



PEOPLE | PATHWAYS | PLACES

Root to Rise

Sitka Foundation | 2024 Impact Report





CONTENTS

- 4 Message from the Executive Director
- 5 Message from the Co-Founder and Vice President
- 6 Sitka's Funding Framework
- 9 Place
- 13 Pathways
- 17 People
- 20 Deeper Dives
- 22 Investments
- 23 Grant Partnerships



WELCOME

At the Sitka Foundation, we support biodiversity and nature by investing in good ideas. Since our founding, we have distributed grants to hundreds of charitable organizations.

Through these contributions and a largely missiondriven portfolio, our dedicated four-person team honours the magnificence of life and the interconnectedness of all things.

The profiles within this report reflect those convictions. May they provide you with an antidote to the loss and hardship affecting our world and leave you with a sense of hope for the future.

Our People

Team

Carolynn Beaty
Executive Director

Lauren Storer Director of Operations

Ross Jameson Program Officer

Travis Inlow
Director of Investments

Board of Directors

Ross Beaty

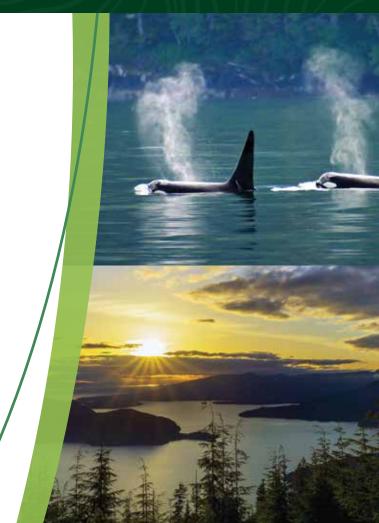
Co-Founder and President

Trisha Beaty

Co-Founder and Vice President

Dr. Sarah (Sally) Otto

Nancy Baron





Message from the **Executive Director**

Our communities are under threat. Declining biodiversity and rising global temperatures leave the species and ecosystems with which we share our planet vulnerable to the damaging, human-driven systems growing more and more out of control. Something has to change.

We believe that change is amplified by and underwritten through connection. Last year, on a windy day in early June, I felt this when Sitka hosted an in-person gathering with some of our partners to celebrate our 15th anniversary. We convened at the restoration site of the Squamish Spit and estuary, where we planted eelgrass seedlings, watched a salmon habitat be rewilded right in front of us as the tide came in, and celebrated at Totem Hall with good food and friends—local grant recipients, funder partners, and the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation. We laughed, walked together, stood in silence to marvel at the (loud) wind, and took replenishing breaths to fortify against the challenges to come. It was an important day of both pause and action.

Our granting circle is broad. In 2024, the Sitka Foundation team processed 103 philanthropic grants to seed ideas, protect places, uplift community plans, and highlight both hopeful and heartbreaking stories of nature, biodiversity, and climate solutions. While most of these grants were rooted in projects in British Columbia—this continent's most biodiverse area—we also supported other place-based conservation ideas and initiatives alongside remarkable funder partners and membership affiliates, including Environment Funders Canada, the Right Relations Collaborative, CREO Syndicate, the BC Water Funders Collaborative, and The Circle on Philanthropy. At the heart of all of these efforts is the power of people: we believe that the people who partner with us in this ecosystem of activity are the heart that beats to drive change forward. Thank you for all you do.

This report is a small snapshot of the many people we are honoured to work alongside. We hope you find inspiration in this diverse and curated portfolio, which highlights true power: the power of storytelling; of highly innovative and place-based Indigenous-led conservation; of a special forest that envelops one of the most vital salmon rivers on Vancouver Island, now held by community trust for all to enjoy; of legal tools used by trusted partners to enhance conservation and sovereignty; and of natural climate strategies deployed close to home.

Throughout all of these narratives, we uplift the power of community decision-making. The enthusiasm and gratitude we feel for all of this valuable work echoes in the pages of this report. Thank you for taking the time to read this collection of stories and reflections so close to our hearts.

Carolynn Beaty Executive Director

Message from the

Co-Founder and Vice **President of the Board**

Sitka's current focus is on the biodiverse province of British Columbia; the solutions worked out locally have the potential to be extrapolated globally, bringing proven methods to mitigate biodiversity loss, climate change, and environmental stresses.

Sitka provides financial support to hundreds of groups with shared purposes and unique perspectives, tools, ideas, and pathways. Of course, those groups aren't just entities. They comprise tens of thousands of people who share our goals. People who understand that a healthy environment is a precursor to healthy human populations, healthy economies, and healthy future generations. And so, it is with a great unity of purpose that we carry out our work. This makes what we do incredibly rewarding, especially when we see positive results from the groups we support.

In the last year, news of impending changes in the global power structure and resultant threats to downplay climate change have rendered the work done by Sitka's partners and community even more important. Their dedication and momentum are a testament to the importance of solving the challenges facing nature and the environment. All of our partners feel like valued parts of the team, from the individuals on the ground through to regional and national NGOs, universities, Indigenous leaders, and governments at all levels; we are all essential cogs in the wheel to improve our environment and sustain healthy ecosystems.

Serving as the Sitka Foundation's vice president over the last 16 years has offered me the opportunity to watch Sitka grow in scope and impact. The forthcoming pages highlight our recent work across Canada. In 2024, we funded numerous Indigenous-led conservation initiatives, including the Great Bear Sea Project Finance for Permanence. Similar progress is seen in conservation finance tools developed in the Qikiqtani region in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. The Sitka team expanded impact investments and further aligned our investments with our mission. Our dedicated staff and board are privileged to have a catalytic role in these momentous accomplishments.

My personal gratitude to this team runs deep. We are focussed and effective; together with our Sitka collective of grantees and partners, we are creating a pathway to a brighter future. It is a personal honour to play a part in this growing movement to care for the environment and create a healthier future for us all.

Trisha Beaty Vice President 2025



We are often asked how we at Sitka measure impact. With a focus as fickle as it comes—on nature—how can a foundation with limited resources ensure they're moving the needle?

We respond: imperfectly, but with effort. The answer begins with a deep respect for what we cannot change and a keen eye for what we can—belief in changemakers. We invest in initiatives that might, over time, contribute to positive solutions in communities that support biodiversity. We invest in systems change and the power of people. And we understand that an action must be tailored to a place in order to take root.

Take wildfire, for instance. While we can't control climate-fuelled wildfires or the loss of biodiversity from those ravaging flames, we can direct resources to study their impacts, movements, and community-driven solutions. Sitka supports organizations exploring robust land-use decision processes and watershed restoration efforts so that, when fires do come, communities are prepared and ecosystems are resilient, perhaps due to early-season cultural burns, the protection of a wetland, or a well-structured firebreak. These solutions also look slightly different everywhere; this can be incredibly challenging to scale, but it's an essential ingredient to success and, thus, to impactful investments.



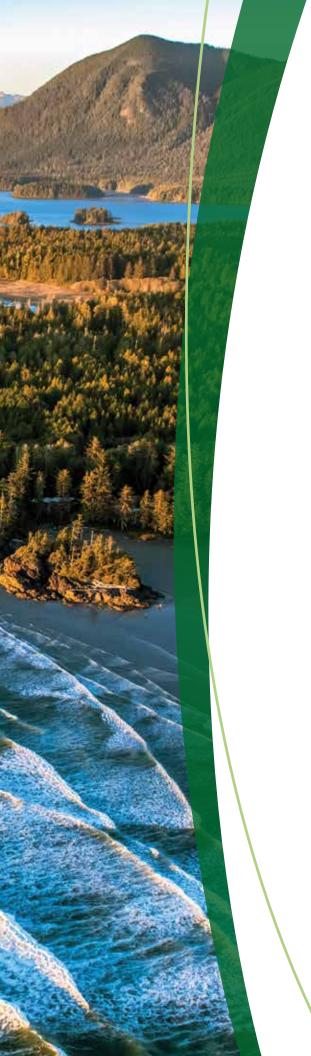
We grant in a relational and trust-based way, while maintaining a clear focus. Sitka's grantmaking will always be connected to the environment but is, for the sake of clarity, delivered in five-year cycles. The year 2024 marked a midpoint in our current strategic grantmaking program.

Early in 2024, we embarked on a monitoring exercise to ensure we were on track in our commitment to the people, places, and pathways that support nature. We heard from partners that we should stay the course, and so we have—while also increasing our disbursements year over year by about 30%. Although Canadian charities now grant more every year due to a significant change in the Income Tax Act, less than 1% of charitable dollars go to the environment, so scarcity still permeates our philanthropic sector.

This is why Sitka aims to help sustain nature and climate action across all our investments philanthropic and otherwise. And we are encouraging others to do this alongside us. In November, we were proud to participate in the Climate Champions Pledge, which will bring more capital (\$481 million so far, to be precise) into this underfunded and crucial space to help Canada deal with future wildfires of the physical and metaphysical variety.

Impact is crucial to track, but at Sitka, the fire that drives us is the honour of doing this work alongside kind, smart, and helpful people. The following pages feature just a few highlights from 2024's portfolio of philanthropic grants.





PLACE

Thriving biodiversity comes only from understanding the myriad pressures on the natural environment.

Sitka's robust Place-based granting stream assists in the creation of durable protection and community-based land use plans for key terrestrial and marine ecosystems throughout British Columbia and across Canada.

The partners in this granting program are fuelling countless projects being envisioned and currently underway to honour places and stand guard in a time of rising biodiversity and climate crises.



Comox Valley Land Trust

For over 25 years, the Comox Valley Land Trust has mounted successful strategies to promote, protect, conserve, and restore ecologically significant environments. More than 670 hectares of land and habitat are preserved today thanks to their efforts.



In recent years, with strong support from the K'omoks First Nation, the organization has pursued the purchase of a Timber Reservation on land owned by BC Hydro around the Puntledge River. This unique conservation endeavour secures important and varied coastal ecosystems rich in biodiversity and carbon sequestration. These lands are a beloved recreational area, and this community land trust has secured them by brokering an unusual but durable partnership.

Over 100 hectares are now guarded against the felling of any more trees, a success that protects the endangered, threatened, and rare plant and animal species that call it home, including the Northern Red-Legged Frog and the Little Brown Bat. Safe, too, are the endangered Chinook salmon that traverse the Puntledge River on their fall and summer runs, and the runs of Cutthroat trout and Coho, Pink, and Steelhead salmon

The Puntledge Forest is a unique 120-year-old second-growth forest that regenerated naturally. This latest conservation effort means the land will one day become an old-growth forest in its own right. Sitka was honoured to contribute to this initiative in 2024. We were especially moved by the elated response of the Comox Valley community, who can now rest assured that their recreational area and backyard ecosystems are forever protected from logging.

Kwiakah First Nation

Kwiakah is a small First Nation on the West Coast, but their land stewardship has an outsized positive impact on our planet. Biodiverse coastlines, mountain ranges, and coastal rainforests within the territory are cared for by dedicated Forest Keepers, who continually research, monitor, and restore land that was logged without permission in decades past.



To protect the elk, grizzly bear, Pacific salmon, and countless other species that call Kwiakah territory home, the Nation recently embarked on a project to repurpose a decommissioned fish farm into the Kwiakah Centre of Excellence for the Research of Regenerative Forestry and Seaweed Cultivation, which will house the Marine Guardian and Forest Keeper lab for cutting-edge soil carbon and kelp farming research. In June 2024, they announced the innovative conversion of 7,866 hectares of threatened and loggable forests into the Macinux Special Forest Management Area (SFMA). This permanent designation will uphold regenerative forestry, protecting against—and ending an era of— extractive logging practices.

The Nation also recently completed the business plan and legal preparation for the launch of their Regenerative Economic Engine, Kwaxala. The initiative will bring together experts and innovative practices and elevate Nation-owned businesses. Kwiakah First Nation continues to share their vision across communities through publications that uphold traditional storytelling practices. Sitka is proud to have been invited into these partnerships.







PATHWAYS

For lasting systems change, a resilient naturefirst toolkit is non-negotiable.

Collaboration between knowledge, data, and action is the only way to build successful, enduring programs that will protect Canada's biodiversity and mitigate climate change for generations to come. That's what Sitka invests in.

The Pathways granting program endorses this infrastructure—from the ideas, to the research, to the rollout of solutions. It is our goal to direct resources along the routes that will most effectively and efficiently enact shifts essential to our world, led by people with a deep understanding of the needs of their surrounding ecosystems and communities and knowledge of the lands, waters, and ancestors. Changemakers use this detailed map to reinforce or overhaul regulatory, legal, and policy systems, paving the way for environmental progress.



Raincoast Conservation **Foundation**

Raincoast Conservation Foundation has focussed their evidence-based lab and field research on BC's coastal land, waters, and wildlife since 1996. The long-lasting relationships that develop from their dedication to rigorous investigation, education, and outreach enable them to foster conservation outcomes on local and international scales.



A hundred years of industrial forestry, development, and urbanization in the Fraser River estuary have caused extensive damage and destruction to the critical salmon-bearing waterbody. Raincoast's research identifies changes that create tangible improvements for this essential salmon habitat. Community is at the core of their work—partnerships with First Nations such as the Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (also a recipient of Sitka funding) and other local conservation groups inform and augment their contributions, alongside restoration initiatives and public media campaigns.

Sitka has funded Raincoast's innovative approaches to conserving and restoring this highly developed and impacted region for many years. In the third year of the most recent grant, the organization's place and policy mindsets not only enhanced ecosystem regeneration and restoration but also offered data points to aid wild salmon and orca populations. Taking a "headwaters to deep waters" approach that addresses threats at every life stage, Raincoast's 2024 work deepened our understanding of the dangers facing wild salmon and the attainable solutions.

West Coast Environmental Law

A non-profit organization of lawyers, strategists, and communicators, West Coast Environmental Law (WCEL) has dedicated the past 50 years to working alongside Indigenous and Crown governments, local communities, and the private sector to enhance essential legal protections.



WCEL creates environmental, political, and social change through continued advocacy for strengthened environmental legal frameworks and recognition of Indigenous governance and stewardship. Sitka is a longtime supporter; we currently fund their marine conservation and RELAW (Revitalizing Indigenous Law for Land, Air, and Water) programs and back communities who work directly with WCEL to amplify their impact.

In 2024, the Marine team contributed influential insights and analyses to national policy and regulatory instruments, including the 2030 Nature Strategy, the Nature Accountability Act, and Canada's first Ocean Noise Strategy. WCEL's legal expertise is key to place-based Indigenous-led conservation initiatives. Their role with the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation's Salmon Parks and other Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) declarations and management planning—by the sməlqmix (Lower Similkameen), Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis (KHFN), Gitanyow, and Kitasoo Xai'xais—are just a few examples of this essential work.

In recent years, Canada has seen significant environmental policy advancements. Still, WCEL continues to campaign for stronger marine protected areas and Indigenous-led conservation mandates, providing tools for durable and healthy environments and communities.







PEOPLE

Skills, knowledge, and resources are crucial ingredients in the recipe that will protect our natural places and threatened species and allow them to thrive.

At Sitka, we frequently focus our funding on conservation capacity, strategically supporting changemakers whose work is on the front lines of mitigating our biodiversity crisis.

We stand behind these people. Highlighted here are just a few of the organizations leading these charges for change—bringing together governments, communities, and their own expertise to advance the strategies and practices we sorely need.

We distribute strategic resources that help amplify these projects, but this work is about so much more than money. The defenders in this wide-ranging community forge relationships that will fortify their collective efforts into the future.



Narwhal News Society

The Narwhal's award-winning team of investigative journalists is dedicated to telling the truth about Canada's role in climate change and the natural world as a whole. In the shadow of widespread media upheaval, thoughtful, inclusive journalism the kind grounded in respect, responsibility, and the public good—is more important now than ever.



In 2022, the Narwhal hired reporter Ainslie Cruickshank to cover British Columbia's biodiversity and write stories about the province's endangered species, extinction crisis, and unique natural landscape. In her storytelling, Cruickshank captures the complexity of diverse needs while creating space for the importance of a healthy environment.

Cruickshank's hard-hitting reports, on topics such as a copper mine expansion that side-stepped environmental assessment and the nearly 2,000 at-risk, yet unprotected, BC species, were well-received, with many reprinted in notable newspapers. Her research into the unreported coal spill in Burrard Inlet helped spur a provincial investigation. She also recounted uplifting narratives—the at-risk species making an unexpected comeback and the largest provincial park established in a decade.

Throughout her tenure, Cruickshank has deepened connections with Indigenous organizations and governments and been asked to discuss her stories at events across the province.

While Sitka supports a position for a Narwhal reporter specifically focussed on biodiversity, strong firewalls ensure editorial independence for this journalism outlet. We have a firm belief in and appreciation of local storytelling as a powerful way to celebrate communities and track change.

David Suzuki Foundation

For decades, the David Suzuki Foundation has been recognized as the most credible source of evidence-based research, advocacy, and policy analysis for the conservation and protection of our environment.

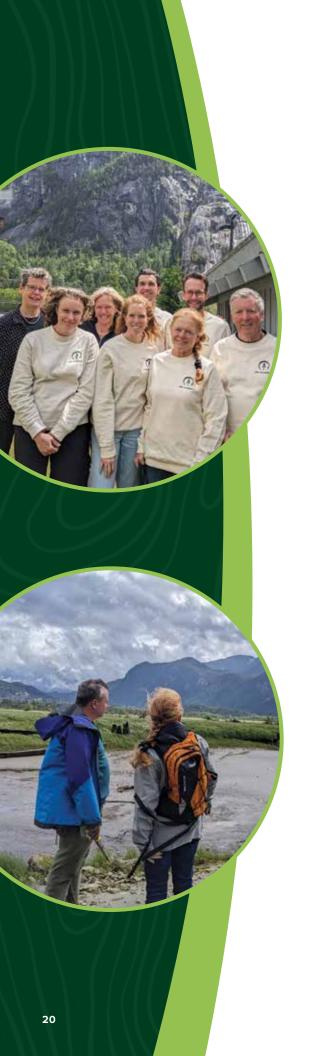
davidsuzuki.org

The David Suzuki Foundation recently focussed on developing nature-directed stewardship plans by centring Herb Hammond's economy-culture-ecosystem framework, which led to several significant place-based First Nations partnerships that uphold their visions for conservation restoration and sustainable use of lands and waters.

Together with the Squamish Nation, in 2024, the David Suzuki Foundation celebrated a successful eighth year of Camp Suzuki at Chá7elkwnech, a nature-based summer program that nurtures conservation leadership for all ages. They also lent their research expertise and expert recommendations to coastal BC conservation and restoration action plans such as the Pacific herring management policy. In recent years, the David Suzuki Foundation has partnered with other Sitka grant recipients to engage in legal actions highlighting threats to sea life, such as orca and Chinook salmon, that stem from human activities.

In 2023 and 2024, the David Suzuki Foundation supported the expansion of the Northern Shelf Bioregion Marine Protected Area, home to endangered whales, ancient coral, and economically vital fish and seabird species. The broad range of nature-based activities led by the David Suzuki Foundation speaks to the diversity of their team across the country. Sitka has been a proud, long-time enabler of this





DEEPER DIVES

Sitka's 15th Anniversary Celebration

On a blustery spring day in June 2024, our team celebrated transformative and regenerative work—and relationships—at the Squamish Spit, as well as Sitka's 15th anniversary, with climate action, cupcakes, and good cheer. More than 60 Sitka grant partners and funder—colleagues, as well as our board and staff, gathered on the soft estuarine grounds to seed hundreds of baby eelgrass into the loamy coastline. In this spot, a large manmade structure had, until recently, stopped water flow and impacted the success of juvenile salmon and other aquatic species.

Through a multi-stakeholder collaboration stretching back almost 10 years, this blockage was removed. This alliance was led by grant partners at the Squamish River Watershed Society and the Squamish Nation, as well as federal partners with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. On that stormy day, everyone could see the rewilding of the nearshore ecosystems—the work furthered natural climate solutions and restored homes to myriad species, right before our eyes. The fresh plantings helped solidify the sandy berm, a future habitat for crustaceans and a nursery and solace for small fish. It felt good to root plants in a restored habitat, to become rooted in place, and to be with each other.

The powerful wind at times drowned out voices, and people were left having more intimate conversations with their neighbours while packing fragile seedlings that would soon be covered by frigid ocean waves. Much laughter and a few tears lasted throughout the celebratory day, which continued in the beautiful Totem Hall. The guests were nourished not only by good food and fresh air, but by deep connections powerfully forged.

Great Bear Sea Project Finance for Permanence

In 2024, Sitka was honoured to help fund and witness a major milestone for the Great Bear Sea's Indigenous-led Marine Protected Area network—the largest and most robust initiative of its kind in the world. Through a Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) investment model, the network secured long-term conservation financing, managed by Coast Funds, to protect the Northern Shelf Bioregion.

Covering 10 million hectares of vital habitats like open ocean, kelp forests, coral beds, and deep fjords—an area the size of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick combined—the agreement activates \$335 million in public-private investments, expected to double over the next two decades. These new and enhanced ecosystem-based management measures are a meaningful step toward Canada's goal of protecting 30% of our country's lands and waters by 2030.

Stewards of these rich, cold waters of the western Pacific have championed this cause for decades. The successful PFP will support ongoing community-led economic development and diversification, as well as Indigenous Guardian programs and management.

This project does more than further conservation efforts; it also shows what is possible when First Nations and other levels of government maintain a deep respect for generations of wisdom in their commitment to the collaborative protection of our planet.



The inaugural round of the Sitka Messengers for Biodiversity Reporting Grants, led by the Science Media Centre of Canada, provided 10 talented reporters with up to \$15,000 each to write impactful stories that highlight British Columbia's sustainability achievements, shortcomings, complexities, and goals. Granted in late 2023 through a low-barrier, participatory grantmaking process, most of the final pieces were released to the world in 2024.

Sitka believes that accurate, evidence-based journalism unfettered by bias or oversight plays an enormous role in our ability as a society to understand and make decisions about our futures. The chosen journalists put their grants to incredible use, utilizing the money efficiently to further the research and production of stories that subsequently engaged the public on a vast range of issues.

Accounts of British Columbia's blueprint for decolonization, the damaging effects of ocean shipping noise, and First Nations' protection of old-growth forests—to name only a few—were disseminated by notable publications including Live Science, The Guardian, and Canadian Geographic. They are all available to read here.





INVESTMENTS

Impact in conventional financial markets is often viewed as secondary or concessionary. At Sitka, we do not see it in such a binary way, and we are trying to debunk the myth that supporting nature-helpful enterprises cannot be done without making concessions in return profiles. We believe it isn't enough to fund nature only through grants—the money that makes those contributions possible must also be managed within an investment portfolio that upholds our mission.

There is still work to do, but in 2024, that alignment continued to trend up, with over 50% of Sitka's investment capital being allocated to a portfolio of projects that uplift our goals and mission. Negative screens are but a first step. We pursue direct positive outcomes by investing in funds and companies that address the nature crisis through the creation of new partnerships, technologies, and services. We also seek to use new tools for a nature-resilient investment thesis by integrating capital across all asset classes.

Although our portfolio is conventional in some ways, we recognize the need for innovation in solving environmental challenges. Our investments catalyze businesses that are including nature more intentionally in their models, furthering our charitable purpose while driving action on the climate and nature crises. We are committed to the pursuit of direct investment opportunities, and 2024 saw the addition of four new companies to our investment portfolio—all of them pursuing climate-focussed strategies such as environmental impact software and wildfire management. In the coming years, we will continue to improve the integration between Sitka's left and right hands: an increasingly conscientious portfolio and the grant partners best assisted by the outcome of those investments.

2024 Grant Partnerships

Aga Khan Foundation Canada

American Friends of Canadian Conservation

Awi'nakola Foundation

BC Spaces for Nature Society

BC Water Legacy

BC Watersheds Collaborative

Birds Canada

Bowen Island Conservancy

Canadian Coastal Research Society

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (British Columbia)

Cedar Coast Field Station Society

Clean Energy Canada at SFU Centre for Dialogue

Coast Conservation Endowment Fund Foundation (Coast Funds)

Coastal Restoration Society

CodeBlue BC

Comox Valley Land Trust

Conservation North

EcoAnalytics Research Initiative

Ecojustice Canada Society

Ecotrust Canada

Environment Funders Canada

Environmental Law Centre, UVic

Federation of British Columbia Naturalists (BC Nature)

Forward Global

Future Ecologies Media

Georgia Strait Alliance

Gitanyow Huwilp Society

Gitxsan Laxyip Management Office

Great Bear Sea Project Finance for Permanence

Green Budget Coalition

Howe Sound/Atl'kat7sem Marine Stewardship Initiative

Hummingbird Collective

IISAAK OLAM Foundation

Indigenous Management Board

Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries,

Kootenay Connect

Kwiakah First Nation

Living Lakes Canada

Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance

MakeWay Foundation

Marine Life Sanctuaries Society of

British Columbia

Mayne Island Conservancy Society

Natural Assets Initiative

Nature Canada

Nature United

Neighbours United for Nature Society

Nexwagwez?an-Dasiqox Tribal Park

Initiative

Northern Confluence

Oceans Collaborative

Oceans North Conservation Society

Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship

Our Living Waters

Pacific Salmon Foundation

Panthera Canada

POLIS Project on Ecological Governance,

Qqs (Eyes) Project Society

Raincoast Conservation Foundation

Resilient Indigenous Leaders Network

Right Relations Collaborative

Salmon Coast Society

Salmon Parks Stewardship Society

Salmon Watersheds Lab, SFU

Salt Spring Institute for Sustainability

Education and Action

Sierra Club of British Columbia Foundation

Skeena Watershed Conservation

SkeenaWild Conservation Trust

Squamish Environmental Conservation

Society

Squamish River Watershed Society

Stein Nahatlatch IPCA Initiative

Stgeeye' Learning Society

Swiilawiid Sustainability Society

Taku River Tlingit First Nation

Terrestrial and Aquatic Conservation

Lab, SFU

The Circle on Philanthropy

The David Suzuki Foundation

The Dena Kayeh Institute

The Narwhal News Society

The Nature Conservancy of Canada

The Nature Trust of British Columbia

The Starfish Environmental Society

The Sustainability Institute of Canada

Thompson-Nicola Conservation

Collaborative

Watershed Watch Salmon Society

Watersheds BC

Wildlife Conservation Society Canada

West Coast Environmental Law Research

Foundation

West Kootenay Watershed Collaborative

Wildsiaht

Wilps Gwininitxw

Wilps 'Wii K'aax

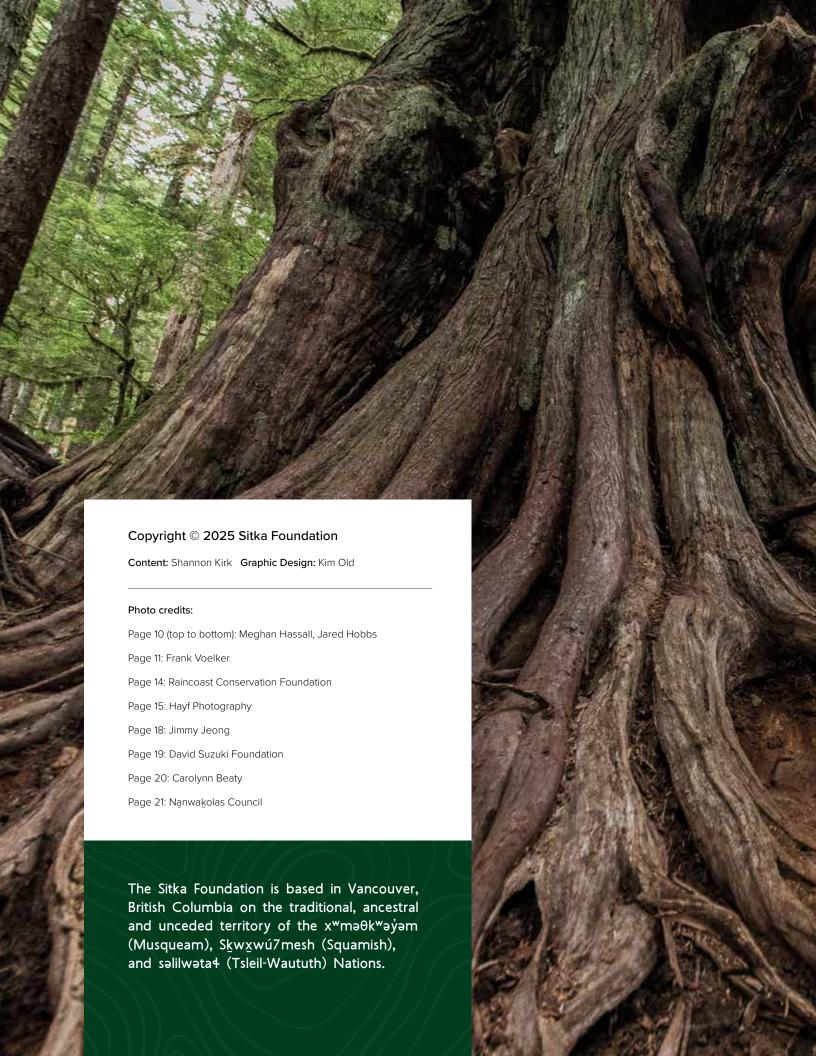
World Rivers Day

WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council

Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation

Initiative Foundation

Young Naturalists Club of British Columbia Society (Nature Kids)









sitkafoundation.org