



SIERRA  
CLUB BC

# SIERRA REPORT

## FALL 2022

### WE'RE TAKING THE B.C. GOVERNMENT TO COURT FOR FAILING TO PRESENT PLANS TO ACHIEVE SEVERAL KEY CLIMATE TARGETS

A couple of years ago, terms like atmospheric rivers and heat domes were not part of our everyday vocabulary. We now understand only too well what havoc they wreak. Last year's intense heat and unprecedented heavy rains resulted in nearly 600 human casualties, billions of dollars in damage, and the demise of 1.3 million livestock and over 1 billion marine animals in B.C. alone.

We need a response from all levels of government that is commensurate with the global crisis we now collectively face. Instead, despite some worthwhile initiatives, years of missed emission reduction targets and broken promises by the B.C. government risk locking our province into a high carbon future.

This is why, back in March, Sierra Club BC and Ecojustice announced that we were taking the B.C. government to court for failing to present plans to meet key climate targets, as required by its own legislation.

The B.C. government is required by its Climate Change Accountability Law to publish annual reports on its progress towards achieving each one of the province's legislated climate targets.

Unfortunately, the 2021 accountability report falls woefully short, by failing to include a plan for the 2025, 2040 and

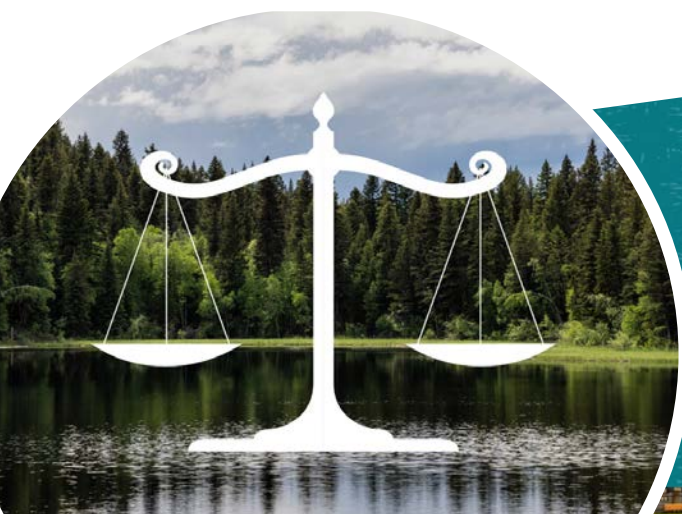
2050 climate targets. It also omits the province's plan to cut carbon pollution from the oil and gas sector, which could rapidly grow in coming years—fueled by the B.C. government's support for fracked gas and LNG projects.

It's imperative that B.C. delivers on the accountability and transparency promised in its legislation. The B.C. government has a legal requirement to state what actions it is taking to reduce emissions and explain how far these actions get B.C. to all of its targets.

Climate leadership is about more than recognizing the problem—it's about making a plan to solve it and being accountable for how that plan is implemented.

We look forward to holding the B.C. government accountable in court on October 4-5. The hearings will be held in Vancouver, and we hope to see you there. Stay tuned for more information.

In the meantime, you can help us make sure our provincial government is working towards climate action that ensures a liveable future for all by using our online tool to call for accountability today. Visit [sierraclub.bc.ca/accountability](https://sierraclub.bc.ca/accountability) for more information.



Photos by Getty Images, Canva and Mya Van Woudenberg.



# THE GRACE OF FORESTS

*A reflection on our forest field trip to the Interior.  
Shared by Mya Van Woudenberg.*

Jens, Florence and I had a wonderful opportunity to visit parts of the Interior in June. To learn more about the forests here, we met with Indigenous elder Bert William of the St'uxwtews (Bonaparte) First Nation, private landowners, foresters and UBC scientists. They shared in-depth perspectives with us about the interactions between ecological integrity, Indigenous knowledge, industrial degradation and the impacts of the climate crisis on Interior ecosystems. It was an incredibly eye-opening experience.

One story that stayed with me was from a family in St'át'imc territory where the forest gave an unexpected gift—it protected them from the worst heat wave in B.C.'s history.

In Lillooet, we met with Karen Playfair (featured below) who invited us to visit the spectacular intact forest and waterfall that stands only a few hundred metres from her front door. We walked beneath towering, lichen-covered old-growth as she shared more about her deep connection—and gratitude—to this place.

"This time last year we were heading into that really big heatwave that Southern B.C. suffered," Karen explained. "It hit about 46 degrees here."

"What was really awesome was by walking up into our creek drainage to the waterfall, the temperature was probably close to twenty degrees cooler. So, we could just go up there to cool off and enjoy that time by the water," Karen shared.

The forest, featured below, provided the Playfair family a refuge when they needed it most.

The shade of their canopies and their ability to absorb and retain water means old-growth forests create idyllic wet, cool microclimates. As heat waves and other climate risks become more common, protecting remaining intact old-growth forests and restoring those degraded from industrial logging is one of the best ways to keep communities safe. Yet year after year industrial clearcutting chips away more of these at-risk forests. Time is of the essence to chart a better path forward.

Meeting community members like the Playfairs and sharing their story is important for our work ensuring the B.C. government keeps its promise to work with Indigenous Nations in implementing the promised paradigm shift in forest stewardship. Together, we can make sure families from all over can find refuge like the Playfairs did. We look forward to sharing more of these impactful stories, photos and videos with you soon.





# NUCHATLAHT FIRST NATION'S HISTORIC TITLE CASE

Earlier this year, the Nuchatlaht First Nation decided to take the B.C. government to court to reclaim their territory, in a historic trial that began in late March at the B.C. Supreme Court.

To help spread awareness and show solidarity, Sierra Club BC teamed up with Wilderness Committee and STAND.Earth to organize two in-person events: a townhall featuring Nuchatlaht's Ha'with (Chief) Jordan Michael, Nuchatlaht House Speaker Archie Little and the Nation's lawyer, Jack Woodward on March 20, and a solidarity rally at the courthouse on March 21.

The Nuchatlaht Nation's territory includes North Western Nootka Island off the west coast of Vancouver Island. Nootka Island has a long history of cultural and natural abundance, and Nuchatlaht leaders are working to restore their stewardship of the area after decades of environmental mismanagement. Logging giant Western Forest Products, as well as the governments of Canada and British Columbia, are defendants in the case.

Despite the fact that the B.C. government passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act into law in 2019, which establishes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the Province's framework for reconciliation, the provincial government has refused to recognize the Nuchatlaht's rights to their territory with lawyers claiming in court that the First Nation 'abandoned' their territory.

The case is currently on break, but closing arguments are set to begin on September 26 and conclude by October 14. A decision is expected to follow in the new year.

*Photos - Top: Nuchatlaht members and their legal team speak at a townhall before the trial (Photo by Wilderness Committee).*

*Middle: We co-hosted a sign-making party in advance of the rally for folks to create messages of support for the Nation (Photo by Florence Baker).*

*Bottom: A speaker opens the solidarity rally at the courthouse (Photo by Solaye Snider/STAND.Earth).*

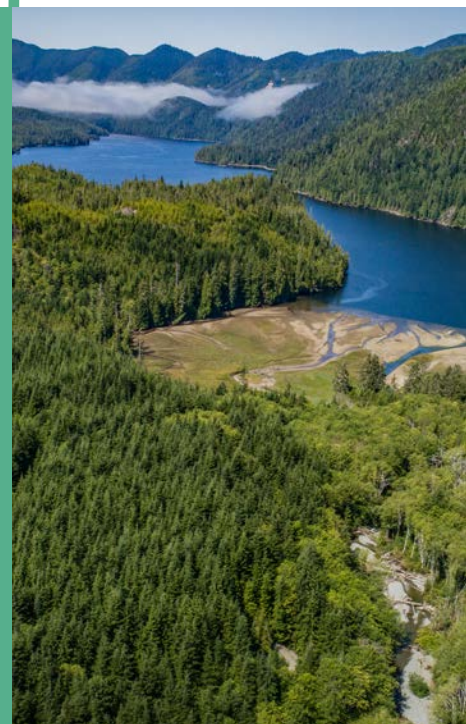


## AN INVITE TO ACTION

You are needed! Join a growing movement of people who are sharing their time and talent to help protect our shared home. Do you love to create art? Are you interested in helping kids connect to nature? Maybe you want to donate funds or are interested in hosting climate conversations with your network? Or perhaps you want to share your idea for action with us?

Through our engagement portal, *Invite to Action*, you can learn more about the diverse ways you can help steward the lands and waters. 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.

Sign up today at [InviteToAction.ca](https://www.invitetoaaction.ca)!



# FAITH GROUP OUTREACH

The stories we tell shape our imagination for action, meaning different stories will lead to different actions.

We need stories that move us out of incrementalism, shift attention away from the dominant structures and help us envision something more. We need stories that remind us of our basic goodness and invite us into a deeper relationship with the land and water.

In February we teamed up with the Climate Emergency Unit and For the Love of Creation to co-host an event for

thirty faith and spiritual leaders across the country. We called it 'The Stories that Move Action.'

In May, we were invited to present at the Vancouver School of Theology's 'Religious Responses to the Climate Crisis' conference on the topic of re-imagining invitations to climate action.

We hope to continue to host these rich and energizing discussions in the coming months.

## BEAR DENS IN B.C. NEED URGENT PROTECTION

Did you know that it's currently legal to log bear dens in most of B.C.?

A century of logging old-growth forests has greatly reduced the availability of suitable bear dens across B.C., with research showing that black bears on Vancouver Island are some of the most affected. This is because black bears on Vancouver Island rely heavily on dens associated with standing and downed large-diameter trees that are most commonly found in intact forests.

In a new report commissioned by Sierra Club BC and developed by the University of Victoria Environmental Law Centre, researchers identified simple yet effective policy measures that could provide provincial-scale protection for bear dens and guidelines for landscape-management.

The report also found that dens in second-growth forests are decaying and will not be replaced because new logging is permitted long before the large-diameter trees suitable

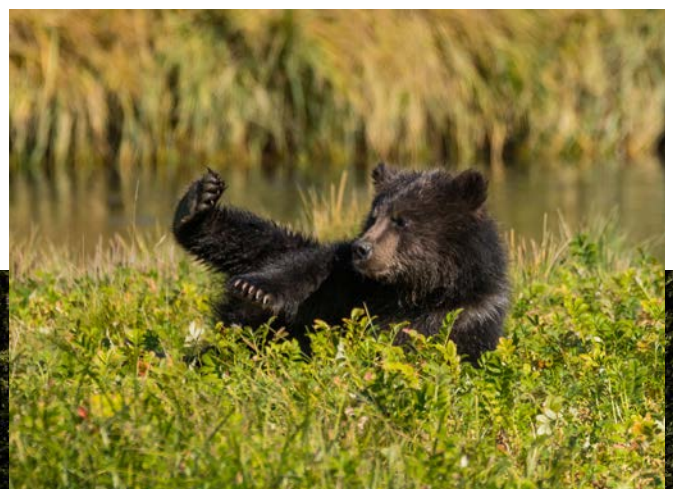
for dens have a chance to grow big enough to house a bear family.

The ongoing destruction of bear dens across many parts of the province is a dramatic example of how unbalanced our relationship with the non-human world is and the urgency of the biodiversity crisis in B.C., particularly for species that depend on intact forests.

As culturally sacred and critical keystone species, a decline in bear populations would negatively impact other species and contribute to the ecological degradation of old-growth ecosystems.

Protecting bear dens means defending habitat for species that depend on old-growth and healthy forests across B.C.

You can help us by calling on the B.C. government to formally protect bear dens. Visit [sierraclub.bc.ca/beardens](https://sierraclub.bc.ca/beardens) for more information.





# STEWARDSHIP SCHOOL: AN INVITATION TO SEE DIFFERENTLY

Held once per lunar cycle, these guided walks led by Cultural Voice kQwa'st'not~Charlene George encourage us to pause, observe and invite a new way of being together. Since launching in January, 60 Sierra Club BC members have participated in these walks, during which participants:

- Learn to see plants, animals (and yourself!) in a different way.
- Leave with an expanded sense of community and a willingness to build a better relationship with our more than human relatives.
- Leave this experience feeling like you can spark an interest in your family, friends and community about what you have learned in ways that are true to your tradition and lineages.

- Leave with an expanded imagination for different pathways to be more engaged in our responsibility to change our current path, which has led us to the climate crisis.

This invitation to “see differently” is re-narrating our understanding of the ‘climate crisis’ and the meaning of ‘climate action.’ It encourages participants to use their imagination and build new pathways that centre Indigenous knowledge and create the societal changes that we need.

After piloting them this year, we are busy planning more walks for 2023. Stay tuned for how to sign up.

*Photo (Bottom): kQwa'st'not~Charlene George guiding a group of Stewardship School members on a walk in the woods (Photo by Florence Baker).*

## TESTIMONIALS FROM STEWARDSHIP SCHOOL

“

I'm understanding that the climate crisis is a crisis of colonization and a crisis of the relationships that were disrupted through the project of colonization... not simply as a the result of us burning too many fossil fuels...the 'climate crisis' is more like a 'disruption of our relationships' crisis.

“

I have shifted the way I can engage in the climate crisis, ... if everyone could start relating to what's around them in a reciprocal way and seeing beings more than humans as equals instead of less it would change the way we engage with everything around us and with each other, which changes how the climate crisis is dealt with.





# HEAR FROM TEACHERS WE'VE WORKED WITH!

"It excited me as an educator to realize just how much we can do at our own school. We don't even have to leave the grounds to appreciate what is around us!"

"Our learning session with Sierra Club BC helped our learners to connect with the land, themselves, and each other. They experienced respectful and caring relationships between people and the other beings in our environment and expanded their awareness of their roles as visitors in the house of nature."

"It is so important that students are given the understanding, vocabulary, and time to explore nature and connect to the world around them. Sierra Club BC offers ways to engage locally and creates importance in our surrounding environment. As we face a climate crisis, it is vital that students grow their understanding of the living things that can and will be affected by our actions."

## EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATES

Sierra Club BC's Education team has been hard at work providing learning opportunities for children and youth across the province. The team uses a place-based approach that invites learners into a relationship with all beings.

Our education staff is also continually working to decolonize the learning process by respectfully incorporating invited local Indigenous knowledge into the workshops and materials we offer. By working with Indigenous partners to incorporate traditional ways of learning and knowing, and meaningfully engaging with place, we offer hands-on, experiential learning opportunities that are interconnected, support healthy childhood development and cultivate care. This helps ensure that future generations are well-versed in stewarding abundant ecosystems and a stable climate.

For the 2021/22 school year, we've been focusing on delivering programs in North Island communities, the Greater Vancouver Area, the Gulf Islands, the CRD and Powell River. Our new Place-based Learning workshop for high school, which was launched in the fall of 2021, was a success and we saw an increase in registration for the Climate and Place workshop for middle school.

During this past school year, we engaged over 400 learning communities (both in-person and online) and connected with over 8,000 learners.

In addition to our workshops for children and youth, the education team has also been providing valuable learning opportunities to formal educators, non-formal educators and community leaders.

If you or a learning community in your local area is interested in our education workshops, please visit the education page on our website for more information and to request a workshop:  
[sierraclub.bc.ca/education](https://sierraclub.bc.ca/education)

*Photos - Left: A student taking part in a forest ecosystem workshop. Through these programs, youth are able to better connect and build relationships with the lands and waters of their community (Photo by Mya Van Woudenberg).*

*Right: We are grateful to the grade 5 learners at Salt Spring Elementary who mindfully put together this collective art project, as part of their engagement with the Sierra Club BC Education team. This work is highlighting the 13 Moons of the WSÁNEĆ (Saanich people), using a borrowed moon design created by Sierra Club BC Cultural Voice, kQwa'st'not~Charlene George.*





# GROWING OUR TEAM

We are delighted to introduce you to new staff on our Sierra Club BC team! Each one of these team members bring a wealth of experience along with fresh perspective to strengthen our work. Please, join us in welcoming them!

Dr. Shelley Luce recently joined our team as Director of Campaigns and Programs. Shelley has carried out leadership roles at various environmental organizations and is particularly excited to develop collaborative, innovative strategic actions with measurable goals and publicly reported outcomes. We want you to have a chance to connect with Shelley and learn about her approach to Sierra Club BC's work and will be announcing events in the coming weeks.

Kate Kempton will be joining us part-time as a Strategic Advisor. Kate is a lawyer well versed in environmental and impact assessment law, mining law, energy law and areas of international law related to Indigenous rights. In her role at Sierra Club BC, Kate will help define and structure campaigns, determine campaign action plans, timelines and deliverables, and build contacts with Indigenous communities across B.C.

Earlier this year, we welcomed Gabrielle Vacheresse as Annual Giving Officer, Tanja Scaber as Finance Officer, Slii'em'tunaat~Lizzie Thorne as Climate Engagement Facilitator, Sylvie Yang as Digital Engagement Assistant and Neil Popko joined our Education team as Facilitator of

Learning. Visit [sierraclub.bc.ca/about](https://sierraclub.bc.ca/about) to learn more about our new team members!

With our staff changes, we are also wishing a fond farewell to the following staff members:

Tim Pearson, Sierra Club BC's long-standing Communications and Operations Director has retired; we wish him well in this next chapter. We are immensely grateful for the support, guidance, wit and strategic vision he has provided to Sierra Club BC in the last eight years.

Our Campaigns team has also undergone change; and we wish Anjali Appadurai, Mark Worthing, and Tłá'ita'łas~Karissa Glendale all the very best on their next steps.

Through her great abilities as an organizer, Anjali played a crucial role in launching Sierra Club BC's climate justice campaign. In his seven years with the organization, Mark has played defining roles from the Crown of the Continent region to our coastal campaigns, particularly on Vancouver Island and the Southern Great Bear Rainforest, where he forged important relationships with communities whose lives are intricately connected to the forests. And Tłá'ita'łas~Karissa pushed forward projects at the intersection of forests and the sea in Northern Vancouver Island. We are so appreciative of all the contributions that they've made at Sierra Club BC during their time with us.



## THANK YOU!

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

## LEGACY GIVING

Our work to safeguard old-growth forests, protect habitat for at-risk species and advocate for meaningful climate action helps ensure we build a better world for future generations. A legacy gift to Sierra Club BC is one of the most effective ways to support this work.

By making a legacy gift to Sierra Club BC, you'll join our Red Cedar Circle of honoured legacy supporters. Like the Western red cedars, Red Cedar Circle members are deeply rooted to this place and to Sierra Club BC's work to protect it. The support these gifts provide is invaluable.

If you want to leave a positive legacy for future generations, let's talk about leaving a gift in your will or estate. If you'd like to discuss your vision for the future, please contact our office by phone at 250-386-5255 ext. 224, via email at [donorservices@sierraclub.bc.ca](mailto:donorservices@sierraclub.bc.ca) or visit [sierraclub.bc.ca/legacy-giving](https://sierraclub.bc.ca/legacy-giving).



## YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We'd love to connect with you this October! Sierra Club BC will be hosting its Annual General Meeting (AGM) with an open invitation for members to attend (virtually). We'll be going over our highlights from the past year, speaking towards our vision for the future and introducing our new team members to you. You'll also have a chance to vote for the Board of Directors who will oversee operations for the next year. We hope you can make it!

**Date:** Wednesday, October 5, 2022.

**Time:** 5:15 p.m. PT

**Location:** Online via Zoom

You can register at [sierraclub.bc.ca/agm](https://sierraclub.bc.ca/agm) or contact Gabrielle Vacheresse at [gabrielle@sierraclub.bc.ca](mailto:gabrielle@sierraclub.bc.ca).



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