Issue 18

FREE MAGAZINE

# THE FOOTPRINT PRESS

Passages from Silverdale, Mission, and beyond.

# Message from the Editorial Committee

All creatures, big and small, human and nonhuman, ultimately owe their lives to plants. The rooted ones provide us with the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the water we drink. Every morsel of our food is ultimately derived from plants, directly, or indirectly through other animals, which themselves, ate plants. Forests are the lungs of the planet, releasing the oxygen for us to breathe, absorbing carbon dioxide, and thus create the atmosphere of the earth. Tall trees capture and condense clouds into rain, which replenishes streams, rivers and the aquifers, from which we derive our drinking water. And plant communities capture and hold moisture, slowly releasing it when needed most, thereby preventing desiccation of the soil, and sheltering a myriad of creatures nestled within their woody embrace.

Our relationships with plants are complex, going back so many years that all animals and plants have the majority of their genes in common. The relationships between plants and other life forms are so pervasive and so fundamental, that we risk taking the rooted ones for granted. Ancient cedar trees are being lost at an alarming rate, with little regard for their sacred role in life's complex tapestry. These ancient beings, which have survived 1000s of years, feed a hunger which will never be satiated, even after every last tree is gone.

First Nations' people understood the generosity of cedar trees and other plants. The DNA of wild salmon has been found in the tops of cedar trees, after the salmon were brought to the tree by bears, eagles and other animals. Could these creatures also be paying their respects to the cedar with this gift? What a wonderful world it would be if we all showed our respect and gratitude for the generosity of plants.

Flicker Phoenix photo by **Mike Stefiuk,** KEEPS
Cover photo by **Bruce Klassen**

# A fish worth fighting for

The Fraser sockeye run has long been considered a natural wonder, the largest in the world, averaging 4 million salmon a year over the past half century. The importance of these fish in the history of our province and our First Nations cannot be understated. So this year, with the lowest returns of Fraser sockeye in recorded history – less than 900,000 – why do our governments seem so unconcerned?

After all, it was only seven years ago, when numbers unexpectedly plunged to 1.3 million (almost 50% higher than this year), the concern was so great that a special $37 million government investigation was launched – the Cohen Commission – to figure out what had happened.

But this year, there's been but a whisper emanating from Ottawa. No inquiries, no special commissions, no

response other than to close the fishery. We have heard a lot of talk of a 'renewed commitment', but still no real action on the vast majority of the 75 recommendations of the Cohen Commission, that, incidentally, were meant to prevent this exact problem. Instead, we are matter-of-factly told that lower returns were the result of warm water conditions. In the era of rapid climate change, what they're really saying is, "Get used to it."

You see, the Trudeau government has already written off our wild salmon.

Take the recent approval of the Pacific Northwest LNG megaproject on Lelu Island, a 'carbon bomb' on the scale of the tar sands. It is the action of a government resigned to 2 degrees or more of global average temperature rise. That this same project is most likely a death knell for Skeena salmon, Canada's second largest run, is of little concern if you're already convinced that salmon won't survive global warming.

A future without wild salmon also explains the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' absurd mandate to expand an industry so closely associated with the destruction of wild salmon.

Just last summer, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans confirmed what independent scientists have been saying for years – that exotic diseases from open-pen salmon farms, never before seen in BC waters, have now infected our wild salmon. If you're planning on wild salmon's survival, the only logical response necessitates a full stop to open-pen salmon farms on our coast.

Instead, the federal government has further entrenched the industry in BC waters, offering salmon farmers an 8-year extension on their, until now, single-year licenses. Worst of all, the government appears committed to hastening the demise of our wild salmon by forging ahead with their court battle to continue allowing salmon farmers to put diseased farmed salmon into our waters, directly in the path of our migrating wild salmon.

This is as far as one can get from evidence-based public policy. Instead, what the Trudeau government has constructed, is nothing more than a self-fulfilling prophecy.

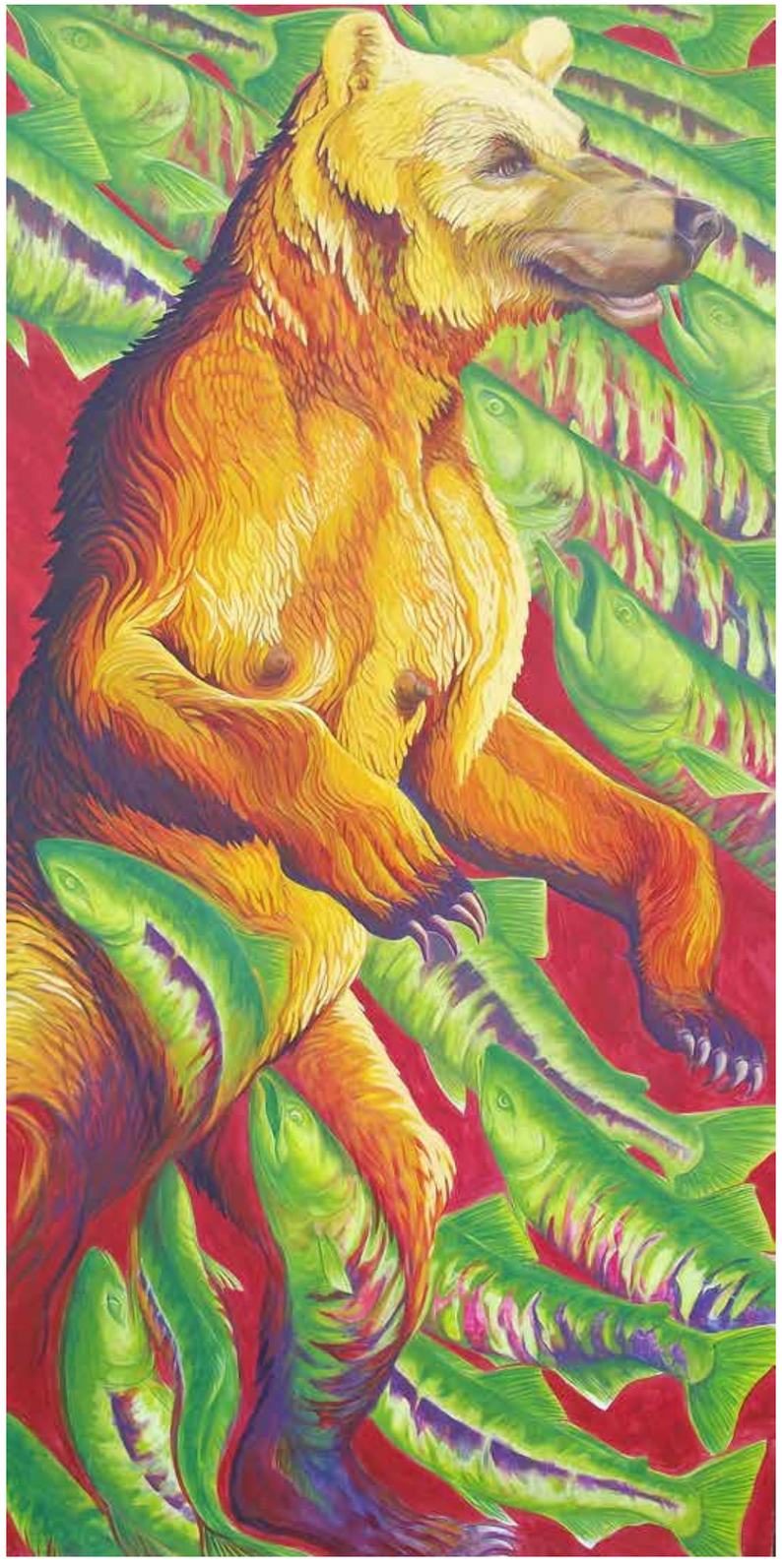
Without a doubt, climate change is a dire concern for our wild salmon. A warming planet not only means warmer ocean temperatures, but it also means reduced snow packs and less of the cooling meltwater that maintains stream temperatures below the danger zone for salmon.

Water temperatures even a couple of degrees above normal can affect our wild salmon in several ways as they make their epic journey back to spawn. First, lower concentrations of dissolved oxygen in warmer waters make breathing more difficult. At the same time, warmer water causes salmon's metabolism to surge, using up reserves of energy critical for their long, challenging swim upstream. What's more, warmer waters also increase the chances of naturally occurring fungal and bacterial infections.  Indeed, it is hard to imagine that salmon have ever faced a greater existential threat than climate change. But as anyone who knows wild salmon understands, survival against all odds is, simply, what wild salmon do.

From the moment of their conception, every stage of a wild salmon's life is fraught with peril. Their multiyear migration from freshwater stream to open ocean and back again, is a maze of predators and life-threatening obstacles; the odds of any one salmon hatching and surviving the round trip are only about 1 in 5000. Yet every year for millennia, the strongest and the heartiest of the species somehow manage to defy these odds, completing their incredible journey, to begin the cycle anew.

In the past century, human activity has added new challenges to their survival. We have filled in their breeding grounds to build roads and developments. We have logged the banks of their spawning grounds, silting up the pebbly stream bottoms that provide protection for their eggs. We've polluted their pristine waters with chemicals, mine tailings and more. Yet still, year after year, they return by the million.

At times, it seems there is little we can do to stop wild salmon from coming back. For over a hundred years, salmon runs were virtually wiped out on the Olympic



Peninsula's Elwha river by two early 20th century hydroelectric dams, that were built without fish passages. Yet, in 2011, within months of the removal of these dams, and after more than a century in exile, the Elwha salmon returned!

We know from fossil records that salmon have lived on the west coast for over seven million years. As a species, they have weathered ice ages and other extremes of nature many times before. They are, without a doubt, among nature's most resilient and tenacious creatures.

But they are not invincible. It is unlikely they can survive a combined threat from both climate change and exotic diseases spread by salmon farms. Fortunately, however, a solution to salmon farm diseases is already in parliament.

Thanks to the efforts of Port Moody-Coquitlam MP Fin Donnelly, parliament will soon vote on private member's Bill C-228 to amend the Fisheries act. If passed, C-228 will force BC salmon farmers to move their operations into closed containment, physically separated from our oceans. It would solve the long-standing issue of sea-lice infestations crippling out-migrating salmon smolts, and prevent further transfer of farmed salmon diseases to our wild populations.

Bill C-228 is, very likely, our last hope for government action on behalf of BC's wild salmon. Because it is subject to a free vote in parliament, every MP is free to vote their conscience.

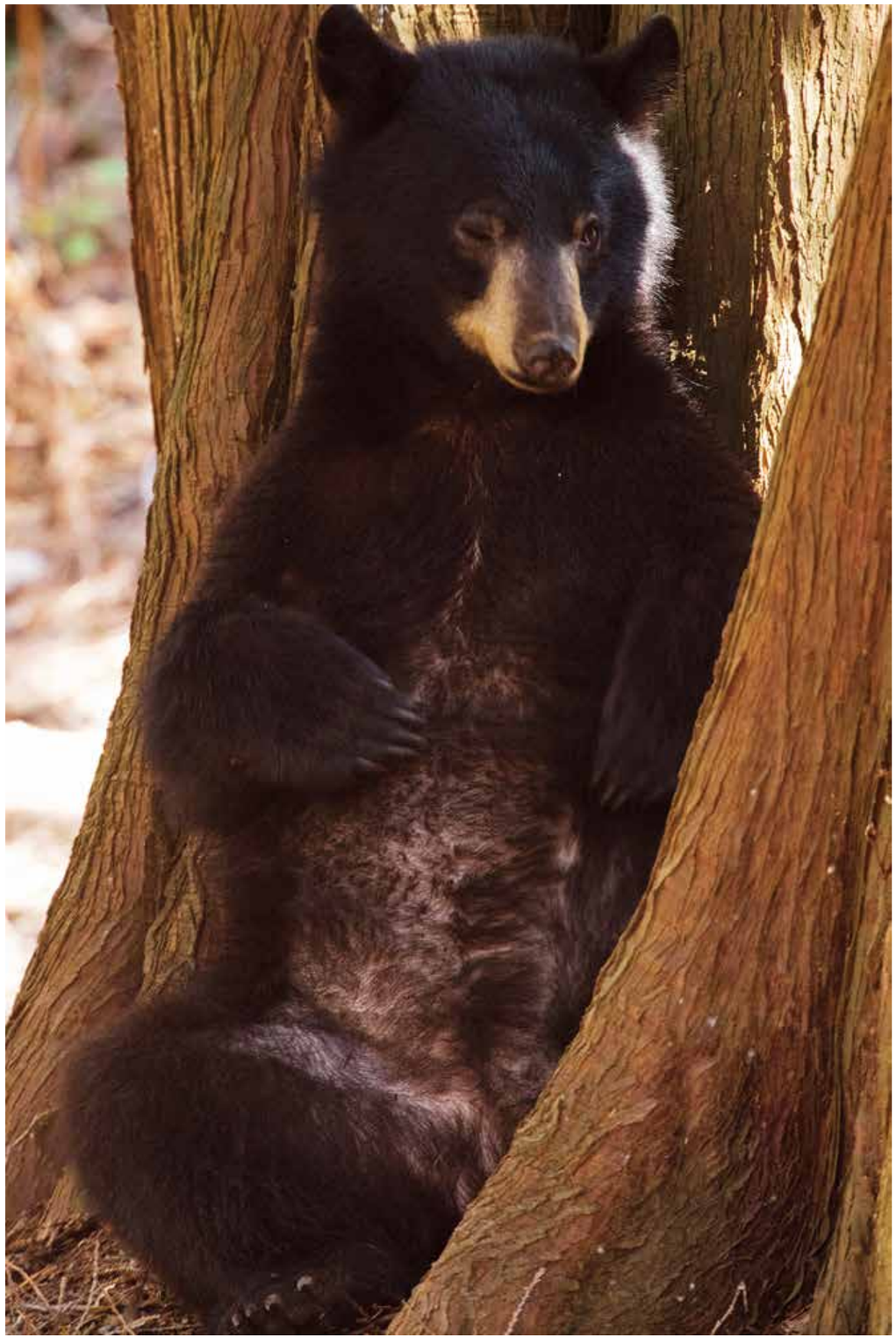
Please visit salmon.advokit.ca to send a letter to your local MP demanding their vote to save our wild salmon.

**Jeff Matthews PhD,**
**North Vancouver**

**Artwork by Leanne Hodges,**
**Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance**

**www.Leannehodges.com**

# Stó:lõ, Salmon, and Cedar – A Sacred Relationship



The Stó:lõ people have depended upon salmon runs and cedar trees since time immemorial. The history of Stó:lõ cannot be written without presenting their special relationship to wild salmon and cedar trees. In days gone by, salmon runs were so abundant, it was said you could literally walk on the backs of salmon to cross some parts of the river. Salmon was such a main staple that we Stó:lõ consider ourselves as Salmon People, as well as People of the River. Historical records show that salmon was integral to a trading economy with other tribes, and with the first Europeans who came to our territory. Instead of trading for furs, we traded predominantly with salmon. Salmon were, and still are, integral to our spiritual, cultural, and physical well-being.

In today's world, our spiritual connection with salmon is cultivated in ceremony. All along the river, now called the Fraser River, Stó:lõ people hold annual First Salmon Ceremonies, to show honour, gratitude and respect to our Salmon relatives for giving its life to nourish us, as well as other species, including bears, wolves, seals, otters, whales, eagles and blue herons. The first salmon that is caught in a community is cooked over the open fire in fine traditional fashion, brought into the longhouse with sacred songs, and is shared with everyone present at the ceremony. Words are shared by witnesses to cultivate a reverence for wild salmon. All the bones of the salmon and other remains are then brought back to the river by elders, youth and fishers, and prayers are said to the water, to the salmon, and to the "Chichelh Siyam," our Great Mother of Creation. The old ones tell us we need to continue these First Salmon Ceremonies to help ensure the salmon will continue to come back to nourish Stó:lõ families in the summer, fall and winter months. In this way, we promote the true value of salmon that provides great benefit to present and future generations, and honour our ancestors who harvested salmon sustainably for thousands of years. It is through ceremony, that Stó:lõ people maintain a sacred trust, to be good caretakers of the salmon and its river shed habitat.

Salmon are wind dried, smoked and canned so they can last until the cycle of salmon returns to us once again. Today, some Stó:lõ also make Salmon candy - smoked salmon (usually chum, sockeye or chinook) basted with honey and water, for a delicious treat.

Scientists have recently confirmed that cedar trees contain the DNA of wild salmon, even at the tops of those trees. Therefore, wild salmon nourish the trees that absorb carbon from our common biosphere, and release oxygen into the air. In this sense, salmon are known to be a crucial climate regulator, and so every precautionary measure must be taken to protect wild salmon.

The cedar tree is considered a relative of the Stó:lõ, as the "Shxweli" or "Life Force" of Xpáy is in all the cedar trees in our territory. As noted in "A Stó:lõ-Coast Salish Historical Atlas," Sxwóxwiyám are the oral histories describing a distant past "when the world was not quite right." Into this chaotic world came Xexá:ls, the transformers – three sons and a daughter of Red-Headed Wood Pecker and Black Bear, who lived in the mountains at the head of Harrison Lake. Black Bear's jealous second wife, Grizzly Bear, killed Red-Headed Woodpecker. The four children, all Black Bears, left their widowed father, and began the process of making the world right through transformations. They transformed those who acted wrongly into stone. They rewarded others for their generosity by transforming them into valuable local resources (including the cedar tree, the beaver and the sturgeon) many of which are the ancestors of the Stó:lõ people. There was a man whose name was Xpáy who was very generous and kind all his life. He was transformed into a cedar tree by Xexá:ls, in honour of his life of generosity. When we see a cedar tree in our territory, we acknowledge the "Shxweli" of Xpáy, our ancestor who taught us the importance of respecting one another with a generous spirit. The

Shxweli of the salmon is very generous as well, as it helps sustain the life of so many species, including humans. In this context, the Stó:lõ are spiritually, and culturally connected to both the salmon and the cedar trees. We hold them in great respect and gratitude, and they continue to be an integral part of our own Shxweli. We value them to the highest degree, and we have a sacred duty and responsibility to protect them.

In today's world, we are seeing our salmon threatened by corporations that act as if there are no consequences to extreme extraction of oil, gas, gold, copper and other resources at the expense of wild salmon, and its habitat – BC's rivers and coastal waters. It is tragic that both the federal and provincial governments are supporting this industrial storm, that contributes to dangerous global warming and destroys what sustains us. It is ironic that BC's Provincial Symbols and Honours Act lists emblems for BC's official tree (western red cedar), mammal (spirit bear), flower (Pacific dogwood), gemstone (jade), bird (Steller's jay), and more recently Pacific salmon. Our wild salmon is an endangered species, and is threatened by open-net pen cage fish farms, irresponsible mining and extreme extraction of fossil fuels. The Site C Dam and the Lelu Island LNG facility also threaten major wild salmon runs in northern BC. Both have been sanctioned by the provincial and federal governments. Therefore, it is up to the people to rise up in large numbers to send a signal to both the federal and provincial governments, that it is in the best interests of Canada to protect wild salmon from all industrial harm. To help with this, it is imperative for both levels of government to uphold their duty to seek the informed consent of Indigenous people, before proceeding with industrial projects that pose threats to the land, the water, and the air.

We are at a critical time in the life of this planet. The red flags are up. World scientists warn that we must change the direction of the world economy, moving as rapidly as we can to one that is sustained by renewable energy, and away from our dependency on extreme extraction and burning of finite fossil fuels, or face unbearable living conditions. Every human needs to heed the warning –1.5 degrees to stay alive! We continue to ignore this at our own peril!

Wild Salmon and the cedar trees are at the center of the industrial storm looming over British Columbia. Let us do everything we can to protect our relatives in the natural world, to the benefit of present and future generations.

**Eddie Gardner,**
**President, Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance**
www.facebook.com/eddie.gardner.50
**Artwork by Leanne Hodges,**
**Wild Salmon Defenders Alliance**
www.Leannehodges.com

## mother cedar

***hug a tree, he said,***
***in bad times, your***
***anger will sink***
***like sap***
***into her bark.***

*

she's the seed in a stranger's eye.

she witnesses creation's ambush, stars scorching feral space, she hops into the stranger's hand, hopes for a bit of good soil.

planet earth rushes by, the stranger's hand opens, she falls, well, she thinks, *anything could grow here,* she rests in a pot of lava.

the planet is mildly surprised.

she waits.

through an eon's simple heart.

earth cools, discovers the words to welcome her.

trilobites splashing at her heels.

she plants herself beside a swamp, mud and water boiling with life.

a giant anthill tickles her toes.

dinosaurs nuzzle her foliage, she shelters a tiny mammal from the pterodactyl's leathery screech.

when the great forests march in from the sea, she's ready for them, she calls the names of the continents.

feathered heartbeats nest in her hair.

a man and woman of clay make love beneath her arms, she lifts their infant into the fragrance of her branches, we're safe, no fang shall sniff us out, mother cedar has loved us such a long time.

she stiffens through the ice age, brushes frozen sky, beckons us home, *you'll see,* she says, *it will be alright.*

she embraces the sun, forgives its lengthy absence, drinks the warm spring rain.

painted people strip her bark for sacred war, she bears the scars proudly.

tall ships drop anchor, spit out little men, do your worst, she'll never fall.

smooth-skinned children build highways around her shoulders, she shrugs them off.

our cities demand the power of her veins, she gives freely.

time accelerates in a white rush of infinite equations.

she breathes slowly, utters a single word.

i searched for a friend on the other side, wandered through her grove, far from the bad breath of downtown men.

when you read this, i'll have slept beneath her roots a billion years.

the stranger saunters by, glances at her, at me, continues on his way.

she will cradle our planet as it crumbles.

**Robert Martens,** Abbotsford

Photo of Echo Lake forest by TJ Watt

# Echo Lake's Old-Growth Forest and Eagle Roost Under Threat!

Near Harrison Mills, Echo Lake is a magnificent, unprotected lowland ancient rainforest, in a region where almost all such forests have long since been logged. Located by the Chehalis-Harrison Estuary near the Lougheed Highway, the region is home to one of the greatest salmon runs and perhaps the largest concentration of bald eagles on Earth – as many as 10,000 in some years, with hundreds roosting in the ancient trees of Echo Lake at night. As such, Echo Lake is one of the great natural wonders in the province – and perhaps one of the least visited so far.

There is a reason why so few people have seen Echo Lake. The lake is surrounded by steep mountains on three sides, with private lands encompassing the flats on the remaining side by the road. Only through the permission of private landowners or via organized tours can you traverse the private lands on its east side in order to access the old-growth forests on the Crown lands on the west side. This difficulty of access has helped to keep Echo Lake as one of the last enclaves of lowland ancient forest left in the region – until now.

Echo Lake is in the unceded territory of the Sts'ailes First Nation band, who run eagle-watching tours in the area, and whose leadership has expressed concern about the fate of the old-growth cedars around Echo Lake.

In 2012, the Ancient Forest Alliance contacted the local landowners Stephen and Susan Ben-Oliel, whose private properties abut against the lake's east side. Together we started organizing public tours, letter-writing campaigns, slideshows, outreach to attract provincial and national news media, and lobbying efforts.

In February 2013, the BC government protected 55 hectares in an Old-Growth Management Area (OGMA) primarily on the south side of Echo Lake, encompassing some impressive old-growth Douglas-fir stands. Unfortunately, the OGMA left out another 40 or 50 hectares of old-growth and mature stands on the west and north sides, within the Woodlot License of C&H Forest Products. The excluded area includes a spectacular "ancient red cedar valley" with some of the biggest trees. One tree, the East Side Giant, is almost 4 metres, (13 feet) wide. While the area at risk also includes second-growth stands, the BC government has tried to depict the entire area as a second-growth forest with just a smattering of veteran old-growth trees – which is far from the truth for those who've been there to marvel at the stands of giant red cedars and Douglas-firs.

In July, the Ben-Oliels discovered that C & H Forest Products had flagged a series of large red cedars near their property for logging and had been given the go-ahead to construct a 1400 metre road to access planned cut blocks on the lake's north side. As Echo Lake is also part of the drinking watershed for local people, there are concerns about the risk to the supreme water quality in the area posed by road-building and logging.

The race is now on to mobilize concerned citizens to speak up to the provincial government, particularly in the lead-up to the May 2017 provincial election. The province could enact a Land Use Order, expand the Old-Growth Management Area, or implement some other protective designation at Echo Lake, while potentially finding an area of equivalent timber value in second-growth forests elsewhere for the licensee – something that the province is so far reluctant to do.

Already 80% of the original, productive old-growth forests have been logged in the southwest mainland of BC, including over 95% of the high productivity, valley bottoms with the largest trees. The Ancient Forest Alliance is working for a science-based provincial plan to protect all of BC's endangered old-growth forests, and to ensure a sustainable second-growth forest industry. The protection of Echo Lake would be a vital step in the right direction.

Please speak up! Write a letter or email to your local Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), as well as Premier Christy Clark (premier@gov.bc.ca) and Forests Minister Steve Thomson (steve.thomson.mla@leg.bc.ca) at the Legislative Buildings, Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4. Ask them to protect ALL of the forests around Echo Lake – for the eagles, wildlife, drinking watershed, scenery, tourism, and because lowland old-growth forests are now extremely scarce in the Lower Mainland.

**Ken Wu, Executive director, Ancient Forest Alliance**

**Photos of Echo Lake by TJ Watt,**
**Ancient Forest Alliance**

**Find out more by visiting:**
www.ProtectEchoLake.com
and www.AncientForestAlliance.org

# Meet Boomer

The Mountain Beaver (Aplodontiidae rufa), is described as the most primitive rodent in existence. This small furry mammal lives amongst the vegetative growth of the southern portion of B.C.'s Fraser Valley. Also known as Aplodontia (definition, red or reddish), its other pseudonyms include, "Boomer", "Ground Bear" and "Giant Mole". In Chinook terminology, its name is Sewellel beaver, or suwellel, meaning a cloak made from its pelt. In scientific terms, the initial part of this species' name refers to a characteristic of its cheek tooth.

Described in appearance as "overgrown hamsters, or tailless muskrats", the Mountain Beaver is not related to the common American Beaver. It gains its name from its subsistence requirement of gnawing bark, and chewing vegetation. It has small ears and eyes, and a very short, furred tail at the end of its 24 to 28cm rounded, densely furred grey, dark brown, or blonde body. Its large front feet include curved claws, required for digging, grasping, and climbing. Local scientist, Pontus Lindgren, noted that as the Mountain Beaver gnaws thin tree branches, it creates stubs, useful for climbing trees.

The Mountain Beaver prefers open-canopied, moist, forested areas, from sea level to south facing timberline locations, on shaded, riparian B.C. slopes. Water resources must be very nearby, critical to the Mountain Beaver's delicate kidney design. This small creature has also adapted to residential backyard garden foraging.

The Mountain Beaver, unlike other rodents, has specific, primitive bodily features, and in the distant past, was related to squirrels. As a subsurface oriented rodent, with sharp claws, it digs 12 to 16cm diameter-sized tunnels near the ground surface, into moist, dense soil with heavy vegetation. This solitary-living creature establishes a well-developed, oval-shaped burrow above the water table, 1 to 2.7m underground, extending outwards to 10 exits from the nest area, with specific chambers dedicated to feeding, food storage, and latrine purposes. Any abandoned burrows later offer homes for other small animals and amphibians.

Summer foraging, which usually takes place at night, includes sword ferns, deciduous plant bark, and leaves. Winter food consists of needles, buds, evergreen twigs, dried grasses and ferns, which are stored within its burrow, where the Mountain Beaver remains active, but does not hibernate.

In early February, courtship rituals and breeding begins. Following a month's gestation period, from late February through to late April or early May, 2 to 3 pups are born. Weaned at approximately 2 months old, the youngsters remain active for the remainder of the year, leaving their den during late summer to live independently.

With a lifespan of at least 5 to 6 years, this small creature is prey to bobcats, coyotes, cougars, golden eagles, owls, and unsupervised pets. Adult and juvenile distribution rates are limited to less than 1km, a critical factor in areas of Mountain Beaver decline. Additional threats include building developments, forestry, and roadways, each one causing Mountain Beaver and other animal casualties, threatening habitat areas and wildlife corridors, and causing population fragmentation. Clearcutting, other connected silvaculture practices, agricultural activities, developments, and climate change, also cause severe disturbances of the soil layer, excessively damaging to this animal, resulting in mortalities and restricted recolonization opportunities.

Protected by the B.C. Wildlife Act, that prohibits killing or poisoning any native terrestrial mammal without a permit, three quarters of the world's estimated 10,000 to

20,000 Mountain Beavers, live outside the 7 protected areas in B.C. Despite rescue attempts, heroic efforts to help the Mountain Beaver are hampered due to its low distribution rates, and the unacceptable habitat existing between the Canadian and American border.

In May 2012, COSEWIC, (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada), designated the Mountain Beaver as being of Special Concern, a status also listed by SARA, (Species at Risk Act). While the government admits that "current inventory and population information is inadequate", specifically for the rapid developing Sumas/Chilliwack regions, they are "high priorities" for that critical information! Also specified is a need for permanent buffers protecting Mountain Beaver burrows, and native environments around critical water sources and development sites.

Further recommendations insist that Mountain Beavers be included as Identified Wildlife in B.C. under the Forest and Range Practices Act, with suggestions for strict forestry management, installation of wildlife underpasses or culverts to allow habitat rejoining, and public education and outreach, geared towards efforts to reduce dangers from feral and free-ranging domestic pets.

As concerned citizens, we can restrain our pets from harassing the Mountain Beaver within our properties and in other outdoor spaces, welcome them if we discover they are residing in our yards, and encourage local authorities to conserve Mountain Beaver habitats.

**Val Pack, Mission**

**Boomer in burrow by Carrielynn Victor**
**Photo courtesy South Coast Conservation Program**

**Mountain Beaver photos,**
**Bruce Klassen & Doug Ransome**

**Many thanks to Gerry Powers,**
**Barn owl recovery,**

**www.burrowingowlbc.org**

# STREAM, trading water for gravel

It is fall. The wheel of life turns another season. The rains will come soon. This coastal rainforest in which we live will teem with water. The same water that the dinosaurs drank, that has been recycling on this planet for over 4.6 billion years. Water - it's in our blood.

My Finnish upbringing on the water's edge in Ontario gave me a great reverence for nature and water, life's fundamental building block. I came to the healing waters of Lake Errock in 1993. My youngest son Joseph grew up there and this article is dedicated to his memory. When he was small, we would trek the bush, scaling cliffs and fording streams, the shore red with spawning salmon, and the sky black with eagles.

But that magical concentration of fish and birds has diminished over the last 20 years. When I came to live in Lake Errock, the "gravel pit" was a small Mom & Pop sand lot on the side of the road. Since then it has been purchased by corporate interests, first Steelhead in the mid 1990's, and now Ekset Contracting. It has expanded to loom over the lake, a full scale industrial wasteland. The mine at Lake Errock has created environmental degradation; air pollution, including silica dust exposure, noise pollution, salmon and eagle habitat destruction, soil erosion, decreased water quality, and the risk of contamination of the watershed. The mine has severely diminished the quality of life for all.

Lake Errock is part of the watershed at the confluence of the Harrison and Fraser Rivers. This place is part of the internationally designated Harrison Salmon Stronghold, yet destruction of salmon spawning areas is assured if gravel expansion is allowed to proceed. The issues for Lake Errock are the same as for Sumas Mountain in Abbotsford, Shaw Street in Mission, and many other communities across BC, and across the globe.

As with many other citizens, I have written letters, attended meetings, spoken with officials, sent out press releases, organized rallies, and sang protest songs, but have found that valid, science-based community concerns and input are ignored or belittled. All levels of government appear to have no regard for the citizens of this community or the environment. The current gravel operations serve only corporate interests, and we continue to suffer the consequences environmentally, socially, economically, and with our own health and disrupted lives.

The issuance of a Temporary Use Permit to Ekset Contracting by the Fraser Valley Regional District, on March

22, 2016, World Water Day no less, allows for massive expansion of gravel mining, including crushing, in this rural and environmentally sensitive area. It was no surprise that in a news release May 3, 2016, the Auditor General of British Columbia Carol Bellringer had this to say when she released her report, *An Audit of Compliance and Enforcement of the Mining Sector*,

"Almost all of our expectations for a robust compliance and enforcement program were not met. The compliance and enforcement activities of both the Ministry of Energy and Mines, and the Ministry of Environment are not set up to protect the province from environmental risks."

http://www.bcauditor.com/pubs/2016/audit-compliance-and-enforcement-mining-sector

*Stream* is my response. It is a protest and examination through visual art, music and video, of our relationship with water and human industrial level interference with water, especially how gravel mining degrades and destroys the environment for plants, animals and humans.

The works consist of photographic portraits of life forms on silk, a digital painting of the pit at Lake Errock entitled "Skinned" and a video installation entitled "Streaming".

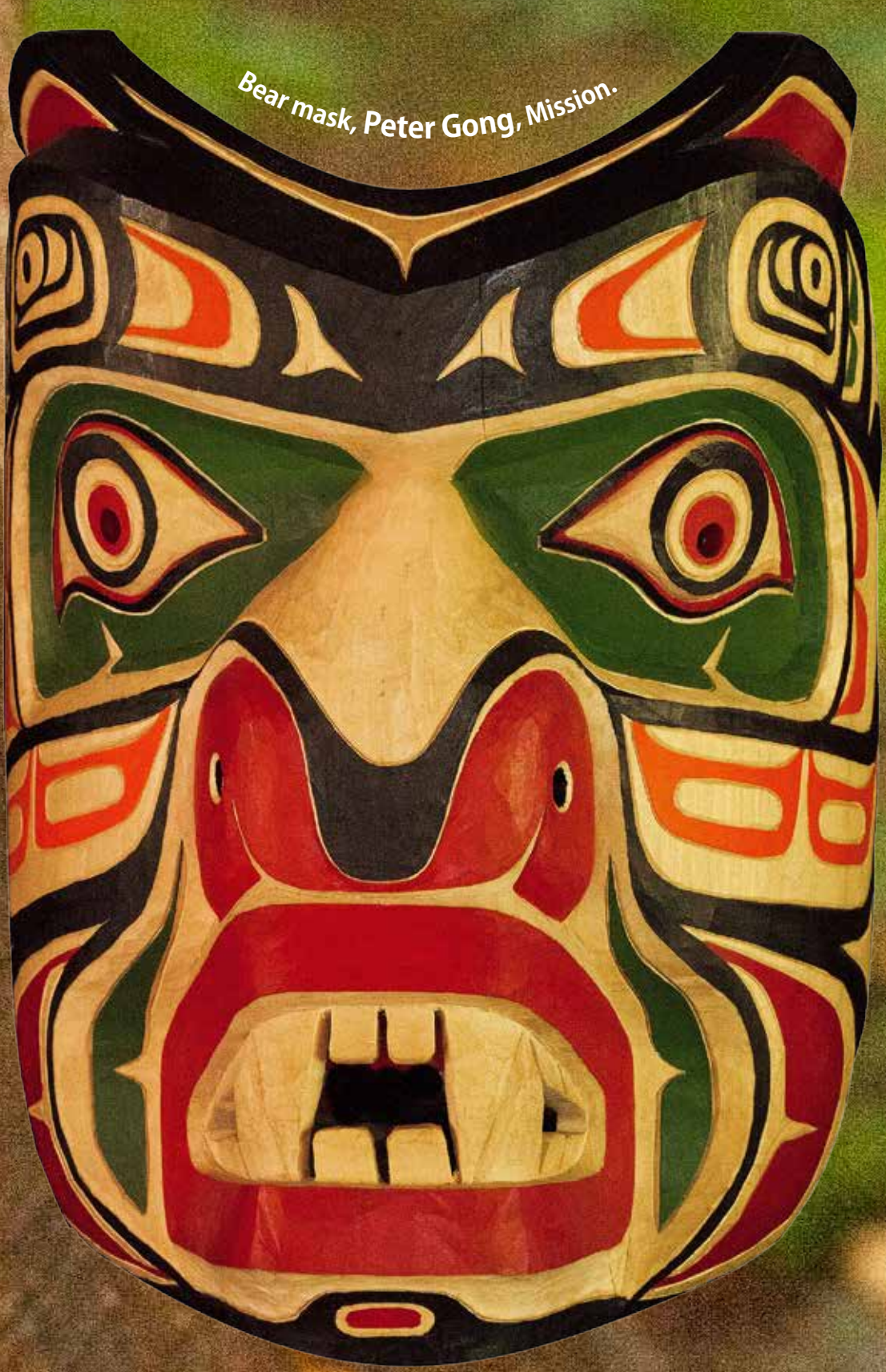
*Streaming* is informed by my experiences in Lake Errock, regarding the devastating effects of gravel extraction practises and permits, that are streaming from the BC Mines Act. The video is underscored by *WaterBody*, my musical meditation on water, a version of which is also a public art performance piece co-created with local community members and Watershed Watch Salmon Society in 2015, with the support of a City of Maple Ridge Community Art Grant.

Through these artworks I hope to bring people to "their senses" – a reminder of the essence of water, the flow within and without us, which gives life.

**Kat Wahamaa, Lake Errock.**

**For more information, visit www.katwahamaa.ca**

**Selected artwork from Stream, by Kat Wahamaa**



Bear mask, Peter Gong, Mission.

THE FOOTPRINT PRESS

The Footprint Press is published by the Citizens Against Urban Sprawl Society (CAUSS), as a non-profit community magazine. Articles, artwork and photography, are submitted by local activists, scientists, First Nations, and other dedicated people, wishing to share their vision of a more just and informed society, and who seek to live harmoniously with nature in a shared environment. Circulation is 2000+. The paper can also be viewed on-line in colour at FootprintPress.ca or contact us at b.causs@gmail.com or 604 820-7592. Donations to help cover our printing costs are appreciated but not solicited. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the publishers as a whole or individually.

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