
SGI Greens Newsletter - May 2024

Sections cover Events, General Interest, On Being Green, and a Feature article.
Links to back issues, subscribe/unsubscribe, and join the SGI Greens are at the end.

Join us! Be part of the 124th Victoria Day Parade

May 20, meet at 8:30 am in the Mayfair Mall parking lot.
Parade begins at 9:00 am



We are inviting YOU and YOUR FRIENDS to walk with us!

Elizabeth May will be there and would love to meet you!

Victoria **GREENS** and Esquimalt–Saanich–Sooke **GREENS** will be joining us, so it's a great chance to meet them and have fun together.

Wear something **GREEN**. We will have some **GREEN** T-shirts to borrow or buy.

Hand out buttons like candy. Help fly our large new **GREEN** banner!

[RSVP here](#), to give us an indication of numbers.

SGI Greens (Green Party of Canada) news and events:

Mark your calendars:

May 20, 9:00 am – Victoria Day Parade

Gather at the Mayfair Mall parking lot at 8:30 am.

June 22, 11:00 am - 3:00 pm – Cordova Bay Day

Talk to Elizabeth May and connect with neighbours at St. David's Church

July 7 - Victoria Pride Parade – Celebrate diversity and have fun!

August 10 - Summer Picnic for SGI members and friends

- We have received and evaluated numerous outstanding essays and a video about Green values submitted by Grade 12 students to our competition for this year's SGI Greens Scholarships.
- Our Executive Committee meets monthly and posts [meeting minutes](#) on our website.

BC Greens news and events: (because we're friends)

- **Meet and Greet with Adam: Saturday May 4th**, Salt Spring Island, TJ Beans Cafe from 12 noon - 2 pm. Drop in and say HI!
- BC Greens activities are ramping up in this provincial election year and there is lots happening. If you are interested in learning about events throughout the province, [you can go here](#). Your provincial riding-specific information, including candidates, ways to help, and local events, is located [here](#).

Community Information:

May 1, 7:00-8:30 pm

William E. Rees presents **The New Age of Illusion - Climate Change, Overshoot, and the Future of Civilization**, at the Cook Street Activity Centre, 380 Cook St. (near Moka House in Cook St. Village). Free entry and parking. Please use the side entrance. Doors are locked at 7:05, so don't be late. Donations appreciated. Hosted by the Victoria Secular Humanist Association.

- Climate chaos is merely a symptom of a greater meta-problem, ecological overshoot. Current efforts to reverse global heating are not fixing the climate and are worsening overshoot. Overshoot is a terminal condition.
- William Rees, PhD, FRSC, is a population ecologist, ecological economist, Professor Emeritus and former Director of the University of British Columbia's School of Community and Regional Planning in Vancouver. Prof. Rees is the originator and co-developer of 'ecological footprint analysis' (EFA), a quantitative tool that estimates human demands on ecosystems and the extent to which humanity is in 'ecological overshoot.' He has authored hundreds of peer reviewed papers and popular articles on these topics.

Earth Day Event (April 21, 2024)

To celebrate Earth Day 2024, the SGI Greens invited the public to the Star Cinema in Sidney to learn about the Pocket Forest Program (The Miyawaki Method). About 80 people attended.

Elizabeth May recounted how seemingly insurmountable problems of pollution (acid rain, the ozone hole) were reversed in past decades, and urged everyone to take a positive can-do attitude to addressing the environmental problems of today. Adam Olsen suggested that our thinking and actions would change if, like First Nations people, we think of the animals and plants around us as kin.

A [video](#) (9 minutes) was shown in which Shubhendu Sharma describes the global movement establishing Miyawaki forests. Sean Steele, from Victoria, and Bruno Vernier, from Richmond B.C., then described in more detail how it's done, and has been done, locally. They answered many questions from the audience.



Some resources to find out more about Miyawaki forests (and help grow one):

[Canadian Geographic: Planting a network of mini-forests across Canada](#) (article)

[Afforestt.com](#) (Shubhendu Sharma)

Green Communities in Canada (Emily Amon)
eamon@greencommunitiesofcanada.org

Garden City Conservation Society (of Richmond, B.C.; Bruno Vernier)
bruno.vernier@gmail.com

Earth Literacies (Sean Steele)
seanmichaelsteele@gmail.com

[CanPlant Native plant database](#) – supports urban greenspace stewardship and restoration across Canada (contact: Heather Schibli at www.dougan.ca)

General interest:

Good news snippets

Good climate news from [@AssaadRazzouk](#). Here's his list for the week of April 21 (with our comments):

- 1 China new EVs [surpass] 50% share in April (MSM here obsess about slowing sales)
- 2 Wind industry builds record 117GW in 2023 (one large nuclear power plant = ~ 1 GW)
- 3 Deforestation down 42% on Amazon indigenous lands
- 4 Indonesian clergy push green Islam
- 5 Major renewables push to come in Mexico
- 6 Zambia bans charcoal permits

The EU's [CO2 emissions have dropped](#) to the lowest level in 60 years! Transition is happening.

Climate solutions

Pocket forests (Miyawaki forests) are a great way to help fight climate change and loss of biodiversity. Planting one builds a sense of community with like-minded people, young and old, and gets people connected with nature. Here's a report on ["little forests" popping up in backyards](#) across Canada. Katherine Hayhoe, a Canadian climatologist and communications expert, recently wrote about Miyawaki forests in [her newsletter](#). She calls them ["Small but mighty forests."](#)

Whether you are an individual, small business or large manufacturer, The [Global Footprint Network](#) provides a way to measure the environmental impact of your actions. The questions in its environmental [footprint calculator](#) take only minutes to answer, and the results indicate how many Earths we would need if everyone on the planet lived like you. Yes, it's simplistic, and your answers may be guesses, but the calculator's questions are informative in and of themselves. And the results can be sobering.

Is this greenwashing?

Are carbon footprint calculators just another attempt by fossil fuel corporations to divert attention and shift blame to individuals? Yes, that's who promoted them, initially. The fossil fuel industry would rather we focus on our own footprint and forget that we can bring about systemic change (phase out fossil fuels). We need both individual action (footprint calculators are informative for this) **and** action to bring about systemic change. Katherine Hayhoe applauds Isaias Hernandez, a climate educator, for the clarity of a video on [the messy truth about carbon footprints](#).

Corporate blame-shifting continues, with oil and gas CEOs publicly [blaming consumers](#) for climate change and claiming that phasing out fossil fuels is [a fantasy](#).

On Being Green:

Our readers

- Readers EB and LK preferred the old newsletter format, with LK pointing out that the April newsletter was “absolutely impossible to read on my phone. Sent from my iPhone.” Thank you for the feedback. We’ve returned to the old format, with the new PDF format as an option for readers using a computer or wanting to print the newsletter.
- Reader BM suggested featuring upcoming events at the beginning. The recent survey about the SGI Newsletter showed broad interest in SGI and BC Greens events, as well as community information. We have moved these sections to the beginning.
- According to the reader survey in February, “Notes from Elizabeth” were the most widely read and would be most widely missed if discontinued. We suspect that many readers had in mind Elizabeth’s [Good Sunday Morning](#), which continues on a weekly basis. The SGI Newsletter may carry additional “Notes from Elizabeth” from time to time.
- Reader BB sent us a Bill McKibben [video](#) (9 minutes), and wrote:
“The topic is **Climate Crisis: How we got here and what we can do now**. The bouncy upbeat background music and McKibben’s expressions and style leave me confident and inspired to act. I hope it affects you positively as well. The short message is that we old folks, who control 70% of the wealth and resources, can’t just leave it to the young people to solve this problem.”
Thanks, BB! As SGI Greens, we totally agree, and recommend our readers [watch this](#).



What we’re reading

Bill McKibben has a newsletter: “The Crucial Years: Working on Winning the Climate Fight.” You can [sign up for free](#) and upgrade to Paid later, if you like it.

Calling all Sewists!

Karen Lindsay and two other volunteers are sewing reusable cotton produce bags to give away at the Saanich Fair. They could use the help of others who can sew in a straight line. Can't sew? We need people to cut the fabric and stamp the bags with the GPC logo. Our goal is to have 200 bags by the end of August! Contact Karen.lindsay@greenparty.ca

How are Greens different from other political parties?

- We are not beholden to corporations or unions. Greens speak for the people.
- We are a grassroots organization. Our members develop and vote on policy.

Feature: Saanich Inlet – a Jewel in our Midst

There is no doubt that we live in an area of exceptional beauty and diversity. One of the most impressive local features is our own glacially-carved reverse fiord, the Saanich Inlet. A reverse fiord is fed by more fresh water flowing from the mouth of the fiord (Cowichan River) than fresh water from the head of the fiord (Goldstream).

This spectacular arm of the bountiful Salish Sea has harboured sea creatures and humans for millennia. Since colonial settlement began, there has been a gradual degradation of the environment, both in the water and on the land, yet “Saanich Inlet remains a threatened, but still largely viable ecological system.” (Saanich Inlet Study 1996)

This body of water, squeezed into an area with growing demand for housing, raw materials and recreation, to name a few essentials, has an existence which will be determined by how we collectively treat the water and surrounding land.

Recognizing that such an important part of our area needed protection from unrestricted development, a group of concerned residents in Brentwood Bay formed the [Saanich Inlet Protection Society](#) in 1989. Their mandate is: “*To protect and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Saanich Inlet for the benefit, education and enjoyment of this and future generations of Canadians.*” They raise awareness of environmental issues, both existing and potential, and bring this information to the public and government officials alike.

Over the years SIPS has partnered with many other NGOs and Government Ministries to advocate for protection of Saanich Inlet. Much of the Inlet’s shoreline is now protected, including the Provincial Parks of [Goldstream](#), [Gowlland Tod](#) and little [Bamberton](#), each with its own character and beauty.

The comprehensive Saanich Inlet Study commissioned by the B.C. Ministry of Environment in 1996 documented the deterioration of key species such as herring and salmon. Above all it reported on the importance of the Inlet to those of us who live around the Inlet and especially to the First Nations who depended on the marine environment for their livelihood. They were, and are, “saltwater people”.

There have been many issues for which SIPS has advocated over the years. Some of these issues continue to this day, while others have been resolved. Currently SIPS is involved with limiting environmental damage caused by poorly maintained and dilapidated boats. The Coast Guard is now partnering with various groups, including First Nations, to remove derelict boats from our waters. The confused responsibilities of Federal and Provincial governments have worked against resolution of the many related recreational boating issues. Local governments have tried and, so far, failed to help. Now the CRD is also involved. SIPS has worked with all levels of government on this frustrating subject.

A major and very successful campaign originated in 2016, when Steelhead LNG proposed to put a floating LNG liquefying plant into the inlet at the Bamberton industrial site. The commercial activity that would have been created was going to dump huge amounts of heated water into the inlet and endanger all aquatic life there, not to mention the potential for huge tanks of LNG to explode.

Bamberton has been the site of rock quarrying for a century because of the limestone that was mined for the cement plant in Brentwood Bay. Those days (and the limestone) are gone, but the rock quarrying continues to extract basalt rock for cement aggregate and road base, mainly used in the USA. A recently requested large increase in the volume of rock removal was the focus of a campaign to ensure this work was complying with government regulations and would not harm the environment. After a very public campaign led by SIPS and supported by hundreds of local residents, the B.C. Ministry of Environment decided that no environmental assessment was necessary, but that stringent conditions should be attached to the quarry permit issued by the Ministry of Mines. The company avoided an environmental review by expanding the quarry site by a volume just under the margins necessary for an environmental review. This extraction continues and the hole in the side of the mountain continues to grow larger.

SIPS is now actively involved with the [Herring Conservation and Restoration Society](#), created to restore the once teeming numbers of herring that existed in the Salish Sea. This little fish is a key food source in the Salish Sea, and once had local populations in bays and shorelines all up and down our coast. Most of those herring have been vacuumed out of the sea, and there are now only small remnant populations in the Salish Sea that require protection to assist in the reinvigoration of this energetic ecosystem. The pressure to allow the herring fishery is enormous, so the need to speak for our local environment is substantial.

SIPS is most appreciative of those who care for and assist with the Saanich Inlet environment. Their advocacy work is ongoing and they stay on the lookout for any new issues that may affect the inlet. Please consider joining this society to cherish and enhance this incredible ocean inlet we have right in our backyard.

Many thanks to SIPS VP, Michael Simmons, and Secretary, Fran Pugh, for giving me insight into this wonderful local effort to cherish and sustain our healthy environment.

– Prepared by Dan Kells



“The Saanich Inlet is **HOME** to Pacific Giant Octopus, Salmon, Whales, Glass Sponges and much more.”

– Saanich Inlet Protection Society

Let's keep it that way!

Published by the Saanich-Gulf Islands Electoral District Association of the **Green Party of Canada**.

Please send feedback and contributions to this newsletter to sgiedanews@gmail.com.

Saanich-Gulf Island Greens publish two newsletters:

The monthly SGI Greens Newsletter

The weekly Good Sunday Morning -- Elizabeth May's perspective

Current and back issues of both are at <https://sgi.edagreens.ca/news-events/>

To subscribe to one or both newsletters, go to sigreenparty.ca/signup_2020.

Click [here to unsubscribe](#) from one or both newsletters.

Join Us! Be a SGI Green!

We acknowledge and respect the W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples, on whose territory we live.
The SGI EDA aims to work with them towards a meaningful and mutually beneficial reconciliation.