



SIERRA
CLUB BC

SIERRA REPORT
SPRING 2020



OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023

Sierra Club BC is thrilled to announce our new strategic plan reflects our ongoing journey of transformation. With this plan, we seek to transform by way of growing and introducing elements that will bring our work more fully into balance.

In it, you'll find themes that many have come to know and trust in our work. These core elements won't change dramatically – what will change more is how we do the work, by striving to shift our organizational culture.

This organizational shift reflects our goals of centring environmental justice and better recognizing, understanding and upholding Indigenous law and jurisdiction.

We've begun this work and will move more deeply into it by investing time and resources into emphasizing diversity, equity and inclusion in our recruitment, engagement and partnership building, learning from the Indigenous governance systems where we live and work, and allowing diverse voices and knowledge systems to become infused into who we are and how we work.



OUR STRATEGIC PLAN: HIGHLIGHTS

Striving for humility, we'll widen our circle by listening to—and learning from—different points of view and centring the voices of those most impacted by the climate crisis. Wherever possible and invited, we'll work with Indigenous peoples, rural communities, networked groups, and marginalized communities.

We'll deepen our engagement with communities through relational organizing, meaningful storytelling, and nurturing leadership for climate action and community resilience. Finding common ground in the climate crisis is essential and we'll strive for this in our communications.

While continuing to connect children with nature through environmental education, **we'll increase our support of youth to become effective climate advocates and nurture a culture of respect for the interdependence of all living beings.**

We'll maintain a focus on protecting ecosystems and old-growth forests, strong climate policy, leaving fossil fuels in the ground and advocating for a just transition to a sustainable, resilient economy. **We'll increase our emphasis on supporting Indigenous-led conservation and areas key for food and fresh water.** While continuing to base our place-based and policy campaigns strongly in science, we commit to balancing this with other ways of knowing.

Lastly, we'll continue to strengthen our ability to do this work through commitments to financial sustainability, a culture of learning, accountability and adaptive planning. **Read more about our strategic plan: sierraclub.bc.ca/balance**



OUR PROCESS TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION

The launch of our new strategic plan represents nearly a year's worth of intense, collaborative work guided by our Board of Directors and leadership team.

When I started as Executive Director, I was tasked with supporting our organization to make the changes necessary for us to be able to show up as powerfully as possible to defend the land and waters in a changing climate.

To determine our new direction, we underwent a rigorous process. First, we reflected on the strengths and weaknesses of our fifty-year past. We were greatly helped in this by Diane Pinch's meticulous research in her book, *Passion and Persistence*, detailing our history. We also published a document that acknowledges past harms and addresses our commitment to building better relationships with Indigenous Nations.

We then asked a number of critical questions: What does it mean to be a conservation organization at a time when food and water insecurity loom globally due to drought and rising temperatures? At a time of increasing migrant and refugee flows due to climate change? At a time of mass species collapse? In an era of reconciliation and upholding Indigenous rights? At a time of increasing social polarization?

We realized that in order to answer these questions, we needed to reach out to a broad spectrum of people from diverse backgrounds and work areas.

We did a survey of our membership, held retreats with our board and staff, and reached out to Indigenous leaders, scientists, business owners, government representatives, funders, individuals from immigrant and refugee associations, climate experts, and labour representatives.

We asked what people saw as our strengths and weaknesses. We asked what changes would make

us more effective, as well as make us better allies in the interlinked struggles for justice in all its environmental, social and economic dimensions.

One thing that came through loud and clear was around our ability to convene diverse groups and catalyze grassroots involvement. Another was the need to transform into a more humble organization that listens and connects more profoundly with people from diverse backgrounds and communities at the level of shared values, and of hopes and fears for the future. Only through these connections can we build a movement that brings us together as more resilient communities, with greater strength and power to effect the changes we so desperately need.

In short, we needed to redefine what it means for us to be an environmental organization.

Our strategic plan marks perhaps the end of the beginning of that process. We have much more to learn. I hope, if you like what you see in our plan, that you will join us in this journey.



Hannah Askew

Executive Director, Sierra Club BC

LEAVE YOUR LEGACY TODAY

If you want to leave a positive legacy for future generations, let's talk about leaving a gift in your will or estate plan that will help Sierra Club BC protect the land and water in honour of your memory.

To learn more about joining our Red Cedar Circle of legacy supporters, contact Elisabeth Noble at 250-386-5255 ext. 250 or at gifts@sierraclub.bc.ca. Or visit sierraclub.bc.ca/legacy-giving.

Another way to help the planet while growing your savings is by moving them out of fossil fuels and into investments that align with your values. Learn more from our sponsor Genus Capital Management at genusfossilfree.com



STAND UP FOR OLD-GROWTH!

In our diverse province, 92% of people agreeing on anything is nearly unheard of. But it happened: **British Columbians have spoken, and 9 in 10 support defending endangered old-growth forests.**

The same number believe it's important for the BC government to keep its 2017 election promise to take action on old-growth, including more protection, less logging, partnerships with Indigenous Nations and support for a more diversified economy, according to a poll Sierra Club BC commissioned last fall. **Read more:** sierraclub.bc.ca/forestpoll.

Protecting old-growth forests is one of the best things we can do to address the climate crisis. But bad logging practices like clearcutting and climate change-worsened forest fires fuel the release of more emissions. It's a domino effect with the potential to catapult us into an even warmer world. Australia's bushfires are a stark reminder that our approach to forests can help address the climate crisis or make it worse. And right now, clearcut logging in BC is making it worse.

In December, Sierra Club BC's Clearcut Carbon report made headlines. It showed that ending clearcutting of forests—particularly old-growth forests—is as important for BC climate action as phasing out fossil fuels. **Read more:** sierraclub.bc.ca/clearcutcarbon.

The BC government recently concluded a review process on old-growth and we mobilized supporters across the province to participate. We've also been building pressure to include protections for old-growth as it considers changes in forestry laws. But when the government talks a good game and acts slowly while allowing endangered ancient forests to be clearcut rapidly, we call it "Talk and Log." And right now, "Talk and Log" is putting us at risk. Every day, across the province, more than 500 soccer fields'

worth of old-growth is still being clearcut.

It's time to shift fossil fuel subsidies towards conserving forests, improving forest management and supporting value-added wood products that create more jobs and less damage. We're calling for restored government capacity for monitoring, research and restoration, and old-growth protection through law reform, modernized land use plans and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs).

The BC government recently passed legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and we encourage supporters to gain an understanding of this Declaration. Implementing UNDRIP in forestry laws is needed to respect Indigenous jurisdiction, support Indigenous-led conservation, and support economic alternatives for Nations that seek to protect more land.

This year, we'll be growing our forest campaign team and building public demand for old-growth protection. We'll be getting campaigners, photographers, journalists and biologists out to tell the stories of what's happening in the woods, while convening conversations about forest solutions and sharing our mapping and research with decision makers and communities. We're grateful for your support as we expand this critical work in 2020.

92%

OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS
SUPPORT TAKING ACTION
TO DEFEND
OLD-GROWTH

Photo: TJ Watt/Ancient Forest Alliance

SHIFTING THE CLIMATE STORY

Sierra Club BC is working to transform our organizational culture to better recognize Indigenous law and governance and centre environmental justice.

Our goal is to uplift grassroots-led change in response to the climate emergency and ecosystem collapse. To do this, we must engage with and learn from diverse communities and knowledge systems, including communities most impacted. The biggest injustice of climate change is that the hardest hit are the least responsible for contributing to the problem. Wherever possible and when invited, we will work with Indigenous peoples, young people, rural communities and marginalized communities.

In particular, we are committed to learning from the governance systems of the Indigenous Nations on whose territories we live and work.

Sierra Club BC has been thrilled to welcome Climate Justice Campaigner Anjali Appadurai and Climate Justice Organizer Florence Baker, both based in the Lower Mainland.

With a background in journalism and communications, Florence is focusing her climate justice organizing on building relationships with unions and faith traditions.

Anjali works to support our role in the climate justice movement by bringing a strong justice lens to climate change messaging. Anjali represented Sierra Club BC at COP25 in Madrid in December, reporting on the global climate talks while centring the stories of those on the frontlines of the climate crisis. **Watch her videos at sierraclub.bc.ca/cop25**

This work to engage new audiences is about relational organizing that starts from a place of listening. **Rather than talking “at” people and claiming to have the answers, we will first seek to better understand peoples’ experiences of environmental issues**, and then explore opportunities for collaboration and storytelling that gives voice to real peoples’ lives and concerns.

This commitment to transformation also involves ongoing internal work. It includes emphasizing diversity, equity and inclusion within our team, paying a living wage, seeking to incorporate diverse perspectives, appropriately compensating those who share them with us, and investing in learning opportunities for staff, Board and supporters.

We are excited to be on this journey of transformation and we invite you to join us on it.

LET'S PULL TOGETHER!

For the past two years, through our Pull Together campaign Sierra Club BC supporters have been organizing with our partner RAVEN to raise funds and solidarity for the Coldwater, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish Nations as they challenge the Trans Mountain pipeline and tankers project in court.

In early February, the Federal Court of Appeal released its decision dismissing the legal challenges. The Nations have stated that this struggle is not over, pointing to the need for bold courageous action on climate change, for defending water and future generations, and for the protection all beings.

We will continue to follow their lead and support them until justice is realized and their rights respected. Appeals are already before the Supreme Court of Canada challenging the limited scope of those legal cases. **Let's show we're holding strong behind their leadership by continuing to support their ongoing legal challenges.**

People across the province have been organizing film nights, dance parties, pancake breakfasts, yoga fundraisers, kayak paddles, clothing swaps and more to raise money for the Nations. Dozens of businesses have also taken part, donating proceeds. We've raised more than \$400,000 since July. That's incredible! **Sign up to organize your own solidarity event at pull-together.ca/organize**

You can also learn more with our Pull Together webinar series. "Wellhead to Tidewater" tracks the bitumen from the tarsands and Teck's proposed Frontier Mine, to frontline communities taking Trans

Mountain to court, to California where residents are opposing proposals to dredge the San Francisco Bay to accommodate supertankers.

Speakers include Tsleil-Waututh and Tulalip Tribes youth Kayah George, West Coast Environmental Law staff lawyer Eugene Kung, Sierra Club BC climate justice campaigner Anjali Appadurai, Stand.earth campaigner Isabella Zizi of the Northern Cheyenne, Arikara and Muskogee Creek Nations and Indigenous Climate Action Executive Director Eriel Deranger of Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. **Watch recordings at pull-together.ca/webinar**

Thank you for being in solidarity with Indigenous Nations who are working incredibly hard to defend their territories. It's an honour to work alongside all of these inspiring people in a global movement for climate justice.

-Mary Lovell, Pull Together Organizer

Photo (L-R): Pull Together organizer Mary Lovell, Sierra Club BC campaigns director Caitlyn Vernon and elected councillor for the Squamish Nation Khelsilem at a Pull Together pancake breakfast fundraiser hosted by the Squamish Nation.

\$400,000+
**RAISED TO SUPPORT
INDIGENOUS LEGAL
CHALLENGES TO
STOP TMX**



ACTING TOGETHER ON CLIMATE

Sierra Club BC has been collaborating with other civil society groups for the past three years as part of Greater Victoria Acting Together (GVAT).

GVAT is an alliance of unions, faith groups, and environmental, education and frontline service organizations working on Lekwungen territory.

Together, we're working to address the top issues our members face in the region we call home. GVAT now represents a massive and diverse cross-section of civil society totaling more than 60,000 people. That's nearly 20% of the population of the region coming together!

On April 27, 2020, all Sierra Club BC members are invited to join GVAT at our "Founding Assembly." We will be bringing together Indigenous leaders, local politicians, key influencers, and leaders and members of each organization to demonstrate our collective

power and influence. It will be at this momentous occasion that we will publicly announce our newest priority area of collaboration: climate change.

Sierra Club BC's new strategic plan calls for us to support and enable 1,000 local leaders across the province to speak up for climate policy. It is therefore an incredible opportunity that we are being called into collaborative action from tens of thousands of members of GVAT to work with them on climate change. All of GVAT's priority areas will be approached through an Indigenous rights lens.

We invite you to join us for this event, which will be held Monday, April 27 from 6:45-9pm at the First Metropolitan Church (932 Balmoral Rd.) in Victoria on Lekwungen territory (Doors 6pm). To be added to the email list and learn more, visit www.gvat.ca.

GOODBYE, GALEN!

With sadness and excitement for his next chapter, we say goodbye to Galen Armstrong. Many supporters have connected with us through Galen and this organization would not be what it is today without him. We wish Galen and his family all the best.

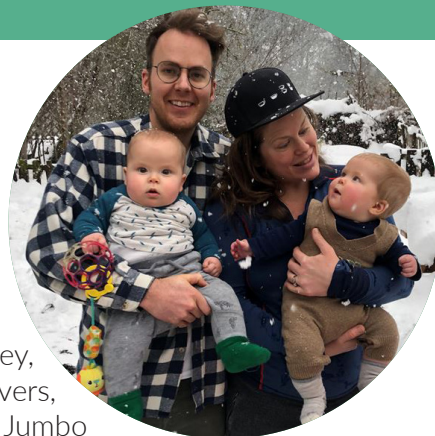
I can hardly believe it, but after 8.5 years I'm moving on from Sierra Club BC. This experience has been incredibly educational, and I owe a huge debt of gratitude to this organization for all the opportunities I've been given. I had a wonderful experience with its hardworking and talented staff, Board, supporters, partners and volunteers.

I'll be working with a group called For Our Kids, organizing with parents and grandparents to address the climate challenge. As a new parent, I'm excited to be involved in this work and to support other parents to do the same.

Working with volunteers has been the most rewarding part of my job. Together, we stood up for the Peace River Valley, the Flathead River Valley, coastal BC, salmon-bearing rivers, the Sooke Hills, Qat'muk (the Jumbo Valley), the climate, old-growth forests, clean water, Indigenous title and rights and more. We did it together, building friendships, alliances and community. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to join you in this important work.

Without volunteers, Sierra Club BC would be a much less influential organization. I really encourage you to get involved.

-Galen Armstrong



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CLUB BC**

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