

News from CCCS

THE CARIBOO CHILCOTIN CONSERVATION
SOCIETY'S BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER



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Photo: It's snack time at Forest Friday.

The Year of the Horse

A message from our Board President,
Amber Gregg

Happy New Year fellow conservationists! I hope you all had a cozy winter season!

In February, we said goodbye to the Year of the Snake and hello to the Year of the Horse. Many have shared their excitement and reflections through social media posts, articles, and books exploring the Chinese Zodiac and astrology. Predictions for the year ahead point to a time of passion and rapid change.

(continued on page 2)



This young conservationist drew the world beneath the ground, including snowflakes signifying groundwater. Impressive!

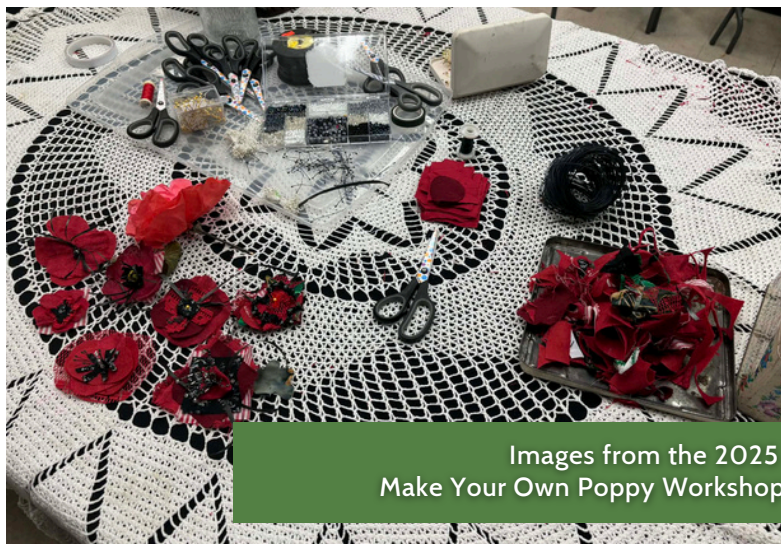
Regardless of where one stands on astrology, the horse itself is a remarkable creature, beautiful, elegant, and powerful, yet a flawed one. There was a time when horses were essential for daily life. We relied on them for transportation, supplies, and even companionship. Horses were a necessity, not the luxury that they are today.

Oh how times have changed. In my own experience working with horses, I've learned that they are rather temperamental beings and often need

patience, good timing, and a few well-earned tricks to gain their cooperation. As 2026 and the Year of the Horse charge forward (whether we are ready or not), my hope for CCCS is that, amid whatever changes surround us, we continue our work with intention and purpose.

May we remain focused on our shared goal, channeling our collective knowledge and efforts into what matters most: providing meaningful conservation education to residents of the Cariboo Chilcotin.

Amber



Images from the 2025
Make Your Own Poppy Workshop



Another successful “Make Your Own Poppy” Workshop was hosted in fall 2025 by NEXT GENERAL Mercantile and Refillery and the CCCS Waste Wise program. We love to provide an opportunity to create beautiful, reusable poppies, but we also encourage folks to donate annually towards the Royal Canadian Legion Poppy Campaign to support the Legion and veterans, whether they wear their own poppy or not.



Local Focus, Big Impact

Water Wise Update
By Jenny Howell

A belated Happy New Year everyone! While uncomfortable and frightening global issues continue to swirl around us, I think continuing to focus locally and working to make our small Cariboo sphere as good as it can be is still the best way to preserve one's sanity in an ever more unstable world.

So here are all the great things we've done in the last six months or so!

We had 23 classes come through the Gavin Lake fall program through September and October. As most of you will know, classes come for two nights (three days) and rotate through a series of modules, two of which are sponsored by CCCS. The two CCCS modules this year were 'the Perfect Stream' focused on trout and trout habitat, and 'Species at Risk', an oldie but goodie, put together by Marg Evans many years ago. Each time I teach it, I go through to update and refresh it and then find it's pretty good just as it is, and has stood the test of time very well. Even the red- and blue-listed species discussed are still sitting on the same lists. Kids learn about food chains and food webs, a quick intro to some of the animal species at risk in our area and then a game where they get to be fishers fighting for survival.

We still start each Gavin session with a short 'garbage' talk and then involve kids in composting, recycling and feeding the chickens food scraps while they are at camp.

After camp was finished, it was back to the classrooms again with 13 sessions before Christmas and another 9 through January and February, including a grade 10 Socials class. We are happy to announce that we have hired on Ruth Lloyd to help with our programs, so she was able to attend a few classes to get the general flavour and she will be able to fill some of the gaps we have. I am hoping to get a bit more of a high school program going and build our Community Water Wise presence further. Our field trip season is also getting a bit out of control with more demand than we can fill.

This year we have 24 field trips booked so we'll be leaning on Ruth to lead some as well as help with others. The outhouses at the Community Forest are finished, operational and seem to be much appreciated from the feedback we have received so far.

Gavin Lake in the fall:
there are worse places to be.



Planning for Earth Challenge is in full swing and ready to go after spring break with ten grade 7 classes. Our format from the last two years seems to work well for students and instructors, so there will be no major changes this year; I am sure it will evolve again in the future when someone comes up with a new idea or suggestion, but until we feel our current model doesn't work, there seems no reason to change anything for now.

February was booked with Snow Science classes at Gavin; Ruth came for a class and then taught her own session. I have only ever had to cancel two Water Wise classes in all the years I have been doing this, but it is very reassuring to know someone will be familiar with the programs and can step in if needed.

Another upcoming change at CCCS is that Dani has decided to focus her energies on her many other demands and projects and will be moving on. She has done a great job working out the office job (not always an easy task), keeping track of the rest of us and initiating some of her own pet projects. The upside is that she timed it perfectly (thanks Dani!), just when Ruth has joined us and Vanessa was looking for a new challenge. With typical CCCS team-working style, we all sat down together and have come up with a plan that should put the organization in a strong position as we negotiate the upcoming changes.

Ruth will be taking on the 'program coordinator' part of Dani's position that oversees the programs, keeps track of the contractors and initiates and follows through on our events and projects. Vanessa will be taking on the financial part of the position,

ensuring our funding is tracked and allocated appropriately, covering cheques and bills as well as everything else that goes with the general bookkeeping of our organization.

Between them they will ensure all our grant applications and reports to funders are taken care of as well as a portion of our marketing position that previously fell to Vanessa. We anticipate several months of adjustment as they work out what tasks fit best with each position and they will be working closely together to become one 'Dani'. Meanwhile, Ruth will still continue becoming familiar with the lesson plans and programs of the Water Wise program as she was originally hired for. In true CCCS fashion, Dani will still keep a few hours to keep her hand in with her xeriscape garden and stay involved with a couple of other projects. As she pointed out, no one ever really leaves CCCS...

I'm looking forward to another good year, knowing that we have the finances and office in extremely capable and stable hands; a solid core of programs to continue to build from and a few new directions to explore. Thanks for all the support from our funders, members, contractors and Board and I will let you know how it all goes in our summer newsletter!

Jenny



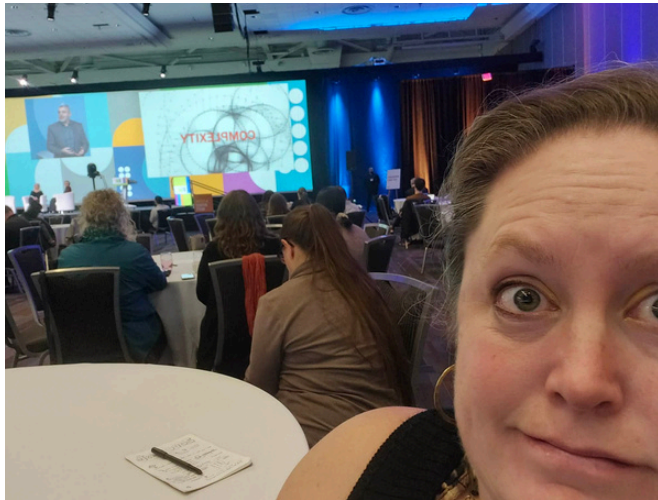


Exciting News in Food Waste

Waste Wise Update
From Oliver & Mary

Waste Wise has been busy during the summer and fall months with our Curbside Audits throughout Williams Lake, the 108 Mile Ranch and now educating in a new zone.... 103/105 Mile Neighborhoods.

These areas now have curbside garbage collection and recycling thanks to efforts put forward from the CRD. Naturally we are in line to follow with education and contamination prevention. So far so good.



Above: Mary & Oliver attended the Zero Waste Conference in Vancouver; Below: Mitten Matchmaking hits the classrooms

Curbside Auditors, coming through!



Good news: we now have a couple outhouses up at the Community Forest for the kids to use or anyone for that matter who is using that beautiful trail. We were able to repurpose an outhouse from Gavin Lake and also utilize some local timber framers (Cut from the Woods) to create a wheelchair accessible outhouse closer to the parking lot.

Arts on the Fly & Arts Wells Music Festival received our Waste Wise team and our strategic educational waste diversion energy!

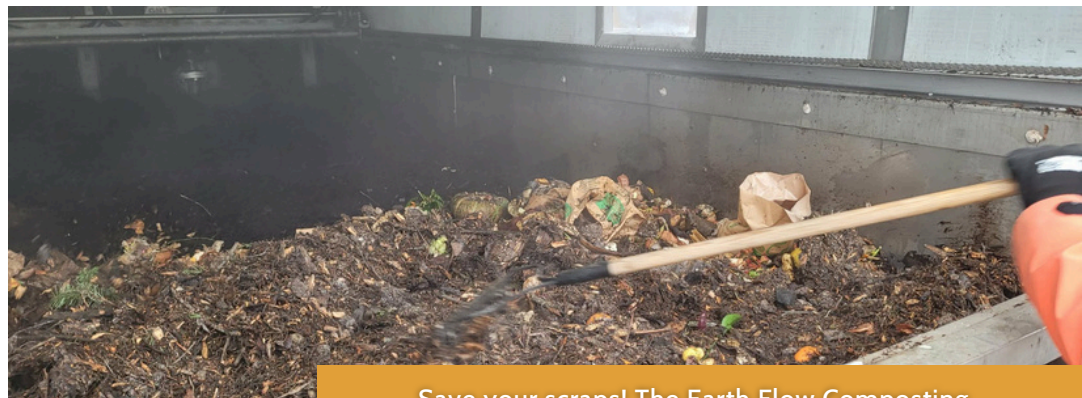
The biggest news on the waste front is our new Earth Flow Composting Vessel. One of our team members, Oliver, played a major part in researching, developing and implementing all the requirements needed to begin composting food waste under provincial regulations in our area.

With the 'Earth Flow' we now have a composting machine down at the Central Cariboo Transfer Station in town to assist in the process of composting food waste in the Cariboo. It is an exciting addition to our ever growing waste diversion systems.

We have collection points in town and at all the outlying transfer stations. We now incorporate this in our education programming and dump tours!

The Potato House Community Composting (which CCCS supports) also has a collection point and will be hosting some composting days in the upcoming year to help promote food waste diversion. You can follow along at Cariboo Compost on their socials to see how local composting is going and keep up on special news releases!

Oliver & Mary



Save your scraps! The Earth Flow Composting Vessel is up and running in Williams Lake.





Bundled Up and Ready to Learn

Forest Friday Update
By Amandah Cullum

With the continued support of CCCS funding partners, and with special recognition to the Williams Lake Community Forest (WLCF) for their ongoing support, Forest Friday adventurers explored the Williams Lake Community Forest and Scout Island trails learning about signs of the season, migration/hibernation, fall harvest, winter weather and so much more!

With a total of 85 children and 51 adults (including many grandparents!) attending between September to December, we dressed for the weather and braved cold noses and fingers, mostly with smiles and yes, the odd tear or two as to be expected!

As 'Teacher Amandah' I bring over 15 years of Early Childhood Education experience to families with the knowledge that research has shown time and again that children who are connected with their families, environment, peers and nature are more likely to build deep social relationships and a sense of belonging and ownership as well as a natural sense of wonder, curiosity, and interest within the world around them.

Our group of amazing children and families, pride ourselves on creating a safe, warm, and inclusive environment where all participants have the opportunity to feel heard, supported, and encouraged to feel awe and wonder for ourselves, others and our earth!

Our Forest Friday adventurers take to the Forest no matter the weather; rain, shine, wind or snow discovering all that nature has to offer our senses and leaving our beautiful community spaces just a little better than we found them.

If you know of a family who is interested in participating, please encourage them to join us every second Friday for our Forest Friday adventures! They can join the Facebook group – Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society's Forest Fridays – to sign up and stay informed of our exciting up and coming adventures, schedules and locations!!

See you in the Forest!
'Teacher Amandah'





Annual Gleaning Event 2025



Thanks to the hard work of our volunteers, including Mme. Custance's Grade 7 French Immersion Class from Columneetza, eight WLDCU employees, and a handful of our own Board Members, we had another very successful gleaning day. We gleaned about 300 lbs of potatoes, carrots, and squash for our root cellar, and over 200 lbs of perishable veggies that went directly to food banks in Williams Lake, including the Salvation Army and Saint Vincent de Paul. And of course, huge thanks to the Kaufman family of Soda Creek Sweet Corn for generously hosting us yet again this year.





Earth Friendly Holiday Event 2025

It takes a village each year, and the community came together yet again on December 6, 2025 to offer the Earth Friendly Holiday Event at the Central Cariboo Arts Centre in Williams Lake.

The Cariboo Arts Society helped people make environmentally friendly wrapping paper. The Cariboo Potters' Guild and Williams Lake Fibre Artists hosted ornament making. Scout Island Nature Centre guided people through the making of bird houses, suet bird feeders, and bird ornaments. Other options included crafting from upcycled materials, trash art, and natural materials like bark and moss. And of course, we had the ever-popular bike rim wreath room.

This event doesn't happen without many hours of volunteer service: collecting boughs, bark, berries, grasses, and cones; preparing bike rims and wrapping them with wire; planning crafts and gathering supplies; preparing refreshments; setting up the arts centre; hosting the stations; and cleaning up afterwards.

Donations were also collected for local food banks and the Giving Tree. All in all, a big win-win-win for the community.

This event was brought to you by the Community Arts Council of Williams Lake and Area, the Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society, and Scout Island Nature Centre with support from the Central Cariboo Arts & Culture Society, the Cariboo Regional District, the City of Williams Lake, the Province of British Columbia, and member groups of the CACWL. Hope to see you again next year!





Pop Quiz! Watershed Edition

Q1. What is a watershed?

Answer: A watershed is the land area through which any water travels to reach a stream, river or lake. There can be many smaller watersheds making up larger ones. For instance, the City of Williams Lake is in the San Jose watershed, but it is part of the much larger Fraser River watershed.

Q2. Do you know where the Fraser River begins & ends?

Answer: The Fraser River's headwaters are in Mount Robson Provincial Park in the Rocky Mountains. It winds all the way through the interior of BC, into the Lower Mainland, emptying into the Salish Sea. Any draining water in this watershed will find its way first to the Fraser and then to the Pacific Ocean.

Q3. What becomes part of the water we use?

- a) everything we put down the drain
- b) everything we put onto the ground
- c) everything we put into the air
- d) all of the above

Answer: You guessed it! All of the above.



Q4. How many people live in the Fraser River watershed?

Answer: The Fraser River Discovery Centre estimates that 2.7 million people (60% of British Columbians) live in the Fraser River watershed. Wow!

Q5. What can we do to protect our watersheds?

Answer: Ensuring our lawns are free from herbicides and pesticides not only protects watersheds, but wildlife, too.

Also, choosing cleaning products that are:

- phosphate-free
- sulfate-free
- ammonia-free
- bleach-free
- petroleum-free
- biodegradable

...or making your own cleaners using natural ingredients like baking soda, vinegar, and essential oils. And we have a guide for that!

Download our Earth Wise Cleaning Guide here: conservationsociety.ca/earth-wise-cleaning-guide





Grants & Funding Update

By Daniella Gastaldello

City of Williams Lake:

The City of Williams Lake Fee-for-Service contract provides two revenue sources: \$42,000 for our Water Wise program and \$37,000 for our Waste Wise programs.

The first allows us to run the Water Wise program in the schools and community of Williams Lake. This funding assures the continuity of the education program which engages all ages in water conservation and provides tools for easy ways to save water.

The second is for our city-based Waste Wise program, an education program focused on reduce, reuse, recycle and rethink. We are also working with the City to include regular audits of the Recycling program in Williams Lake, for an additional fee (that is included in the \$37,000).

We were again awarded renewal of these contracts and are in year one of the three-year contract (2026-2028).

Cariboo Regional District:

In addition to all of our regular Waste Wise work, this contract allows us contractor hours and kilometres to travel around the region with our classroom Waste Wise Program and to conduct more food waste education and compost coaching.

Our CRD fee-for-service is a three-year contract (\$40,465), with a 2-year option to renew. The three-year term was June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2025, and we are currently in the two-year option to renew until May 31, 2027.

Community Gaming Grant:

This contract includes Watershed Health classes for regional schools and other watershed education – and our Sustainable Life Education program – which includes our Outdoor Education modules plus community waste reduction programs such as Bikes for All, Skates for All, Veggies for All, & the Earth Friendly Holiday Event.

Our annual Community Gaming application (\$25,000) did not get approved this year, as our organization did not meet eligibility requirements. We have adjusted our budget and operational plan accordingly, and do not anticipate a drastic impact on our programming this year. We will reapply for the funds as soon as we are reeligible.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada:

This grant funding supports many of our Water Wise initiatives including Classroom Education, Xeriscape Gardening, Shoreline Awareness, Storm Drain Awareness, and many others. We reapplied for \$5,500 in funding from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), and received approval.

Williams Lake Community Forest:

Our Community Forest partnership not only supports our field trips, contractor hours, and our preschool program, Forest Friday, but we also have the ability to use funding towards a multitude of program needs here at CCCS.

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(Grants & Funding continued)

Williams Lake Community Forest:

This source of funding is not on contract, and instead is billed every June for the Spring Field Trips done in May and June, and the Forest Friday trips throughout the year. Over the last 4 years we have averaged 14-20 school field trips each school year.



This coming spring, we have 22 SD27 classes planned to attend the highly sought-after Community Forest field trip, as well as some Forest Friday trips, which will bring in around another \$18,000+ in funding.



But It's Just a T-Shirt

Of course, we all need clothes, and lots of other things, too. But every “thing” has a backstory, usually involving a startling amount of raw materials, water, chemicals, energy, carbon, and pollution.

Mindful shopping can help lighten the impact. This may include:

- buying secondhand
- prioritizing quality items that will last
- researching a company's sustainability promises
- supporting small businesses and local artisans
- waiting 24 hours before making a purchase
- asking ourselves if we really want/need the thing

Because ultimately, the best things in life aren't things at all, amirite?

The Impact of a T-Shirt

RAW MATERIALS

fertilizer
energy
water

PROCESSING

energy
cleaners
dyes

MANUFACTURING

energy
waste

PACKAGING

paper
plastics
waste

TRANSPORT

energy

USE

bleach
detergents
water

DISPOSAL

waste



That's why we

- wear
- repair
- wear some more
- upcycle (tote bag)
- downcycle (rags)
- or donate





Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society

Memberships & Donations

102-197 Second Ave N
Williams Lake, BC V2G1Z5
For appointments call: 250-398-7929

Our organization benefits tremendously from strong community support in the form of volunteer hours, memberships, and donations.

Thank you for your continued enthusiasm for our programming!

For a membership or donation, please follow the instructions below. If a membership is not right for you, please consider passing it along to a friend or making a one-time donation instead.

3 ways to join our membership!

1. MAIL - Please print off, fill out, and mail this form with your payment to the above address.
2. IN-PERSON - You can visit the CCCS office to fill out the form and make payment in person.
3. ONLINE - Find our online form at <https://conservationsociety.ca/get-involved#membership-form>.

Circle your membership type:

Individual: \$15.00 Family*: \$20.00 Senior/Student: \$5.00 Group/Business: \$30.00

*If you checked "family" membership, how many people in your family? _____
(If left blank, we will assume your membership covers 4 people.)

Optional donation: \$20.00 _____ \$35.00 _____ \$50.00 _____ \$100.00 _____ Other amount: _____

Name: _____

Business name (*group memberships only*): _____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

How to pay: Membership fees and donations can be made via cash, cheque (made payable to the Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society), or via e-transfer to coordinator@conservationsociety.ca. Please note that this account is set up for autodeposit so there is no need to create a password.