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For most of our fifteen-year history, Living Oceans marine conservation work has been grounded in the North and Central Pacific Coast, the waters we call home. In 2013 we changed course and set our sights on playing a greater a role on the national stage.

We haven’t in any sense abandoned home waters—we understand that our strength has always come from being based in a small coastal community where local knowledge grounds our work in reality. We realize, though, that our highly specialized knowledge about the ocean can help communities that depend on a healthy ocean on Canada’s other coasts.

Our new national course was reflected by the winner of our 2013 Ocean Exposure’s Photo Contest which was taken in Repulse Bay, Nunavut. This is the fourth year we’ve run the contest which has given us a marvellous collection of marine photos from all three of Canada’s coasts, plus other countries with coastlines around the world.
Letter from the Executive Director

If the year 2012 is remembered as the worst on record for environmental protection in Canada, the year 2013 may be most memorable for the remarkable progress we chalked up in spite of it all.

Living Oceans had worked for a decade to bring the necessary players to the table to create marine spatial plans for the Pacific North Coast. In 2012, it appeared as if the federal government and the shipping sector had effectively halted the whole Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area (PNCIMA) planning process, because it looked likely to impact plans for oil tanker shipping through B.C.’s pristine North Coast. But by the end of 2013, we had not only achieved a high-level federal plan; we had also convinced the PNCIMA stakeholders to continue on planning, in a process created by a partnership of First Nations and the federal government (the Marine Planning Partnership, or MaPP). From the grassroots up, we helped draft plans plan that contain the ecosystem-based management principles we’ve always advocated.

Casting back again, it was at just the same time that then Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver was calling West Coast environmentalists terrorists and money-launderers that his colleague Peter Kent signed a cheque to Living Oceans for some $90,000, to enable us to carry out our first intensive marine debris removal project, taking lost and abandoned fishing gear, tsunami and other debris out of the intertidal zone, where it poses a threat to fish, mammals and birds. With the generous support of our donors and some help from BC Parks, we were able in 2013 to continue and expand that work to a network of north Vancouver Island beaches and rehabilitate some important habitat.

As the Fisheries department, armed with a whole new mandate, set about improving the prospects for salmon farmers, we worked to promote the entry of Kuterra salmon into the marketplace. This project of the ’Namgis First Nation is a state of the art closed containment operation and (foreshadowing next year’s report) we were very pleased to see our SeaChoice retail partner Safeway Canada agree to take all of its production!

Finally, of course, there is the dramatic reversal of Enbridge’s fortunes with the Northern Gateway proposal. Despite the enthusiastic support of the federal government in 2012 and a favourable ruling from the Joint Review Panel in 2013, the ultimate decision from Cabinet was so low-key as to signal a distancing that was not missed by any pundit, or the company itself. We played, and continue to play, a leading role in the courts, the media and in public, working to ensure that this pipeline and tanker project never sees the light of day.

None of these gains would have been possible, but for the unprecedented collaboration among First Nations, environmental groups, unions and other civil society groups. As one commentator recently observed on the subject of Canadians flexing their democratic muscle, the horse has left the barn and it’s going to be very difficult for this or any other government to corral it again.

Sincerely,

Karen Wristen
Letter from the Chair

One of the perks of serving as the Chair of the Board of Directors of an ambitious organization is the front row seat I have to hearing about the innovative approaches the dedicated campaigners come up with for grappling with issues that are complex and global in scope, yet demand national and local action.

In 2013 Living Oceans held a retreat in Sointula to review and update its long term strategic plan. Self evaluation is seldom an easy task, and it was clear to everyone that the ultimate goal of our campaigns—to see ecosystem-based management implemented in the ocean—remains as urgent as it remains incomplete. Our path to that goal was confirmed and elaborated: in order to create such fundamental change in management, we need to increase our influence.

How does a group based in a tiny fishing village on an island remote from centres of power effect change? It needs a large and informed base of supporters to help carry the call for change; it needs partnerships with academia and other civil society groups; and it needs capacity to cultivate these new relationships to mutual advantage. For Living Oceans, that means reaching out throughout the country and becoming a truly national organization.

I am encouraged by the progress Living Oceans has made in building relationships with First Nations that strengthen our campaigns aimed at expanding closed containment aquaculture, enhancing the marine planning process and standing in solidarity against tar sands pipeline and tanker projects. We signed the Solidarity Accord against the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline with First Nations in British Columbia and Alberta, and Unifor, Canada’s largest private sector labour union. Other signatories included the BC Teachers’ Federation, the BC Wilderness Tourism Association and the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. These ties will amplify our voice as we move towards a reckoning with the federal government’s current, ruinous energy policy.

Our Mapping and Analysis team has also broken new ground with academic partnerships that will bring our experience on the West Coast to an analysis of the sustainability of all of Canada’s fisheries. It is a tribute to the organization’s commitment to science and to working collaboratively that we have become the data custodians for the British Columbia Marine Conservation Atlas, a comprehensive collection of marine data that offers unprecedented tools for analysis and decision-making. I look forward to seeing the team extend that work to all of Canada!

This growth is something to be proud of and I would like to extend my thanks to all the staff as well as the people, businesses and foundations that have provided us with the support that has made this possible.

Sincerely,

Astrid Scholz

Astrid Scholz
In 2002, the northern half of Canada’s Pacific coast was identified under the Oceans Act as an important area for ocean planning. The 102,000 km² area was dubbed the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area (PNCIMA), as was the tripartite federal, provincial and First Nations marine planning process for the region. There was little in the way of follow through, however, until Living Oceans campaigners got the moribund process rolling in 2007.

For several years Living Oceans championed PNCIMA, building popular support for what promised to be the best chance to protect the region’s waters and create the conditions for people to speak their minds about how the ocean and its resources should be used. Progress was being made until 2011 when the federal government withdrew from PNCIMA after the shipping sector and Big Oil convinced the Prime Minister’s office that the process could be an obstacle to the passage of oil tankers from the Northern Gateway pipeline’s proposed Pacific terminus. However, the relationships our Marine Planning team forged over the years with the many stakeholders and sectors endured.
We’re making ecosystem-based management a reality

From the best pieces of PNCIMA arose the Marine Planning Partnership for the North Pacific Coast, or MaPP for short. Our Marine Planning team now works with the Province of British Columbia and 18 First Nations governments to develop a more thorough and detailed marine planning process that will ensure even more extensive local planning and stakeholder engagement.

Throughout 2013 we represented the conservation community in MaPP advisory committees with ocean-based industries and regional district governments where we ensured that ecosystem-based management (EBM) is built into MaPP’s plan. EBM should manage human impacts within thresholds that conserve the integrity of ocean ecosystems. In turn, the ecosystems will fortify nature’s ability to protect our cities from storm damage; provide food security and recreational opportunities; and maintain resilience to climate change—all for free.

Living Oceans continued to fight against destructive fishing practices within the proposed Hecate Strait Glass Sponge Reef Marine Protected Area and for protection for the foraging habitats of endangered seabirds in the waters surrounding the Scott Islands nesting colonies.

We worked with First Nations to identify areas that could be safeguarded for future generations through Indigenous Peoples and Community Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCAs). This represents a new approach to marine planning available to First Nations that want to protect territories of biological and cultural significance.
Living Oceans Society is at the forefront of mapping Canada’s Pacific coast. We are known internationally for our planning tools and analysis work which can be applied virtually anywhere to assist coastal communities planning to benefit from the ocean’s rich diversity.

Our mapping and analysis team does more than make maps. We showcased our research with two presentations at an international CoastGIS conference in 2013. Presentations focused on the distinct lack of MPAs on the Pacific Coast that prohibit commercial fisheries, and our GIS (Geographic Information Systems) work to support the development of a frozen footprint for the B.C. groundfish trawl fishery, which has to-date contributed to significant reductions in coral and sponge bycatch.

While we research and develop the science-based messages behind our campaigns, we are also often asked to participate in ‘peer review’ of DFO’s science. In 2013 we provided input on the risk to deep sea sponges from sediment kicked up by fishing gear contact with the sea bottom, development of a classification system to ‘measure’ what habitats and species need more protection through MPAs, and a computer model to evaluate alternative designs for shellfish fishery closures.

Our GIS team brings to life issues like the dangers of marine debris, the frequency of vessel incidents, and the impacts of salmon farming, by mapping the places and creatures we’re working to protect.
In 2013 we wrapped up the British Columbia Marine Conservation Analysis (BCMCA) project for now, but only after ensuring the pages of the Marine Atlas of Pacific Canada and the data will continue to be delivered through the BCMCA website. We also helped to create and activate a site where you can overlay and interact with all the BCMCA datasets to assemble your own maps.

We took advantage of our membership in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature to spread the word in Ottawa and internationally about Canada’s Pacific ‘paper parks’ where commercial fishing still takes place. We also publicized Canada’s lack of progress in meeting the Convention on Biological Diversity Aichi Target of 10 percent of our oceans in MPAs by 2020. Currently, **only one percent** of Canada’s oceans and Great Lakes are protected in federally designated MPAs.

Our interactive *Keep It Clean* map served as a visual petition to let politicians know that Canadians want a tanker-free coast. Hundreds of supporters who love the coast and want to *Keep It Clean* sent us their photos for the map.
In 2013 we continued our stand against tarsands proposals to bring supertankers to Canada’s Pacific coast. The tarsands are Canada’s chief contribution to the carbon dioxide emissions that are driving climate change and ocean acidification worldwide.

Our Energy Campaign devoted much of its effort in 2013 to offering evidence at the Joint Review Panel on Northern Gateway. As the year ended we also took on a second pipeline challenge when Kinder Morgan Canada announced that it wanted to enlarge capacity for its Trans Mountain pipeline through Metro Vancouver to 890,000 barrels per. Between the two projects the coast would see as many as 600-700 supertankers each year.

At Joint Review Panel hearings for Northern Gateway we jousted with Enbridge lawyers and consultants and submitted evidence about the state of oil spill response preparedness and technology and the safety of oil tanker design, operations and maintenance. It played a part in persuading the Government of Canada to study tanker safety and to release long-awaited work on the properties of spilled diluted bitumen. This was the first sign that the government realized it needs to manage public expectations about tanker safety, a fact for which our Energy Campaign can claim some credit.

Feeling the heat from our successful efforts to help the public participate in the JRP hearings, the federal government changed the environmental assessment process by severely limiting public input in future pipeline hearings.
Executive Director Karen Wristen speaking at the media release of the Financial Liability for Kinder Morgan report. Canadians could be on the hook for as much as 90 percent of the cost of an oil tanker spill, according to our latest report on pipeline and tanker proposals. The report comes on the heels of the company’s announced expansion proposal for the Trans-Mountain pipeline.

Our work on Northern Gateway garnered further recognition from consultants retained by the Province of British Columbia. Nuka Research and Planning Group LLC cited analysis by Living Oceans and its experts in preparing its West Coast Spill Response Study for the Clark government, still grappling with its ‘five conditions’ for pipeline approval. The study found enormous gaps in Canada’s response regime for marine-based oil spills and acknowledged the limitations of modern technology in removing oil from oceans and shorelines. Premier Christy Clark has ample evidence at her disposal, in this report and on the advice of First Nations, to say with complete credibility that her conditions for pipeline approval have not been met.

Just before 2013 drew to a close the JRP recommended the approval of the Enbridge pipeline with 209 conditions that must be observed by the federal cabinet, which has ultimate approval over the project. We have launched a judicial review of the JRP decision based on their failure to identify mitigation measures for some of the environmental impacts that they found would be significant or unquantifiable, such as the effects of oil tanker traffic on threatened humpback whales. The case will not, in itself, stop the proposal, but the court might send the JRP back to the drawing board to propose mitigation plans or provide reasons for their conclusion that significant adverse impacts on certain species are “justified in the circumstances.”

To end the year, we signed the Solidarity Accord in support of the Save the Fraser Declaration, along with the nation’s largest labour union, civil society groups and several prominent Canadians. Living Oceans is accordingly pledged to stand with over 70 First Nations who are committed to preventing the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline from entering their territories or its associated tanker traffic from impacting the ocean migration routes of Fraser River salmon.

Defend Our Coast in Sointula
Sointulans gathered as part of Defend our Climate, Defend our Communities to demand an end to tarsands pipeline and tanker projects. Living Oceans helped organize several events as part of a nation-wide day of action.
Much of Living Oceans’ work on sustainable seafood and fisheries is done through SeaChoice, a national program involving four other leading Canadian environmental groups. Through our partnerships with major retail chains, SeaChoice provides expertise and guidance to providing high-quality seafood that is not only a ‘best choice’ for their customers, but for the ocean too.

The basis of our work at SeaChoice is to take a science-based approach in assessing the environmental impacts of different seafood production methods and communicate those assessments using a traffic-light (green/yellow/red) ranking system that rates the seafood on a scale from best (green) to worst (red). Our assessments are conducted using the rigorous methodology developed by the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch Program, with whom we work closely. Living Oceans is an active member of the SeaChoice science team that tracks the progress of assessments, keeps on top of the latest fisheries science and research and reviews key assessment that are highly important to the Canadian seafood landscape.
Living Oceans’ Kelly Roebuck and Bill Sexsmith of Canada Safeway cut the ribbon to launch the retail chain’s groundbreaking in-store information program developed with SeaChoice.

The Sustainable Seafood Campaign started the year off right when Canada Safeway unveiled its new in-store consumer information program in January that included new clear and concise point-of-sale information on sustainable seafood and a pilot product labelling program to include the Latin name, catch or farm location and method of production. SeaChoice also developed a sustainable seafood training module for Canada Safeway’s 500+ seafood staff to help them advise their customers about the growing number of sustainable seafood products that are available.

One billion people depend on seafood as a source of protein

These ongoing efforts with Canada Safeway and our other retail partners make it easier for shoppers across Canada to identify which seafoods are the best ocean-friendly choices and encourage the development of an engaged, informed and transparent seafood supply chain. Having people in grocery stores asking questions about their seafood sources and demanding ocean-friendly seafood puts economic pressure on retailers and the fishing industry to source and supply products that are less harmful to the ocean.
Protecting deep-sea corals and sponges

Our 2012 agreement with the bottom trawl industry in B.C. is the perfect case in point of how consumer demand and market leverage can create meaningful change on the water.

The results are in from the first year of the novel agreement that offers increased coral and sponge protection on the British Columbia coast. The first-of-its-kind management measures received the thumbs up from bottom trawlers and environmentalists alike. The results showed the trawlers did not catch anywhere near the limit that was placed on bycatch of sponges and corals, meaning they have co-operated fully in avoiding the reefs we identified during our Finding Coral Expedition. Limiting bycatch of corals and sponges and freezing the B.C. trawl fleet’s footprint didn’t appear to present fishermen with any notable difficulties in catching their quotas of target groundfish species.

Those SeaChoice wallet cards are working

SeaChoice is reassessing the B.C. groundfish trawl fishery taking the new Habitat Conservation Measures into consideration to see if their ranking can be improved in the consumers’ seafood buying guide.

Further to our sustainable seafood work, Living Oceans continues to play an active role in the international sustainable seafood movement as a member of the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions – a partnership of eighteen leading conservation organizations from the U.S. and Canada that came together in 2008 to pursue a common vision for environmentally sustainable seafood. In 2013, we began to draft guidelines for Aquaculture Improvement Projects (AIPs), put into practice the Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs) guidelines, and furthered our relationships with like-minded groups from across the continent.

Healthy coral forests and sponge reefs are oases where young organisms hide from predators and older ones rest or hunt for prey.
Our campaigners kept up the demand for action on the Cohen Commission report, traveling to Ottawa in March to find out just what the federal government’s intentions were for implementing Justice Cohen’s recommendations. While we were in town, the long-awaited *Fisheries and Oceans Standing Committee report on closed containment technology* was released, pointing the way for reform of Canada’s salmon aquaculture industry along the lines we’ve always advocated.

The Committee acknowledged that closed containment is viable and made specific recommendations for government to invest in the new technology. It fell short, however, on the one measure desperately needed by wild fish and crustaceans on both coasts: No new net-pen sites while closed containment pilots prove themselves.

DFO has done nothing to protect Fraser River sockeye
Our Clear the Coast initiative hit its stride in 2013 as we organized the drive to locate, remove and dispose of marine debris, ghost fishing gear and abandoned vessels on northern Vancouver Island.

Living Oceans partnered with BC Parks to set up debris stations with collector bags and posters at remote Provincial Parks on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The collector bags were made from old seine nets by a Sointula fisherman. “Pitch In” signs invited park visitors to fill the bags with any marine debris they found. The stations were a big success and plenty of people volunteered to collect plastic, bottles and Styrofoam. The combined efforts resulted in the removal of more than two tonnes of debris.

In January, during one of our helicopter surveillance flights, we spotted a washed up, intact Japanese vessel along with other debris. The discovery of the skiff sparked national media coverage and drew attention to the waves of plastic that are washing up on Canada’s west coast.
On many West Coast beaches the terrain is too rugged to pack out all the debris on the long trails through old growth forest. We used helicopters to lift the debris to volunteers waiting in the parking lots with pickup trucks to transport, sort, recycle and dispose of the debris.

Over the spring, summer and fall, Living Oceans made presentations to a variety of community organizations and school groups to raise awareness about the impacts to ocean health from marine debris and coordinated groups of volunteers interested in helping to clean debris from some of our shorelines.

We have our work cut out for us

We posted what our volunteers found and where the many cleanup efforts took place on our Clear the Coast interactive map which records the amount and types of debris that has been collected.

Local divers volunteered their time and equipment to locate and remove ghost traps from some popular recreational crab fishing areas. Three estuaries – areas that have high ecological importance - were inspected for ghost traps and any that were found were removed and disposed of responsibly. The divers likened the work to looking for a needle in an underwater haystack on a foggy day but they plan to continue the effort in the future as part of their club mandate of community improvement.

Derelict vessels can also impact marine ecosystems. We researched how best practices and lessons learned from vessel removal efforts in other places can be applied on northern Vancouver Island. Our findings will provide local harbour managers, marinas and other businesses with a starting point to develop local solutions to the hazards and pollution problems posed by the growing number of abandoned and derelict vessels. We worked with a harbour authority to remove and responsibly dispose of an abandoned boat as a pilot project to determine the potential for a local boat breaking business.
Donors and Supporters

Foundation support
- ESRI Canada
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- Oak Foundation
- New Venture Fund
- The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation
- Sandler Foundation
- Marisla Fund
- Vancouver Foundation
- The Patagonia Foundation
- Mountain Equipment Co-op
- Waitt Foundation
- Da Capo Fund

Government Support
- Environment Canada – EcoAction
- Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- BC Parks – Regional Park Enhancement Fund

Business donors and In-Kind Supporters
- AbeBooks
- Arc’teryx Equipment Inc.
- Banquet Atelier and Workshop
- Banyen Books & Sound
- Bluewater Adventures Ltd.
- Coast Mountain Expeditions Ltd.
- Coastal Community Credit Union
- Tiger Fera Investment Inc.
- Hornby Island Diving
- Malcolm Island Bird Club
- Malcolm Island Lions Club
- MEC Victoria
- Murray Tanner, and Carmen Burrows and Rich Shaw
- Nanaimo Dive Outfitters
- Organic Ocean
- Sheila Roote (Sointula artist)
- SointulArt (Darryl Luscombe, Sointula artist)
- Sointula Co-op Store
- Storytellings Consulting
- Upper Crust Bakery
- Vital Choice Wild Seafood & Organics

Staff and Board

Karen Wristen  Executive Director  Kim Wright  Marine Planning and Protected Areas Director  Karin Bodtker  Director, Mapping and Analysis  Will Soltau  Sustainable Fisheries and Salmon Farming Campaign Manager  Jenna Stoner  Sustainable Seafood Campaign Manager  Sharlene Shaikh  Ecosystem Services Analyst  Gord Curry  Local Marine Planner  Geoff Gilliard  Communications Manager  Julie Scott-Ashe  Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist  Barb Iarocci  Book Keeper  Kerri Reid  Office Administrator

BOARD: Astrid Scholz, Ph.D.  Chair  Tundi Spring Agardy, Ph.D.  Kory Wilson
**Revenue**

Revenue in 2013: $903,665

**Expenditures by Program**

Total expenses in 2013: $906,468