

Why did Tides USA buy 150 acres right next door to Mayor Gregor Robertson on Cortes Island?

From: [VIVIAN KRAUSE <vivian.krause@me.com>](mailto:vivian.krause@me.com)
 To: Gregor.Robertson@vancouver.ca, [Ross McMillan <ross.mcmillan@tidescanada.org>](mailto:Ross.McMillan@tidescanada.org),
joel@renewalpartners.com
 Cc: [Charlie Smith <charlie@straight.com>](mailto:charlie@straight.com), [Fizal Mihlar <fmihlar@png.canwest.com>](mailto:Fizal.Mihlar@png.canwest.com), [Tim Renshaw <trenshaw@biv.com>](mailto:Tim.Renshaw@biv.com)
 Date: October 31, 2011 2:09:59 PM

Mayor Robertson, Mr. McMillan & Mr. Solomon,

Since October 12, I have been trying to inquire about the purchase of Hank's Beach by the U.S. Tides Foundation/Renewal Partners, and other matters. I have received no response from you.

Below, please find two items that I have now posted at my blog. If I have presented anything here that is factually incorrect, or if I have missed any important points, please let me know.

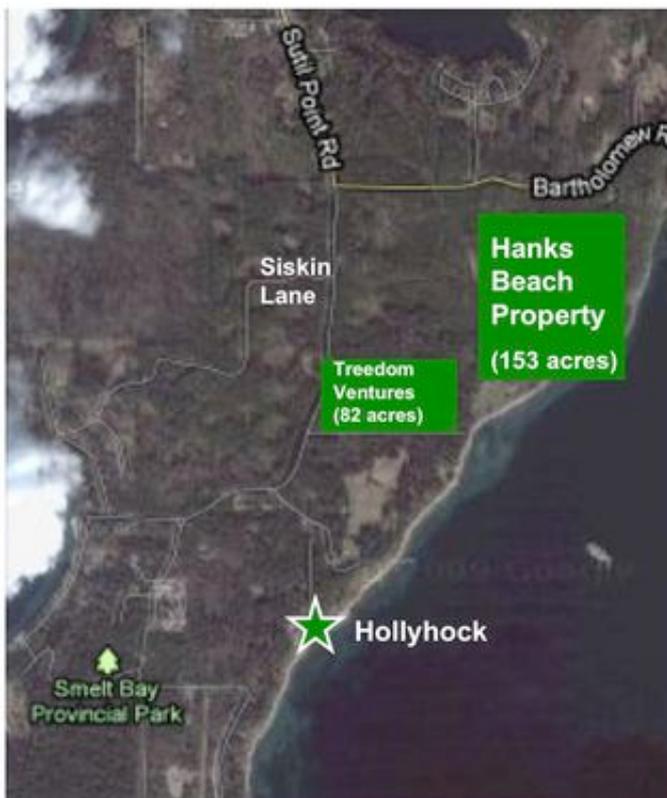
As before, I can be reached at 604.618.8110.

Sincerely,
 Vivian Krause

Why did Tides USA Buy 150 acres on Cortes Island - right next door to Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson?

With the U.S. in tough times, one would think that American charities would be doing all they can to help out at home. The last thing that I would have expected is that the San Francisco-based Tides Foundation ("Tides USA") would pay over a million dollars for a 150 acre park on Cortes Island, in British Columbia. But to my surprise, this is precisely what Tides USA recently [announced](#). Tides initially purchased the land [in 2007](#) and held it in a numbered company in Vancouver, [tax returns show](#) (see below).

Locally, this 150 acre property is known as Hanks Beach.



In September of 2011, Tides USA [announced](#) that it had purchased Hank's Beach along with Renewal Partners, and was donating it to the Strathcona Regional District, under the [Ecological Gifts Program](#) of Environment Canada.

Even before this new 150 acre ocean-front park, Cortes Island already had two large parks vast tracts of crown land - and only 950 residents.

By way of comparison, Stanley Park, Vancouver's biggest park, is about 1,000 acres. In terms of size, buying Hanks' Beach is equivalent to buying about 15 percent of Stanley Park. That's a lot of land.

According to the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between Tides USA and the Strathcona Regional District, Tides USA will provide an endowment of \$150,000 towards the maintenance of Hanks Beach. Indeed, tax returns show that in 2009, Tides USA paid [\\$20,444](#) to the Vancouver Foundation to be granted "*to support the Land Conservancy of B.C.'s endowment solely to benefit the 'Hanks Beach' property.*"

A few years ago, there was a tussle over Hank's Beach. As the story goes, some of the locals feared that their access to the waterfront was going to be restricted by new owners. Other locals say that there was more to it than that. Some even go so far as to say that the concerns about access were exaggerated as a means of intimidation in order to get the new owners to move on. Rex Weyler chronicles his view of it all in [The Tyee](#) which, incidentally, is [partially funded by Tides USA](#) as part of its [\\$10 million dollar "Tar Sands Campaign."](#)

Tides Directors In the Neighborhood

I find it interesting to note that the property that Tides USA chose to purchase is within walking distance of private properties owned by the former CEO of Tides USA and the vice-chair of Tides Canada. These individuals are Drummond Pike and Joel Solomon, respectively.

Incidentally, Drummond Pike is also the [founding chair](#) of Tides Canada, the [chairman](#) of the Endswell Foundation and a [senior advisor to Renewal Partners](#). That's in addition to the [26 organizations](#) of which Pike was a director, according to U.S. tax returns. Pike was the CEO of Tides USA for 34 years before quietly departing in the fall of 2010.

[Hollyhock](#), a high-end, ocean-front charity facility which has been funded by Tides USA and Tides Canada - to the tune of at least [\\$445,000](#) - is also within walking distance of Hank's Beach. Hollyhock appears to be a mix of non-profit work and for-profit business, such as the ["Bodywork"](#) offered by Hollyhock Farm Ltd. (Looks like a spa to me!). Prior to entering B.C. politics in 2005, the [treasurer](#) of Hollyhock Farm Ltd., was Gregor Robertson.

Back in 2006, [in a Cortes Island newsletter](#), Carol Newell, the alleged founder of Tides Canada, gave the impression that she would personally buy the Hanks Beach property "in order to return our beach and trails to the community forever," she said. But did she? Who actually bought and

paid for the Hank's Beach?

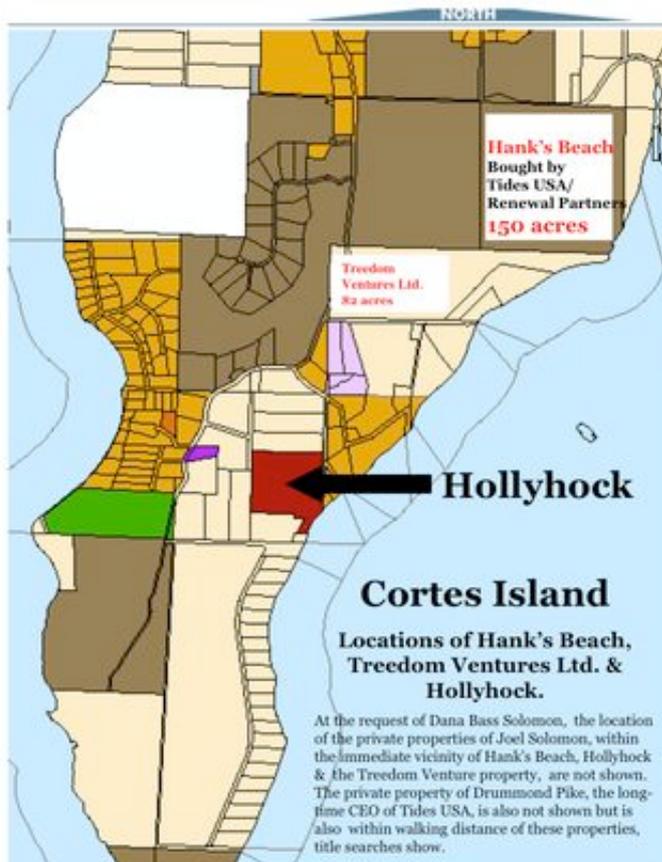
Title searches and other records show that Hanks Beach was:

- Bought by Weyerhaeuser on June 8, 2000
- Sold by Weyerhaeuser to Island Timberlands on June 6, 2005
- Sold by Island Timberlands to Monkey King Enterprises Ltd. on January 4, 2006
- Sold by Monkey King Enterprises Ltd. to Renewal Land on June 1, 2006
- Sold from Renewal Land to 0793406 B.C. LTD on June 1, 2008. That's a numbered company in Vancouver that is a wholly owned subsidiary of the U.S. Tides Foundation (see excerpt from U.S. tax returns, below).

At the [request of Mrs. Dana Bass Solomon](#), the map at the right does not indicate the location of properties owned by herself and Joel Solomon. (Interestingly enough, of all the [e-mails and letters](#) that I have sent to Joel Solomon, the only response that I ever received was this [e-mail](#) from his wife, asking that the location of her home not be disclosed).

Treedom Ventures Ltd. Owned by Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson

A [title search](#) and other documents show that Hank's Beach is *immediately adjacent* to an [82 acre ocean-front property](#) owned by [Treedom Ventures Ltd., a B.C. company](#) which is owned or co-owned by Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson, according to his [financial disclosure statement](#).



How much of Treedom Ventures is owned by Mayor Robertson is not clear to me but I have noticed that from [2002](#) to [2006](#), the only directors/officers of Treedom Ventures Ltd. were Gregor Robertson and his wife, Amy, company records show.

Why Hank's Beach?

Of all the countries in the world where Tides USA could create a million-dollar, 150 acre park, why Canada? Why Cortes Island? And why Hank's Beach?

[Tides USA says](#) that the land is "pristine," a "sensitive ecosystem" with "mature forests" but locals say that its far from pristine. Its been logged on and off for 70 years.

One thing is for sure, it won't hurt the property values of the vice-chair of Tides Canada and Mayor Gregor Robertson to be next door to a 150 acre park.

Excerpts of U.S. Tax Returns of the U.S. Tides Foundation (2008,2009, 2010):

Part IV Identification of Related Organizations Taxable as a Corporation or Trust							
(A) Name, address, and EIN of related organization	(B) Primary Activity	(C) Legal domicile (state or foreign country)	(D) Direct controlling entity	(E) Type of entity (C corp, S corp, or trust)	(F) Share of total income	(G) Share of end-of-year assets	(H) Percentage ownership
0793406 BC Ltd Ste 2010-1055 W Georgia St Vancouver, British Columbia V6G 1P1 Canada	Holding Co	Canada	Tides Fdn	C Corp	-124,771.	1,778,833.	100.00
BAA FEAS000L 120208 Schedule R (Form 990) (2008)							

Part IV Identification of Related Organizations Taxable as a Corporation or Trust (Complete if the organization answered "Yes" to Form 990, Part IV, line 34 because it had one or more related organizations treated as a corporation or trust during the tax year.)							
(A) Name, address, and EIN of related organization	(B) Primary Activity	(C) Legal domicile (state or foreign country)	(D) Direct controlling entity	(E) Type of entity (C corp, S corp, or trust)	(F) Share of total income	(G) Share of end-of-year assets	(H) Percentage ownership
0793406 BC Ltd Ste 2010-1055 W Georgia Street Vancouver, British Columbia V6G 1P1 Canada	Holding Co for R/E	Canada	Tides Fdn	C Corp	-51,700.	3,893,215.	100.00
BAA FEAS000L 120208 Schedule R (Form 990) (2008)							

Part IV Identification of Related Organizations Taxable as a Corporation or Trust (Complete if the organization answered "Yes" to Form 990, Part IV, line 34 because it had one or more related organizations treated as a corporation or trust during the tax year.)							
(A) Name, address, and EIN of related organization	(B) Primary activity	(C) Legal domicile (state or foreign country)	(D) Direct controlling entity	(E) Type of entity (C corp, S corp, or trust)	(F) Share of total income	(G) Share of end-of-year assets	(H) Percentage ownership
0793406 BC Ltd Ste 2010 - 1055 W Georgia Street Vancouver, British Columbia V6G 1P1 Canada	Holding Co for R/E	Canada	Tides Fdn	C Corp	-63,100.	8,429.	100.00
BAA FEAS000L 120210 Schedule R (Form 990) 2010							

2007	Federal Statements	Page 7
Tides Foundation		51-0198509
Statement 15 (continued) Form 990, Part V-A, Line 75c Individuals Compensation By Related Organizations		
FEIN:	94-3213100	
Relationship Explanation:	There is Board overlap between The Tides Center and Tides Foundation and she serves as an officer for both organizations.	
Compensation Paid:	\$ 175,417.	
Benefit Plan Contributions:	\$ 27,763.	
Expense Account:	\$ 0.	
Compensation Arrangement:	Compensation paid entirely by The Tides Center.	
Statement 16 Form 990, Part VI, Line 80b Related Organizations		

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	EXEMPT	NONEXEMPT
07934406 BC Ltd (Tides Cortes)		X
Farallons Fund	X	
Fresh Sound Foundation	X	
Ginungagap	X	
Goldman-Sonnenfeldt Foundation	X	
Heller Family Foundation	X	
JK Irwin Trust	X	
Kreitzberg Family Foundation	X	
New Field Foundation	X	
OneCalifornia Foundation	X	
Rouhana Family Foundation	X	
Schott Ctr for Public & Early Education	X	
The Tides Center	X	
Three Guineas Fund	X	
Tides Advocacy Fund	X	
Tides Two Rivers Fund	X	
Tides, Inc.	X	
Underdog Foundation	X	
Weithorn & Ehrmann Families Fdn	X	

Please read: [Copyright Notice & Disclaimer](#).

For the June 16, 2011 Staff Report from the Strathcona Regional District, click [here](#).

For the announcement, click [here](#).

Begin forwarded message:

From: VIVIAN KRAUSE <vivian.krause@me.com>
Date: October 21, 2011 2:23:39 PM
To: Gregor.Robertson@vancouver.ca,Ross McMillan <ross.mcmillan@tidescanada.org>,joel@renewalpartners.com,fmihlar@vancouver.sun.com,Charlie Smith <charlie@straight.com>,Tim Renshaw <trenshaw@biv.com>
Subject: **Renewal Partners, Hank's Beach, Treedom Ventures Ltd., etc....**

Mayor Robertson, Mr. McMillan and Mr. Solomon,

I am writing to let you know that I did not receive any reply from you to my e-mail below, of October 12, 2011.

I would like to re-iterate my earlier questions about Renewal Partners and Interdependent Investments Ltd.

I would also like to inquire as to whether the property owned by Treedom Ventures Ltd. on Cortes Island is, in fact, a total of 97 acres that is immediately adjacent to the 150 acre property purchased by the U.S. Tides Foundation / Renewal Partners, and then given to the Strathcona Regional District to become a park, last month.

Below, please find a revised version of the material that I sent you earlier. This is the basis of much of the concerns, opinions and questions that I have been trying to present. If anything here is factually incorrect or if I have missed any important points, please let me know.

As before, you or your staff can reach me at 604.618.8110.

Sincerely,
 Vivian Krause

Mayor Robertson was a director of Tides Canada from 2002 to 2004, immediately prior to his entry into B.C. politics with the provincial NDP. The treasurer of Vision Vancouver, Martha Burton, also has a long history as a senior advisor to Tides Canada and Mike Magee, the Chief of Staff at Vancouver City Hall was also a senior advisor to Tides Canada (2002 to 2007).

Back in 2008, Mayor Robertson came to power with a landslide on a campaign platform to end homelessness and make Vancouver the greenest city in the world. Through Tides Canada, the City of Vancouver has had at least \$50,000 to do precisely that, courtesy of the Seattle-based Bullitt Foundation ("Bullitt").

Through the U.S. Tides Foundation ("Tides USA") Bullitt also funded the Dogwood Initiative, a B.C. environmental group, "*to mobilize urban voters for a federal ban on coastal tankers.*" But soon after I testified about this to a House of Commons Committee, last fall, the Bullitt Foundation quietly re-wrote this grant. American charitable foundations aren't supposed to be mobilizing voters in a foreign country.

Another grant from the Bullitt Foundation was "*To strengthen and enforce a 34-year moratorium on oil tanker traffic in the mid and north coast of British Columbia, and to prevent expansion of oil and gas infrastructure in Georgia Strait and the lower Fraser Basin.*" Indeed, if one's agenda is to block infrastructure development in the lower mainland, it wouldn't hurt to have the mayor of Vancouver on side.

When Mayor Robertson came to power, his party was brand new and yet it ran the most expensive municipal campaign in the city's history. The biggest donors were Renewal Partners and Strategic Communications which is a "partner" of Renewal Partners. They contributed \$188,062 to Mayor Robertson's campaign and Vision Vancouver. In a municipal election, that's a lot of cash.

One of the first things that seems peculiar to me about Renewal Partners and Strategic Communications is that, as far as I can tell, neither is registered in British Columbia. Renewal Partners is registered in Halifax and Strategic Communications, in Ontario.

Renewal Partners calls itself "an independent investment company operating under the Renewal group of organizations."

The president of Renewal Partners is Joel Solomon. According to Canadian tax returns, Solomon is also the current treasurer of Endswell which supposedly he co-founded with a friend and heiress to some of the Rubbermaid fortune, Carol Newell.

Endswell, like Tides Canada, is federally registered in both Canada and the U.S., and files tax returns in both countries. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires far greater disclosure from non-profits than Revenue Canada so, ironically, the place to learn about these Canadian charities is their U.S. tax returns.

Joel Solomon: Millionaire Philanthropist?

Joel Solomon has been described by Vancouver media as "a millionaire philanthropist" and "a modest version of the later generations of the Kennedy/Rothschild/Rockefeller class." But Endswell's U.S. tax returns appear to me to tell a different story.

Endswell reports \$1.2 million in contributions from Carol Newell but not a single gift from Mr. Solomon since 1997. In fact, since 1997 Endswell has paid Mr. Solomon and his company the handsome sum of \$979,527, tax returns say. *What sort of millionaire philanthropist pays himself nearly a million bucks out of the charity that supposedly he co-founded?*



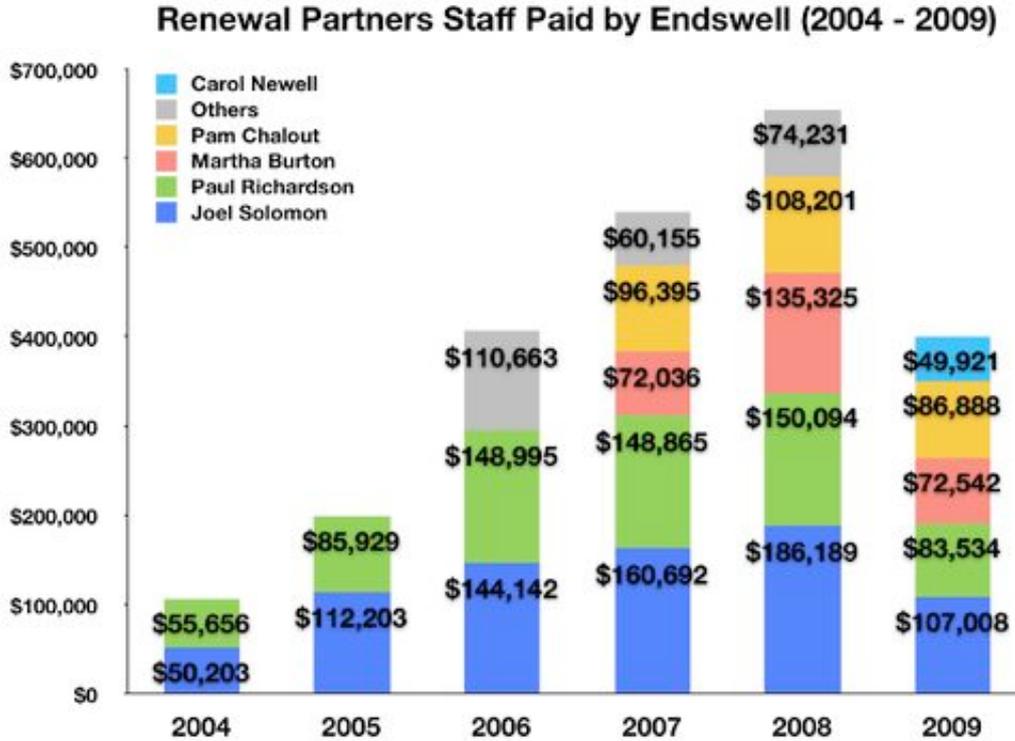
Endswell payments to Joel Solomon seem to have more than tripled, from \$50,203 in 2004 to \$186,189 in 2008. Between 2006 and 2009, Solomon was paid nearly \$600,000 (\$598,031 to be exact) by Endswell. Whether that includes all of the payments made to "JSCO," which presumably is an abbreviation for "Joel Solomon Co.," is unclear.

Solomon isn't the only person at Renewal Partners whose salary appears to have been paid by Endswell. In fact, all of the senior staff at Renewal Partners were paid by Endswell - to the tune of \$2.3 million between 2004 and 2009, tax returns show. *What kind of investment firm has staff salaries paid for by a charity?*

Joel Solomon personally contributed a reported \$9,040 to Mayor Gregor's 2008 campaign and was

one of Robertson's biggest financial backers. But it wasn't always that way. Back in 2005 when Robertson ran as M.L.A. with the provincial New Democratic Party (NDP), Solomon didn't contribute a single penny, not according to Gregor Robertson's NDP Financing Report. Renewal Partners contributed a mere \$680. So, how did Joel Solomon and Renewal Partners manage to dramatically scale up their contributions as Gregor Robertson went from the NDP to Vision Vancouver?

As shown in the figure, from 2004 to 2008, the total amount paid to the highest five paid employees at Endswell, increased by six-fold, from \$105,859 to \$654,040.



Village Real Estate, Nashville Tennessee

Renewal Partners has invested in over 75 companies, Solomon says. I could only find information regarding 26. These included a pizza company and an organic yoghurt company in New Hampshire and companies for cosmetics in New York, cleaning products in Vermont, wild seafood in California and music publishing in Colorado. Of the 26 companies that I could find, more are located in the United States than in Vancouver.

One of the real estate companies in which Renewal Partners says that it has invested is Village Real Estate in Nashville Tennessee (www.villagerealestate.com). Solomon, a native of Tennessee, had 10 percent ownership in this company, U.S. tax returns said in 2007.

If Joel Solomon's is so concerned about advancing sustainability in Vancouver, why has his "investment firm" invested in more companies - including at least one of his own - in the United States, rather than in Vancouver?

Happy Planet and Other B.C. Investments

Renewal Partners reports that it also invested in Happy Planet, the fruit juice company that is Mayor Robertson's claim to fame prior to his entry into politics. *Did the money that Renewal Partners invested in Happy Planet also originate from the Endswell Foundation?* I have seen no evidence of this but since staff salaries at Renewal Partners were paid for by the Endswell Foundation, its fair to ask, what else was too? If not, then where did the money originate that Renewal Partners "invested" in Happy Planet?



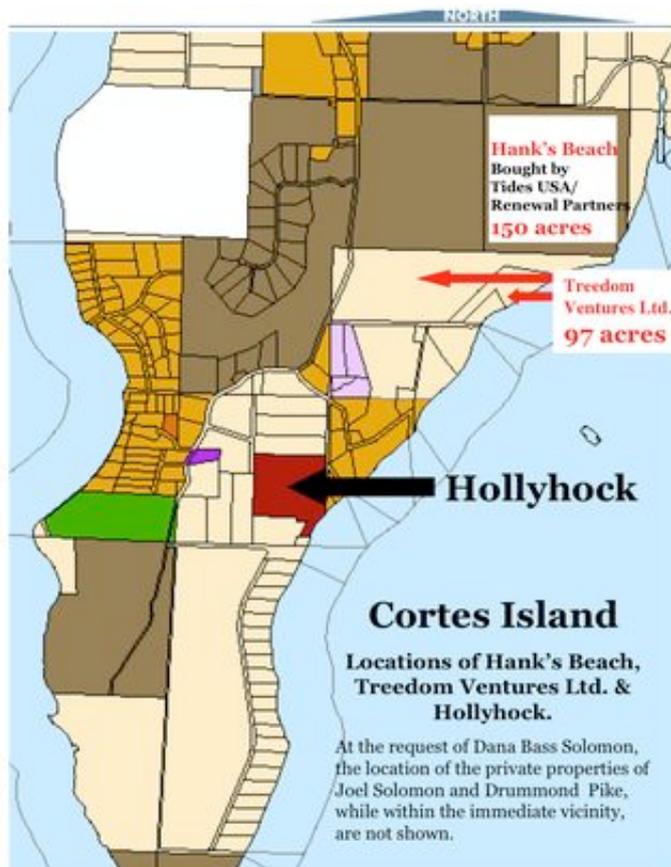
The other B.C.-based companies in which Renewal Partners has invested include an organic coffee company, a sprout company, a re-usable maxipad company, two grocery delivery companies, two publishing companies, a P.R. company and a real estate company. These may be good companies but aren't there higher priorities for sustainability than fruit juice, organic coffee, washable cloth menstrual pads and so on?

Hank's Beach & Treedom Ventures Ltd.

Renewal Partners also "invested" in Renewal Land, a real estate company for Cortes Island. In September of 2011, Tides USA announced that Renewal Partners has purchased a 150 acre Cortes property known as Hank's Beach and donated it to the Strathcona Regional District to become a park. During 2008 and 2009, this land had been on the books of a numbered company in Vancouver which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Tides USA, tax returns show. Hank's Beach is immediately adjacent to a 97 (ninety-seven) acre ocean-front property owned by Treedom Ventures Ltd. which is owned or co-owned by Mayor Robertson, according to his financial disclosure statement. The only directors of Treedom Ventures Ltd. were Gregor Robertson and his wife, Amy, company records show from 2002 to 2006.

Drummond Pike, the long-time CEO of Tides USA, and Joel Solomon also own property in the immediate vicinity of Hank's beach and Treedom Ventures Ltd., title searches show.

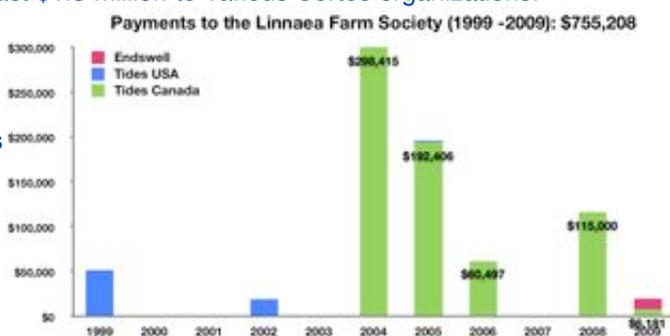
Of all the countries in the world where Tides USA could create a million-dollar park, why Canada? Why Hank's Beach? Tides USA says that the land is "pristine," a "sensitive ecosystem" with "mature forests" but locals say that its far from pristine. Its been logged on and off for 70 years. One thing is for sure, it won't hurt the property value of Treedom Ventures Ltd. to be next door to a 150 acre park.



Linnaea Farm Society and Hollyhock

Hank's Beach isn't the only investment that Tides USA has made on Cortes Island. In fact, according to my analysis, Tides USA, Tides Canada and Endswell have granted at least \$1.3 million to various Cortes organizations.

According to internet archives, Tides Canada has reported that from 2002 to 2004, Robertson worked with the Linnaea Farm Society ("Linnaea"), a farm co-op on Cortes Island. Robertson's wife was the co-op's president from 2000 to 2005, Canadian tax returns show. Linnaea has been paid a total of at least \$705,008 by Tides USA, Tides Canada and Endswell. Payments from Tides Canada to Linnaea sparked sharply to \$298,415 in 2004 and \$192,406 in 2005.



Back in 2004, Robertson was also the treasurer of Hollyhock Farm Ltd, an ocean-front charity on Cortes Island which has also been funded by Tides USA and Tides Canada. Hollyhock Farm Ltd. offers "Bodywork" starting at \$85 per hour. (That's charity? Looks more like a spa to me.) U.S. tax returns show that the Tides USA, Tides Canada and the Endswell Foundation have granted a combined total of at least \$444,470 to Hollyhock over the years, perhaps more.

Endswell, Tides Canada & Tides USA

Endswell and Tides Canada are legally distinct but for practical purposes, Endswell appears to me to be part and parcel of Tides Canada. Here's why: for most of the 2000's, the senior leadership at the two charities was the same,

	Tides U.S. (as of 2008)	Tides Canada Foundation	The Endswell Foundation
Drummond Pike	Founder & CEO	"Founding Chair"	Chairman of the Board

including the treasurer. And, between 2003 and 2009, fully 99 percent of the funds granted by Endswell went exclusively to Tides Canada, a total of \$8.7 million. So in essence, it appears to me that when Endswell granted money to Tides Canada, money was imply being transferred from one charity that the directors are involved with, to another.

Joel Solomon	Chairman of the Board	Vice-Chair	President
James Morrissey	---	Treasurer	Treasurer
Source: U.S. and Canadian Tax Returns			

Tides USA, based in San Francisco, and Tides Canada are also legally distinct entities but again, the senior leadership was the same for many years. Drummond Pike was the founder and CEO of Tides USA for 34 years until he quietly stepped down in September of 2010. Pike is also the founding chair of Tides Canada, the chairman of Endswell and a senior advisor to Renewal Partners. That's in addition to the 26 organizations of which Pike was a director, according to tax returns for 2007. The former chairman of Tides USA and vice-chair of Tides Canada, is Joel Solomon.

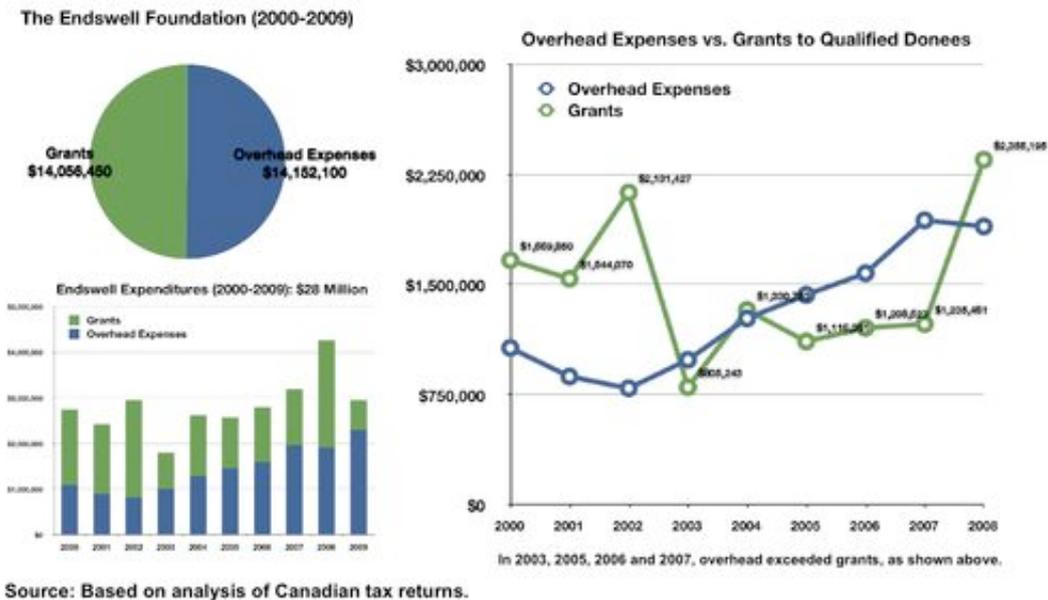
Tides Canada and Endswell have the same law firm: Bull, Houser & Tupper from which I received a series of letters threatening legal action in the spring of 2011. I found it interesting that Bull Houser and Tupper spoke up for Tides Canada but didn't say boo about any of the information, concerns and questions that I've presented with regards to Endswell. Tides Canada didn't challenge any of my financial analysis but demanded a retraction and an apology for "serious inaccuracies." After some minor clarifications on my part and an exchange of letters in which I explained why I believe that everything that I have written is true, I heard nothing further.

Beyond Renewal Partners and Strategic Communications, I also have questions about the campaign finance contributions that Vision Vancouver received from Interdependent Investments Ltd., Convergence Communications and Communicopia - all of which have received substantial payments from Tides Canada and/or Endswell. But that's another story.

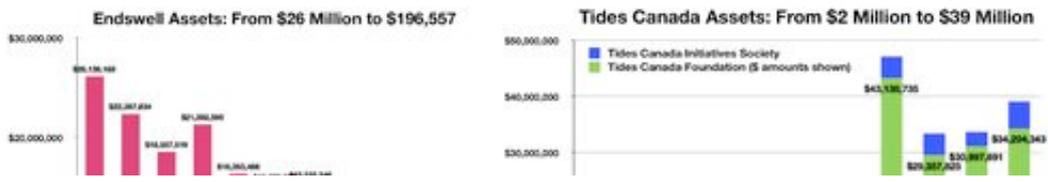
The \$11.4 Million Dollar Question

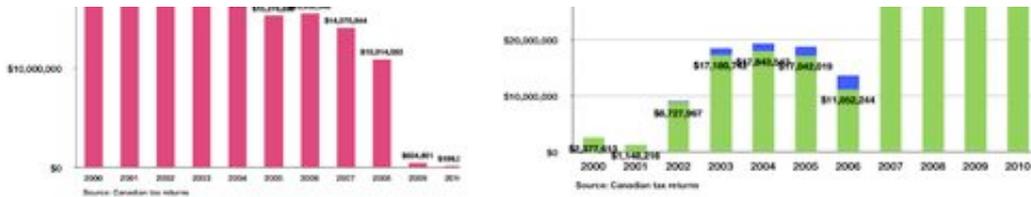
One of the things about Endswell that seems most peculiar to me is that Endswell has had what appears to me to be unusually high overhead. In fact, over the past ten years, Endswell spent slightly more on overhead or overhead-like expenses (eg. office expenses and staff) than on grants.

Endswell: Overhead Exceeded Grants



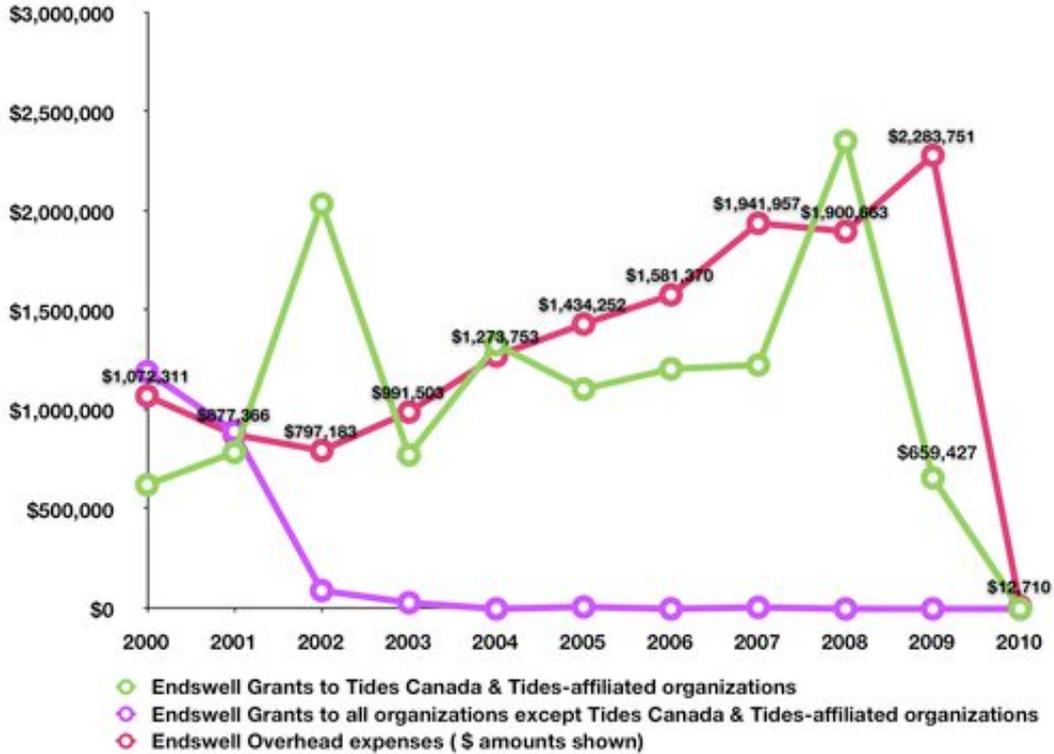
Since 2000, Endswell's assets have plummeted from \$26 million to a mere \$197,000. Over the same period, the assets of Tides Canada have skyrocketed from \$2 million to \$39 million. This leads me to wonder whether the money that Endswell granted to Tides Canada was actually re-granted to other organizations, or was it added Tides Canada's nest egg of assets?





Over the same years (2003-2009) that Endswell gave 99 percent of its grant funds to Tides Canada, Endswell spent \$11.4 million on overhead: \$2.3 million for office expenses, \$3 million for staff and consultants and \$5.9 million for "other expenses," whatever that means. Why did Endswell need to spent \$11.4 million on overhead merely to transfer \$8.7 million to Tides Canada?

Endswell Grants and Overhead Expenses (2000-2010)

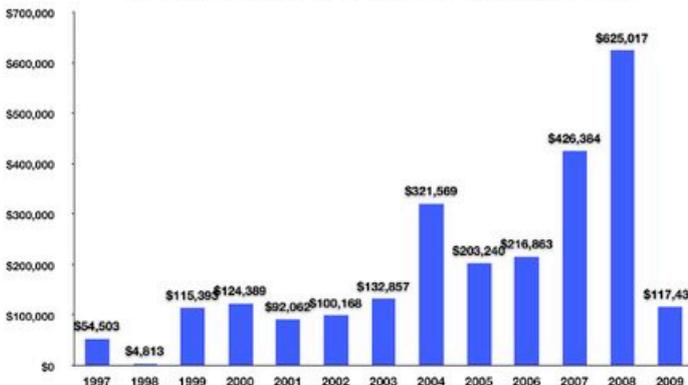


Source: Compiled based on analysis of U.S. tax returns

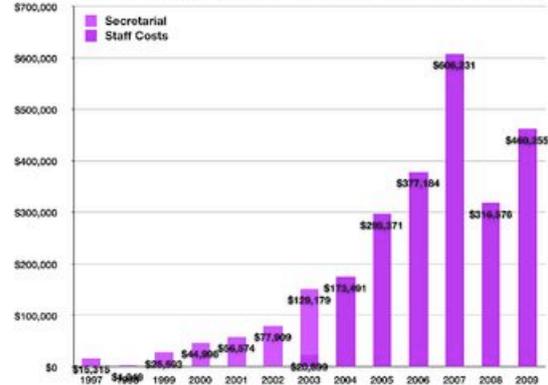
Endswell's annual office expenses increased four-fold from about \$172,000 in 2003 to \$765,000 in 2008. Why did Endswell even need an office during all those years when its grant-making consisted solely of transferring money to Tides Canada?

Staff costs at Endswell increased sharply from about \$174,000 in 2004 to \$606,000 in 2007. When the staff at Endswell, a grant-making foundation, weren't making any grants except to Tides Canada, what were the staff doing? Were they working at Renewal Partners?

Endswell Office Expenses (1997 - 2009): \$CAN 2.5 Million

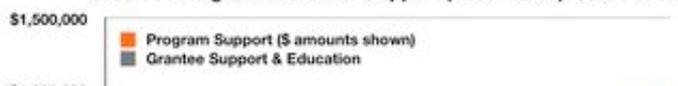


Endswell Secretarial & Staff Costs (1997 - 2009): \$US 2.6 Million



From 1999 to 2008, Endswell paid about \$200,000 annually for "grantee support and education," or "program support." Then, suddenly Endswell's payments for

Endswell Program & Grantee Support (1999 - 2009): \$3.3 Million

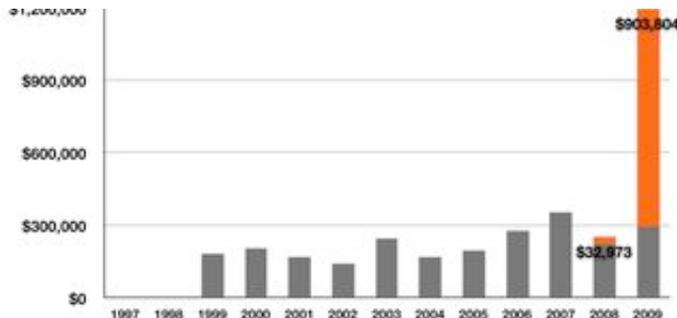


"program support" jumped from \$32,973 in 2008 to \$903,840, tax returns show. *What is the program that Endswell supported at a cost of \$903,840 in 2009?*

All of this raises questions about Endswell and also about Vision Vancouver's biggest funder when it came to power in 2008. *Is Renewal Partners a charity-subsidized "investment firm?" Or part and parcel of a charity?*

Charities are not allowed to support political parties. That's against the rules.

Endswell's doors are now closed. "Endswell's grant-making era is now complete," the foundation says at its web-site which, incidentally, it shares with Renewal Partners. That's another apparent peculiarity: *Why is an "investment firm" sharing a web-site with a charity?* Endswell's total expenditures in 2010 were only \$12,710 and didn't include any salaries, according to Canadian tax returns. But at Tides Canada, the head count has sky-rocketed. In 2010, Tides Canada reported 251 employees, up from 37 in 2006.



If Mayor Robertson is confident that none of his campaign finance originated from a registered charity, surely he could say so. He hasn't. In response to a series of letters that I sent last fall, the mayor replied, "Your letter is asking several questions about business matters of third parties." The political party of which the mayor is the leader, is hardly a third party to the mayor.

Tides Canada's lawyer has clearly stated, "No funds or support whatsoever have been given by Tides Canada to any political party or candidate for public office." That's no surprise to me, that would be too obvious. My question is whether Endswell, and possibly Tides Canada, have indirectly supported Vision Vancouver through a series of intermediaries. And if so, why?

Begin forwarded message:

From: VIVIAN KRAUSE <vivian.krause@me.com>
Date: October 12, 2011 12:48:49 PM
To: Gregor.Robertson@vancouver.ca,joel@renewalpartners.com,ross.mcmillan@tidescanada.org,Fizal Mihlar <fmihlar@png.canwest.com>
Subject: Vision Vancouver's Biggest Funder: Who is Renewal Partners?

Mayor Robertson, Mr. Solomon and Mr. McMillan,

As you know, for more than a year now, I have been trying to inquire about some of the campaign funding of Vision Vancouver and whether a substantial amount of that money originated indirectly, from Tides Canada and the Endswell Foundation.

One of my central questions is whether Renewal Partners is, in essence, part and parcel of the Endswell Foundation. I notice, for instance, that the salaries of the senior staff at Renewal Partners were also on staff at Endswell, and their salaries were paid by Endswell - to the tune of \$2.3 million (2004-2009). It surprise me that an "investment firm" would have its salaries paid for by a registered charity, unless of course, they are two sides of the same coin.

The article below outlines the basis of my concerns, opinions and questions.

If I have presented anything here that is factually incorrect, or if I have missed any important points, please let me know this week.

As before, I can be reached at 604.618.8110.

Sincerely,
 Vivian Krause

The Biggest Donor to Vision Vancouver:

Who Is Renewal Partners?

As the municipal election season gets underway in B.C., voters, as always, need to know who funds who. In the case of Vision Vancouver, voters may want to know about Renewal Partners and Tides Canada, a registered charity.

Back in 2008 when Vision Vancouver came to power with Mayor Robertson as the helm, the party was brand new and yet it ran the most expensive municipal campaign in the city's history. The [biggest donors](#) to Vision Vancouver were Renewal Partners and Strategic Communications, a P.R. firm which calls itself a "[partner](#)" of Renewal Partners. They contributed [\\$188,062](#). In a municipal campaign, that's a lot of cash.

Renewal Partners calls itself "[an independent investment company operating under the Renewal group of organizations.](#)" But U.S. tax returns may reflect a different story.

Since 2003, the senior staff at Renewal Partners were also on staff at the Endswell Foundation ("Endswell"), a registered charity, and their salaries were paid by Endswell - to the tune of [\\$2.3 million](#) (2004-2009), according to Endswell's U.S. tax returns. *What kind of "investment firm" has its staff salaries paid for by a registered charity?*

Renewal Partners and Endswell [share a web-site](#). They have their offices in the same building as Tides Canada and they use the same law firm.

Endswell says that through the 1990s, it was [the largest B.C.-based charitable foundation funding environmental issues](#). Endswell, like Tides Canada, is federally registered in both Canada and the U.S., and files tax returns with both Revenue Canada and the Internal Revenue Service (I.R.S).

The [president of Renewal Partners](#) is Joel Solomon. He is also the [current treasurer](#) of Endswell, a long-time director and [former chairman of the board](#) of the U.S. Tides Foundation ("Tides USA") and the [vice-chair of Tides Canada](#). Solomon is also involved in other Tides-affiliated charities and businesses.

Solomon has a reputation as a "millionaire philanthropist." In fact, he's been described "[a modest version of the later generations of the Kennedy/Rothschild/Rockefeller class.](#)" But again, U.S. tax returns may reflect a different story. Since 1997, Endswell has paid a total of [\\$979,527](#) to Mr. Solomon and his company, U.S. tax returns say. Of that, \$598,031 was paid between 2006 and 2009. *What sort of "millionaire philanthropist" pays himself nearly a million bucks out of the charity that supposedly he founded?*

Since 1997, U.S. tax returns for the Endswell Foundation do not show any contributions from Mr. Solomon. If he contributed to Endswell, it may have been prior to 1997.

Renewal Partners has invested in [over 75 companies](#), Solomon says. I could only find information regarding [26 companies](#). These included pizza and organic yoghurt companies in New Hampshire and other companies for cosmetics in New York, cleaning products in Vermont, wild seafood in California and music publishing in Colorado. Of the 26 companies that I could find, more are located in the United States

than in Vancouver.

One of the companies in which Renewal Partners "invested" is [Village Real Estate](#), a real estate company in Nashville Tennessee (www.villagerealestate.com). U.S. tax returns say that Joel Solomon, a native of Tennessee, has [10 percent ownership](#) in this real estate company.

If Joel Solomon's is so concerned about advancing sustainability in Vancouver, why has he invested in more companies - including one of his own - in the United States, rather than in Vancouver?

The B.C.-based companies in which Renewal Partners has invested include [Happy Planet](#), the fruit juice company with which Mayor Robertson is involved, an organic coffee company, a sprout company, a re-usable maxipad company, two grocery delivery companies, two publishing companies, a P.R. company and a real estate company. These may be good companies but aren't there higher priorities for sustainability than fruit juice, organic coffee, re-usable maxipads and so on?

Beyond Renewal Partners and Strategic Communications, there are also questions about campaign finance contributions from Interdependent Investments Ltd., Convergence Communications and [Communicopia](#) - all of which have received payments from Tides Canada and/or Endswell.

Endswell and Tides Canada are legally distinct but for practical purposes, Endswell appears to be part and parcel of Tides Canada. For most of the 2000's, the senior leadership at the two charities was the same, including the treasurer. Furthermore, between 2003 and 2009, fully [99 percent](#) of the funds granted by Endswell went to Tides Canada, a total of \$8.7 million.

Tides USA and Tides Canada are also legally distinct entities but again, the senior leadership was the same for many years. Drummond Pike was the founder and CEO of Tides USA for 34 years until he quietly stepped down in September of 2010. Pike is also the [founding chair](#) of Tides Canada, the chairman of the board of Endswell and a [senior advisor to Renewal Partners](#). *How autonomous are charities whose founder and chairman of the board are the same person?*

Mayor Robertson was a board member of Tides Canada [from 2002 to 2004](#), immediately prior to his entry into politics with the provincial NDP, in 2005. Robertson isn't the only one in his political party who has a long history with Tides Canada. The treasurer of Vision Vancouver, Martha Burton, is a [senior advisor to Tides Canada](#). Mike Magee was a senior advisor to Tides Canada [from 2002 to 2007](#) before he became Chief of Staff at Vancouver City Hall.

Endswell's annual office expenses increased from about [\\$172,000 in 2003 to \\$765,000 in 2008](#). Why did Endswell even need an office while it was simply transferring money to Tides Canada?

Staff costs at Endswell increased sharply from about [\\$45,000 in 2000 to \\$606,000 in 2007](#). And yet, during 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2009, Endswell didn't make a single grant to any organization other than Tides Canada. During those years when Endswell didn't make a single grant except to Tides Canada, *what were the staff doing?* Were the charity's employees working at Renewal Partners, the "investment firm" that has been Vision Vancouver's biggest funder?

Tides Canada's lawyer has clearly stated, "No funds or support whatsoever have been given by Tides Canada to any political party or candidate for public office." 'No surprise there. It hasn't been suggested that Tides Canada contributed directly to Vision Vancouver. That would be too obvious. The question is whether Tides Canada has indirectly supported the political career of Gregor Robertson through Endswell and a series of "investment firms" and P.R. companies that have served, for lack of a better term, as a front. *And if so, why?*

Tides Canada says that it is a non-partisan, national public foundation that supports social and environmental philanthropy. But perhaps there's more to it than that.

Since 2000, Tides Canada has been paid about [\\$60 million](#) by American foundations, according to the tax returns of Tides Canada's American funders. Of that, 90 percent was from the billion dollar foundations created by the founders of tech giants, Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft, and Intel. The Hewlett foundation and the Packard foundation, both created by the founders of Hewlett-Packard, paid [\\$29 million](#) to Tides Canada over the past decade. The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation paid Tides Canada [\\$26.6 million](#). Moore is the co-founder of INTEL. Tides Canada has also been funded by the Wilburforce Foundation, created by one of the founders of Microsoft, [Gordon Letwin](#). The Wilburforce Foundation funded Organizing for Change, a project of Tides Canada which sought to influence the B.C. Liberals choice of leader to replace Gordon Campbell as premier of British Columbia.

In 2010, [more than half](#) of Tides Canada's \$14.5 million in revenue was from foreign sources, Canadian tax returns say.

Through Tides Canada, American foundations are funding multi-million dollar campaigns to "reform" the resource-based industries that are the backbone of Canada's economy: forestry, mining, aquaculture and most recently, the Alberta oil industry. These campaigns would make Canadian industries less competitive and less profitable while protecting U.S. market and trade interests - all in the name of protecting the environment. For example, the campaign against farmed salmon sways market share towards "wild" salmon, most of which is Alaskan. The campaign against oil tanker traffic would block oil exports to Asia and continue the virtual monopoly that the United States has on Canadian oil exports.

According to my analysis of Tides Canada's U.S. tax returns for 2009, [about half](#) of Tides Canada's grants went towards addressing Canada's energy sector and for projects on the north coast of B.C. Obviously, something about that relatively small but very strategic part of Canada's coastline - the gateway to Asia - is very important to Tides Canada.

The Hewlett foundation and the Packard foundation have spent a staggering total of [\\$72 million](#) to "address" the oil and gas industry in Canada and to establish a huge park on the strategic, north coast of B.C. This park, however, isn't called the Hewlett-Packard Park. Instead, its called the Great Bear Rainforest and its now being used as a pretext for banning oil tanker traffic. No oil tankers means no oil exports to Asia. Whether or not this was the plan all along, the Great Bear Rainforest has become The Great Trade Barrier.

Incidentally, the Wilburforce Foundation paid Tides USA to get the Dogwood Initiative, a B.C.

grassroots movement, "[to devolve control over land on B.C.'s central coast](#)" to First Nations and communities in the interest of long-term habitat protection." Of all the countries in the world, are the first nations on the B.C. coast really the most in need of American philanthropy to re-gain control of their traditional lands? Or is there something else going on here?

The area covered by the Great Bear Rainforest extends from the northern tip of Vancouver Island to the southern tip of Alaska, covering the entire area that is the gateway to Asia. This is precisely the same area that is covered by the [Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area \(PNCIMA\) Initiative](#), a project for which the Moore Foundation has granted [\\$30 million](#) to B.C. environmental organizations.

In September, [Tides announced](#) the purchase a million-dollar, 150 acre property known as Hank's Beach on Cortes Island. This was then donated it to the Strathcona Regional District to become a park. What didn't get mentioned is that this land is right next door to ocean-front property owned by Treedom Ventures Ltd. which is owned, at least partially, by Mayor Robertson. Drummond Pike and Joel Solomon also own property within walking distance of Hank's beach.

Tides USA says that Hank's Beach was purchased in the mid 2000's by Renewal Partners. U.S. tax returns show that Endswell paid about [\\$660,000](#) for the "maintenance of protected property" between 1997 and 2002. Was that Hank's Beach?

Of all the countries in the world where the Tides USA could purchase a million dollar property and turn it into a park, why Canada? Why Cortes Island? And why Hank's Beach? This beach is a favorite of some of the locals, but its far from pristine. Its been logged. One thing is for sure, it won't hurt Mayor Robertson's property value to be next door to a 150 acre park.

In 2009 and 2010, Tides USA paid [\\$8.4 million to 43 organizations](#) for their involvement in a "Tar Sands" campaign, U.S. tax returns say. For general support, Tides USA paid a further \$1.8 million to these groups for a total of \$10.2 million over two years.

Back in 2004, U.S. tax returns show that the Hewlett Foundation paid Tides Canada \$70,000 "for the development of a strategic plan to address the oil and gas industry in British Columbia." Since then, the Hewlett Foundation has granted [\\$25.7 million](#) to Tides Canada and Tides USA for projects to "address" the oil and gas industry in Canada. That's a lot of money, and it raises a fair question: *What was the strategic plan?* Did it involve funding a large number of small environmental organizations to campaign in concert against Canadian oil, and in particular, against Canadian oil exports to Asia? Did it involve huge payments from American foundations to First Nations but only on the strategic, north coast of B.C.? Did it involve supporting a particular politician? Or a particular political party?
