

# British Columbia Libraries Association - Climate Action Committee

## Annual Report

2022 – 2023

### CAC EXECUTIVE TEAM FOR 2022 – 2023

- Co-chairs: Helen Brown and Diana Marshall
- Recording Secretary: Lisa Nathan
- Directors at Large: David Waddell and Caitlin MacRae
- Student Representatives: McKelle Hansen

### SUMMARY & CONTEXT

The Climate Action Committee has focused on consultation, advocacy, and projects led by working groups, particularly related to building capacity within the library sector. This work guides and sustains BCLA's responses to the ongoing climate crisis, and it is our hope that it will help inspire justice-based action and resilience throughout the library and information management community.

In the 2022-2023 year, the BCLA Climate Action Committee launched an initial pilot of [Climate Action Week](#), following similar events offered by other organizations and governments. Planning is currently underway for the 2023 Climate Action Week, which will also expand participation to Ontario libraries. Other projects included a briefing document and presentations. During this past year, BCLA and the Climate Action Committee also moved to a new website and switched to using the new Branches online forum for updates and discussions. The forum was renamed after the Committee, but with the continued purpose of sharing ideas, making connections, and learning about new information and professional development opportunities, in addition to updates from the Committee.

Also in the past year, there have been substantive changes within the library sector more broadly, including increases in library committees focused on climate action, professional development sessions aimed at library workers, library journal articles, and, of course, programming and supports for communities. For example, the [Open Climate Campaign](#), Open Access Week's [Open for Climate Justice](#) theme, webinars and courses from the American Library Association, and the inclusion of climate justice in library strategic frameworks.

### CONSULTATION

Consultation continued to be a significant focus for 2022-2023. We heard about the importance of climate action for library and information workers, the challenges libraries face as they respond to climate emergencies, and the need for coordinated efforts and capacity building within the library community. This feedback came from meetings with the executive directors

of BCLA, the Libraries Co-operative, and the Public Library InterLINK; meetings of the Climate Action Committee and working groups; as well as the following meetings and surveys:

- Survey to public library directors about the supports and resources libraries need to participate in Climate Action Week (June 2022)
- Climate Action Week Story Gathering and Feedback survey (Dec 2022 – Jan 2023)
- Updates and Idea Sharing meeting at the BCLA 2023 conference (14 April 2023)

## RELATIONSHIPS

Information sharing and relationship building between library organizations was another important way that we gathered information. Priorities that were raised include education and professional development, collaborating on projects, and establishing a national climate action committee.

- **BC Libraries Co-operative and Public Library InterLINK:** The [BC Libraries Climate Action Update](#) (July 2022) provided an opportunity to hear about a range of initiatives from strategic planning to ideas for sector-wide leadership and support.
- **Ontario Library Association:** OLA formed a Climate Action Committee in 2022, which includes a BCLA CAC representative. Together, we collaborate and share ideas, including plans to build on each other's work and expand initiatives between provinces. One example of OLA's work is a benchmarking survey that will measure libraries' contributions against the UN Sustainable Development Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts.
- **Canadian Federation of Library Associations:** OLA and BCLA submitted a resolution to CFLA to establish a climate action committee at the national level. CFLA approved the creation of the committee, drafted Terms of Reference, and is currently working on forming the committee.

We also heard from others in the library community conducting similar work such as incorporating questions about the climate crisis in the Government of BC's Annual Survey of Public Libraries, work with BC Housing, and programming and community partnerships.

## INITIATIVES

In the 2022-2023 year, the Climate Action Committee has completed or contributed to the following projects. Each project involved a volunteer or working group who moved it forward.

- **Climate Action Week:** In 2022, the Climate Action Committee organized and hosted a Climate Action Week pilot in September that established libraries' interest in continuing with this event and the supports needed for libraries to take part. The Committee worked with BCLA to create a [website](#) and logo. In 2023, the Committee and BCLA investigated possible funding options. The working group is organizing Climate Action Week for November 2023 and hosts regular planning meetings for libraries and

individuals. The Ontario Library Association is also interested in Climate Action Week and 2023 will see the week expanded to Ontario libraries.



- **Navigating Uncertainty: Libraries and the Climate Crisis (Oct 2022):** This [briefing document](#) by McKelle Hansen, takes a library-specific look at our roles and responsibilities in responding to the climate crisis and outlines places where we can take action, including imagining new futures and building communities of care and resiliency. This project was completed under the supervision of Dr. Lisa Nathan as part of a directed study through the UBC iSchool.
- **BCLA became a signatory to the BC Climate Emergency Campaign:** The Climate Emergency Campaign advocates for the Government of BC to confront the climate emergency and commit to [ten climate actions](#). The campaign currently has over 530 signatories, including the Archives Association of BC, and a wide range of other organizations. The December 2022 report can be found here: [Confront the Climate Emergency: An Urgent Call to the BC Government Progress Report](#)
- **“Be the Change: Think Deeply, Act Boldly on Climate Change,” BCLA 2023 Conference session:** This panel presentation to in-person and virtual attendees included five local climate leaders: Katjã Lafferty, West Vancouver Memorial Library Climate Writer in Residence; Elaine Su, New Westminster Public Library Board Chair, McKelle Hansen, MLIS student at the UBC iSchool; Caitlin MacRae, Public Services Librarian at the New Westminster Public Library; and David Waddell, Neighbourhood Services Manager at Vancouver Public Library. Together they explored how the library sector can engage in climate action that reflects our best selves, the diversity of our communities, and the strength of communal action, while also highlighting the importance of collaboration with community partners and boards in responding to the climate crisis as a sector.

## WEBSITE

The Climate Action Committee’s website includes the documentation produced by the committee, as well as core resources and briefing materials to provide context and reliable information on climate change and actions being taken by library organizations.

The committee also uses Basecamp and Google Docs. These are used for routine work like managing agendas, providing presentations, and most notably, for enabling asynchronous work and collaboration.

## MEETINGS & MEMBERSHIP

Regular monthly meetings were held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of every month at 12:00pm. Working group meetings occurred as needed, depending on the project. In order to make the meetings accessible for members from different libraries and positions, all meetings were held on Zoom and the date and time were determined based on surveys and feedback.

Most communications are shared through the BCLA Climate Action Committee forum, which is part of BCLA's Branches Online Forums and is available to BCLA members and non-members. Some announcements are also shared in the main BCLA Discussion forum. Communication about upcoming meetings and initiatives takes place via the forum. It is also available for subscribers to connect with others about their initiatives, resources, professional development opportunities, and questions. Anyone can attend committee meetings or get involved in working groups.

## GETTING INVOLVED

New members are always welcome! You do not have to be a member of BCLA to get involved. Communication about upcoming meetings and initiatives take place via the online forum.

- Join the BCLA Climate Action Committee forum [here](#)
- Join Climate Action Committee meetings (date, time, and link shared in the online forum)
- Get involved in a working group
- Visit the Climate Action Committee website [here](#)
- Contact us at [climateaction@bcla.bc.ca](mailto:climateaction@bcla.bc.ca)