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President's Report September 2016

The North Columbia Environmental Society's purpose is to promote sustainable living and protection of the natural environment in the North Columbia region.

In working towards our vision of Revelstoke as a thriving community that recognizes the interdependence of environmental, economic and social well-being, and in our actions to promote stewardship of the natural environment throughout the North Columbia region, we strive to adhere to the following guiding principles:

- Being informed;
- Offering positive and creative solutions;
- Using collaborative and peaceful methods of working towards our goals;
- Being approachable;
- Using open, transparent and respectful communications and actions;
- Persevering to achieve change; and
- Being focused, proactive, responsive and realistic.

Reflections on the past year:

Since last year's AGM the NCES has delved into the CBT's Non-Profit Support Program to address some of the capacity issues we've been facing. Through a lot of work at the Board level, we have now worked both with a financial consultant to get set up with a proper bookkeeping system that our new Treasurer, Hilary has now had up and running for a few months. We are also just on the tail end of a lengthy, but worthwhile, Strategic Planning Process being led by Nicole Fricot. This has both identified the issues, projects and programs the NCES would like to work on over the next 3-5 years and has highlighted some other things we can be doing to address our capacity issues. I'm happy to announce that the Strategic Plan document (though not yet formally adopted by the Board of Directors) is ready and available for review.

We were sad to lose Mel as the NCES Coordinator, but she has been doing great and hugely important work on Revelstoke's Food Security Strategy. Kate has been a wonderful addition to the NCES and I'm looking forward to working closely with her as we try to transition her position into a more Executive Director type role. She has shown a lot of enthusiasm, has grasped what the NCES is about quite quickly and gotten herself up to speed on all our programs very efficiently. She is easy to work with and wonderfully on top of things

Three new people joined the Board last year (Hilary, Mike and Kristina) and we have up to 3 spots to fill this year as Alison Lambert resigned when she moved to Hawaii and Jen and Fraser are both stepping down. As many of you know, our Directors are elected for 2 year terms. I am up for re-election this year and am happy to stand for election. If elected, I will spend the next 2 years working closely with Kate to bring the NCES Board properly within an "oversight" Board of Directors and less of a working Board. My intention is that this is the last year I will stand for election as president of the NCES but that, by the time a new President is to be elected, the workload should be much less. I would also like to use the next 2 years to work on finding alternative funding opportunities (perhaps through Social Enterprise) and marketing the NCES as the organization that protects this unique place that so many residents and visitors cherish in order to increase our visibility and support base.

CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Jody Lownds, President
Fraser Blyth, Vice President
Jen Greenwood, Director of Conservation
Kristina Welch, Director of Fundraising
Mike Brooks-Hill, Director of Communications
Gina Cawthorpe, Secretary
Hilary Zeeuwen, Treasurer

MEMBERS:

61 paid members, including 21 family memberships. More than half of our members have now purchased lifetime memberships. In 2015 we had 91 paid members, 38 of which were lifetime memberships, and the year before we had 116 paid members. The decline in memberships is something we are hoping to address in the year ahead.

VOLUNTEERS:

We have approximately 30 regularly active volunteers including the members of the Board of Directors, volunteer efforts by paid contractors who often go above and beyond what they are paid to do, Sustainable Living Committee members and Conservation Committee members. In addition to this, we have approximately 10 volunteers who show up to help out with one-off types of events that they are most interested in as well as the GASP Students who select to do their stewardship hours through NCES events and programs.

Volunteer hours put in this year are about on par with the previous year (about 2400 hours of volunteer time being a conservative estimate).

SUB COMMITTEES:

Conservation Committee (acting chair is Brian Gadbois)
Sustainable Living Committee (chaired by David Aubrey)

MEETINGS:

Monthly meetings, as needed committee meetings, AGM in September or October

COMMUNICATIONS:

Email (e-blasts)	Website & Blog	NCES & SLC Facebook
Event posters	Stoke List	Eco-Fact sheets
Library	Booth at Local Events	Newspaper articles
Stoke FM		

Just under 550 likes on our NCES Facebook page and 186 on the SLC Facebook page.

2015/2016 CONTRACTORS:

Agathe Bernard. Sustainable Living Committee Coordinator. Agathe brings fantastic photography skills, a science (geology) background, and new social-media ideas to the NCES as well as great energy and enthusiasm. Agathe also participated in the GASP weekend as a nature photography instructor.

Anna Maria Stone. Hunting & Gathering Guru Series Coordinator. Anna is new to the NCES and has done a great job picking up where Erin Wilkins left off with the 2nd year of the Hunting & Gathering Guru Series. Anna has a great energy and lots of enthusiasm and passion for the topics being covered by the H&G Guru Series. We hope to keep working with her in the future.

Kate Borucz. NCES Coordinator. Kate joined our team in April in addition to starting employment with the Invasive Species Council of BC at that time. While she is new to Revelstoke, she has immersed herself in the town, made many connections and gotten up to speed on various environmental topics and issues of local concern. Her organizational skills, background in forestry/tree planting and familiarity with working under the direction of a Board of Directors has already proved her to be a true asset to the NCES.

Kayle Robson. Bike Swap Coordinator. This was our third year for this event and Kayle did a great job of stepping into the job last minute to fill in for another Coordinator. Despite this challenge we had a great turn out for the event and it was very well organized. Kayle also did a great job of providing us with valuable feedback and tips/pointers to help this event grow next year.

Krista Patterson. GASP Coordinator and Jr. Naturalists Co-Coordinator. While Krista is a new contractor to the NCES, she is not new to the GASP or Jr. Naturalists programs. She had worked on the Jr. Naturalist program when it started under Friends of Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Park and she was previously a GASP volunteer leader. Krista has been an Outdoor Education instructor for School District 83 North Okanagan-Shuswap for the past 3 years and has an Honours degree in Outdoor Recreation Parks and Tourism with a Specialization in Leadership from Lakehead University. She is extremely engaging with the students and has done a phenomenal job of taking over the GASP Coordinator role.

Matt Kieller. Junior Naturalists Co-Coordinator. Matt showed his dedication to the Jr. Naturalist program by continuing on with the program and ensuring it would continue to thrive as it has under his direction even while he was gearing up to attend teacher's college. Students and parents alike enjoyed Matt's positive, fun attitude and ability to make learning fun. The program grew in a wonderful direction under Matt's coordination and we hope to keep it going with his vision of the program's potential in mind.

Sarah Newton. Earth Day Art Contest. Sarah is well known to many of you and we were thrilled that she came back from her travels in time to run the Earth Day Art Contest. We will hopefully be seeing much, much, much more of Sarah in the upcoming year as she has generously agreed to return to the Board of Directors and bring back all her experience, ideas and NCES history.

Local Issues of Significance to the NCES:

- Lack of a Conservation Officer for our region (looked into Bear training for RCMP)
- Circulating the RAPP line and MoFLNRO Enforcement line in the absence of a CO
- Columbia River Treaty Review Process (what is happening, ensuring local engagement)
- Management of the Upper Arrow Reservoir Drawdown Zone (the flats), particularly relating to motorized recreation, littering and destruction/disturbance of habitat and wildlife
- Existing and proposed local gravel pits (toxic dust and noise pollution)
- Environmental Assessment re: the 6th Generating Unit proposed for Revelstoke Dam
- Lack of locations/resources in Revelstoke to deal with Hazardous Waste disposal
- Proposed LNG conversion in Revelstoke
- CSR and BC Hydro's Pest Management Plans/use of pesticides
- Waste reduction (overall) and waste management by City (integrated recycling, composting, solid waste pick-up, bearproof garbage bins)

NCES Partnered Projects:

Revelstoke Caribou Rearing in the Wild (RCRW)

RCRW is a truly community-based conservation project, comprised of a cross-section of organizations (Revelstoke Community Forest Corporation, MoFLNR, NCES, Splatsin First Nation, Parks Canada, Heli & Cat Ski Operations) committed to the recovery of mountain caribou in the Revelstoke area. RCRW's goal and sole focus is to fundraise, plan and conduct a maternity penning project with the aim of increasing caribou calf survival in the North Columbia Mountains over a five-year period. This past year was the third year of the pilot project and, in July, 7 healthy caribou calves were released from the pen. Over the three-year course of the project, there have been approximately 9 calves added to the wild population (an increase of about 24 % over wild calves). Jody Lownds is the NCES Director who sits on the RCRW Board of Directors as President.

GASP Program

More information regarding this program is set out below. GASP is run in partnership with Parks Canada, the Revelstoke Visual Arts Society and a huge amount of assistance from Revelstoke Secondary School.

Invasive Species Identification and Pulls with CSISS

We often work with the Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society to help promote and provide volunteers for their invasive species identification workshops and invasive species weed pulls.

CBEEN's Spring Celebration of Environmental Education

The NCES was thrilled to work with the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network in hosting the Spring Celebration of Environmental Education in Revelstoke in May 2016. This was a great opportunity for networking and to help ensure environmental educators in the Columbia Basin are aware of the work being done by the NCES – both environmental education programs and our other work.

Carousel of Nations with Multi-Cultural Society

The NCES worked with the Multi-Cultural Society to reduce the amount of waste produced at the Carousel of Nations event last year. Through composting arranged with the Spa Hills Composting facility out of Salmon Arm and providing water stands through Revelstoke's Own Water and setting up composting and recycling stations at the event, we were able to make the event close to producing zero landfill waste and instead collected 6 full bags of compostable materials (the plates and disposable cutlery were compostable) and 2 bags of recycling.

Screen Smart with Stoke Youth Network

The NCES worked with the Screen Smart Coordinator and Stoke Youth Network to organize an afterschool slack line activity during Screen Smart Week for elementary and high school students.

Representation on Local and Regional Stakeholder Committees:

Columbia Basin Regional Advisory Committee*

BC Hydro's Rev 6 Core Committee Process

Revelstoke Caribou Rearing in the Wild Society Board of Directors*

City of Revelstoke Environmental Advisory Committee*

*NCES members sit on these Committees in their individual capacity, not as the North Columbia Environmental Society Representative

NCES Programs, Events and Initiative Highlights:

Glacier Adventure Stewardship Program- May to November (coordinator)

In its fifth year and attracting 19 students between the ages of 15-17, the GASP program continues to be a huge success. Krista Patterson coordinated the students in their volunteering, each doing 15 hours of community oriented environmental stewardship activities in order to participate in a 3 day backcountry hut trip. They were taught by a host of local experts about back country skills (topographic map use and route planning, GPS use and geocaching, tree identification, fire building, camp stove use, bear encounter preparedness, communication and leadership) and nature photography. The weekend and all the hard work put in by the students and volunteers culminates in a photo exhibit at the Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre in October or November.

Junior Naturalists March Break, Summer and Spring (after school) Programs-

(coordinator) This is a youth based educational program, with a curriculum based on the fundamentals of natural science, taught in a fun and engaging outdoor environment. The program continues to grow and be a huge success. Last year, due to the 2-week March break, we decided to offer some sessions to try and help out parents looking for childcare alternatives. These sessions booked up quickly and we are hoping to offer a full week-long day-camp this year.

The March Break Program consisted of 4 days of daycamp events as follows: RMR sponsored Snow Adventures, Revelstoke Dog Sled Adventures, a hike up to Monashee Lookout in Mount Revelstoke National Park and a Cross Country Ski to Ole Sandberg Hut at Mt. McPherson. All events were \$5/participant except dogsledding which was \$20 per participant.

The Spring after school program ran for six-weeks at Begbie View Elementary. The sessions took place from 3:00 -4:30pm on Wednesday afternoons from May 20th –June 24th and programs included: Going Fishing: Fresh water fish species around Revelstoke; Avian Adventures; Alternative Energy Sources and Solar Powered Vehicles; Map Reading and GPS 101; Microscopes and the World Beyond Our Eyes; and Tree and Shrub Identification. The program was run free of cost, to increase the inclusiveness of the program. Once again we had very successful results with attendance ranging from 6-12 students per program, with the majority of students attending every program.

The summer program ran on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 9am until noon and cost was \$10 per child per session. A total of 8 classes were taught and topics included Amazing Amphibians and Radica Reptiles, Renewable Resources, Invasive Invaders, Passionate Pollinators, Bear Necessities, Invertebrate Studies, Map Reading and Orienteering, and Animal Tracking & Predator/Prey Dynamics. Program locations include the green belt, Skunk Cabbage boardwalk, Monashee lookout and the BC Interior Forestry Museum. The sessions for the older kids (7-9 year olds) were consistently filled at maximum capacity.

Sustainable Living Workshops- ongoing (contractor and volunteer)

Now in their third year, these workshops lead to the sharing of ideas regarding green building practices and other sustainable living ideas. Last years topics provided an overview of energy alternatives (solar, hydro, etc.) and discussed and presented ideas relating to minimalist living, biomass, heat pumps, insulation and green home tours. Topics for the upcoming year include plastic reduction and elimination campaigns, citizen rights to a healthy environment and continued green homes/buidling techniques.

Hunting and Gathering Guru Series – spring and fall (contractor and volunteer)

This program educates people about the link between responsible hunting, fishing and gathering practices and a healthy ecosystem. The second year of this series aimed to continue on with some of the more popular “intro to” sessions, particularly the outdoor and fieldtrip oriented ones, but also delve deeper into some of the first year’s topics. This years sessions included Intro to Spin Casting, Hunting Q&A, Jerky Making, Plant Anatomy, Edible Invasives and a session covering basic map reading and navigation.

NCES book lending library at Sangha Bean- ongoing (volunteer)

Books & videos re: the environment and sustainability are lent out to local residents.

Kokanee Fish Festival; September 2015 (coordinator)

At Bridge Creek, grade 2’s in Revelstoke spend half a day learning about salmon spawning and other related topics. Booths hosted by several organizations featured learning and activities including endangered fish species and life cycle games, running games, fish prints and art, fish dissection, water modelling, aboriginal education, and bear aware activities, etc. About 150 students (from Begbie View Elementary, Columbia Park Elementary, Arrow Heights Elementary and Revelstoke Homeschool Group) took part in this annual event.

Bat Boxes – Spring/Summer 2016 (Cons. Committee/Volunteer)

12 Bat Boxes were constructed during workshops that took place in the summer and, after ending up with a long list of property owners eager to have bat boxes on their properties, we will work with property owners who want to set up bat boxes on their properties to understand how and where they need to be placed.

Culvert Project – Spring/Summer 2016 (Cons. Committee/Volunteer)

The NCES (really Jackie and Brian :-)) saw to replacement of a culvert on the flats by Score Construction who used a small rubber-tracked machine so as to minimize site

disturbance. Because of the erosion next to the old culvert, they contoured the new surface and placed clumps of sod on top of the fill that was used to close in around the new culvert. We are going to assess the site this fall before snowfall and again in the spring before the reservoir floods the site. We expect that the sod will re-sprout and green-up the disturbed areas. After the reservoir recedes in the fall/winter of 2017, we will again assess the site and if necessary bring the excavator back on site to touch-up any areas that settled. If needed, we will also add additional gravel. This project keeps the well-used walking, cycling, snowshoeing and xc skiing trail near the south end of the airport walkable. This popular recreational area is also a key spot for local and tourists to enjoy the view and appreciate nature.

Bike Swap & Sustainable Transportation Expo (Earth Day Celebration)- spring (coordinator)

NCES hosts the buying and selling of bikes and equipment in order to foster and encourage sustainable transportation growth in our community. This was the 3rd annual bike swap and was well attended (150 – 200 people), but still wasn't much of an income earner. However, as we continue to hold this event on an annual basis and explore different commission and admission fee structures, we are hoping it will build as more of a fundraiser like the ski swap is for the Ski Club.

The Sustainable Transportation Expo component provided a forum for people to meet and celebrate sustainable transportation by helping people connect with local cyclists, retailers and cycling associations as well as learn a bit about bike maintenance. There was face painting and a bike obstacle course for kids. The event saw approximately 175 people attend. The Revelstoke Museum and Archives donated pictures about historical biking in Revelstoke. We also had a representative from Bike to Work Week attend and a representative from the Revelstoke Visitor Centre to make bike trail maps available and talk about the electric charging station for electric vehicles at the Visitor Centre. Other partners included Skookum and RCA, Kootenay Carshare and Wandering Wheels.

Bike Giveaway- spring (Volunteer)

In partnership with the RCMP and Flowt Bikes and Skis, refurbished, abandoned bikes were given away to residents in need of a bicycle. Partnered with Community Connections and Okanagan College Settlement Assistance Program to select recipients.

Earth Day Art Contest – April (coordinator)

Invitations were sent out via email to SD 19 elementary classes, Ecole de Glaciers, and about 10 home-school students in the community. We had a total of 120 entries showing the student's image/idea for an Environmental Superhero. Entries were judged on two questions in a scored rubric: environmental message, and artistic merit. Prizes were given out for the best work in each class that participated and to an overall primary and intermediate winner. Prizes for each class was a house plant that were purchased from Coopers at cost. Grand prize- Flowt gift certificate for \$40 each. Prizes were given out at school assemblies by an NCES representative.

Speaker Series – Ongoing (coordinator)

The NCES and Columbia Mountains Institute of Applied Ecology are working together to provide a new series called “CRED Talks!”. These Columbia Region Ecological Discussions will include speakers addressing a diversity of topics such as science communication, active ecological management, citizen science, research skills and techniques and the influences that our natural environment has on art and culture. This series will run throughout the fall and winter.

Funding Sources:

General Funds:

Membership dues
Cash donations
Event revenue

Grants:

CBT Community Initiatives	TD Friends of Environment
CBT Youth Initiative	Revelstoke Credit Union
The North Face	MEC
Revelstoke Community Foundation	

In Kind Donations:

Thanks to NCES contractor efforts and a very generous community of individuals and businesses who have given substantial in-kind donations of labour, time, materials, and property.

Thank you all for everyone’s contributions to the North Columbia Environmental Society over the past year, it is a fantastic organization and I’m grateful to get to be a part of it.

Jody Lownds

President, North Columbia Environmental Society
Revelstoke BC, October 11, 2016