

Sustainable Communities

GEORGIA BASIN ECOSYSTEM INITIATIVE



Achieving
Clean
Air

Action Plan Highlights

2001 | 2002

Achieving Clean
Water

Conserving and Protecting
Habitats
and Species



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada



We are pleased to present *Action Plan Highlights 2001 – 2002* for the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative (GBEI). Following the Year 2000 Progress Report, this *Action Plan* provides a snapshot of some key initiatives, both new and continuing, that GBEI partners will undertake or support over the next year. The projects will help to achieve clean air and clean water, to protect habitat and species and to promote community sustainability in the Georgia Basin.

Over the past year, through workshops, conferences and various public fora, we have heard numerous important themes expressed. As you read through this *Action Plan*, you will find highlights of our work with First Nations, local government, communities and other partners to respond to these themes.

Increasing public concern about the health effects of poor air quality in the Lower Fraser Valley has led us to work with our colleagues and partners on both sides of the border to begin the development of a *Transboundary Airshed Management Plan*. Protecting aquatic ecosystem health through improved management of stormwater will be promoted through the release of a *Stormwater Management Guidebook*. Protecting and conserving biodiversity in the highly urbanized Greater Vancouver area is the focus of the *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy*. GBEI is also supporting and promoting local action through a variety of stewardship tools, including the *Coastal Shoreline Stewardship Guide*, and is improving access to environmental data and information over the web through projects such as the *Cowichan Valley Integrated Data Management Project*.

This past year has demonstrated both a need and a willingness to work cooperatively towards solutions for urban sustainability. We are supporting the protection of ecosystem health through innovation in urban planning and design in both local and transboundary partnerships projects.

Partnerships also continue to expand. *The Coast Salish Sea Initiative* is evolving as a significant mechanism to facilitate meaningful involvement of Coast Salish peoples in GBEI planning and project delivery. With the announced establishment of a new *National Park Reserve in the Gulf Islands* by 2003, *Parks Canada* will play an increasingly important role in the preservation and understanding of this unique ecosystem. Our link with communities will also be strengthened through the involvement of the *B.C. Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers*.

Our commitment remains... we will be both catalysts and leaders for translating goals into practical actions that will preserve and protect the Georgia Basin ecosystem and enhance the quality of life for Georgia Basin residents. And because we want to stay in touch, we will continue to translate our actions into words and regularly engage and communicate with Georgia Basin residents.

If you have any ideas, comments or suggestions about the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative, we would like to hear from you. Contact information can be found on the back cover of this *Action Plan Highlights 2001-2002 Report*. We also encourage you to visit the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative website at: <http://www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/GeorgiaBasin> for a complete listing of all projects.

Thank you.

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Sustainable Communities

Residents and decision makers taking action for healthy, productive and sustainable ecosystems and communities.

- Through the **Coast Salish Sea Initiative** the GBEI partners are working with Coast Salish peoples to assist in the identification and prioritization of environmental issues of concern to the Coast Salish, and the development of joint projects. The inclusion of Coast Salish interests in the implementation of the GBEI Action Plan will help foster understanding and awareness of traditional knowledge in decision-making processes having an impact on the sustainability of the ecosystem. Working in partnership with Coast Salish are Environment Canada, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Parks Canada.
- Initiated by the City of Abbotsford and the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, the **Business Environmental Pledge Program** and the **Residential Pledge Program** are designed to reward businesses and homeowners for taking steps in protecting the environment. Businesses pledge to take responsibility for their practices, reduce their impact on the environment, and as a result, improve their cost efficiency. Homeowners will receive a pledge guidebook and learn how simple behaviour changes in water consumption, household toxic use, and vehicle maintenance can make significant improvements to the natural world. GBEI support will assist in monitoring business and community involvement and tracking the implementation of the two programs. Partners include the Cities of Mission and Abbotsford, Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures Development Corporation of North Fraser, Environment Canada, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, as well as an array of other community partners.
- The **Cowichan Valley Integrated Data Management Pilot Project** continues work on seven priority data sets: stream locations, fish presence, private cadastre, sensitive ecosystem inventory, water quality, water quantity and water users. A pilot web-based access tool to these data sets will be produced for review by September 2001. A printable CD-ROM of the Cowichan Valley Environmental Planning Atlas and a prototype of a web-based tool for interacting with digital maps and data have already been developed and are being tested by the project's Community Advisory Group. For more information, visit the IDMI website: <http://www.elp.gov.bc.ca/isb/xgovprojects/idmi/index.html>. Partners include Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and Environment Canada.
- The **Smart Growth Toolkit** will assist community groups with their questions about smart growth strategies, facilitate partnership building, and encourage effective community involvement in the land development process. The Tool Kit will include a variety of resources, such as 'how-to guides', fact sheets, check-lists, sustainability network information, web-based resources and more. Partners include Smart Growth BC, the Vancouver Foundation and Environment Canada.
- The Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers is supporting the development of **Community Indicator and Benchmark Reports** for New Westminster and the Powell River/Sunshine Coast region. This is part of a ministry funded pilot initiative for learning new ways and approaches to measure changing conditions in communities that will support evidence-based action to enhance sustainability. By December 2001, communities will prepare local reports that identify key indicators and benchmarks of sustainability along with an action plan for achieving progress. The Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative is an active partner in this work.

Support continues for various Community-based Stewardship Initiatives including those delivered through the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program (HCSP), the Habitat Restoration and Salmonid Enhancement Program (HRSEP), and partnerships with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Streamkeepers Federation, Wetland Keepers, Shorekeepers and Reefkeepers volunteer programs.

Eco Education in Action is a student-centered action-oriented environmental education resource that helps British Columbia teachers and facilitators integrate environmental education into their curricula. The kit, to be released in the September 2001 school year includes a detailed facilitators manual and a poster to record how many environmental actions every student completes. For more information, visit the Eco Education website: www.bccf.com/ecoed. Partners include the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and Environment Canada.

INDICATORS

“What is the current state?”,
“Is it getting better or worse?”,
“Why is it happening?”
and **“What is being done about it?”**.

These are common questions that GBEI partners are often asked about the sustainability of the Georgia Basin ecosystem. Some of the projects underway will help answer these questions:

> **Transboundary Indicator Fact Sheets** will be released in summer 2001 for Georgia Basin and Puget Sound for the following: air quality (PM10), terrestrial protected areas, species at risk, solid waste per capita, contaminants in harbour seals, and population growth (by Regional District/County). Partners include Environment Canada, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team, Washington State Department of Ecology, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

> As part of the popular State of Environment Reporting series by the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, the **Georgia Basin Indicators** will be released on the GBEI website later this year.

> As part of the effort to integrate economic, social and environmental factors of sustainability, work is currently being done on **Economic Sustainability Indicators** for the Georgia Basin. The project will develop a database of economic data related to the economic stability of the Basin. Much of the information will be available on a regional district scale. Partners include, Environment Canada, BC Statistics, Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Parks Canada, University of Victoria and the Sustainable Development Research Institute at the University of British Columbia.

> Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative partners will work with the Fraser Basin Council in the coming year on the identification and application of a set of **Sustainability Indicators** for the Fraser Basin. When tracked over time these indicators will provide residents of the Fraser Basin with relevant, useful information on sustainability issues. For more information, visit their web site at <http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/indicators.html>



Achieving Clean Air

Air quality that supports healthy, vibrant communities and healthy ecosystems

- Work on the Lower Fraser Valley airshed management plan continues with the development of **Harmonized Measures for Reducing Greenhouse Gases and Air Pollution in the Lower Fraser Valley**. This phase identifies greenhouse gas and common air contaminant emission reduction measures for selected priority sectors in the Greater Vancouver Regional District and Fraser Valley Regional District that are amenable to a harmonized approach to co-management. This work will help lead to solutions around priority air issues, such as fine particulate and visibility, greenhouse gases, and ground level ozone. This harmonized approach will also help in the development of emission reduction measures and identifying the costs, benefits and implementation challenges. This phase also addresses agricultural sources in greater detail. Partners include Environment Canada, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Greater Vancouver Regional District, and the Fraser Valley Regional District.
- Through a series of workshops that began in February 2001, GBEI partners, other government agencies and First Nations from Canada and the United States are working towards cooperative approaches to **Transboundary Airshed Management**. Support has been demonstrated for a number of actions, including the development of a statement of intent on areas for future cooperation, the characterization of the airshed, and the development of a clearinghouse of agencies' policies, programs and their most progressive regulatory actions. A key element of this plan will address how regulators in both countries might review proposed new projects that affect air quality in the **Georgia Basin and Puget Sound airshed**. Partners include, the Fraser Valley Regional District, Greater Vancouver Regional District, US Tribal Nations, Canadian First Nations, Northwest Air Pollution Control Authority, US Region 10 Environmental Protection Agency, Washington State Department of Ecology, Environment Canada, and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.
- The **Marine Aerosol Study** has reached its last phase with the final report and recommendations to be released later this year. This project has looked at the sulphur emissions coming from the Strait of Georgia that are thought to have direct influence on the production of aerosols in the Georgia Basin that effect human health and visibility. Partners on this project include University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, and Environment Canada.
- The **Year 2000 Air Pollution Emission Inventory** will be used to assess the relative strengths of the various emission sources in the Georgia Basin. It will include point, area and mobile emission source strengths as well as natural sources. Partners in this project include the Greater Vancouver Regional District, Washington State Department of Ecology, Environment Canada, and Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.
- The **Pacific 2001 Field Study** is an international air quality field study to be conducted from August 13th to September 1st, 2001. The study will provide comprehensive scientific information on the characteristics of fine particulate matter and ozone formation processes. There will be seven sampling sites, two aircraft and three balloon launching locations to support this intensive field campaign. Information from this study will assist in the understanding of the physical and chemical characteristics of aerosols. This information will be used in computer models to assist with air basin management planning. Partners involved are the Meteorological Service of Canada, Environment Canada, Fraser Valley Regional District, Greater Vancouver Regional District, University of British Columbia, York University, University of Victoria, National Research Council, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, and the Canadian Forest Service.

Emission reduction strategies will be assessed to determine both the benefit realized by each reduction and the associated cost. The **Economic Based Air Quality Target** study will determine the point at which the benefit from the reduction balances with the cost of implementing the emission reduction. The emission reduction strategy defined by this benefit/cost balance will produce an estimate of the level of air quality in the Georgia Basin. The expected level of air quality will identify a target that can be used to develop plans for dealing with air quality issues in the Georgia Basin. Partners include Health Canada, Simon Fraser University, Greater Vancouver Regional District, Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, Environment Canada, and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.

LOWER FRASER VALLEY AIRSHED

Smog, the term given to a brownish yellow haze, is a potential risk to health in the Lower Fraser Valley. The key smog pollutants are ground-level ozone (O₃) and fine airborne particulate matter (PM). A major source of these two smog pollutants is the burning of fossil fuels in vehicles, factories, thermal power plants, and home furnaces. Soil, road dust, fires and industrial and agricultural activity also contribute to the fine particle mass.

The Lower Fraser Valley encompasses the Greater Vancouver Regional District and that portion of the Fraser Valley Regional District bounded by the Coastal Mountains to the north and the Cascade Mountains to the southeast. These geographical features, along with the summer sea breezes off the Strait of Georgia, restrict air-flow patterns and contribute to the area's smog problem. Summer-time weather conditions and the atmospheric pollutant emissions from human activities are the other factors that allow the formation and accumulation of air pollution.

The Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative is working with many partners to better assess sources and distribution of air pollutant and assist in the development of new strategies for managing the airshed.

For more information on a "smog indicator" please go to <http://www.ecoinfo.org>



Achieving Clean Water

Clean water to protect and improve aquatic ecosystem health and human well-being in the Georgia Basin

- The **Stormwater Management Guidebook**, provides advice and guidance to municipalities on stormwater management planning including: how to undertake public consultation, assess watershed health, identify priority watersheds, select, implement and monitor best management practices, and how to implement and finance stormwater management programs. Partners include Environment Canada, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Regional District of Nanaimo.
- Students at Templeton Secondary in Vancouver are helping to protect the environment with an **Assessment of Non-Point Source Pollution in the Hastings Creek Catchment**, where their school is located. They are installing and monitoring pollution filters in storm drains and raising local awareness through a brochure and community workshop. Project partners include the Real Estate Foundation of BC, Fisheries Renewal BC, a local branch of the Royal Bank, Environment Canada, and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.
- The Saanich Peninsula stormwater study is working towards reducing sewage input to Saanich Inlet, and the re-opening the shellfish beds fronting Tseycum, Pauquachin and Tsartlip First Nations reserve lands, and municipal lands in North and Central Saanich. The **Open Saanich Inlet Shellfish Beds** project has shown an initial 50% reduction in fecal coliform loading from the stormwater sampled to date. Sampling will continue with support from Environment Canada, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Capital Regional District.
- Plans for the **Semiahmoo Bay—Drayton Harbour Shared Waters** project for 2001–02 include the establishment of a roundtable involving groups from both the Canadian and US sides of the border, and the development of an action plan based on a public workshop that outlined 3 priority areas for action: water circulation, identification of pollution sources and public outreach. Both Semiahmoo Bay and Drayton Harbour are currently closed for shellfish harvesting. The partners on this project are the Boundary Health Unit, Semiahmoo First Nations, Environment Canada, and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.
- As a result of the designation of a number of marine areas as ‘no discharge zones’ in May 2000, the **Pleasure Craft Sewage Pump Station Facilities** project has partnered in the construction of pump-out facilities in Comox Harbour, Deep Bay, Gibsons Harbour, Madeira Park, Ganges Harbour, and Cowichan Bay. Future plans are to partner for two new additional pump-out facilities. The GBEI partners on this project include Environment Canada, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Each pump out station facility is also supported by a variety of community partners.
- **Guidelines for Land Application of Biosolids** (sewage sludge) will be developed for Medical Health Officers to support the upcoming Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks Organic Matter Recycling Regulation. This initiative will provide guidance to health officials in the beneficial reuse of biosolids within water supply watersheds and on agricultural land. Partners on this project include Environment Canada, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Ministry of Health.
- **Saanich Peninsula Stormwater Pesticides Best Management Practices** follows up on previous work that documented household pesticide use and monitored pesticide residues in sediments near major storm water discharges in the Saanich peninsula. Best management practices and public information brochures for pesticides and other toxic chemicals will be developed to educate residents, greenhouse operators and farmers on the Saanich peninsula on the proper management of these chemicals. Partners include the Capital Regional District, the Georgia Strait Alliance, Environment Canada, and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.

The **5th Annual International Conference on Shellfish Restoration** will provide an opportunity for local government, community organizations, industry members, universities, First Nations, provincial and federal government officials, and other resource managers to discuss approaches to restoring coastal ecosystems for molluscan shellfish and their habitat. The conference, to be held September 18-21, 2001 in Nanaimo, BC, will facilitate the sharing of information and lessons learned in shellfish restoration remediation work in the Georgia Basin and internationally. Partners include the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Nanaimo First Nations, Malaspina College, South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, Environment Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The **Raspberry Growers Nutrient Management and Soil Nitrate Survey** aims to promote the use of fall nitrate testing as a report card to assess the previous years nutrient management practices. Results to date have indicated that manured and non-manured fields have residual nitrate levels greater than what is recommended in the Berry Production Guide. This year's work is planned to evaluate annual variability and to work with producers with high soil nitrate levels to improve management practices so as to reduce those levels. Partners include the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Environment Canada, and the Raspberry Industry Development Council.

The **Cecelia Creek Catchment Trucked Liquid Waste Pilot** project complements the existing community effort to reduce contamination of Cecelia Creek by increasing awareness of waste management issues. Trucked liquid wastes are those wastes that are not permitted to be discharged to the sanitary sewer, and must be trucked to a disposal site. The pilot project will promote pollution prevention, informed decisions on liquid waste disposal, the development and use of appropriate and cost effective facilities, and compliance with regulations. Partners include the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Capital Regional District.

The **Distribution and Pathways of Organic Contaminants**, including persistent organic pollutants will be examined through the identification of spatial and temporal trends in the distribution of contaminants in the Strait of Georgia. A related project will study the distribution of PCB's and DDT-groups in Killer Whale sub-populations and harbour seals. This project is being led by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The **Impact of and Recovery from Aquaculture Operations** project will assess the spatial scale of the impact of finfish aquaculture operations using various indices of stress, and assess possible rates of recovery, particularly for benthic ecosystems. Partners include Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, the University of British Columbia, and representatives of the aquaculture industry.

SHELLFISH

Shellfish and the waters they inhabit are good indicators of the bacteriological health of the marine environment. Fecal coliform bacteria in the water indicate the presence of human or animal wastes and the possible presence of disease-causing organisms. Pollution of shellfish growing water can occur from a variety of sources and under many different conditions. Sanitary shellfish closures are attributed to a combination of pollution sources, including urban run-off, sewage discharges and agricultural drainage. Multiple sources account for the largest area closures followed by sewage outfalls, agricultural/hinterland drainage, boat sewage discharges, and urban runoff. Non point sources can be considered the largest contributor to closures.

Sanitary closures from sewage contamination of shellfish habitat have increased steadily since the 1970's. Up to January 2000, there were approximately 105,000 hectares closed to harvesting of shellfish in BC. Of the closed areas, 63,000 hectares (630 square km) are in the Georgia Basin. Within the Georgia Basin, major harbours such as Vancouver, Victoria and Nanaimo are classified as prohibited for shellfish harvesting. Similar classifications are employed by the Washington State Department of Health for Puget Sound where pollution has made shellfish harvesting unsafe along the Sound's heavily populated east shore from Everett to Tacoma.

Through a number of community-based partnerships, the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative is working to re-open important shellfish production areas to commercial activity.

For more information on shellfish closures, please go to <http://www.ecoinfo.org>



Conserving and Protecting Habitat and Species

Terrestrial and aquatic fauna and flora, biodiversity and human well-being are maintained.

- Efforts continue on the development of a **Biodiversity Conservation Strategy** for the Lower Mainland, a project focused on working with local government representatives and stewardship groups to provide a coordinated mechanism for the delivery of planning, programs and activities for the conservation of biodiversity. One component of the Strategy is a mapping project to collect and compile information that will assist agencies in conservation planning and management activities. In addition, input and feedback obtained from a well attended workshop in Spring 2001 will be used to develop the strategic plan, including a collective vision for biodiversity conservancy, common goals and objectives, and priorities for action (proceedings are available at <http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/services/growth/projects/projects.htm>). The Greater Vancouver Regional District will continue to play a key role in the project, along with Environment Canada, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Ducks Unlimited, the Fraser River Estuary Management Program, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.
- Through both the Pacific Estuary Conservation Program (PECP) and the GBEI partnership, detailed information on estuarine areas of coastal British Columbia, including the Georgia Basin, is being consolidated. The **Estuary Management** project will include: more detailed mapping of estuaries, including smaller sites; documenting their legal status or level of protection; consolidating information on biophysical attributes (dominant vegetation and fish/wildlife use); and identifying current and potential threats from human use and development. In the coming year, efforts will be directed towards analyzing this information, compiling information on current and potential threats to key estuaries, and documenting the current level of protection on key estuaries. Partners include Ducks Unlimited, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, and the Land Use Coordination Office.
- The **Non-Indigenous Species** project will continue to document the abundance and diversity of non-indigenous species of algae, vascular plants and invertebrates in Georgia Strait. This project is being led by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.
- Under the guidance and coordination of the Stewardship Technical Committee (STC), development of the **Coastal Shorelines Stewardship Guide** is now fully underway. It is expected that a draft guide will be completed by December of 2001 and field testing with focus groups can begin early in 2002. When completed, the guide will provide tools to assist landowners, planners, developers, and others to avoid or minimize the impacts of shoreline development on wildlife species and habitats. Partners include Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, and other non-governmental community partners.
- The **Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory (SEI) in the Georgia Lowland Ecoregion**, a multi-year project designed to systematically inventory remaining sensitive (rare and fragile) terrestrial ecosystems of the Sunshine Coast and islands in the northern Strait of Georgia, is still going strong. The focus for the upcoming year will include ground-truthing of sites between Agammemnon Channel and Desolation Sound and additional sites on Cortes Island, as well as map preparation. Boundaries for all 5,500 sites identified on air photos over the past two years will be digitized and draft maps for about half of the study area should be completed by late 2001. Partners include Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Environment Canada, Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, and the Sunshine Coast Regional District.
- The **American Dipper** is a key species for monitoring the health of fresh water streams. Following on work done on the Chilliwack River watershed, researchers will also be studying dippers in two watersheds on Vancouver Island, the Tsolum River, a watershed heavily impacted by mining and forestry, and the neighboring Puntledge River. The objective of this newer study is to measure exposure to contaminants and compare the breeding success and behaviour of dippers in a system that is impacted by human activities with other less affected sites. Partners include Environment Canada and Simon Fraser University.

In partnership with the BC Shellfish Growers Association, **Shellfish Best Management Practices (BMP's)** are being developed for the industry. BMP's will provide guidance on approaches to minimize potential conflict between seabirds and the economic success of the industry. In addition to GBEI partners, the project involves the Canadian Nature Federation. In a related project, the Canadian Wildlife Service is undertaking a five year **Study of Seaduck and Shorebird Use of Baynes Sound**. The project will provide information on which areas are currently being used by migratory birds and why the birds are choosing those areas in particular. This information will be important in better understanding the impacts of aquaculture on migratory birds and should provide guidance in the development of recommendations to the aquaculture industry. Partners include Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.

Efforts to **Secure Critical Habitat** areas will continue on a number of fronts in the coming year. The Georgia Basin Ecosystem Conservation Partnership, which includes key federal, provincial and local government agencies and non governmental organizations, will continue to work on identifying, acquiring, and securing priority sites through pooling of information, expertise, and funds. The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks (MELP) will continue to work with its partners in the Pacific Estuary Conservation Program/Pacific Coast Joint Venture to establish new Wildlife Management Areas under the provincial *Wildlife Act*. MELP will also continue to designate important Wildlife Habitat Areas as part of implementing the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy of the Forest.

To address the continuing decline of valuable Steelhead salmon stocks in the Georgia Basin, a **Georgia Basin Steelhead Recovery Team** was recently formed. This team will lead the implementation of a small number of immediate priority projects identified in the existing Steelhead recovery plan for the east coast of Vancouver Island as well as high priority projects in the Lower Mainland. In consultation with stakeholders, it will also have responsibility for developing a long-term coordinated strategy for the region as a whole. The team includes staff from Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Drift Fishers of BC, Steelhead Society, and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.

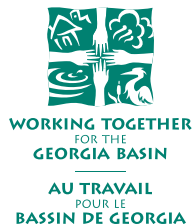
Fisheries and Oceans Canada, in collaboration with local governments, GBEI partners and community groups is leading the implementation of the Courtenay River **Estuary Management Plan**. The development of the Nanaimo River Estuary management plan is now underway.

The **Marine Mammal Monitoring Pilot** project will promote stewardship of marine mammals, birds and critical habitat by providing a comprehensive outreach, education and monitoring program for recreational and commercial ecotourists in the Trans-Boundary area. This program will reduce pressures of human activity on marine mammals, birds and habitat and systematically support less intrusive methods for wildlife viewing. Partners include Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Veins of Life Watershed Society.

PACIFIC MARINE HERITAGE LEGACY

In July 1995, the governments of Canada and British Columbia signed the *Memorandum of Understanding Respecting the Development and Implementation of a Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy*. The principal objective of the program was to purchase some of the country's most exceptional coastal sites resulting in an expanded and integrated network of coastal and marine areas in the southern Gulf Islands. By March 31, 2001, 19 properties had been acquired at a cost of approximately \$32.5 million.

On March 31, 2001, the governments of Canada and British Columbia signed a Framework Agreement. More specifically, a new national park reserve will be established by 2003 in the southern Gulf Islands. In addition to lands already purchased, Canada will contribute a further \$10 million and B.C. a further \$5 million to acquire lands for the national park reserve. B.C. will also transfer to Canada 9 existing provincial parks, one ecological reserve and other Crown lands for national park purposes. B.C. will also contribute \$20 million for the acquisition of significant conservation lands in the southern Gulf islands outside of the national park. The governments of Canada and British Columbia will also conduct a feasibility study for the creation of a national marine conservation area reserve in the southern Strait of Georgia.



If you have any comments or questions,
or would like more information on the
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(aussi disponible au français)

