



Green Schools Newsletter

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The Notebook: Making Connections

The United Nations declared 2005-2014 [The Decade for Education for Sustainable Development](#) to raise awareness for the integration of principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning.

Whether it is practiced as *environmental education* or *education for sustainable development*, many provinces in Canada have committed to an interdisciplinary approach where environmental and sustainability related topics are integrated into the curriculum. One of the common themes found in this approach is connections:

Interconnectedness of living things and living systems, of local actions with global consequences and vice versa, of different subjects in school, and learning communities.

BC is now able to make even stronger connections in the environmental education community: In March 2011, the new [Institute for Environmental Learning](#) (IEL) was launched in Vancouver, BC, to facilitate in the continued integration of environmental education principles and practices into the BC school curriculum. Building on the foundations of [Walking the Talk](#), the Institute is hosted by Simon Fraser University and was created in collaborative partnership with other post-secondary institutions, including UBC, Royal Roads University, and UVIC. Local educators, school administrators, students, government, NGOs and community stakeholders participate on the IEL's Steering Committee and Advisory Council. The IEL is chartered by the United Nations as a Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development.

The Institute's main objectives are to:

- promote multi-sectoral collaboration, community-based problem solving and a network of research into effective teaching practices;
- develop and support research and programs on Environmental Learning in communities, schools and post-secondary institutions;
- focus on an interdisciplinary approach to research with multi-institutional involvement and expertise;
- coordinate research and development activities; and,
- increase private and public involvement in Environmental Learning and related research, fund distribution, public awareness and new policy development.

Over the past year, IEL members have been disseminating the [Environmental Learning and Experience resources](#) (ELE), participating in professional development seminars and conferences in over a dozen school districts. During this school year, the Institute will be focussing on professional development and raising awareness of the ELE guide within Metro Vancouver's school districts.

Educators and school administrators in the Metro region interested in participating in the ELE dissemination program and professional development seminars can contact the Institute through the [Walking the Talk](#) website, which is administered by the IEL. Teachers, schools, and other environmental education groups are encouraged to share school projects, teacher resources, event announcements and related news to the [Walking the Talk](#) site for posting to their network, which has over 800 registered members across BC committed to environmental learning and best practices in education.

We are now more than half-way through the Decade of ESD and BC continues to connect the environment, organizations, and BC learners.



Kootenay-Columbia School District No.20



School District 19 (Revelstoke)



Ministry Update

The Ministry of Education and the BC education community are moving toward creating a [Personalized Learning](#) model for BC students. Feedback is invited through the [Flipbook](#). Personalized learning includes making more meaningful education experiences for students, which is the basis for environmental education: interdisciplinary learning, experiential learning, connecting local issues with global issues, problem solving, collaboration, creativity, and innovation. BC offers a number of resources to assist teachers in using these approaches: [Environmental Learning & Experience Guide, Maps, and videos](#), along with a number of other [resources](#) offered by other organizations.

Does environmental education make a difference in students' school experience and achievement? According to one [landmark study](#) on schools that use the environment as a context for learning, overall student achievement improved in all subject areas. They also reported less classroom management issues and improved teacher engagement.

In addition to connecting learners to the environment, BC schools and districts are making connections to behaviour change and emissions reduction. The [2010 School District Carbon Neutral Action Reports](#) contain information about infrastructure changes in schools, as well as educational programs, campaigns, and behaviour changes that also help reduce GHG emissions and improve sustainability. The reports highlights initiatives such as: school gardens integrated into the science class as well as lunch programs; information from solar panels integrated into the math curriculum; money from energy savings directed back into school programs. All new schools in BC are built to [LEED Gold](#) standards and provide numerous cross curricular linkages.

School District Spotlight: Columbia Basin

BC subscribes to the [whole school approach to environmental sustainability](#), involving students, educators, administration, parents, and the community. BC School Districts are taking this one step further to include district wide environmental policies, programs, and campaigns, in addition to student-driven sustainability projects. Many of these actions are found in their [Carbon Neutral Action Reports](#).

School District Spotlight: Columbia Basin

The following six school districts are inspiring examples of how districts connect an appreciation of their environment with practices and learning opportunities in the schools.

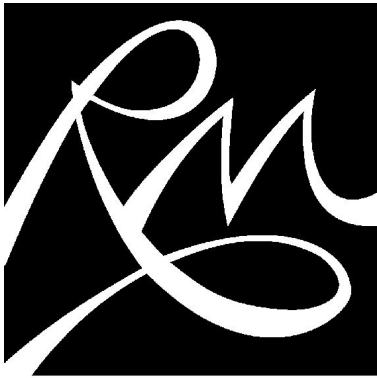
The school districts of Southeast Kootenay (5), Rocky Mountain (6), Kootenay Lake (8), Arrow Lakes (10), Revelstoke (19) and Kootenay Columbia (20) are located in the Southeast of BC, surrounded by the Monashee, Purcell and Selkirk mountain ranges, and sharing the water systems within the [Columbia Basin](#).

The beauty of this area is not lost upon the school districts when they report their annual carbon emissions. From [Kootenay Columbia's 2010 report](#) (SD20): "We fully expect the results of our efforts will help to maintain and improve our beautiful local environment..." This district has downsized its fleets, streamlined school bus routes, installed motion controlled sensors in one of their gyms, and are working with [Destination Conservation](#) to further improve energy efficiency. [J.L. Crowe Secondary School](#) in Trail is the newest school, built to [LEED Gold](#) standards, using rainwater for irrigation and low flow toilets to conserve water.

School districts in the Columbia Basin have all made infrastructure and behaviour changes to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Revelstoke is also committed to sustainability to preserve their natural environment. From [their 2010 report](#): "One key value in our school district in that our system should create and nurture an environment in which appreciation, conservation and sustainability of our natural environment are learned and acted upon." In 2010, this district met and exceeded their goal to reduce district-wide energy consumption by 8%. They also changed the way custodians clean schools: By working in teams, they were able to clean schools faster and shut them down for the evening, thereby reducing energy consumption.

[Arrow Lakes](#) has improved energy efficiency in their buildings and reduced energy consumption. Infrastructure changes such as building upgrades, a real time metering system, reduction and improvement in their bus fleet, and behaviour changes such as reduced paper consumption all contribute to reduced greenhouse gas emissions.



Rocky Mountain
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6



School District Spotlight: Columbia Basin

Kootenay Lake is in its third year working with Destination Conservation and has had great success in energy conservation awareness programming. Three schools in this district, all in Nelson, participated in the BC Green Games: Blewett Elementary School in Nelson shared their worm –eating garbage solution; Grade 2 Wildflower students envisioned what their future city could look like; L.V. Rogers Secondary showcased their Greenhouse & Garden Project. Their newest school, Crawford Bay Elementary Secondary School, is not only built to LEED Gold standard, but also features real-time monitoring capabilities which can be used for classroom learning.

Rocky Mountain School District continues to promote sustainable practices such as recycling, composting, operating greenhouses, and planting trees, and has a district Environmental Stewardship Policy. J.A. Laird Elementary School in Invermere is a LEED built school, featuring a solar thermal domestic hot water heating system. The K-3 students at Lindsay Park Elementary in Kimberley, also contributed to the district's sustainability initiatives by offering their perspective on Global Warming to the BC Green Games.

The Southeast Kootenays reported reduction in emissions from upgrades to their heating and cooling systems, and well as their fleets. Kindergarten students from Gordon Terrace Elementary in Cranbrook contributed to the district's sustainability bottom line by sharing their project to reduce waste in the BC Green Games.

BC Green Games

Register your teams NOW for BC Green Games!

Science World is thrilled to announce the fourth year of BC Green Games. You are invited to share and celebrate the environmental success stories of your school, school teams, or your classroom online. This year, over \$20,000 will be awarded to winning entries.

Submissions should document BC students' eco-actions in either video or PowerPoint format. Get connected to great resources, eco-mentors, and established environmental programs which will help take projects to the next level.



BC Green Games Award Ceremony
2011 at Telus World of Science.

...BC Green Games

New this year:

This BCGG are hosting **Webinars** to aid in project planning and submission, with the first one coming up in late October. Teacher Sponsors (elementary and secondary) and secondary students will be known as **Team Leaders**. Secondary teachers can mobilize and motivate students to **create** their eco-action projects outside of class as well as by providing in-class support, but now students have the opportunity to take responsibility for the registration and submission of their final projects.

The BCGG are introducing a **new Energy prize** which will be judged alongside the 20 general prizes.

Visit bcgreengames.ca to view last year's winners and over 250 other projects on a range of topics including recycling, community stewardship, and energy efficiency. **Get inspired to take action!**

Registration Period: September 15–November 30

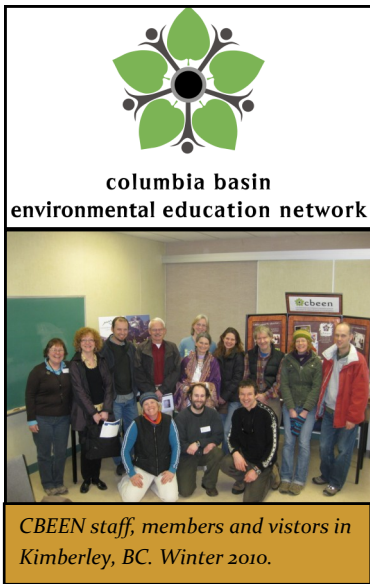
Project Submission Period: February–March 1

For more information or assistance, please contact Kate and Marina at info@bcgreengames.ca

Science World manages BC Green Games with input from youth, government, school district, university, science and environmental education community partners.

Resources: CBEEN

For over a decade, the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN) has been working to advance environmental education (EE) across six school districts in the southeast corner of the province: Southeast Kootenay SD5, Rocky Mountain SD6, Kootenay Lake SD8, Arrow Lakes SD10, Revelstoke SD19, and Kootenay-Columbia SD20. With close to 300 members, CBEEN is a regional professional network for practitioners, coordinating and supporting information and resource sharing, professional development, and on the ground projects. Membership with CBEEN is free and open to anyone with an interest in environmental education in the Canadian Columbia Basin region – from classroom teachers to nature centres to regional government.



Resources: CBEEN

Wild Voices for Kids (WVFK) is CBEEN's flagship environmental and heritage education program, providing free curriculum-linked classroom presentations and field trips to over 10,000 K-12 students each year across the region's six school districts. WVFK is a database of local presenters who share their environmental or heritage knowledge with students. CBEEN recruits and trains these volunteers from all walks of life (e.g. wildlife biologists, archaeologists, First Nations storytellers, etc), helps them develop programs that meet BC K-12 Prescribed Learning Outcomes, and promotes their programs via online searchable database. Teachers search for and book presentations that meet their grade level, subject, and learning goals. WVFK provides presenters with a cash honoraria and also cover costs of transportation for field trips.

CBEEN also provides a wide variety of programs and services to build capacity among the region's environmental educators. One strategy is coordinating professional development workshops and networking opportunities, including the popular annual *Voices for Sustainability* weekend. These events provide educators with a chance to learn about new EE resources, to share success stories, and to meet other like-minded individuals. CBEEN also offer bursaries to provide members with the financial assistance they require to meet their personal professional development needs. Online communication is another important tool, and CBEEN publishes a monthly e-newsletter, various social media (Facebook, Twitter, and an upcoming blog) and their website to share relevant EE news. Their website provides members with a searchable database of EE resources, a Google map to locate fellow members, an events calendar, a jobs board, news about grant opportunities, and links to the *Wild Voices for Kids* program.

Finally, CBEEN works to advance EE at the provincial, national and international level. They are active members of both the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM) and the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), and participate in their respective 'Affiliate Networks' (a network of EE networks). They also work with the Environmental Educators Provincial Specialist Association (EEPSA), and Walking the Talk: The BC Working Group and Network on Sustainability Education, and will be working with the newly formed Institute for Environmental Learning. For more information about CBEEN or to join, please visit www.cbeen.org.

Events

October 3-7. iWalk— also known as International Walk to School Week - is an annual, week-long, world-wide event held every year in October that encourages students, parents, staff and community members to celebrate the many benefits of walking to school together. **Register Now!** www.hastebc.org.

October 12-15. North American Association for Environmental Education 40th Annual Conference. North Carolina, USA.

Register your school's environmental project with GREEN High Schools and earn national recognition for your students' work. Join 49 participants across Canada as they share their environmental learning experiences and become Canada's first GREEN High Schools. www.eco.ca/public/teach-enviro-careers/green-high-schools-about/72/



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