



Spring 2016

GICEL

15 Years of bringing nature experiences to all

<http://www.gicel.ca>

A Pivotal Moment in Time

For those who are mindful of history, it is all too clear that we are living when the world is again at a pivotal moment in time. One hundred years ago, the nations of Europe were locked in battle in the most devastating war the world had ever known. British dominions across the seas, like Canada and Australia, were drawn in, and forged their nationhood on the battle fields of Europe and the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey. Out of the conflict in Europe would emerge a new world order that sowed the seeds for an even deadlier conflict a generation later. The aftermath of the two World Wars was a juggernaut of industrialism that spread across the world, fueled by seemingly endless supplies of “cheap” energy from ancient carbon in the form of coal and oil.

Which brings us to today, and a world still locked in battle, but now on two very different fronts. One is the familiar military conflict, now centred in the Middle East, but threatening more widespread dislocation. On the other front, a vast human population is exerting such enormous pressure against the natural world that we fear it will permanently disrupt the ecosystems that sustain life on the planet.

The generations of a hundred years ago went through epoch-changing conflict that bequeathed to the generations of today the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced: the necessity to build within the lifetimes of people now alive a peaceful civilization that can thrive but remain in balance with the natural world.

The good news is that the nations of the world are showing evidence that they understand the challenge and are beginning to respond. The agreements on action achieved at the Paris Summit on Climate Change held in December 2015 are the latest indications of movement in



The Mayne SEEP participants crowd around an aquarium after specimens have been collected by our local divers and carefully transported for a closer inspection



the right direction. However, the bad news is that the response may be too little too late.

But we have a major advantage available to us in the 21st century to meet the challenge. The powerful educational systems that were created at the same time as the problems were developing, and which certainly contributed to the problems, also contain the potential to chart the way for change. The same science and economic principles that fueled industrial expansion and massive consumption can now provide direction for how to build a civilization of the future that will live in balance with the natural world.

But the task is greater than any formal educational system can manage. It requires the commitment of informal bands of people who understand that all of us must now become leaders of change in the right direction, and we have vast resources of information and knowledge available to us to do so. Such groups of people are springing

up all around the world. In the Gulf Islands of British Columbia in 2001, one such band of educational leaders created the Gulf Islands Centre for Ecological Learning, which has provided the opportunity over the past 15 years through its Summer Earth Education Programs for hundreds of young people to become Earth citizens, who will in time become the enlightened leaders of the future to bring in the changes that can build a sustainable planetary civilization.

The stories in this Newsletter of how these activities played out over the past year should give us hope that the outcome of the larger struggle in which humanity is engaged at this pivotal moment in time will be the life-supporting transformation on Earth that we all wish to see.

*Desmond Berghofer PhD
Vice-Chair*

Report from GICEL Board Chair For January - December, 2015

GICEL's Summer Earth Education Program (SEEP) was offered again in 2015, and as usual, was well received. A full report about SEEP 2015 is included elsewhere in this Newsletter, as is information about other GICEL activities.

Board Membership

Members of the GICEL Board of Directors for 2015 were: Michael Hoebel (Chair), Desmond Berghofer (Vice-Chair), Shelly Johnson (Treasurer), Andrew McPhee (Secretary), Michael Dunn (Programs), Lisa Halstead, Marie Mullen, Tina Farmilo, and Jeff Hopkins.

Board Meetings

Meetings of the Board were held on May 1, 2015 and September 18, 2015.

Michael Hoebel



Our Cortes Leadership camp participants setting off to find a petroglyph

Summer Earth Education, Seedlings and Environmental Leaders Programs 2015

The 2015 summer programs were well attended this year and in some cases, for the first time, we had to create a waiting list as demand exceeded our limits to some of the programs. Nonetheless, we were able to run all programs as proposed. This year we had an intake of 214 participants over the 6 program offerings. We, again, were able to provide employment for 14 senior leaders and 24 junior leaders or leaders in training. We also had five volunteers. Our community grants totaled \$8,775 for these programs with an additional \$350 in food vouchers.

The numbers by program include:

Salt Spring Island - 60 participants with 5 Senior* and 7 Junior leaders

Mayne Island – 69 participants with 4 Senior and 11 Junior leaders

Mayne Island – Seedlings – 14 participants with 2 Senior and 3 Junior leaders

Pender Islands – 42 participants with 3 Senior and 2 Junior leaders

Saturna Island – 23 (a new high total) participants with 2 Senior and 3 Junior Leaders.

Cortes Island – 13 participants with 4 Senior Leaders and 1 Junior Leader

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This past year too, we surpassed a milestone in that one of our participants at the Saturna Island program was our 2,000th registrant. The significance of this achievement is that we had just completed our 15th year of operating summer programs. Previously we surpassed 1000 registrants at our 10th year and we now have doubled that number in half the time.

Again, we thank all the community organizations that supported our programs for 2015. It has helped us provide our programs to all young people who wish to attend.

Thank you
Michael Dunn



Report from School District 64 (Gulf Islands)

Submitted by Lisa Halstead, Superintendent

Ecological programming has expanded in School District 64 in the 2015/2016 school year. Some of the excitement has been the intentional development of additional programs, while much of the growth has been a result of nurturing a place-based philosophy over time in terms of “that’s what education looks like around here”.

Both the SEEC and MYSEEC programs continue to flourish and make connections with both within the SD64 community and beyond. Fernwood and Fulford Elementary Schools have each added two nature based classrooms for primary students focusing on experiential learning in a multiage setting. Additionally, Pender School has added a Grade 4-8 ecological class this year. The focus on emergent curriculum and interdisciplinary learning is evident throughout the district.

All four elementary schools on Salt Spring Island are involved with the

Kids for Creeks initiative. This looks different at each school site. For example, at Salt Spring Elementary, two classes are involved in creek studies this year. Gail Bryn Jones’ grade 4 class has an intensive yearlong focus on monitoring and studying the creeks on Salt Spring Island, especially Ganges Creek. While Ann Marie Davidson’s grade 2/3 class is involved in an inquiry project focusing on “where is the best spot to release salmon?” Both classes are supported by Cate McEwan and have received grants



to pursue this study. Additionally, at Salt Spring Elementary, several classes are involved in the Salmon in the Classroom Project. Other classes will be raising and releasing butterflies and the two Kindergarten classes spend one afternoon a week in Mouat's Park exploring nature.

Fulford Elementary is now in the third year of being a Wild School and has been working with Eco-Mentor, Cate McEwen, focusing on place-based learning around the theme of water. The school applied for Go Grants offered through Wild BC and each class chose a project that would increase opportunities to learn outside. Most classes chose to do a project connected to Kids for Creeks and the Fulford Creek and estuary. Mr. Jim Lightfoot's class did a mapping project of Fulford Estuary, Mr. Lindsay McQueen's

class learned about monitoring the creek water throughout the year (pH, turbidity, temperature, flow, etc.), Ms. Sarah Kerrigan's class studied birds that were seen at the estuary during the fall and winter seasons, and Miss Kloe Holmes' class learned about seasonal changes at the creek.

Throughout the school district, we continue to explore BC's redesigned curriculum and the First Peoples' Principles of Learning. We are fortunate to have a district of committed and talented educators, eager students and supportive parents and community members. This submission to the GICEL newsletter is just a snapshot of the rich learning in the district and we look forward to detailing additional learning opportunities in future newsletters



Our Saturna SEEP participants pause to admire the power of Boat Pass in Winter Cove

SEEDLINGS Early Years Nature Day Camp

In 2016 it will be the fourth year of the GICEL Early Years half-day camp Seedlings on Mayne Island. The Seedlings program provides a tremendous opportunity for young children to play, explore and learn together in nature.



GICEL Seedlings Daycamp 2015 exploring the forest. [photo; Tina Farmilo]

The camp has become very popular with families both on and off-island, many of whom now plan their summer vacations around the camp's schedule.



prep for the Scent Game. [photo; Tina Farmilo]

The emphasis is on social, affectionate, play-based learning, with a focus on sensory experiences in nature: listening, looking, touching, tasting, singing, laughing, digging, climbing, running, swinging, building, eating, sharing, storytelling, painting, sculpting, and - did I mention - playing



painting rocks

I warn parents beforehand that their children will get Very Dirty And they do...



Joy is...a wheelbarrow full of clay



Playing “Bell-Tag” in the woods
[photos; Tina Farmilo]

We have enough staff with our signature mix of adult and junior leaders—young people themselves graduates of GICEL’s nature day-camp now building their own leadership skills—to allow the little ones real freedom to make themselves at home in the meadows, fields and forests of the *Seedlings* world.

We are happily mentoring a generation of future environmentalists, healthy young human beings with a profound and joyful connection to Nature.

Tina Farmilo

Mayne Island BC

Gulf Islands Centre for Ecological Learning Summer Earth Education Program (SEEP) • Schedule for 2016

Salt Spring Island

July 11 to 15, 2016

July 18 to 22, 2016

Coordinator: Andrew McPhee
(amcphee@sd64.bc.ca)

Pender Island

July 18 to 22, 2016

Coordinator: Andrea Mills
(pender_gicel@hotmail.com)

Mayne Island

July 25 to 29, 2016 (Forest)

August 1 to 5, 2016 (Marine)

Coordinator: Jessica Willows
(jwillows@sd64.bc.ca)

Seedlings

Early learners (3-5 year olds)

July 11 to 15, 2016 – half days

Coordinator: Tina Farmilo
(tinafarmilo@shaw.ca)

Environmental Leaders

Apprenticeship Program, Cortes Island

August 16 to 23, 2016

Coordinator: Andrew McPhee
(amcphee@sd64.bc.ca)

Saturna Island

August 8 to 12, 2016

Coordinator: Jessica Willows
(jwillows@sd64.bc.ca)

Fee Structure SEEP

“All the SEEP programs except for two will be **\$200.00 per week for each child (\$350 for two siblings)**. We accept children ages **6 to 12 for these programs**.”

Environmental Leaders

Apprenticeship Program (Cortes Island)

\$500.00 per child ages 13-17 (includes all food, transportation and accommodation)

Seedlings (available only on Mayne Island)

\$140.00 per child ages 3-5

All our programs have limited funding available to assist families with program costs. Please contact the island coordinators for details.



G.I.C.E.L.

Gulf Islands Centre for Ecological Learning

Throughout the world awareness is spreading that people must form a new relationship with the Earth—one that will allow civilization to prosper rather than flounder in global conditions hostile to life. The key to building this new relationship is ecological learning. For fifteen years GICEL has championed the new learning programs that must one day be taught to all children.

We are honoured that you are a supporter of this good news story and we ask that you help us to strengthen our programs and to reach out to many more students by supporting us again with a donation.

Here is my contribution to GICEL

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

I will send a Child to Camp for a week

1 child \$200 \$ \$ _____

2 children \$400 \$ \$ _____

3 children \$600 \$ \$ _____

Charter Membership (includes life membership) \$1000 \$ _____

Family/Individual Annual Membership \$25 \$ _____

Organization Membership \$50 \$ _____

Other Donation \$ _____

Total Donation \$ _____

Please make your cheque payable to

GICEL

P.O. Box 496

Salt Spring Island, BC

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