

2006 Biodiversity Education and Conservation Colloquium - Transcribed Feedback

Colloquium Wrap-up, April 14, 2006

Please note, points are not presented/organised in any particular order.

1. What were the most helpful/useful aspects of this colloquium:

- Meeting, talking, hearing other people's stories
- Real world examples and discussion
- Networking. Ever-expanding the web of connections in our diverse field
- Hearing about programming in other botanical gardens, centres, events, campaigns. Great food!
- Most helpful: Information: Elin's hint about how to set up your innovations to succeed; Perspective: So much happening and such potential for public learning; Feeling: Recharged and connected to plant people!
- Sally Aitken's talk on forest biodiversity
- Elin's comment that being truly innovative means "delayed" success
- Most helpful/useful:
 - Excellent written/hand-out package at beginning
 - Broad scope of speakers on related subject
- Learning about success and failure of others
 - Elin's insights into innovation, success and failure
- Hearing from others of their exciting cases
- Exchange of information
 - Learning from others
 - Networking
- Inspiring great examples that provide energy for our own ideas
- Great to see two gardens; David's talk on global connections and his call to action
- Creating links
 - Learning what others do and "steal" ideas or adapt to our "reality"
 - Best of motivation to make a difference
- Case studies for some great ideas
 - And Elin and Sally for making me understand
- Opportunity to meet fellow educators and discuss approaches/ideas/suggestions and to then translate to our garden
- Knowledge of and optimism about the future of BGs and a chance to learn directly from those involved
- Hearing what other organizations are doing w.r.t. conservation
 - Great ideas and enthusiasm
 - Very inspiring

2. What Could be Improved Next Time:

- Meals/snacks
 - Reduce waste
 - Increase recycling (especially bag lunches)
 - Increase composting options
- Shorter talks
 - More conservation focused on real life example
- More time!
 - Conversation
 - Garden tours, displays
 - Opportunity to share our innovations and accomplishments inspired by our gathering
- Central hotel accommodations and shared meals
- Less commuting, stay on schedule - plan longer breaks?
- Observe botanical garden program activities
 - Creating an action plan
- More informal "small talks" like:
 - What do you think of...
 - So many people can express their ideas regarding working but also personal experience
- This was great
 - Maybe include garden tours, include a bit about how/what kinds of education takes place where in this garden? (focus was plants, not education)
- Improve for next gathering? Can't think of anything
- Less sender/receiver style presentations and more group discussion (with a facilitator)
 - More time outside in conversations
- "Structured Chaos" - informal or spontaneous round-tables
 - "Talking Stick" model?
- Invite like-minded institutions (cross-pollination)
- Engaging in a more dialogue-based setting, perhaps having small groups discuss ideas and then relay ideas back to larger group ... to facilitate greater interaction
- Evening event for energy and to hone conversation
- Time for conversation strategically placed in middle of garden so people attend! (with rules of conversation reviewed) - even adults need this!
- More opportunity for conversation
- A presentation on some aspect of botany - plant structure, taxonomy, etc,
- More structured discussion? More unstructured discussion? More time in the gardens...
- More opportunity to work in groups to discuss issues, prepare plans of action directly related to the presentations
- Shorter panelist "presentations: or else give panelists time to do a proper presentation - they went too long and didn't allow enough time for discussion - people can't absorb all that info in one go properly & then immediately launch into discussion

3. Identify what you will do to this year to continue supporting plant conservation and biodiversity education

- Attempt to apply myself to an organization dedicated to these ideas of conservation, education and biodiversity through volunteer or education opportunities
- Strive for a multi-visit programme with local children and local "mentors"
- Promote field naturalist gardens and projects
- Don't let Jill go to England
- Make explicit links with conservation in all programming
 - Start a dialogue with volunteers on what they think
- Incorporate conservation messages into new interpretive signage and displays for the garden. Messages will create links between the gardens collections and the natural world
- Plant seeds this spring!
 - Research and development of school program in our community
 - Collaborations with teachers
- Conversation! With Milner garden/Char re her program
 - Reinforcement that failure is a sign that we are innovating
- Will include conservation in our education program
 - We're somewhat weak in that area
- Improve BGCI's web site to include all the fab Canadian examples and case studies!
- I enjoyed the Milner garden presentation because it was a concrete example of how education can really be applied - how this is all really possible
- Further efforts to link Academia with public audiences
- Incorporate the "Conversation about Conservation" into formal ed programs at university, in other programs and meetings
- Establish a healthy food/bubble greenhouse project and report back on our success and failures
- Concrete conservation education action: Establish a "native plants" (grasslands) research & conservation site
- Action: Make/start species at risk list for our island community
- Create a project template for micro botanical gardens/native species gardens for youth (high schools, universities, community groups)
- Support a Canadian botanical garden network - more & better
 - Interactive interpretation
 - Focus our efforts

4. How do we keep the networking and dialogue going?

- Blog? Listserve with ability to post and discuss? (Would Daniel Mosquin at UBC volunteer to do this?)
- Subscribe to listserve
- Gathering 2008: Bill, Jason, Laurel, Olivia, Cindy
- Keep the conversation open with the staff and volunteers that we need to incorporate conservation awareness and education into all aspects of our programming

- Contact details from other delegates - get in touch with them to continue the dialogue
- Actively seek ways to encourage broader knowledge or design and histories run by BGs through work with YEN
- Consolidate BGCI/Canada and CBCN Web sites
- Encourage the Summerland (BC) Ornamental Garden in the CBCN Network
- Email addresses!
 - Commit to meeting in two years
- Create smaller networks of botanical gardens that can work on joint projects
- Get Elin to write articles for Roots all about how to promote innovation in other gardens
- Support public forum - community gathering - information sharing session
- Carry forward with CBCN Strategic Plan and work with BGCI and ABGA to develop network renewal or "web" - network of networks
- E-conversations? CBCN Blog?
- Web page info with all related organizations (~ paragraph) with link to their website
- Columbia Valley Botanical Garden would like to host a BGCI/CBCN gathering in the Rockies
- Action to maintain conversation: presently not sure, other than continue in botanical garden and potential "gatherings"
- I'll send everyone an email about how to sign up to Interpretation Canada's email list-serve - a window into what's new, what others are doing re: interpretation
- Email (Monthly) highlights at botanical gardens
 - Small working groups to provide feedback/input
- Create weblog/list serve to keep dialogue going. Exchange ideas, insight, new developments, and new resources
 - Continue biennial gatherings