

# SGI Greens May 2023 Newsletter

## Greetings!

Welcome to the May 2023 SGI Newsletter! The sun is shining and spring is well underway. Read on....

## Notes from Elizabeth

To all SGI Friends-

If you subscribe to my [little Sunday letter](#), you will have already heard the news of the four federal by-elections called for June 19!

I am pulled in a number of directions to help out. I have been to Montreal a few times over the last week to support Jonathan Pedneault - Green candidate in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce/ Westmount - and will be back frequently before the vote. VIA Rail gets me back and forth - a nice two-hour trip - to Ottawa. [Here is the link](#) to donate to JP's campaign.

The role of JP as co-leader (in progress) and currently Deputy Leader makes this the by-election with the highest profile Green, but still, he is not well known. This is a Liberal fortress, where no media will expect us to do well. But it is possible for us to do well due to a current of anti-Trudeau feeling, largely due to the new federal Official Languages Act changes, C-13, which leave the minority language English population in Quebec feeling aggrieved. In fact, many think these issues are why former MP, former Cabinet member Marc Garneau quit Parliament unexpectedly - prompting this by-election.

On June 4th, I will be in Winnipeg to help our candidate in Winnipeg-South Centre, Doug Hemmerling. We have to do our very best in all four by-elections, but clearly, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce/Westmount is a top priority.

So for the coming weeks, please forgive us for all the requests for financial support - and equally for help in phone calling into the ridings. And for those of you who would like to phone into Montreal, but do not speak French, do not be concerned. The riding is very Anglo and easily reachable by picking the best neighbourhoods for phoning into the minority English-speaking population.

Meanwhile, on our coast, I am very encouraged that a number of court cases have been launched to oppose the expansion of the Roberts Bank Terminal! This is how I attacked this appalling decision [in the House in Question Period](#). I have been so hoping that there would be a court challenge we could support. And now there are two with multiple plaintiffs. The Lummi Nation in Washington State, but with historic ties across the border, [has filed for judicial review](#). So too have the David Suzuki Foundation,

Raincoast Conservation Foundation, Georgia Strait Alliance, and Wilderness Committee - with Ecojustice representing them, [they have challenged the monstrous decision](#).

Thanks so much to all our local Green members. Looking forward to seeing more of you over the summer - Brentwood Bay Days, picnics, fundraisers, parties, and fall fairs! See you soon!

Elizabeth

## **Saanich-Gulf Islands EDA report:**

April 22 was Earth Day and that was celebrated by many Green EDAs across the country. We were fortunate in SGI to have a table at the well-attended Salt Spring Island CRD Parks & Rec Earth Day event as well as hosting a movie at the Star Cinema in Sidney. Fracking the Peace was shown and was followed by a speaker's panel hosted by Adam Olsen. There was a great amount of knowledge about this important subject gained by those attending.

The annual SGI Summer Picnic is confirmed for August 5. This is a great opportunity for our local members to spend some time with Elizabeth May. We will be there from 12 to 3 at our usual picnic shelter in Centennial Park. This is always a great time to catch up with some old friends and make some new ones, so please mark the date on your calendar. If you should wish to volunteer at our summer picnic, please email [Mary Leslie](#). Further information about this event will be provided in the July newsletter.

The Saanich-Gulf Islands EDA could not function without our dedicated volunteers. The summer picnic is a perfect example of what our volunteers do for our members and I thank every one of them.

Board members change throughout the years and we are always looking for new people to serve on our board as well as having volunteers for our events team.

If you are interested in working with the SGI team, please contact [Dan Kells](#).

## **Earth Day 2023**

On April 22, Earth Day, the Saanich-Gulf Islands EDA hosted the film, [Fracking the Peace](#), produced for STAND.earth, at our Star Cinema in Sidney. This movie features the voices of a local physician, Dr. Ulrike Meyer, a rancher, two members of a local first nation, and a resident instrumental in providing alternate forms of energy for their community. Each spoke of the impacts of fracking on their community, and the health and safety risks to their area known as Treaty 8. This large area is in the northeast corner of British Columbia and also extends into portions of the Yukon, Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

Seventy-seven locals came out to see the film and participate in the discussion that followed. The panel featured Dr. Gilles Wendling, a hydrologist familiar with the well and water issues in the area, and Ben Parfitt, a journalist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives who has been covering oil and gas issues in the province. Adam Olsen, the MLA for Saanich North and the Islands kindly moderated the lively discussion. There were excellent questions asked of the panel and much new information was learned that evening.

In the film, Dr. Meyer pointed out the health impacts on oil and gas workers who are getting cancer at 7% higher rates than the national average. She spoke of ongoing research on women in the prenatal stage in the Treaty 8 area that indicated the presence of chemicals involved in the fracking process being present in above acceptable levels in these women, especially those who live within 250 metres of a well site. The rancher outlined impacts to the water needed for her crops, livestock, and the impacts on horses that were affected by an incident involving the escape of larger levels of chemicals and radioactive gasses from a well site. Two members of nearby First Nations communities addressed the greater impact on the health of their members due to their living closer to the land, including the use of local plants, fish, and wild animals, all essential parts of their diets for thousands of years. They also spoke of an escape of toxic gasses that was not reported to area residents for months, thereby limiting their ability to take added precautions in regard to impacts on animals, food crops, and residents that would have been affected.

The hydrogeologist, Gilles Wendling, addressed the many ways that methane can enter the atmosphere from all aspects of the fracking process, as well as the limited life of each well, which creates a need for more wells after those have expired in 3-5 years. We learned how toxic waste is handled on-site, and the dangers of outdated wells being used as storage for these toxic fluids, resulting in the leaching of these chemicals into the aquifer and atmosphere as the cement casing of the wells deteriorates with time. Ben Parfitt of the CCPA spoke of the inadequate monitoring of the methane escaping at well sites, and of the lack of requirement for fracking companies to return the water they used to a purified state after use and before abandoning the wells.

The Saanich-Gulf Islands EDA wishes to thank the organization Stand.earth for their making this film available for our event and for their ongoing assistance in bringing this event to our members. This movie is available for viewing by contacting [Stand.earth](#) and their website has a great amount of information on this subject and other climate action information.

## **Earth Day on Salt Spring Island**

Led by Michelle Grant, Salt Spring SGI Greens put together an Earth Day display in Centennial Park on Salt Spring Island to get people thinking about practical ways to do our best for our planet. Suzy Q, the scarecrow created from recycled materials by Deborah Miller, was a big draw.

Also active at the Earth Day event were Salt Spring Conservancy, Nature Salt Spring, and Transition Salt Spring, as well as several musicians and speakers.



## BC Greens News and Events:

Saanich North and the Islands RA will hold their Annual General Meeting on Sunday, June 4th at 2 pm. This will be a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting and will have several excellent guest speakers including Adam Olsen, Camille Currie (candidate in the upcoming Langford-Juan de Fuca byelection), Christina Winter (nominated candidate for Victoria-Swan Lake in 2024), and Dr. Sanjiv Gandhi (deputy leader, BC Greens). For more information and registration for the in-person attendance, [go here](#). For information and registration for the virtual meeting, [go here](#).

Save the date: Join the Saanich North and the Islands Greens as they host a special evening online with Jody Wilson-Raybould: Exploring True Reconciliation. This online event will take place on Tuesday, June 13th at 7 pm. More information and [registration is available here](#).

The Langford-Juan de Fuca by-election has yet to be called, but all three main parties have announced their candidates. [Camille Currie](#) is an excellent high-profile candidate for the BC Greens and her campaign is off to a great start, with phone and foot canvassing ongoing and an office opening last week. Please consider joining their volunteer team or sending a donation their way!

Would you like to help elect Camille Currie in the Langford-Juan de Fuca by-election? [This link](#) will take you there. Wendy Hayko has just been nominated in the Vancouver-Mount Pleasant by-election. Please consider helping her - the link is [here](#). The by-elections are anticipated to be called today!

More BC Greens events listings [can be found here](#).

## Gardening - Gary and Nancy

Gary and Nancy recently founded the Peninsula Food Growers Co-Op and now produce a monthly newsletter for that group. We are reprinting parts of interest, with permission. Anyone interested in joining the group can [contact Gary](#).

Now that the weather has finally turned the corner from frigid growing conditions to something much more favourable for our plants, it is also time to think about how to protect our plants from all the other animals that want to eat them too. While plant pests can be numerous, let's just deal with the more problematic and common ones. These include slugs and snails, white cabbage butterfly and carrot (rust)fly, aphids, pillbugs, and sowbugs. This month we will cover the first three and save the last two for next month. To read further, [go here](#).



## Of Interest

### Saanich Peninsula Environmental Coalition

Saanich-Gulf Islands has a wonderful diversity of land, sea, and islands. At the heart of this area is the Saanich Peninsula, home to about 50,000 people, who are living in three municipalities (Sidney, North Saanich, and Central Saanich) and four First Nations of the WSÁNEĆ people. In this area is a rich biodiversity of plants and animals, with many of those existing in their own natural habitat. However, our maps show political borders crossing those natural areas with no regard for their boundaries.

Is it possible to have these human-created zones work in collaboration with the intersecting bioregions of the Saanich Peninsula? That is the question that the [Saanich Peninsula Environmental Coalition](#) (SPEC) seeks to answer.

In November of 2018, environmental groups, elected officials, and the local First Nations were invited to an all-day event titled the Sidney Summit. Bringing together these diverse organizations has helped to kick-start this important initiative by calling for an integrated approach to the planning on the Saanich Peninsula. Following this recommendation from the Sidney Summit, SPEC developed the document [A Bioregional Framework for the Saanich Peninsula](#).

The aim of SPEC is to have the principles of bioregional planning legally incorporated into each municipality's Official Community Plan. This would create an overarching environmental plan to assist in coordination of efforts by the three communities and the four First Nations to look at the Peninsula as a whole bioregion, rather than a gathering of discrete parts. Recognizing that nature does not conform to our artificial boundaries would help to sustain and strengthen the ecology of the existing natural environment on the peninsula. Helping to create a flourishing environment for the peninsula region would lead to a healthier outcome for the people living on the land here, as well as the neighbouring Salish Sea.

SPEC's Coordinator is Bob Peart of North Saanich, a biologist and well-known local environmentalist. Bob's leadership has been critical to SPEC's developing the bioregional framework approach and bringing all the partner groups together into a common vision. As a result, SPEC has become an essential ingredient in our local regional planning.

The most important impact of SPEC is to contribute towards the Official Community Plans of each of the three municipalities. As of April 2023, Sidney has adopted their OCP, Central Saanich is finalizing theirs and North Saanich has put their process "on hold" while determining how best to move forward.

To summarize, in SPEC's own words:

"We continue to focus our efforts on ensuring that the three Councils highlight activities that are inclusive of W̱SÁNEĆ teachings and that consistently integrate cross-jurisdictional collaboration and ecological sustainability into their bylaws, regulations and operating procedures. In particular, we are looking for Council priorities that recognize:

1. Blue-green networks, corridors and connectivity.
2. Coastal Restoration and Green Shores
3. Jurisdictional Collaboration
4. Climate, Biodiversity and Natural Assets."

For more information, or if you are interested in being active with the Coalition please contact [PlaceSpeak](#).

## Of Interest in Our Communities:

### What's up with Old Growth?

Webinar on Monday, May 29th at 7:00 p.m. (PT) Find out how much old growth remains in the province, what is being done to keep it standing, and how to separate facts from government and corporate talking points.

This webinar will feature Wilderness Committee's national campaign director Torrance Coste, Sierra Club BC's campaigns director Shelley Luce, opening words from Mariah Charleson of the Hesquiaht Nation, and will be moderated by Jackie Larkin from Elders for Ancient Trees. Register [here](#).

### Royal Roads University Changemakers – A Speakers Series

The next event in the Changemakers series will be held on May 31 at 7 pm at the Victoria Conference Centre. Dr. Thomas Homer-Dixon, Founder and Executive Director of the Cascade Institute at Royal Roads University and previous director of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Toronto, will present Hope in the Polycrisis. You can get more information and purchase tickets [here](#). \$20.

### Shiny Geranium

Our region is being invaded by Shiny Geranium and each of us can help eradicate it. Invasive species displace native vegetation, decrease the foraging capability of wildlife, and threaten species at risk by dominating habitats and altering vegetation.

Please [watch this video](#) to help you identify the plant. In addition, the CRD has an [excellent document](#) that describes the plant and outlines how and when to remove and dispose of the invasive plant.

The good news is that the plant itself has a fragile root system and is easy to pull up. The bad news is that it produces prolific and persistent seeds which are forming now. You may need to fight it again next year if your plants have gone to seed but it is still worth doing now. If you know you have an outbreak on your property take appropriate action as well as report it. If you see one in your area, please report it to [invasive@crd.bc.ca](mailto:invasive@crd.bc.ca)

### UVic Climate Action Certificate

UVic is offering a series of courses toward a certificate in [Transformative Climate Action](#). Billed as a flexible, interdisciplinary credit program, participants will “learn to engage with the social and political challenges of mitigating and adapting to the disrupting effects of climate change, build collaborative solutions in ways that support

decolonization, integrate diverse communities, enhance social resilience, and overcome polarization.” Curious? There is a [free information session](#) on June 19th.

## Saanich:

### Lochside and Fowler Park Renewal Project

Saanich Parks hosted an Open House on May 2, 2023, to display information and receive feedback on conceptual plans for Lochside & Fowler Parks. If you missed the opportunity to learn more about the plans for these two parks and to offer your opinions, you can find the presentation and a feedback form [here](#). It is not too late to offer your input.

### People, Pets and Parks

Saanich Parks has been engaging in deep consultation with users of our public spaces, trying to find a way that all citizens can enjoy our public spaces without damaging the natural environment we all enjoy. If you want your voice heard, please join the [virtual information session](#) on Monday, May 29, 6-7:30

If you can not attend, fear not. The session will be recorded and posted to the Saanich Municipal website after the event.

### Saanich Pride in the Park

Come celebrate the second annual [Saanich Pride in the Park](#) event featuring a variety of information displays, entertainment, food, and family-friendly activities. It’s a wonderful celebration of the diversity that makes us strong.

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

5:00 - 9:00 pm

[Beckwith Park](#)

Free Admission

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Questions? Comments? Feedback? Please contact us at [info@sgigreenparty.ca](mailto:info@sgigreenparty.ca)