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## **President's Report October 2017**

**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 delved into the CBT's Non-Profit Support Program to address some of the capacity issues we have faced over the years. Through a lot of work at the Board level, we have now worked both with a financial consultant to get set up with a better bookkeeping system that our Treasurer, Hilary has now had up and running for almost a full year. Last year's Strategic Planning process resulted in an updated Mission Statement and a decision to keep our existing Vision. Our Vision continues to be "Revelstoke is a thriving community that recognizes the interdependence of environmental, economic and social well-being and promotes stewardship of the natural environment throughout the North Columbia region." Our Mission is now "To educate and enable individuals to prioritize the natural environment, and to advocate for its protection."

Kate not only continued to do a wonderful job of growing into the role of NCES Coordinator, but she has also now become an employee of the NCES – our first one!

With her new title of Executive Director, Kate continues to work on all NCES projects with enthusiasm, has provided direction to volunteers and paid contractors and is taking initiative to pursue grants and develop new project and program ideas. Kate is a very easy person to delegate tasks to and has taken a lot of work off my plate. She continues to stay on top of things at the program level which has allowed the Board of Directors to work towards being more of an “oversight” board (read – less time in meetings!) and focus more on governance.

Though not new to the NCES, Agathe joined the Board last year and has brought wonderful photography and visual skills to the Board, as well as a science (geology) background and great energy and thoughtfulness all around. We have up to 3 spots to fill this year as Hilary and Kristina are both stepping down and there is a potential third spot that still has yet to be filled.

Last year, I reminded our membership that Directors are elected for 2 year terms. My goal and intention at the time in standing for re-election as President was to spend the next 2 years working towards bringing the NCES Board properly within an “oversight” Board of Directors and less of a working Board. I feel that has mostly been achieved and that the organization is well on its way to being secure in this new model. Therefore, this will be my last year as President of the NCES but it is true that, whomever is willing to step forward into this role should have a much lighter workload than it has been in the past.

We still have work to do to find alternative funding opportunities (perhaps through Social Enterprise), but I am proud to say that our Jr. Naturalist program is now essentially self-sustaining and that, new people on board can often bring new energy and ideas. I know Kate is also keen to increase her hours and make the ED job a sustainable position, so she is always on the lookout for ways to strengthen our cash flow.

I’m extremely proud of where the organization is currently at and even more excited to find out where it can go.

#### **CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

**Jody Lownds**, President

**Mike Brooks-Hill**, Vice President and Director of Conservation

**Sarah Newton**, Past President

**Kristina Welch**, Director of Fundraising

**Agathe Bernard**, Director of Communications

**Gina Cawthorpe**, Secretary

**Hilary Zeeuwen**, Treasurer

**MEMBERS:**

99 paid members (up from 61 last year), including 26 family memberships. Approximately ¾ of these are lifetime memberships. Memberships finally appear to be back on the up-swing, largely in part due to the Jr. Naturalist Program and also, we suspect, reduced membership fees.

**VOLUNTEERS:**

We have approximately 20 regularly active volunteers including the members of the Board of Directors, volunteer efforts by 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 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.

Total volunteer hours put in this year would be approximately 2000hrs – less than previous years, likely due to a smaller workload for the President and Board of Directors and more tasks being completed by the Executive Director that previously needed to be done by volunteers.

**SUB COMMITTEES:**

Conservation Committee (chaired by Mike Brooks-Hill)  
Sustainable Living Committee (chaired by Kate Borucz)

**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 over 700 likes and 693 followers on the NCES Facebook page and 197 likes and followers on the SLC Facebook page.

## **2016/2017 CONTRACTORS:**

**Anna Maria Stone.** Hunting and Gathering Guru Series (Summer/Fall 2016). Anna did a great job of organizing the following sessions for this very popular series: Intro to Fishing, Plant Structure and Foraging, Basic Map Reading and Navigation, Eat your Weeds, Jerky Making, Edible Mushrooms 101 and Mushroom Cooking, and Getting Started with Hunting. Anna showed a passion for all these topics and put in a large number of volunteer hours to make sure the Community had a breadth of topics to choose from and that all the workshops went smoothly. She also ended the series with the NCES' first Local and Wild Potluck that brought together many volunteers, participants from the earlier sessions as well as Board members. It was a fun, delicious, informative and wonderful way to spend a rainy fall evening in Revelstoke.

**Kate Borucz.** NCES Coordinator turned Executive Director as of April 1, 2017. Under the new ED position, Kate is our SLC Coordinator, Hunting & Gathering Guru Series Coordinator, Bike Swap Coordinator, Kokanee Fish Fest Coordinator and pretty much the go to person for all things NCES these days. She's also doing a lot of behind the scenes work on administrative tasks (for example, taking some of the admin work on for running the Jr. Naturalist program), responding to member enquiries, applying for grants, manning the NCES booth at various events, sending out E-blasts and keeping the Board up to date on what is going on.

**Krista Patterson.** GASP Coordinator and Jr. Naturalists Program Coordinator. Krista has been an Outdoor Educator for School District 83 North Okanagan-Shuswap for the past 4 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 students (and adults) of all ages and has done a great job of running the GASP Program in partnership with Parks Canada as well as expanding the Jr. Naturalist Program.

## **Local Issues of Significance to the NCES:**

- Forest Stewardship Plan Reviews and widespread "stumping" practices
- Management of the Upper Arrow Reservoir Drawdown Zone (the flats), particularly relating to motorized recreation, littering and disturbance of habitat and wildlife
- Urging the City of Revelstoke to develop a Wildlife Attractant Bylaw together with Bear Aware and encourage other measures to reduce human-wildlife conflicts.
- Lack of a Conservation Officer for our region and circulating info about the RAPP line and MoFLNRO Enforcement line in the absence of a CO
- Columbia River Treaty Review Process
- Invasive Weeds
- Motorized Recreation concerns
- Existing and proposed local gravel pits (toxic dust and noise pollution)
- 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 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 fourth year of the pilot project and 9 calves and 12 cows and a juvenile male were released from the pen in early July As of September 27<sup>th</sup>, 12/12 adults are confirmed alive and 8/9 calves are confirmed alive (one mortality in August due to predation). Results for the first 3 years of the project indicate RCRW has doubled calf survival to 10 months of age from 22% to 43% (project target is 45%). There's been a total of 6-8 calves added to the sub-population. A population level effect would require 20+ adults being penned. Jody Lownds is the NCES Director who sits on the RCRW Board.

### **GASP Program**

More information regarding this program is set out below. GASP is run in partnership with Parks Canada, the Revelstoke Visual Arts Society, Stoke Youth Network 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. We've also partnered with them on an "eat your weeds" Hunting and Gathering Guru even for the past 2 years.

### **Carousel of Nations with Multi-Cultural Society**

We 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, we were able to make the event close to producing zero landfill waste.

### **Chamber of Commerce Green Business Initiatives List**

The NCES worked on compiling a list of initiatives that businesses can refer to in aiming to make their business more "green". This list was circulated by the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber also helps us in promoting our events and programs.

### **One River Ethics Matter Conference (May 2017)**

Together with the Center for Environmental Law and Policy, Local First Nations Groups and Faith Based Groups, this conference was aimed at remembering the past and exploring the ethical dimensions of Rivers as our responsibility in preparing for the future and the Columbia River Treaty Review in particular. The conference heard from those who experienced the loss of homes, livelihoods, and traditions and from those with expertise in natural river flows, riverine communities, and aquatic life.

## **Representation on Local and Regional Stakeholder Committees:**

Columbia Basin Regional Advisory Committee\*

BC Hydro's Rev 6 Core Committee Process (no longer active)

BC Hydro's Draw Down Zone Advisory Committee

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 October (coordinator)

In its sixth year and attracting 16 students between the ages of 15-17 from Revelstoke and Golden, 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, 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 with ED assistance) 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 is a huge success. It adds to our membership base and is on the verge of being self-sustaining financially.

This year we offered a full week of day-camp activities over the March Break that filled up quickly and included a dog-sledding adventure, river ecology and snowshoeing day, snow science adventure at RMR and cross-country ski at Mt. MacPherson all for a cost of \$30/day or \$125 for the week. The summer program continued to run on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 9am until noon and cost was \$15 per child per session. Classes and topics included tree planting, fire safety, river ecology, bush craft and survival skills, hiking and team building. The sessions were consistently filled at maximum capacity.

**Sustainable Living Workshops-** ongoing (contractor and volunteer)

After a brief hiatus, the SLC Workshops are now in their fourth year, and are again helping those in Revelstoke share ideas regarding green building practices, alternative energy options and other sustainable living ideas, such as making your own cleaning and beauty products. A drinking-straw ban and plastics elimination campaign is in the works.

**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, Mushroom Foraging and Cooking, Edible Invasives and a session covering basic map reading and navigation.

**NCES book lending library at XXXX- ongoing (volunteer)**

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

**Kokanee Fish Festival;** September 2016

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.

**Bike Swap - Spring**

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 4<sup>th</sup> annual bike swap and continued to be well attended (150 – 200 people), but still wasn’t much of an income earner. Primarily, we need to figure out how to get more people interested in selling their bikes through the swap instead of through Facebook, the Stoke List or Revy Sell. We are lookign at different commission structures for the next one.

**Speaker Series** – Ongoing

The NCES and Columbia Mountains Institute of Applied Ecology worked together to provide a series of “CRED Talks!”. These Columbia Region Ecological Discussions included speakers addressing topics such as science communication, active ecological management, citizen science, research skills and techniques and the influences that our natural environmental 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 Environment Fund          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 23, 2017