

# channels

news from the outdoor school  
spring • summer 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>

## Spring is upon us

The season of renewal is the perfect time to share an update on the latest happenings at the Outdoor School. With the arrival of warmer weather, we are given even more reasons to step out and enjoy nature's classroom. Read on to learn about the North Shore Credit Union Environmental Learning Centre, our Summer Institute for teachers, community celebrations, special campus visitors, new friends and alumni memories.

*No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow.*

*-Proverb*



## The hum of spring

May 19-25, 2009 marks the unofficial start of spring with the annual hummingbird count and banding at the Outdoor School. Biologist and Master Bander, Cam Finlay and his team have been conducting hummingbird research across BC for over a decade, banding close to 15,000 of these beautiful tiny birds. Since 2002, several hundred birds have been banded at the Outdoor School. With this research, and that of a network of volunteer banders in B.C. and elsewhere in North America, more will be learned about hummingbird breeding habits and migration patterns.

For the last two years, Ida Bacon, PhD student from the University of Edinburgh, has participated as a "researcher in residence" at the Outdoor School, using field observations and historic banding data in her work. Ida's research focuses on behavioural and genetic variation in populations of rufous hummingbirds. In order to expand this important international research, additional hummingbird feeding sites from Furry Creek to Brackendale need to be identified.

If you are interested in participating in an international study to help us understand hummingbirds better in the Sea to Sky corridor, please contact Victor Elderton at [nvos@nvds44.bc.ca](mailto:nvos@nvds44.bc.ca) to register your feeders.

*Feeder tip: Red dyes may be harmful and should be avoided. A mix of 3 or 4 parts water to 1 part white sugar is best.*



*"Outdoor School really made me realize what impact humans have on the environment. I am now more careful about recycling and taking only what I need." Malika, (grade 6)*



## Summer institute for teachers

**Learning Like a River**, a one week course exploring sustainability and environmental issues is scheduled for July 6 to 10, 2009. Experience and explore the stunning Cheakamus River from Whistler glaciers to the Squamish Estuary in Howe Sound. Activities include high alpine hiking, river-rafting, and a night in the Skw'one-was Big House.

These learning experiences support the new BC K-12 environmental learning curriculum framework. Course participants can apply for undergraduate credit at Simon Fraser University. Selected applicants may be eligible for a Sustainability Leadership subsidy from the Ministry of Education. To indicate your interest, please contact: [learninglikeariver-2009@sfu.ca](mailto:learninglikeariver-2009@sfu.ca)

## Whistler Forum for Dialogue and Leadership

wrapped up a busy year of leadership training with a final learning day at the Outdoor School Big House on May 1, 2009. *Learning and Leading Together with First Nations* was the focus of the cohort, with the goal to build bridges of understanding and to expand networks of responsible leaders more cognizant of the history, culture and aspirations of Squamish and Lil'wat First Nations in the Sea to Sky Corridor. Outdoor School staff shared the successes of the Skw'one-was "together" First Nation cultural immersion program, now in its 25th year.

The Outdoor School's 420 acre natural campus provides a unique meeting venue. Facility rentals help to support the schools environmental learning programs that serve over 5,000 children annually.



For information on booking Outdoor School facilities please contact: [mindy@nvsvd44.bc.ca](mailto:mindy@nvsvd44.bc.ca)

## Outdoor School adds its voice on the future of BC



CBC's BC Almanac teamed up with Simon Fraser University's Image BC, a dialogue series involving leaders from diverse sectors in the province in thinking forward about BC's possible futures. Outdoor School Principal Victor Elderton participated in the Imagine BC Public Dialogue on March 27, 2009 at SFU's Wosk Centre for Dialogue. BC Almanac host Mark Forsythe moderated this live broadcast. This stimulating gathering explored how to create resilience in health, habitat and livelihoods in BC, and shared stories of what individuals, organizations and institutions are doing now around the province to create a resilient future.

As part of the Image BC project, CBC put out the call for provincial change-makers who are taking ideas and making them happen. Outdoor School teaching staff was nominated as a BC change-maker for inspiring the minds of young learners through nature, sparking imaginations and helping to develop healthier, happier, more resilient children.

## Nature is key in unlocking secrets of green design

The sustainable design of the North Shore Credit Union Environmental Learning Centre (ELC) aims to achieve a level of energy efficiency and economic performance that is substantially higher than a conventional educational facility. The ELC project team is taking a whole-building approach to the multi-phased infrastructure renewal – a perspective that recognizes the interconnections between all building systems.

It is the School District's goal to design and build a learning centre that possesses a synergy with the natural environment, and integrate the centre within the forested site to demonstrate system interconnections. Over the last few months, the ELC project team of district staff, architects, and consultants has engaged in energy and infrastructure design workshops to examine the integration of components and systems and determine how they best work together to save energy and reduce environmental impact on the Outdoor School site.

This holistic approach draws from the broad knowledge of the project team and will provide the strategies to achieve a true high-performance environmental learning centre: one that is cost-effective over its entire life cycle, safe, accessible, flexible, aesthetic, productive, and sustainable.

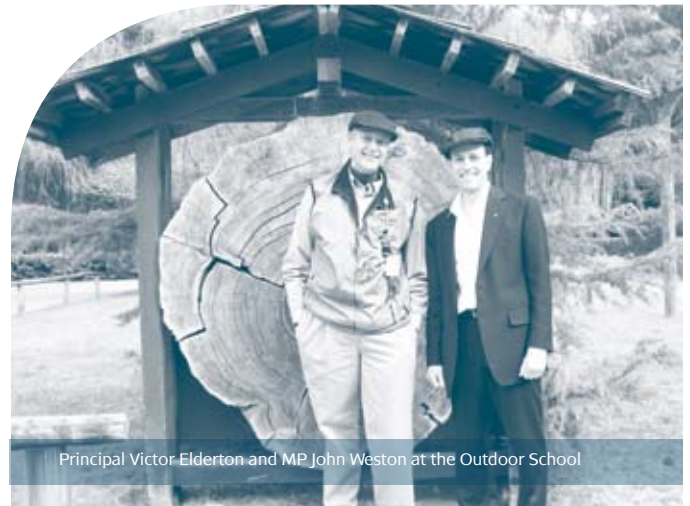


**NorthShore**  
CREDIT UNION

## John Weston, Member of

**Parliament** for West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country, dropped by the Outdoor School as part of a visit to Squamish on April 9, 2009. As a member of the Public Accounts and Fisheries Standing Committees in Ottawa, Mr. Weston enjoyed a first-hand look at the school's fish hatchery, and was interested to learn about the on-site BC Hydro partnership projects related to spawning habitat restoration in the Cheakamus River.

During his visit, MP Weston was briefed on the Outdoor School's forty year history of experiential environmental education, the First Nations cultural experience, and youth leadership programming. Mr. Weston learned of the critical need for campus infrastructure renewal and the plans for the new North Shore Credit Union Environmental Learning Centre, the first sustainably-designed building in a multi-phased revitalization of the Outdoor School's 420 acres of ecological reserve in Paradise Valley, near Squamish.



Principal Victor Elderton and MP John Weston at the Outdoor School

## Dr. Brian Riddell joins Outdoor School Advisory Committee

We are extremely pleased to welcome Dr. Brian Riddell, Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) to the Outdoor School Advisory Committee. Dr. Riddell is one of Canada's most respected and decorated salmon researchers and managers. His impressive career has been focused on creating a sustainable future for

salmon in Canada. Dr. Riddell continues PSF's long standing relationship with the Outdoor School that was strengthened by past Executive Director and Advisory Committee member, Dr. Paul Kariya. PSF is recognized as the pre-eminent salmon and watershed conservation organization in Canada.

## Earth Day celebrations on the beach

Outdoor School joined Green Squamish (formally Squamish Environmental Conservation Society) in a celebration for Earth Day at Nexon Beach in Squamish on April 19, 2009. Despite the rain, visitors enjoyed live music, speakers, an expo of sustainable local businesses, local non-profit info booths, kids

fun activities, a community bike ride, and a guided ecology walk through the estuary. Earth Day is just one of the many special events Outdoor School participates in throughout the year, helping to bring the community together in celebration of the environment through education, dialogue, art and music.

## Alumni memories

"It's amazing when we look back on our childhood experiences, and can clearly remember something special like a week at Outdoor School! Then you realize that so many kids have been there over the years, and those kids are now grown up like us, and all share similar memories. This really gives perspective on what a special and important place Outdoor School is, and how important the programs are in forming our thoughts, our interests, and our ambitions later in life! I still have some black & white photos that we developed in the photo lab at Outdoor School during my week. I remember the instructors name was Shane and he was perpetually happy and fascinating to us. The introduction to a photo lab led me to a career in photography for a short period of my life. My action and lifestyle photos were eventually published in several national and international ski and snowboard magazines. The seed of this interest was definitely planted at the Outdoor School and by Shane!"



Walter Rawlinson at the door, left to right: John Jervis, Ward McLaren and Sean Geifin  
Photo submitted by John Jervis, developed in Outdoor School photo lab, 1977

*John Jervis is Director of Guerrilla Management, a project management and development consulting firm serving the Sea to Sky Corridor. John attended Outdoor School in 1977 as a student of Holy Trinity Elementary.*



## Outdoor School Open House

June 7, 2009 | 10:30 am to 3:30 pm

2170 Paradise Valley Road, Brackendale, BC (near Squamish)

**Celebrating 40 years & forward**

**For more information on volunteer opportunities, ways to donate, and how to get connected contact:**

**Cathy Jenkins**  
Community and Business Development  
North Vancouver Outdoor School  
[cjenkins@nvsd44.bc.ca](mailto:cjenkins@nvsd44.bc.ca)  
778.772.1504

North Vancouver School District 44  
721 Chesterfield Avenue  
North Vancouver, BC V7M 2M5  
[www.nvsd44.bc.ca](http://www.nvsd44.bc.ca)