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Lands and People

Autumn 2007, VOL.5, NUMBER 2

On the Lookout for Tankers

**The Fabric of Community • East/West Divide
Lessons from the Queen of the North • Coastal Vigilance
A Fragile Fidelity • Giving to Charity**

Lands and People

Analysis & Commentary
on BC's communities, politics,
lands and resources.

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First Nations, environmentalists, and
community and labour leaders.

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bians exercise local control to create
healthy and prosperous communities.

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on the cover: Sandhill Crane.

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Valuing our Coastal Values

Editor's Note: *Charles Campbell*

Close your eyes and think of your special place on BC's coast. What do you value about that place? What's your dream for its future?

Here we go again, another oil spill on the coast. This time it's diesel in a whale sanctuary; last month it was a pipeline rupture in a Vancouver suburb. In between Westpac Terminals announced a proposed LNG terminal on Texada Island. Sometimes we get so busy with what we are fighting against that we need to be reminded of what we are working towards.

Our Executive Director, Will Horter, recently returned from a tour of the Douglas Channel. He traveled the 140km fjord from Kitimat to Hartley Bay, the route that supertankers will take if any of a number of proposals for oil and gas facilities in Kitimat gain government approval. He came back with videos, photographs and stories about the places he went and people he met.

"You really get a sense of a working ecosystem," he said, speaking of whale populations on the increase, the abundant bird life and the sea that provided dinner for the small group of activists he was touring with. "You also get a sense of the strength of the individuals and communities that rely on this working ecosystem for their livelihoods."

After listening to Will, my mind was not on the destructive projects we are opposing, but the value of what we are working to preserve: the strength and integrity of communities such as Hartley Bay, our spectacular coastline, the diversity of life in the ocean and on the land. These values underpin all our actions at Dogwood Initiative.

We don't think our values are that different from those of many British Columbians. You don't have to be in this province long to appreciate the staggering beauty around us and the wealth of our land. It just makes sense that the people closest to those lands and resources should have the biggest say in how they are used. It makes sense that we should work to preserve this great heritage for generations to come.

When I see our politicians clambering after a short-term boom in oil and gas revenues I don't just see the potential destruction such a boom can cause. I see supposed leaders with little appreciation of the true prosperity of "Super-Natural British Columbia", its lands and its people. ☒



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News Briefs

“Get the Shell Out”

Shell’s plans in the Sacred Headwaters ignites international protest.

Shell’s plans to resume coalbed methane operations in the Sacred Headwaters has not only met with protest from the Tahltan people but, now, stiff international opposition. On August 21 elders from the Tahltan blockaded Shell’s attempt to move its trucks and drills into the coalfield. Shell responded by seeking an injunction to forcibly remove the protestors, but backed down, adjourning the hearing on the courthouse steps. Shell finally seems to be bowing to pressure from a coalition of groups including such heavyweights as *Greenpeace*, *Friends of the Earth*, *David Suzuki Foundation* and *Dogwood Initiative*. All have come together to help save the Sacred Headwaters, the birthplace of three of Canada’s most important salmon rivers, and a place sacred to coastal First Nations.

Climate Contradictions

Environmental groups are still waiting for Gordon Campbell to make good on his climate change commitments.

Gordon Campbell continues to send environmentalists love letters, but we are still waiting for that first kiss. A leader in the Western Climate Initiative, which includes BC, Manitoba, California and five other American states, Campbell has committed to reducing greenhouse gases by 33% of 2005 levels by 2020. How

is this commitment consistent with Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Minister Richard Neufeld’s aggressive pursuit of oil and gas development through subsidies and plans to lift the moratoriums on coastal drilling and crude oil tankers? It’s not.

Climate Vote

Citizen groups put pressure on Campbell.

Citizen groups are forming to demand that our politicians do something about the impending climate crisis. Voters Taking Action on Climate Change (VTACC), a Vancouver based group, met with Gordon Campbell in September. They pointed out the contradiction between his climate change commitments and a raft of climate-unfriendly policies, from transportation to oil and gas development. Campbell says he “doesn’t intend to fail” to meet his targets. Well Mr. Campbell, in the immortal words of Elvis: “A little less conversation, a little more action.”

Westpac tries again

LNG proposal for Texada?

Plans for an LNG terminal on Ridley Island near Prince Rupert became the latest in a growing list of suspended LNG proposals on BC’s coast. Westpac terminals has mothballed their proposal and wants to set up shop in Texada Island in hopes that BC ratepayers will pick up the tab for a new LNG terminal and power plant (see *article facing*) ☒



Financial Times ad calls for Shell to get out of the Sacred Headwaters

Fabric of a Community



Westpac Terminals expects BC ratepayers to bail out its failing LNG proposal, but Texada Islanders are unwilling to pay the price.

Arthur Caldicott

Community is in some respects like a fabric, with all its individual strands woven together into something functional, robust, and often beautiful. The strength of both, fabric and community, is magical—they are held together without visible glue or bolts or welds. In this sense, community is a function of the invisible bonds and relationships between people.

But fire and other violent forces can destroy a fabric. And powerful external forces—war, earthquakes—can sometimes destroy a community. Buildings and people may remain, but “community” takes a long time to re-weave itself.

Perhaps the most common of these powerful external forces are industrial projects and large developments, uninvited, brought to town by corporations and senior governments, often working with each other in seeming collusion against the local citizens.

These projects can divide a community. Some residents are for them, some opposed. The stress of the polarizing situation takes its toll on the fabric of community. Sometimes the damage is irreparable.

Many projects are pitched; few are built.

The history of British Columbia is a collection of stories of communities which have grown, prospered, then floundered and sometimes collapsed because of industrial projects imposed and controlled from outside the community. The number of stories increase a hundredfold when you add in the projects pitched, but never realized.

The list of controversial projects that didn't fly in BC, in all sectors—energy, mining, transportation, real-estate development—is extensive. A few hotly battled energy projects in south-western BC were approved but never built, include the Westcoast LNG Storage Facility at McNabb Creek, the Georgia Strait Crossing Pipeline, and Duke Point Power.



Target: Texada

Texada Island is the target of the latest project that is causing distress in its host community. Introduced earlier this year by WestPac LNG Corporation, a Calgary company, WestPac is proposing to build a liquefied natural gas (LNG) receiving terminal and a “co-located” natural gas electricity generation plant. The company suggests the appropriate site is on the northern tip of Texada Island, at Kiddie Point.

Although WestPac LNG has been around for a number of years, its proposal has changed significantly.

The original proposal was to bring LNG by tanker to BC’s coast at the Ridley Island deep sea port, near Prince Rupert. From there, LNG would be barged to Haida Gwaii and many other remote coastal locations, as well as down Johnston Strait. The LNG would replace barged-in diesel fuel used for electricity generation. At the time, a large price differential existed between natural gas in North America and LNG sourced from places like Qatar, Australia, and Russia, creating a profitable opportunity, but the company’s ambitions also appeared to have some social and environmental benefits, reducing the greenhouse gas and other emissions from the diesel it replaced.

Times have changed, and so has

WestPac. The company was forced to abandon Ridley Island and now wants to bring its LNG tankers to Texada Island: one every ten days or so, adding to the never-ending chain of commercial and recreational marine traffic in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Georgia Strait. Each tanker increases the likelihood of a marine disaster. WestPac wants to put most of its gas into an adjacent gas-fired generation plant on Texada, piping the remainder to Vancouver Island and Powell River. The huge gas-fired generation plant will add up to 4 million tonnes of new greenhouse gases to the atmosphere per year.

The company states the LNG terminal will have the capacity to re-gasify up to 500 million cubic feet per day of gas. That is five times the capacity of the cancelled GSX Pipeline, and is one-quarter the capacity of the Spectra Energy BC Pipeline (formerly known as the Westcoast Energy BC Mainline) which moves much of BC’s natural gas production to the Lower Mainland and into the U.S. at Sumas.

At 1,200 megawatts, the gas-fired generation plant would be nearly five times the size of the rancorously controversial Duke Point Power project—which BC Hydro cancelled—and twice the size of the hotly disputed and ultimately abandoned Sumas Energy

2—which the BC Government opposed.

Westpac’s motives

What has motivated WestPac’s change in plans? WestPac LNG has a problem; it has been unable to secure cost-effective LNG for its terminals and doesn’t have buyers for the gas anywhere in North America. Construction costs have skyrocketed. (*Kitimat LNG faces similar problems: see box.*)

Westpac has turned to electricity ratepayers in BC to underwrite what is increasingly looking like an economic non-starter. It is presenting a gas-fired generation plant as some sort of public service to all of us needy BC electricity users. The truth is, a successful electricity purchase agreement (EPA) with BC Hydro is a life-ring to the company, ensuring its income for decades. Without an EPA, almost certainly there will be no LNG terminal.

WestPac LNG tells us that its generation plant “*will enable the development of wind, run-of-river hydro and other green power solutions by providing necessary firming capacity for these intermittent types of power generation. The project could also contribute to improving air quality in the Fraser Valley by enabling the decommissioning of the Burrard Thermal Generating Station.*”

LNG: If the worst were to happen...

Pool Fires

Spilled LNG pools on the ground or ocean surface and burns if ignited. LNG fires are intensely hot and could cause death, severe burns and forest fire more than 1km away. Any marine life close to the surface during a spill over water would be affected either by the intense cold of the LNG or the intense heat of the fire.

Vapour Clouds

Spilled LNG evaporates to form a ground-fog-like ‘vapour cloud’, parts of which would be flammable, and if ignited could seriously damage facilities, people, and other life kilometres away from the accident itself.

There is no way to extinguish an LNG fire—it must burn itself out.

Explosions

A major rupture causes LNG to vaporize violently, potentially undergoing a ‘rapid phase transition’ that produces a large shockwave. LNG tanker is turned into a high explosive.

Experts disagree on the likelihood of this scenario. There are currently only reliable models for small spills.

That is pretty ambitious. It's also preposterous. WestPac is proposing to build a much bigger version of plants that were rejected at Duke Point and Sumas. It is going to emit some four million tonnes of new greenhouse gases annually, in a province where government policy is clearly focussed on reducing greenhouse gases. That's a very peculiar way to "enable" power projects that do not emit greenhouse gases.

Greenhouse-gas inconsistency

Furthermore, the Burrard Thermal contribution to Fraser Valley air pollution is insignificant, given that BC Hydro runs the plant only minimally. WestPac's logic suggests that the spurious air quality improvements in the Fraser Valley will be obtained at the expense of air quality and public health on Texada and in nearby Powell River.

The neighbouring Comox-Strathcona Regional District recognizes the greenhouse-gas inconsistency. In August it passed a resolution asking Gordon Campbell's government to require "100 per cent carbon sequestration to all fossil fuel-fired projects."

The people on Texada Island think it's preposterous too. Nobody asked them if it's a good idea to have LNG tankers cruising by their shores. Nobody asked them if they wanted the emissions

from gas-fired generators, or the visible plumes, or the noise. They weren't asked about the new transmission line that would be strung half the length of the island.

But they've been speaking up. And they don't reckon anyone on Texada will get any of the 75 jobs. They're concerned about impacts to real estate values as the

WestPac is proposing to build a much bigger version of plants that were rejected already by BC... It's going to emit some four million tonnes of new greenhouse gases.

value of property on the island finally moves in line with other Gulf Islands. They recognize that taxes are paid to the provincial government, not the island.

Texada residents filled the rooms at WestPac's open houses in Van Anda and Gillies Bay on September 10 and 11. The overwhelming message to the company was opposition to the project and anger

at having it imposed. The company rather misguidedly showed a U.S. film that went on about "homeland security." Asked point blank whether the company would withdraw the project if the community decided against it, Westpac gave an answer that was anything but straightforward, but seemed to be "no."

Strong fabric

We've seen it time and time again, in one project after another, as proponents forget that the people they are talking to can think for themselves. Many live where they do because they like it that way. And they'll fight to keep it that way.

WestPac says its consultation program is to "keep the Texada Island and neighbouring communities informed and to encourage an open exchange of ideas." There's no hint of, "If you don't like it, we'll go away," in that statement.

Texada Island's community will be tested in this struggle. But it is made of strong fabric, and its resolve is unwavering. ☒

For updated information about the WestPac LNG Texada project, bookmark www.texadalng.com and www.dogwoodinitiative.org. Email texadaactionnow@hotmail.com.

The stillborn history of LNG in BC

1982 - The province approved a \$1.7 billion pipeline and liquefaction terminal project called Western LNG, to be built near Prince Rupert. It was a partnership of Dome Petroleum and other Canadian and Japanese businesses. 20-year agreements with Japanese customers were secured, and financing was in place. But ... nothing happened. (*WestPac LNG's Jack Crawford was involved with Western LNG.*)

1995 - Pac-Rim LNG revived essentially the same idea--a pipeline

and sending terminal for Kitimat or Prince Rupert. This time, Korea was pitched as the hungriest market. Pac-Rim formally withdrew the proposal in 2002.

2004 - Galveston LNG (later Kitimat LNG) announced plans to build an LNG terminal in Kitimat. in 2006 the project secured the necessary environmental approvals, but a year later no shovels have broken ground, and start construction has been pushed back indefinitely.

The pipeline project that is necessary to move the imported gas east to the existing pipeline network shows signs of going nowhere. And in the sincerest-form-of-flattery department, Kitimat LNG has lately been talking about a gas-fired generation plant of their own at its LNG terminal site near Kitimat, mimicking WestPac LNG. Or is that the grasping-at-straws department?

East/West Divide

The Harper government is aggressively defending the East Coast against several LNG proposals. Why isn't British Columbia getting the same treatment?

Will Horter

"...let me be absolutely clear. We oppose the passage of LNG tanker traffic through Head Harbour, and we will continue to do so. - Stephen Harper

While rattling sabres to protect east coast waters Stephen Harper is allowing BC's coast to be put at risk. Harper's government has aggressively intervened to defend the narrow channel of Head Harbour Passage, off southern New Brunswick, from LNG tanker traffic servicing three proposed LNG terminals in Maine. The Tories cite unacceptable environmental and navigational risks as grounds for their opposition. On the BC coast however those same risks don't cause Harper any concern.

Contrast the Tories fighting words regarding the east coast with their implicit support for an LNG terminal at the end of a very long, narrow, and dangerous channel on the north coast of British Columbia. Kitimat LNG, a project that is off the radar of most British Columbians, received federal approval in June. The facility will require LNG tankers to pass through the treacherous waters of BC's north coast before entering the 140 km fjord of Douglas Channel, passing the site where the *Queen of the North*, a BC ferry, sank last year.

The labyrinthine coast of British Columbia's northern inside passage is studded with treacherous submerged

rock pinnacles and subject to 25-foot tides and hurricane force winds. It is also the heartland of the province's \$1.7 billion/year commercial fishery. It gives life to at least 7,000 marine species of fish, including more than 9,600 genetically distinct salmon stocks.

Surely here too Canada's government would wish to *'protect our environment, our citizens, and our economy in terms of the fishery'*?

The answer appears to be: 'No'. On the west coast, the Conservative government has rubber stamped the Kitimat project and there is no indication it will do any different for the recently proposed terminal on Texada Island east of Courtney-Comox in the Strait of Georgia.

The proposed LNG tanker routes to Kitimat and Texada are every bit as dangerous and ecologically sensitive as Head Harbour Passage; so what's the difference?

The federal government seems to have concluded that risks posed by LNG tankers and terminals are acceptable so long as they benefit the Canadian oil and gas industry.

But how much risk should British Columbians and all Canadians shoulder to supply the US and Alberta's tar sands, with natural gas?

This is not the first time both coasts have been under threat from tankers. Previous governments have taken action to protect coastlines. Thirty five-years ago, on the west coast, Prime Minister Trudeau imposed a tanker moratorium on Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait, Douglas Channel and Queen Charlotte Sound. In 1982 Ottawa passed a regulation under the *Canada Shipping Act* restricting fossil fuel laden ships passing through Head Harbour

So why the discrepancy in the government's position between the past and present, east and west?

Perhaps it's a question of leadership, or the lack thereof. Minister of Veteran affairs, Greg Thompson, is a strong representative for his constituency in New Brunswick. BC's cabinet representatives, Minister of Natural Resources and MP for Saanich-Gulf-Islands, Gary Lunn, is a card-carrying advocate for the oil and gas industry, particularly Alberta's tar sands.

With polls showing that over 84% of Vancouver Islanders support a ban on oil tankers perhaps Gary Lunn should start showing some allegiance to his constituents. The people of BC will not allow oil and gas tankers in our fragile coastal waters. Politicians that ignore this do so at their peril. ☒

Which Conservative MP said the following?

"Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago the Government of Canada said no to the transport of tankers... The government of the day took the strong position to protect Canada's environment by refusing the passage of tankers through internal Canadian waters, the only route possible..."

Today a similar project is being considered....

I urge the Government of Canada to once again stand up and protect our citizens and our environment, and say no to the transport of LNG tankers..."

Greg Thompson (New Brunswick Southwest) speaking about proposed LNG tankers through Head Harbour Passage on the East Coast.

Answer:



The Gitga'at community of Hartley Bay near the *Queen of the North* accident site.

Lessons from the Queen

As oil continues to seep from the sunken *Queen of the North*, the community of Hartley Bay is preparing to defend itself against larger threats; oil tankers.

Caitlyn Vernon

The Gitga'at people of Hartley Bay know what an oil spill looks like, and how it smells. The sinking of the BC ferry, *Queen of the North*, has degraded the marine environment in which they live and work, raising fears in the community about proposals to bring oil tankers to Kitimat. The community wants to see the health of the coast restored, not further harmed

by another oil spill.

The *Queen of the North* didn't sink beneath the waters without a trace. Today, the rainbow sheen of an oil slick on the surface of the ocean still marks the location of the vessel. When the ferry struck Gil Island on March 22, 2006, the spill from the 230,000 litres of diesel and oil onboard coated approximately 89 km of coastline in diesel, killed hundreds of birds, and contaminated shellfish in the area with unsafe levels of hydrocarbons.

More than one year later, the diesel and oil that remain within the sunken ferry (and the cars inside) continue to leak at a rate of nearly half a litre per day. Surface streaks several hundred metres long and up to 10 metres wide are still visible. So Gitga'at Chief Councillor Bob Hill is disappointed that BC Ferries is not planning to remove any of the remaining fuel from the ship. "The environmental impact to us as a community, as a nation, is very real," says Chief Hill. He points to recent evidence of fuel at Turtle Point on Gil Island, where the Gitga'at have a sacred graveyard.

Hereditary Chief Ernie Hill says that the upwelling oil and diesel is having a huge impact on clam beds that have been harvested for generations. Wary of the high levels of hydrocarbons, residents now have to travel much farther to gather clams, mussels, sea cucumbers, sea urchins and prawns. The Gitga'at people also worry about the contamination of crabs and seaweed, and the effects of the fuel on herring, salmon, seals, sea lions and whales. Crabs, for example, spend the larval stage of their life at the surface of the water, where they are especially vulnerable to the oil slicks. A low survival rate for crabs means fewer jobs in the crab fishery.

The continuing seepage of fuel harms not just the health of the marine ecosystem and the availability of seafood, but also the sustainability of fishing and eco-tourism jobs.

While the spill from the *Queen of the North* has had a major impact, the amount of diesel leaking from the ferry is small compared to the 364 million litres of oil or more that a supertanker can carry. And from where it lies at the bottom of the ocean, the *Queen of*

the North is a constant reminder that accidents do happen to big ships on the coast. With the proposed volume of tanker traffic, Environment Canada estimates we can expect to see 100 minor, ten moderate, and one major oil spill every year.

This is not a risk the Gitga'at Nation is willing to take. To express their concern, the residents of Hartley Bay have sent delegations to protest the proposed tanker traffic to companies like Enbridge

that are proposing the projects.

This isn't the first time the Gitga'at Nation has opposed oil tanker traffic through its traditional territory. In 1977 the Gitga'at helped to maintain a ban on oil tankers. This time, Lynne Hill, vice-principal of the Hartley Bay school, proposes crocheting a thread to stretch across the rough water of Douglas Channel as a symbolic blockade of the oil tankers. Whatever the method, the people of Hartley Bay are not prepared

to stand by quietly while oil tankers plow through their community.

Under BC's *New Relationship*, the provincial government has said that it will share decision-making with First Nations over how resources are managed within their traditional territories. This means respecting the desire of coastal communities such as Hartley Bay to maintain the moratorium on oil tankers. ✂

Coastal Vigilance: interview with David Anderson

Charles Campbell: *When were you first alerted to the issues of oil tankers on our north coast?*

David Anderson: When the Prudhoe Bay Field was discovered [in 1968] it was clear that the Americans would need some sort of transportation system to move the oil. And of course a pipeline across Alaska was going to mean a tanker route south of Alaska.

At the same time there were a series of tanker accidents worldwide best typified by the Tarry Canyon disaster off the coast of England and Wales in 1968, the year I got elected. So you had two things working. One was the inevitability of a tanker route on the coast. Two were some major disasters elsewhere in the world and a general failure to recognize in Canada that this major oil artery was going to be running down our coast.

CC: *How did you go about opposing the tankers?*

DA: I launched a lawsuit, along with the Canadian Wildlife Federation, Environmental Defence Fund, Friends of the Earth, the Cordova District Fisherman's Union, and Natural Resources Defence Fund.

CC: *What was the nature of the lawsuit?*

DA: The lawsuit was over the American

Since the late sixties David Anderson has kept a lookout for oil and gas projects on BC's coast. Now it's time for the next generation to take the watch.

Charles Campbell

government's and the oil companies' failure to honour the provisions of the *National Environmental Policy Act* of 1969, which required proper analysis of environmental impact. The twist, which caused me to lose at the trial level but win at the appeal level, was that the oil companies and the US government argued the law did not apply outside the United States. My argument was that the preamble to the law talked about the worldwide concern for the environment, and it would just not make sense if this narrow interpretation were followed.

This was the landmark environmental assessment lawsuit. The landmark, because it was the first one that really defined the parameters of the *National Environmental Policy Act* of 1969. And we won it!

CC: *You were an MP at the time. What role did this play in your political career?*

DA: At the same time I was working within Canada to raise this issue. I founded the first environmental committee in the House of Commons, against the wishes of the government and opposition party leaders, but with the co-operation of some MPs from my and other parties.

CC: *What about back in Saanich and Esquimalt?*

DA: Well the first thing was to persuade people that really this was important. In those days—as now—you had people shrug and say, "Well that's progress, we have to put up with decreasing environmental standards if we want increasing jobs."

I've always denied that more jobs is a necessity on this coast. We seem to have far too many people coming anyway. Lifestyle and the environment is why we are here. It seems very contradictory to destroy it so that you can bring more people here.

CC: *What were the feelings of your constituents?*

DA: There was a certain scepticism, but in the late '60s and early '70s there was a very strong environmental concern. My

constituents as a whole were very interested, but it was not considered to be one of those issues where people switch votes. That may have changed now.

CC: *So there was not a lot of political traction to be gained from your opposition to tankers.*

DA: It wasn't me running to the head of a parade to lead it. I had to do it myself, and then people came. There were no organisations. The Sierra Club's interests were forests, forest tenure and clear cutting, not fish or marine matters. It just wasn't their focus. The same with Greenpeace. They were focused on other things.

CC: *How did the American lawsuit evolve into a moratorium on tanker traffic and coastal drilling in Canada?*

DA: The fact is that we couldn't have a consistent position saying we are very concerned about tankers coming down the coast of Alaska if at the same time we weren't taking other steps within our own jurisdiction to minimize risk.

With the lawsuit and the publicity it engendered we did create a political issue for the Canadian government. People were beginning to say, "If an MP has to find the money himself to sue in the American courts, where the hell is the Canadian government?" So eventually we got Trudeau, who understood the issue of spills, as a good ally; he wasn't captured by industry or anything. In due course the rest of government adopted the concern and we established Canadian policy.

CC: *Fast forwarding to the present day, how do you see this playing out now?*

DA: It is the old story of constant vigilance. There will always be some commercial group who have some interest in a port or some sort of development, maybe coastal drilling. It may be the



David Anderson

You know these things are always going to keep coming and you know you have to win, because once you lose it's over.

failed Enbridge proposal; it may be a proposal in Kitimat, as we had the late seventies; or the almost-successful attempt to lift the drilling ban in the very late eighties, which Exxon Valdez put an end to. You will always get this pressure

from some commercial interest.

You know these things are always going to keep coming and you know you have to win, because once you lose it's over. And once you lose you must remember you've lowered the benchmark for every other development that comes along the pipe, because you can't discriminate against companies. Once you have established a northern port with oil going through it you can't say to the TransMountain people, "You can't use your pipeline to bring oil out of Alberta and ship it out of Vancouver." Once you've established drilling in the north you can't say, "Well, by the way, you can't drill among the Gulf Islands." No, you have to be consistent.

CC: *You mentioned vigilance. What does it feel like now that you are out of politics and less able to play that role of watcher?*

Others have to take it up. Politics is very energetic and people are coming forward. Briony Penn, an absolutely committed environmentalist, is running for the national Parliament in Saanich. I'm very happy about that.

There are lots of good environmentalists, but some must work within the political system. Ultimately that is where policy is formed. And environmentalists must get involved in politics in parties that have a chance of influencing policy. I have great respect for people that work in the Green Party, but I'm not in it because I simply don't think I can spend 20 years to create something new. To get your environmental objectives you have to be in the mainstream parties, those that have a chance of being in government.


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CC: *What do you have to say about what Stephen Harper and Gary Lunn are saying in terms of their denial of the moratorium?*

DA: Well the trouble with Mr Lunn and Mr Harper is that they have a major credibility issue, because he and his government have made a lot of statements that are clearly pro-development. It is a sort of shell game, as with their new rhetoric on climate change. Come on, Mr Lunn, less than a year ago you were dismantling programs on climate change. Now you re-establish some of them—but not all of them.

This is why his boss, Mr Harper, is not doing well in the polls. You can't reverse yourself, as he has on climate change, without saying, "I'm sorry, I was wrong; I made a mistake here." You can't simply ignore all that and pretend you've been right all along. So this is where he has a credibility issue and why he can't be trusted on tanker traffic.

CC: *To conclude, what advice do you have for those fighting tankers now?*

DA: Well first keep up the fight. It is winnable. It has been winnable over the last 36 years and that's a pretty good stretch of time. It's winnable over the next 36 and the 36 after that. And the way to do that is through the political process.

My view is that you have to get out there and get to the political meetings. There are only so many political meetings and only so many people get to the microphones. If the question keeps coming back and back and back to the question of tanker traffic and drilling even the densest of candidate is going to realize they have to say something on this that is unequivocal.

It is not an entirely responsive process at all times, but it is very responsive at certain times, such as elections. People should get out and work for candidates

such as Briony Penn. Go door to door and say, "I think this is terribly important, because there is a risk here that perhaps you are not fully aware of, and we think you should support someone willing to stand up and do everything possible on a political level to prevent this happening. People are impressed by that kind of commitment.

If people are interested, make sure this is the issue for all candidates. And make sure they get a candidate elected who is going to be able to do something in power. We want people who are where it counts, not just people who appear at each election, say the right things, and vanish. I just look back at my career. I could not have done a lot of things unless I was elected. It gave me credibility. How would I ever have launched a lawsuit representing the people of British Columbia? But I was able to do much of what I did because I had the platform of elected office. ✂

A Fragile Fidelity



Photo: Briony Penn

The Sandhill Cranes fidelity to place and partner make it a likely casualty of proposed oil tanker traffic

Briony Penn

One hundred miles, as the crane flies, north of Vancouver Island is the heart of the breeding range of the coastal Sandhill Crane—a vast archipelago of boggy, forest-rimmed islands surrounded by the variable moods of the Pacific. The industrial age has largely passed this part of the coast by until now. With no economic spotlight on the region, western science took little interest in its denizens, including the elegant coastal variety of cranes that match the hues of the rockweed and peatmoss so perfectly that one cannot doubt the bird and the

place are intertwined to the core of their DNA.

The coastal crane is a distinct population, named “Canadian Sandhill Cranes” by the international bird community because they “disappeared” to Canada from their wintering grounds along the lower Columbia River every April and reappeared in October. Only the locals in Canada knew where they went to breed. The scientific documentation of the cranes consisted of brief observations made in 1928, twelve years after hunting drove them to the edge of extinction and they were protected under the *Migratory Bird Act*. Although numbers have recovered, what little we know is cloaked in the myths of the cultures in which the fifteen other cranes of the world feature. From Bhutan to Siberia, cranes are the birds of heaven, renowned for being the most ancient of birds, secrecy and for their fidelity to mate and place. For someone doubting fidelity exists in a rapidly changing world, what better a subject for observation?

So I readily took a research job last spring: two weeks on the offshore islands, documenting the cranes’ distribution, breeding behaviour and use of habitat as they arrived from their spring migration. Two weeks of observation, silence and meditation on something bigger than oneself.

The cranes literally are bigger than ourselves when their wings are outstretched in defence—as I found out when I happened on their nests in the small boggy lakes on these islands, lakes freckled with sphagnum moss islets the size and comfort of a double bed. During those moments, the silence of the islands was broken by the alarm calls of the birds circling me—a human intruder—with calls that have been ringing through bogs of the world for aeons. Predators far more dramatic-looking than humans, with sabre teeth or bristling claws, have been the cause of their alarm in the past. But today we threaten to be their “Waterloo.”

Our research was being done through *Raincoast Conservation Foundation* to document the significance and use of habitat by this distinct population of *Grus canadensis rowani*, and to provide data to enhance their chances for protection. The coast, long protected by remoteness, weather and indifference, is now open for business: oil, timber, fish farms and wind farms. In the battle of values for BC, we tend to revert to formalities of data, Latin names, the numbers of the population (4000), the status of population (blue and red depending on the country) and latitudes and longitudes. But in these terms, measured against oil, the cranes hardly stand a chance.

When I would come across an alarmed bird, (male or female, since both incubate and tend the nest), I would say, “Don’t worry, I’m trying to help. If you think I’m scary wait until you see an oil tanker bearing down on your island.” There was more than one eccentric anachronism in the bog.

But there is still a chance of persuading the public, so I was out collecting data with my research assistant Jessie Housty. Jessie is also a poet, studying English literature at university. She names some of the more distinctive cranes we observe after her favourite poets, like Ezra Pound. She is also the granddaughter of a chief of the Heiltsuk Nation, in whose


territory we huddled through the cold, wet night and listened for c’idawai, the Heiltsuk name for cranes.

We were there to collect data, but we were also there to write poems about the tenuousness of beauty and fidelity. In the battle over the last guts and feathers of BC’s coast, it is not clear whether poetry or data is the most powerful weapon. We came back armed with both.

The recent *Central Coast Land and Resource Use Management Plan* or Great Bear agreement has no provision for minor players like the cranes. A few great bears might endure within the four walls proposed around the protected areas of the agreement, but 86% of the coast could be open for business. As of June last year ten tankers have brought condensate through the area and there are plans afoot for crude oil to follow. Six oil and gas projects are proposed for the north coast that would necessitate further traffic. On Banks Island, a major nesting area, a huge windfarm is proposed and the potential impacts on crane nesting habitat are unknown.


What Jessie and I learned in the field is that the cranes are birds of heaven, not birds of commerce. During the two weeks, Jessie and I would take up different vantage points to watch from dripping hides, our kidneys damp from the water seeping up through the sphagnum moss and down through the clouds. During the short patches of sun, we would join the cranes preening, snoozing and rejoicing in spring. At nights, we would wait for the first dawn stirrings of the cranes, coming to

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feed at low tide alongside wolves, bears and a myriad of shorebirds from sandpipers to dowitchers. We visited over 50 islands. One such island was Spider Island, reknowned for its role in history as a lookout post during WW2. Its other distinction is one of the locations of the only scientific reference to cranes. Dr. Ian McTaggart Cowan, coauthor of *Birds of BC*, had visited there in 1928, and he told me before we set off to look out for the unique behaviours of these cranes who “run like rabbits through the forest.”

Spider Island is like an impenetrable citadel to the west, with a peaceful lagoon in the lee. I went back to the lagoon he described and there was a pair of cranes, eighty years later, defending the forest trailhead to their nesting site. Fidelity to nesting sites is believed to be a characteristic of cranes, but what we observed is that they will be faithful as long as the site is productive in food and security and enables them to rear their young.

Spider Island has remained productive because all the ingredients are there

still: clean shoreline, unlogged forest and undisturbed bog. Fidelity to mates is also believed to be a characteristic of cranes. We know now that they will be faithful as long as the mate is productive in providing food and security, enabling them to rear their young. Fidelity is the luxury of a world that changes slowly, so saving the cranes will be a test for a society that now knows only rapid change. ☒

A Painless Way to Give to Charity

With a little planning we can increase what loved ones and charities get when we're gone.

Stephen Whipp

As we enjoy the fruits of our labours some of us will stop to think about how our estate will be divided up. Aside from a surviving spouse and children there is of course Mr. Harper and Mr. Campbell, or should I say the federal and provincial governments' tax. That means there may not be much left to give to deserving charitable causes like Dogwood Initiative. However you can increase what your loved ones and charities get by some simple planning.

One of several strategies that you can use to reduce taxes at death is often referred to as a Back to Back Annuity. What? Let me explain.

Let's say you have a \$100K of investments that you don't require for income producing purposes or for capital needs and suppose the tax implications of

cashing it in are not severe.

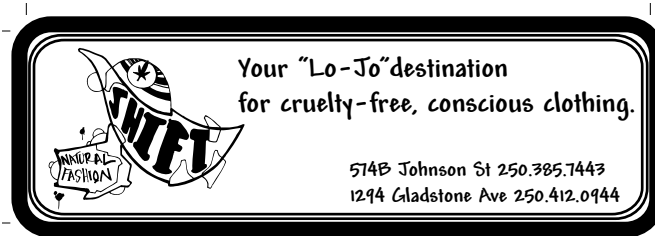
With this \$100K you purchase what is called an Annuity. There are many types of annuities available, (please get advice on the best one to use) but let us suppose the one you have chosen pays you an income of about \$700 a month.

Next you take out a permanent life insurance policy that will pay out a lump sum upon your death. For illustration purposes let us suppose you take out a \$200,000 life insurance policy with a monthly premium of \$600. You use the \$700 annuity payment to cover the insurance premium.

What you have just done is increased your estate value. How? Because life insurance is not taxed at death, the full \$200,000 will get paid to your beneficiaries; children, The Dogwood Initiative and/or go towards directly paying taxes upon death.

This is a strategy that does require you to get advice and work with a professional. For more information on how to contribute to the Dogwood Initiative in a tax preferred way contact a Certified Financial Planner. ☒

Stephen Whipp is a Certified Financial Planner specializing in ethical investments and can be reached at Berkshire Insurance Services Inc. 250 405-3550.



Staff and Volunteer Update

Matt Takach

It has been a busy and very exciting time since our last update. Dogwood's volunteer team is bigger than ever and has been working hard to protect our north coast from oil tanker traffic by collecting thousands of petition signatures. So far volunteers have helped us collect almost 10,000 signatures from across BC! A big thank you to everyone doing the important work of raising awareness about the risks to our north coast. A particular thanks to our Sidney petition team (Michael, Kathleen, Corey, Emmy, Renee, Bill, Glenda, Renate, Jennie and Mike), who have been collecting signatures around the corner from Gary Lunn's office. For all of their hard work available petitioners were treated to a trip on Captain Mike Woodward's sailboat.

We also pay tribute to our newest office volunteer, Corey Kowal for her continued hard work and dedication. Corey joined our team back in May and has been a steady presence in the office ever since, helping keep our database up to date. And a big thanks to Dorothy

Cutting, who has been working hard on Salt Spring Island writing letters to the editor and getting lots of signatures on the petition.

Our board of directors is now a little bit smaller with the departure of Stephen Whipp and Lisa Ambus. Both Stephen and Lisa are joining Dogwood's advisory board, and will continue working with



Captain Mike

the organization. Thank you to Stephen and Lisa for your time and dedication to the board. We look forward to working with you in your new roles.

In addition to all of our new volunteers we've also had two additions to our staff team! Eric Swanson joined Dogwood in May on contract as our Researcher. Eric recently moved to Victoria from Calgary, where he actively campaigned to stop the expansion of

the tar sands and for the protection of Alberta's wild spaces. Welcome, Eric! Kate Stevens also joins us on contract to do some data entry. (Thanks to all of you who donated for this.)

Our team of staff and volunteers is growing every day, but we still need more people. Are you concerned about the health of our coast? Join the campaign to make sure the Inside Passage is protected from tanker traffic. If you live in Victoria we are looking for regular help in our office, keeping our database up to date and helping with administration.

Thanks again to everyone for all of their hard work. With your continued efforts we will keep our north coast oil tanker free! ✉



Dorothy (right) gathers petitions at Salt Spring Market

Get involved! Share your skills! Join our team by volunteering! For more information on volunteering, please call Matt Takach at (250) 370-9930 ext. 21 or e-mail mtakach@dogwoodinitiative.org.

Congratulations Stephen

Stephen Chessor is the winner of our last prize draw for an **overnight stay for two at the world famous Sooke Harbour House.**

Enter our Autumn prize draw to win a **\$400 gift certificate from Mountain Equipment Co-op.**

See centre for details.



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