

annual report 2019



 **Dogwood**

**Dogwood brings together
everyday **British Columbians**
to reclaim **decision-making power**
over our **air, land and water****



Message from the Chair 2018–19

I'm honoured to have served on Dogwood's Board of Directors since 2006, and as Chair since 2013. As a volunteer and supporter like you, I'm excited to see so much of our hard work come to fruition over the last year. Together, we have stopped the expansion of thermal coal exports through the Fraser Surrey Docks project, launched a successful program to train young activists, joined a coalition to reform mining in B.C. and persuaded the province to launch a corruption inquiry. While the Trans Mountain pipeline fight continues, we can be proud that not one metre of pipe has been laid across unceded First Nations territory in B.C.

In this annual report, you'll read more about the highlights of our campaigns and programs in the words of our dedicated staff. As your Dogwood chair, I want to share with you the steps we are taking to make the organization representative of, and responsible to, the communities we serve.

Our success stems from our distributed organizing model which has built real grassroots political power capable of influencing governments and policy. Our power is based upon the involvement of hundreds

of volunteers working in their own communities. Last year, it became clear that our organization is not as diverse as the province we want to serve, and so we began a journey to weave justice, equity, diversity and inclusion into the core of our work.

Our opponents in the struggle to take back decision-making power over our air, land and water all too often wrap their messaging in a vision for Canada that leaves behind our diverse communities. Diversity is

our strength. To fight back against tankers and fossil fuel infrastructure—indeed to win a habitable climate future for our children and grandchildren—we must also fight back against patriarchy, xenophobia and colonialism.

The year ahead will involve an uphill battle to stop the Trans Mountain pipeline, while at the same time broadening our conversation to target the billions in taxpayer subsidies given to the fossil fuel industry

each year. As we have that conversation, I encourage you to ask yourself and your neighbours how justice, equity, diversity and inclusion are reflected in the investments we make as a society. We are stronger when our conversation includes everyone in our community, and I thank you for joining us in your commitment to this important work.

— Jennie Milligan, Board Chair

"We are stronger when our conversation includes everyone in our community."



Communications & Campaigns

This was a year of setbacks for traditional progressive and environmental activism in B.C. The federal government bought a pipeline. We lost a referendum on voting reform. And on key files affecting the environment and Indigenous rights, B.C.'s new government chose to defend decisions made by the old government it defeated.

The overall problem is clear: even when voters install nominally progressive leaders, we lack the organized power as a movement to hold those people accountable. After they take office, the status quo reasserts itself through lobbying, propaganda and threats of capital flight. It's demoralizing for our supporters, and costly for our organizations.

Meanwhile, corporations have learned from the digital organizing first embraced by the left. With more money, much of it from real estate and fossil fuel interests, right-wing consultants have cultivated a network of astroturf groups. They not only mirror our tactics—by many metrics, they are beating us.

Put that against a backdrop of climate breakdown, loss of trust in institutions and economic insecurity, and you have a recipe for populism. The big question is whether this will manifest as violent right-wing populism, targeting vulnerable populations—or a genuine social movement capable of challenging corporate power. We're pushing as hard as we can toward the latter.



"The big question is whether this will manifest as violent right-wing populism or a genuine social movement capable of challenging corporate power."

Climate

Our fiscal year began amid ongoing protests at the Kinder Morgan oil tanker terminal and tank farm. Then the owner dropped a bombshell: the Texas company was suspending "non-essential" spending due, they said, to opposition by the provincial government. It was vindication for thousands of supporters and Dogwood volunteers who had spent the previous year doing everything they could to keep their MLAs on track.

Then the federal government stepped in and offered to buy the project with public money. Dogwood immediately pivoted to a "Stop the Bailout" campaign. 14,573 supporters sent letters to their MPs. Another 8,160 people signed our paper petition. But the sale went through. Price tag? \$4.4 billion. As Prime Minister Trudeau later said, Trans Mountain "would be dead" if it were still in private hands. The government, he said, "has a greater tolerance for risk".

The same month, the Squamish Nation lost a court challenge against the B.C. government's approval of the project. Former premier Christy Clark never conducted a review of the project. She rubber-stamped it

after taking huge donations from Kinder Morgan and its oil patch backers. The Squamish Nation said that violated the province's duty to consult. But—despite months of advocacy by our supporters—the B.C. NDP defended Clark's approval and beat the Squamish in court. (That appeal continues.)

It looked like construction was inevitable. Then another bombshell: the Federal Court of Appeal overturned the Trudeau government's original approval, stopping the project in its tracks. Ottawa was ordered to conduct another review of the oil tanker traffic and consult Indigenous communities properly. It was a huge victory for our First Nations allies and a welcome reprieve for our organizers.

Another win: after six years fighting a U.S. thermal coal terminal at Fraser Surrey Docks, the Port of Vancouver finally cancelled the permit, killing the project. We held a victory party overlooking the site with longtime community allies, lawyers and local officials. It was a satisfying way to wrap up our Beyond Coal campaign—but also a reminder of the heavy cost of battling individual fossil fuel proposals.

Democracy

The court-ordered hiatus on Trans Mountain created space for Dogwood teams to campaign on B.C.'s third electoral reform referendum, which ran throughout the fall of 2018. Overall, it was a frustrating experience.

The government solicited, then disregarded, recommendations by Dogwood and other civil society groups around the design and timing of the referendum. The confusing ballot questions, use of paper mail and long voting period created structural disadvantages that we never overcame.

Our memes and videos were popular within our progressive online bubble, but failed to reach a broader public. And because the polls were wrong, we campaigned on the assumption that it was simply a matter of getting progressive supporters to a mailbox. In the end, it was a 23-point gap.

On the bright side, we also used the summer to incubate a pilot program called Summit, a week-long youth activism workshop we ran twice with students from Lower Mainland high schools. The participants were whip-smart, hardworking and filled us with hope.

After the summer, many put the training to use organizing climate strikes, as well as a youth-led campaign to lower the voting age in B.C.

We think youth activism is the most exciting disruptive force in politics today, and we're proud to support their struggle for enfranchisement and generational justice. We plan to make Summit a regular summer program, in addition to offering workshops and resources throughout the year.



Mining Reform

This year we also started building a new campaign. Electrifying the world's economy will require mining for minerals, many of which B.C. has in abundance. But under our 1800s-vintage mining laws, companies are operating in a Wild West. Reforming mining in B.C. means upholding Indigenous rights, including Free, Prior and Informed Consent. It means strengthening protections for water. And it means holding big polluters accountable.



Over the summer, close to 1,500 Dogwood supporters participated in the province's process to overhaul Environmental Assessment in B.C., demanding that project reviews consider climate and Indigenous rights. The province signed a new EA bill into law in the fall that, while far from perfect, gives communities new tools to consider proposals.

We met with frontline communities affected by mining, including folks on Quesnel Lake still grappling with the 2014 Mount Polley tailings dam failure. We conducted public opinion research. We co-hosted an event by the Tsilhqot'in Nation to better understand their fight to defend Teztan Biny, the trout-rich lake targeted by Taseko Mine's New Prosperity proposal.

In the spring we launched our "Make Them Pay" action aimed at Imperial Metals ahead of the five-year deadline for charges in the Mount Polley disaster. 7,826 Dogwood supporters sent letters to federal

fisheries minister Jonathan Wilkinson, demanding that he not let Imperial Metals off the hook. Our video launching the action was our most successful of the year, racking up more than 120,000 views online.

Conclusion

The reality is dawning on us that the projects presenting the biggest threats to our climate, our water and our local communities cannot survive without public money. Our money.

Imperial Metals offloaded \$40 million in cleanup costs onto B.C. taxpayers. Trans Mountain will cost us \$15 or \$20 billion if it is ever built. The foreign state-owned oil companies behind B.C.'s biggest gas export project, LNG Canada, demanded \$6 billion in government aid—and got it. Even the Site C dam appears to be an indirect taxpayer subsidy to the fracking industry.

These companies maintain their grip on lawmakers and regulators because they need them. The more they can make the public pay the costs of doing business—including infrastructure construction, accident cleanup and carbon pollution—the more the companies profit. But those institutions, and that money, belong to us.

We need to tap into the growing public urgency around the climate crisis. We need to empower and support youth activists whom the OPEC chief Mohammed Barkindo calls the "greatest threat" to the future of the oil industry. And we need to relentlessly expose and attack the public money and political institutions propping up the billionaires and oligarchs that threaten our lives.

But this will only work if we also broaden who we mean by "we". To harness true people power, we need to show up for communities outside the mostly white, educated, liberal, urban milieu that has so far powered most environmental activism in B.C. That means embracing a broader left populism that puts everyday people's material security ahead of corporate profits. And we have to do it quickly, or risk becoming irrelevant.

— Kai Nagata



"To harness true people power... we need to embrace a broader left populism that puts everyday people's material security ahead of corporate profits."





Organizing

Where we've been

Over the course of the year, we sustained and diversified Dogwood’s organizing network. We had the right mix of teams, mobilization groups and individuals across Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland ready to take action—especially during the six-month period of Get Out the Vote mobilizations on proportional representation, the Nanaimo provincial by-election and the Burnaby South federal by-election.

Volunteers and organizing staff brought in more than 8,000 new Dogwood supporters this year, mostly concentrated in the summer season during our Stop the Bailout push—the year’s peak of grassroots activity. Volunteers focused on public events in key ridings to hold Liberal MPs accountable before and after the federal government bought the Trans Mountain pipeline and oil tanker expansion proposal. This added to our base of British Columbians opposed to oil tanker expansion projects and started building towards a broader campaign to end tax dollar handouts to oil, coal and gas companies.

Meanwhile, smaller scale local action continues to bring success. Over the last year, several Dogwood teams have taken the initiative to assist the climate accountability campaign. Led by West Coast Environmental Law and Georgia Strait Alliance, this effort is asking cities to demand compensation from fossil fuel companies for climate change-related impacts on community infrastructure. In February, thanks to Dave and the Comox Valley team, the city of Courtenay became the 20th municipality to pass a resolution and send a letter to oil companies. Teams on the South Island, North Shore and Vancouver have supported similar efforts at their local councils.

We celebrated an enormous victory when the proposed Fraser Surrey Docks coal port, which would have exported eight million tonnes a year of dirty U.S.



coal through B.C. communities to be burned overseas, was scrapped. The efforts of our Coal Campaigner Arie Ross, who worked with us as an organizer before taking the reins of the Beyond Coal campaign in 2016, along with those of our incredible allied community groups and organizations also fighting Fraser Surrey Docks, were celebrated in April. It was a sweet victory that was six years in the making, involving some of the most committed volunteers Dogwood has had the honour of working with.

Our organizing staff makeup saw quite a bit of change this year as talented team members moved on to different pursuits and we added new faces for a fresh wave of campaigns and field work. In the spring, after three years as Director of Organizing, Laura Benson handed over the reins to long-time Organizer, Cheryl Cameron. Cheryl started with Dogwood as a volunteer in 2013 and will now take Dogwood’s field program to new heights in this time of climate emergency action. Laura has moved into a new role as Dogwood’s Director of Administration & Human Resources.

What we learned

During Dogwood's proportional representation campaign, we experimented with an age-old tactic that has been made new again: relational voting. This practice of mobilizing volunteers to influence their friends, family and personal contacts to vote has been proven to be twice as effective as any other tactic in U.S.-based electoral experiments. As far as we know, Dogwood was the first organization to try relational voting in Canada. We invested a lot of resources into creating a website to provide volunteers with the necessary tools and ran the program alongside a more traditional phone banking effort.

In the end, 110 volunteers deployed relational voting with the same amount doing GOTV phoning. On the one hand, relational voting proved far and

away more effective, but on a small scale—1,642 voters were contacted with 90 per cent confirming they had voted. On the other hand, we had 11,000 phone conversations with voters, but with no way to know how many of them actually voted.

Unfortunately, even if we had been able to reach thousands more British Columbians in the Stop the Bailout phase, and thousands more voters during our pro rep campaign, it still would not have been enough to achieve the outcomes we had hoped for. The power of our grassroots support in B.C. is, in the end, only a fraction of the federal scale of the Kinder Morgan bailout. We did, however, add a strong new base of supporters to be mobilized in the 2019 federal election. Similarly, while our efforts on pro rep could have significantly affected outcomes in other election

scenarios, the margin of defeat was larger than anything we've seen before due to a number of factors outside our scope of influence.

Overwhelmingly, what we found in the field in undertaking these three back-to-back efforts is that mobilizations flex and strengthen our grassroots power and volunteer leadership, but do not build our base of supporters. These campaigns were the most challenging to date in terms of reaching people—even our existing folks—and convincing new people to join us by giving us their contact information. We are operating in a very challenging new environment of public discourse and mistrust, and our issues do not inspire the same kind of online and grassroots response that our original No Tankers era enjoyed.

Where we're going

At the end of the fiscal year, coming out of by-election mobilizations in Nanaimo and Burnaby South, it was clear that our volunteers and supporters were in need of a new way to frame our long-fought pipeline battles. In particular, the political rhetoric around the Trans Mountain expansion had reached a fevered pitch, turning friends and relatives in Alberta and B.C. against each other and making reasoned conversation impossible. To address this impasse, our organizers held three speaker events in Vancouver, Victoria and Nanaimo called "Polluted Discourse: Building Grassroots Power Amid Pipeline Propaganda". The sold out events provided a needed opportunity to hear from people on the ground and to launch a new, broader campaign to eventually replace No Tankers: Dogwood's Climate Campaign. Its first objective is to end subsidies to fossil fuel companies.

With several new organizers on staff and the transition away from our flagship No Tankers campaign (which brought the majority of our volunteers to us) we have our work cut out for us to maintain, train and reinspire our core volunteers and teams. However, there's new reason for optimism as youth and climate activists take to the streets and join town halls across the country to talk openly about their gravest fears and strongest-held hopes for the planet. Dogwood

organizers and volunteers will take every opportunity to engage in this and give it a strategic direction by providing concrete actions to effect change within our democracy. In this federal election year, we will also be focusing on building our base in key swing ridings, including Burnaby North Seymour, home of the TMX port and tank farm.

"Relational voting proved far and away more effective, but on a small scale — 1,642 voters were contacted with 90 per cent confirming they had voted."

As for bringing in up and coming activists and leaders, our first round of Youth Summit camps last summer was a huge success. One cohort independently organized to launch a campaign to lower the voting age to 16 years old in B.C. As part of our Democracy campaign, Dogwood is now supporting this youth-led #LVA16 initiative with the goal building a support base by raising awareness through canvassing over the summer months, holding trainings and weekly meetings, and lobbying elected leaders. This year's much anticipated second round of Youth Summits will take place in both Vancouver and Victoria.

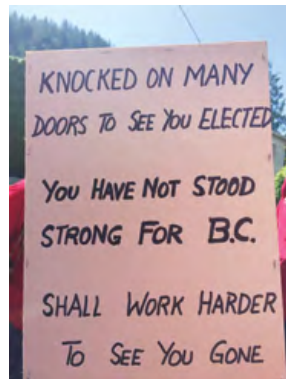
Finally, Dogwood's push for mining reform is gathering steam and our new staff organizer based in Nelson will be a big part of building local grassroots power. Holding mining companies accountable and preserving fresh water for the communities who depend on it are ideas most British Columbians can agree on. Our job, as always, is to bring our people together and amplify their voices and their influence.

— Laura Benson and Cheryl Cameron



**"Ottawa was ordered
to consult Indigenous
communities properly.
It was a huge victory for
our First Nations allies."**





Fundraising

Dogwood has always been about channeling everyday people toward points of power to make change, and that is just as true in our advocacy as it is in our fundraising. We are grateful to have thousands of everyday people fuel our work \$25, \$50 or \$100 at a time.

More than 2,400 monthly donors provide a steady stream of income that gives us the flexibility to meet new challenges as they arise. I don't know what we would do without their steadfast support month by month.

Support from both our one time donors and monthly donors has been critically important over the past year, especially at times when we are being singled out by politicians like Jason Kenney with the power of the bully pulpit behind them. Mr. Kenney wants you to believe Dogwood's funding comes from an American oil conspiracy, but the truth is we are

powered by thousands of generous and passionate Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

One of those generous and passionate Canadians passed away this last year, and left a legacy of activism in her will. By planning ahead, she was able to ensure her life's work—to protect the people and places she loved—lives on in our work together.

Finally, we owe deep gratitude to Don Gordon, who retired as Head of Revenue this year. Don's work over seven years at Dogwood transformed our fund-raising operations and left us with a strong platform for continued success, ensuring that your gift will be put to the best possible use standing up for B.C.

Dogwood exists because thousands of passionate and generous people believe in our work and support us \$25, \$50 and \$100 at a time. If you are one of them, thank you. If not, I invite you to join them!

— Adam Bailey, Head of Revenue

Financial summary

Summary of revenues and expenditures

Year ended March 31, 2019

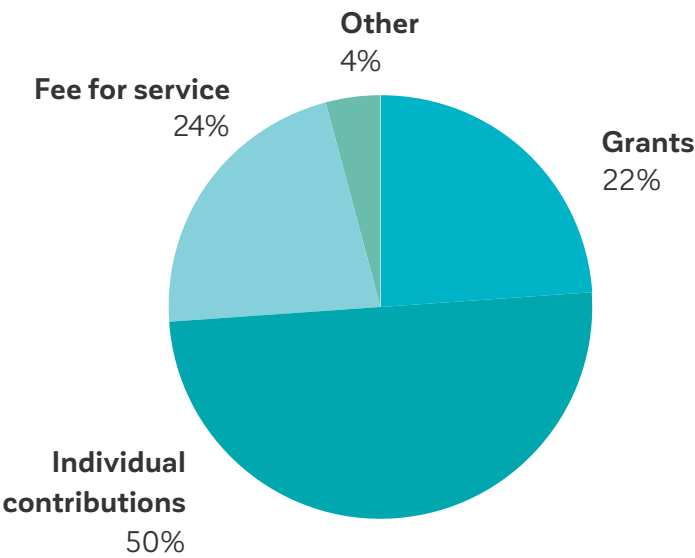
	2018–19
Revenue	
Grants	\$428,009.00
Individual contributions	\$881,236.00
Fee for service	\$391,989.00
Other	\$68,896.00
	<u>\$1,770,130.00</u>
Expenditures	
Overhead	\$182,066.00
Communications/campaigns	\$316,629.00
Special events	\$6,863.00
Travel	\$10,815.00
Human resources	\$1,102,784.00
Amortization of assets	\$82,503.00
	<u>\$1,701,660.00</u>
Excess of revenue over expenditures	\$68,470.00

Thank you

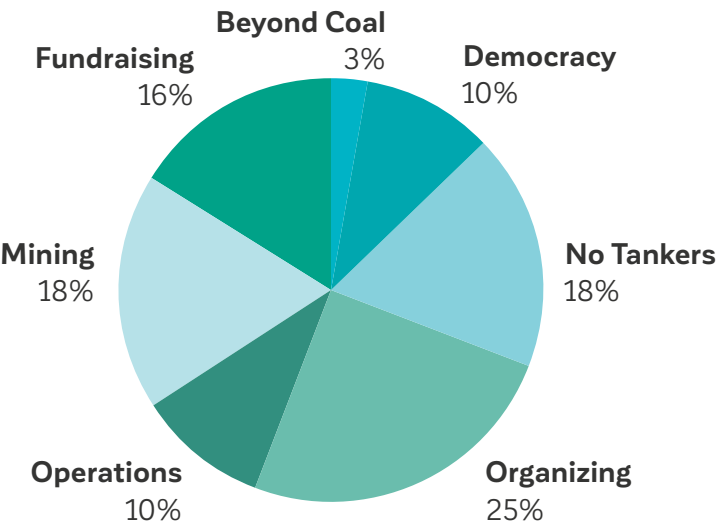
Thanks to our 6,903 donors and 2,492 monthly donors — you make Dogwood possible!

While the majority of Dogwood’s annual revenue comes from individual donors, we’d like to recognize the funding we receive from grants and contracts with the following groups and organizations: Greater Vancouver Community Assistance Foundation, Patagonia, HRSDC — Canada Summer Jobs, Institute for New Economics, Oak Foundation, Brainerd Foundation, Wilburforce Foundation, Bullitt Foundation, West Wind Foundation, Winky Foundation, Tides Foundation USA, Timken Sturgis Foundation, Climate Solutions, and Western Mining Action Network.

Revenue



Expenses





dogwoodbc.ca

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📠 250-370-9990

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