



SIERRA REPORT

Defending nature and confronting climate change Spring 2019

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS IN ACTION

In the summer of '69, a group gathered in the Lower Mainland over concerns about flooding of the Skagit Valley and logging in Cypress Bowl on Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam territory (West Vancouver). Having linkages to—but not the permission of—the US-based Sierra Club (the oldest and largest environmental organization in the United States), they called themselves the Sierra Club of Western Canada.

Soon after, a group in Victoria launched a campaign to protect the magnificent forests and lakes of the Nitinat Triangle on Ditidaht territory. They took some Sierra Club US letterhead, erased the "US" and stenciled "Sierra Club Victoria" in its place. By the time Sierra Club US found out, the Nitinat campaign had been won. And the name stuck.

Today's Sierra Club BC is entirely BC-based and independent of Sierra Club Canada and Sierra Club US (though they've long since forgiven us and we remain close friends).

From our scrappy roots, we are now the longest running and one of the most well-respected organizations at the forefront of BC's environmental movement.

From Pacific Spirit Park, the West Coast Trail and Cypress Bowl, to Gwaii Haanas on Haida Gwaii and the Great Bear Rainforest, Sierra Club BC supporters have helped achieve nearly every major conservation victory in BC.

This year, we're marking this milestone and celebrating the next chapter of fulfilling Sierra Club BC's mission. The urgency of climate change means our responsibility to make an impact is greater than ever. We're continuing to evolve our work to respond effectively to the changing environmental landscape in BC.

We're committed to the next fifty years. **And we're so glad you're in this together with us.**



We'll be producing special programming to celebrate our anniversary. Beginning in early summer, we'll be hosting special events and involving members in storytelling initiatives.

Stay tuned for invitations to take part as details are confirmed. Visit sierraclub.bc.ca/50years for the most recent updates.

STILL DEFENDING OLD-GROWTH FORESTS

Vancouver Island forests have been at the heart of the environmental movement in BC since Sierra Club BC's inception. Half a century later, the loss of rainforests remains one of the most challenging issues.

We're losing 34 soccer fields' worth of old-growth on the island every single day. Mills and logging communities are going belly-up and ecosystems are in a state of emergency. There's still no plan to support industry to transition from depletion of ancient rainforests to improved second-growth forestry.

It's also bad news for our climate. As a result of destructive logging and climate impacts, BC's forests are now releasing more carbon dioxide than all other provincial sectors combined.

Last fall, Sierra Club BC's Mark Worthing visited northern Vancouver Island to hear from folks in tourism, municipal governments, First Nations, logging sector leaders, and government staff. Mark also helped organize a gathering of Indigenous leaders to talk forest stewardship.

We visited Schmidt Creek in Tlowitsis-Ma'amtagila territories, where logging has begun in BC Timber Sales cut blocks, which could cause landslides near important orca rubbing beaches at Robson Bight. We did field assessments in the Nimpkish watershed, the Tsitika Landscape, the Tahsish and surrounding areas. Sadly, all have extensive logging damage to ancient old-growth ecosystems.

The number of people calling for action continues to swell. But 18 months after taking power on a promise to act for old-growth, the BC government has yet to take meaningful steps. However, we're seeing some positive shifts and will keep with engaging them.

On February 6, more than 100 Sierra Club BC supporters visited the constituency offices of 16 MLAs, including those of Premier John Horgan and Environment Minister George Heyman. They delivered a letter signed by 20,000+ BC residents calling for the protection of old-growth forests. This is in addition to the 200,000+ people internationally who have called for action, a petition we delivered to the BC Legislature in the fall. We've also been meeting with government and keeping the issue in the public eye, with 43 media hits in just the first 6 weeks of 2019—an average of one every day.

This year, we're organizing in forestry-dependent communities and supporting local leaders. We'll be sharing our research and mapping to get more people calling for action. We'll hold space for dialogue, especially in rural areas, so industry, First Nations, municipalities, and community groups can find common ground.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, but we've done this before and we can do it again. The forests need us. We're growing our forest campaign, and we're so glad you're in this together with us.



MORE WINS FOR NATURE

2018 IMPACT: CLIMATE & ENERGY SOLUTIONS

- > Produced a popular podcast series on clean energy
- > Challenged in court the exemption of 2 fracking dams from environmental assessments
- > Mobilized thousands to tell the government to stop subsidizing LNG and invest in renewables
- > Called out provincial support for LNG in the media
- > Revealed BC's emissions rose in 4 of the past 5 years
- > Mobilized thousands to call for a climate test

2019 GOALS

- > Produce Season 2 of our clean energy podcast
- > Build broad support for increasing climate ambition and make climate action a major federal election issue



2018 IMPACT: PIPELINES AND TANKERS

- > Helped raise \$660,000 for Indigenous legal actions that overturned Trans Mountain's approval
- > Ran radio ads opposing the Kinder Morgan buyout
- > Engaged thousands to call for better oil spill response
- > Exposed articulated tug barge tanker risks, engaging thousands to call for restricting ATBs on BC's coast
- > Helped collect 66,000+ letters to the NEB

2019 GOALS

- > Convince BC to do a new review of Trans Mountain
- > Stop Trans Mountain once and for all!

2018 IMPACT: EDUCATION

- > Celebrated 20 years connecting kids with nature with 140,000+ students reached!
- > Engaged 7,800+ students and 400+ teachers
- > Launched a teacher mentorship program

2019 GOALS

- > Expand our programming to 6 more school districts including 3 in northern BC
- > Get thousands more kids outside!

2018 IMPACT: SOUTHERN ROCKIES

- > Called out Teck's Elk Valley coal mines for polluting watersheds with toxic waste
- > Mobilized hundreds to call for First Nations to be included fully as partners in Columbia River Treaty negotiations
- > Supported a water quality program to monitor effects of mining pollution on waterways

2019 GOALS

- > Launch a campaign calling for no new mines in the Elk Valley
- > Raise awareness of the incredible biodiversity of this region

2018 IMPACT: SITE C DAM & PEACE VALLEY

- > Supported Treaty 8 Nations' legal challenge to Site C
- > Led media trip to Wood Buffalo Nat'l Park to highlight Site C impacts, with multimedia exposé in *The Narwhal*
- > Organized stops on a tour by Peace Valley farmers Ken and Arlene Boon, with \$13,000+ raised

2019 GOALS

- > Hold Canada accountable to protect Wood Buffalo from Site C's impacts
- > Continue supporting Treaty 8 legal challenges to Site C



SIERRA CLUB BC MEMBER ZONE

Sierra Club BC could not do this work without the valuable contributions of our volunteers, 2,000+ members and 70+ major donors who give at least \$500 per year.

Members provide the financial support necessary to keep the long term view in mind. People like you who donate – especially on a monthly basis – are the backbone of Sierra Club BC. Our core capacity to affect change is determined by the strength of our membership, which is growing at a steady pace.

As a member, you help carry the work that our community of 34,000 non-financial supporters rely upon for environmental advocacy, education, and conservation. Thank you!

Did you know that as a member, you get access to exclusive invitations to events, our monthly e-newsletter Sierra Life and the ability to vote at our AGM? Ensure your membership is up to date for 2019 by making a minimum \$15 gift at sierraclub.bc.ca/membership.



MEMBER SURVEY

On our 50th anniversary we're taking time to reflect deeply on where we've been and where we'll go next.

With our new Executive Director Hannah Askew, we're excited to fine-tune our focus to ensure we're responding effectively in today's rapidly changing landscape. Thanks to the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, we've embarked on the Innoweave Process, a program to test and implement new approaches to enhance our impact.

We're asking you to be part of our reflection process.

We've developed a short survey enclosed here to listen to where you think our strengths are, where we can improve and what you see as the top priorities for action in the next decade.

We hope you'll take this opportunity to let us know what you think. We truly value your feedback - it will help us in setting a strong foundation for the development of our next strategic plan, to be released this fall.

You can also fill out the survey online at:

sierraclub.bc.ca/survey

2018 IMPACT: VOLUNTEERS

- > Made 10,000+ calls to remind people to vote in BC's electoral reform referendum
- > Helped collect 10,000+ signatures in support of rainforest protection
- > Spent 125+ days canvassing
- > Represented Sierra Club BC at 30+ events
- > Delivered a petition to the BC Legislature from 200,000 people calling for forest action
- > Helped raise \$660,000 for Indigenous legal actions that overturned Trans Mountain's approval
- > Our Quadra Island Local Group raised \$3,500 for the PVLA and Indigenous legal challenges to Site C
- > Student volunteers hosted a hike raising \$562 for our pilot Outings program

GVAT: LISTENING TO OUR MEMBERS

Sierra Club BC is one of 20+ members of Greater Victoria Acting Together (GVAT), an alliance of unions, faith groups, and environmental, education and frontline service organizations working on Lekwungen territory. This fall our groups undertook a listening campaign as part of the GVAT organizing process.

We asked our members, Board and staff four questions about what is genuinely going on in our lives. The results were revealing and helped GVAT decide to tackle all of its campaigns through both a climate change and an Indigenous rights lens.

What we heard from our members is that you value your health, friends and family, access to the natural world, and the freedom and quality of life that comes with living in Canada. Many expressed deep concern about climate change and a sense of climate grief or stress. Many are concerned about affordability and housing, inequality, disconnection from nature and each other, and challenges with health and family. We heard stories about developing a strong connection to nature as a child, grief over loss of wild spaces, and feelings of awe at the universe and humanity's relationship to it.

As GVAT continues to expand its "Power for the Common Good," Sierra Club BC will be working with other organizations to coordinate a "Civic Climate Academy" event. We plan to bring together faith groups, unions, frontline service organizations, environmental groups, and members of government to discuss the climate crisis and make a plan to work together.

We look forward to continuing to gather together. The uniqueness of working with groups outside our ordinary audience has proven to be powerful both for our organization and personally for our members who have experienced GVAT's work. **If you're interested in getting involved, contact Elisabeth Hazell** at gifts@sierraclub.bc.ca or 250.882.3682.



PODCAST PICK

Sierra Club BC's podcast **Mission Transition: Clean Energy and Beyond** returns this spring!

We're launching our next series with a focus on moving the sustainability discussion beyond solar panels and electric cars to explore aspects of the clean energy transition that few have yet considered.

Find *Mission Transition* on Apple Podcasts or your favourite podcast app, click 'Subscribe' and 'Auto-Download' to ensure you get all the latest episodes as soon as they're released. Or you can listen online at sierraclub.bc.ca/podcast.

WET'SUWET'EN SOLIDARITY

In January, there was an explosion of media coverage about Indigenous rights and title as a result of the RCMP raid of the Gitdumden and Unist'ot'en camps in northern BC. Indigenous leaders and tens of thousands of people showed up to solidarity events across Canada to denounce the use of violent police force against Wet'suwet'en people asserting their rights and jurisdiction on their unceded territory.

Sierra Club BC stands in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en. A number of our members have reached out to ask questions in order to better understand the situation, and we're providing a brief update here.

The Unis'tot'en (C'ihlts'ehkhyu/Big Frog Clan) and Gitdumden are two of five Wet'suwet'en clans. For the past decade, the Unist'ot'en have been protecting their land from oil and gas development, including the Coastal Gaslink pipeline which would feed the LNG Canada fracked gas facility. A cabin, healing lodge, bunkhouse and pit house have been constructed. The camp is used year-round for healing retreats, culture camps and living.

The Wet'suwet'en have occupied their territory with a sophisticated hereditary governance system for thousands of years. The Band council system was imposed by the federal government on Indigenous Nations through the Indian Act, as part of an assimilation policy. The elected Chief and Band Council are primarily responsible for things that happen on reserves like water, housing and schools.

There are five elected Wet'suwet'en band councils, four of whom have signed agreements with Coastal Gaslink. However, hereditary chiefs from all five clans say those agreements don't apply to the territories off reserve. They have not given their consent for the pipeline to go through their territory.

Many Canadians have heard of the 1997 Delgamuukw Supreme Court decision, which recognized that Aboriginal title continues to exist over land and water where Indigenous Nations have never signed a treaty with the Crown. The territory in question was Wet'suwet'en and neighbouring Gitxsan territory.

The Wet'suwet'en are preparing to launch another title case to protect their territory and assert their rights, title and jurisdiction. They have launched a fundraising initiative toward this end.

We hope this clarifies the complex nature of what at first might appear to simply be opposition to a pipeline, but is in fact about conflicting perspectives over who holds authority and how resources are managed on unceded territories.

We encourage you to learn more about this issue. We've posted more detailed information and a list of ways you can support the Wet'suwet'en at sierraclub.bc.ca/wetsuweten-solidarity.



CLIMATE ACTION: WHERE ARE WE AT?

Momentum on climate change is heating up. After a summer of record-breaking wildfires in BC – and reports of severe floods, droughts and hurricanes around the world – the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a sombre report.

The IPCC stressed that we have just 12 years to keep warming under 1.5 degrees and avoid the worst impacts on our health, communities and the wild species we love.

In December, BC announced its new clean growth plan. CleanBC is a major step forward in the race to combat the climate crisis. It features specific measures to get us 75% towards our 2030 carbon pollution reduction target and commits to articulating how it will achieve the remaining 25% within 18-24 months. We like its accountability mechanisms and annual reporting.

We'll be watching to ensure the climate advisory council is given sufficient capacity, can set interim targets and has the ability to revise targets in light of the latest science.

Is the plan perfect? Far from it. Its targets are not ambitious enough. We need to reduce carbon pollution faster than currently planned. And that's going to hurt: BC's climate pollution is still on the rise.

We're also concerned that this government is still committed to LNG. It's counter-productive to act to reduce carbon pollution while expanding fossil fuel extraction. And there's no mention of how we'll meet our 2050 targets.

But in today's polarized world, in which far too many politicians and political parties are backsliding on climate, the CleanBC plan is a bold and welcome step forward. It shows the vision and prioritization we must bring to the climate crisis challenge.

And yet, we must do more. In 2019, we'll be working to help make the provincial plan even stronger and make bold climate action a major federal election issue. We need to show real climate action involves a just transition that provides good jobs, respects Indigenous rights and leaves carbon rich old-growth forests standing to fight global warming.

The climate crisis means we have to move beyond partisan conflict. Politicians and parties of all stripes need to come together and work toward our common good.

Please join us in challenging the BC government to do even better by talking to your MLA. This fall, we also encourage you to challenge federal election candidates to demonstrate strong commitments to climate action. Show up to debates, ask questions, and let them know you expect platforms that commit to the bold action needed today.



Take action on climate change with us at:
sierraclub.bc.ca/action

A LEGACY FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS

My wife Diane and I plan to leave a substantial portion of our estate to environmental groups, especially Sierra Club BC.

We have been passionate outdoors people most of our lives and want future generations to have the same opportunities we did. Yet what we see is wilderness loss, climate change, pollution and species extinctions. We believe humans have a duty to protect nature. Possibly we are the last generation who can do this in a meaningful way.

Sierra Club BC is BC's oldest environmental charity. Since 1969, it has helped protect areas of ecological significance such as the Carmanah Valley, Clayoquot Sound and the Great Bear Rainforest. Today its 36,000 supporters continue that same work, but in the context of a climate-changing world.

Diane and I have long admired Sierra Club BC, both for its science- and solutions-based advocacy and its effective grassroots action. It cuts to the essence of environmental issues in a thoughtful manner and gets results. By supporting Sierra Club BC, we know British Columbia will always have an advocate for nature.

Remarkably, less than 3% of charitable giving currently goes to environmental causes. As longtime volunteers and supporters, Diane and I want to ensure Sierra can continue its work of protecting nature and getting people outside. I encourage you to include Sierra Club BC in both your charitable giving and your will. It can be as simple as adding a codicil with just one sentence such as: "I give Sierra Club of BC Foundation, currently of 301-2994 Douglas St. Victoria, BC, V8T 4N4, _____% of my estate, to be used for general conservation purposes at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors."

- Brian Pinch, a retired investment advisor, was one of the pioneers of socially responsible and environmental investing in Canada. He and his wife Diane live in Victoria BC.



5 DECADES OF IMPACT: HIGHLIGHTS

1972: Sierra Victoria is successful in helping protect the forests and lakes of the Nitinat Triangle.

1988: Sierra Lower Mainland's 14-year campaign for the UBC Endowment Lands on Musqueam territory successfully results in the formation of Pacific Spirit Park.

1994: Sierra Victoria's four-year battle to protect Victoria's watershed from logging is successful (but now in 2019 the Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park needs protecting from development again!)

2000: Clayoquot Sound becomes a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. Sierra Club BC and our partners in the Clayoquot Sound Conservation Alliance seek to work collaboratively with First Nations toward lasting conservation solutions for Clayoquot Sound's remaining ancient rainforest valleys.

2016: Sierra Club BC and our partners sign the historic Great Bear Rainforest Agreements and win the prestigious Buckminster Fuller Challenge and EarthCare Awards for this precedent-setting collaboration.

These are just a small handful of our achievements together. Read more at sierraclub.bc.ca/history.