



columbia basin environmental education network

# NEWS RELEASE

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## CANADIAN CONFERENCE CONNECTS CLASSROOMS TO COMMUNITIES IN THE COLUMBIA BASIN

*Participants learn from the land and people of the Ktunaxa Nation*

After submitting their bid to host in 2012, the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network (CBEEN) was given the nod to host the 2018 Canadian Environmental Education Conference.

The conference was hosted on October 18-21 at the Ktunaxa Nation's St. Eugene Mission Resort, a former residential school turned resort and conference centre. "CBEEN was delighted to win the bid to host the 2018 national conference", said CBEEN Executive Director and Conference Coordinator, Duncan Whittick. "This is the first time that this conference has come to our region, and we were honoured to host it in a place that the Ktunaxa people have turned from such a negative history into a place that is positive for the local community and educational for all Canadians. This event will launch a provincial conference that will come back to this region every four years."

Conference Indigenous Advisor, Michele Sam, shared that "I was pleased with the feedback, the participation and the content offered by various Ktunaxa people who have been practicing place-based learning for as long as we have been here. Together, we took the opportunity to support learning by doing differently, and surely that investment and energy will support these organizations as they move into their everyday work, and planning the next national conferences in Saskatoon in 2019 and Toronto in 2020."

The 2018 conference featured over 100 workshops, sessions, field studies, presentations and outdoor learning opportunities. Keynotes included Ktunaxa Hereditary Chief Sophie Pierre, ?a?am Nasu?kin (Chief) Joe Pierre, Tewa Indigenous Scholar from New Mexico Dr. Gregory Cajete, BC Minister of Education Rob Fleming, Environmental Education Professor Dr. Rick Kool and Ktunaxa Nation Council Chair and BC Climate Solutions and Clean Growth Advisory Council Member, Kathryn Teneese. The spotlight also shone on the music of mountain-inspired band Shred Kelly, and Canada's premiere environmental education musician, Remy Rodden.

Conference volunteer and local educator, Natasha Burgess, reflected, "I heard so many people say that this was one of the best conferences they had ever been to. It was the perfect mix of information, connection, and fun. When I think about what experiential, place-based learning should look like, talk about 'walking the talk' with this conference!"

?a?am Nasu?kin (Chief) Joe Pierre closed the conference reflecting on pop music lyrics "It's something unpredictable. But in the end it's right. I hope you had the time of your life."

Local conference organizers were delighted by the high level of local support from organizations in the Columbia Basin such as College of the Rockies, Wildsight, Columbia Outdoor School, Columbia Basin Trust, Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, Kootenay Savings Credit Union, Regional District of East Kootenay, City of Kimberley, St. Eugene Mission Resort, Kootenay Kwik Print and Kicking Horse Coffee. All school districts in the local region were partners in hosting this conference.

Read more about CBEEN's role and support for environmental education: <https://cbeen.org>

For more information contact CBEEN Executive Director and Conference Coordinator: [info@cbeen.org](mailto:info@cbeen.org)

#### PHOTOS:

- 1) ?aⱡam Nasu?kin (Chief) Joe Pierre taking the time to greet each of the 300 conference participants at the Opening Circle
- 2) Keynotes greeted by a packed house with 300 educators across Canada participating
- 3) Participants enjoyed over 100 sessions and workshops on outdoor and environmental learning
- 4) BC's Minister of Education Rob Fleming voicing his support for environmental education and place-based learning as being a key piece of BC's redesigned curriculum





