

SGI Greens March 2023 Newsletter

Greetings

Welcome to the SGI Greens newsletter for March 2023, and Happy Spring! The blossoms are blooming, the sun is beginning to shine and the days are longer - and warmer! Please read on to see a message from Elizabeth, learn about Earth Day happenings, an event tomorrow about W̱SÁNEĆ and the Douglas Treaty plus much more.

Notes from Elizabeth

Dear friends in SGI,

Oh, how I love getting home to Sidney at this time of year. Actually, I love getting home at any time, but when Ottawa is still wintry and blustery and Sidney's streets are lined with cherry blossoms, there is no contest where I would rather be. My new additional volunteer duties as Green Party leader are taking me away from home a great deal. Our grassroots need some TLC after the last few years. Since being elected leader in late November, I have visited with Green Party members in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, and, of course, British Columbia, while Jonathan Pedneault has made all those visits - as well as Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, and Saskatchewan.

We are gearing up for by-elections, likely to be called in June for several ridings in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta. We are trying to raise money, but remain hampered by a lack of staff. I am doing all I can to keep us in the news as a force for positive change - while also having to do many jobs that used to be done by staff. I know you probably hate getting emails asking for more donations, but honestly we need that support to be election ready.

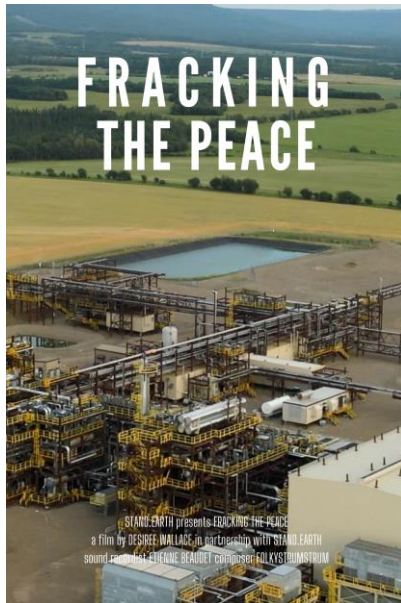
No one ever knows for sure, but my instinct is that we will not have an election in 2023. Still, one never knows. One really good polling period for Liberals and they will be tempted as ever- just the way John Horgan did - to pull the plug early and hope that First Past the Post rewards them with a false majority.

With all that said in terms of internal challenges, let me celebrate and share with you how much I love what I am doing and what we can do together. I love working with Jonathan Pedneault, who really is carrying half the load! We have a great team with our new ED Kevin Dunbar, new president (originally a British Columbian) Ian Soutar, and Rainbow Eyes who is playing a huge role in the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Circle and great SGI volunteers, from Robyn Ross who does more than I can keep track of in helping me be prompt in replies to members, to Linda, Karen, Bob and Brian on the newsletter team, to CEO Dan Kells and our whole fabulous executive. I am having fun.

Would you like to get your Peace by Chocolate bar?? Watch for details to come!

Elizabeth

Saanich-Gulf Islands EDA report: Earth Day



Does BC need more Liquefied Natural Gas? Despite what the fossil fuel industry would have you believe – LNG and fracking are two of the fastest-growing threats to our climate.

LNG consists mainly of methane, a climate super pollutant, that when leaked during the production process is 86 times worse than carbon dioxide for warming our planet. Extracting LNG also means more fracking and all the environmental destruction that comes with it. Every year, fracking in British Columbia produces around 390,000 swimming pools worth of contaminated wastewater.

Another export terminal has just received environmental approval in Kitimat, BC. To ship it, we must produce it. And that is a story in itself...

Fracking on Treaty 8 Territory in North Eastern BC has changed the water, the land, and the lives of local communities. Don't miss the chance to hear their stories in a powerful new documentary by Stand.Earth: [Fracking the Peace](#).

Home to the majestic Peace River, this documentary showcases a region of BC that's been ravaged by more than 25,000 fracking wells. Fracking has threatened the livelihoods, health, and the very water that sustains the life and spirit of the local communities – and it's way past time something is done about it. Every single one of us

contributes to this industrial development through generous subsidies but we need to ask - is this form of energy development necessary for our society?

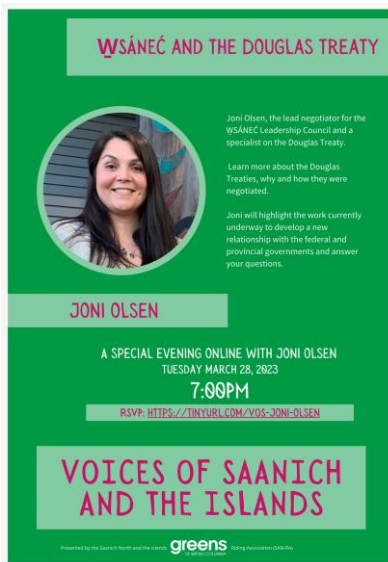
Explore this issue with the Saanich-Gulf Island Greens on Earth Day, April 22, as we host this essential movie, Fracking the Peace at the new Star cinema at 4 pm on Earth Day, April 22. There will be a panel afterward that includes Ben Parfitt (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives) and hydrogeologist Gilles Wendling, plus one other possible speaker. Both men have spoken on panels about this movie previously.

Tickets may be purchased [here](#) - advance ticket purchase is recommended as seating may become limited.

Sign now: [No more LNG or fracking](#)

BC Greens News and Events

Voices of Saanich and the Islands - with Joni Olsen



The Saanich North and the Islands Greens regularly host online or in-person events called “Voices of Saanich and the Islands”. The next event, “**WSÁNEĆ and the Douglas Treaty: A Special Evening with Joni Olsen**” will take place online on Tuesday, March 28th at 7 pm.

Join Adam Olsen as he discusses the Douglas Treaty with Joni Olsen, lead negotiator for the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council. You will have an opportunity to learn more about the Douglas Treaties and the work underway to develop a new relationship with the Federal and Provincial governments. Your questions will be welcome.

[Registration for this event is here.](#)

A New Politics for BC

The BC Greens recently hosted a fascinating and informative series of workshops and presentations called “A New Politics for BC”. Recordings for the sessions can be found on their [YouTube channel](#), and the resources page for the sessions is [here](#).

For other BC Greens events listings, please go [here](#).

April in the Garden

Well, judging by the profusion of flowers and the warm afternoon temperatures (and a bit of rain mixed in) we would say that spring is really here. The average date of the last frost is March 28, so there are already lots of things you could have out in the garden. Unfortunately, a rat got into our greenhouse and ate all our brassicas so we are going to be late getting a new batch into the ground. Thank goodness for all those overwintered vegetables that are “springing” into growth and providing food for the table at this time of year (especially spinach, lettuce, chard, broccoli, and cauliflower)

Many of you will have already started seeds and as the seedlings grow, not only is it important to keep them watered, but they may already be running out of nutrients in their small quarters so we like to water them with some fish fertilizer once a week or so. Especially with the afternoon warmth, seedlings are starting to put on quite a bit of growth now and, like teenagers, need quite a lot of food to keep them growing big and strong. And as they grow big enough to go outside, don't forget to move them outside in the afternoon (we move ours to a hoop house where they also spend the night) so they get hardened off slowly before having to spend the cold nights outside. As you probably know by now, we are big fans of using cloches so even after we plant out (after hardening off) we will use cloches until the weather stays warm all night long (some years that is in June!).

So many vegetables can be started indoors now. In fact, almost everything except the three sisters (squashes, corn, and beans) can be started indoors now. You can start some vegetables outdoors, but germination will be slow, and growth may also be too slow so as not to outgrow the potential damage by slugs, snails, wood bugs, and other pests that love those tender veggies as much as we do. You could cover them with Remay cloth to help protect them a bit, but we find that setting out starts (from indoor plantings) is the surest way to success in the garden. And you have to love that instant garden. It does wonders for making it seem like a day of planting in the garden paid off with a garden that already looks amazing.

This is also the time of year to think about any of those open-pollinated plants you want to save for seed. We try to isolate everything we hope to collect seed from so there is no chance of cross-pollination. This is hard to do spatially in a small garden so we have to resort to using Remay cloth to cover plants to keep them apart from other varieties they may cross with. Brassicas are the worst because we plant so many varieties and

they are usually grown quite close together. We don't always get organized in time to get our seeds isolated enough to collect, but we try each year so we can carry our garden over from one year to the next. And now with the Peninsula Food Growers Co-op we are able to share self-saved seeds with others to expand the varieties we can grow in our gardens and collectively enjoy the fruits of our labours of love in our garden plots.

Happy gardening!

Nancy & Gary Searing, Honeysuckle Cottage

Focus on Community

Land protection: An endeavor for everyone

[The Raincoast Conservation Foundation's Forest Conservation Program](#) aims to improve habitat protection throughout the Coastal Douglas-fir zone. What can you do to help?

For nearly three decades, Raincoast Conservation Foundation has been working to establish and enhance habitat and wildlife protection on BC's coast. Our scientifically-informed approach aims to identify conservation gaps, make recommendations for how to fill them, and when all else fails, fill them ourselves.

Since 1996, Raincoast's purview has grown to include nine flagship programs aiming to protect marine and terrestrial predators like Southern Resident killer whales, wolves, and grizzly bears, as well as threatened and endangered habitats in places like the Great Bear Rainforest, the Fraser River Estuary, and the Gulf Islands. This work includes collaborations with community partners and First Nation communities and governments, the creation of educational programming, and undertaking a great deal of empirical research.

One of Raincoast's most recent successes was the co-purchase of 45 acres of globally rare Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) forest habitat on S,DÁYES (North Pender Island), WŚÁNEĆ Territory, in partnership with the Pender Islands Conservancy. KELÁ_EKE Kingfisher Forest includes an undisturbed foreshore along Plumper Sound, mature stands of coast Douglas-fir and western redcedar, and marshland, together providing habitat to over 100 known bird species, including several listed as threatened or endangered by the federal government. Prior to the initiation of our protection campaign, this land had been slated for development. Had these plans proceeded, the property would be transformed from a maturing forest at the coastal interface into a residential suburb.

Land purchase is a fairly new undertaking for Raincoast. When we initiated our Forest Conservation Program (previously known as the Gulf Islands Forest Project) in 2019,

we did not anticipate becoming a land trust. However, because the CDF zone is disproportionately under private ownership (80%) in comparison to the rest of the province (5%), land purchase is one of the only strategies currently available to ensure ecological communities are permanently safeguarded. Now, in 2023, Raincoast co-owns two conservation properties with the Pender Conservancy: [KELÁ EKE Kingfisher Forest](#) and the 13-acre [S,DÁYES Flycatcher Forest](#) (also on North Pender Island).

Each of us has a role to play in maintaining biodiversity in this region. One way to start is by noticing the diversity of ecological communities within the CDF zone. Though most people recognize common coastal giants like Douglas fir and western red cedar, there is so much more to these communities. Start looking for other plants you recognize and remember that just because people or infrastructure might be present alongside the plants you see, it doesn't mean they aren't part of the larger ecosystem. In the words of one Saanich-based biologist: "If we start to adopt the view that degraded ecosystems are not worth recovering, then we will lose so much more than we will gain."

While Raincoast's achievement of establishing a land trust and protecting two properties in just over two years is notable, there are opportunities for each of us to contribute to biodiversity conservation in our small corner of the CDF. What will your contribution be?

Questions? Want to get involved?

Contact Shauna Doll, Forest Conservation Program Director
Raincoast Conservation Foundation
shauna@raincoast.org or 250-886-3735

Of Interest

[Embracing the Wild: Native Plant Workshops](#)

Capital Region residents are invited to the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary for an introductory workshop about gardening with drought-resistant native plants. Pre-registration is required, but there are plenty of dates on offer now through October! The lecture portion is outdoors under the big white tent beside the Nature House at 3873 Swan Lake Rd. and there's a tour afterward in the gardens. Dress for the weather.

Regional information

Saanich

Park Ambassadors

Got 2-4 hours per week to spend outdoors? Love nature? Why not volunteer as a [Saanich Park Ambassador](#) at PKOLS (Mt. Doug) Park? Park Ambassadors are volunteers who walk in a park or trail on a regular basis with the purpose of greeting

park visitors, offering information and answering questions about the park, and helping visitors understand their role in helping to protect the park. You can learn more [here](#) as well as find a link to apply to join the team.

Biodiversity in Saanich

A [Draft State of Biodiversity report](#) was received and discussed by Saanich Council on March 13, 2023. Council accepted the report for information and looks forward to receiving a final draft Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, an Environmental Policy Framework, and enhanced Stewardship opportunities before the end of 2023.

In 2023, there will be many opportunities for public engagement in the upcoming phases of the Resilient Saanich deliverables or tasks. If you wish to be kept informed on this initiative, contact biodiversity@saanich.ca and ask to be added to their email list.

Salt Spring Island

On Earth Day weekend, April 22-23, the [Salt Spring Island Home and Garden Show](#) will take place at the SSI Farmers Institute featuring many interesting speakers and displays.

The Salt Spring Community Energy Society are organizing a month long event called Electrify Salt Spring, with events in April and May including Earth Day April 22nd. One of the two electric school buses will be on display at the Earth Day event. Details in [Aqua Magazine \(page 12\)](#). More details about the May events will be provided in the April SGI EDA newsletter.

On a final note, kudos to intrepid SSI folks who rented one of the new electric buses to attend the February 25th Old Grown March and Rally in Victoria! They also created over 50 decorative tree banners for the rally.