

## **BCLA Climate Action Committee**

### **Open Meeting: Collaborate on BC-wide Climate Emergency Initiatives**

19 April 2022

#### **Description:**

The BCLA Climate Action Committee has heard a desire from many in the library sector for collaborative, library sector-wide initiatives that address the climate crisis. This working meeting focuses on sharing ideas and moving forward on two initiatives that have been suggested by many and have been successfully implemented elsewhere:

#### **1. Climate emergency week**

A climate emergency week is an opportunity to mobilize a call to action, and echoing Seth Klein, help make the climate emergency feel like an emergency. Similar initiatives have been successfully implemented elsewhere, including [Climate Preparedness Week](#), which takes place in many US libraries, and the [Climate Emergency Week](#) and forthcoming climate emergency month at the University of British Columbia. Join us to explore the idea of hosting a BC wide climate emergency week in late September to coincide with Climate Preparedness Week, UBC's Climate Emergency month, global climate strikes, and the annual COP.

#### **2. Toolkits and resources**

Toolkits and resources are a way of exploring what our libraries are already doing and sharing ideas and resources that can make it easier to implement something new or generate workable ideas. ALA's [Resilient Communities: Libraries Respond to Climate Change](#) includes an example of such a resource. Library-specific resources would help us to work together, scale up our efforts, and adapt climate justice initiatives from elsewhere to help support our communities.

Please join this special BCLA Climate Action Committee meeting to explore, discuss, and possibly implement these ideas. Everyone is welcome!

#### **Notes from the meeting:**

Participants: 32 from public, academic, government libraries including both urban and rural areas

#### **Notes for Climate Emergency Week break-out room**

Facilitator: David Waddell and Helen Brown

Note taker: Sally Taylor

Ideas received via chat or microphone are included below.

#### **Introduction**

- Week where libraries could do different things; generate energy
- Survey done by CAC - anxiety was a top issue - if we coordinate, we can win
- Similar to summer reading club - different scales for different-sized libraries, organize sector around literacy
- Date of new event - last week of September (top of mind for citizens, post-fire season, corresponds to existing efforts on climate action from libraries and other organizations)

1) Do you think it would be a good idea to explore an event like this? What are the benefits and challenges?

- Yes, it's a fabulous idea!

#### Benefits

- Momentum across sector
- Public Library Interlink - 18 large libraries, leverage work being done in each library, what works best in each library
- Collaboration with other organizations in communities such as Friday for Futures (youth), Citizen Climate Lobby, BC Climate Hub
- For many libraries at short notice (this coming September) it can purely be a scheduling opportunity. They might want to do a workshop or talk or have a book club on the topic and just putting it in that week is adding support to the group concept.
- Getting youth involved is super important!

#### Challenges

- Climate denial identified as a challenge. Just state climate change as a fact and make the conversation about that. Move away from the factual debate.
- How to coordinate support materials (similar to Summer Reading Club materials) that might be different between public, academic, special libraries.

2) Do you think your library would be willing to implement a climate emergency week?

- There is interest!

3) How? – possibilities

#### Background / options:

- BCLA can host a webpage with information that is updated 1-2 times a year
- A champion library hosts a central LibGuide or website (similar to Climate Preparedness Week).
- A group creates a website that others can use and link to (similar to the Keeping it ReAL conference)
- Funding for central keynote(s) that is open to anyone in the province
- Start small if needed
- Organized by a sub committee of CAC
- Could include other provinces and it could be a broader partnership right from the beginning

#### Ideas:

- Similar to mental health initiatives - leverage that action is taking place. Expectations that something will take place every year. Also Science Literacy Week - all organizations/institutions promote activities on central website.
- A list of participating libraries. Cities set civic mandates so shows library is participating.
- Centralized website which highlights all the local actions (libraries or communities) can inspire action throughout the province, and make connections between sectors.

4) What?

#### Options / prompts:

- Variable, customizable for different libraries and communities with some central programs/events available. Not one size fits all. Flexible plan
- Can include many partnerships with local organizations
- Address professional development needs for libraries
- Address local and community needs, e.g. navigating heat risk

- Ideas if needed: Forefront the most important issues and solutions; prioritize Indigenous and IBPOC leaders, activists, researchers, etc.; address misinformation either directly or by sharing good information

Ideas:

- If it's an emergency -- What is the purpose? Where do we put our energy?
- Event aimed at library employees - keynote presentation about responding to emergencies (Public Safety Canada or Emergency management in BC) followed by practical hands-on scenarios, inward focus on library (preserving collections) and outward focus (serving community during heat wave), goal to learn about disaster preparedness but also forge connections between libraries and library sectors.
- Professional development for library employees and public-facing supports. CAC has advocacy role and working on statement
- Could have a professional stream and public-facing stream of activities.
- Climate preparedness would be tied in with our municipal/city plans - good way for libraries to work with our elected officials/city planners/etc.
- Specific locally with themes - e.g. one library focus on food sovereignty, another on just transition.
- A centralized website which highlights all the local actions, can inspire action throughout the province.
- OLA - survey libraries and include questions about climate - what skills and resources do we have already? Benchmarking where we are now.
- Library can promote what their institutions are doing (e.g. UBC)
- Nelson Public Library Board - identified climate as stream in strategic plan. Plan to do workshops about climate crisis, and educate how to respond.
- Concern that terms "crisis" or "emergency" cause fear while "preparedness" does not
- Concern about not using "crisis," etc. and suggestion that these terms are necessary and accurate

## Notes for Toolkits & Resources break-out room

Facilitator: Jennifer Wilson and Diana Marshall

Note taker: Lisa Nathan

Ideas received via chat and microphone are included below.

Ideas captured through the slides have also been added below:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1tiwBvINlmvXVVxvkTAhYtM-0VG4Ce4C08u7j21Ll3Yo/edit?usp=sharing>

## Introduction

### 1. Why create a hub?

- Library-specific resources would help us to work together, scale up our efforts, and adapt climate justice initiatives from elsewhere to help support our communities.
- We can kickstart the visibility of Climate Emergency communication in all our libraries with ease.
- Libraries are all about sharing! Sharing is:
  - Efficient: Reusing or adapting existing content can save us time.
  - Consistent: Patrons will see the same messaging in all our libraries.
  - Flexible: Can offer materials for all types of libraries, and all types of tasks.

- Effective: We can discover new/better/different resources/ideas than perhaps we have time to create on our own.

## 2. What might a hub look like?

- Example Hubs
  - ALA's [Resilient Communities: Libraries Respond to Climate Change](#) is an example of such a climate resource for libraries.
  - [Library Toolshed](#) is an example of a resource hub for libraries (broader than climate)
  - [UBC Library Climate Action](#) webpage.
- Example Documents / Content
  - Programming resources: ALA's [Resilient Communities Programming Guide for Libraries](#)
  - Administrative resource: UBC Library's [Air Travel Decision Tree](#) and poster assessing conference emissions (adaptable and reusable)

## 3. Where could it be located?

Possibilities include

- BCLA CAC website (<https://bclaconnect.ca/cag/cac-documents/>)
- BCLA non-CAC site (with seasonal updates)
- Library Toolshed, BC Library Cooperative <https://bc.libraries.coop/services/toolshed/>
- CAC listserv as platform for ongoing discussion
- Niche Academy
- Collaborative space with OLA
- Other places ? What are your ideas?

## 4. What might we share in the hub?

Content ideas to inspire

- External / community focused
  - Program templates, Posters/promotional material, Passive displays, booklists, film discussion, book discussion
- Internal / staff focused
  - Tips for how to persuade your library to engage, Staff training modules, Addressing staff climate anxiety, Library emissions audit frameworks, where to start, checklists, decision trees.
- Strategy
  - Library climate action plans, Advocacy strategies, Messaging/wording

## Discussion

### 5. How could we make it most effective for you?

- Like the idea of incorporating it into the Library Toolshed. Starting something new seems big. On Library Toolshed, folks might come across information on climate justice/crisis that they might have not thought about yet.
- Most use Google to search for ideas rather than Toolshed
- Notifications would be a great option. Newsletter?

### 6. What kind of resources would you look for in the hub?

- Resources for libraries & directors for being involved with emergency planning
- Government & grant funding applications with municipal (in partnership)

- Everything mentioned. Programming ideas/walkthroughs, contacts, maybe even helpful lists held somewhere (google docs?). It's hard to know how broad or specific to be.
- Information about how different libraries are reacting to climate crisis --what is open, who is a cooling center, etc.
- Public libraries differ widely in terms of facilities. Smaller ones have limited space in aging facilities. This needs to be considered before identifying libraries as a cooling centre, i.e., is it open and does it have air conditioning?
- Decision trees or resources about sustainability of technologies as libraries often invest in and expand technologies
- Resources for library workers to use in unions – such as resources around divestment of pension divestment from fossil fuels.

7. Are you aware of existing resources to add?

- One library organization is in the process of a top down, sustainability-oriented process (putting the 17 Sustainable Development goals in the catalog)
- UN Sustainable Development Goals <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- Sustainable Library Certification (US based). Rebecca Aldritch –
- WVML - Toolkit for living more sustainable lives (launched at beginning of pandemic)

8. Is it a good idea to prepare a hub for library climate emergency tools?

- 6 yes

9. Would you or your library share to or draw from a climate resource hub?

- Share with our public? Special vs. public vs academic libraries
- Tag by type of library? Tag by use?

10. Additional Ideas

- Have staff person who has it as part of their position (regularly available people who focus on this). Available to all BC libraries. Dedicated position.
- Concern (and a discussion that seemed to resonate) about very small libraries and their ability to monitor resources etc. They are the ones that get pulled in when there is a crisis, with little to no check in to see if they have the capacity, are open, have air conditioning etc. The public libraries branch is starting to collect data on this. Would a live status indicator be helpful?
- Someone mentioned a pre-covid initiative at WVML that was oriented to the public to envision climate futures. Willing to share this resource.
- A need for public libraries (and academic/special) to be involved in their local government (City, town council, etc.) in planning. Resources for libraries and library directors to know how to be involved with emergency planning in advance (similar for special and academic libraries). How to be involved in the emergency planning, not an afterthought. Ability to apply for funding in support. Particularly in collaboration with others (across governments etc.). This might take the shape of guidance documents on how to do this.
- Programs, planning, decision trees, wider advocacy role.