

SIERRA REPORT FALL 2025

Building a brighter future, together.

Protecting our coast & economy

Six years ago, after years of fighting to protect the waters of B.C., British Columbians won a huge victory when the federal government formally banned oil tankers on the North Coast and sent Enbridge (and their misguided pipeline plans) packing.

Now, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith wants another kick at our coast with a proposed northern oil pipeline that she continues to promote, despite her failure so far to find any private sector proponents.

For decades, First Nations and the people in British Columbia have said no to oil spills and the job losses, financial devastation and damaged ecosystems that come with them. We plan to keep it that way.

With your support, we've been loud, persistent and clear: People in B.C. love their hard-fought North Coast Oil Tanker Ban. In the last few months, we've published an op-ed and ads in the Ottawa Citizen and Vancouver Sun, we've activated thousands of people to send letters to Liberal MPs, and our social media videos about upholding the oil tanker ban have gone viral, with over 100K views.

We want the provincial and national media to understand that B.C. will keep defending the North Coast Tanker Ban — the only piece of legislation standing in the way of a new pipeline. We will continue this push through op-eds, webinars, and social media campaigns to make sure PM Carney understands that protecting our coast protects our economy, local communities and ecosystems.





An update on forests

In 2025, First Nations led the way to important victories in old growth protection. The Kwiakah First Nation doubled their protected area to 16,000 ha. In Clayoquot Sound, the Ahousaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, and Hesquiaht First Nations created 76,000 ha of new protected areas. And the Klinse-za/Twin Sisters Park expansion added 200,000 ha of land supporting endangered caribou in the territories of the Sauteau and West Moberly First Nations.

This summer, we celebrated the announcement of the Kaska Nation's 4 million hectare protected area in northwest B.C. — an area larger than Vancouver Island! It will protect forests, rivers, lakes, wetlands and mountains from development. Sierra Club BC supports Kaska First Nation as they work through the land use planning process with the B.C. government, to achieve all the protections the Nation has envisioned.

Sierra Club BC has focused on revealing crucial information about forests in B.C. to the public through two major reports. The first, *The Economic Value of Old Growth Forests in B.C.* released in April, found that protecting at-risk old-growth forests in just two large Timber Supply Areas (TSAs) could deliver \$10.9 billion CAD in economic benefits over the next century — far surpassing the returns from business-as-usual logging. These findings give decision-makers clear evidence that protecting what remains of our old growth is not only the right choice for the environment, but also for long-term economic sustainability.

The second report, to be released in November, provides an in-depth look at the current state of old-growth forests. Building on the Old Growth Strategic Review, it will assess what progress — if any — has been made toward the transformative shift in forest management the Review called for. It will also give real numbers on what remains and how much our province is continuing to log. The report will be shared widely to raise awareness, strengthen public support and increase the pressure on the B.C. government to take meaningful actions to protect these irreplaceable ecosystems.



Fact-checking Canada's annual "State of Canada's Forests" report

The federal government's "State of Canada's Forests" report paints a rosy picture that downplays the real impacts of industrial logging on biodiversity, Indigenous rights, and carbon emissions. That's why this summer a coalition of environmental organizations, including Sierra Club BC, released a counter-report that tells the real story of what's happening to forests in Canada.

Without transparency, the public can't demand the urgent action needed to maintain and restore healthy forests that support thriving biodiversity and protect communities across Canada, including in B.C.

Our webinars are reaching thousands

Our “Old Growth is Awesome” webinar highlighted the incredible value of old-growth forests for biodiversity, a livable climate, tourism, recreation and much more. Almost 900 people registered to hear our panel provide an update on provincial old growth policies and the importance of supporting Indigenous protected areas in B.C.

Our “Is a River Alive?” webinar had over 1,100 registrants! The event featured author Robert Macfarlane and the launch of his new book ‘Is a River Alive?’, which explores the idea that rivers are living beings who should be recognized as such in both imagination and law. Sierra Club BC hosted the discussion with special guests, including an introduction from Grace Vickers, a co-founder and member of the Lax’yip Firekeepers, also known as the Youth of the Gitksan Lax’yip.



Protecting biodiversity and ecosystems in B.C.

Last year, the B.C. government developed a draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework that received thousands of supportive comments and input from people across the province.

This draft is the result of many years of public pressure, and it outlines a path forward — including interim protection while a provincial law co-developed with Indigenous Nations that prioritizes biodiversity and ecosystem health is developed.

We understand that a law affecting all natural resource sectors is complex to implement, so we provided specific suggestions for how the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship can work with the Ministry of Forests to map out legislation that can work across the differing mandates.

Our campaigners met with Minister Randene Neill, B.C.’s Minister of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship, with a strong message on the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework: people want species protection. We will continue to pursue this, with enormous support from the public.

We continue to fight for endangered species federally. Our team met with Federal Environment Minister Julie

Dabrusin and discussed our successful Migratory Birds Act lawsuit, making her aware of the court-mandated timeline for Environment Canada to vastly improve their standard of protection for marbled murrelets and 24 other vulnerable bird species. Our lawyers are now busy with the legal follow-up on the case, and we won’t rest until marbled murrelets and other endangered birds have the protections they need. For the murrelets, this would mean finally requiring protections for the coastal old-growth trees where they build their nests.



Our team continues to fight for endangered species, like old-growth dependent marbled murrelets, through our Migratory Birds Act lawsuit (Photo by Deborah Freeman).



Moving the dial for climate-ready communities

Our Move the Dial for Climate-Ready Communities program is proof that when people are empowered with the skills and support to take action in their communities, they can shift the paradigm towards healthy ecosystems and climate resilience.

In two years the program has led to successful council motions in 15 municipalities and helped secure endorsement from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for resolutions to fund local biodiversity and climate resilience initiatives. At the heart of this program are the 'dial movers': the 100+ volunteers who stepped up for their local environment since our launch in 2023.

Our 2025 focus was to increase the uptake of our new *Climate-Ready Communities* toolkit with a targeted campaign to strengthen urban green infrastructure. We all deserve to live in healthy, climate-safe communities. But right now, our cities and towns are being harmed by heatwaves, wildfires and landslides that are made worse by climate change.

Move the Dial volunteers throughout the province advocated for motions by their municipal councils to improve tree equity. And our work paid off! We are happy to report that our resolution calling for cooling green infrastructure was endorsed by the Union of BC Municipalities!

As temperatures rise, cities and towns around the world are leading with the knowledge that housing must be climate-ready. This resolution sent a clear message to the Province that B.C. communities need green infrastructure to keep people safe.

To help move this along, Sierra Club BC also created an online petition that has had over 500 signatures, and our campaigner David Quigg co-authored an op-ed in the Times Colonist with Dr. Melissa Lem and Dr. Bethany Ricker from the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE).

Paddling together for səliłwət (Burrard Inlet)



On May 25, səliłwət Nation's (Tsleil-Waututh Nation, TWN) Sacred Trust Initiative and Sierra Club BC (SCBC) hosted their second annual Interfaith Water Ceremony on the shore of Whey-ah-Wichen. Over 200 people and 25 faith leaders responded to TWN's call. The ceremony aimed to bring diverse communities together to renew commitments to care for the inlet as it faces threats on many fronts, including the Trans Mountain pipeline and tanker project.

This major threat to the inlet comes without the consent of the Tsleil-Waututh who, in 2014, released a 1,400 page-assessment working within their own legal order and the colonial legal system to show that this pipeline should not be operational. The inlet is of immense importance to the TWN and to all the communities that live within and around these waters. A threat to the inlet presents a major threat to the TWN's way of life and contradicts their obligations as the people of the inlet.



More media pick-up on climate issues

We've been busy doing media interviews with a big focus on climate issues. Here are some highlights.

When it comes to the climate crisis, no matter how bad things get, there's always something we can do to make things better. Sierra Club BC Organizer David Quigg was interviewed about this on the CBC's All Points West radio show.

David was also quoted in the Globe & Mail and in a Radio-Canada article about the B.C. government's approval of the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission pipeline and was interviewed about it on Radio West in the Interior, All Points West in Victoria, and On the Coast in the Lower Mainland.

Sierra Club BC Associate Director Shelley Luce was invited on CBC's BC Today show to comment on the proposed northern oil pipeline and broader energy issues in B.C. Sierra Club BC senior policy and science advisor Jens Wieting was also interviewed by Global TV about the same subject.

Catalyzing community networks through our Mother Tree Local Leaders Program

Our last Sierra Club BC's Mother Tree Local Leaders Program (MTLLP) cohort was made up of mental health professionals who work in diverse settings including addiction services, private practice, and the B.C. Crisis Line. These individuals know that the wellbeing of their patients is directly tied to the wellbeing of society and the ecosystems they live in. We had 9 sessions together focused on drawing connections between caring for the lands and waters with caring for our own health. Our current cohort is made up of interfaith leaders from Sikh and Muslim communities.

At its heart, MTLLP empowers 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 — the highly connected hub trees that provide information and nourishment to other trees in their network — MTLLP is an experiential learning program for people who, like these nurturing trees, serve as hubs, connectors and supporters within their communities.

We continue to support projects by members of previous cohorts. This year some of those projects include gardening workshops, art workshops, and a five-session webinar about the Perek Shira, a medieval Jewish poem inspired by local ecosystems.

Education program updates

2025 has been a beautiful year of growth for our education program at Sierra Club BC. We began the school year by welcoming Jochelle, our new Facilitator of Learning, whose rich background in arts education brought a fresh and inclusive lens to our work. With her support, we've deepened our focus on welcoming neurodivergent learners and younger students into meaningful, land-based education. Jochelle's tailored approaches have helped us engage those who may not have found a place in traditional environmental education spaces.

Our commitment to offering free, equitable access to all programs has remained strong. We're excited to share that this fall we'll be bringing our workshops to the Okanagan. This is our first expansion beyond Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland since 2020. This marks a powerful step in connecting with more learners across the province, alongside our continued reach through accessible online webinars.

This year, our programs have been rooted in play-based learning. This play works in tandem with place-based learning, and celebrates the unique gifts of our facilitators and creates lasting memories for students. Play opens the door for deeper relationships with the natural world and with one another, fostering connections between students and the beings in our backyards – which remains the core tenant of our programs.

We also continue to weave Indigenous voices into our workshops and resources, a vital part of decolonizing both our internal practices and our external offerings. With gratitude and intention, we move forward — learning, unlearning, and growing together on these lands.

Since the start of the school year, you helped:

- Deliver over 293 outdoor education workshops to youth from Kindergarten to Grade 12 — connecting more than 6,500 students with hands-on learning experiences in nature.
- Boost support for teachers and parents by expanding our online resource library. This fall, we launched seven brand-new lesson plans on topics like Fire, Lynx, Herbariums, Deep Ocean Ecosystems, Nature Poems, and more. We also hosted five Professional Development Workshops, reaching 165 teachers and teacher candidates with fresh tools and ideas for bringing nature into the classroom.
- Inspire over 1,300 participants through our Learn to Draw webinars, featuring fascinating deep ocean ecosystems, sandpipers, rattlesnakes and Canada lynx. Among them were 100 teachers watching with their classes — reaching an estimated 2,000 additional students! In total, our Learn to Draw series connected with 30 unique school districts across the province. In addition, we organized an in-person walk-and-draw about forests in Vancouver that was attended by 20 people.



HEAR FROM TEACHERS

“We are incredibly grateful that our students had the opportunity to engage with Sierra Club BC’s educational programming, made possible through generous public support and grant funding. It was a joyful, memorable experience that helped foster a lasting connection to the natural world. Thank you for making this learning possible!”

“My students loved being outside and learning from an expert! Especially in grades 1 and 2, students really appreciate getting to move out in nature. Many of my students found newfound respect for the environment around them and how to better engage with it in a respectful manner.”

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 two local leaders SCBC has worked with who are finding creative ways to build a brighter future.

This local leader is a forest ecologist with decades of experience

Erik Piikkila is a forest ecologist with decades of experience in B.C., Finland, the US Pacific Northwest, and California. He has performed nearly every job you could have in a forest, including working for the B.C. Ministry of Forests, during which time he counted trees, managed masses of harvesting and reforestation data, and advised forest companies and BC Timber Sales. He is now working on ecological restoration and pushing for long-term forestry solutions to protect and restore old-growth forests in B.C. Erik partnered with Sierra Club BC on our seven-stop film tour of the documentary 'Silvicola' across Vancouver Island last October. He led forest ecology walks at each tour stop and helped the film audience to reflect on what is truly needed for a healthy forestry sector and forest wellbeing in B.C.



This local leader is connecting health care and climate action

Agnes (Aggie) Black is a registered nurse and retired health care leader who has spent her career working to improve and strengthen the health care system. Now, she brings that same dedication to planetary health, serving on the national board of the Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment (CANE). She also works with the New Westminster Climate Action Hub on public education and advocacy campaigns linking climate change and health. Aggie is an alumni of our Mother Tree Local Leaders Program.



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.



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