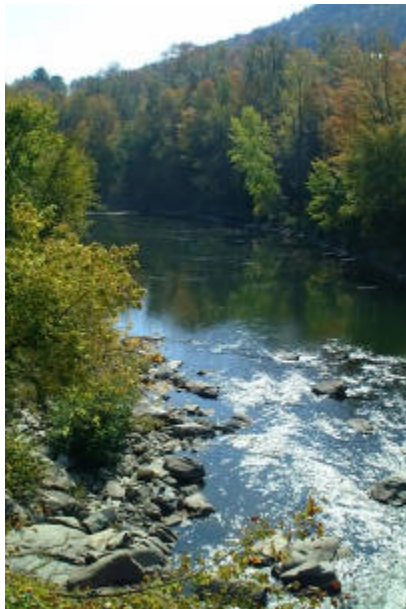




ANNUAL REPORT 2003



*Speaking up for
fish habitat conservation*

**T. BUCK SUZUKI ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION
ANNUAL REPORT
Annual Meeting May 1, 2004**

Two years have brought an unprecedented attack on environmental regulation including the axing or gutting of important laws and programs aimed at protecting fish habitat and preventing pollution of our waterways.

STATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CLIMATE

Provincial environmental regulations

The B.C. government has replaced the Forest Practices Code with the Forest Act, negotiated behind closed doors with the logging industry. But, the new Act will give fish streams little protection until actual damage has occurred.

Under pressure from developers, the B.C. government is moving to roll back urban stream protection contained in the Streamside Protection Regulation. Instead, a new Urban Stream Protection Regulation will allow housing and commercial developers to hire consultants to assess stream impacts and advise on protection measures, in most cases without consulting municipal and federal habitat biologists.

The government has weakened pulp pollution regulations, relaxed the pesticide controls, and has approved permits for major municipalities to dump huge quantities of garbage into our oceans.

Farming impacts

Concern was placed on new farm sites by the NDP because of increasing awareness of the impacts of the salmon farming on wild salmon and the marine ecosystem. These include seabed pollution, the danger of transfer of sea lice and disease to wild stocks, and the escape and spawning of Atlantic salmon in B.C. streams. Dr.

Oil and Gas Development

Oil and gas exploration off the B.C. coast could bring devastating impacts to fish habitat. Oil spills, dumped drilling muds, tanker traffic and impact would all negatively impact commercial fisheries and marine ecosystems. Pollution is increased on the B.C. coast because prevailing winds would blow any oil ashore, not offshore as is the case on the East Coast. Drilling would take place in shallow waters and would be situated in a major earthquake zone.

The Government of Canada imposed a moratorium on crude oil tanker traffic through the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait, and Queen Charlotte Sound due to concerns about environmental impacts. The moratorium was subsequently extended to include the entire coast. This was followed by a similar prohibition by the government of

British Columbia. In the last two years the province has been actively working to lift the moratorium on oil and gas exploration and drilling. Campbell has been lobbying the federal government to lift the moratorium and in his Throne Speech in February 2003, Gordon Campbell pledged that there would be offshore drilling by 2010. At the federal level, Environment Minister John Efford has declared himself in favour of offshore oil and gas exploration. The federal government has now initiated a public review process to look at the lifting of the federal moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration, chaired by a panel with clear ties to the oil and gas industry. Hearings are being held in coastal communities and a report will go to the federal cabinet recommending whether or not the moratorium should be lifted.

Shell oil company has publicly announced any interest in offshore oil and gas exploration in the region. But their offshore leases are extensive. Fortunately, any drilling or seismic activity would require a federal Environmental Assessment before proceeding.

Staffing levels for habitat protection

The federal government has cut deep into staffing levels in all Ministries concerned with environmental protection. Between 2001 and 2005, Water, Land and Air Protection was cut by 41 percent; Sustainable Resource Management by 44 percent; and Environment Canada by 30 percent. Water, Land, and Air Protection's Wildlife, Fisheries and Habitat programs are left with only 225 staff for the entire province. The equivalent of one staff member per 100,000 people.

IES IN 2003

Farming

Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation continued to be an active partner in the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR), which includes the Geological Survey of Canada, David Suzuki Foundation, Raincoast Research, Watershed Watch, Raincoast Conservation, Friends of Clayoquot Sound and the MTTC. We have a partnership with GSA with one funder and a partnership with CAAR with three funders.

Worked in the North to raise awareness about the impacts of salmon farming on commercial fishermen, sportsfishing groups, First Nations and the general public. Made presentations to public bodies and took petitions to public events. Researched and produced submissions to DFO on the first three new applications for salmon farms in the North. Distributed leaflets and other printed material throughout the community.

Worked with the CAAR Government Relations committee to critique government policy and to meet with decision-makers at the provincial and federal level, including the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Minister of Sustainable Development and the Pacific Regional Director for DFO. Assisted in research for a provincial government report card produced by the GSA for CAAR. Became an appointed representative for CAAR to the B.C. Science Council Aquaculture Research and Development Committee, which oversees the grant of \$5 million in aquaculture research funds. Advocated for increased research into impacts from sea lice and disease on wild stocks.

Streamside Protection

Followed up participation in the provincial Streamside Protection Regulatory Advisory Committee with updates to B.C. Environmental Network groups on provincial directions regarding the Streamside Protection Regulation.

Organized a meeting of streamkeeper, stewardship and conservation groups to ramped up streamside regulation with the participation of key staff at the Minister, Land and Air Protection Biodiversity Branch, including Pacific Streamkeepers, Byrne Creek Streamkeepers, Evergreen, Maple Creek Watershed Streamkeepers, West Vancouver Streamkeepers Society, Stonev Creek

ly from a directive to municipalities to enact municipal streamside protection measures, and was moving instead to a model of developer-funded environmental consultants working under a standard streamside assessment model.

Stream Protection

participated as a member group in the Coalition for Sustainable Forest Solutions which drafted alternative legislative models for forest ecosystem protection and conducted a series of public meetings to build public awareness regarding agricultural best practices regulations.

Public consultations on forest practices regulations were not convened as expected, the province allowed the B.C. Environmental Network to represent the environmental sector in closed, confidential meetings leading to the drafting of regulations. The T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation was part of the Environmental Network Forest Caucus advising the province through its representative.

participated as a member of the Forest Stewardship Council, which has been publishing certification standards for environmentally sustainable B.C. forest products.

1 Prevention – Sewage, Offshore Oil and Gas

conducted a workshop with the Labour Environmental Alliance Society on environmental issues in the home and workplace. The T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation focused on the household products that are harmful to fish, issues of sewage treatment, sewage effluent and stormwater outfalls.

worked with environmental staff from North Vancouver District and the City of Vancouver to discuss riparian and stormwater issues.

worked with the North Shore Streamkeepers to explore possible joint initiatives for riparian protection and stormwater pollution prevention.

assisted in setting up a strategy session for environmental groups working on these issues and helped develop a mission statement and founding principles. Frustrated in 2004 for this coalition to become a working body – lack of funding and support from environmental groups in this issue area has made it difficult to achieve what was first envisioned.

continued to organize a number of environmental issues towards a collective

worked with the University of Victoria Environmental Law Centre where a student was assigned to T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation to analyze alternative source control measures in Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria.

participated in the Oil Free Coast coalition to help raise public awareness about potential impacts to marine life from offshore oil and gas exploration and presentations at public hearings conducted by the federal government.

participated in the B.C. Environment Network Toxins Caucus.

Education

produced a fall edition of the T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation SalmonWatch newsletter with articles examining contaminants in marine mammals, Georgia Strait sewage pollution, restoring Rivers Inlet sockeye runs, offshore exploration and local stewardship efforts.

distributed 2,000 SalmonWatch newsletters to streamkeepers, environmentalists, commercial fishermen, First Nations, commercial fishing organizations and others.

made SalmonWatch available through the T. Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation website and public libraries.

researched and produced an overview booklet on impacts to fish habitat, *Fish Habitat*.

ED WORKPLAN FOR 2004

FARMING

ntinue to work with CAAR to press for a move to closed containment
hнологies for B.C. salmon farming.

ntinue to work in the North raising public awareness on the issue and cri-
cific siting proposals in the North.

ntinue to participate in advising on research priorities through the B.C. S
uncil.

SIDE PROTECTION

ork to organize local stewardship, streamkeeper and conservation groups
ocate for a strong stream assessment process as part of the new Riparian
gulation and to monitor the results of the new urban stream assessment p

STREAM PROTECTION

ypare a brief on the impacts from changes to forest legislation and regula-
C.

ON PREVENTION

ypare a brief on industry-specific pollution reduction measures for indust-
eater Vancouver contributing significantly to sewage loadings.

ganize a series of meetings with the conservation community to formula-
ommendations on industry specific pollution reduction to present to the

ork with Georgia Strait Alliance and the Labour Environmental Alliance
mulate a strategy to push for secondary sewage treatment for Greater Vi

ork to increase public participation in regional meetings on the potential
moratorium on B.C. offshore oil and gas exploration and continue to w
Oil Free Coast coalition.