

BC MÉTIS FEDERATION CONSERVATION

SEPTEMBER 2024



Coastal
Water Protectors



BC Métis
FEDERATION

SWEEPING THE SHORES 03

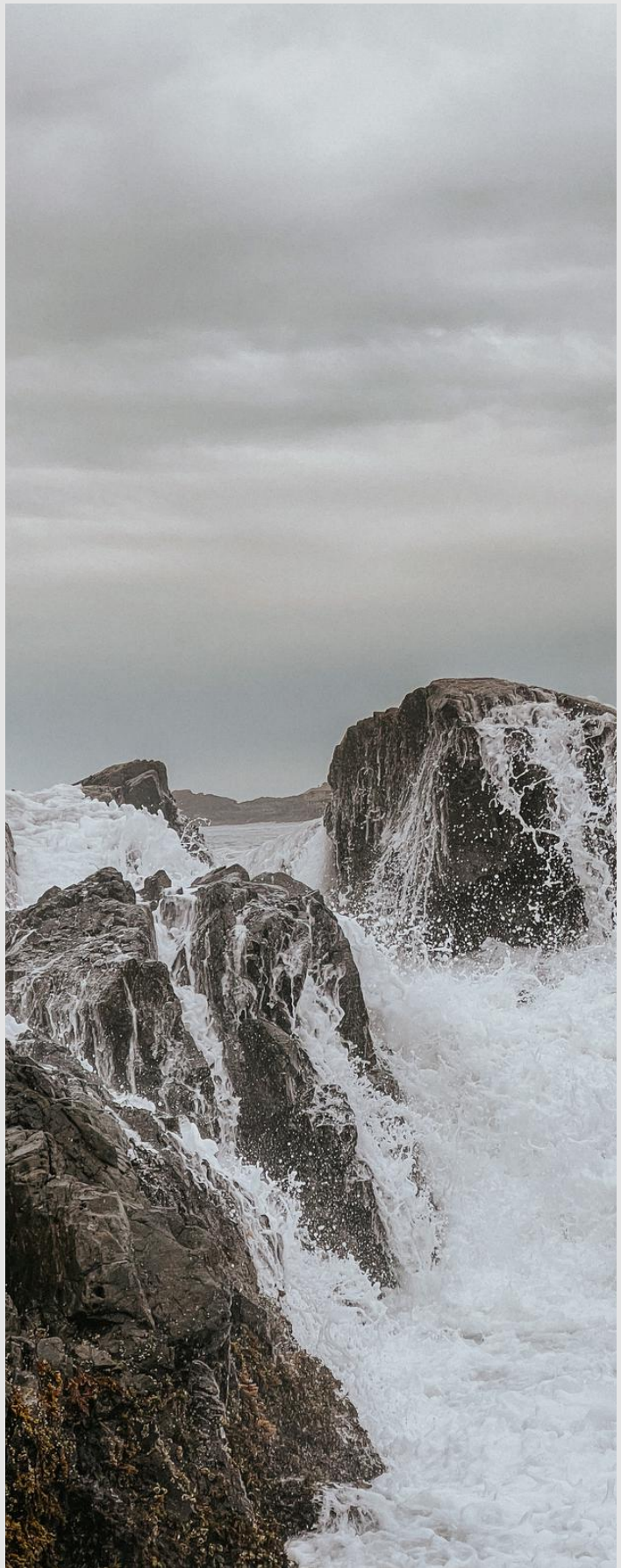
Blackie Spit Park, Surrey

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SWEEPING THE SHORES





In September, the BC Métis Federation's Conservation Department held its final "Sweeping the Shores" shoreline cleanup of the year at Blackie Spit Park. This marked the culmination of six months of dedicated monthly cleanup events aimed at raising awareness about the importance of aquatic conservation, engaging members and local communities, and contributing to cleaner shorelines across British Columbia.

Since the start of the program, "Sweeping the Shores" has played an instrumental role in fostering a sense of environmental stewardship among Métis members and local residents. Each month, the department organized cleanup events in different locations, providing hands-on opportunities for volunteers to help protect and preserve BC's beautiful waterways. These events also served as a platform to highlight the Conservation Department's work and initiatives, helping to spread the message of responsible environmental practices and encouraging more community participation in conservation efforts.

The success of this final cleanup was bolstered by the generous sponsorship of Natalino's Pizzeria and the Sunflower Cafe, which provided food and refreshments to keep volunteers fueled throughout the event. Their support ensured that everyone involved felt appreciated and energized as they worked together to make a tangible difference.

Over the past six months, the "Sweeping the Shores" initiative has not only helped make BC's shorelines cleaner, but also strengthened the relationship between the Métis community and the broader public.

The series has been a great opportunity for individuals to connect with one another, learn more about conservation, and take an active role in protecting the environment.

As the Conservation Department looks ahead, the success of the "Sweeping the Shores" program has laid a strong foundation for future community-driven environmental efforts. The department remains committed to fostering awareness, engagement, and hands-on participation in conservation initiatives, helping to ensure the long-term health of BC's aquatic ecosystems for future generations.









INTERVIEW WITH MÉTIS ELDER



CAN YOU SHARE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MÉTIS CULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT?

“Métis have always lived off the land. Traditionally they have hunted for moose, elk deer, geese, ducks, and even rabbits. They fished in the rivers and the lakes. They gathered wild turnips, wild onions, and berries. I have family members who foraged the land for medicines to cure illnesses, and fevers.”

WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR MÉTIS COMMUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED IN CONSERVATION EFFORTS?

“Pollution has a big impact on our lands, our waters, our oceans. There's trash being left along the shores and dumped into the waters. Wildfires are destroying the lands, destroying our medicines. It's important for everyone to do their part to recycle, and be responsible - pack out what you pack in, for example. It's important for us to educate our children and youth as they will be the ones who will be most impacted and left with a lot of this work.”

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS CHANGE OVER TIME, AND WHAT IMPACT HAS THAT HAD?

“Sea levels have been on the rise and that is due to climate change and global warming. There have been mammals coming closer to shorelines, there has been a decrease in fish, an increase with mammals from California making their way to Canadian waters.

Many sea creatures are becoming extinct or already are. Many years ago, I would go to Vancouver Island and would see sand dollars, and starfish all over the beach and in the crevices of the rocks, and you don't see that anymore.”

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO SHARE WITH YOUNGER GENERATIONS ABOUT CARING FOR WATER AND AQUATIC HABITATS?

“The youth need to become more involved in the protection of the lands and waterways. they need to be active in going out and picking stuff off the beaches, they need to teach their parents in their homes better practices.”

HOW WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE PARTICIPATING IN THE 'SWEEPING THE SHORES' SHORELINE CLEANUP EVENTS, AND WHAT DO THESE EFFORTS MEAN TO YOU?

“Sweeping the Shores' initiative has been very important to me. During some of the cleanups I have picked up cigarette butts, bottle caps, plastic straws, bags, cups, spark plugs, tin cans, metal, and styrofoam. I have even come across dead animals on the shoreline. I took my grandson with me on all the events I attended, we talk about what we see, we talk about how important it is to remove these things from the shoreline. During this time we get fresh air, exercise and get to spend time together. I thoroughly enjoyed them. These event promote community!

WORLD RIVER DAY





The BC Métis Federation's Conservation Department recently participated in Burnaby's World River Day event, held at the Burnaby Village Museum. This global event, raises awareness about the importance of rivers and the need to protect and restore them. It brings together communities worldwide to celebrate waterways and foster a sense of stewardship toward these vital ecosystems.

At the event, the Conservation Department set up an informative booth, where they provided educational materials on river conservation, aquatic ecosystems, and the importance of protecting watersheds. The team engaged in insightful discussions with visitors, sharing stories about the department's conservation efforts, including shoreline cleanups, responsible boating practices, and their spill kit initiative.

A highlight of the day was meeting the Mayor of Burnaby, which provided an opportunity to discuss the importance of collaboration between local governments and conservation organizations in safeguarding aquatic environments.

World River Day at Burnaby Village Museum was a significant platform for the department to raise awareness, exchange knowledge, and celebrate the importance of rivers in sustaining life and culture in British Columbia.

