



SUMMER 2026

News from CCCS

THE CARIBOO CHILCOTIN CONSERVATION
SOCIETY'S BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER

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Photo: Grade 7's at Columneetza take on Earth Challenge!

Waves of CHANGE

A message from our Board President,
Amber Gregg



A Community Forest tour, photo
taken by Amber

As usual, the months continue to fly by, regardless of my desire for things to slow down to a more reasonable pace. Raising two young boys while working from home during summer break is a privilege that I am grateful for...AND...it has taught me they have significantly higher energy outputs than I do (fueled extensively by popsicles and goldfish).

While I am busy at home with my day job and sweet, darling angels, the CCCS contractor team has been busy, both in and out of the office! As you are likely aware, we have had a team shuffle again recently. Dani Gastadello has moved from the Program Coordinator role to maintaining the Spirit Square xeriscape garden. Recent Water Wise addition, Ruth Lloyd, has taken on the Coordinator role, but has passed the financial management on to former Program Coordinator and Marketing Coordinator Vanessa Moberg. Jenny Howell remains steady in her position as the Executive Director and the Water Wise Instructor.

This remarkable crew of people is meeting on a regular basis, using their combined expertise to deep dive into current projects and priorities, and forming a strong plan for the next chapter of CCCS work. I am thankful to be included in this planning, both as a previous Coordinator and as the current President.

Out of the office, things are equally busy! Mary Forbes and Oliver Berger continue to work their magic in the community. They have recently been conducting waste audits, providing residents with recycling education, supporting local community events by helping to divert waste from the landfill, and helping to plan upcoming projects and initiatives.

Mary and Oliver have been through many changes to the admin team and we are grateful for their passion for their important work – and we appreciate that these two need little input to continue to do so.

One final addition to the team is graphic designer and marketing expert, Jasmine Alexander. Jasmine is a former Cariboo resident that has worked with the CCCS team in the past, most recently updating the logos for the Waste and Water Wise programs. Jasmine's work will mainly focus on updating publications, creating advertisements, and keeping the bi-monthly reports and newsletters coming!

In the coming months, the CCCS Board of Directors will meet to discuss several team member updates, proposed initiatives, and project plans for the coming years. The team will continue to provide updates for CCCS members and community partners. Upcoming events include the annual gleaning event, Earth Friendly Holiday Event (a CCCS favourite), and more additions to the team!

Just like my house, with two energetic boys, there is rarely a dull moment around the Conservation Society team and we wouldn't have it any other way!

Amber



Kim Zalay explains how trees and shrubs filter runoff and more around water bodies in the Williams Lake Community Forest.



Weathered it Together

Water Wise Update
By Jenny Howell

Hello everyone!

I am writing this to you from my childhood home in North London, feeling a little bit homesick and a long way both culturally and geographically from the Cariboo. CCCS has faced a challenging spring, with three of our key contractors called away to deal with family emergencies all within days of each other. If we weren't all dealing with such serious issues in our respective situations, it would have been almost farcical. Things are settling for the three of us now, and two are back at work. I have been able to do some things from London and will be heading back home in a couple of weeks, very grateful that my life's path took me to Gavin Lake and that I didn't end up as a stockbroker in London!

Starting back in the New Year, the annual pattern was much the same as always. I had quite a few class sessions in January as well as planning for the Earth Challenge and the field trip season, taught snow science at Gavin Lake through February into March, and then into the Earth Challenge and an Elder College workshop in April.

In that early spring period we had an office shake-up, with Dani moving on from CCCS to new projects and Ruth and Vanessa stepping in to fill her role between them. Vanessa took on the financial part of the job and Ruth was to cover more of the 'coordination' part. Ruth also continued to become familiar with the Water Wise instructor position and started some Water Wise initiatives of her own.

The field trip season started well, accepting our highest number of bookings ever, knowing that Ruth could share the teaching load. Then Ruth was called away. At that time, I was able to take on her scheduled classes and still keep the season on track. Not long after, I also got the call of a family emergency and had to leave immediately, with no sense of how long I would be gone. I had no choice but to cancel the next couple of weeks of upcoming Community Forest field trips until the situation in London became clearer. And then a few days later, Vanessa also had a family emergency and had to leave immediately. I think the title of her e-mail was 'you're not going to believe this!'.



The Elder College tour

This year's Water Wise
at a glance:

99 classes
1872 students
256 adults
2143 people reached!

Almost immediately, the retired teachers that help with the field trips stepped up, and Kim Zalay contacted all my teachers and reinstated the programs. She got all the materials, scheduled all the other helpers and continued with the season as it had been originally set up. This was so unexpected and so beyond what I would expect anyone to do that I can't even imagine a way to thank her enough as she basically gave up her own life for six weeks. There were only two classes that ended up going without a CCCS leader, and they had a teacher package I had put together previously for anyone that did want to run their own day up there.

I left the third week of May and Kim ran all the other classes through to the end of the school year. Ruth was able to come back and help with some, and then the other helpers filled the gaps, although Kim also ran many days alone. She kept in close touch and it sounded like everything went really well and the teachers and kids were very appreciative. She even took the annual 150 Mile class for their water/pump station and sewage tour.

Vanessa got to the other side of her emergency and picked up the office reins again, although we were all in touch throughout and able to limp through the couple of weeks where we were all in peak crisis mode. The Community Forest staff were very supportive and extremely happy that the programs continued. The fact that this all happened right in the middle of an office transition was an added twist we could have done without, but since Vanessa has handled the finances previously and Ruth was already familiar with the CCCS office, (although not yet her new position), it was handled with style and professionalism and we were able to ride it out.

On that note, we would like to thank Dani for her time with us and all she brought to CCCS. We have been so lucky with everyone who has worked with us, each bringing something a bit different to add to the mix and expanding the 'whole'. Dani will continue on with her xeriscape garden project for us in Spirit Square and we know she will stay connected to CCCS, just like Amandah continues with Forest Fridays (and Amber became our president, and Vanessa has cycled back around to take on finances again!).

Left: Snowflakes under the microscope
Centre: Finding the layers in the snowpack
Right: An Elder College tour of the city sewer



I also am so grateful to Vanessa and Ruth for agreeing to take on Dani's role between them and as things settle for us all they will work out how that looks specifically.

This school year, Water Wise reached 99 classes. There were 1872 students and 256 adults for a total of 2143 people reached or 'contacts'. Some of these will be students counted twice if they attended more than one Water Wise program.

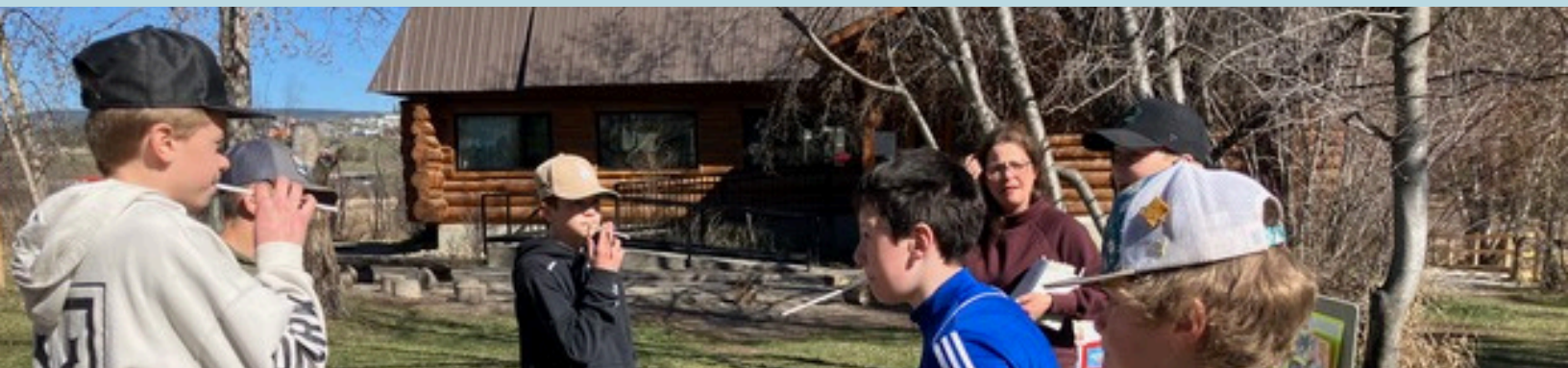
I hear that the spring has turned wet at Gavin Lake, and rain is coming to Williams Lake, so I hope we can all have relatively peaceful summer ahead. There have been two heat waves with temperatures of 35 degrees in London since I have been here. When I was a child I didn't even own a pair of shorts as summers tended to be cool and wet. There is no air conditioning on the buses or the tube which become insanely hot, and I am sure are quite dangerous.

Some of the newspapers here are much more openly linking the heatwaves to climate change than they used to; although because newspapers here are also much more openly politically oriented than in Canada, others still barely recognize it. I think our work continues to be critical, helping to educate and prepare the next generations so they can make informed decisions as they become the adults and leaders who will face increasing climate change pressures in so many aspects of their lives.

I am always grateful to everyone that contributes to CCCS, but it seems even more poignant this year with our crazy spring. You all know who you are, (which is everyone), but I would like to especially thank Amber for her steady presence and support as we've wound our way through first the office changes and then the calamities. I look forward to a patch of smoother sailing ahead!

Jenny

Earth Challenge education included time at Scout Island





From the forest to the office...

By Ruth Lloyd

It feels as though I have only just gotten started with CCCS, yet more than half a year has already slipped by.

From January through June, I had the opportunity to absorb some of the incredible Water Wise knowledge and observe presentations led by Water Wise Educator Jenny Howell. Along the way, I taught a snow science module at Gavin Lake, delivered a Water Wise presentation to TRU Climate Change students, helped Mary and Oliver with some waste audits, and assisted with—then led—some Williams Lake Community Forest tours, learning a lot as I went from experienced teacher Kim Zalay. I also enjoyed taking part in community events, including Seedy Saturday at TRU and an event in Quesnel hosted by the Invasive Species Council of BC, and coordinating Spring GoByBike Week.

Because of a family emergency, followed by a previously planned trip to a cycling conference, it wasn't until June that I was able to begin to take on the newly adjusted role of Program Coordinator.

Ruth and Mary enjoy a spontaneous Spring GoByBike meet up on the roadside



A big thank you to Vanessa Moberg for keeping so many things running while I was away. Despite dealing with unexpected emergencies of her own, she kept everything moving along. As I continue to settle into the office, we are developing new systems to support our shared position. Thankfully, Vanessa's experience on both sides of the role has made that transition much smoother.

There is a lot to learn, but that has been one of the most rewarding parts of the job. I've really enjoyed discovering more about the work CCCS does and its impacts and drawing on the wealth of knowledge and experience within the organization.

Our administrative team has been incredible. Jenny, Amber, and Vanessa bring an impressive depth of experience, and it's inspiring to work alongside them. It's equally rewarding to witness the great work all the CCCS contractors continue to do in the community.

I'm excited to be part of an organization with such a long history of working to address some of the most important environmental challenges of our time.

As wildfire smoke once again drifts in and out of our communities—something we are all too familiar with in the Cariboo-Chilcotin—I'm grateful to be supporting work that helps move us toward positive change.

We are nature, and nature is us. — Ruth



All Five Senses

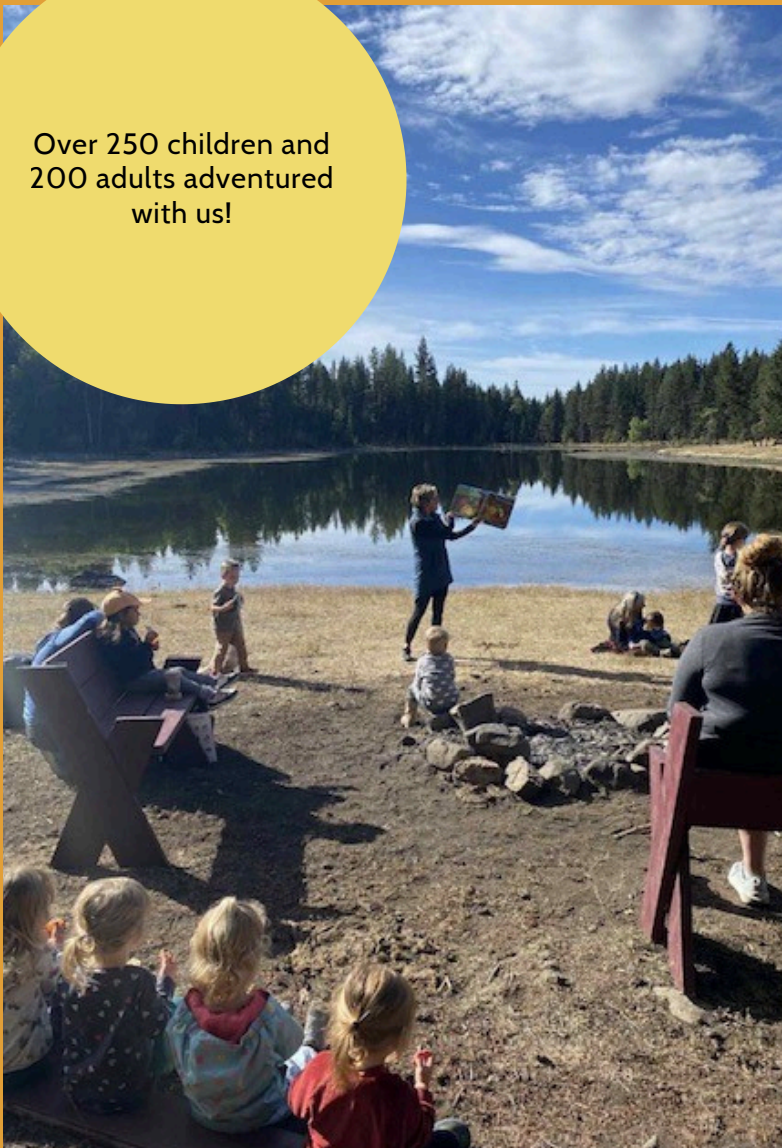
Forest Fridays Update
By Amandah Cullum

Forest Friday continues to be a well-attended early years program, created for children ages 0-9, along with their caregivers to create curiosity and wonder while at the same time setting them up for successful community relationships and a strong, natural and connected sense for conservation that we can only hope will follow them throughout their lifetime.

With the continued support of CCCS funding partners (and with special recognition to the Williams Lake Community Forest for their ongoing support) I was able to adventure with over 250 children and 200 adults (including many grandparents!) since September 2025 exploring many local trails and sanctuaries including the Williams Lake Community Forest, Scout Island and the Dairy Fields learning about topics such as season changes, weather, hibernation, birds, insects, metamorphosis, pond life and so much more!

Over 250 children and
200 adults adventured
with us!

Just a few of the many children and families
that took part in Forest Fridays this spring



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.

I, along with an amazing group of 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...we often have a few explorers who show up with 'garbage grabbers' and bags to collect what 'doesn't belong in the forest!' Warms my heart!!

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!

In addition to Teacher Amandah's Forest Friday visits, there were 25 Community Forest school field trips this year allowing hundreds of young explorers to get their hands dirty.

Teacher Amandah





From Compost To Community

Waste Wise Update
By Oliver Berger

Last fall I got to build Williams Lake's very first MOE-approved, medium-scale composting facility at the Central Cariboo Transfer Station (CCTS) with the Cariboo Regional District. My experience and time with CCCS have proven very valuable in promoting community composting, engaging with community members and being able to get projects like this off the ground.

Now that we have this new technology up and running and an official site for composting organics, we have been able to up our game during the Earth Day Challenge Dump Tours this Spring.

We took all grade 7 classes right through all parts of CCTS: showcasing recycling options, walking into the 'stink barn' (garbage transfer tent), getting a hands-on feel of the Earth Flow Composting Vessel, and touring the wood waste and concrete areas.

These dump tours continue to prove invaluable for the kids to be able to pass the info up the chain to the parents so they know where they can bring all their recycling throughout town. When they are finished the dump tour, we have also shown them where the electronics drop-off is, how to recycle used engine oil and filters and where to bring different types of metal for cash!

Mary and I continued along with our curbside recycling bin audits. Working with the City of Williams Lake and the Cariboo Regional District, we audit in the City and throughout the 108, 105 and 103 subdivisions to keep our recycling contamination at bay. Our data shows that continued auditing and on-the-streets education helps ensure that our collected recycling stream remains clear of major contamination problems. It also is a great way to promote the Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society and all the other programs that we offer. Many folks are still very happy when they receive their first 'Gold Star'!

Oliver oversaw many waste collection opportunities in the community this year



This year a few new neighbourhoods around Williams Lake such as South Lakeside Drive and Dog Creek Road will be added to our curbside auditing program schedule, and we are excited to put stickers on new bins.

Spring in the Cariboo brings the opportunity for me to attend many farmers markets. Here I can showcase our society, discuss our programs and brochures, and chat sustainability with folks from all over the region. We were present at Seedy Saturdays in 100 Mile House, Quesnel, Bouchie Lake and the two that were held in Williams Lake. Of course we do our Waste-Wise displays, collecting and segregating waste from these events in an educational way.

I always bring Water Wise along with me in the form of educational material and conversations on water saving tips and tricks. Ruth attended the Williams Lake Seedy Saturday in person, along with the watershed model, and engaged in plenty of Water Wise discussions.

I connected with the Chamber of Commerce and the Tourism Discovery Centre this Spring. We do not have the 'Welcome Wagon' anymore however they do prepare welcome packages for new folks moving into the community. After a thorough look through their material, I decided they needed a bit of our useful educational material and the Chamber agreed. All new residents will receive updated copies of our recycling drop off locations, accepted materials, Water-Wise guide for saving water, our super famous Repair-It Guide for Williams Lake and of course a copy of our BC Parks, Trails and Natural Areas booklet.

Mary and I continue to develop our on-the-fly Trash Talk Tuesday material and upload it as such. It is no longer a dedicated weekly addition to our educational material however it still gets just as many likes and comments with our new Trash Talk whenever-day-we-are-inspired method. Thanks to our socials support team and boosting abilities, local folks interact and learn through that portal of education as well.

Oliver



Always a friendly face!
Dry grad (left)
Recycling audits (top right)
ArtsWells (bottom right)



Bikes and Bins

Waste Wise Update For Mary Forbes

This year has had some ups and downs, and even more so for Waste Wise team member Mary Forbes this year.

There was planning done and programs booked for Mary in 2026, but you know what they say about the best laid plans...

A darnning workshop took place at NEXT GENERAL Mercantile in January, but a car crash mid-month meant Mary was sidelined and her regular programming was temporarily on pause.

By mid-March, she was able to return to do some recycling audits with Oliver in Williams Lake, then later in the year in the 108.

She said the person-to-person recycling feedback they have been giving has shown positive results for those whose recycling habits or knowledge needs improvement. "It feels much more personal when you talk to them in person or you leave hand-written notes," she said, adding it also helps build community relationships.

The waste audit team is working to transition to an app for audit data entry and are testing this out to try to cut down on the office time for audits.

Dump tours with local Grade 7s took place in April as part of the Earth Day Challenge program. While some classes and their teachers were really engaged in these tours, others weren't necessarily as comfortable confronting the waste from our consumption habits. We like to think some of the hardest lessons are the most important, and hopefully the tour and all that goes with it, made an impression on all of them.

The Bikes For All program got a boost this year, thanks to the Surrey Traditional School. The school made changes to a program for vulnerable youth working with bicycles, and so the Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society Bikes for All program was gifted some bike stands and bicycles.



Mary and Abi in the conver-truck-ible (left)
A darnning workshop (right)

A bike repair workshop offered through the Cariboo Chilcotin Elder College ensured more senior cyclists are now empowered to do some of the care and maintenance of their own bikes. Bike repair or recycling sessions and Waste Wise support and education took place at a number of community events, including Pow wows, ArtsWells, Farmer's Markets, two different community bike rodeos, the Williams Lake Children's Festival and more.

Mary said that the ArtsWells festival recycling was very well done this year, but it still meant long days to help educate and divert as much waste as they could.

The Farmer's markets have also been busy, with more bike repair support needed in order to get more bikes out and into the community due to the high demand.

To finish off the season, Mary helped support bike participants in the annual community Stampede ride. She helped prior to the ride, going to the communities of Yunesit'in (previously known as Stone), Tl'etinqox (previously known as Anaheim) and Tlesqox (previously known as Toosey) and went out to provide mechanical support along the ride route itself.

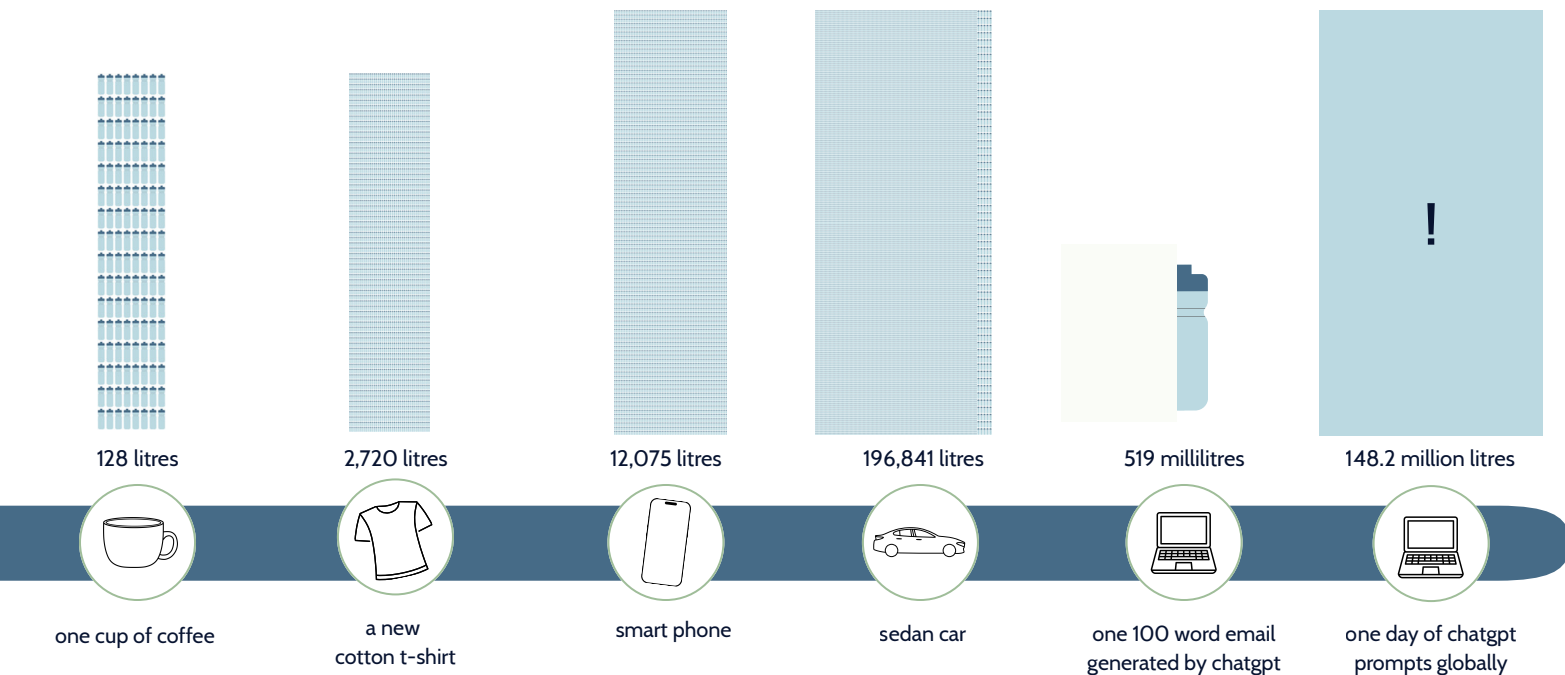
Earth Challenge Waste game with Mary (right) Supporting cycling in the region (below)



HOW MUCH WATER

are we really using to produce:

*demonstrated using a
1 litre water bottle



This autumn, let's take steps to becoming mindful consumers!
Visualizing our consumption is one step towards more positive impacts in helping our planet heal.

sources: businessenergyuk.com/knowledge-hub/chatgpt-energy-consumption-visualized
watercalculator.org/footprint/the-hidden-water-in-everyday-products

The new Xeriscape Garden at Spirit Square



Land Acknowledgement

We are very grateful for the wisdom of the Secwépemc, Tšilhqot'in, Dakelh, and Nuxalk nations leading us to better stewardship of this beautiful region. We are honoured to work with them in this pursuit, and we acknowledge that much of this work takes place on their traditional unceded territories.



Grants & Funding Update

By Vanessa Moberg

We are incredibly grateful for the support of the following organizations, who provide us with stable core funding, and allow us to continue our work of protecting the Cariboo Chilcotin for future generations.

City of Williams Lake:

The City of Williams Lake Water Wise fee-for-service contract (\$42,000) allows us to offer the Water Wise program in the classrooms and community of Williams Lake, engaging all ages in water conservation, and providing “the whys and the hows” to save and protect water.

The City of Williams Lake Waste Wise fee-for-service contract (\$37,000) funds the Waste Wise program within City limits, focusing on reduce, reuse, recycle, and rethink, as well as supporting regular audits of the City of Williams Lake Recycling program.

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

Cariboo Regional District:

The CRD Waste Wise fee-for-service contract (\$40,465) supports wages, travel expenses, and other costs associated with extending our popular Waste Wise program into the communities of the greater Cariboo Chilcotin, including classroom work, community education, as well as more food waste education and compost coaching.

Our CRD fee-for-service is a three-year contract (\$40,465), with a two-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.

Heartfelt thanks to all our friends and partners! In addition to the key program partners listed above, CCCS would like to acknowledge our treasured membership, along with the countless businesses, non-profit organizations, government departments, community groups, volunteers, teachers, individual donors, foundations, educational organizations, coalitions, councils, planning groups, and steering committees that have supported us and partnered with us through the years. We are grateful for each and every one of you!

Community Gaming Grant:

Our annual Community Gaming application (\$25,000) was not 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 contract normally covers our Watershed Health program (extending our Water Wise work beyond City limits into Cariboo Chilcotin schools and communities), and our Sustainable Life Education program (for outdoor education and ecosystems modules plus supporting our community waste reduction programs). We look forward to reapplying for the funds in the next fiscal year, at which point we expect to be eligible once again.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada:

We apply annually to Fisheries and Oceans Canada for \$5,500 under the Salmonid Enhancement Program grant which supports some of our key Water Wise initiatives including classroom education (water conservation, chemistry, the water cycle, watersheds, world water issues, and water quality) as well as select outdoor education modules (The Perfect Stream and Aquatic Invertebrates).

We reapplied in summer 2026 for \$5,500 and are awaiting approval.

Williams Lake Community Forest:

The funding we receive from the Community Forest supports our highly sought-after springtime field trips and our preschool program, Forest Friday. Critically, we are also able to use some of this funding towards other program needs here at CCCS.

Each June, we invoice the Community Forest for spring field trips (completed in May and June) and the Forest Friday field trips (held throughout the year). In 2026, we offered 22 SD27 CCCS-led class trips and 7 Forest Friday trips into the Community Forest, bringing in \$19,850 in funding.



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. ONLINE - Find our online form at <https://conservationsociety.ca/get-involved#membership-form>.
3. IN-PERSON - You can visit the CCCS office to fill out the form and make payment in person.

Please note, our office is currently open by appointment only.

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.