
Annual General Meeting 2014 Director's Report

Date: Tuesday, May 27th, 2014

Time: 6:00-7:00pm

Location: Roundhouse Arts and Recreation Centre, 181 Roundhouse Mews, Vancouver BC

Connecting Environmental Professionals Canada

Connecting Environmental Professionals (CEP) Vancouver is part of a national network of chapters promoting opportunities for networking, career development and capacity building in the environmental and sustainability professions. Under the CEP Canada umbrella, each chapter is fully responsible for its own operations and activities.

Being linked to the CEP Canada network involves the following:

- Allowing **transferrable memberships** between chapters.
- Participating in **national conference calls** to maintain communication between the chapters.
- Working with other chapters to:
 - coordinate **national events** (e.g. GLOBE, webinars, etc.),
 - maintain a national CEP **website** with chapter sub-pages,
 - periodically review CEP **bylaws** for continued relevance, and
 - develop additional/new CEP chapters.

Membership

CEP Vancouver has over 700 members. CEP Vancouver has gained 138 new members since May 2013, compared to 62 new members from May 2012 to May 2013.

Board Membership

The 2013-2014 CEP Vancouver Board of Directors consisted of the following volunteers:

President – Justine Townsend
Vice-President- Samantha Eyre
Treasurer – Manon Gartside
Secretary – Nourhan Alkurdi
Director (Communications) – Erik Blair
Director (Mentorship) – Amy Greenwood
Director (Social Media) – Kimberly Armour
Director (Volunteers) – Devon Thompson

Board Planning Session

During the CEP Vancouver 2013-2014 Board planning session in July 2013, the Board agreed to continue organizing monthly speaker events, workshops, tours, networking opportunities, social opportunities and continue to run our mentorship program and seek out and establish partnerships with sister organizations in the Lower Mainland. We established the following goals:

- **Speaker events/workshops/tours:** Host or co-host at least one event per month. An additional event will not be organized in March 2014 due to the GLOBE Conference.
 - **Result:** Hosted/Co-hosted at least one event every month except February 2014. The Board decided to host a mid-way internal planning session in February 2014 to help with successional board planning in lieu of hosting a public event.
- **Partnerships:** Develop partnerships with other organizations that can help CEP deliver its mission and increase networking and learning opportunities for members.
 - **Result:** Co-hosted a speaker event with A&WMA in April 2014.
 - **Result:** Established a relationship with SPEC with plans to co-host events and workshops in the future.

- **Result:** Continued our partnership with Bullfrog Power, utilizing Bullfrog Power to offset the carbon emissions associated with our events.
- **Mentorship program:** Provide one-on-one mentoring for at least 10 mentee/mentor pairs. The 2013-2014 CEP Mentorship program is being led by Board member Amy Greenwood and volunteer coordinator, Maureen Cooper.
 - **Result:** Program currently in progress (January 2014-June 2014) with 21 mentees and 18 mentors
- **New website:** Launch new CEP Vancouver website in January 2014 complete with online membership application/renewal and event registration capabilities.
 - **Result:** CEP Vancouver’s new website launch in February 2014.
- **Volunteer internships:** Provide internship opportunities for CEP members to obtain additional experience and skills by assisting with CEP member service delivery and the day-to-day operations of the organization. The Volunteer Internship program is being led by Board member Devon Thompson.
 - **Result:** Retained our Administrative Coordinator position
 1. Natalie Ethier (May 2013 – May 2014)
 2. Danniele Livengood (May 2014 – present)
 - **Result:** Our Calendar Coordinator position was made redundant following the implementation of the website, which has a calendar function
 - **Result:** Retained our Mentorship Coordinator position – Maureen Cooper
 - **Result:** Retained our Website and Newsletter Coordinator position – Vincent Tong
Note: In 2013 CEP had a Website Coordinator (Vincent Tong). As a result of the new website the responsibilities of the Website Coordinator were reduced and so this role was expanded to include coordinating the new CEP Vancouver Newsletter.
 - **Result:** Created one new internship position
 1. Events Coordinator – Cornelia Dinca (Nov 2013 – April 2014)

2013-2014 Events

Month	Event
September	From Producer to Plate- Connecting with Sustainable Seafood (Fish Counter)
October	<i>Presentation Skills Workshop- CANCELLED (low enrolment)</i>
November	Mushroom Foraging Tour (Mundy Park)
December	Holiday Green Drinks co-organized with Green Drinks (Steamworks)
January	Mentorship Kick-Off Event (The Profile)
January	Systems Thinking Workshop (The Profile)*
March	<i>Globe Conference – Young Leaders Forum</i>
March	<i>Closing Event for Young Leaders Forum at Steamworks</i>
April	BC’s Climate Action Plan and Carbon Finance - with Rob Abbott, Executive Director of Climate Action Secretariat *
	Partner Event with A&WMA

April	Mentorship Mid-way Meeting and Workshop: check in and skills training session with Joanne Loberg from JL Careers
May/June	Film Screening Partner Event with SPEC
May	AGM and Speed Networking*

*During this event we also partnered with Bullfrog Power to provide "green power".

Mentorship Program

This is the 9th year of the CEP Mentorship Program and we continue to have great success with our mentor / mentee matches. In the past we have matched up to 10 mentee / mentor pairs. Thanks to the dedication of Board member Amy Greenwood and our Mentorship Coordinator, Maureen Cooper, in 2013-2014 we have 39 individuals participating - 21 mentees and 18 mentors (many of whom are repeat mentors). Mentees and mentors meet three times as a group throughout the program, while each mentee-mentor pair meets on a monthly basis throughout January to June 2014. CEP Vancouver provides the matching and a loose structure, as well as ongoing support for each pair.

This year, 6 mentees and 3 mentors are participating in a new development in the program referred to as the Energy Cohort. All nine individuals meet as a group on a monthly basis, instead of as mentee-mentor pairs, to discuss energy-related themes in environmental career development and mentoring.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Workshop/Event</i>
Fall 2013	Mentee Applications Received (future participants: refer to the CEP website for 2014-2015 application information)
16 Jan 2014	Kick-off Session
14 Apr 2014	Midway and Coaching Session with Joanne Loberg of JLCareers
June 2014	Wrap-up Session

CEP Vancouver's Mentorship program runs from January to June each year, but we are always looking for new mentors. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming mentor, please contact us at mentor@cepvancover.org.

Communications

List Serve:

CEP currently operates one digital mailing list:

Over 1000 subscribers (members and non-members).

Through this mailing, CEP shares information about community and CEP events, as well as job postings for environmental and sustainability professionals. Job postings are only available to members.

All postings and e-mail inquiries are reviewed by our CEP Administrative Coordinator who then forwards event notices and job postings on to our mailing list.

Website:

The CEP website was redesigned in 2012-2013. The launch of the new website was led by Board member Erik Blair (and previously Laurie Bates-Frymel and Dawn Hancock), who also provided training to other Board members on how to use the new platform. The new website allows members to:

- Create their own CEP member profile,

- Subscribe to our job postings (members eyes) and local event notices,
- Choose e-mail frequency (immediate, daily, or weekly digest),
- Register and pay for events,
- Receive automated reminders about membership renewal and renew online,
- Participate in online discussion forums,
- Search the CEP Vancouver Member Directory for experts in the field, and
- Chat with other CEP members.

CEP rolled out a communications strategy in early 2014 to notify and transition the membership and list serve recipients to the website. Feedback received to date on the new website and associated communications has been positive.

The website initiative was part of a coordinated effort with the other CEP Chapters, with the chapters deciding to adopt the new Wild Apricot platform, and maintaining a national CEP splash page with links to each of the chapters.

Newsletter:

CEP initiated a monthly e-newsletter in January 2014 to help communicate with the membership including reporting out on monthly events, as well as new initiatives and opportunities. The newsletter is a pilot project that will likely be suspended over the summer months and reinitiated in September 2014. Each edition of our newsletter is viewed by almost 300 subscribers. Readership continues to grow.

Social Media:

Our Social Media sites are managed and coordinated by Kimberly Armour, Director of Social Media.

Twitter

CEP Twitter network grew to 1270 followers in 2014. The CEP Twitter account was delinked from the Facebook page in 2013/14, and focus was placed on promoting CEP events, and CEP partnership events through tweets that recognized and linked to event locations, partners, supporters, resources etc. Branding CEP events with hashtags may be an opportunity engage and grow the CEP Twitter network.

Facebook

CEP Facebook Page has 607 likes. Facebook posts in the past year had a primary focus of promoting CEP events, and CEP partnership events. Photo albums from CEP events were posted, and locations tagged. Environmental professional information and resources was also shared in the past year through Facebook posts. There were requests from non-CEP events in the past year to be highlighted through CEP's social media Facebook network. Highlighting some non-CEP events or opportunities may be offered and an incentive to support CEP's event and job posting list serve.

LinkedIn

CEP has a Linked in Group Page that it moderates with 1053 members. The group encourages environmental discussion, event promotion and sharing of job opportunities. CEP is considering switching from a Group Page to Company Page. Groups are often formed around issues or opportunities and require a commitment to moderation. A company page may offer a more direct marketing opportunity, with the option to add groups as issues/opportunities arise and moderation is resourced. There are no current plans to change the LinkedIn network, and CEP will consult with the network for feedback on the effectiveness of the group format to meet member needs.

CEP 2014 Member Survey:

CEP conducts a member survey every two years to obtain important feedback from its members on its performance, including type and quality of events, communications and initiatives and suggestions for future events/speakers. This survey will be distributed to the membership early May 2014.

Other CEP Activities

New CEP Logo

CEP Chapters nationally participated in an initiative to update CEP's logo. Through this participatory national initiative CEP National settled on its new logo which it generated using 101 Designs, an affordable, open-sourced graphic design competition.

Proposed Change in Membership Fees

In the past few years CEP has made a concentrated effort to expand and enhance the mentorship program, provide a more functional platform for communications to members, and expand our volunteer base, and the organization is also exploring additional ways to support the sustainability community, including the possibility of creating a scholarship or bursary program in the future. To support the organization's efforts to provide value to its members, CEP Vancouver is proposing to change from a lifetime membership fee of \$30 to an annual membership fee of \$30, with a one year grace period for existing members. The main reasons for doing so are so that CEP Vancouver can increase the quality of services and events available to members. A key priority area is increasing CEP's capacity to communicate effectively with its members and to provide regular, high-quality speakers and events. Membership would still be transferable to other chapters.

The 2012-2013 CEP Vancouver Board conducted extensive research designed to review whether the lifetime \$30 membership fee, established in 2002 when CEP Vancouver was born, was still appropriate for CEP over 10 years later. This research included a comparison with the membership dues of other similar non-profit member organizations and professional associations, consulting the membership at the 2013 AGM, and many internal discussions. It was also considered that, according to the last CEP Member Survey (2012), most of CEP's members are early to mid-career working professionals and not students. CEP Vancouver believes a \$30 annual membership fee to members will be acceptable to members and offset by the steep discounts CEP members will continue to enjoy on CEP events.

The 2012-2013 Board voted unanimously that the membership fee structure should change to a \$30 annual fee in February of 2015 in order to allow CEP to better support its membership and fulfill its mission. The 2013-2014 Board continued the steps necessary towards communicating this recommended change to members, and began notifying CEP members and list serve recipients about this recommendation in January 2014 via regular email communications and via the e-newsletter. This initiative was part of a broader national CEP discussion with the other chapters in Calgary, Ottawa and the newly formed chapter in Toronto. CEP Calgary has also decided to increase its membership fee to \$30 per year. Ottawa and Toronto are much smaller chapters that currently do not offer as many services as CEP Vancouver or CEP Ottawa and thus are maintaining the lifetime membership fee for the time being. The CEP Vancouver Board has included a Special Resolution for the 2014 AGM that seeks a vote from members on this proposed fee change from a \$30 lifetime membership to \$30 annual fee. The outcome of that vote will dictate whether the membership fee structure changes and our Constitution is amended.

Connecting Environmental Professionals (CEP) is a not-for-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to promoting opportunities for capacity building, career development and networking. Our members include working professionals and future professionals (including students!) from government, business, not-for-profit organizations, and associations.

CEP Vancouver was launched in 2002 as a chapter of CEP Canada. CEP Vancouver now has over 730 members.

Active CEP chapters also exist in Ottawa, Calgary and Toronto.

www.cepvancouver.org