

British Columbia Libraries Association Climate Action Committee



Annual Report 2023 – 2024

CAC EXECUTIVE TEAM FOR 2023 – 2024

- Co-chairs: Diana Marshall and David C. Waddell
- Recording Secretary: Lisa Nathan
- Directors at Large: Caitlin MacRae and Helen Brown
- Student Representatives: Amory Strader

SUMMARY & CONTEXT

In 2024, the Climate Action Committee focused on managing and completing work that amplified broader advocacy, increased scale and reach, and measured success of current efforts. A critical approach to the committee's work is to have members contributing work at a manageable scale, so moving forward existing project work was a priority. 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 2023-2024 year, the BCLA Climate Action Committee achieved completion of a climate crisis position statement, which the BCLA Board accepted and published on behalf of the association: [BCLA Climate Action Statement: Essential Climate Justice Responsibilities in the Library Sector](#). This document outlines 3 core priorities and 10 calls to action to guide library organizations in responding to the crisis and advocating for support and change. The Committee will update this document every three years and is already working on toolkit materials to support libraries to fulfill the statement.

We also expanded our [Climate Action Week](#) to libraries beyond BC, increasing awareness across Canada. Planning is currently underway to expand the 2024 Climate Action Week by providing

ready made materials in English and French, with support by the CFLA Climate Action Committee through an Environment Canada grant.

Other projects included preparation of a benchmarking survey and conference presentations. During this past year the Climate Action Committee also maintained current library climate resources on the BCLA website and kept our community informed through the Branches online forum for updates and discussions. Lastly, we enjoyed working with Vancouver Community College design students on a new logo for the Committee, intended to message urgency and positivity, and increase recognition of our group.

This year we enjoyed a year of collaboration with various groups, committees, and associations across the country. For example, thanks to conversations with groups like the Ontario Library Association's Climate Action Committee, we were able to discuss shared priorities, approaches, and collaborate on campaigns to better coordinate our efforts between provinces. Having a shared language in climate work in libraries ensures the voice of our work is united, consistent, and impactful. A more specific example is the shared language used in surveys. Having consistent words across libraries when talking about climate action metrics is essential in measuring the success of our work. This collaboration would not have been possible without members of our committee routinely reaching out to the OLA and vice versa. Both climate committees invited each other to sit in on meetings and we highly encourage a similar approach among others in the sector. We look forward to working with many other groups and organizations in 2024 and beyond.

CONSULTATION

Consultation continued to be a significant focus for 2023-2024. 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:

- 2023 Climate Action Week in Libraries Participant Feedback Survey assessed library participation levels, successes and gaps to help guide CAC planning the future annual event, and explore funding opportunities (Nov - Dec 2023)
- Consultation with the BC Libraries Co-Operative and other BCLA Committees and Groups such as BCALS and PLIG to share and invite critical assessment of the near-final draft wording of our proposed Climate Action Position Statement.
- Updates and Idea Sharing meeting at the BCLA 2024 conference (25 April 2024)

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:** The BCLA CAC continues to engage and cooperate with the Co-Operative. Examples include supporting Co-Operative professional development opportunities, and consulting on BCLA CAC informational pieces such as the Position Statement.
- **Association of BC Public Library Directors:** The group works with BCLA leadership to keep ahead on trends and through these channels assists the CAC. We appreciate their assistance on promoting initiatives from the committee and offering to connect individual libraries with various committee projects.
- **Public Library InterLINK:** The BCLA CAC continues to liaise with the InterLINK Youth Services Committee through information sharing at quarterly Youth Services meetings. The group also collaborated with the InterLINK author presentation committee, for example on a climate speaker series during Climate Action Week.
- **Ontario Library Association:** The OLA Climate Action Committee continues to include 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:** In 2023 CFLA formed a Climate Action Committee and established inaugural membership. BCLA CAC is building strong ties to this new national level counterpart through shared representation, with a goal towards increased coordination, knowledge sharing and capacity building in the sector.

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 2023-2024 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.

- **BCLA Climate Action Statement: Essential Climate Justice Responsibilities in the Library Sector:** [This document](#) outlines 3 core priorities and 10 calls to action to guide library workers and leaders in moving change forward in their libraries. It was created by a CAC working group with lots of collaboration, consultation, and support from the BCLA board. The CAC hopes this document can facilitate future climate work in libraries by helping professionals focus their efforts. The CAC strongly believe specificity, data, and momentum are key in winning our fight against climate collapse and disasters.

- **Climate Action Week - 2023:** In 2023, the Climate Action Committee again organized and hosted Climate Action Week. We broadened our reach by formally inviting libraries from other provinces to participate. The number of participating libraries increased by over 250% and the 38 participating GLAM organizations span Saskatchewan, Ontario, Alberta, as well as British Columbia. In 2023, InterLINK collaborated with the CAC to provide the 'Conversations on Climate' speaker series over Zoom, aligning certain dates with Climate Action Week. No direct funding was secured for 2023 but we continue to pursue this for 2024.
- **Climate Action Week - Feedback Survey:** After the conclusion of Climate Action Week 2023, the Committee hosted a survey designed to assess the level to which the event achieved its intended outcomes. Approximately 60% of participating libraries responded to the survey. Areas of success for the 2023 CAW included building climate literacy in communities and facilitating climate conversations. Areas for improvement for 2024 include encouraging workplaces to change current practices and reducing climate anxiety. One encouraging result: 88% of respondents said they would continue to promote climate awareness year round, a major goal of Climate Action Week.
- **Climate Action Week - 2024:** A key focus on the 2024 Climate Action Week (CAW) will be engaging staff and providing them with more fulsome documentation that makes participation easy. These documents will not only outline programs and service models to promote climate action and information. They will also be worded in such a way to encourage staff at local libraries and organizations to build out their own local climate leadership and understand climate action as a core library value. These documents will hopefully be translated into French, and funded through external collaborations with more details to come.



- **Read4Climate Campaign and Resources:** Created in partnership with FVRL and the OLA Climate Action Committee, [Read4Climate](#) is a rack card and poster design articulating the top four ways libraries can help our communities respond to the climate crisis. Libraries can download the resources from the Library Toolshed, add their own logos, and print or share locally, use in displays, outreach, opening dialogue, etc..
- **Committee Logo Design:** The CAC was approached along with other BCLA groups to receive assistance from the graphic design students at Vancouver Community College. After working with their students on an assignment for their class, the BCLA CAC was pleased to receive this final product to be used on future communications.



Climate Action Committee

- **Presentation: “Where do Emissions Lurk: Finding Our Way to Lowering Emissions in Libraries,” BCLA 2024 workshop:** This workshop invited participants to meet with colleagues from different libraries to identify where climate impacts lurk in their libraries and what mitigation actions they could take to make the biggest difference. Participants worked collaboratively in small groups to examine a non-library institution to identify where emissions and other impacts are embedded within their spaces, processes, and practices and what actions that institution could take. Presented by Helen Brown and Coco Chen.
- **Presentation: “Moving Forward on Climate,” BCLA 2024 Conference session:** This panel presentation was in-person to 100+ attendees. It presented a manageable way to approach the 10 Climate Actions outlined in the position paper and discussed the current library landscape for environmental sustainability and climate work. Presented by Diana Marshall and David C. Waddell.
- **Poster Presentations: “Read4Climate” and “Climate Action Week” at BCLA 2024:** These poster sessions encouraged awareness and participation in these two climate awareness campaigns. Both generated good engagement individually and also promoted awareness of the CAC. Presented by Diana Marshall and David C. Waddell, respectively.
- **BCLA Climate Benchmarking Survey:** This survey of BCLA member libraries sets baseline data for climate action progress in the province. The questions lean into the climate impacts of BC libraries, on BC libraries, and the strategic work libraries are doing to mitigate and adapt. Drafted by a CAC working group in the first part of 2024, we’re preparing to launch the survey in late Spring, and anticipate analyzing and reporting on the results in late 2024.

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 3rd Friday of every month at 12:00 pm. 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 project working group
- Run for a Climate Action Committee executive position at our annual AGM (BCLA members only)
- Visit the Climate Action Committee website [here](#)
- Contact us at climateaction@bcla.bc.ca