
Wild Times

A change in the air

by Joe Foy

Political change is coming at us all so fast right now in BC that by the time this article is published, we may be living in a very different province from the one I now sit in as I write this.

I don't know if the BC Greens and NDP will form a coalition government – but not long from now that may well have happened.

In this thin crack in time, where nothing is known for sure and anything might be possible, hope grows for a better future. I can almost feel the universe changing around me.

Where once a massive oil spill in the Salish Sea seemed inevitable, now it looks likely that a new Green-NDP government working hand in hand with its citizens will stop Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain oil pipeline dead in its tracks.

For my entire life I have lived around the Salish Sea. I have trolled for coho salmon beside kelp forests bobbing in the first light of sunrise off Quadra Island. I have stalked Dungeness crabs with a forked stick off Crescent Beach. I've feasted on delicious Fanny Bay oysters and recall with joy the thousands of hours spent swimming at Tsawwassen, White Rock and Qualicum Beach – or just sitting on a log in the sunshine and breathing in the sea air. All these special memories are shared with friends and family. And of course I hope that my grandkids can have equally wonderful Salish Sea memories as they journey through their lives.

Both the NDP and Greens have said they oppose Kinder Morgan's pipe dream – so



today, I am happily imagining the day that the pipeline goes away – for good.

Back in 1954 when I was born, my family were farmers in Langley. In the 1970s when the Agricultural Land Reserve was brought into law, I thought it was a very good piece of forward-looking legislation to preserve BC's precious food lands. I still do.

So I was horrified when the BC government approved the Site C dam project and work started to flood the largest area of farmland ever removed from the Agricultural Land Reserve. But now with a potential Green-NDP coalition, I find it possible to hope that the terrible Site C dam project can be brought tumbling down.

Times are tough in the Peace River Valley, where the spectre of Site C flooding is the stuff of farm family nightmares, up and down the river. The Boon family were told that they had to be out of their third-generation farmhouse by the beginning of June. Recently, they were granted a 30-day extension.



Both NDP and Green statements on the Site C dam have given the Boons and the rest of us reason to hope that the \$9 billion useless waste of taxpayer dollars will be scrapped.

All over BC others are holding on too – barely. Driven to the brink of extinction by out-of-control logging practices, spotted owls, marbled murrelet, and mountain caribou numbers have fallen to dangerously low levels. Grizzly bears, wolves, and cougars are hunted down and killed for the fun of it – even in parks.

But both the Greens and NDP have promised a provincial endangered species law and an end to the trophy hunting of grizzly bears.

The future is so close I can almost reach out and touch it. All I know for sure right now though is that a change is in the air and I am feeling hopeful.

Joe Foy is the national campaign director for the Wilderness Committee, Canada's largest membership-based wilderness preservation organization.