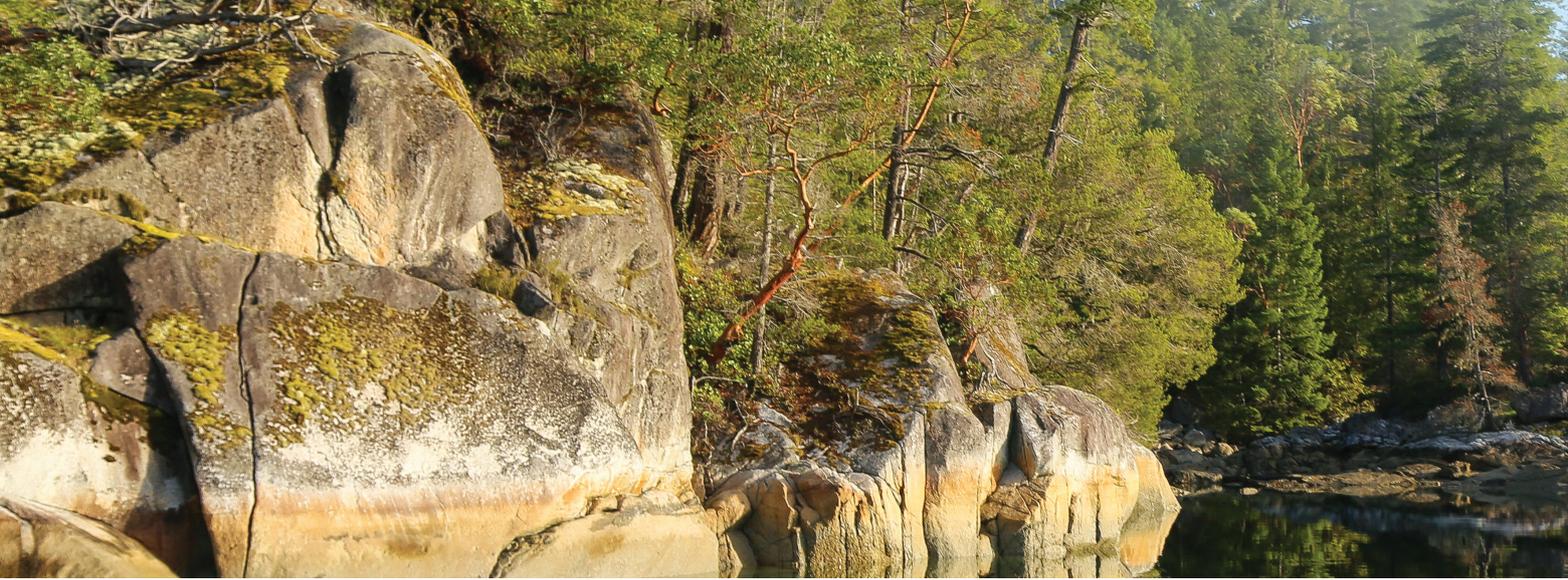


# ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE — in B.C. —



2021/22 EDITION



“These organizations share a common ground in responding to the environmental crisis with dedicated advocacy and action.”

ELIZABETH ROSALYN THE



Here in B.C., we're lucky to be surrounded by oceans and lakes, rainforests and mountains, and other natural wonders that make up the beautiful and diverse scenery we call home.

Our great outdoors should not be taken for granted, as our current climate crisis has been abundantly clear. It will take a collective effort from our communities to protect and preserve our natural environments for years, decades, and centuries to come.

Within our province alone, there are numerous community leaders across all industries who are boldly stepping up in the face of this urgent challenge.

For the inaugural *Environmental Excellence* in B.C. magazine, we

spoke with some of the province's top environmental stewards that are leading the charge and making a difference in the fight against climate change.

From protecting Canada's endangered wildlife and their habitats to introducing sustainable solutions for waste management, these organizations share a common ground in responding to the environmental crisis with dedicated advocacy and action.

The significant contributions of these featured environmental leaders are sure to inspire you to join in the fight for climate justice.

**ELIZABETH ROSALYN THE**  
EDITOR



# ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

— in B.C. —

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# Skeena Resources Limited

## Recycling Mines for a Sustainable Future

**M**etals are all around us. We use them in our smartphones, medical equipment, solar panels, and pretty much anything else you can imagine. If it's not grown, it's mined. Metals are both a critical part of a sustainable future and our evolving society.

Taking an innovative approach to providing us with the metals we need, Vancouver-based company *Skeena Resources Limited* has started a business model around the idea of mine recycling. The recycling of mines, called brownfield sites, means looking for additional mineral resources where they have been mined before.

"Rather than looking for new mineral properties, we started looking at closed past-producing mines," says Justin Himmelright, Vice President of Sustainability at *Skeena Resources Limited*. "This is more in alignment with the environmental and social values in society today."

*Skeena* has acquired the closed past-producing precious metal mines of Eskay Creek and Snip, located in Tahltan Territory, an area known as the Golden Triangle in northwest B.C.

Focused around working with communities, especially Indigenous Nations, *Skeena* offers value for those communities and drives business with contracts for services and employment.

"Social licence is an overused but paramount term," says Himmelright. "Support from communities to move projects ahead is required. *Skeena's* focus on the broader conversation of reconciliation within Indigenous communities is demonstrated by the focus of our organization which, along with the focus on recycling of mines, makes us a unique operator in the mining space."

Recent successes for *Skeena* include the company's collaboration with the Tahltan Nation on conservation and investing in future generations.

*Skeena* has worked with the Tahltan Nation to convert 3,500 hectares of their mineral tenures next to Mount Edziza Provincial Park into a protected area. This conservancy will be protected from mineral development forever – an example of the company's innovative approach to sustainable development, collaboration, reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and protecting the land for future generations.

In terms of investment in future generations, *Skeena* has created a mentorship program working with six young Tahltan Nation professionals in various capacities.

"Tahltan played a major role in the Eskay Creek Mine when it was previously in operation, making up 30-35% of the workforce. We would like to build on that legacy and see Tahltans in management positions when the mine moves into operation again; we have begun with training and experience for young professionals who want to work in an industry that has a significant presence in their Territory," says Himmelright.

*Skeena* is also supporting the Tahltan Nation in moving forward as a regulator on their territorial lands. The Eskay Creek Revitalization Project will be the first mining project in B.C. to be granted an Environmental Assessment Certificate authorized by a First Nation.

"We believe that this is the right step to take in acknowledging Indigenous Title and Rights in the area. This is unceded territory and taking this step is in line with our values on supporting reconciliation with Indigenous people," Himmelright says.

The reopening and revitalization of the Eskay Creek mine is also a serious undertaking.

"During its operation, it was the highest-grade gold mine in the world. We have an opportunity to bring it to today's standards; a project that is environmentally clean, runs on green energy, supports reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and creates prosperity in local communities," Himmelright says.

The focus on mine recycling and collaboration with First Nation communities is proving to be a successful combination.

*Skeena Resources* has grown significantly over the past year and the Eskay Creek Revitalization project is on track to reach commercial production by 2024.

*Skeena* believes that working with communities, supporting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, collaboration, partnership and innovation creates value for shareholders.

"Investing in our people is a huge part of our future. When you look across our organization, we have a young workforce that is socially aware and in tune with the realities of environmental standards of today. ■

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

— in B.C. —

“The company's sustainability approach plans for future generations and is about the legacy you are creating.”

**JUSTIN HIMMELRIGHT**  
VICE PRESIDENT OF SUSTAINABILITY



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**GeoScan**  
SUBSURFACE SURVEYS

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RADAR

# Geoscan

## Identifying and Addressing Urgent Needs in the Environmental Sector

From discovering salt-induced degradation of farmland, oil spills, or other contaminants to preventing utility line damage and infrastructure deterioration, employee-owned **GeoScan** have an extensive portfolio of specialized projects where the spotlight is on environmental impact.

Their service links to environmental preservation run extremely far and deep. **GeoScan**'s contaminant plume mapping, for example, monitors environmentally harmful contaminants such as chloride, that find themselves into subsurface aquifers in the vicinity of major highways.

The team regularly maps tree roots for clients who wish to avoid damaging long standing trees. A common use of their technology is to locate potentially harmful abandoned oil tanks under residential properties.

There is no shortage of endeavours where input from **GeoScan** can add value. The firm uses state-of-the-art technology (such as Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR)) and expert interpretation to support companies across many industries with survey services. Much of the industry that **GeoScan** works within is unregulated, which has led to their heavy investment in a trainee scheme that boasts the highest quality of professionals, with a market-leading number of qualified Registered Utility Locating Technicians (RULT).

The business started in 2010, offering utility locating, concrete scanning and shallow geophysical surveys. Half a decade later, **GeoScan** started branding its concrete scanning as **Xradar**, who later became a sister company providing non-destructive testing, structural surveys, void and crack detection, and corrosion mapping across Canada.

Such explorations can help to advance planning for a large variety of projects, says Director Joe Salazar. "Knowing what's underneath the ground automatically reduces risk, and is proven to be vital damage prevention information. However, in the construction industry, there sometimes is this tendency to rush projects and deal with mistakes afterwards, often to the detriment of the environment, or infrastructure."

For building projects, for example, there are four confidence levels to discovering and verifying utility data, with A being the most –

and D the least – accurate.

"Level D is a simple background check while C involves surveying and using judgement in correlating above-ground utility features," Founder Will Meredith explains. "Level B is when we come on site for subsurface utility engineering, for which we use ground penetrating radar and electromagnetic equipment."

Short of level A, which determines utility line depth, material and location through vacuum excavation, this is the most precise method for obtaining this kind of data.

"A lot of contractors only go as far as level C, and rely on information on utility lines provided by municipalities and BC One Call," says Meredith. "Then they might dig and discover the lines in a different spot, because the maps often show only a rough approximation, or worse, dig in an area that was believed to have been free of utility lines entirely, causing a dangerous and expensive hit."

This can cause unforeseen conflicts during the construction phase, which may require re-engineering, utility conflict resolution and utility relocation. **A University of Toronto study estimates that for large infrastructure projects, the average return for each dollar spent on subsurface utility engineering services is \$3.41.** In some cases the damage to the environment can be far more extreme, for example an oil line puncture in Burrard Inlet in July 2007, causing untold environmental damage in addition to its \$15m+ in cleanup costs.

**Geoscan** and **Xradar** aim to step up efforts to address urgent needs in the environmental sector by collaborating with local partners. "Working with communities to support relevant causes is a big goal of ours," says Salazar. This passion for making a difference is shared widely, volunteering for local projects, or contributing their expertise to pro-bono work and committees.

Related activities – which include collaborations with First Nations and inner-city projects in Vancouver and Victoria – resonate with employees. And that's important since the companies are now 100 percent employee-owned after implementing an employee share ownership plan.

"We believe if all people had the opportunity to truly own a piece of the business they work for, the world would be a much better place," Meredith says. "We will always place a high value on inclusivity and ownership." ■

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

— in B.C. —

“ In the construction industry, there sometimes is this tendency to rush projects and deal with mistakes afterwards, often to the detriment of the environment, or infrastructure. ”

JOE SALAZAR  
DIRECTOR



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Redux  
A WEST COAST REDUCTION LTD. PRO-TEAM



# Redux / West Coast Reduction Ltd.

## Finding a Solution and Better Uses for Waste

“Nothing left behind except sustainable solutions,” is the bold mission statement of **Redux**, a program of **West Coast Reduction Ltd.**

Founder Jack Diamond and his sons started the business from a small butcher shop in Vancouver, which he grew into multiple locations, and then into B.C.’s largest meatpacking operations. Gordon Diamond succeeded his father in 1979 and proceeded to build what has become the largest independent rendering company in western Canada with expanded facilities in Vancouver, plus additional facilities in Calgary, Chilliwack, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Nanaimo, and Saskatoon.

Diamond’s ultimate goal? “Finding an efficient solution for this waste while creating value.” Thus, **West Coast Reduction Ltd.** was created in 1964.

“He noticed there was a need to get rid of products that couldn’t be sold to humans for consumption and that ended up in the landfill, so he built up this network of operations – wanting nothing left behind,” says Derek Quan, Head of **Redux Services** on the ‘silent industry’ the company has been involved in since its inception.

Fast forward to 2010, and a much-needed division of the umbrella company was formed, named **Redux**, which is built on four unique services that keep tonnes of animal and food waste, plus thousands of litres of used cooking oil and grease, from being dumped in landfills annually across western Canada.

The first service involves **Redux’s** philosophy of useful collection and upcycling of used cooking oil from food processors, restaurants, and commercial kitchens. “We collect what is viewed as waste, then process it in a safe and compliant way so it can be reborn into new products for animal feed and renewable energy,” explains Quan. The second service is commercial grease trap cleaning, which intercepts grease between drains and our sewer systems before it causes clogging in our waterways.

The third service is the collection of unusable bones and fat, which is transformed into ingredients used in all sorts of products.

The fourth and newest service deals with pre-consumer food waste from food

processors and grocery stores.

“The goal is to divert waste from the landfill,” Quan says. “It’s shocking how much food goes to waste before it even reaches the consumer, whether it has been labeled incorrectly or has small imperfections. We use the EPA food waste hierarchy, which starts off by reducing waste at the source level. If it is safe, we try to find an option to feed humans with it, like through charities. If that is not possible then we work to feed it to animals, use it as a feedstock, or work with partners for composting.”

A large part of **Redux’s** business was impacted during the pandemic when restaurants closed, and as the company is not government-funded, but a family-run business with over 500 employees.

“Back in March of 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, our CEO Barry Glotman took me into his office and reiterated how important it was that we protect our people, keep the team busy, and avoid layoffs like all the others in our industry,” says Quan. “We treat every single team member like family. It is truly refreshing to see how much Gordon and Barry really care.”

The same family-style approach applies to their clients with nurtured relationships, mutual respect, and a solution-focused approach to everything. **Redux** has had success aligning on a corporate level with head offices of brands that treat environmental and sustainability topics seriously. Streamlining this process with these clients has allowed for seamless adoption in multiple services.

“Word of mouth has always been our path to growth,” says Quan. “For the longest time, **Redux** was very quiet in the back of house at restaurants, collecting used cooking oil, animal by-products, and cleaning out grease trap interceptors. It’s dirty work, but we have a reputation for doing things the right way, and we take pride in our service and even all the little things like the level of cleanliness of our trucks.”

With the health of our planet always paramount, where does **Redux** go from here? Quan keeps it simple, stating the brand’s stance - “what else can we do to add value to the world and get us even closer to our mission of Nothing Left Behind?” ■

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

— in B.C. —

“We collect what is viewed as waste, then process it in a safe and compliant way so it can be reborn into new products for animal feed and renewable energy.”

**DEREK QUAN**  
HEAD OF REDUX SERVICES



  
**Redux**  
NOTHING LEFT BEHIND\*

**WEST COAST REDUCTION LTD.**

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# CPAWS-BC

## Protecting Lands and Waters Across B.C. since 1978

**B**.C.'s lands and waters are home to nearly 1,800 species of animals and plants at risk of extinction, more than anywhere in Canada.

To save these species, we must protect the habitats that shelter them by creating large, well-managed, connected protected areas where native plants and animals thrive, now and forever; and where people and communities can live off the land and ocean without impacting future generations.

*Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - British Columbia*, also known as *CPAWS-BC*, is the provincial chapter of one of Canada's oldest not-for-profit, grassroots-based conservation groups. For over 40 years, *CPAWS-BC* has been protecting wilderness in every corner of B.C. and deep into the ocean. In the face of the dual biodiversity and climate crises, they advocate for nature conservation so that forests, grasslands, oceans, and the animals we love and depend on can thrive forever.

*CPAWS-BC* works in partnership with First Nations advocating for the creation of large parks, protected areas, and wildlife corridors – areas including the home of the orcas in the Salish Sea, the unique grasslands of the South Okanagan Similkameen, and the lush waters of Gwaii Haanas where rainforest meets the sea.

*CPAWS-BC* works to bridge relationships between Indigenous leaders, provincial and federal governments by advocating for well-designed and managed protected areas and keeping conservation a top priority for governments. This is critically important, as science now affirms what generations of Indigenous stewardship and knowledge have nurtured: biodiversity is highest on Indigenous-managed lands. Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) offer a nature-based solution to combat habitat destruction and species loss.

“With wildlife populations plummeting and biodiversity loss at its worst, the B.C. government has a huge opportunity to lead true change for nature,” says Jessie Corey, Terrestrial Conservation Manager at *CPAWS-BC*. “This has to begin with a promise to take action now and support First Nations and others working to permanently protect B.C.'s wildlife and ecosystems. The clock is ticking.”

From moose and caribou habitats to marine-life hotspots like glass sponge reefs along B.C.'s coast, *CPAWS-BC* is dedicated to keeping nature and wildlife thriving forever.

This collaborative approach has already made

big conservation gains, across B.C. Over the last 15 years, *CPAWS-BC* has pushed to protect unique grasslands in the South Okanagan Similkameen. Now, the Okanagan Nation Alliance, provincial, and federal governments are working together to establish a new National Park Reserve. The park would span over 27,000 hectares, protecting dozens of endangered species on the brink.

*CPAWS-BC's* partnership with the Kaska Dena is supporting the creation of Dene K'eh Kusān, a four million hectare protected area in Kaska ancestral territory that would connect 14 protected areas in northern B.C. This years-long story—one that *CPAWS-BC* hopes will lead to protecting a swath of land bigger than Vancouver Island—is a key example of their trusted partnerships with First Nations.

*CPAWS-BC* also works to create marine protected areas (MPAs) on the coast, one of the most effective tools to protect ocean ecosystems and rebuild marine life populations.

“By removing or reducing all known threats and stressors, MPAs act as refugia for marine life and in doing so improve the long-term health and sustainability of species and habitats that coastal communities and commercial fisheries rely on,” says Kate MacMillan, acting Ocean Conservation Manager of *CPAWS-BC*.

A network of Indigenous-led MPAs is proposed for the north and central coasts off the shores of the Great Bear Rainforest. Canada's first MPA network would showcase how Indigenous-led conservation helps continue First Nations' stewardship of these waters and move reconciliation forward.

*CPAWS-BC* was honoured to be involved in establishing the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve (NMCAR) and Haida Heritage Site, which signals a brighter future for marine protected areas. The Southern Strait of Georgia, home of the iconic southern resident killer whale and some 3000 more marine species, is currently undergoing a feasibility assessment to become a National Marine Conservation Area Reserve.

In 2017, Canada committed to protecting 30% of lands and oceans by 2030 as part of a global movement to combat climate change. Evidence shows that protecting at least 30% of the Earth's land and ocean will be needed to reverse the decline of biodiversity and sustain a healthy planet, and British Columbia must do its part.

*CPAWS-BC* is committed to helping the province meet and exceed these bold conservation targets. Nature is B.C.'s best hope, for all of us. ■

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

— in B.C. —

“With wildlife populations plummeting and biodiversity loss at its worst, the B.C. government has a huge opportunity to lead true change for nature.”

JESSIE COREY  
TERRESTRIAL CONSERVATION  
MANAGER



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# Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG)

## Canada's Leading Full-Service Law Firm – Making a Difference in ESG

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices have gained prominence to the point where “the rubber is hitting the road,” says Lynn McGrade, national head of the Investment Management Group at **Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG)**. “ESG used to be tied to social license, to doing the right thing, but now it is an essential business imperative.”

This is evident across all areas of practice at **BLG**, which focuses on business law, commercial litigation and arbitration, and intellectual property solutions. Providing advocacy-related services to organizations across all sectors, the firm is regularly engaged to assist a wide range of clients on ESG matters with increasing frequency. “Our clients are taking comfort in knowing that **BLG** has deep knowledge of international ESG best practices, strategies and solutions,” explains John Vellone, national leader of the firm’s ESG initiative.

The heightened attention on climate change, sustainability and social justice brings greater scrutiny on companies to align their performance with calls for responsible action.

Jennifer Archer, a partner in the firm’s Private Equity Group, adds that while observers may dismiss ESG considerations as simply the latest hot market trend in business, that view fails to account for a shift in societal climate. According to Archer, thoughtful consideration and management of ESG factors has potential to assist in achieving two key goals: driving value and limiting risk.

For McGrade, this means helping firms tell their ESG stories, track and measure outcomes, and present this information to institutional investors who consider ESG an important indicator for economic success.

Larry Fink of BlackRock stated that “not a day goes by when he doesn’t get asked about ESG,” shares McGrade, who believes this speaks to the importance for companies seeking to raise capital to focus on ESG issues to “remain attractive to investors.”

At the end of March 2021, the value of sustainable funds in Canada was \$18 billion, which represented a 160-percent increase from 2020. “Investment fund managers are stepping up efforts to build ESG-focused funds or integrate ESG screens into their products,” McGrade says. The burgeoning market has also

attracted the attention of regulators, who are working to advance transparency and clearer definitions.

Another driver of change is shareholder activism, notes Fred Pletcher, corporate practitioner and leader of **BLG**’s national Mining Group and shareholder engagement. “Governance practices are among the key things we focus on when we conduct assessments for shareholder activists.”

Investors and stakeholders are increasingly looking to influence strategic and operational decision-making as well as board and management makeup as a means to improve outcomes and, Pletcher says, these efforts leave an impact.

“We’ve seen remarkable change and improvement in governance standards, including diversity on boards, across Canadian public companies over the course of the last 15 years.”

Pletcher has observed significant forward momentum in mining, calling the Canadian mining industry an international success story. “Mining companies have long been reporting on environmental actions,” he says. “They also have extensive experience in consulting with rural and Indigenous communities in order to secure social license.”

Indigenous Law counsel, Chris Roine, relates to the “S” in ESG by highlighting how relationships between the Crown and First Nations are increasingly taking the form of partnerships. “This accelerated after November 2019, when B.C. became the first province in Canada to embrace the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in legislation, followed by federal legislation in June 2021,” says Roine. The passage of UNDRIP legislation is historic, but the hard work is yet to come, namely developing and implementing the action plans anticipated by the federal and provincial legislation.

For Environmental Law partner Jonathan Cocker, a focus on environmental outcomes can help to mitigate challenges and capture opportunities. “Clients are adjusting, disclosing and reconciling their future operations by reacting to conditions on the ground,” says Cocker.

**BLG** is also committed internally to ESG practices, including a commitment to conducting responsible business, reducing environmental impact and improving access to justice. ■

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE — in B.C. —

“Our team provides comprehensive, results-oriented advice related to the legal aspects of ESG strategies — positioning our clients to effectively address emerging opportunities and challenges.”

JENNIFER ARCHER  
PARTNER



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# Summit Earthworks

## Mission-Based Contractor Providing Conscientious Environmental Solutions

Since 2009, *Summit Earthworks* has operated as a civil, geotechnical, and environmental remediation contractor, specializing in contaminated soils management, environmental remediation, and habitat restoration. Environmental solutions for government, industrial, commercial, and residential clients are their focus.

Steve Rosell, Senior Vice-President considers the company the “peak of excellence in environmental service, with a commitment to quality and integrity for our clients.”

What sets *Summit Earthworks* apart from their competitors? “Providing a diversity of services is our strength,” he says. “The niche work we do, specifically the wide range of specialized environmental solutions we provide, and the fact that we own and operate several provincially permitted soil management facilities in B.C. separates us from our competitors in the soil management and environmental remediation industry.”

*Summit Earthworks* operates soil management facilities in Mission and in New Westminster, plus a wood waste landfill in Quesnel which also includes a contaminated soil bioremediation facility.

For many of those not in the business, there is some confusion as to what ‘contaminated soil’ means. Rosell explains that “contaminated soil doesn’t always mean toxic or hazardous in our industry, the standards classify soil based on land use, such as residential, commercial, industrial or hazardous waste soil – which we don’t accept the latter, but we do manage these projects and direct them to places that can deal with it.”

Summit is a COR and ISNetworld certified contractor and works closely with developers, environmental, geotechnical, and civil consultants. They have a sterling reputation when it comes to completing large, complex projects on time and within budget and an excellent relationship with Indigenous communities, including a dedicated professional on staff that has been working with First Nations throughout the province for several years.

A recent success is the completion of “an interesting project at a very remote work site along the central B.C. coast,” says Rosell.

“We worked with a local First Nation to construct a new solid waste management centre

for this community. There were no roads in, it is very remote, and all the equipment had to be barged and floated upriver. We built the centre and removed all the existing waste. One of the challenges are the tidal swings in the river. In fact, the community can be completely flooded at times.”

Another notable achievement, Summit was nominated as a national finalist in 2020 for a “Brownie Award”, a recognition in brownfield remediation from the Canadian Brownfields Network for the Wren + Raven Development, a local residential project in Mission.

The accolades are shared by the entire Summit team, that Rosell believes is key to the company’s success.

“Our strength of services comes from our vast team experience,” he says. “We have environmental science professionals, chemical engineers, habitat and biology experts on staff – it’s our depth of talent that matters.”

The company has grown from 28 employees two years ago to the present staff of 73, clearly rising above the challenges of a global pandemic.

When it comes to supporting the environment, has *Summit Earthworks* made a difference, especially under the public microscope these days?

“Health and Safety and the protection of the environment are a huge consideration for the public and; our staff,” Rosell says. “We do sensitive marine work, and have a responsible method for managing contaminated soil, that provides solutions versus illegal dumping.”

A good example of habitat restoration by Summit is the Thames Creek project in North Vancouver. “The riverbanks were eroding and impacting several of the residents, so we diverted the water, rebuilt, and reinforced the riverbanks and then restored the flow back into the creek,” he says.

Growth and expansion continues for Summit. They are beginning construction on a new engineer designed soil transfer facility along the shores of the Fraser River near Annacis Island, which is expected to be operational before year end.

*Summit Earthworks* has plans to expand into B.C.’s north coast, including Kitimat, Prince Rupert, and the Terrace region. Prince George and Vancouver Island are also of interest for this growing company that’s worth watching. ■

ENVIRONMENTAL  
EXCELLENCE

— in B.C. —

“ Providing a diversity of services is our strength. ”

STEVE ROSELL  
SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT



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# Ecowaste Industries

## A Recycling Champion Working Towards a Sustainable Future

**M**etro Vancouver's population is projected to swell from today's 2.6 million to 3.8 million by 2050.

At the same time as construction and demolition activities are ramping up, the metropolis is looking to reach ambitious waste reduction targets. *Ecowaste Industries Ltd.* (*Ecowaste*) plans to be part of the solution.

The privately-held, Canadian-owned company received a 2020 *Environmental Excellence* award from the Waste Management Association of B.C. for its investments in its recycling program. It is now stepping up efforts to address the "challenges of diverting waste from the landfill as well as reducing the need for transportation in the region," says Christian Dietrich, *Ecowaste's* general manager. "This inspired us to come up with a local option."

*Ecowaste* has been operating a landfill since 1971. From taking mostly soil during the early years, the company now receives roughly half of their business from waste generated from the construction or demolition of buildings, such as wood, concrete, plastics, roofing materials and insulation.

The changes in intake – along with growing awareness about sustainability – inspired *Ecowaste* to invest in recycling equipment. Resulting activities now include conversion of yard waste into compost, clean wood into biomass, and concrete into aggregate.

"One of our machines breaks down pieces of concrete into two inch and smaller pieces that can be reused in construction or roadbuilding," Dietrich says. "We also have a wood-grinding operation, which turns used discarded lumber into wood chips that we sell to businesses across the Lower Mainland for energy."

These measures allow *Ecowaste* to keep about one-third of its intake out of the landfill, but the goal is to get this number up to 70 or 80 percent, he says. "We plan to build a large materials recovery facility, or MRF, where inbound materials pass through different equipment that separates them based on their density, size and composition."

The proposed 100,000-square-foot, multi-million dollar facility will allow the separation of

wood, concrete, metal, plastic and more, which can then be recycled or reused. Dietrich sees this as "key for reducing the environmental impact of the construction industry."

However, these plans are currently on hold due to pending regulatory approvals: *Ecowaste* is seeking to extend the life of the landfill, which now operates on a permit that ends in 2035 as well as increase its height allowance.

"Our license allows us a certain waste height within the landfill, and we currently only have space for about three years of current volumes," he explains. "Even if the MRF would allow us to recycle most of the material, there will still be some materials that will not be able to be recycled or reused which we will have to landfill throughout the expected life of the MRF, some 30 years."

And should the permit run out, all buildings and structures would have to be removed from the property by 2035, "which makes the business case for a multi-million facility challenging," he adds.

Metro Vancouver has the aspiration of diverting 80 percent of solid waste from landfills, but the number currently hovers at 63 percent.

While every effort, including banning plastic straws, is a step in the right direction, the proposed MRF would enable a big leap forward, believes Dietrich. "We have a robust solution. It doesn't require taxpayers' money and there is no opposition from our neighbours."

The benefits of having a "local recycling and landfill facility – and a company that is committed to investing in recycling technologies should be obvious," he notes. "Having an outlet for receiving construction and demolition materials and dealing with them responsibly would give businesses, including construction and hauling companies, confidence about the future."

And a timely removal of the regulatory obstacles would allow *Ecowaste* to invest and "help to raise the region's diversion rate to nearly 70 per cent with the addition of this new facility," says Dietrich. "The clock is ticking. We have to look beyond today's numbers and think about the next few decades." ■

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

— in B.C. —

“One of our machines breaks down pieces of concrete into two inch and smaller pieces that can be reused in construction or roadbuilding.”

CHRISTIAN DIETRICH  
GENERAL MANAGER



## ECOWASTE

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# Ecojustice

## Defending Nature, Combating Climate Change and Fighting for a Healthy Environment

In confronting challenges, Canadians tend to try friendly approaches and collaborative efforts first due to the prevailing sense that if urgent action is required, governments will do what's needed.

What if this trust turns out to be misplaced? Where can Canadians find support for galvanizing action, when ongoing environmental degradation inspires disillusionment or even despair?

With its climate defender's mantle, *Ecojustice* is poised to help in such circumstances.

"We're running out of time in the context of the climate crisis, and many realize that we need to force government and industry to do what's right," says Devon Page, executive director of *Ecojustice*. "And that can require litigation."

*Ecojustice* uses the power of the law to defend nature, combat climate change and fight for a healthy environment. During its 30-plus year history, its strategic, public-interest lawsuits and advocacy have led to precedent-setting court decisions and improved laws that address urgent environmental issues in Canada.

A current example is the youth-led lawsuit, *Mathur et. al. v. Her Majesty in Right of Ontario*. This lawsuit, launched by *Ecojustice* on behalf of seven youth, alleges that when the Ontario government rolled back the province's climate targets, it violated young Canadians' rights to life, liberty and security.

"When the Doug Ford government came into power, it weakened Ontario's climate legislation," says Page. "We believe this also breached the right to be treated equally. Since the politicians, who are adults, failed to act appropriately, youth today will bear the disproportionate burden of the changing climate."

Ontario's weaker target will allow more greenhouse gas emissions to be emitted, fueling dangerous climate change-related impacts such as heatwaves, floods, fires, and poor air quality that threaten the quality of life of Canadians — today and in generations to come.

A key driver of climate change is overconsumption, notes Page.

"We take more from the Earth than it can give, and we dispose of more than it can absorb. This ultimately leads to ever-increasing environmental degradation."

He advocates for two courses of action: One, that Canadians adopt more sustainable lifestyles; and two, that politicians pass laws to mandate that corporations and industry act in

a more sustainable and responsible way.

"Industry uses every tool to maximize revenue generation, regardless of the environmental impact," says Page. "And the market currently doesn't require Canadian companies to behave in an environmentally-friendly manner."

Activists — and especially youth — are responding with a push for climate action, he adds.

"We see young people taking to the streets, from climate marches in Montreal to Fairy Creek blockades on Vancouver Island. They understand what's at stake, and they're not intimidated by the RCMP or the courts."

A sea change in awareness has also affected *Ecojustice*, which is now Canada's largest environmental law charity, with offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa and Halifax. It started in 1990 with Steward Elgie, a young Canadian lawyer, who led a high-profile legal battle to hold Exxon and the Canadian government accountable when 35,000 tonnes of crude oil spilled from the Exxon Valdez into Prince William Sound.

The question of who would be nature's lawyer in Canada inspired the creation of the Sierra Legal Defence Fund, now *Ecojustice*, which takes on litigation and advocacy targeting issues like fish farming, old-growth logging, coal mining, oil and gas extraction, and pesticide use.

Climate change is a "hair-on-fire emergency," Page says. Two Canadian courts have already ruled that evidence supports the "climate crisis" characterization.

"Twenty years ago, judges were less educated about the environment and less sympathetic to our position," he says. "Now, there is recognition that our organization is often better informed than the industry, which typically presents a one-sided view."

Resulting benefits include better legal and environmental outcomes on the ground, as well as "evidence being tested and confirmed in court proceedings," says Page.

"Climate science has been clear for years. Acknowledging that this is an emergency in black and white in court judgments changed the narrative of how politicians, lobbyists and the media talk about environmental degradation in Canada."

Now the challenge is for "every citizen and every political leader to start behaving accordingly and making decisions that ensure we live within our planet's means." ■

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

— in B.C. —

“We’re running out of time in the context of the climate crisis, and many realize that we need to force government and industry to do what’s right.”

DEVON PAGE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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# Humane Solutions

## A Unique Approach to Wildlife and Pest Management Services

While studying environmental sustainability at UBC in 2015, Joe Abercrombie must have had some intuition about the future and his role in it. Intuition, plus grit, resourcefulness, and the desire to pay bills all led Abercrombie to accept a contract for pest control work and make a realization that would swiftly pull him from academics and dive headfirst into entrepreneurship.

With an extensive background in results-based work in the wildlife industry, Abercrombie was immediately aware of the larger issue when he was exposed to the industry standard for pest control in Vancouver. He quickly realized that the pervasive model is to convert pest and wildlife conflicts into sources of recurring revenue, not to solve the issue quickly while prioritizing clients' budgets and animal welfare.

"I got a truck, made a website and got going," Abercrombie explained. Now CEO of *Humane Solutions*, his business has been struggling to keep up with demand. "We have since grown exponentially and have built an amazing team of diverse and skilled professionals, all of whom prioritize ethics and sustainability above all else."

With a head office in Vancouver and a permanent division in the B.C. interior, *Humane Solutions* offers sustainable wildlife and pest management services to most major municipalities in B.C. A growing segment of the business is focused around innovative, high-profile wildlife management such as co-existence with beavers, predator monitoring and response, and specialized training services for industry and government, which are in demand across Canada.

"We try to be sustainable problem-solvers," says Abercrombie. "We have hundreds of different services and add to them by the week, due to the wide range of problems we are asked to help with. Some days we are physically controlling pests and wildlife, and others we are framers, roofers, stonemasons, and general handy people."

"We believe we are saving wildlife and helping drive sustainable development by solving human problems," he says, adding "rodents don't just magically appear because there are crumbs behind your stove, there are access points on your structure letting them in, and it does not matter how clean you are – the

structure itself is a resource."

The *Humane Solutions* ethos is to direct all funds and effort into these root causes. Only once they are effectively mitigated do they apply control methods to the species still in conflict. "Would you pay a roofer to return weekly to change the bucket under a roof leak? No, you demand a permanent result with transparent billing," Abercrombie says.

"By marrying older skills born from the fur trade and construction techniques, with modern safety and due diligence processes, we are in a league of our own," says Abercrombie. "We are the only company that is 100% rodenticide-free and have proven it successful over the last 5 years."

"Additionally, we are the only company that works with high-profile wildlife including furbearers and predators, as well as training municipalities and government agencies on our proprietary wildlife coexistence and intervention strategies," continues Abercrombie.

"We are relied upon and involved in the movement pushing the public outcry regarding banning rodenticides which pressured multiple B.C. municipalities to do so. The Ministry of Environment dropped a provincial wide ban and *Humane Solutions* is an enthusiastic participant of the scientific review process. That is so meaningful and positive, and hopefully has a disruptive effect on policy and results in some system change, because that is our goal," he says.

The proof is in the pudding, as *Humane Solutions* essentially swept the 2021 business awards in their category, claiming the top spots in the 2021 Consumer Choice Award, Top Choice Award, and Canadian Best Businesses.

*Humane Solutions* is aiming to expand their pest and wildlife services Canada-wide over the next couple of years, but their ambitions are greater than just dealing with wildlife.

*Humane Solutions* hopes to become a socially motivated group of companies, with immediate plans to become involved with recycling, upcycling hard and soft plastics, and helping to solve the issue of the cycle of poverty in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Says Abercrombie, "we are a socially motivated company, and our overall ambition is to grow and pivot to where people need help, and we feel we can do some good." ■

ENVIRONMENTAL  
EXCELLENCE

— in B.C. —

“ We believe we are saving wildlife and helping drive sustainable development by solving human problems. ”

JOE ABERCROMBIE  
CEO



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SOLUTIONS™

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# Pacific Salmon Foundation

## Leading Research, Restoration, and Conservation of Pacific Salmon and their Ecosystems

About half of Pacific salmon populations are in a state of decline. Pacific salmon face a myriad of challenges during their unique life cycles, which involve seasonal migrations through both freshwater and marine environments. Significant factors impacting Pacific salmon include climate change, habitat degradation, land and water pressures, pollution, and events — such as landslides, heatwaves, droughts, and wildfires.

These circumstances affect the seven primary species of wild Pacific salmon — including Sockeye, Chinook, Coho, Pink, Chum, Steelhead Trout, and Cutthroat Trout.

As climate change and related trends continue to impact salmon survivability in the years ahead, there is a growing need to accelerate work supporting climate adaptation for salmon populations whose habitats are dramatically impacted by shifting climate patterns.

Since 1987, *Pacific Salmon Foundation* has been working to conserve and restore wild Pacific salmon and their natural habitats in B.C. and the Yukon. Through a shared vision, major funding, communication, and coordinated action, the non-profit organization believes that vital freshwater and marine habitats can be restored and Pacific salmon can recover.

“There is still time to advance ongoing Pacific salmon recovery,” says Michael Meneer, CEO & President of *Pacific Salmon Foundation*. “This demands urgency for Pacific salmon and for the 130+ species, including grizzlies, orcas and eagles, that depend on them. We cannot lose them on our watch.”

This summer, *Pacific Salmon Foundation* announced more than \$1.2M in grants to 114 grassroots Pacific salmon conservation projects in 66 communities across B.C. in an effort to continue the work to conserve, restore, and enhance Pacific salmon and their ecosystems.

*Pacific Salmon Foundation* believes there are major areas that can be leveraged right now to positively impact salmon — habitat, fishing, and hatcheries.

Crucial salmon habitats, from freshwater streams to the open ocean, have been impacted

by 150 years of industrial development, and are now being compounded by rising water temperatures and changes in stream flows due to climate change. As a result, Pacific salmon that spend a longer amount of time in freshwater are struggling.

Major investment is needed to restore estuaries and essential habitats. Thus, *Pacific Salmon Foundation* is actively funding community partners who are restoring spawning habitat, replanting native vegetation along key salmon streams, identifying cool water refuge sites in streams, and researching migration impediments.

B.C. has encountered increasing fisheries restrictions based on conservation objectives over the past 20 years, which has been a source of frustration and loss for communities that depend on fisheries. Even more, the state of Pacific salmon has not improved.

To support a sustainable future of salmon harvest practice, *Pacific Salmon Foundation* advocates for collaborative research and catch monitoring programs with fisheries, exploration of more traditional selective fishing practices, and engagement with stewards in First Nations communities.

Salmon hatcheries offer a number of positive benefits, including helping to rebuild weak populations, supporting salmon stock assessment programs, producing fish for harvest, and supporting education and awareness in local communities.

At the same time, these hatcheries can also introduce risks, such as changes to natural genetics, increased harvest pressure on weak stocks, and increased competition for food and habitat in the natural ecosystem.

Currently, research is underway by *Pacific Salmon Foundation* to determine optimal hatchery effectiveness, allowing for continued conservation and enhancement of stocks while maintaining the genetic diversity of wild stocks and minimal competition for survival.

**It is essential to recognize that salmon are resilient and they can recover.** Through conservation efforts led by *Pacific Salmon Foundation* and partners, B.C. can support Pacific salmon stream by stream, and ensure their longevity for generations to come. ■

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

— in B.C. —

“There is still time to advance ongoing Pacific salmon recovery, this demands urgency for Pacific salmon and for the 130+ species, including grizzlies, orcas and eagles, that depend on them. We cannot lose them on our watch.”

MICHAEL MENEER  
CEO & PRESIDENT



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