos: (Top) The Tree of Life team meeting out in the woods on Ma’amtagila territory. (Bottom left) SCBC forest relations coordinator Tł̓q̓lita’las~Karissa Glendale and forest ecologist Suzanne Simard connecting with the old-growth ecosystem. Photos by Mark Worthing.



A NEW DIRECTION FOR OUR EDUCATION PROGRAM

Our hands-on education programs offer experiential learning opportunities that centre diverse ecological and traditional knowledges and invite learners of all ages into a relationship with the beings just outside their doors. They are deeply rooted in the principle that empowering and educating youth is vital to stewarding abundant ecosystems and a stable climate, as well as building resilient, equitable communities.

Right now, we are working towards growing the reach of our education programs. In July, we welcomed Haya Aldoori as our new education program lead who is helping us realize this commitment. With her experience in curriculum development, outdoor education and community outreach, the education team is hard at work re-envisioning our current workshop offerings to embrace a place-based model and increase delivery into underserved remote communities across the province.

For the 2021/22 school year, we will be focusing delivery in North Island communities, the Gulf Islands, the Greater Vancouver Area, and potentially the Interior to invite new connections. An important piece of our place-based approach is that it is centered in authentic voice by meaningfully including invited local Indigenous knowledge into the education workshops and materials that we offer.

This process of recycling and reimagining our education programs started this year with the invitation of intersection into our Climate and Place school workshops to better empower youth leaders. There were five focus areas to connect with in these workshops: science

of climate change, ecosystem ecology, youth climate justice activism, sustainable food systems, and self-expression through climate art. If you or a school in your area is interested in our free workshops, please visit the education page on our website for more information and to request a workshop at sierraclub.bc.ca/education.

We're excited to share more about the education program's transformation with you soon.

Photos: (Top) A young student learns about the ocean ecosystem in a workshop at their local beach. (Middle) Our new climate art workshop encourages student's creativity and aids in processing the weight of the climate crisis. In this art piece, the student wanted to empower their fellow classmates and teachers to join them in making their lunches zero waste every Wednesday. (Bottom) A Grade 3 class learns about old-growth habitats and the many beings that call them home in our place-based workshop. Photos by Mya Van Woudenberg/Sierra Club BC.



This past school year we facilitated **274 workshops** and connected with **over 5,500 students** across this place known to some as B.C.!



BIRD FAMILIES ARE HELPING PROTECT ADA'ITSX (FAIRY CREEK)

Screech owls and marbled murrelets are likely to be nesting in parts of the Ada'itsx/Fairy Creek area which remain open to logging. Both of these beautiful beings are protected under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) and the Migratory Bird Convention Act, meaning logging their nesting sites is illegal. So, to safeguard our shared old-growth home, Sierra Club BC worked with a group of biologists and birders to get out on the land documenting sightings and any active nests. In May, one team found evidence of threatened screech owls nesting within the watershed. Then in July, another field unit confirmed more than 240 endangered marbled murrelet sightings near old-growth stands slated to be logged. Sierra Club BC and the Wilderness Committee have notified the Pacheedaht, Ditidaht and the Huu-ay-aht to help inform their ongoing long-term land use planning work.

To further corroborate these recordings, Sierra Club BC and Wilderness Committee contracted a wildlife and environmental consultant to carry out a radar survey the morning of July 19. Within the radar's radius, we

detected marbled murrelets flying and circling outside of the current, temporary logging deferrals zone in both Ada'itsx/Fairy Creek and neighbouring Granite/Renfrew Creek watersheds.

With logging company Teal-Jones appearing to ignore the confirmed detections, and the province being unwilling to step in, we have called on the federal minister of environment to act. Under the federal Species at Risk Act, a clause allows the Canadian government to take over provincial land management if they believe the province fails to effectively protect the mapped critical habitat of a species at risk; and the B.C. government is certainly failing right now.

We are grateful to our small but powerful bird neighbours for helping protect the places we all know and love. If you'd like to be kept up to date about monitoring projects, or to see how something similar might support ecosystem protection in your community, please email us at social@sierraclub.bc.ca.

Photos: (Top left) An adult marbled murrelet pair. Photo by Eric Ellingson, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0; (Top right) Experts with the help of a group of citizen scientists detected marbled murrelets nesting in the Fairy Creek/Ada'itsx watershed. Photo by Royann Petrel; (Bottom left) A marbled murrelet chick in its mossy bed. This endangered seabird depends on old-growth trees for nesting. Photo by Aaron Allred.

TREATING CLIMATE CHANGE AS WHAT IT IS—AN EMERGENCY

The IPCC—the world’s authority on climate science—just released the first of three instalments of a new report. The contents are disturbing; they show a world in the middle of a climate emergency with a predicted increase in fires, extreme weather events, droughts and sea level rise. Unless we take immediate and significant action to reduce emissions from fossil fuels, this report predicts that we will soon surpass the strict threshold of 1.5 degrees of warming required to keep us from irreversible climate chaos.

The time for bold action for climate justice is now, and it’s only a matter of political will (and the will of the people) to make it happen. That means stopping fossil fuel subsidies, like those funding the Trans Mountain pipeline and tankers expansion project, and creating a strong social safety net. It means protecting our most advanced climate technology: old-growth forests. It means restoring authority and land stewardship to Indigenous peoples, whose thousands of years of knowledge kept these lands in balance and resilient to climate change.

That’s why Sierra Club BC has partnered with the Climate Emergency Unit (CEU). The CEU is a five-year initiative inspired by Seth Klein’s 2020 book *The Good War: Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency* and aims to implement massive-scale policies in Canada to confront the climate crisis. This requires rallying people across all levels of government and civil society organizations—from trade unions to businesses to art collectives. Our climate justice campaigner Anjali Appadurai and lead organizer Flossie Baker work with the CEU to connect with different community members within artist and faith communities. Through empowering local leaders across these diverse sectors, we can build the upswelling of support needed to face the climate crisis head on. To learn more about this initiative, visit climateemergencyunit.ca.

BRINGING ENVIRONMENTAL CONVERSATIONS INTO YOUR LIVING ROOM

Despite the constraints posed by the pandemic, this past year we reached over 6,000 people across the province through our massively popular webinars! Some of the highlights from these diverse sessions include:

- **Finding the mother tree—a conversation with Suzanne Simard:** We hosted a fascinating conversation about the wisdom of the forest with *Finding the Mother Tree* author Dr. Suzanne Simard and Sierra Club BC campaigners.
- **The future of salmon—a conversation with Alexandra Morton and Tłálitá’las Glendale:** Sierra Club BC’s forest relations coordinator Tłálitá’las Glendale was joined by biologist and national best-selling author Alexandra Morton for a conversation about the future of salmon and forests in B.C.
- **A good war—mobilizing Canada for the climate emergency:** How can we take large-scale climate action to provide a healthy world for future generations? Sierra Club BC’s climate justice campaigner Anjali Appadurai was joined by author Seth Klein to discuss the obstacles to meaningful climate action and what we can do to overcome them.
- **Our fun for all ages learn to draw webinars:** Hosted by scientific illustrator Dr. Julius Csotonyi, so far this year we’ve learned how to draw caribou, Pacific lamprey and mother trees! This webinar series invites learners of all ages to connect with coastal beings through art.
- **Intact forests, safe communities:** We invited concerned residents and municipal governments to join us for a webinar on how forest management influences the risks we face from climate change such as wildfires and floods.

If you’d like to watch any of these episodes, please visit sierraclub.bc.ca/webinars.





85% OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS WANT OLD-GROWTH ACTION

Sierra Club BC and Insights West partnered to examine public perceptions of ecological and social issues in British Columbia, particularly forest-related issues.

We found that the vast majority of B.C. residents (85%) want the provincial government to follow through on their election promise to implement all the recommendations from the independent Old-Growth Panel Review. Only 16% of B.C. residents say the government has done a good job in keeping this election promise. Learn more at sierraclub.bc.ca/forestpoll21.

DID YOU KNOW HUGE OLD TREES LIKE THIS ARE STILL NOT PROTECTED IN B.C.?

Logging of the last old-growth forests became a huge topic in B.C. this year, in large part because of growing protests, the ongoing wildfire season and big government promises followed by little action. During this time, the Sierra Club BC team has worked hard to bring some of these stories to the forefront and counter industry and government spin.

When a shocking photo surfaced of a truck transporting a giant Sitka Spruce along a highway near Nanaimo, the provincial government quickly claimed that there was nothing to worry about. A spokesperson from the B.C. Ministry of Forests released a short statement saying that the tree, presumably logged months earlier, would now be protected under the Special Tree Protection Regulation that came into effect on Sept. 11, 2020.

But the 2020 Special Tree Regulation was designed to leave almost all big trees without protection. SCBC quickly mobilized to set the record straight and make sure local, national and international media knew that Sitka Spruce are only protected if they have a diameter equal to or larger than 2.83 meters at breast height. Keeping in mind that in B.C. the maximum load width is 2.6 meters, old-growth trees of the size and species in the photo can

still be legally logged today. "The regulation was designed to ensure it wouldn't significantly affect the industry," says Jens Wieting, Sierra Club BC's senior forest and climate campaigner. For reference, under this ineffective regulation, Yellow Cedars are only protected at 2.65 meters, coastal Douglas-Firs at 2.7 meters, coastal Redcedar at 3.85 meters and non-coastal Redcedar at 2.9 meters.

Sierra Club BC will continue blowing the whistle against unsustainable industry and half measures from the provincial government. To help protect old-growth forests and the last big old trees like the Spruce on the truck, please send a letter at sierraclub.bc.ca/oldgrowth. For more options to speak out about old-growth check out our forest action takers guide at sierraclub.bc.ca/forestguide.



THANK YOU!

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

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IT DOESN'T PAY TO BE A SAVER!

It seems strange to pay taxes to die, but that's exactly what estate taxes are! There is something amoral about it especially given that this money has already been taxed. If you agree, here's my solution: registered charities can help us reduce our tax burden while supporting a future we believe in by leaving a gift in our estate plans.

But why wait?

You can create an ongoing legacy now! After accepting a \$3 million estate gift to another charity, a financial advisor remarked, "Just think of all the tax dollars that could have been saved if this woman had donated more money to charity along the way." This statement resonated with me, and I hope it does with you. From that day forward, my personal goal has been to donate enough money to charity annually to offset my personal income tax.

Similarly, often individuals don't sell, move, or cash in their (dirty) investments because they don't wish to pay capital gains tax. Registered charities can help offset capital gains taxes with charitable tax receipts (i.e. providing you with more money in your pocket, a clearer conscience and support for groups like Sierra Club BC).

What about that ecologically significant land your cottage is sitting on? If possible, you probably would prefer not to pay taxes on 50% of the difference in value from the time you purchased it when you die. The good news is you don't. Registered charity land trusts can help you through conservation easements or covenants written according to your terms while giving you a tax break. This means you can keep the cottage in your family for your kids, protect the forest around it, all while saving an enormous amount of tax.

Lest we forget, we are in a climate emergency! So, I'm investing in a future I believe in. What if more Canadians donated to environmental and social justice charities along the way? What would this country and planet look like? Canadians overwhelmingly want the government to act on climate change. B.C. is literally on fire! By donating to Sierra Club BC, you are helping to support the planet and future generations now! Let this be our legacy.

*Signed, Anonymous longtime Sierra Club BC
donor/supporter (20+ years)*



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