



Growing Knowledge – Sharing & Building on Learning Outdoors in the Early Years (3 to 8)

9:15 – 10:15 AM

Keynote: Dr. Louise Chawla

“Creating a Foundation for Lifelong Care for the Natural World”

10:45 – 11:30 AM

Session One

Imagining place-based, ecological pedagogy through experience, Clayton Maitland, Dayna Muys and Michelle Bouchard

Imagining place-based, ecological pedagogy through experience: Maple Ridge Environmental School Project. How does one create and live the story? Learning through stories about real lived experiences and expanding oral language through story telling are both broadened considering st'elákw'.

Clayton Maitland, learner/principal, focuses on planting possibilities for growing relationships that flourish with nature, a deeper and broader understanding of community. He believes that learning happens in place, through experience, and with activity/mediation all woven together.

Dayna Muys, learner/teacher, is designing learning experiences through place-based, ecological practice. She helps others gain a deeper understanding of the more than human world through activity, peeing and playing in the woods.

Michelle Bouchard, learner/teacher, encourages others to grow, connecting experience to a variety of settings. With "ironman" commitment and will, she continues to push "learning" limits and enhance learning opportunities.

Moving Learning Outdoors: Nature Kindergarten, Lisa Lockerbie and Erin Van Stone

The Nature Kindergarten program is in its second year of the two year pilot phase in the Sooke School District and the second group of learners is heading into the forest every day with the kindergarten teacher and early childhood educator. Nature acts as a third teacher as it provides a rich learning environment filled with new and interesting discoveries that are constantly engaging children. It excites and puzzles children and drives them to expand their thinking and challenges their abilities.

This workshop is designed for educators who would like to:

- experience what a morning is like in Nature Kindergarten
- deepen their understanding of inquiry and interest-based learning
- learn ideas about how to spend more time outside with their students
- learn how pedagogical documentation is used in the Nature Kindergarten program and how it can be incorporated into Early Learning programs

Lisa Lockerbie is currently the teacher for the Nature Kindergarten in the Sooke School District. She has been an elementary classroom teacher for 8 years and has taught in Tache, B.C., London, England, and in Colwood, B.C. Her professional interests include: exploring nature as a co-teacher, learning through exploration and community building within the classroom. She is currently taking her Masters in Education (Early Learning through Exploration) through SFU.



Growing Knowledge – Sharing & Building on Learning Outdoors in the Early Years (3 to 8)

Lisa has a passion for nature and her experiences teaching in a variety of settings have always led her to the great outdoors!

Erin Van Stone is the Early Childhood Educator for the Nature Kindergarten program. She has worked in many early learning settings throughout Victoria, and is currently a fourth year student in the Child and Youth Care program at the University of Victoria. Beyond learning outdoors, Erin’s professional interests include creating dynamic learning environments and inquiry based learning.

Hidden and Underutilized Urban Forests as Foundations for Nature Education Programs, Erik Piikkila

Are there hidden and forgotten urban forests, watersheds, meadows or creeks in your towns, cities or school yards? Are they forgotten or underutilized? Could they be the foundation for new and transformative Nature Education programs?

If so, come along on an easy hike in the forests of Royal Roads University, the home of the Nature Kindergarten. We can talk about Nature, Education, the Nature Kindergarten and a new initiative called the 4Season Eco School at Savory Elementary, all in the magnificent forests at Royal Roads University.

Erik Piikkila - With over 20 years of experience and training in forest ecology, park interpretation, school groups, forestry and forest sciences, Erik brings a unique perspective to Nature Education. His application of knowledge and experience began with hikes in Capital Region Parks with his son from ages 2 – 5 as part of their own Nature Kindergarten. Erik’s nature walks with his son and experience at the Preschool, facilitated his membership on the Nature Kindergarten Advisory Committee. More recently, from a serendipitous meeting two months ago with the Savory Elementary Principal, Erik is bringing his ecology and interpretation knowledge combined with his Nature Kindergarten experience to a position as co – developer of the 4Seasons Eco School at Savory Elementary, in Langford BC.

Taking Literacy Outside! Bonnie Davison

Song-games are the perfect outside activity for creating a strong foundation for reading and writing skills. In this hands-on workshop, learn how song-games are the most fun and developmentally appropriate literacy activities to be using with 3-7 year olds! No music experience necessary!

Bonnie Davison is the Founder and Director of the Victoria Nature School, a not for profit organization that offers a full day preschool out of Mt Douglas Park, as well as workshops and custom designed forest school programs for home school and public school communities. Bonnie is also the Founder of Singing English Education Workshops and has trained hundreds of educators across Canada on how to use song-games as the foundation for reading and writing success.

1:00 – 1:45 PM

Research Panel – Moderator: Dr. Louise Chawla

Ulrich Mueller (UVic), Enid Elliot (Camosun College), Sean Blenkinsop (SFU), Laura Piersol (SFU), Magdalena Rudkowski (SFU)



Growing Knowledge – Sharing & Building on Learning Outdoors in the Early Years (3 to 8)

2:00 – 2:45 PM Session Two

Outdoor Play at Fulford Elementary School, Katharine Byers and Janet Hoag

Our presentation will be about outdoor play at Fulford Elementary School on Salt Spring Island. We looked at the complexity of children's play comparing play on manufactured permanent play structures with outdoor play in the forest surrounding the school. We asked ourselves.... 'Do we sacrifice learning for safety?'

Katharine Byers is a school trustee on Salt Spring Island with SD64. She has a Masters in Environmental Education and has 10 years teaching experience in the UK and US.

Janet Hoag is an early childhood educator and primary teacher currently working as primary coordinator for SD64 Gulf Islands. Along with my husband and our three boys, I love to hike and ski and spend as much time as possible on the beaches and in the water swimming, surfing, kayaking or just splashing about.

Turtle Logs, the Missing Bridge and One Very Lonely Indoor Tree: Saanich's ECO Program – Stories from Around Swan Lake, Chris Filler and Victoria Finucane-Bell

“The truth about stories, is that that’s all we are” - Thomas King

For the past ten months, thirty six preschoolers have been crafting their own Earth stories as students in the District of Saanich's E.C.O. (Educating Children Outside) Program in partnership with the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. As they navigate their way through a rich landscape of play, they continually learn about themselves, their social group, and the natural world they are part of. Engaged in such a space of experiential immersion, eco-literacy becomes so much more than simply being able to name the plants around them. The stories we share will capture the essence of our time at Swan Lake spent learning with and from these capable, confident and inspirational three & four year olds.

King, T. (2005). *The truth about stories: A native narrative*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Victoria Finucane-Bell, ECE

Vicki is the lead educator with Saanich's E.C.O. Program at Swan Lake. She comes with many years of experience working in a variety of early childhood education settings, always with a focus on getting children outside whenever possible. After a morning in the forest with her group, she can be often heard saying “I have the best job in the world!”

Chris Filler, PhD

Chris began the E.C.O. Program after his research into Eco literacy and teacher education at UVic and discovering the need to immerse more people of all ages in the natural places they call home. He comes with a background in adventure education, human kinetics, and environmental studies.

Hidden and Underutilized Urban Forests as Foundations for Nature Education Programs, Erik Piikkila

Are there hidden and forgotten urban forests, watersheds, meadows or creeks in your towns, cities or school yards? Are they forgotten or underutilized? Could they be the foundation for new and transformative Nature Education programs?



Growing Knowledge – Sharing & Building on Learning Outdoors in the Early Years (3 to 8)

If so, come along on an easy hike in the forests of Royal Roads University, the home of the Nature Kindergarten. We can talk about Nature, Education, the Nature Kindergarten and a new initiative called the 4Season Eco School at Savory Elementary, all in the magnificent forests at Royal Roads University.

Erik Piikkila - With over 20 years of experience and training in forest ecology, park interpretation, school groups, forestry and forest sciences, Erik brings a unique perspective to Nature Education. His application of knowledge and experience began with hikes in Capital Region Parks with his son from ages 2 – 5 as part of their own Nature Kindergarten. Erik's nature walks with his son and experience at the Preschool, facilitated his membership on the Nature Kindergarten Advisory Committee. More recently, from a serendipitous meeting two months ago with the Savory Elementary Principal, Erik is bringing his ecology and interpretation knowledge combined with his Nature Kindergarten experience to a position as co – developer of the 4Seasons Eco School at Savory Elementary, in Langford BC.

Frictions in a 'forest studio', Sherri-Lynn Yazbeck, Ildiko Danis, Deanna Elliott, Mary Kelly

The focus of this workshop is on sharing documentation gathered at the University of Victoria Child Care 'Forest Studio' in Haro Woods. The presenters have been working with multiple forms of knowledge about Haro Woods in order to develop complex (and situated) forest art pedagogies. They specifically have engaged three different inquiries. A first inquiry is around place, particularly Haro Woods as an urban forest, and the ongoing colonial occupation of Victoria. A second inquiry involves thinking with more-than-human perspectives. The third inquiry is how art can produce new possibilities for rethinking the forest as inextricably intertwined with the social and material worlds in which we live.

Ildikó Danis is an Early Childhood Special Needs Educator at the University of Victoria, Child Care Services. Ildikó endeavors to support the discovery of the complex and inclusive ways of forming 'natural childhoods', in which all human and non-humans collaborate and build enriching experiences together with reverence.

Sherri-Lynn Yazbeck is an Early Childhood Educator and supervisor of a 3-5 year old program at the University of Victoria, Child Care Services. She strives to be in a state of exploration, wonder and dialogue with the children, families, materials and fellow educators of the Centre. She finds joy in the ordinary moments of the day and loves to find comfort in those uncomfortable moments of inquiry and question.

Mary Kelly graduated in 1981 with a certificate in early childhood education from Camosun College, Victoria B.C. After many satisfying years working in a variety of childcare settings Mary returned to Camosun College in the fall of 2008 to obtain a diploma with an infant/toddler specialization in the Early Learning and Care program. After graduating from Camosun College in 2009 Mary was fortunate to join UVIC Child Care Services where she loves working in one of their toddler programs.

Deanna Elliott is an Infant/Toddler educator and supervisor of a toddler program at the University of Victoria Child Care Services. Her work with natural play spaces and materials is very important to her. Deanna strongly believes these spaces and materials open endless possibilities for the educators and children to explore curiosities, spark imagination, and enhance wonder.