

Rachel S Forbes

rachel@sharpsix.com | 604.345.9129 | Vancouver / Coast Salish Territories

Profile

An entrepreneurial lawyer and strategist with a broad range of skills in law, policy, governance, project management, fundraising, strategic planning and communications. Trained in and most passionate about environmental, animal and Indigenous issues, especially where they may, could or should intersect. Loves a challenged assumption, a solved problem, and a good laugh.

Identifies: she/her; settler

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rachelsforbes/>

Employment History

2013-present [Sharp Six Services](#)
Principal and Lawyer

Provide capacity building professional services to non profits, charities, social enterprises and other community driven organizations to increase their efficiency and effectiveness. Services include governance audits and workshops, policy development, project management, funding strategies, strategic planning, grant writing and proposal development. Provide some legal advice to clients on select issues.

2017-2018 [Grizzly Bear Foundation](#)
Executive Director (maternity leave August- mid November 2017)

As the first employee of a new charity, I developed and oversaw communications, fundraising, financial, administrative and programmatic plans and systems for the organization. Wrote press releases, coordinated a major provincially-accessible press conference, and regularly conducted print, radio and television media interviews. Made submissions to various levels of government on wildlife, fish and resource management policy. Supported the development of the board, including by adding four new directors and by designing a strategic planning session. Built relationships with diverse interest groups, decision makers and rights holders. Hired and managed contractors and staff for program and communications work. Created and managed program plans and objectives.

2013 [Simon Fraser University](#)
Sessional Instructor

Instructor for Law and Resources in the Resource and Environmental Management Graduate Program. Redesigned, taught and graded a course on the legal management of resources and of land use planning tools by federal, provincial, local and Aboriginal governments (with emphasis on British Columbia).

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2011-2013 [West Coast Environmental Law Association](#)
Staff Lawyer

Worked with colleagues and partner organizations on BC- and nationally-focused public education and campaign and communications work. Researched and drafted legal reports, coordinated social media and press, made submissions to various levels of government on law reform issues. Responsible for media outreach, and coordinating events for the organization to advance program objectives and increase profile for the organization. Together with the executive director, responsible for developing, funding and managing a project budget. Managed the student and intern programs, including hiring, oversight and evaluation.

As part of my work with West Coast, I was the lead on [Save Canada's Environmental Laws](#) and the organizational representative with [Black Out Speak Out](#). Both of these included developing and employing consistent messaging, using various social media and online petition tools, writing and publishing blog posts and background reports, coordinating as well as conducting media interviews and press conferences, and providing follow up reports to partners and funders. This work also included a sub-project of producing a mini documentary series called [Living Democracy from the Ground Up](#).

2009-2011 [Lidstone & Company Law Corporation](#)
Associate Lawyer

Provided opinions, bylaws and associated schedules, policies and agreements to local government (municipal, regional and First Nations) and non profit clients on environmental, administrative, Aboriginal, land use planning (urban and rural/resource), resource use, freedom of information, and intellectual property law. Researched, drafted and consulted on issues regarding the interpretation of laws and policies and strategized implementation of laws within local governments. Drafted legislation for clients that was then passed by the provincial legislature. Drafted and implemented internal personnel (non discrimination, parental leave) and sustainable office practices policies.

2009 [Braidwood, QC, Commissions of Inquiry](#)
Legal Researcher (Temporary Contract)

Conducted research and a due diligence review to support Commission Counsel.

2008-2009 [Environmental Law Centre Society & Ratcliff & Company LLP](#)
Articled Student & Lawyer

Made submissions to tribunals and courts, researched law and policy, drafted opinions for clients, produced client and public reports, pitched reports to media, responded to media requests. The projects and opinions ranged on subjects including environmental assessment, setting indicators for protected areas, contaminated sites, resource management and planning, bylaw drafting, crafting of definitions for bylaws, and often included comparing approaches across jurisdictions.

2007;
2009-2010 [Ecojustice Canada \(formerly Sierra Legal Defense Fund\)](#)
Summer Research Student; Volunteer Lawyer

Managed new case inquiries, conducted domestic and comparative research, provided litigation support, communicated with clients, attended hearings.

Volunteered to assist with submissions in relation to a litigation case on orca protection. I also did a comparative research project on key legal definitions, their implementation and judicial consideration in Canada's *Species At Risk Act* versus the USA's *Endangered Species Act*.

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2006 [Institute for New Economics / POLIS Project on Ecological Governance](#)
Research Associate

Coordinated a multifaceted marketing plan for *Planet U*, a book focused on urban and regional planning. Assisted professor M'Gonigle with green legal theory research for his graduate legal course syllabus.

2004-2005 [SFU Community Corporation / UniverCity](#)
Planning Assistant

Liaised with university staff, board members, contracted professionals (including engineers, architects, planners and developers) and local governments to research and advance sustainability initiatives. Developed and monitored via specialized indicators sustainability initiatives, including office practices, community art, affordable housing programs, child care programs, green building guidelines and stormwater management plans. Applied for and managed grants in relation to stormwater management, affordable staff housing models. Project managed to completion and secured sponsorship for community art projects (in situ installations as well as an exhibition with two prominent shows, *Two Trees*). Attended all Board of Directors meetings, Planning Committee meetings, Community Advisory Council meetings, and regularly attended meetings with university staff, local government officials, and with construction and design professionals.

2002 [Ministry of Children and Family Development](#)
Project Assistant

2001 [City of New Westminster, Planning Department](#)
Cooperative Education Student

Professional Memberships

2009-present [Law Society of British Columbia](#)
Practicing Member 2009-2013, 2016 / Non Practicing Member 2013-2015

2008-present
x 2014-15 [Canadian Bar Association](#)
Environmental, charities, animal & Aboriginal sections

2017-present [Canadian Association of Gift Planners](#)
Greater Vancouver Chapter

2018-present [UVic Environmental Law Centre, Associates Lawyers Program](#)

2010-2017 [Planning Institute of British Columbia](#)
Associate Member

Formal Education

2008 **Bachelor of Laws** *University of Victoria, Faculty of Law, Victoria, BC*

- Focus on environmental and Aboriginal law

2004 **Bachelor of Arts, First Class Honours** *Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC*

- Major Geography, Minor Communications
- Certificate in Urban Studies
- Co-operative Education
- Participant in SFU's 2003 Semester in Dialogue: The Urban Experience

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Volunteer Experience

- 2018-present *Advisor*, Nestworks Society
- 2017-present *Board Development Committee*, LOCO BC
- 2016-present *Advisor*, Vancouver Foundation Field of Interest Environment & Animal Welfare Advisory Committee
- 2016-present *Founding Member*, Simon Fraser University Geography Department Alumni Council
- 2014-present *President; Executive, Governance, Nominations and Board Development & Strategic Planning Committee Member*, Georgia Strait Alliance
- Work on social, economic and environmental sustainability education and habitat protection issues throughout the Strait of Georgia/Salish Sea and its marine and river based communities.
- 2011-2015 *Executive & Development Committee Member and Director*, Whistler Centre for Sustainability
- Collaborated on urban development, local government and First Nations sustainability & governance issues. Lead work on a strategic development plan, including funding and partnership opportunities.
- 2009-2012 *Director at Large; Membership Committee Chair*, BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- Worked with Directors and staff on advocacy and education programs, financial and strategic planning and the general governance of all chapters of the BC SPCA. Chaired the Membership Committee, which included Directors and representatives from the membership throughout the province.
- 2006-2008 *Elected Co-President*, Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria
- 2005-2006 *Business Manager*, Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria
- Coordinated and chaired Board and Committee meetings. Developed and implemented new policies. As a member of the Club, managed Club finances, and collaborated with the Centre and Clinic on various legal and policy related projects as well as many speaker events, conferences and community awareness projects.
- 2006-2008 *Elected Chair & Member*, Student Animal Legal Defense Fund, University of Victoria
- Hosted two significant animal law conferences at UVic law, 2006 and 2007
- 2006-2008 *Elected Secretary & Member*, Indigenous Law Club, University of Victoria
- 2006-2007 *At Large Student Representative*, University Senate, University of Victoria
- 2006-2007 *Second Year Representative*, UVic Faculty of Law Curriculum Committee
- 2006 *Assistant Editor*, The Interdisciplinary Journal of International Studies
- 2002-2004 *Elected Student Representative*, SFU Community Trust Board of Directors
- Oversaw and directed the development of the UniverCity community. Addressed environmental, financial and social planning policies for the community. Contributed to the Board's *Planning Committee* in relation to community and architectural design. Resigned from the Board when I graduated SFU and was hired on by the Trust as a Planning Assistant.

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- 2003-2005 *Elected Financial Resources Coordinator*, Sustainable Campus Coalition
- Managed finances, prepared grant applications, and negotiated with SFU Administration on the development of a campus sustainability office and related policies. Sustainable Campus Coalition was successful in creating a Sustainability Office at SFU, and the group became Sustainable SFU, an incorporated non profit, now called Embark Sustainability.
- 2002-2004 *Chair*, Burnaby Mountain Development Working Group, SFU
- Facilitated meetings, recruited and managed volunteers, coordinated research and activities, developed strategic alliances, communicated with various governing bodies.

Select Publications + Presentations

- Blog posts, letters, and internal strategy documents via Grizzly Bear Foundation
- Various blog posts and resources via the Sharp Six resource library, *Sharp Spotlight* (sharpsix.com/spotlight)
- Vancity Credit Union Board of Directors election campaign website, endorsements, video, 2016, rachelforbes.ca
- Various reports, briefings and blog posts on environmental assessment, federal environmental law, and public participation in decision making, including submissions to Canadian House of Commons and Senate Committees, West Coast Environmental Law, 2011-2013 (<http://wcel.org/publications-search/results/forbes>).
- “Living Democracy from the Ground Up”. *West Coast Environmental Law / Point Blank Creative*, 2012. A mini-documentary series where I acted as the Executive Producer. More information on the YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/Envirolawsmatter>
- “Open & Closed Meetings, Confidentiality & Privilege”. *Pacific Business and Law Institute: Local Government Law Conference*, 2011. Paper available at <http://www.pbli.com/conferences/table-of-papers?itemid=18#>!
- “Creating Legal Space for Animal-Indigenous Relationships”, *Undercurrents: Journal of Critical Environmental Studies*, Vol.17, 2008.
- “Rural Dimensions of Sustainable Community Development: Benefits of & Barriers to Renewable Energy in Rural North America.” Thesis, Faculty of Geography, Simon Fraser University, 2004. Supervised by Mark Roseland.