



SEPT 29, 2023 - ENVIRONMENT UPDATE

On September 30th we observe Orange Shirt Day to honour the children who suffered in the residential school system and to remind all Canadians that “Every Child Matters.” Since 2021, September 30th is also the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This year marks the first time that this day of remembrance covers the entire workforce, as all parties in the legislature voted to enshrine it in provincial law. We must, alongside Indigenous peoples, take steps to ensure that all British Columbians are aware of the history and legacy of residential schools, and the lasting effects of colonialism.

We encourage British Columbians to approach the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation with reverence, humility, and respect. Residential schools are just one of many truths that we need to reconcile with, and it’s important that while we do, we look to and listen to our Indigenous community members’ lived experiences.

As we have marked fall equinox, I would also like to take this chance to highlight just some of the initiatives, funding, and supports that our government announced in the summer months (since May) surrounding environmental issues. This is such a large topic that you may wish to peruse based on your specific interests. For me, this long list of programs and funding both emphasizes the many moving parts in protecting surroundings, and how all these parts are interwoven together. I don’t want you to miss any info that may be valuable to you, so you will find updates on the following subjects in this newsletter: 1. Legislation / Innovation; 2. Land; 3. Water; 4. Energy; 5. Recreation



1. LEGISLATION / INNOVATION

Electric planes, motorcycles, boats showcase B.C. clean-transportation innovation

A high-tech revolution is dramatically changing how British Columbia moves people and goods in the air, on the land and over the water, supported by government funding for companies that specialize in inventing and advancing zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) technologies. The CleanBC Go Electric Advanced Research and Commercialization (ARC) program is investing \$5 million to support new made-in-BC technologies that contribute to electrification of transportation. This is the third round of funding for the ARC program, which has distributed more than \$9 million to 21 projects in the province.

Province sets single-use plastic requirements

A new provincial regulation will expand B.C.’s efforts to tackle hard-to-recycle single-use and plastic items. The Single-Use and Plastic Waste Prevention Regulation will cover shopping bags, disposable food service accessories, oxo-degradable plastics and food service packaging made of polystyrene foam, PVC, PVDC, compostable or biodegradable plastics. Focusing on hard-to-recycle single-use and plastic items will help move B.C. to a circular economy where waste and pollution are eliminated, products and materials are kept in the economy through re-use, and natural systems are regenerated.

Polluter Pays

The Province is amending legislation to ensure owners of high-risk industrial projects are responsible for the full cost of environmental cleanup if their projects are abandoned. Changes under the proposed legislation will enable future provincial regulations to give government the authority to collect, use and enforce financial assurance requirements under the Environmental Management Act. It means companies will be obligated to plan for decommissioning and closure of their operations and may be required to provide financial security for this cleanup in advance.



Making polluters pay and protecting BC's environment

2. LAND



Yesterday, a group of people rallied in support of protecting Old Growth. We came into government determined to better manage our forests, including our most precious old growth trees, and we started to take action right away. And we are just as determined that the way forward is lasting.

When we faced a global pandemic, we all learned that we are stronger together; and by sticking with this credo, we've seen our recovery and forward momentum in BC proving the rule. "Stronger together" is also what it takes to achieve a generational shift in how we steward our natural environment for a vibrant, sustainable tomorrow, particularly for the beautiful forests of British Columbia.

That's why industry-developed forestry plans are being replaced by collaborative forest landscape planning which brings First Nations and communities to the table. All are charged with recognizing ecosystem health and giving priority to clean air and water, carbon storage, conservation of biodiversity and sustainable timber supply.

It's not an easy task, but we are stronger together and that's how we will make our way to a brighter future. This is only one of many initiatives that our government has rolled out and we are accelerating progress as we advance reconciliation, respond to a changing world due to a worsening climate, and support people and communities in a changing global economy.

B.C. helps farmers prepare for extreme weather

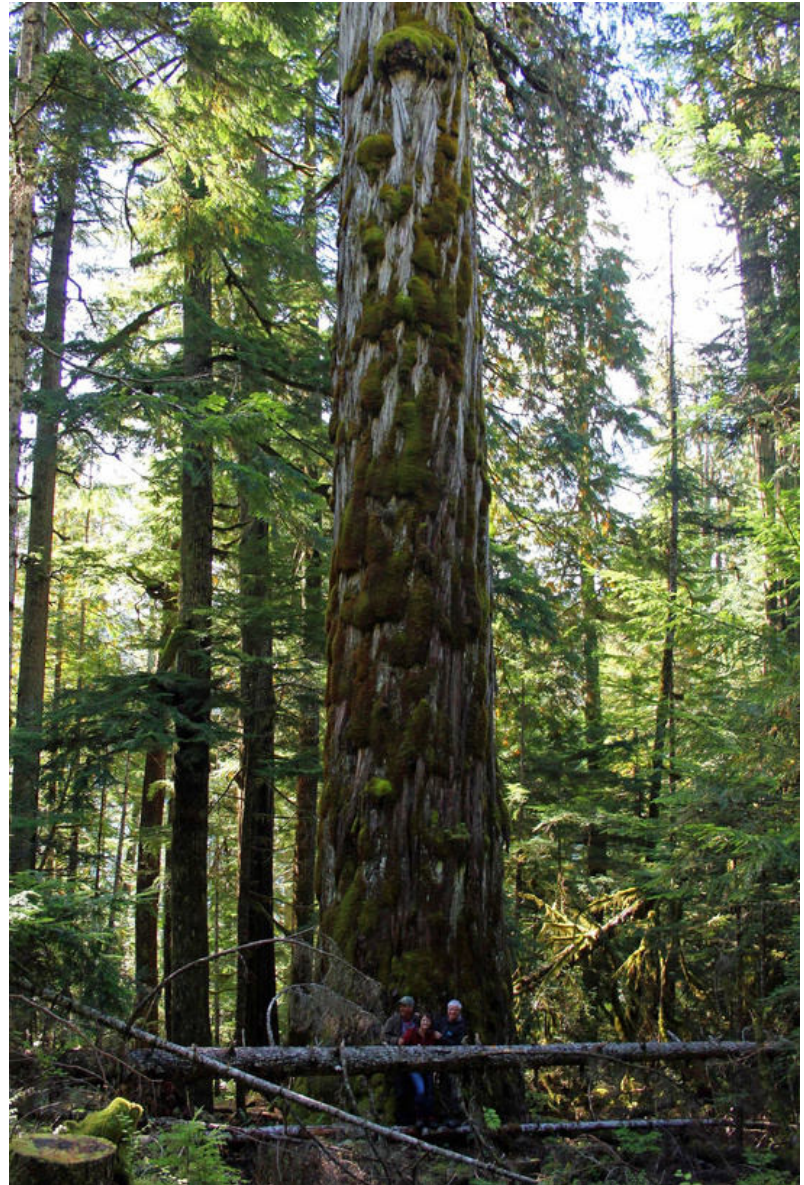
This summer this government stepped up to support Farmers and ranchers in a new round of funding to help strengthen their resilience to wildfires, flooding and extreme heat, and mitigate future climate impacts. In the first year of the program, more than \$1.4 million supported 129 projects in the poultry, dairy, beef, tree fruit and berry sectors. These programs help farmers be more resilient to the impacts of climate change and better protect their livelihoods, while ensuring we have a stable, sustainable food supply.

New actions will improve forest management, transparency

We are boosting forest conservation to better support ecosystem health, including rare and critical habitat. Regulations are being amended to strengthen forest management, including new requirements for forest licence holders to publish forest operations maps, new legal protection for rare habitats called "ecological communities" and enhanced management for designated recreation sites and trails. Supporting healthy forests and improved forest management is important to people, workers, and communities.

BC Forest Practices Board releases new strategic plan

The BC Forest Practices Board has released its 2023-26 Strategic Plan, setting new priorities for advancing the public interest in forest and range practices in B.C. The plan includes new values and priorities in recognition of the changing landscape in British Columbia. The Forest Practices Board is B.C.'s independent watchdog for sound forest and range practices, reporting its findings and recommendations directly to the public and government. The new strategic plan, along with reports on audits, investigations, and other forest and range issues, can be viewed on the Forest Practices Board website: <https://www.bcfpb.ca/>



Two-year Plan to Plant Over 37 Million Trees in British Columbia Under the Two Billion Trees Program

Under this two-year agreement, over 37 million trees will be planted in the province through nearly \$80 million in joint funding from Canada and British Columbia. The reforestation project will be primarily focused on wildfire-impacted areas.

Co-management builds resilience in the Great Bear Rainforest

New measures to sustain the Great Bear Rainforest as one of the world's most treasured and diverse coastal temperate forest ecosystems have been introduced. Coastal First Nations, the Nanwakolas Council and the Ministry of Forests, have worked in partnership to identify new steps to be taken as part of strengthening implementation of ecosystem-based management in the Great Bear Rainforest



Province keeps more hazardous waste out of landfills

The province is amending regulations to make it easier to dispose of household hazardous waste that is toxic, flammable or corrosive. These changes will help keep potentially harmful waste out of B.C.'s environment and landfills by making it easier to dispose, collect, store and transport these products. These and other measures will also make recycling easier and more accessible for small and rural communities, as well as First Nations.

Province strengthens protection of B.C.'s ecological reserves

New regulatory changes are being made to safeguard the province's ecological reserves. Under the previous regulation, BC Parks lacked the ability to impose penalties on individuals and companies that disobey the law in these sensitive ecosystems.

Words for National Forest Week

For National Forest Week (Sept. 17-23), Minister Ralston wrote some lovely words that I would like to share with you now:

"Forests are places of beauty, home to wildlife and of immense importance to First Nations, but this year they faced exceptional challenges. This year, we grieve and reflect on all those who have put their lives at risk to protect our homes, communities and environment. On behalf of all British Columbians, I want to pay special thanks to all the hard-working firefighters who bravely faced the worst fire season on record in B.C., and to the courage and dedication shown by First Nations, local government partners, the First Nations Emergency Services Society, B.C. forest industry contractors and the BC Cattlemen's Association. Thank you...

It is what we do now to respond to this year that will determine the legacy we hand down to our children and grandchildren. As we face the challenges of climate change together, we have the opportunity to protect the lands, waters, communities and people that are important to us. By speeding up the transition to a sustainable modernized forestry sector, protecting the most at-risk old-growth forests, protecting more communities by doubling wildfire prevention and mitigation and strengthening forest management based on ecosystem health, we must take bold action to ensure resilient, sustainable and healthy forests... Our forests have a role to play in fighting climate change, and we have a role to play in making this happen.



3. WATER

Province builds on unprecedented investment in wild salmon recovery.

New projects focused on restoring wild salmon populations will make sure salmon remains stable for years to come, and create a more sustainable future for all of us. Wild salmon are integral to BC's ecosystems, economy and food security. This year, to mark B.C. Wild Salmon Day the government announced more than \$17 million for wild salmon restoration throughout the province. The bulk of the funding (\$15 million) will be shared equally between the Pacific Salmon



Foundation and the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) to work to protect, conserve and restore the abundance of Pacific wild salmon in British Columbia. Science, Indigenous knowledge and data will be used to actively advance habitat restoration and climate adaptation. The remaining \$2.25 million will go to the FNFC to support this work.

B.C. supports research to protect coastal ecosystem

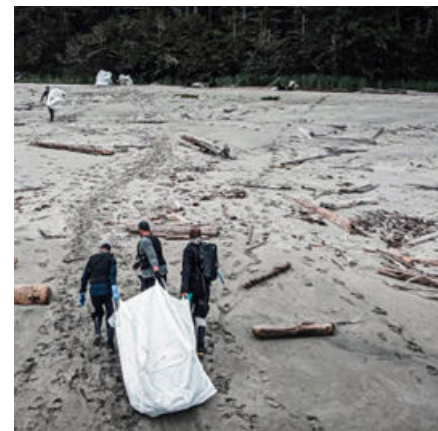
New funding for the University of Victoria's Experimental Ocean Climate Change Lab (EXCEL) will support research on the impact of climate change on the environment and the promotion of resilience and sustainability for B.C.'s marine sector. UVic's EXCEL is one of 27 projects spread over five B.C. public post-secondary institutions that have received a total of \$6.5 million for equipment in the latest funding round from the BCKDF.

B.C.'s largest coastline cleanup gets major funding boost

B.C. is providing a further investment in Clean Coast, Clean Waters Initiative Fund with an additional \$25 million. The Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative will receive \$4 million, bringing its total funding to \$7.5 million since 2020. The remaining \$21 million will be awarded to successful funding applicants through a merit-based assessment process, administered by PwC Canada.

Public input will enhance B.C.'s first-ever coastal marine strategy.

Following extensive consultations with British Columbians, the Province has received valuable feedback that will help shape British Columbia's first-ever Coastal Marine Strategy, co-developed with coastal First Nations. A summary of more than 900 submissions received from individuals, environmental non-governmental organizations, local and regional governments, industry associations and businesses across British Columbia is now available in the Coastal Marine Strategy's What We Heard report: https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2023/08/CMS-What-We-Heard-Report_2023-08-10.pdf



Infrastructure upgrades protect marine habitat, build clean-energy solutions

The province is helping improve the environment and enhance access to fishing and shellfish aquaculture development for the Haida Nation through a \$20-million investment that will support a new wastewater treatment plant. The project will help improve wastewater capacity and quality for the residents of Daajing Giids and protect the health of residents and the surrounding ecosystem. It will also help ensure safe access to fish and shellfish for the Haida Nation and support their aquaculture interests in the area.

4. ENERGY

Clean power to electrify B.C.'s future

Electricity demand is expected to increase by 15% between now and 2030. This is due to economic and population growth, and as more homes, businesses and industries switch from fossil fuels to clean electricity. In the past six years, the number of electric vehicles on B.C.'s roads has increased by nearly 2,000%. BC Hydro will move forward with a call for new sources of renewable, emission-free electricity to power British Columbia's growing clean economy and create new jobs throughout the province. The call is expected to launch in spring 2024. In addition, the Province is providing \$140 million to the B.C Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative (BCICEI) to support Indigenous-led power projects, create economic opportunities for First Nations, and advance community self-determination.

Funding helps remote First Nations communities reduce diesel use

New funding of \$30 million will extend the CEDR program by three years. This will fund an estimated 96 projects over its six-year lifespan, including support for First Nations to replace diesel power generation with cleaner options, including hydro-electric, solar, biomass and wind.

Renewable diesel refinery a first in Canada

British Columbia's clean fuel goals and vision of a low-carbon future have come into sharper focus now that Canada's first stand-alone renewable diesel refinery has completed construction and will soon begin production. Using bio-feedstocks, such as canola, tallow and tall oil (liquid rosin), the Tidewater facility will produce renewable diesel which offers an 80% to 90% reduction in carbon emissions compared to fossil fuel diesel. When fully operational in the near future, Tidewater Renewable's facility is expected to produce more than 3,000 barrels of low-carbon fuel a day, or approximately 170 million litres a year. The facility will also produce renewable hydrogen, which will be used in the production of the low carbon fuel, with the potential to supply excess renewable hydrogen for other uses.



5. RECREATION

Province enhances support for improved access to outdoor recreation

The Province is providing a one-time grant of \$10 million to the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC (ORCBC) to establish a new endowment fund that will improve and enhance outdoor recreation for people in B.C. The Outdoor Recreation Council of BC is a non-profit umbrella organization representing approximately 70 outdoor recreation clubs and associations that construct and maintain trails and recreation sites, and organizes events and trips for their members and the public. ORCBC also delivers educational programs that foster responsible outdoor practices and is active in conservation, outreach and safety initiatives. Their members help maintain more than 20% of B.C.'s trails (8,500 kilometres) annually



Upgrades made to Juan de Fuca Marine Trail

People hiking the popular Juan de Fuca Marine Trail on southern Vancouver Island can enjoy enhanced camping facilities with the addition of 50 new elevated tent platforms at five backcountry campgrounds.

The wooden tent platforms are part of several infrastructure upgrades along the 47-kilometre wilderness trail and provide a more comfortable camping experience during bad weather, while protecting sensitive habitat. The cost of the project is approximately \$905,000, marking the biggest single investment in improvements to the Juan De Fuca Marine Trail in recent years.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

Is someone in your life, your workplace, or your church celebrating a Milestone birthday or anniversary? Make sure to put in a request for a letter from your MLA.

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

The province of BC wants to hear from you. There are a number of topics that you will find on [engageBC](#)

Get in touch

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about any provincial issue, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are here to help you. Our office at 437 5th street is currently open for appointments only. You can reach us at 250.703.2410 or Ronna-Rae.Leonard.MLA@leg.bc.ca.

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