



Spring 2018 **GICEL**

17 Years of bringing nature experiences to all

<http://www.gicel.ca>

“What You Do to the Land, You Do to Yourself”

A recent article from the David Suzuki Foundation argued for the benefit of a “regenerative” economy as contrasted with an “extractive” economy. The difference between the two lies at the heart of a number of hot-button issues in Canada today. Not the least of these is the dispute between the British Columbia and Alberta governments about moving more diluted bitumen from the Alberta oil sands to the port of Vancouver through an expanded Trans Mountain pipeline. The area of the Alberta oil sands is arguably one of the most visible projects on Earth grounded in an extractive economy. Huge amounts of outside capital are expended to extract a fossil-based energy resource and transport it long distances to market. In the process of extracting this energy source to



Galiano School Garden - Food Program

fuel industrial society, substantial impacts are generated on the environment, not only where the extraction occurs, but all the way along the construction of a pipeline and the delivery of the product to overseas markets via oil tankers. A huge risk factor in the form of a “spill” of a toxic product either on land or along shorelines also looms large in this scenario. Downstream impacts of carbon emissions when the product is burned are also serious negative implications of the pipeline project.

In contrast to this extractive approach to fueling an economy the David Suzuki Foundation article cites the example of the Niaka’pamux Nation in BC. The Kanaka Bar Indian Band, one of 17 bands in the Nation, has solar projects and is working with partners on a run-of-river project to generate hydro power and income. In support of this approach, Chief Patrick Michell cites the traditional saying of “What you do to the land, you do to yourself.”

Chief Michell says his people have been food and energy self-sufficient for thousands of years, but recently his community has seen changes in weather patterns, water flows, precipitation, forest fires, and ecosystems, often related to climate change.

Neighbouring communities are asking about



Kanaka Bar's experience and Chief Michell is happy to see the work rippling out. "For him these efforts represent a return to the land, to values that will help his community become more self-sufficient, vibrant and resilient." These two examples are indicative of the struggle facing the larger world to build economies based on the regenerative model and move away from the extractive model, on which industrial society has been built, and which we now know is causing significant negative impacts on the environment. The architects and supporters of the regenerative economy of the future will be the young people in school today. For them to understand and appreciate the wisdom of the indigenous teaching that "What you do to the land, you do to yourself" they must have intimate hands-on learning about how the ecosystems of the land and the oceans work. This is the learning that GICEL has been fostering for more than 15 years through its Summer Earth Education Program. We invite you to read more about our recent summer programs and other related activities in this Newsletter. We are proud that our young participants are so enthusiastic about what they learn in their summer camps. They are certain to understand that "what we do to the land, we do to ourselves." May we all become more thoughtful about the difference between an extractive and regenerative economy.

Desmond Berghofer PhD
Vice Chair

Report from GICEL Board Chair for January – December, 2017

GICEL's Summer Earth Education Programs for 6-12 year olds on Mayne, Pender, Saturna, and Salt Spring Islands experienced another successful year in 2017. The "Seedlings" Program for 3-5 year olds on Mayne continues to grow, as does the Environmental Leadership Apprentice Program for 13-17 year olds on Cortes Island.

A highlight for GICEL in 2017 was receiving a "Project of Good Work for the World" award at a Visioneers International Network event in Vancouver in October.

Board Membership

Members of the GICEL Board of Directors for 2017 were: Michael Hoebel (Chair), Desmond Berghofer (Vice-Chair), Andrew McPhee (Secretary), Michael Dunn (Programs), Shelly Johnson, Lisa Halstead, Tina Farmilo, and Sky Losier.

Board Meetings

Meetings of the Board were held on February 24, June 16, and November 3, 2017.

Michael Hoebel



Rich Learning Harvested from Gulf Islands School Gardens

On February 28, 2018 Robin Jenkinson, Toby Carson, and Katharine Byers presented to the Gulf Islands Board of Education on the status of school gardens in School District 64. Robin and Toby are parents and volunteers, and Katharine is a teacher at Salt Spring Elementary. Here is an excerpt from their presentation!

School gardens are a valuable resource for all our schools. At Salt Spring Elementary they have offered a space for student engagement in experiential learning within the school grounds, a living classroom for cross curricular projects. Students enjoy art projects, literacy and numeracy activities, science and connections to the aboriginal



Mayne Garden - Robin Jenkinson

principles of learning as well as having full involvement in the design, planning and building of our gardens. Classes have engaged in compost and soil education developing an improved waste and compost system for the school. A group designed tool benches for the garden equipment, constructed scale models from card and then followed up with a visit to Windsor plywood to cost the project before engaging a parent to help in the construction. Salad was harvested regularly by classes to create salads at lunchtime, sell extra produce to parents and staff and make soup for the whole school from vegetables harvested from the garden. The list goes on as the gardens continue to offer accessible outdoor learning opportunities to all our students.



Pender Greenhouse

In fact, this appears to be the first year ever that all the elementary schools in the District have active gardens! We interviewed each of the schools to learn more about the programs and looked for common strengths and challenges. We're in the process of writing a more detailed series of case studies, but here are brief snapshots of what's going on at each school.

Mayne: About eight years ago, the garden was created as a food-producing, outdoor classroom. The garden became a collaboration with the Food Bank, who waters and harvests over the summertime. This year, a farmer volunteer has organized workshops for the kids about soil and weeds, and the school just received funding to enhance gardens.

Pender: About 6 years ago, a large garden was established by the Spring Leaves program, which includes a greenhouse, a composting centre, a cob shed, and a pizza oven. Depending on teacher interest, it gets more use some years than others, and summer watering is a challenge. A new teacher is enthusiastic about reviving the program this year.



Tasting the Carrots on Galiano

Galiano: Get this: they actually have a paid, part-time school garden coordinator in partnership with the Community Food Program, who waters the garden over the summertime. They also have a greenhouse for starts and year-round snacks. Once-a-week, small groups of children get to learn about, help grow, and then harvest and cook snacks with garden foods for the rest of the school. They also celebrate Nettlefest and Applefest each year.



Galiano Broccoli-Galiano Food Program

Saturna: The community garden, located on school property, has been a part of the school program to varying degrees over the years. Right now, the Strongstart program plants a bed.

Fernwood: Established in the early 1990's by the teachers and volunteers involved in the "Let's Grow for it" Program, this garden includes a sophisticated greenhouse and a solid garden toolshed. After a rest period, the garden program was revived several years ago with help from a mentor from the SSI Garden Club, and then by invested teachers and parent volunteers. School chickens were popular, but short-lived. Greenhouse starts and their roadside farmstand help sustain the program.



Fernwood Greenhouse Erika Verlander

Fulford: Established in the later 1990's by parent volunteers, the garden includes fruit trees, a small pond, a greenhouse, composting areas, a bird bath, and many raised beds. At one time, there was an afterschool garden club.



Fulford School Garden
photo Robin Jenkinson

The current garden champion's brilliant idea has been to focus class plantings around an annual harvest lunch in the early autumn, with different grades harvesting and preparing different parts of the meal, and then sharing a whole-school feast!

Phoenix: With many raised beds, a large apple tree, a goat-paddock, cob pizza oven, and rainwater catchment, this school embraces garden learning. New parent volunteers are taking on the project.



Phoenix Water Catchment & Pizza Oven



Fulford Harvest Lunch
photo John Cameron

Salt Spring Elementary: Many people have worked over the past decade to get gardens going here, and it is truly a community project, with over 20 business sponsors plus individual donors and volunteers. The total value donated exceeds \$20,000. Most of the classes now use the gardens for activities ranging from agriculture to art, storytelling, mathematics, and play. Springtime plantings are now focused on growing food for a June Harvest Celebration.



nice worm
photo Robin Jenkinson

GISS: inspires with its innovative aquaponic-hydroponic greenhouse, micro-greens and herb sprouts, composting system, salad food-cart, indoor lettuce-growing stands, and healthy farm-grown cafeteria lunches and extraordinary culinary education!

To learn more about the presenters analysis and recommendations to support school gardens across the district, [click here](http://sd64.bc.ca/supporting-gardens-in-sd64/).
<http://sd64.bc.ca/supporting-gardens-in-sd64/>



SSE Planting
photo Robin Jenkinson

The following recommendations to support gardens at district schools were made to the SD64 (Gulf Islands) Board of Education by presenters Robin Jenkinson, Toby Carson, and Katharine Byers:

Common Strengths and Values

- Several links to the District strategic plan:
 - Gets kids outside, healthy learning outdoors.
 - Strong community partnerships
 - Opportunities for mentorship
- District wide trend to expand garden-based learning with healthy eating.
- Many academic, emotional, and social benefits to students have been linked to spending time in school gardens, as well as emotional benefits to teachers.



Common Challenges and Issues

- Watering in the summer & getting occasionally charged for water.
- Need for more coordination around school gardening. Need a School Garden Coordinator
- How the curriculum fits into the school garden for some teachers
- Sustainability of the garden programs. Studies point to the need for clear administrative support. That is why we are here to gauge and gather support for the school gardens.

Future Plans in the School Gardens

- Learning Circle planned for late spring
- Grant out to Island Health to support development of a Gulf Islands School Garden Calendar & a District-wide Pro-D Day
- Earth Day garden work-party activities & June Harvest Celebration at SSE

Initial District Recommendations

- Hire a Garden Coordinator to share information & support programs
- If maintenance is going to charge for water, ask them to install water meters to document water use for food gardens.
- Fund and support a Garden-Based Learning Pro-D Day for Gulf Islands Teachers.
- Participate in Learning Circle with all schools
- Consider how to fund garden-based learning in the future.
- Support for the development and compilation of garden learning resources (including online).



SEEC - Saturna Ecological Education Centre commits to Weekly Beach Clean- up.

When you were a kid was there plastic on the beach? Did you just not notice it? Or has something changed. Well nearly every week, SEEC is exploring a different nook on Saturna to learn about place-based ecology and social responsibility. As a class, SEEC students come to Saturna three days a week to take credits in grade 10/11 courses for a full year of study. Sadly, we have been noticing more and more garbage washed up on the shores. From shot gun shells to large chunks of Styrofoam, and smaller indistinguishable pieces of what were once marginally useful things; pen lids, pop bottle caps, disposable packages, etc.

This is a picture of what we found below Taylor Point Reserve on the south side of Saturna, overlooking Pender Island and Plumber sound. We walked along the length of a wave cut platform beach towards murder point, admiring the striations of sediment in the cliffs. On the way back, we did a quick blitz and found what you can see in the



picture.

To address this issue, we have added another job to our weekly list of tasks.

Every week when we go out, we will bring a 60 liter backpack with us. Any garbage that we find will be collected

and sorted at the recycling depot. The student responsible for waste management usually takes the food waste to Precilla's Chickens at the Haggis Hollow; brings the recycling to the depot to get sorted; and now they will be

carrying the beach clean up backpack. Hopefully this will keep the beaches cleaner and the marine life of the island healthier. If you are interested about updates on this project or learning more about SEEC, check out our website at secsaturna.ca

Martin Anevich



GICEL's Early Years Nature Day Camp

Seedlings 2017

Year Five was another joyful outdoor adventure with the three to five-year old children who attend the Seedlings Early Years Nature Day Camp, and our happy team of young teen counsellors working with the engaged and experienced adult leaders. The camp focus is on gentle, playful outdoor exploration and lots of creative fun. We go on hikes, paint sticks and stones, build a fort, play exciting nature-themed games, tell stories and sing songs every day. The multi-age group atmosphere is warm, inclusive and socially stimulating, and the children quickly come to feel at ease in the secluded meadow and little forest of the Seedling camp-site. We look forward with great pleasure to reuniting the team for the summer 2018 program



Tina Farmilo: Seedlings' Coordinator



Summer Earth Education Program

The summer of 2017 saw continued growth for our Summer Earth Education Programs (SEEP) across the islands with programs being run successfully on Mayne, Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna Islands. As has been the case for the past few years, we continued to see increasing interest in our programs across



the Southern Gulf Islands.

Since it was first operated in 2001 the Summer Earth Education Program has reached well over 2000 young learners. While the programming has evolved over the years, the goal remains the same: to connect people with nature and help nurture eco-literate citizens.

We are looking forward to continuing expanding the cornerstone of our summer programming this year with exciting expansions planned for our program on Mayne Island. If you are looking for more information about this year's programs, please visit www.gicel.ca/programs for the most up to date information.

Sky T. Losier
SEEP Coordinator



Group on Cortes Island

GICEL Environmental Leadership Apprentice Program

First operated in 2012 GICEL's Environmental Leadership Apprentice Program (ELAP) is an outdoor leadership camp for youth ages 13-17. This program operates on Cortes Island at the end of each summer. Throughout the week, we spend four nights sleeping under the stars in the fields at Linnaea Farm and two nights on an out-trip to a remote location around Cortes Island. This seven-day program gives participants the chance to push themselves and grow their skills a young leader in their community. Building on the philosophy of our cornerstone Summer Earth Education Program, GICEL's ELAP seeks to continue in assisting participants become eco-literate citizens.

Since its first iteration in 2012 the Environmental Leadership Apprentice Program has grown and changed every year we have run it. However, the program continues to stay true to the original

intention: helping young leaders build connections with and feel at home in the natural world. The community that is developed at each camp is close and tightknit who help each other overcome obstacles throughout the week. With our staff striving to lead from behind, we allow and encourage campers to take on leadership roles within the group which has them put into practice what they are learning right away.

This program is designed around having participants come back to continue to build on the skills they developed and experiences they had in previous years. Having campers return allows our staff to build relationships with the campers and help them develop as leaders. Each camp is unique and we adjust our programming to fit the skills and desires of each group. An exclusive program that only operates once a year for 15 participants, GICEL's Environmental Leadership Apprentice Program is continually

changing.

Each year we use a similar structure to build the week, but the content of the program is never the same. We start our week off with a day and a half of team and community building activities at Linnaea Farm, giving participants time to bond and create friendship allows them to push each other forward as the week goes on. After a few days building community on the farm, we head out to a remote location on or around Cortes, here we allow for participants to be fully immersed in nature – sleeping out under the stars or under a shelter they build if it is raining. While on our out-trip, we spend our days on day hikes to west coast oases and during the evenings we continue to build leadership skills. Over the final two days of the program, we provide time for participants to lead a workshop on something they are

passionate about. Allowing campers to use the leadership skills they have learnt over the week and share their skills with the group is always a highlight of the program.

Over the years we have been fortunate to have many incredible encounters with the natural world. Cortes Island is abundant with untouched flora and fauna. From watching flying squirrels leap through the trees in the Children’s Forest, to falling asleep to the sounds of wolves howling and humpbacks breathing. These are just a few of the incredible experiences we have had over the years and in truth, words cannot do them justice.

For more information on the program, or to register a camper – visit www.gicel.ca/programs.

Sky T. Losier
Environmental Leadership Apprentice
Program Coordinator





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 seventeen 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

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