



# The New NIPR Newsletter

Volume I | Issue 3 | December 2022 | North Island-Powell River Greens

## *We Are Here!*

Your North Island-Powell River Greens are excited to reconnect with the people who make us so strong and resilient – you!

We need connection. We need cooperation. *We need Community.*

We hope that, in these pages, you find stories that challenge, motivate, and inspire. And we want you to know that we are here, we are working, and we are listening.

We acknowledge that we are based on stolen land on the traditional, ancestral territories of many different First Nations, including the We Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum, Homalco, K’ómoks, Tla’amin, Kwakuitl, and Gwa’sala’Nakwaxda’xw Namgis.

~ Carol, Edward, Jay, Jessica, Larry, Linda, Mark, & Susan

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## ***Elizabeth May Wins Green Party of Canada Leadership***

OTTAWA - Elizabeth May is the new leader of the Green Party of Canada. She won the nomination against 5 other candidates. Anna Keenan came in second and Jonathan Pedneault finished third. In total, 6 people participated in the Party's leadership race. Interim Leader Amita made the announcement during the evening at a live event in Ottawa.

“It is a tremendous honour to be elected Leader of the Green Party of Canada. I pledge to work tirelessly to rebuild the Party and earn the trust of Canadians who seek integrity in politics.”

“Huge congratulations to Elizabeth May! If accepted by the party membership, she will form a duo with Jonathan Pedneault to lead the party at this crucial time,” said Amita Kuttner. We had a great race with an outstanding group of candidates. We are immensely grateful to each of them, and their campaign teams, for all the work they have done throughout this race.

We are confident that Elizabeth May's victory marks the beginning of a new era for the Green Party of Canada. We have two outstanding MPs in Parliament and we are optimistic that Jonathan Pedneault will soon join them. The next few months will be critical to the future of our party and it is with great confidence and hope that we will get to work on the next steps.

November 19, 2022

(Green Party of Canada Media Release)



## **Supporting Each Other & Our Community**

The photograph at the top of this issue of our newsletter shows how NIPR Greens support each other and our community. Jessica Wegg (far left, somewhere under the lipstick and fake eyelashes) was in the cast of a local production of *The Rocky Horror Show*. Your North Island-Powell River Greens were proud sponsors of the production and attended a performance to show their support in person. From left to right, after Jess: Linda, Jay, Doug, Mark, and Carol.

If you have a community event and would like support from NIPR, please send us an email telling us about it!

## ***After the Mill Coalition Formed***

When Paper Excellence announced the indefinite closure of its paper mill in Powell River a number of local citizens became quite concerned about the fallout from the closure. The mill has been a major part of the local economy for over 100 years and the most obvious issue is the economic impact – the mill apparently represents about 17% of the City tax base. There are however additional issues and they wanted to make sure that there is attention to all of them. A coalition of local organizations\* was formed and after much discussion this group distilled the concerns in to three main objectives. These objectives are spelled out in a mandate document and summarized in a brochure that has been created to introduce the initiative. The brochure can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

At a high level, the coalition seeks to address site remediation, appropriate benefits to the community from the hydroelectric power capability and support of the Tla'amin Nation in the restoration of the historic Powell River salmon run.

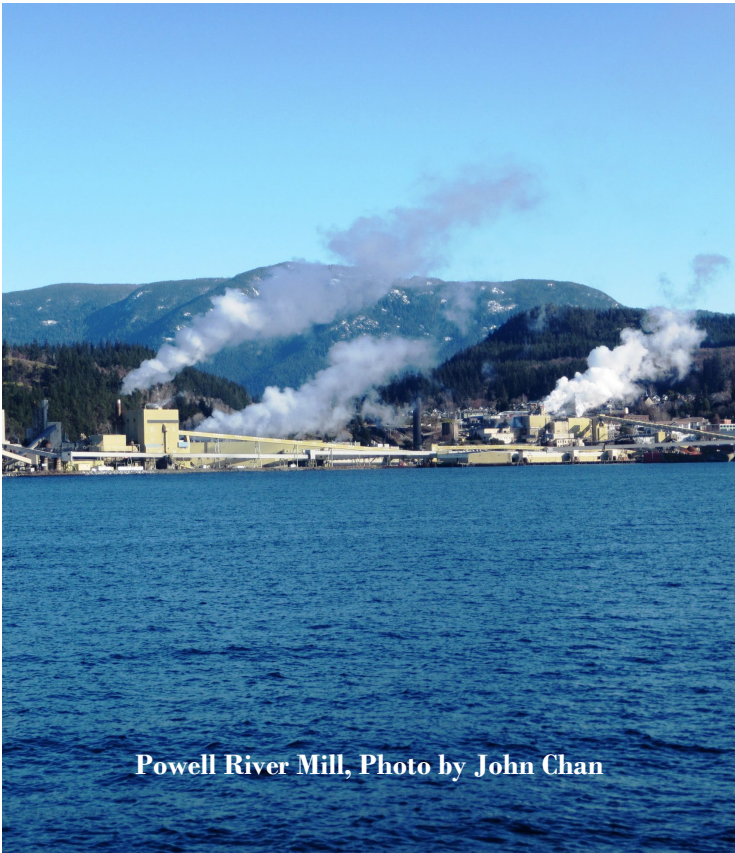
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## ***After the Mill Coalition Formed (cont'd)***

Coalition members currently include the local chapter of the Council of Canadians, the Westview, Townsite and Wildwood Ratepayers' Societies, qathet Climate Alliance and Energy Democracy for British Columbia (ED4BC). Work is under way to establish a coalition website and contact points. In the meantime, if you are a member of a group that would potentially sign on with the coalition's mandate, please feel free to contact one of the current member organizations. You can also reach out to the executive of the NIPR Greens EDA and we will gladly get you in touch with the right people.

*\*The After the Mill Coalition seeks to be a non-partisan group representing all qathet residents. The NIPR EDA is therefore not a member organization. We are however in agreement with the Coalition mandate and will work to support the Coalition objectives.*

(Submitted by Larry McCumsey)



**Powell River Mill, Photo by John Chan**

## **We're Recruiting!**

*Are you looking to make a difference in your community and beyond? Would you like to work toward positive outcomes with other volunteers?*

### **BECOME A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NORTH ISLAND-POWELL RIVER (NIPR) FEDERAL GREEN PARTY ELECTORAL DISTRICT ASSOCIATION (EDA)**

The Board is comprised of volunteers who provide a governance function, set strategic direction and participate in fundraising and social activities.

**About:** The NIPR EDA is sanctioned by Elections Canada to facilitate party and community building activities. We build volunteer teams for events, raise funds and support the Green candidate campaigning in the election, and support our local communities.

**Green values:** The Global Green values are foundational in everything we do: ecological wisdom, non-violence, participatory democracy, respect for diversity, social justice and sustainability.

\* \* \* \* \*

If you would like more information about the work of the Board, or you are wanting to speak to a Board member, please send an email with your contact information to [northislandgreens@gmail.com](mailto:northislandgreens@gmail.com) and we will get back to you!



(Literal tree-hugging encouraged, but not required.)

## **George Quocksister, Wild Salmon Champion**

I first met George Quocksister, Jr., Hereditary Chief Gigame of the Laichkwiltach Nation, in 2019 while campaigning as the Green Party of Canada candidate for the North Island-Powell River riding. Along with Jody Wilson-Raybould's famous father, Bill Wilson, Hereditary Chief Hemas Kla-Lee-Lee Kla of the Musgamagw Nation, George had invited me to accompany him onboard his cousin's fishboat to inspect current operations on some of the salmon farms in his traditional territorial waters in the Discovery Islands. As a federal candidate, he wanted me to see first-hand what's been going on with these farms, and how damaging they are to our wild salmon.

It was an eye-opening and unforgettable experience. As a biologist with considerable fish experience, I considered myself pretty well informed. But not only was this tour with George a crash-course in the truly destructive impacts of these farms, but also a privileged opportunity to glimpse this through the eyes and cultures of these two powerful men.

For at least three decades George has been working tirelessly to document and report the truth about fish farms' incredible devastation. He's been a true warrior, working to defend traditional Indigenous cultural practices and rights to the ocean, all the while watching his beloved salmon slowly dwindle year by year. Virtually every moment of his life has been dedicated to compiling and revealing what he has found. He has spent countless hours monitoring dozens of farms day and night, and conducted two research and reconnaissance forays with the Sea Shepherd Society aboard the Martin Sheen, their beautiful flagship research vessel. He's worked closely with Alexandra Morton and other scientists, and toured David Suzuki through the farmed waters to show him what's really been happening.

The result of all this work is an amazing photo and video record chronicling the diseases, sea lice, illegal pit lamping, grotesque farm fish die-offs, and the mountains of debris and detritus around these farms turning the sea floor into a desert. He has evidence of farmed fish illegally consuming huge numbers of baby salmon and other fish attracted into the pens by powerful night lights, probably intentionally. He has documentation showing the illegal pumping into the ocean of blood and the ground up remains of diseased salmon.

And his grisly photos of the ghostly deformed and diseased bodies of many of the salmon in these farms are truly alarming and hard to look at. Though likely unfit and dangerous for human consumption, some of these fish are known to have made it into supermarkets for sale to an unsuspecting public.

All George's work and his uncountable pleas to government officials, DFO, politicians – anyone he could corner – have fallen on deaf ears. He's been ignored and even shunned by politicians and regulators. I witnessed this first hand at a meeting last October in Campbell River between fisheries minister Joyce Murray, DFO officials and various salmon farm "stakeholders" to discuss ways to move the industry away from ocean-based open-net farms to some other form of farm, yet without actually removing them from the ocean by 2025 as mandated by Justin Trudeau to his fisheries minister in 2019, and again in 2021.

Though George is probably one of the most informed experts on actual on-the-ground effects of these farms, and though the meeting was held in his traditional territory and mostly over farms in his traditional waters, he was not invited. Chiefs from several other nations, both elected and hereditary, who have been far less outspoken and have much less actual firsthand experience with the farms, were invited. This was both a huge disappointment and a tremendous insult to George, who has given his life to this issue. Eventually George was able to find a way into that meeting and sit at the discussion table, but he reported that even then time and again when it came round the table for him to speak others drowned him out or ignored him.

George let his frustration at these insults be known far and wide, and finally in mid-November Minister Murray instructed her senior DFO Aquaculture Management Coordinator for the Pacific to travel to Campbell River and give George a proper hearing. George invited me to be there as a supporter and a witness to the proceedings. A small group of us met in George's living room (a first for everyone), and for two hours George was able to speak freely and show a great deal of the evidence he's compiled. I believe it was the first time for George that a senior government official remained respectfully quiet, took notes and just listened, only occasionally interjecting with an intelligent, pertinent and genuine question.

As we debriefed in his living room after the meeting, George's body language showed visible relief and gratitude for having finally been heard. We wondered what if anything might come of the meeting, but for an important hereditary chief who has dedicated so much to protecting our wild salmon to finally be acknowledged and listened to was hugely significant.

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**George Quocksister,  
Wild Salmon Champion (cont'd)**

George knows this battle is far from over, as the powerful corporate and economic forces behind the global fish farm industry continue to exert their influence over our politicians, our bureaucrats, and even our scientists. But there is continuing and growing hope that the decades of effort are slowly yielding results, as Canadians increasingly awaken to the dark side of farmed salmon, and especially as First Nations grow in their power to reclaim their cultures, territories and resources.

Personally, I am so grateful to George and have immense admiration for his steadfast persistence in working for his salmon brothers. We all know how vital these fish are to our entire coastal marine ecosystem. Their majestic silver bodies are a wonder of perfection and power. We've all marvelled at the fabulously delicious and nutritious food they provide us. And increasingly we settlers are understanding the fundamental importance they play in the culture of coastal First Nations, and therefore in their very survival as peoples. Salmon are life, in very literal terms. There is no way these amazing creatures must ever

be replaced by an introduced, modified, highly diseased cousin that has no place in our waters.

Meanwhile, DFO aquaculture bureaucrats continue to find creative ways to reinterpret Trudeau's mandate letter to his Minister to remove these farms from the ocean, moving the goal posts towards an outcome that will keep open net-pens in the ocean through 2025 and beyond. I refer you to an excellent description of DFO's deceitful practices by Stan Proboszcz, Senior Scientist with the Watershed Watch Salmon Society in his article "DFO-So-Sneaky". It's in the current December 2022/January 2023 issue of the [Watershed Sentinel](#).

May we all continue to be educated on the truth about salmon and these farms. May we let our concerns be deeply felt by our MPs, our Fisheries Minister, and the Prime Minister. Keep writing those letters. Keep signing petitions. Attend rallies. And if you have the chance, extend your gratitude to George and those other salmon warriors who stand with him.

Gilakas'la.

*(Submitted by Mark de Bruijn)*



Chief George Quocksister, Jr. with supporters at a rally for wild fish, Campbell River, BC October 12, 2022

## Clearcutting of Old Growth Forests in the Comox Valley Continues

In October of this year we highlighted our concern about clear-cutting of the original / old growth forest adjacent to the Mount Washington Parkway at Ramparts Creek / Browns River area with a [Letter to the Editor](#) in the COMOX VALLEY RECORD. Mosaic Forest Management is doing the clearcutting and is the forestry arm of Timberwest who actually owns the land. Mosaic has shown itself adept at side stepping issues of biodiversity and sustainability of forests / watersheds by indicating its participation in the industry led Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI). Ecojustice and eight environmental groups have just filed a complaint with Competition Bureau requesting it conduct an inquiry into false and misleading ‘sustainability’ claims made by the SFI about its sustainable forest certification scheme. Devon Page, executive director, Ecojustice said: “The Sustainable Forestry Initiative’s standard is a greenwashed certification that misleads consumers and fails to protect forests and the environment. This deception needs to stop immediately.”

We cannot wait, we must stop this old growth logging NOW. Timberwest was bought in 2011 by provincial pension plans managed by BC Investment Management Corporation (BCi) (teachers, ICBC, BC Hydro, provincial employees) and federal pension plans managed by Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSP) (civil servants, RCMP, military) for just over \$1 billion. This is only a very small proportion of their more than \$350 billion invested.

These pension plans can afford to take a slightly lower return on this investment to ensure the continued existence of these old growth forests and their associated species. If you are a retired or ongoing member of any of these groups or a concerned citizen we need to write BCi and PSP in a huge ground swell indicating that this logging of the original / old growth forests adjacent to Ramparts Creek / Browns River is totally unacceptable in this time of a dual Climate and Biodiversity Crisis. If we care about the type of world we are leaving for our children and their grandchildren we must act now!

(Submitted by Jay Van Oostdam)

CLICK ON THE VIDEO BELOW.



If you want to hear more about how you can participate, please contact the Save Our Forests Team – Comox Valley (SOFT-CV) at [saveourforeststeamcomoxvalley@gmail.com](mailto:saveourforeststeamcomoxvalley@gmail.com).

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

General Inquiries or Comments and Newsletter Submissions: [northislandgreens@gmail.com](mailto:northislandgreens@gmail.com)

Volunteer Opportunities and Volunteering: [northislandgreens@greenparty.ca](mailto:northislandgreens@greenparty.ca)

Donation Questions: [susaneshort20@gmail.com](mailto:susaneshort20@gmail.com)

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