

INTRODUCTION

British Columbia's northwest region, which encompasses the North Coast, Kitimat-Stikine, and Bulkley-Nechako regions, is a diverse environment with some of the most picturesque wilderness in British Columbia. From time immemorial, the region has been the traditional territory of First Nations people, including the Haida, Haisla, Gitksan, Nisga'a, Tsimshian and Wet'suwet'en Nations. The vast area is known for being a habitat for many species of wildlife, including grizzly bears, cougars, moose, wolves, and salmon. For human dwellers, it offers magnificent freshwater and saltwater fishing, paddling, hiking, skiing, and snowmobiling.

The Northwest Library Federation (NWLF) is comprised of seven public libraries, located in Houston, Smithers, Hazelton, Terrace, Kitimat, Prince Rupert and Stewart. These communities range in size from 400 to 12,220 people; as such, the differences between them in terms of size, capacity, and access have contributed to a disparity in patron access to both physical and digital resources, as well as programs and services.

BC's northwest has a long history of forestry, mining and fishing, all of which are still critical to its economy. In 2017, the industries that represented the largest share of employment in the North Coast and Bulkley-Nechako regions were retail trade, construction, manufacturing, health care/social assistance, and transportation/warehousing. Just 2% of British Columbians (just under 96,000) live in the North Coast and Bulkley-Nechako, and the area has consistently had more unemployment than most other regions of the province. In January 2019, the rate for this region was 4.1 percent, which is an improvement on previous years.

NWLF STRATEGIC GOALS IN 2018 AND BEYOND

In March 2018, Lauren Wolf retired as Director of the Northwest Library Federation and Melissa Sawatsky took on the role. Considering that a significant strategic plan review and update had taken place in the fall of 2017, the NWLF Board decided to extend the current goals to the end of 2019. Therefore, a new strategic plan will be created in the fall of 2019 to guide NWLF goals and priorities for 2020-2022.

The NWLF has remained on target with its strategic priorities in 2018, which include:

1. Increase service equity between member libraries (see Priority 1)
2. Enhance library services in the region (see Priority 2)
3. Create a community of member libraries (see Priority 3)

The 2018 NWLF Annual General Meeting in Terrace was quite well-attended, with every member library represented by both board and staff members. Adrienne Wass of the Libraries Branch also joined us as a guest presenter and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to connect and clarify provincial priorities.

PRIORITY 1: FOSTERING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES

Related NWLF strategic goal: Increase service equity between member libraries

Books for Babies and Book Club Sets: The NWLF enjoyed continued participation in two inter-federation programs, Books for Babies and Book Club Sets. These programs continue to give libraries throughout the province greater capacity to maximize resources, as well as to address community needs.

Database & Technology Subsidies: The NWLF provides member libraries with database & technology subsidies on a sliding scale to create a more even playing field in the provision of database access for patrons and technology upgrades for libraries.

Regional Tours

- *Leif David Tour:* Leif David brought his "Motion Commotion" magic show to each of the 7 communities in the NWLF region. These events took place either in the library itself, or at a local elementary school in partnership with the public library. Attendance ranged from approximately 40 to 250 people, depending on the venue capacity. Jess Dafoe from Terrace PL expressed: "I loved every part of the show and so did the kids. [...] Several children are 'coming back to the library today' after seeing the show." A teacher at Walnut Park Elementary School in Smithers observed: "Fantastic engagement with the kids. [...] The weaving of educational content and reading endorsement was great!"
- *Darryl Hutcheon (Science World):* The NWLF connected with Darryl Hutcheon to coordinate a tour of northwestern BC. At each NWLF member library, he presented "Science and Engineering of Technology"—an interactive series of events in which volunteers conduct experiments to deduce a law of nature and then use the result to engineer useful objects. Member libraries report being thoroughly impressed with the session, with one library director going so far as to say she was "astounded." Science World sponsored Hutcheon's tour and therefore it did not affect the NWLF budget line for tours and programs.

PRIORITY 2: DEVELOPING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Related NWLF strategic goal: Enhance library services in the region

2018 NWLF Fall Conference

From October 19-20, 2018, the NWLF and Houston Public Library partnered to host the 2018 NWLF Fall Conference. 35 people attended the conference, comprised of 25 staff members and 10 board trustees. While staff attendance remained on par with the last NWLF conference in 2016, trustee attendance was down slightly.

Conference session topics varied from connecting with homeless and low income community members, to mental health in the workplace, lightning talks, and hands-on Evergreen training. On the feedback survey, one participant commented that "there was a good balance of providing hard training together with discussion of hot issues. There was also time to network and meet new people."

In response to the mental health session presented by the Canadian Mental Health Association, one participant noted: "We will be pursuing more detailed training, spurred by the introduction we received in this presentation." This session in particular led to much discussion around the room and the necessary clarification of the difference between mental health and mental illness.

The session featuring Lightning Talks from library directors around the region, as well as the Library Staff Roundtable, both gave staff a chance to share unique initiatives and insights within a regional context. Of the roundtable session, one participant reflected: "I always learn so much [from these sessions] and it puts our

jobs in perspective regionally." The lightning talks gave another participant the insight that "in this era of constant change and stretching for innovation it is always great to see how other libraries are reaching out to serve their communities and challenge us all to give better service." Front-line staff also appreciated the inclusion of practical, hands-on training with someone from the BC Libraries Coop. One participant noted: "Since we spend so much time with Evergreen it was also nice to touch base with a real person. I feel more confident somehow after this presentation and I hope it can be a feature of every conference."

Board members were offered two Vantage Point trustee training sessions, as well as the opportunity to attend BCLTA's revamped Trustee Orientation Program (TOP). One trustee, who had been looking for an opportunity to attend TOP for a few years, noted that "the content provided a helpful foundation for our work as trustees. More than that, the facilitator really helped the content come alive off the page."

For further information about the 2018 NWLF Fall Conference, refer to Appendix 1 (NWLF Fall Conference Program).

Travel and Course Fee Subsidies

NWLF supported several library staff members across the region pursue online and in-person training. Some of these professional development opportunities included:

- *iTech Conference* (2 staff members)—Library staff members came away with tips and ideas about acquiring the newest hardware to increase reliability and security of library networks, how to create procedures for better backup reliability, and how to prevent cyber attacks to library's servers. **This aligns with the provincial government's key commitment to deliver services people can count on.**
- *Critical Indigenous Literacies for Librarians* (Library Director)—The Director intends to use more inclusive titles for programming and will continue to "build a connection with First Nations groups." **This aligns with the provincial government's key commitment to true, lasting reconciliation with First Nations in British Columbia.**
- *Teaching Patrons to Use Technology* (1 staff member)—The Computer Tutor reports coming away with ideas about how to better prepare for tutoring sessions and gained insights on instruction.
- *Introduction to Sensory Processing* (1 staff member)—The Children's Programmer intends to integrate what she learned into her programs for young children to better serve those with developmental delays or challenges.

PRIORITY 3: *WORKING TOGETHER*

Related NWLF strategic goal: Create a community of member libraries

Building Community: These efforts are primarily communications based, and include:

- Regular teleconference meetings with LDAG and NWLF Board of Directors
- Regular phone and email conversations with LDAG, as required
- Continuation of the monthly NWLF newsletter (detailed below)

Sharing Resources:

- Two NWLF libraries used their time and 3-D technology to help a smaller NWLF library bring technology to their community. This is a great example of how a regional community can come together to find solutions and make things happen.

- After the significant Evergreen upgrade in May 2018, staff at one NWLF member library assisted 3 staff members at another member library by answering questions about Evergreen via teleconference.
- One of the newer library directors reached out to the NWLF Library Directors Advisory Group (LDAG) for advice on acquisitions and preferred distributors for finding adequate Canadian content. All the library directors in the Federation offered support and advice, which was truly appreciated. The NWLF LDAG is consistently generous, collaborative, and supportive of each other.
- The NWLF Conference (detailed under Priority 2) also serves the purpose of building community and sharing resources.

Monthly Newsletter: *NWLF Member News*

The NWLF produces a monthly newsletter, which highlights news on the activities of all member libraries in order to encourage dialogue and interaction within the region. The newsletter is sent to every staff and board member in the Federation, as well as several staff/board contacts beyond the region and from related organizations. With an open rate of over 60% and a click rate of close to 45%, this tool continues to offer value to members of the NWLF. Via the newsletter, the NWLF regularly distributes information on upcoming webinars, courses, and professional development opportunities.

The value of *NWLF Member News* extends beyond the NWLF region. In 2018, Library Directors from Kimberley and Castlegar requested that they be added to the mailing list. In addition, the NWLF consistently receives written thanks for the value of this service from numerous libraries outside the region.

Relationship with Coast Mountain College

Over the last couple of years, the NWLF's relationship with Coast Mountain College has been distant. However, the College remains an associate member of the Federation and continues to offer reciprocal borrowing privileges (patrons may borrow from campus libraries of Coast Mountain College and from public libraries in the Federation using either library card).

In 2018, the NWLF Director connected with 2 library staff members at the Terrace campus with the goal of exploring how the NWLF and the College can collaborate and assist each other going forward.

PRIORITY 4: *ENHANCING GOVERNANCE*

The inclusion of the Trustee Orientation Program and Vantage Point sessions for trustees at the 2018 NWLF Fall Conference offered board members an opportunity to gain information, ideas, and insights to implement on the ground in their communities.

The NWLF Director also committed to keeping its Board of Directors better informed between board meetings by sending out a quarterly report on Federation activities.

SUMMARY

One key finding of 2018 was the necessity to operate within a more prudent budget in 2019. The reserve funds the NWLF has enjoyed for the past few years have been spent, and the Federation must now budget its activities in accordance with the annual provincial grant.

In the 2017 grant report, it was stated that "a robust NWLF conference should be produced every year in order to achieve staff and board professional development goals." In 2018, the board recommitted to the more realistic goal of producing an NWLF conference every 2 years, while supporting staff and board travel expenses to Beyond Hope in the off years. With a strategic planning session coming up in 2019, the NWLF could not additionally afford the expenses required to produce a "robust" conference in the same year.

The NWLF intends to focus on community building and resource sharing in the coming year. While the modest NWLF budget adds value to the programs and services its member libraries are able to offer their communities, the lasting value of the Federation is what it can offer its membership in terms of collaboration, regional connection, and the sharing of ideas.

NWLF Fall Conference

October 19-20, 2018

Hosted by the Northwest Library Federation in partnership with Houston Public Library

Friday, October 19th

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| 9:00 – 9:50 | Registration with Continental Breakfast
Please arrive by 9:45 a.m. if you plan to attend the first session. |
| 9:50 – 10:00 | Welcome
Melissa Sawatsky (NWLF) and Sara Lewis (Houston Public Library) |
| 10:00 – 11:00 | How We Connect: Libraries, Access and Poverty
Colleen Nelson (Vancouver Island Regional Library) |

Session Description

At the heart of library values is access—that library resources should be equally and equitably available. It is an often quoted value, but people living in poverty still lack access to many essential library resources and services. Many of the barriers to access are directly implemented by libraries through policy, institutional culture and practice. As neoliberal policies have decimated social services, people living in poverty have increasing informational, recreational, and social needs that are going unmet. Some libraries have slowly begun adapting to meet these needs but stigma, ignorance and entrenched policy and practices contribute to a reluctance to embrace this role fully.

However, all libraries have the opportunity to develop meaningful library service for people living in poverty. The Courtenay branch of Vancouver Island Regional Library has developed Connect, a program aimed at improving access to library resources, providing lifelong learning opportunities, developing relationships and building communities. The program is a model for expanding library service and resources to underserved populations, addressing stigma and dismantling internal barriers to access.

The development and implementation of Connect is the story of a branch's culture shift, away from stigma and towards understanding. It is about community development and relationship building, as well as failure, resistance and hope. This session will also explore the role of libraries in community poverty reduction strategies and the role of library workers as advocates for poverty reduction.

Colleen Nelson is a Library Manager with Vancouver Island Regional Library in the awe-inspiring Comox Valley. Colleen knows a public library is a reflection of its community and her work as a librarian is informed by her commitment to social justice and her activism within the labour

movement. She is interested in the ways libraries can use community development and partnerships to knit the library into the fabric of the community, and how these relationships can improve access and outcomes for vulnerable members of the community.

11:00 – 12:00

Awareness of Mental Health in the Workplace

Geoff Moffett (Canadian Mental Health Association)

Session Description

This workshop is designed to help build comfort in talking about mental health and mental illness, and learn how to respond in a supportive way to co-workers who may be experiencing a mental illness. The session begins by building an understanding of the continuum of mental health, and the risk and protective factors that influence our current state of mental health. It uses personal stories to help build awareness of what it is like to experience mental illnesses like anxiety disorders or depression at work. You'll have the opportunity to ask questions and leave with a list of resources available to help support your mental health.

***The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)** is a national charity that helps maintain and improve mental health for all Canadians. As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, CMHA promotes the mental health of all and supports the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness.*

12:00 – 1:00

LUNCH (catered lunch provided)

1:00 – 2:00

Lightning Talks: Re-imagining Library Collections/Programs

David Tremblay (Terrace Public Library), Sara Lewis (Houston Public Library),
Patrick Siebold (Vancouver Island Regional Library, Haida Gwaii)

Session Description

Join three Library Directors from different communities in northern BC for short lightning talks (with Q&A periods) on innovative projects and programs they have enacted in their respective libraries. David Tremblay will discuss the development of the "Library of Things" at Terrace Public Library. Sara Lewis will give attendees the inside scoop on the reorganization of Houston Public Library's classification system. Join Patrick for a discussion on how to meet the needs of our diverse and ever-growing senior population. Patrick will describe some of the programs, partnerships and outreach he has worked on while at Vancouver Island Regional Library.

***David Tremblay** is the Library Director at Terrace Public Library. **Sara Lewis** is the Library Director at Houston Public Library. **Patrick Siebold** is a Library Manager with Vancouver Island Regional Library on Haida Gwaii.*

2:00 – 3:00

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Session A: **Library Staff Roundtable**
Facilitated by Kathy Wilford (Smithers Public Library)

Session Description

Join your regional staff colleagues in this opportunity to share and discuss common workplace challenges, successes and strategies. This session will be moderated by Kathy Wilford of Smithers Public Library and registrants will determine the agenda by contributing topics in advance.

Session B: **Library Directors Advisory Group (LDAG) Meeting**
NWLF Library Directors, Federation Director & Denise McGeachy

3:00 – 3:30 **BREAK** (snacks available)

3:30 – 4:30 **Evergreen 3.1: Navigating a New Interface**
Christine Burns (BC Libraries Cooperative)

Session Description

This session will focus on tips, tricks, and troubleshooting related to the recent upgrade and online migration of Sitka's Evergreen (version 3.1). There will be an opportunity for Q&A with Christine Burns of BC Libraries Cooperative.

***Christine Burns** has been a Trainer and Help Desk support specialist for the BC Libraries Cooperative since 2013. She obtained her Library Technician diploma from Langara College and enjoys training and helping people learn new things.*

5:00 – 7:00 **Dinner/Social at Happy Jack's** (optional)

7:00 – 8:30 **NWLF Board Meeting** (HPL meeting room)
NWLF Board Trustees, Federation Director & Denise McGeachy

SPECIAL EVENT: An Evening with DebiLyn Smith at 7:00 p.m. (Houston Public Library)

For all other conference attendees, please note that the library is presenting a post-dinner reading with local Houston author, DebiLyn Smith, starting at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 20th

8:30 – 9:00 **Continental Breakfast** (please arrive by 8:45 a.m.)

9:00 – 12:00 **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

Session A: **Trustee Orientation Program**
Melanie Wilke (BCLTA)

Session Description

TOP is a full-day session that explores the roles and responsibilities of library trustees in British Columbia. Participants are introduced to the provincial context for public library governance, effective board practices, current public library issues, and strategies for success. While designed with new trustees in mind, the broad content of the workshop makes it a useful experience for all trustees, whole boards, and library directors.

***Melanie Wilke** is fulfilling her fifth year as a trustee on the Terrace Public Library Board. Her involvement with the Library Board is not a coincidence; she has an MLS and spent 7 years as the Children's/Deputy Librarian at the Terrace Public Library before joining Coast Mountain College as the Library Coordinator in 2009. She has been on the BC Library Trustee Association Board for 2 years and is excited to be joining you today to talk board governance.*

Session B: **Getting Change Done**
Michelle Bernard (Vantage Point)

Session Description

This workshop will empower you to shift from responding to change, to leading and inspiring change. It will provide you with a strong foundation for implementing change leadership practices. Learn practical tools to embrace the human dynamics that lead to success or failure in implementing change. Participants will gain an understanding of the difference between change and transition, and identify concrete steps to build their organizational capacity to lead, implement and manage change.

***Michelle Bernard** is currently a Manager of Philanthropy at United Way of the Lower Mainland. She started her fundraising career at UBC's Planned Giving Department in 2001 and has dedicated her career to supporting fundraising activities in the education and social services sectors. Michelle is passionate about improving the lives of the people in her community and is a member of philanthropic advisory and financial planning associations, including the Vancouver Estate Planning Council and the Canadian Association of Gift Planners (CAGP). When she isn't working with donors, Michelle can be found volunteering at a local wildlife refuge, hiking, skiing, sailing, or kayaking.*

12:00 – 1:00 **LUNCH** (catered lunch provided)

1:00 – 4:00

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Session A: **Trustee Orientation Program (continued)**
Melanie Wilke (BCLTA)

Session Description

Afternoon portion of the Trustee Orientation Program. See workshop description above.

Session B: **Fund Development**
Michelle Bernard (Vantage Point)

Session Description

This workshop is targeted to board members who want to learn how to develop a culture of fund development within their organization. By the end of this session you will:

- Understand the current limitations and opportunities in fund development and be able to assess which fundraising approaches would work best for your organization
- Be able to bring more prospective donors to your organization
- Increase your confidence in talking to prospective donors about funding opportunities
- Have concrete tools for increasing donor retention

With an interactive, discussion-based format, this workshop is suitable for board members, executive directors, and senior leaders (i.e. Directors, Managers)