

# finding



David  
Suzuki  
Foundation

winter 2015  
[www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org)

# SOLUTIONS



David Suzuki and Tara Cullis got the idea for the David Suzuki Foundation after a meeting of minds in 1989.

## A year to celebrate

This year and next mark special occasions for David Suzuki and the Foundation. In September, we celebrated 25 years of bringing scientific understanding and solutions to the environmental challenges Canada faces. And in March, our co-founder David Suzuki will celebrate his 80th birthday.

Suzuki already had a history of science and environmental advocacy and activism when CBC Radio asked him to host a five-part series called *It's a Matter of Survival* in 1988. That program drew more than 16,000 letters (in pre-email days), many from people asking what they could do. Suzuki's wife, Tara Cullis, suggested it was time to be more than just messengers. In late 1989, they invited a small group of thinkers to Pender Island to discuss ideas. They agreed on the need for an organization that went beyond responding to individual crises.

As Suzuki wrote in his autobiography, "An organization was needed to focus on root causes, so that steps could be taken to

produce real change." They decided it had to be science-based, and that it shouldn't accept government grants. In 1990, the David Suzuki Foundation was born, despite objections from Suzuki about having it named for him.

Over the past 25 years, the Foundation has changed and grown. Thanks to your support, it's succeeded in bringing about positive change in many areas, from helping to reform the trawl-fishing industry to getting legal protection for species at risk and their habitat to researching climate change solutions.

Although David Suzuki is no longer officially affiliated with the Foundation, he remains one of our most committed volunteers and donors. At the Foundation, we're proud of the work we've done and are happy to wish our co-founder a happy 80th birthday. And we want to thank all of you for making the past 25 years memorable and successful and for supporting us in the years to come. There's still a lot of work left to do!



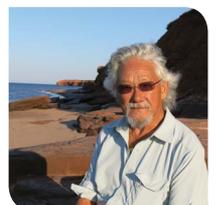
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# Blue Dot movement keeps on rocking



PHOTO: JOHANN WALL, JOHANNWALL.COM

Neil Young recently donated \$100,000 from a Vancouver concert to the Foundation's Blue Dot campaign.

The Blue Dot movement is on a roll. Thanks to our amazing volunteers and donors, more than 90 municipalities — representing at least one in seven Canadians — have passed environmental rights declarations.

Now the campaign is reaching the provincial level. In an unprecedented move, municipal leaders from throughout B.C. spoke passionately on behalf of a provincial right to a healthy environment at the September Union of B.C. Municipalities annual meeting. After a nail-biting vote, the UBCM passed a resolution calling on the B.C. government to enact an environmental bill of rights. Forty B.C. municipalities have already passed their own environmental rights declarations.

In October, Manitoba committed to developing environmental rights legislation. Premier Greg Selinger said he will introduce the bill before the provincial election set for April 19.

The Blue Dot movement also got a boost from rock icon Neil Young, who donated \$100,000 from his Vancouver concert in October. Young helped launch

the Blue Dot Tour a little over a year ago.

The support we've received from people across Canada — volunteers, donors, artists, musicians and politicians — has exceeded our wildest expectations and shows how important environmental protection is to Canadians. With the movement growing so quickly, we're well on our way to having the right to a healthy environment included in the

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

More than half the world's nations offer constitutional guarantees for the right to live in a healthy environment, but Canada does not. Recognition of every Canadian's right to clean air, safe water, healthy food and diverse, abundant ecosystems would lead to stronger environmental laws, better enforcement of existing laws and improved environmental performance.



The Pas, Manitoba, has passed an environmental rights declaration. Now the province is set to enact one as well.

# Canada must contribute to climate talks

From Pope Francis's encyclical to Ontario's commitment to a cap-and-trade system and everything in between, 2015 has proven to be a groundbreaking year for worldwide climate action. The culmination of global efforts will undoubtedly be the United Nations climate summit in Paris in December. The David Suzuki Foundation has spent the past several months ramping up public engagement and government outreach in anticipation of a binding international agreement.

A poll released on September 28 by the Foundation in partnership with the Environics Institute revealed that Canadians' expectations for political leaders' involvement in a global deal to reduce carbon emissions are high and growing. Overall, 61 per cent of Canadians believe the country should sign an international agreement, and



PHOTO: MOVAN BRENN, FLICKR

World leaders will meet in Paris in December to hammer out a climate agreement.

66 per cent of those who support an agreement said they would be upset if Canada were not involved. Poll results also revealed a majority of Canadians

(58 per cent) support a carbon tax to limit emissions domestically and an even greater majority (74 per cent) are confident that renewable energy can become the dominant form of power generation in their home province.

You can get involved by telling your government representatives to push for three Canada-focused outcomes in Paris:

1. A commitment to put a national price on carbon pollution
2. A pledge from the Alberta government to start phasing out coal power immediately, with complete elimination within 10 to 15 years
3. Increased investment in renewable energy across the country

These outcomes require collaboration from all levels of government.

# Nurturing tomorrow's environmental leaders

Everyone loves summer camp. But what if it included fun activities and essential learning for tomorrow's environmental leaders? That's what happened for 50 young people, aged 17 to 35, from across British Columbia who attended Camp Suzuki: Howe Sound, held at Camp Fircom on Gambier Island this year. Participants from the Squamish Nation and local communities came together for a week to share experiences and learn about local ecosystems, traditional Squamish perspectives and the basics of community organizing and social change.

Camp Suzuki: Howe Sound gave participants the opportunity to grow and reflect while being welcomed into a community of like-minded, inspiring individuals. Squamish Nation leaders shared teachings about the traditional importance of Howe Sound stretching back thousands of years.

The experience's power to transform was captured by participants like Emily,



PHOTO: CALDER-CHEVERIE

Camp Suzuki: Howe Sound gave 50 young participants an opportunity to learn about First Nations traditions and environmental stewardship.

who wrote: "It didn't matter if I had as much knowledge or experience as everyone else there, what I had was a desire to learn and a passion for the land I share with every other living creature, a land I simply borrow from

future generations." Chris reflected on the importance of self-care in the world of activism: "What surprised me most about this camp was how focused it was on people, not the environment. I needed that, I needed to be reminded that I need to take care of myself before trying to take care of the world."

Following camp, participants become Howe Sound stewards through six-month volunteer placements with organizations working to protect the region. Camp Suzuki: Howe Sound was supported and run by the Foundation, the Squamish Nation and the United Church (Camp Fircom's owners).

Howe Sound is experiencing an astonishing marine rebirth as herring, salmon, porpoises and whales return after years of absence. We expect these young environmental leaders will play a big role in making sure the Sound's ecosystem remains healthy for generations to come.



### Suzuki's Superheros protect the planet

"In a world of more than seven billion people, each of us is a drop in the bucket, but with enough drops we can fill any bucket," says David Suzuki. In other words, if we each do our part, we can make a "super" difference. The Foundation launched its Back to School Superhero Challenge with that in mind. We want to inspire Canada's next generation of superheroes. With the help of thousands of teachers and parents, we're getting kids reconnected with nature, teaching them about environmental responsibility and saving the planet!

### A novel approach to protecting eulachon

Eulachon are a small fish with enormous cultural importance to First Nations. The Foundation is supporting an approach — adding lights to trawl boats — that has successfully reduced eulachon bycatch in the U.S. shrimp trawl. We helped get research permits for Canadian boats to pilot the lights here. This could be the start to changing Canadian legislation prohibiting light use and bringing back this important fish.

### November is Radon Action Month

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas, and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Colourless, tasteless and odourless, it can accumulate in homes, schools and workplaces. To mark Radon Action Month, the David Suzuki Foundation is highlighting our recent report, *Revisiting Canada's Radon Guideline*, and encouraging all Canadians to test their homes for radon. Test kits are available from hardware stores, businesses specializing in radon detection and many provincial Lung Associations. Learn more at [www.davidsuzuki.org/radon](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/radon).

## Western Canadian provinces vying for "climate leader" status

Over the past few months, we've seen a flurry of activity from subnational governments regarding strategies to reduce carbon emissions and drive investment in renewable energy. Almost in unison, Canada's two westernmost provinces launched efforts to strengthen plans to tackle climate change — B.C. with its Climate Action Plan 2.0 and Alberta with the Climate Leadership Plan.

Each effort has involved lengthy public consultations, and the David Suzuki Foundation has provided recommendations on how to achieve emissions reductions goals and solicited feedback from the public. On August 12, Foundation climate change policy analyst Kyle Aben hosted a public webinar to guide participants through the B.C. government's online consultation process, and on September 8 and 15 Aben attended closed-door meetings in Alberta with industry and government leaders to brainstorm a low-carbon path for Canada's highest-emitting province.

These efforts have proved worthwhile. Alberta's town hall consultations were well-attended and the Foundation received positive feedback in both provinces.

The United Nations climate negotiations in Paris are fast approaching, and subnational governments are taking their roles in these talks seriously. Many experts believe that even if national governments fail to reach an agreement to limit global temperature rise to 2 C, the same goal (or at least significant progress) could be made by lower levels of government working together to cut emissions.

The David Suzuki Foundation will continue to be actively involved as B.C. and Alberta develop specific policies and other provinces follow their lead.



Alberta hopes to reduce reliance on fossil fuels with its Climate Leadership Plan.

PHOTO: JEFF WALLACE, FLICKR

## Accounting for nature makes cents

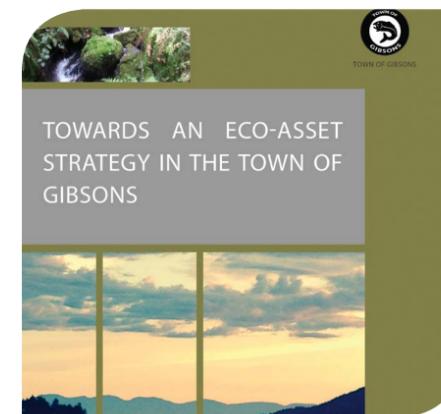
The small community of Gibsons on B.C.'s Sunshine Coast has become a leader in North America for its approach to managing and conserving nature. With the Foundation's help, the town now includes natural assets such as creeks, watersheds and beaches alongside capital assets such as roads and sewer pipes in its financial management approach. It has adopted a strategy that recognizes environmental assets can provide clear benefits over engineered infrastructure. The town is valuing nature's services such as cleaning the water and air, while reducing budgets that would have been spent on grey infrastructure replacements such as water-filtration plants.

The Foundation is partnering with the Town of Gibsons to build the economic model, including accounting tools accepted by Canadian Accounting Standards for tracking ecological assets,

and helping with the town's plans for monitoring and maintenance.

Gibsons is finding that when nature is accounted for and valued alongside other municipal assets the town can better prepare for the effects of climate change. The approach, which uses natural capital tools, also supports efforts to become carbon-neutral, ensuring an easier transition to a low-carbon future. Nature's ability to manage rainwater, control floods and purify water is expected to reduce the municipality's risk and operating and maintenance costs. Unlike bridges and roads, nature doesn't depreciate if properly managed. Along with cost savings, the town's residents reap additional spiritual, cultural and recreational rewards when nature is conserved.

Given massive and growing municipal infrastructure deficits across the country and the mounting costs for



With help from the David Suzuki Foundation, Gibsons, B.C., has adopted an eco-asset strategy.

climate-related events such as recent floods in Calgary and Toronto and this summer's wildfires in B.C., this approach couldn't be timelier for Canada's cities. The hope is that Gibsons' success will be replicated by larger municipalities across North America.

### green living



## How to leave the leaves

If I know you, you can't stop helping pollinators — planting a butterfly garden, getting your yard off grass, signing the Monarch Manifesto and more. I realize you might have snow on the ground by now, but don't feel bad if you didn't get to rake the leaves. And next fall, allow your rake to collect only dust!

Why? Because butterflies begin in leaves, as larvae. Keep leaves where gravity left them. Those brown, dead leaves are the planet's butterfly nursery and home to microbes and worms. Leaf litter is where many species of butterflies and moths overwinter as pupae. Animals like toads, shrews and salamanders benefit from leaf litter to hide and hunt, too.

If you can't leave all of your leaves where they fall, here are a few other ideas:

**Mulch leaves in your planter beds.** Does your homeowners' association have something against leaves? Rake leaves off the lawn and into your planter beds.

**Mulch leaves on your lawn.** Use your mower to mulch leaves on the lawn and improve your lawn health by suppressing weeds and fertilizing the soil.

**Collect browns to compost.** Composting 101 tells us to balance "greens" with "browns." Store leaves in a bin and add them to your backyard composter throughout the winter months.

**Craft with leaves.** Have children collect their favourite leaves in your yard and throughout the neighbourhood. Then search online for nature weaving ideas or how make "craftments".



PHOTO: GARY SCOTT, FLICKR

Why not leave the leaves? They're good for butterflies and other critters.

Note: Please do rake leaves out of sewers and drainage pathways.

Lindsay Coulter, David Suzuki's Queen of Green

# Homegrown rain gardens win award

Do you have problems with a wet basement or flooding in your yard? Ranger Marc Yamaguchi has an idea for you.

As part of the David Suzuki Foundation's Homegrown National Park Project, Marc launched the Rain Gardens of East Danforth Village project this summer. The project grew from his desire to convert his front yard into a rain garden, designed to absorb and store rainwater, keeping it away from his basement.

Marc learned that easy-to-maintain rain gardens attract bees, birds and butterflies, and are able to weather severe storms and extreme heat. He reached out to his neighbours with the idea of creating a rain garden network.

As part of 100-in-1-day on June 6, 2015, Homegrown National Park Project volunteers and local residents helped Marc dig out his yard and create the first rain garden. Then the project won the Toronto Foundation's 2015 Vital Innovation Award, including \$10,000 to expand the project to 10 more yards.



A rain garden is designed to naturally absorb and filter stormwater, preventing flooding.

In August, the Homegrown National Park Project team began digging and planting. The rain gardens all feature locally adapted wildflowers, shrubs and trees that will need little to no watering once established. A landscaped, shallow depression in each yard will naturally

absorb and filter stormwater, preventing flooding.

The project will be used to encourage other homeowners to create rain gardens across the city. For information, check out [www.davidsuzuki.org/raingardens](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/raingardens).

# Energy East pipeline is bad for Quebec and Canada

While the eyes of the world turn to Paris for the upcoming 21st Conference of the Parties to establish a new international climate agreement, oil transportation projects continue to increase in Quebec and Canada. TransCanada's Energy East project is one of the largest ever proposed in North America. With a planned transport capacity of 1.1 million barrels per day, this project could have significant environmental and social impacts, including on watercourses and climate.

Because the pipeline will go through the Montreal Metropolitan Community, the David Suzuki Foundation's Quebec office submitted a brief to the MMC highlighting the environmental risks and

impacts and offering recommendations.

The Foundation said the project puts the region's rivers at risk, including the St. Lawrence — drinking water source for much of the region's population — and offers few or no economic benefits for the region or Quebec. The project would also be associated with 32 million tonnes of new greenhouse gas emissions in the oil sands, equivalent to twice the emissions reductions Quebec will have achieved from 1990 to 2020.

We argued that the project is not only incompatible with Quebec's goal to reduce its emissions, but also that the environmental risks for the Montreal region are higher than the potential benefits for the MMC's 82 municipalities.



PHOTO: JÉRÔME SPAGGIARI

The Energy East pipeline will threaten the St. Lawrence River with no real benefits for Quebec.

## finding SOLUTIONS

A publication of the David Suzuki Foundation, a registered Canadian charity working to protect the diversity of nature and our quality of life, now and for the future.

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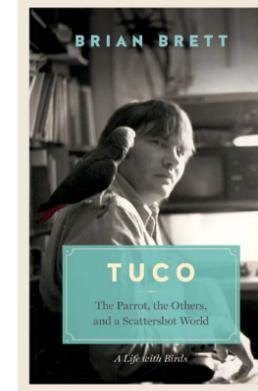
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**Tuco** by Brian Brett  
Greystone

With his previous memoirs, *Uproar's Your Only Music* and *Trauma Farm*, poet and author Brian Brett proved to be one of those rare and brilliant writers who illuminates much about the human condition and our relation to nature through fascinating stories of his own life. With *Tuco: The Parrot, the Others, and a Scattershot World*, the Salt Spring Island writer uses his decades-long relationship with an African grey parrot to delve into subjects ranging from language and intelligence to the history of dinosaurs and birds to the way we treat beings who are "different". It's an engaging, enlightening and funny book.



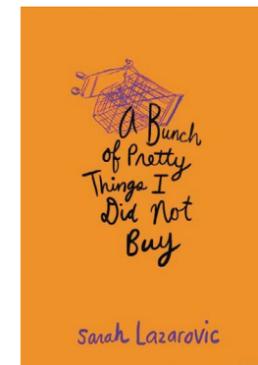
**Fractured Land** by Damien Gillis and Fiona Rayher  
Documentary Film

While all Canadians live with the effects of our fossil fuel-driven economy, indigenous communities feel the impacts more strongly than most. This documentary follows the fight of Caleb Behn, a Denne-Zaa lawyer and activist who speaks eloquently about the ravages of the extraction industry on traditional ways of life. Using the law to stand up for his community's rights, Caleb's message is a plea to put more value on the things — like clean air and water — that keep us alive.



**This Changes Everything** by Avi Lewis  
Documentary Film

"Is it really possible to be bored by the end of the world?" Naomi Klein asks in the film *This Changes Everything*. The climate change documentary, based on Klein's book, powerfully illustrates the struggles communities around the world are facing to protect our right to clean air and water while battling society's need to feed an ever-growing economic monster. The film is refreshing, inspiring, emotional and smart, leaving you to rethink your role in the climate crisis.



**A Bunch of Pretty Things I Did Not Buy** by Sarah Lazarovic  
Penguin

This playfully illustrated graphic memoir tracks the author's journey from childhood consumer of pretty, shiny stuff to impulsive online shopper to recent attempts to not buy any clothes for a year. Instead, she penned illustrations of the coveted items. And with a nod to Michael Pollan and the slow food movement, she coins the phrase, "Buy clothes. Not too many. Mostly quality." Wise words; enjoyable book.



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# Reflections and wishes as I approach my 80th birthday

For more than 25 years, I've studied and communicated about the seriousness of the climate crisis. It was the main reason my wife, Tara, and I joined other thinkers to start an environmental organization, which we named the David Suzuki Foundation (a name I initially rejected) — now celebrating its 25th year!

I can't help thinking how much better off we'd all be had the politicians and public heeded the warnings from climate scientists and experts so many years ago. Had we taken incremental steps, we could have shifted much further from dangerous fossil fuels to energy conservation and clean energy with only minor disruptions. Now, as the consequences of global warming hit home and become increasingly severe, we have to resort to more drastic and possibly disruptive solutions.

Still, we have time. A growing body of research shows addressing climate change and other environmental challenges will not only benefit human health and well-being, but will also provide economic boosts. And not doing anything about it could be disastrous for the economies of Canada and the world.

During the federal election campaign,

we heard a lot of promises about tackling climate change. Let's hope our new government keeps its promises and works with other parties to do even more. That means making constructive contributions to next month's UN climate summit in Paris.

As my 80th birthday approaches, I look back at the good work people at the Foundation have done, to bring about fishing industry reforms, protect species at risk and their habitat, promote restrictions on pesticides that harm our children's health, find solutions to our climate and energy challenges, and so much more. None of it would have been possible without the support of hundreds of volunteers and tens of thousands of donors. Now municipalities representing more than seven million Canadians have signed declarations for the right to a healthy environment, and the Manitoba government has committed to doing so as well, using the Foundation's Blue Dot campaign to create a powerful and ever-growing movement from coast to coast.

But there's still work ahead. I won't be around forever, but I care about my children and grandchildren and all the



PHOTO CREDIT: NADEGE VINCE

world's people, and about the planet and natural systems that allow us to thrive and survive. And so I have some birthday wishes. At the top is for world leaders to finally come up with a fair and binding agreement in Paris to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I also wish for your continued support. Together, we've made great gains, but we have much left to do. Thanks.

## Two kinds of greeting cards that support the work you care about

### Paper cards

[www.davidsuzuki.org/greetingcards](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/greetingcards)

These 12-card packs feature original art exclusive to the David Suzuki Foundation and are blank inside — ready for you to personalize. They also make great gifts.

### E-cards

[www.davidsuzuki.org/holidaycard](http://www.davidsuzuki.org/holidaycard)

E-card purchases are like donations, so you receive a tax receipt for the entire amount.

*There are many cards to choose from — view them all online!*

