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President's Report September 2014

Personal Comment: This may well be my last president's report and I am handing the reins over to a most impressive board. I know that the depth and vision of the current board, volunteers, contractors, and most importantly, the general membership is strong and informed. It is going to be yet another great year ahead of us!

The board of directors is as diverse as it is strong. Members are a great combination of biologists, a lawyer, an urban planner, sustainable farmer, born and bred Revelstokian, food security experts, and educators. I continue to be inspired by the ideas and projects that we partner in, create, and inspire: from caribou conservation to sustainable agriculture. Again this year I can say that for a community of our size I don't think there is a more active environmental group to be found in British Columbia. Furthermore, I would hazard a guess that the NCES is among the most active non-profit groups in our community! We have events, active research projects, representation on municipal and regional government committees, and we collaborate with a myriad of other stakeholder groups on initiatives. With all these wonderful endeavors, it is with great sadness that I reflect upon the loss of one of our directors this year. Rowland Bell, our director of conservation passed away this spring. I hope that Rowland is looking down at our small community with a smile, and finding peace.

To Review:

The North Columbia Environmental Society's Constitutional goals are to:

- Promote the conservation, preservation, & restoration of the natural environment in the North Columbia region.
- Increase community awareness and participation to ensure that environmental health is recognized as essential for community well-being.
- Establish a unified voice for environmental issues.
- Find and share information about environmental issues of concern to North Columbia residents.
- Look for the common causes of environmental and social concerns and involve others in addressing them.
- Assist in developing strategies for ecological, social, and economic stability.
- Represent the environmental interests of the community and the surrounding ecosystem.

CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Sarah Newton, President, that's me. I am a school teacher at Begbie View Elementary and am also the Social Justice Contact for our school district. I enjoy bringing community together and my personal hero is Annie Leonard, a sustainable living leader who created *The Story of Stuff* and *the Story of Solutions*.

Jody Lownds, Vice President and Treasurer who keeps us on track with her level head and is just so much more organized than most of us!!! Jody is also a practicing lawyer whose legal insights are highly valued and the envy of other ENGO's!

Melissa Hemphill, Secretary. Melissa offers the voice of a parent, and a person who 'walks the talk' in her personal life. She has a degree in biochemistry and holistic nutrition, both of which help our board make valuable decisions on complex issues.

Erin Wilkins, Director of Fundraising, you rock at digging into the different grants and making sure that our programs get the funding they need! Her organizations skills have made this portfolio a great deal less terrifying for the rest of us.

Jen Greenwood, Director of Conservation, Jen is a wealth of knowledge and having an experience biologist on the board has added a great deal of legitimacy to our organization. She has done field work and research in our area and knows our eco-system very well.

Fraser Blyth, Director at Large, who has pulled off a new Committee this year and is one for details and planning. And you are the best at organizing our meetings and making sure we adjourn at a reasonable time! Fraser is a city planner, another important attribute to our society, one that does so much for our built landscape.

Nadja Luckau- Director of Memberships, and our sustainable farmer expert. She does what many of us dream of, she makes her living from being an organic farmer in Revelstoke, and in her spare time keeps our membership organized and ever growing.

Ron Glave, Director of Communications. Communicating to our membership means walking a fine line between information overload and an information vacuum. Ron has made our newsletters interesting and full of value. Having been born in Revelstoke and knowing the history, helps our society make decisions that best respect our community.

Members

116 paid members (in 2013 we had 98 paid members)

325 + likes on our NCES Facebook page

Volunteer Hours:

In the past we have relied more on volunteers and now we have more hired contractors. As president I feel that this is a double-edged sword. Intense volunteer burn out for board members and a number of other key volunteers made it obvious that we needed to hire an over arching contractor. At present this job is being done most professionally and efficiently by Amy Clarke, a woman whom I am most grateful to and impressed by. We are very fortunate to employ her. She is so also one of our hardest working volunteers, probably with a 1:1 ratio between her volunteer and paid hours.

Since having hired other short and longer term part time volunteers, we still rely heavily on our outstanding volunteer base. Having a hired person to coordinate has made our volunteer opportunities more manageable and enjoyable for our membership (most notably our board of directors).

It is difficult to determine volunteer hours since our last AGM, but I calculate that perhaps a minimum of 2200 hours volunteer hours were contributed by NCES volunteers. The ability of the NCES to mobilize volunteers is well known and admired in Revelstoke. To show our ongoing gratitude, the board hosts a volunteer appreciation event each year. This year it was a feast from La Baguette and Nadja Luckau, with sporting events (that showed our age as we panted through a pick up soccer game!), and a great turn out.

Sub Committees:

Independent Power Projects
Revelstoke Mountain Resort

Water Issues
Local Food Initiative

Mountain Caribou
Conservation

Meetings

Monthly meetings, as needed committee meetings, AGM in September

Methods of Communication

Email	NCES Website (5600 visits in 2014)	NCES Facebook page
Event posters	Stoke List	Eco-Fact sheets
Library	Booth at Local Events	Newspaper articles

2014 Contractors:

Laura Stovel, Accessible Garden and Landshare Coordinator. It is impressive Laura never stops coming up with great ideas and brings them to fruition.

Hailey Ross, MSNG Coordinator, it goes without saying that Hailey put on an amazing event again at Terra Firma Farm even though she was at the end of her first pregnancy!

Heather Hood, Farm to Table (Elementary School) and Garden & Art Tour Coordinator. Heather is also expecting, this will be her second child! Good thing we have members making sure we have more members in the future!

Nicole Cherlet, Website Coordinator. Nicole loves technology and has been instrumental in the NCES reaching new audiences. She is also the face behind our food preservation rental program at her fantastic shop: Big Mountain Kitchen.

Jesse Johnston-Hill Farm to Table Coordinator (High School): To me, just the thought of standing in front of a classroom full of teenagers talking to them about local and organic food deserves the biggest respect! And Jesse did an awesome job at it.

Sara Peterson, Bike Swap Coordinator. Sara did a fabulous job at organizing the first annual swap, and she hands down designs the prettiest posters!! This was our first year for this event and it was a resounding success, uniting hundreds of bikes with new owners.

Matt Kieller, Junior Naturalists & GASP Coordinator. Matt is awesome at engaging kids that we usually don't get to reach. His passion and knowledge truly is teaching kids to love nature so that they can protect it.

Amy Clarke, NCES Coordinator, Garden Guru, Downtown Community Garden and RVAC Coordinator, and so much more. Amy keeps things organized, cracks the whip when she has to & engages people. The NCES would not be the same without you!

Local Issues of Significance to the NCES:

- Kokanee Creek Log Jam (resulting in disturbance to salmon run)
- Local industrial gravel pit dust close to schools & residences (toxic dust and noise pollution)
- Shelter Bay Development (luxury recreation community created 50 km south of Revelstoke)
- Independent Power Projects (private power for profit proposed on 70+ creeks in our region)
- Reduction of urban forest (concerns over cutting, lack of adequate replants)
- Downie wood waste pile (high risk of explosion, fire)
- Bear training for RCMP (to correctly handle nuisance bears)
- Lack of a conservation officer for our region
- Salmon runs in the Columbia watershed (reduced dramatically in the last 4 years)
- Columbia River drawdown zone management (lack of enforcement of wildlife policies)
- Chicken bylaw (climate change action, food security)

NCES Partnered Events

Mountain Caribou in the Wild-ongoing

A true conservation project in our own backyard. The NCES is a member of a committee of stakeholders that aim to foster the recovery of mountain caribou by the creation of maternity pens northwest of Revelstoke. This year ten females were captured and the result was the birth and survival of 9 calves. Jody Lownds is the NCES director who sits on this committee.

CSRD Waste Reduction Week Film- Trashed (Oct 2013)

CSISS (Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species) weed pull, willow plant with Robyn Hooper

Screensmart Week- local organizations sponsor events during a week that encourages children to spend less time in front of screens.

Food Camp-New Revelstokian, Sarah Keyes coordinated this event for youth with minor information dissemination and networking help from the NCES

Begbie View Elementary School Garden- two beds located at the downtown elementary school teach gardening techniques and fosters a love of growing your own food.

Revelstoke Wetlands Past, Present, & Future: in partnership with the Columbia Mountain Institute, this flagship event saw record turn outs and outstanding speakers. Presentations included Revelstoke Museum and Archives, ecological values from local biologists, development potential with the Chamber of Commerce and the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, and more.

Gleaning Project with Bear Aware- to harvest local fruit, make it into products for the food bank, and keep bears out of the urban area.

Representation on Local and Region Stakeholder Committees:

Columbia River Treaty Negotiations

Watershed Governance Symposium

Revelstoke Caribou Rearing in the Wild

City of Revelstoke Environmental Advisory Committee (now dormant)

NCES Events and Initiative Highlights:

Glacier Adventure Stewardship Program- June to September (coordinator)

In its third year and attracting 18 students in the age range of 15-17, the GASP program was a huge success. Matt Kieller coordinated the students in their volunteering, each doing 15 hours of community oriented environmental stewardship activities in order to participate in a 4 day backcountry educational wilderness adventure. They were taught by a host of local experts about back country skills and photography. The cumulative event is a photo exhibit in October. Matt Kieller

Junior Naturalists- July- August (coordinator)

This program we took over this year from the Friends of Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks. It was a successful year with 8 weeks of summer day camps, and 6 after

school sessions with an average of 7-16 children in attendance. Events focused on local conservation and environmental awareness. This fall we will add an after school component to target more 'at risk' children in the elementary schools. Matt Kieller

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

Books & videos on the topic of the environment and sustainability are lent out to local residents. Special thanks to Julie Laverdiere who organized our library this year as part of her Parks Canada volunteer hours.

Earth Day- April (volunteer)

- Nature walk on the greenbelt (6 people braved a torrential downpour), The Greenest Little City in BC Student Art Contest (over 300 entries), Best of the Best Environmental Film Night (over 30 people in attendance). Sarah Newton

Kokanee Fish Festival- Late September (coordinator)

Community wide educational opportunity for grade 2 students at Bridge Creek, this annual event engages stakeholders to provide stations for children to learn about salmon and the Columbia watershed. Heather Hood and Jennifer Meens

Regular NCES newsletter- Quarterly (volunteer)

E-publications that announces events, local environmental issues, volunteer opportunities, and NCES/ Community activities. The newsletter is mentioned here because it has taken on a new life this year. It is dynamic, interactive, and richer in information than ever before. Ron Glave

Website Renovations- ongoing (contractor)

A new format and additional features such as Paypal for online memberships, ticket sales, program information, and links to important information to our membership are but some of the innovations on our website. Like the newsletter, the website has taken on a new life, and become an integral part of NCES functions. Nicole Cheret

Winterlude- spring (contractor)

An exciting new series of events for all ages that included Tracking for Winter Wonders, Nature Nerding Night, Geocaching and Wild Things, Winter Survival Skills, that engaged the participants (of all ages) in our local natural environment. Hailey Ross

Native Landscaping Guide- planning stages (contractor)

This Revelstoke centric document will be a valuable resource for people trying to find plant ideas that work for Revelstoke and that take into consideration bear aware practices, pollen, native species, food security, climate change, and invasive species. Fraser Blyth

Sustainable Living Workshops- early summer (volunteer)

Starting with an overview of energy alternatives, talks on Solar power, hydro power, small homes, etc. These workshops were organized by our new committee on sustainable living. Excellent turn out to events and an excellent collaborative effort adds greatly to the NCES repertoire of offerings. Fraser Blyth, Laura Stovel

Bike Swap- spring (coordinator)

NCES hosts the buying and selling of bikes and equipment in order to foster and encourage sustainable transportation growth in our community. A well attended new event that turned out to be an excellent fundraiser for the NCES. Sarah Peterson

Bike Giveaway- spring (coordinator)

In partnership with the RCMP and Flowt Bikes and Skis, refurbished, abandoned bikes were given away to residents in need of a bicycle. Sarah Jeffery

Kokanee Fish Festival; September 2014 (coordinator) about to happen!

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 feature activities include running games, fish prints, fish dissection, art, fishing games, scavenger hunts, bear aware activities, etc. About 80 students take part in this annual event. An obvious concern for the future is that there are few if any Kokanee spawning in the last two years. Sara Jeffery last September and this year we have Jenn Meens

IPP Committee Update, Chair Mike Watson

There isn't much new regards to any active or proposed projects in and around the Revelstoke area. Begbie Creek, McKay Creek, and Moses Creek have been put on hold indefinitely due to a conflict of interest from the proponent. In terms of province wide IPP run-of-river development the provincial government has very quietly been revoking existing proposals due to increased media exposure of project malfunctions (including creeks running dry and fish kills), BC Hydro meeting provincial energy demands, and the ballooning costs of the IPP program itself. Also many companies with proposals are realizing their proposals are more expensive than originally anticipated (case and point Hadow Creek near Arrowhead and the tiny Sequoia Energy Company).

While this is good news, projects that have been approved and received Energy Purchasing Agreements are continuing to be built and put online. The most recent one built is near Terrace and is a 25MW run-of-river project, diverting two creeks: Basque Creek and Middle Creek. The increased amount of IPP projects in that area is due to the proposed mines in the Northwest Transmission corridor. The government is actively spinning green wash by using the so-called 'green energy' from run-of-river IPP projects to power mining operations. The IPP Committee continues to lobby the current Liberal government to place a moratorium on all existing IPP proposals and any currently under construction until the following criteria are met:

1. Built with the highest environmental standards
2. Regionally planned
3. Acceptable to First Nations
4. Meaningful environmental assessment
5. Cumulative impact assessment

The IPP committee continues to actively work with the Wilderness Committee out of their Vancouver office, notably with Policy Director Gwen Barlee and the Valhalla Wilderness Society out of New Denver. Together we can do Green Energy right.

Local Food Initiative (LFI, a committee of the NCES) Programming:

The LFI will be electing its new leadership team for the 2014-2015 year at this Thursday's meeting. This is an exciting year for the LFI as we work with the Revelstoke Food Security Strategy in our strategic planning to grow the food movement in Revy. Please come out this Thursday night at the rec centre at 6:30pm to learn more about what the LFI is currently doing and where they're headed next.

-Food at Work; Ongoing (volunteer)

A local initiative to encourage local businesses to plant food instead of flowers outside their businesses. At present we have seven participating locations. The goal is to increase awareness of capacity for food production and capacity in the urban commercial demographic. Nadja Lucknau, Melissa Hemphill, and Amy Clarke

-Downtown Community Garden; Ongoing (coordinator)

In conjunction with the Revelstoke United Church in the downtown core, it supports a number of educational opportunities, ie. Garden Guru series. Funding for garden maintenance and a series of garden-related educational programming came from the CBT & the New Horizons grant. A garden co-coordinator & Junior Urban Farmer were hired to assist members & ensure food bank donations. We have 13 plot holders; this season we donated 50+ kg of food to the food bank with a lot more produce to come. Amy Clarke

Garden and Art Tour; August (coordinator)

The NCES hosted a self-directed tour of 11 homes and 9 artists, to celebrate and share strategies for growing your own food in an urban environment. This event was a resounding success with over 120 following our event maps from venue to venue, mostly on their bicycles. Heather Hood

Hosted Harvest Palooza- September (Coordinator)

Harvest event with contests, a potluck, live music, and educational booths to showcase local food and celebrate the harvest season. Heather Hood

Garden Guru workshops- early spring to late fall (coordinator)

Food preservation workshops on a wide variety of topics with local experts presenting. Hands on an informative sessions that are a favourite of local residents. Amy Clarke

Food Processing Equipment Lending- in partnership with Big Mountain Kitchen, to inspire more local food preservation.

Little Sprouts- Little Sprouts is a volunteer run program that aims to teach preschool-aged children where their food comes from and how to grow their own food. By going to a preschool and hosting events at the downtown community garden (where the little sprouts have two garden plots) we were able to reach 90 children. There are still carrots to harvest, so watch for the little sprouts at the farmer's market.

Incredible Edibles Film Series- winter, early spring (volunteer)

A winter film series on topics of local interest and to do with sustainable food production. Films included Mad City Chickens, Queen of the Sun, Permaculture, and Fresh. Great turn out and engaging guest speakers that helped bring a local flavour to each film. An organizational whirlwind of LFI volunteers organized this event.

Mid-Summer Nights Green – early fall (coordinator)

A fundraising gala evening of local food and entertainment at Terra Firm Farm. We sold out in a matter of days with 100 tickets sold, but about 25 additional people there as volunteers, a profit of about \$6000. Hailey Ross

Food Charter: Ongoing (contractor)

Local initiative to create a Food Resilience Charter for Revelstoke. A stakeholder committee of various actors with a stake in Revelstoke's food security developed a definition for what "Food Security" means for Revelstoke, and drafted a charter to be ratified by the community, and City Council. The Charter was ratified by City Council in February 2014, by School District 19 in March 2014, and continues to gather ratifications from a variety of community groups and individuals. Project partners include Community Connections, City of Revelstoke, School District 19, the Fair Trade Society, Terra Firma Farms, and a variety of other individuals representing cultural groups, seniors, First Nations, etc. The ratified food charter, and the associated steering committee, lead to the City of Revelstoke funding a the production of a Food Security Strategy to take the values embodied in the food charter and create an action plan for the community. Consultants hired to write the strategy aim to complete the document by Sept 30, 2014. Hailey Ross

Publication of the book *Mountain Harvest: Spring* (coordinator)

Revelstoke's seniors share their secrets which came out in time for Christmas, and it has been selling well. We also created an exhibit on Revelstoke's agricultural history that is up at the Revelstoke Museum and Archives. Laura Stovel

Visual Arts Centre Garden: Ongoing (contractor)

In the process of building eight wheelchair-accessible garden planters in partnership with the Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre. Laura Stovel, Amy Clarke

Moberly Manor Garden: spring (contractor)

In May we were able to install and plant vegetables in two planters at Moberly Manor and three planters at The Cottages so that seniors with mobility challenges can continue to enjoy growing their own food. We also bought a composter for Moberly Manor. Laura Stovel

Garden sharing: Ongoing (contractor)

Created a program to match landless gardeners with vacant garndens, but we did not have much interest from gardeners – though there were many offers of land. This could be because people living in Revelstoke often have easy access to garden space. We have turned our efforts to creating a gardening website that will allow people to offer or seek garden space; buy, sell, trade or give away gardening tools, supplies or produce; and seek advice from other gardeners. The website will feature a tip from a gardener every week of the year. Most of these are senior gardeners but we are also profiling some younger gardeners. Laura Stovel

-Garden Guru Series; April to September (coordinator)

These garden and food preservation workshops are a growing success each year. Coordinated by Amy Clarke, this workshop series identified local "experts" in gardening and food-preservation techniques to facilitate workshops on these topics. There were 13 workshops with an average of 17 people in attendance. The series has been very successful

as demonstrated by great attendance, a diverse demographic appeal, community praise, and generous community donations of time and resources. Amy Clarke

-SD 19 schools: Farm to Table; December to March (coordinator)

Education about climate change as it is related to the food issues of processing, transport, and packaging. This annual program takes place in all grade 5 classes, with a about 100 students taking part in four modules and trips to the farmer's market and local grocery stores. (A new round of units are starting up this fall with Heather Hood doing elementary classrooms and Jess Johnston-Hill starting a brand new curricula at RSS). Jessie Johnston-Hill (RSS), and Heather Hood (elementary)

NCES COMMITTEES (and chair)

Water Committee (Jody Lownds)

Conservation Committee (Jennifer Greenwood)

IPP Committee (Mike Watson)

Sustainable Living Committee (Fraser Blyth)

Caribou Committee (Jody Lownds)

2014 Part-Time Contractors

Amy Clarke- NCES Coordinator, speaker series, garden guru, Visual Arts Centre Garden

Laura Stovel- Garden book, land share, accessible garden project, Visual Arts Centre Garden

Heather Hood- Garden and Art Tour, Harvest Palooza

Sara Jeffery- bike giveaway (Amy, did this actually happen!?!?)

Nicole Cheret- web design, food equipment lending library

Hailey Ross- Midsummer Nights Green, Food Charter (?)

Matt Kieller- Junior Naturalists, GASP

Farm to Table- Jesse Hill, Heather Hood

Sara Peterson- Bike Swap

Funding Sources:

Annual membership dues

Cash donations

Event revenue

CBT Community Initiatives

CBT Youth Initiative

Hellmans

New Horizons

TD Friends of

Environment

Evergreen Fund

Revelstoke Credit Union

Revelstoke Comm.

Foundation

North Face

MEC

Walmart

BC Gaming

In Kind Donations:

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

Thank you all for your contributions to the North Columbia Environmental Society, it is well worth your efforts. With warmest regards,

Sarah Newton, Acting President
North Columbia Environmental Society

Revelstoke BC, September 23, 2014

