channels

news from the outdoor school
winter 2009

Chan·nels n.pl. 1. the beds of a stream or river 2. means of communication or expression 3. pathways or directions of thought or action <new channels of exploration>

WINTER

WELCOME to the Winter edition of *Channels*, intended to recap our recent happenings, recognize special friends, and introduce our new Pacific Foundation for Environmental Learning. It is an exciting time for the North Shore Credit Union Environmental Learning Centre as we move from the schematic and design development stage and progress into the construction phases of work. As you read this, we will have completed a comprehensive Master Plan for the sustainable development of the Outdoor School site, campus and facilities, and held our 2nd annual Advisory Committee retreat focusing on strategy, goals and planning for the future.

It's a great time to get out and experience the beauty of the early snow...then settle in and enjoy our latest news.

North Shore Credit Union Environmental Learning Centre makes BC's greenest three

The North Shore Credit Union Environmental Learning Centre was showcased as one of BC's greenest three buildings in Business in Vancouver's 2009 edition of Green Space BC magazine. Outdoor School's new gateway centre was acknowledged for its leading-edge sustainable systems that will be a part of the unique learning experience. Metrotower III and Discovery Green, both LEED (leadership in energy and environmental design) certified buildings, also made the top tier. Green Space BC is published annually and focuses exclusively on sustainability business opportunities, initiatives and challenges.

GREEN HUB

The Outdoor School was the host venue for the Squamish Chamber of Commerce Luncheon on November 10, 2009. Joan McIntyre, MLA for West Vancouver-Sea to Sky, and a special friend of the Outdoor School, was the guest speaker. The Chamber event featured a 100-Mile Menu created by Outdoor School Chef Jason Nadeau, and attracted a full-house of local business people from across the corridor. With the North Shore Credit Union Environmmental Learning Centre soon to break ground, the Outdoor School is well positioned to become the "green" hub for community connections and dialogue in the region.

Larry Murray, Outdoor School Advisory Committee and Joan McIntyre, MLA West Vancouver-Sea to Sky

Outdoor School sustainability finalist

The Outdoor School was one of three finalists in the category of Sustainability at the 12th Annual North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards, October 29, 2009. Student teams from Capilano University's School of Motion Picture Art were tasked with creating short films on all the Finalists. Students David Gattey and Jeff McAlpine were awarded third place, and $500, for their film about Outdoor School.
To see the film clip **CLICK HERE**

A summer of learning through nature

Artists for Kids 16th Annual paradise Valley Summer School of Art was held July 5-17, 2009. This popular residential summer camp provides young artists with the opportunity to develop their abilities immersed in a rich learning environment inspired by some of Canada's finest artists.

BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn Camp took place July 19-24, 2009. Every summer, young burn survivors come from across the province to experience a week of joy, safety and freedom at Outdoor School. Participants develop life-long friendships through outdoor group activities and valuable one-on-one support.

Eureka Camp Society joins our family of summer camps. The 2010 Eureka Outdoor Camp will focus on activities that foster an appreciation and enjoyment of the outdoors in an emotionally safe and friendly environment. The Society has been offering outdoor recreational programs for youth with invisible disabilities since 1980.

Whistler 2020 Partners Celebrate

Outdoor School was one of a dozen Sea to Sky organizations that signed on to the Whistler 2020 Sustainability Plan at a ceremony at the Squamish Lil'Wat Cultural Centre (SLCC) in Whistler, BC on July 9th, 2009. Whistler 2020 Partnership Agreements recognize and celebrate Sea to Sky corridor organizations' shared commitment to effectively working together to achieve a successful and sustainable community.

Whistler Mayor Ken Melamed holds Whistler 2010 partnership poster signed by Whistler 2010 Sustainability Plan partners at the SLCC ceremony

Powerful partnerships

BC Hydro Customer Care and Conservation managers toured the Outdoor School on July 17, 2009. For over two decades, the Outdoor School has worked together with BC Hydro, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and other conservation partners to restore historic salmon habitat throughout the site.

72,218 Chum and 40,523 Coho were released from the Outdoor School hatchery to the Cheakamus River and Squamish Rivershed between April and June, 2009.

It was a busy summer for the Outdoor School, hosting campus visits from our friends at BC Ministry of Tourism, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Parks Canada, Squamish Climate Action Network, Terasen Gas, and the Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee.

Outdoor School Principal (centre) tours BC Hydro managers (left to right) Wayne Cousins, Mary Ferguson, Gary Sevinson with Advisory Committee member Larry Murray (far right)

Foundation formed for the Outdoor School

The Pacific Foundation for Environmental Learning (est. 2009) directly supports the ongoing success and viability of the Outdoor School. Since 1969, the North Vancouver School District has been operating the Outdoor School with no direct funding from the Ministry of Education. As we enter into our 40th year, your generous support is critical to ensure the best in environmental education and facilities for future generations. We invite our friends, alumni and donors to join us in creating a renewed Outdoor School.

What will a revitalized Outdoor School look like?

A revitalized Outdoor School is a provincial, life-long learning center, providing dynamic educational opportunities and outdoor learning experiences for audiences of all ages. We demonstrate the highest standard for a sustainable campus, incorporating green building best practices that will set an example for our region. The Outdoor School is a place for leading scientific research and conservation, and a place where our youngest visitors prepare to become the natural resource managers and community leaders of tomorrow.

What can I do to help?

We need your support more than ever to keep our multi-day school and adult education programs strong, to steward our 420 acre ecological reserve, and to help us transition to a more sustainable campus.

Learning through nature is a real gift.

DONATE NOW

Donating to the Outdoor School has never been easier, thanks to CanadaHelps!

This online donation portal is accessible by simply clicking on the Donate Now icon above. Or, send your cheque to:
Pacific Foundation for Environmental Learning, c/o 721 Chesterfield Avenue, North Vancouver, BC V7M 2M5.

We accept and appreciate any amount donated. $50 helps us build on forty years of vibrant learning experiences through nature; $100 enhances intergenerational learning opportunities at the Coast Salish Skw'une-was Bighouse; $150 allows a high school youth to develop life-long leadership skills; $250 puts hip waders on young aquatic explorers to investigate the world of salmon; $500+ assists us in stewardship, conservation and upgrades to our 420 acres of indoor and outdoor classrooms for future generations.

Contributions and sponsorships for sustainable building projects may be any combination of funding or in-kind donations and can be tailored to meet your needs.

Please contact Cathy Jenkins at **cjenkins@nvsd44.bc.ca** or call 778.772.1504 for details on our donor recognition opportunities.

Donations are tax-deductable. The Pacific Foundation for Environmental Learning is a registered charity #82655 1293 RR0001.

Spotlight on Alumni

Reflections on the Outdoor School Counsellor experience

The North Vancouver Outdoor School holds many wonderful memories for me, and it proved to be a life-changing experience.

The first time I was a counsellor, there was no Paradise Valley facility yet. I was a grade 11 student at Handsworth, way back in the 1968-1969 school year. Teacher Don Robertson decided to take his grade 7 students from Montroyal Elementary to the United Church camp on Gambier Island for a week of environmental science. This was the original pilot project for an Outdoor School in North Vancouver. I was one of eleven high school counsellors who went along. We did the same things counsellors do today: helped with field studies, ran the recreational activities and stayed in the cabins with the students.

That spring, Don Robertson put together a proposal to the School Board to establish a permanent Outdoor School for the district. He asked me to be part of the presentation to the Trustees, to bring the perspective of the high school counsellors. I didn't have a clue what a Board meeting was all about, but I chatted away about the role of the counsellors and answered some questions from the Trustees. As we now know, the school board approved Don's proposal, and he became the first director of the Outdoor School.

As for the life-changing part, it was the Outdoor School counselling experience that made me decide to go into teaching as a career. Since then, I've taken many classes of my own students to Outdoor School, not to mention enjoying many NVTA Executive Retreats at the Conference Centre.

History! Glad to have been a part of it!

Submitted by Linda Watson, Past President, North Vancouver Teachers' Association (NVTA). | Every year, over 300 high school students participate in the youth leadership program at the Outdoor School.

Laurie Clark on the newly dedicated "Pika's Path"

Fond farewell to a very special teacher

Laurie "Pika" Clark retires after a long and successful teaching career with the North Vancouver School District and the Outdoor School. Our heartfelt thanks for making a difference is best expressed in the words of the children:

Evelyn "I saw a lot of eagles and salmon on the walk. It was so cool how both animals moved. Thank you Pika for pointing out many things that most of us would not have noticed. "

Dylan "On our walk we saw a huge cedar tree and I was amazed by how many people it took to reach around the tree. I never knew that all of nature could be connected by each other."

Mira "We saw so many birds! There were herons, dippers and salmon. Thank you, Pika. I appreciate my experience as one of the best."

Haitchka, Kee-lee-la!

For more information on how you can get involved contact:

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