

SIERRA REPORT **SPRING 2025**

Building a brighter future, together.

Building momentum for forests

Over the past year there's been exciting movement for old-growth protection, with Indigenous Nations leading progress to establish new conservancies and protected areas. Since 2021, there's been over 300K hectares of new protected areas announced thanks to years of public pressure from people like you. And there is a \$1 billion commitment to help ensure we hit our goal of protecting 30 percent of the land by 2030.

In January the B.C. Ministry of Forests announced they would be extending the Ada'itsx (Fairy Creek) watershed logging deferral, which was set to expire February 1 of this year, to September 2026. The extra time will allow the Pacheedaht Nation to continue their resource management planning process that is already underway.

This announcement has the potential to be a milestone on the path to long-term solutions for old growth in B.C. When combined with other conservation achievements in the last year — like last summer's agreement between Ahousaht, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, and the B.C. government to almost double the protected old-growth rainforest in Clayoquot Sound — we think there is a strong case for the B.C. government to proactively approach First Nations with support to defer remaining at-risk old-growth forests in their territories.





Forest trends update

Four years after the B.C. government's announcement of the Old Growth Strategic Review, key forest trends show that old-growth and forest health overall are declining faster than progress to protect at-risk forests and reform forestry practices.

The rate of logging, both for old growth as well as overall forests, has remained at unsustainable levels in recent years and there is no comprehensive annual government overview on the state of the forests in B.C. While this is no substitute, last September Sierra Club BC offered a high-level overview of key forest trends over the last four years that included data on old-growth logging, overall clearcutting, forest burned, forests protected, and forest deferred from logging.

One major barrier to old-growth protection is a lack of detailed and up-to-date government data on how much old growth is actually left, what is currently protected and how much is on the chopping block. That's why Sierra Club BC will compile and share additional forest trends in 2025 and engage with the province to work towards more transparency. In the meantime, we will continue to share the data we do have with Indigenous leaders, provincial staff, stakeholders and more to help ensure these ancient forests remain standing for future generations.



Event highlight: Silvicola Film Tour Vancouver Island

In October, we hit the road for seven days across seven Vancouver Island towns to tour the award-winning B.C. forestry documentary *Silvicola*. Lively community town halls and forest walks followed these screenings. We were joined by *Silvicola* director Jean-Philippe Marquis and ecologist Erik Piikkila who helped lead our guided hikes.

Our goal was simple: Get neighbours together to talk about the state of forests and the role of forestry in their communities. We also discussed how we can work together to better care for these ecosystems while upholding Indigenous rights and supporting a thriving economy. These conversations are especially important considering the ongoing tariff threats and the stark reality that only a small fraction of at-risk old-growth forests remain standing in B.C.



On route to a provincial biodiversity law

This year is critical for the creation of a provincial biodiversity law, and we are actively working with ministries and their key stakeholders to demonstrate broad support for strong legislation co-developed with First Nations. This follows our work in 2024, when we collected thousands of supportive comments and input from people across the province to inform the B.C. government's draft of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework. Since then, we have continued to pressure the re-elected B.C. government to finalize the framework and to develop a provincial biodiversity and ecosystem health law in collaboration with Indigenous Nations.



Webinar highlight Signs of Life: Hope in an era of extinction

Environmental journalist Sarah Cox has witnessed what happens when we drive species to the brink of extinction. In her 2024 book 'Signs of Life', she tags along with Indigenous guardians, biologists, conservationists, the Canadian military, and ordinary people who are racing to save the habitat of hundreds of species before it's too late.

In November we hosted an online panel conversation with Sarah Cox, Spô'zêm First Nation Chief James Hobart, and SCBC Senior Policy and Science Advisor Jens Wieting. The online event was moderated by SCBC Campaigns Director Shelley Luce.

We discussed how we got here; the work Indigenous guardians are doing to protect species habitat on their lands and waters, and what is needed to make sure they succeed; the importance of making commitments like the Nature Agreement, 30 by 30, and provincial biodiversity legislation a reality; and what gives us hope for the future of the over 1,900 species on the brink in B.C.



Only one wild-born spotted owl remains in B.C. Action to protect endangered species like spotted owls and the old-growth forests they rely on will take all of us working together (Photo by Jared Hobbs).



Climate change is hurting the people and places we love

Reducing climate pollution that causes extreme atmospheric rivers, droughts, heatwaves and wildfires requires winding down the production and burning of fossil fuels. Recent government approval of ten new, clean energy projects is a good step toward meeting B.C.'s energy needs with low-carbon energy, and does not require new, environmentally damaging pipelines. At the same time, the fast-tracking of wind and other major resource development projects in response to the threat of U.S. tariffs is concerning, and SCBC is working with the B.C. government to ensure proper environmental protection processes are maintained. With leadership and additional climate action, it is possible for B.C. to meet pollution reduction targets and move toward a clean energy economy.

Preventing wildfires, droughts, floods and heatwaves will require real commitment to reduce dangerous, climate warming pollution. Getting on this path will save lives, and protect our health, finances, infrastructure and the web of life we all depend on.



B.C. climate emergency campaign

We joined over 600 civil society groups to issue an annual assessment of the B.C. government's implementation of ten urgent climate actions to confront the climate emergency. The assessment tracked the province's progress on issues such as fossil fuel expansion, building electrification, public transit and biodiversity protection, and was presented during a press conference in January.



B.C. delays sharing emissions data

As the UN Climate Change Conference COP 29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, was set to begin in November, the B.C. government had not shared its latest annual climate pollution data as it often does ahead of the UN climate summit. The province has been consistently late sharing this data, often about 20 months after the end of the reporting year. 2022 data was quietly shared at the end of December and showed a three percent increase in climate pollution.

In B.C., the lack of current data hampers our ability to strengthen climate policies early enough to meet provincial emissions reduction targets. With the deadlines for 2025 and 2030 targets fast approaching, we need government transparency around the data showing B.C. climate pollution trends. This is especially true as the province continues to greenlight new fossil fuel projects that lock in millions of tonnes of additional climate pollution in B.C. and abroad



Catalyzing community networks through our Mother Tree Local Leaders Program

Sierra Club BC's Mother Tree Local Leaders Program (MTLLP) continues to expand. During 2024 we ran a Jewish faith cohort for 17 local leaders and provided ongoing support to community leaders from our previous two cohorts. These diverse and networked individuals represent over 6,400 people across the Lower Mainland and beyond.

At its heart, MTLLP aims to empower local leaders to catalyze their community networks in creating tangible, positive change and stepping into healthier relationships with the lands and waters. Drawing on learnings from mother trees, highly connected hub trees in forest communities that provide information, nourishment and support to other trees in their network, MTLLP is an experiential learning program designed for people who, like these nurturing trees, serve as hubs, connectors and supporters within their communities.

Staying on top of B.C. politics

The last few months have been a whirlwind. It started with the B.C. provincial elections and is currently playing out with a looming trade war with the United States. Through it all, our team has worked to keep our members informed on how the political landscape will impact environmental policy. During the election we put together a list of questions for MLA candidates focused on different commitments around biodiversity, old growth and climate action.

Since the election, we have analyzed and commented on the BC NDP and BC Greens agreement, the new mandate letters for MLAs and the recent throne speech. We shared our concerns about the lack of details and timelines for climate and biodiversity commitments. While the mandate letters and throne speech call for rapid industrial development, including fast-tracking major fossil fuel projects by exempting them from important environmental assessments, we are calling for government action that addresses more than one crisis at once. Our commentary and analysis have been picked up by different media outlets including The Narwhal, Global News and CBC radio.

Education program updates

We began this school year by connecting with youth across B.C. through meaningful engagement with the land. We welcomed a new Indigenous Facilitator of Learning for the Lower Mainland, Erika, who has been busy helping learners cultivate deeper connections with the beings and ecosystems around us. Together, we learned more about nature in our backyards, created new nature poems, and immersed ourselves in hands-on learning. And this winter, we welcomed a new Facilitator of Learning for the Capital Regional District. Jochelle brings a wealth of knowledge on how to connect learners to the land through movement.

We remain committed to ensuring that everyone has access to our programs. Our webinars have allowed us to reach far corners of B.C., while our in-person workshops remain free for all schools.

Our approach focuses on sowing seeds of connection that blossom into relationships grounded in reciprocity. We aim for all of our facilitators to embrace their diverse perspectives with a commitment to decolonizing our learning processes. We respectfully incorporate local Indigenous knowledges into our workshops and resources. This intersectional approach helps foster a deep, respectful relationship with the land, water, and all living beings.

Since the start of the school year, you helped:

- Organize over 142 outdoor education workshops for youth in kindergarten through grade 12. Through these workshops we have reached over 3,250 learners!
- Increase our capacity for teacher and parent support. This fall we expanded our downloadable resource library by creating and publishing five new lesson plans on Migratory Birds, Salmon Sharks, Wolverines, Fall, and Nature Poems. This year we also ran six Professional Development Workshops for 170 teachers and teacher candidates! A highlight for our team was presenting at the Classrooms to Communities Conference.
- Reach over 1,900 people through three Learn to Draw webinars on salmon sharks, migratory birds and wolverines. Nearly 150 of these people were teachers watching alongside their class, representing another 3,000 students! Our Learn to Draw webinars reached 35 unique districts. In addition, we organized an in-person walk-and-draw on intertidal zones in Vancouver that was attended by 45 people.

HEAR FROM TEACHERS

“It was great to complete this activity in our local environment and have it connected directly to our curriculum. It was also incredibly valuable to approach it with an Indigenous perspective and our roots/history.”

“It is so important to take the kids out to local environments, but even better when someone prepares engaging lessons. After the lesson, they were more easily able to talk about their learning after “BEING” in the place where they learned/ touching the plants vs just talking about plants.”



These change-makers are helping build a brighter future.

We know that acting in the face of the climate and biodiversity crisis can feel overwhelming. But you are not alone in this work. That's why SCBC supports local leaders creating positive change in their communities. We connect them with resources to help folks step into meaningful action. Here are three local leaders SCBC has worked with who are finding creative ways to build a brighter future.

CLIMATE LEADER: MEGHAN FANDRICH

Meghan Fandrich survived the Lytton fire and is reaching thousands of people across Canada through her poetry and her story. She is a neurodivergent writer, editor, and parent currently living on the edge of Lytton, B.C., in Nlaka'pamux territory. Through her loss and grief, Meghan went to Ottawa last spring to tell politicians her story and to call for a strong emissions cap on Canada's fossil fuel sector. She shared her story in our summer 2024 webinar "Turning Down the Heat: Solutions in a new era of wildfire".



FOREST LEADER: JEAN-PHILIPPE MARQUIS

Jean-Philippe Marquis is an award-winning filmmaker who partnered with us on our recent seven-stop film tour across Vancouver Island. His visually captivating film, *Silvicola*, profiles a wide range of people whose lives and livelihoods are deeply connected with the forest. The beauty of the film is that it asks the audience to reflect on what is truly needed for a healthy forestry sector and forest wellbeing in B.C.



EDUCATION LEADER: JULIUS CSOTONYI

Julius Csotonyi is a Vancouver-based scientific illustrator and natural history fine artist who has been generously donating his time to host Learn to Draw workshops with Sierra Club BC since 2020. His background in ecology and microbiology has taken him to study sensitive ecosystems, from sand dunes in the Rocky Mountains to hydrothermal vents at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. These experiences have fueled a strong resolve to work toward preserving biodiversity. Painting biological subjects is one means that he uses to both enhance public awareness and to motivate concern for its welfare.



Leave a legacy of a brighter future

You can leave a legacy of healthy land and water by leaving a gift to Sierra Club BC in your will.

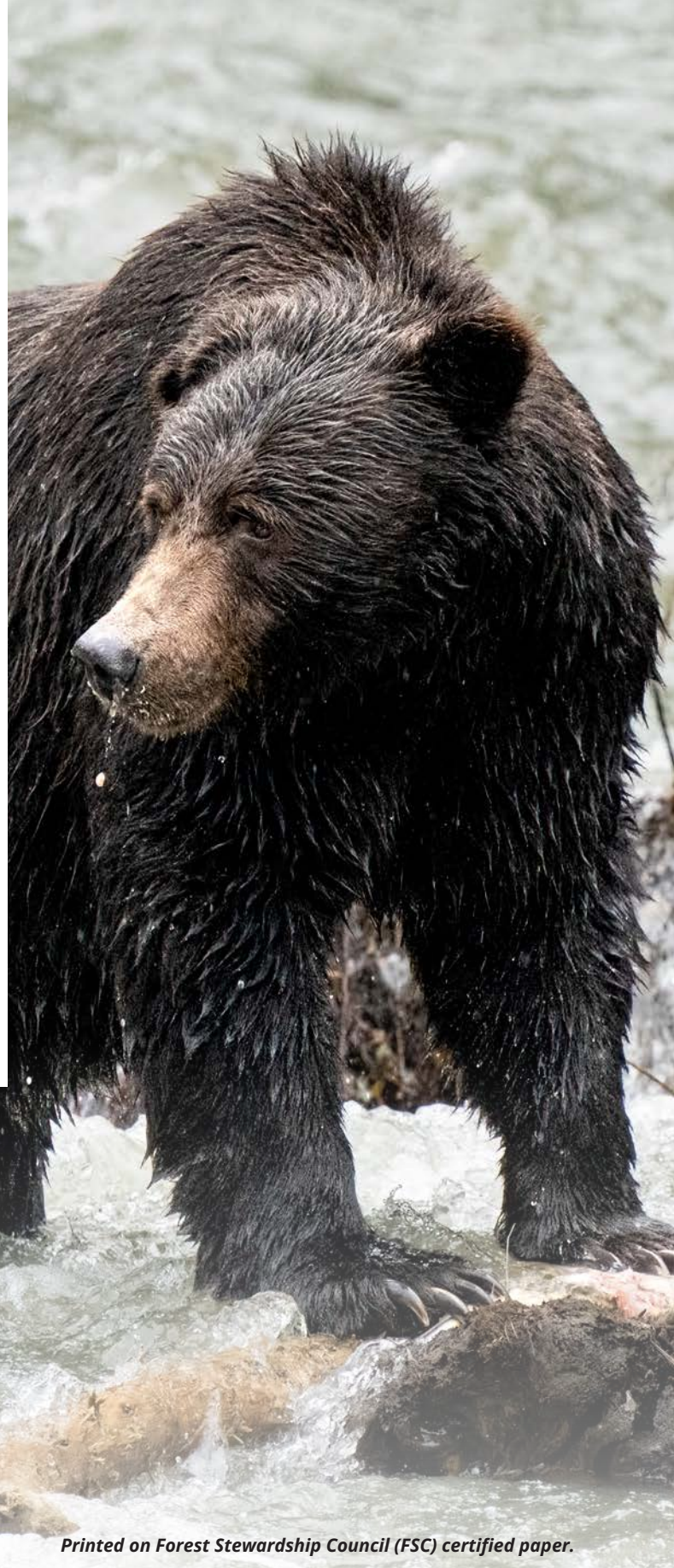
Since 1969, Sierra Club BC has been known for safeguarding biodiversity, protecting old-growth forests, advocating for a healthy climate, and inspiring future generations to better care for the lands and water through our place-based environmental education programs.

Your legacy gift, no matter the size, will make a tremendous difference in ensuring we can continue this work into the future.

A charitable gift in your will can also reduce the taxable impact on your beneficiaries by reducing taxes on your estate.

When you add Sierra Club BC to your estate planning, you'll join dozens of our honored Red Cedar Circle legacy supporters. Join them in leaving a brighter future.

Visit sierraclub.bc.ca/donate/legacy-giving to learn more or contact Gabrielle Vacheresse at 250-386-5255 ext. 102 or gabrielle@sierraclub.bc.ca.



Cover photos by Mya Van Woudenberg.

Printed on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper.



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