



# GREEN GLANCE

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## GREEN GLANCE

SD 47 Powell River

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Sustainability and  
Eco-Education

## Destination Conservation Year-End Celebration

On Wednesday, May 25th, Destination Conservation (DC) school teams converged on the Brooks Great Hall for their Year End Celebration! This event was intended to celebrate the creativity and hard work that went into the culture-changing campaigns of all DC school teams during the 2010/2011 school year. A dimension of community continuity and mentorship was added with the presence of local sustainability leaders including Rob Hughes of Routes to Roots Edibles, Coco Hess and Abby McLennan of the Regional District Waste Management Project, Owen Gaskell of Transition Town Powell River, and Janet May of the Community Forest Initiative. Also in attendance was School Board Trustee Mary James and leaders Mayor Alsgard and MLA Nicholas Simmons. Some of the highlights from the evening included: the showing of the Edgell Green Games video submission which documented the DC campaigns in their school, the reusable gift bag demonstration provided by Jasmin Marshman and the Grief Point DC Team, and the raffling of the Brooks "Lights Out" signs. Even Mayor Alsgard got to take a Lights Out sign back to Town Hall. The half-time snack provided by Amy Sharp of Manzanita was also a memorable moment! Who knew frittata could be such a hit with kids! This event was the culmination of School District 47's second year partnering with DC. According to District Principal Kevin Morris, in year one of DC the School District reduced their total carbon emissions by 14 tones and saved \$40000. A percentage of this savings has been given to schools and DC teams to support their continued efforts in year 3 of DC. The remaining cost savings are used to fund other district programs and to pay for year 2 of the Destination Conservation program which costs the district \$13 000 a year for the contract with the DC parent body. It takes time for the data to be tabulated for each year so stay tuned for the results of the savings from year 2. At this rate, they will no doubt be dazzling!

## Gutter Planters in Mr. Ervington's Class

Lucien Ervington is incorporating food cultivation into his grade 2/3 classroom at James Thomson school. As you approach the school, you can see greenery growing out of gutters which are fastened to the outside wall of his grade 2/3 class. His class is growing lettuce as part of their science unit on plants. The planters have allowed the students to observe the growth of the lettuce daily and also to think of alternative ways of growing food. Lucien came across the idea of gutter planters while perusing the internet for 'green' living ideas. "As soon I saw the planters, I knew that it would be great way of growing plants in the classroom." The gutters were generously donated by Modern Windows. Lucien drilled wholes in the bottom of them for drainage and filled them with soil. The gutter planters are ideal for any plant that has a shallow root system. "My class plans on having a harvest salad once the lettuce has reached maturity. About 90% of the students voted on Caesar dressing for our class salad. I was hoping for a simple vinaigrette." Sounds like a delicious way to celebrate spring and to grow competence in students' ability to produce food locally.



## Brook's Bike to School Week Events



Students and teachers at Brooks celebrated the second Bike to Work/School Week in some creative and fun ways. On the Thursday and Friday of Bike to "School" week, students or teachers who rode their bike to school received muffins, juice, or a free sub.

Those who rode to school on Thursday, June 2, enjoyed a FREE bike service by Suncoast Cycles .

The festivities continued with the presentation of the \$1000 cheque to the School last Friday for the Green Games Bike Project. It was presented to Michael Brinton to be used to support bike initiatives in the school next year.

Michael also pulled the winning ticket for the bike draw. The winner was Josh Ross someone who rides to school daily !!!

Way to buff those pedals Brooks!

### Bike to "School" Week May 30-June 3

The Sustainable Schools Committee (SSC) would like to support district schools in their Bike to Work/School Week activities. Some schools are having Bike Rodeos and some are having classroom challenges. To encourage these activities the SSC has put aside \$100 for each school to award in a manner that best suits their school. We hope you have a great Bike to School Week. If there is anything the SSC can do to help in those activities please don't hesitate to contact Scott Fisher or your school's SSC representative.

## Storytelling in Environmental Education by Samantha Christmann

*"What is science? Science is an attempt to understand the story of the universe, ecology is the story of our home." B. Ellis*

Brian Ellis, an environmental educator and author introduces his article on the importance of storytelling in environmental education with this eloquent and succinct statement declaring science as a story. What then could be better to teach science than stories? This is not a new idea. Throughout history the oral traditions of Indigenous peoples around the world have passed down local knowledge of flora and fauna. Not new either is the practice of storytelling in our schools. All that is new is our reason to tell the story of science. No longer is it enough to simply understand the story of our home. Environmental educators tell stories that help students understand and protect the future of our home, *eco-stories*.

As a mother of a primary aged student I have bookshelves full of stories. Only those I deem to be eco-stories have made the transition from bedtime reading to the classroom. One such story is The Loon Lake Fishing Derby by Kathleen Cook Waldron (1999). The story of the frenzy that erupts as gardens are destroyed in search of worms for bait has all the features that make it an eco-story. First, this story is easy for local students to relate to. Many Powell River students have been fishing and/or have visited our very own local "Loon Lake". Second, the story elements are easily identified and can be connected to an ecosystem. In Loon Lake the characters are animals in a setting that could be considered a habitat. The problem is revealed when the gardens are dug up looking for worms and the plants dry up. As anglers crowd the

lake and get thirsty, the solution is to trade in their worms for fresh watermelon, restoring the balance of the garden. Finally to make it off my daughter's bookshelf into a science unit an eco-story must address a prescribed learning outcome. I have integrated this story into lessons on living things, basic needs, food chains, and the properties of soil. The story of the disruption to the balance of the ecosystem at Loon Lake easily meets my criteria for an eco-story resulting in many narratives in many classrooms. I encourage you to read what Brian Ellis writes about the importance of storytelling in environmental education for a detailed explanation of how stories enhance students' understanding of our home ([www.storyteller.net/articles/90](http://www.storyteller.net/articles/90)). Then I encourage you to share an eco-story and inspire students to re-write the story of our home.

## Growing Food at Brooks Secondary School

Spring is here and with it has sprung a food garden and compost at Brooks Secondary School. Thanks to the efforts of teacher champion Krista Bangham, Brooks will soon be growing food onsite.

Currently there are 3 raised beds and one beautiful Critter Proof Compost. The food beds will focus on growing foods for Foods Classes. Krista hopes to get a few things planted this month, but the predominant goal is to get it up and running in September.

Agriculture Science students have helped get the beds up and running along with the help from students in both the Foods 9 class and the Interact club. For Krista growing food onsite at Brooks is a great opportunity to expose kids to the benefits of growing their own food for health, environmental and economic reasons. Furthermore, students will have the opportunity to learn the science of composting and to be outside doing some hands on learning!

The community has come forward in support of this project. Rona donated all the lumber, tools and equipment and Select Sand and Gravel donated all the top soil and crushed rock.

Next time you are in the Brooks neighbourhood, take a stroll around the back side of the school to witness this project in the making. It is well on its way to being a site of great, hands-on learning for the students of our community! Way to go Krista and Brooks Secondary!



## Hula Hoops, Dragonflies, and Tomatoes by Izi Loveluck



Henderson's seventh grade students have been very busy investigating ecosystems and the needs of living organisms in the past few weeks! We used hula hoops to section off areas of the field for a survey early in April and found a ladybug and fungi despite our wet and cold spring. We will be returning to the field in late June to compare the numbers and variety of species we found.

We are also raising tree frog tadpoles at Henderson. The egg cases were found in a very clean ditch and are being carefully observed and cared for in four different classrooms. We were planning to return the tadpoles when they are ready to leave the water, but this is now a restocking project as a cold frost killed most of the remaining eggs. Unfortunately, the tadpoles in seventh grade were decimated by a newly hatched dragonfly larva, which eats voraciously and is a great example of predator-prey interactions and population dynamics. The larva now has its own tank, where it is supplied with newly-hatched bullfrog tadpoles. We watched the dragonfly hunt down and eat six tadpoles in twenty-four hours, as it shed its exoskeleton, and are hoping that it will emerge as an adult before the end of the school year.



Other organisms arrived in class with the tadpole water (plants, a red water mite, caddisfly larvae, paramecium, and lots of other microorganisms) and this has allowed students to study a very small ecosystem. They have been able to compare the biodiversity of the tadpole ditch to the biodiversity of Lang Creek Hatchery and have decided that this ditch is a healthy ecosystem with little pollution.



Last year, at Edgehill and Oceanview, classes participated in the Canadian Space Agency's Tomatosphere project and conducted an experiment to see how many International Space Station tomato seeds germinated in comparison to a control group. This year, three classes at Henderson are participating in the Tomatosphere project; 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, Mrs. Taylor's K/1, and Mrs. Macklem's 1/2 classes are all germinating seeds. This year, however, the seeds have been placed in a simulated space environment to mimic what might happen in an accident on the way to Mars! Students do not know which seeds have been exposed to the cold of space so, in addition to learning about germination, they are learning how to conduct a (somewhat) controlled experiment.

In late May, Henderson 7<sup>th</sup> Grade will be going to do a field study at Myrtle Rocks. We will be using hula hoops again to define our study area and will be comparing a sandy beach area to a rocky beach area.

## My Passion for Mountains by Krista Cawley (Student)

To climb a mountain is to take a step forward into a new being. The long, unending uphill trek following a slowly undulating ridge into the sky. This trek is one of reflection, one of motivation and grit that allows time to fade in and out of awareness until the mind pulls you back into reality, into that moment of elation upon reaching the highest point. The minutes of rest at the summit, where a small celebratory snack and a quick drink replenish tired, sore muscles and the wild, intensely beautiful panoramic view feeds the soul before a long hike downwards, returning to the valley floor. The descent, where the mind marvels at the previous sights

and memory guides you down, each turn bringing back a recollection of the hours previous during the ascent.

Mountains. They are my passion, my fuel for greatness and my inspiration and desire to be better, to be someone who I never thought I could be. Every time I allow my eyes to drift up a snowy, blanketed ridge, its presence beckons me closer and the thought that surges into my mind is, "I want to go up there." Why do we find these mountains so tantalizing? Is it because of the challenge, the thrill, the wild experience that it presents? Or is it a softer desire for freedom and beauty? Maybe it is because these peaks

are just there, predominant in our daily lives as we gaze up at them for advice and use them as a metaphor for difficulties and challenges. Every day, we climb the mountain of development, the mountain of confidence and of skill, while others choose to literally climb a remote peak in a much less travelled part of the world. But maybe it is not the mountains we seek to conquer; it is ourselves who truly benefit from overcoming inner hurdles, conquering fears and insecurities and partaking in the process of personal growth. My passion to achieve new heights and climb higher and higher has showed me that I am strong, willing to step beyond the predictable

confines of society to constantly rediscover myself and move into a place that is beautiful, powerful, and real.

Where can passion take us? Well, it can pull us to the top of the world or to the bottom of the ocean, to the most spectacular places on Earth or to our own home. The most important thing is that it takes us somewhere.



*This article was written as a speech for Toastmasters.*



## Powell River School District

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**Sustainability & Ecological Education**  
Supporting students  
in reinventing their world!

Thank you to all the teachers and students  
who have submitted  
articles to the Green Glimpse during the  
2010/2011 school year!  
The next Green Glimpse will come out in  
October. Any specific district, school, or  
classroom sustainability initiative, project  
or idea can make a great story!  
Student submissions are welcome.  
Please email articles by  
September 16 to:  
[kwestland@sd47.bc.ca](mailto:kwestland@sd47.bc.ca)  
*Have a wonderful summer!*

## Environmental Days in June 2011

### Canadian Environment Week, June 5-11

Canadian Environment Week is held during the first week of June to coincide with **World Environment Day** (June 5). This special day was designated by the United Nations in 1972 to stimulate action on the environment and empower people from every corner of the globe to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development.

**Official Website:** [www.unep.org/wed/](http://www.unep.org/wed/)

**Lesson Plans:** [www.ec.gc.ca/education/default.asp?lang=En&n=D3D10112-1](http://www.ec.gc.ca/education/default.asp?lang=En&n=D3D10112-1)

### Oceans Day, June 8

National Oceans Day is a time to remember the critical role of oceans worldwide. This international celebration has grown from a ripple into a tidal wave of awareness about the importance of our oceans. Teachers resources and related activities can be found on the website below.

**Official Website:** [www.worldoceansday.org](http://www.worldoceansday.org)

### Rivers to Oceans Week, June 8-15

Rivers to Oceans Week is an opportunity to work together to create an understanding of Canada's watersheds, our connection to fresh- and salt-water environments and what everyone can do to protect and keep watersheds healthy for people and wildlife. Practical and relevant teacher resources can be found on the website listed.

**Official Website:** [www.cwf-fcf.org/en/conservation/issues/water/2011/](http://www.cwf-fcf.org/en/conservation/issues/water/2011/)

### Nature Play Day, June 15

On June 15th, the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada and its members, collaborators and fans are encouraging all Canadians to get outside and play! Your activity can be as simple as a picnic in a local park or as extravagant as a community festival! Registered events will be entered to win prizes! Also resources are available online to help with ideas and inspiration.

**Official Website:** [www.natureplayday.ca](http://www.natureplayday.ca)