



Inland Canada Regional Virtual Workshop

Summary Report

Leads: Shannon Monk, Sakatay Global/ COLC and Justine Ammendolia, COLC

On June 23, 2020, the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition (COLC) held the Inland Canada Virtual Workshop to review and discuss the [Inland Canada Regional Report](#) and explore steps for moving forward. This workshop was part of the five regional sessions of the virtual workshops (Atlantic, St. Lawrence, Pacific, Inuit Nunangat, Inland Canada) and one national session. Participants were invited to comment on the research results (strengths, barriers, and preliminary recommendations) and discuss the following question: *How can a national strategy help advance ocean literacy (OL) in the Inland Canada region?* The highlights from these discussions are captured below.

Workshop Facilitation Team

Diz Glithero (COLC), Sarah MacNeil (COLC), Noémie Roy (COLC), Shannon Monk (Sakatay Global/COLC), Justine Ammendolia (COLC), Barb Sweazey (Stratos), Michael van Aanhout (Stratos), Dan Adams (Stratos), Nathalie Wilson (Interpreter).

Participants

Thank you to the 16* participants who attended the workshop and contributed their insights for developing a national ocean literacy strategy.

CarolAnne Black (CaroleAnne Black, Consulting Science Writer); David Pearson (Laurentian University); David Zandvliet (Simon Fraser University); Hali Moreland (Parks Canada); Janet Stalker (Ocean School/Ocean Frontier Institute); Janine Higgins (Government of Alberta); Kiley Best (CaNOE); Kirsten Mathison (Georgia Strait Alliance); Lucija Prelovec (Ocean School/CaNOE); Maia Hoeberechts (Ocean Networks Canada); Misha Warbanski (Polar Knowledge Canada); Munju Ravindra (Parks Canada); Nicola Bridge (Ocean Conservation Trust); Nikki Kroetsch (Fisheries and Oceans Canada); Patrick Wells (Memorial University of Newfoundland); Sjoerd van der Wielen (Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources).

*Please note that due to technical limitations, this list does not include the names of the participants who joined over the phone.



Part 1: Inland Canada: Review of the Regional Report

Regional Strengths

The following strengths were noted in the regional report: Established community water monitoring programs and information sharing; Place-based experiential education; and “Water is Life”: building land-water stewardship action.

Additional strengths identified by participants:

- The importance of film festivals (e.g., Let’s Talk About Water, Global Institute for Water Security, University of Saskatchewan) for connecting youth and adults to water issues

Regional Barriers

The following barriers were identified in the regional report: Funding and restrictive guidelines; Limited access to water and capacity sharing; and Lack of frameworks and policies for ocean and water literacy initiatives.

Additional barriers identified by participants:

- Participants agreed that funding is an issue, especially with community-based initiatives
- Volunteer groups spend a lot of time on paperwork for small grants, taking time away from conducting programs
- Funding is also tied to political priorities and these priorities can quickly shift
- Access to water/ocean resonated as a barrier, as inland connections to the ocean are weak, which further prompted these questions: How can local connections be made to the ocean through watersheds, weather/climate, and cultural heritage? How to connect with water when “water is always there” except when it’s a problem (flood or drought)?

Regional Recommendations

Three preliminary recommendations were presented: Increase support and capacity in community-based water initiatives; Provide space for open dialogue and collaboration between ocean and water literacy experts and practitioners; and Develop regionally-specific resources that tie into an overarching national water/ocean narrative.

Additional comments from participants:

- In terms of addressing the challenge of accessing funds, one participant recommended the need for provincial or federal governments offering funds for smaller-scale projects (e.g., community group stream restoration projects) because local governments are challenged to offer more than in-kind support (e.g., staff time, tools, equipment) for these types of projects. These partnerships improve the effectiveness of community groups in engaging, educating, and making a difference in their communities. However, another participant

cautioned that in some provinces, local and provincial governments are cutting staff, which reduces capacity to support NGO and community projects.

- Building on the identified strength (Water is Life), a participant suggested adding a recommendation that builds on the work of Indigenous water protectors and Land Needs Guardians programs, while also supporting the right to clean water in Indigenous communities. This recommendation could also contribute to building relationships and dialogue between the government and the communities.
- Building on the recommendation around open space and dialogue for collaboration, a participant suggested that in addition to connecting ocean and water literacy experts and practitioners it would be helpful to connect ocean and environmental literacy practitioners more broadly. More particularly, connecting with those working in the agricultural world, as that is such a big part of life in the prairies

Recommended resource: “Great Lakes Literacy Principles,” which offer a freshwater spin on the OL principles <https://www.michiganseagrant.org/lessons/about/great-lakes-literacy/>

Part 2: Building a National Strategy: Inland Canada Insights

1. Towards a Successful National Strategy in the Inland Canada Region

- Utilize existing networks and find ways for Inland Canada to inform coastal regions and vice-a-versa
 - Have more open and frequent conversations between “freshwater and ocean people” / sectors
 - Identify relationships and points of connection between the coastal and inland organizations, sectors, initiatives
- Link inland Canadians to the ocean, make relevant to inland industries, governments, education departments, insurance sector, etc.
 - Use examples from agriculture sector or in relation to weather phenomena such as flooding and drought
 - Highlight connectivity of water around the globe and how it affects others: “People often look upstream, not downstream”
 - Example: storm drains with fish on them for people to realize where their water is going
 - Use variety of “water realities” to showcase OL, including access to clean drinking water, water quality issues, changing water levels, patterns in aquatic animal behaviour, etc.

- Lean on place-based learning and digital education to connect to the ocean in schools
 - Reflect connectivity of watershed and water cycle to global ocean in curricula
 - Use results of the COLSurvey to help textbook writers and curriculum developers find logic in moving from ‘land-focused’ products to impress the need to know more about the planet’s water – fresh, brackish, and salt

2. Towards an Effective National Strategy Overall

- Develop terminology that does not alienate/disconnect (i.e. both "ocean" and "literacy" can be problematic)
- Highlight importance of all experiences with water as key connections to the ocean and OL
- Emphasize need for understanding Indigenous water issues and challenges.
- Build an inclusive OL through anti-racist lens and welcoming to newcomers
- Highlight water connectivity from inland to ocean and ocean to inland
 - Revive Paddle to the Sea?
 - Inclusive of women, Indigenous Peoples, and other underrepresented populations in Canada
- Help remove silos between various regions to learn from one another, know what’s going on in other regions across the country
- Showcase OL as an inclusive, collective space
 - Allow for relationship building across regions, and between inland and the coasts.
- Develop community of practice to learn from one another
 - How best to plant the seeds for action on OL?
 - How to establish an effective secretariat to accompany the strategy to keep conversations at grassroots level and bring them to the next level?
 - How to keep communication open and accessible
 - Facebook group accessible, and already largely used in Indigenous communities.
 - Face-to-face conversations are important for including groups who may not already see themselves in OL
- Incorporate tools that already exist, do not reinvent the wheel
- Offer measures for accountability with visible touchstones

