ECOLOGY NORTH

Annual Newsletter

2023-2024





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About Us

Ecology North is a charitable, non-profit organization formed in 1971 to support sound environmental decision-making on an individual, community and regional level.

We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work in Chief Drygeese Territory, traditional home of the Yellowknives Dene and homelands of the Indigenous Métis of the North Slave Métis Alliance, Akaitcho territory, within the Môwhì Gogha Dè Nîîłtèè boundary. We stand in solidarity with the Indigenous Guardians of Denendeh.

Mission

Our mission is to bring people and knowledge together for a healthy northern environment.

Vision

Our vision is a healthy northern environment, forever.



Meet Our Staff



Dawn Tremblay
Executive Director



Brandon Pludwinski
Education Program Manager



Emily McInnis
Office Manager



Amir Bakar
On the Land Recreation Assistant



Derek Simmers
Environmental Education Project Officer



Hannah Ascough
Public Outreach Project Officer

53rd Board of Directors

Eric McNair-Landry, Chair;
Dylan Cook, Vice Chair;
Lauren Nolan, Treasurer;
Rajiv Rawat, Director;
Suzanne Carrière, Director;
Vivian Peng, Director;
Ben Linaker, Director;
Paula Petkovic, Director.



Happy Trails

Zain Ali - Education Program Manager
Summer interns - Abigail Jones, Cyrus Ross, Linnea Azzolini and Molly Power
Thanks for all your hard work as part of the team!



From the Chair

Hello, I'm Eric. I have been the chair of the Ecology North Board for the last 4 years and as per the term limits that the Board and I instituted, I shall be vacating that post. While I am saddened to depart, I am happy that I leave the organization financially stable, with staff who are proud to call Ecology North their employer.



This past year the organization has invested more in its staff's personal development, has increased its programming outside Yellowknife and has taken on advocacy around active transportation in partnership with Communities in Motion. We also finally moved up, vacating our basement for rooms with a view and fresh air! Come visit!

— Eric McNair-Landry

Funders, Supporters, Partners


Government of Canada
Gouvernement du Canada
Canada
NSERC
CRSNG
Government of Northwest Territories
Gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest
POLAR
POLAIRE
United Way
Hotiì ts'eeda
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
SPOR SUPPORT UNIT
DENE NATION
KA'A'GEE TU FIRST NATION
NAHENDEH
YELLOWKNIVES DÉNÉ FIRST NATION
TREE OF PEACE
FRIENDSHIP CENTRE
TĮ̀CHQ̀ GHA HOGHA EDJHTHER YEDHER GHEDHTHER
TĮ̀CHQ̀ GHA HOGHA EDJHTHER YEDHER GHEDHTHER ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE
TĮ̀CHQ̀

Climate Solutions





Ecology North's focus, from our 2020-2023 strategic plan, has been on an overarching goal of education and awareness.

As environmental educators and advocates we have provided programming for many partners in Yellowknife and across the territory on our five core subject areas: climate change mitigation and adaptation, water stewardship, waste reduction, biodiversity conservation/species appreciation, and local food production.

We have been consistent in our reach this year: staff hosted more than 150 sessions in Yellowknife schools; schools in the Dehcho, South Slave, Sahtu and Beaufort Delta regions; and summer camps. Our programming reached over 3,000 youth! Mahsi cho to the many partners who make our work possible.



Education & Outreach

This year we prioritized getting into classrooms and providing experiential activities. We have continued to develop resources and activities to bring a variety of new experiences to our classroom visits and have been so grateful to be able to reach so many students across the NWT.

We planted and harvested school gardens, then taught students what to do with those harvests in pickling and cooking workshops. We talked about the concept of a circular economy and what that can look like in the north, how to reduce waste and reuse items we already have, and got messy learning about vermicomposting. Students learned about plastic waste and how they can make a difference drinking tap water in communities where it is safe to do so – we even tested water from a water fountain and bottled water and they drew the conclusion that there was no measurable difference in quality!



Since October 2023 we have given workshops in Délı̨nę, Tulita, Tłegǫ̀htı̨ (Norman Wells) Rádeyı̨lı̨kóé (Fort Good Hope), Tetlit'zheh (Fort McPherson), Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, Ka'a'gee Tu (Kakisa), Tthets'éhk'edélî (Jean Marie River), Líídlı̨ı̨ Kúę (Fort Simpson), Nahæâ Dehé Dene Band (Nahanni Butte), Hay River, Thebacha (Fort Smith) and Zhahti Kų̨ę (Fort Providence).We also facilitated professional development workshops for Dehcho Divisional Education Council and Yellowknife Catholic Schools educators.

NWT SCIENCE FOCUS

Connecting youth with their environment, through science.

Do you work with children or youth in the Northwest Territories? Then this website is for you!
It offers complete science and environmental education lesson plans; activities to incorporate into your teaching, on the land camps, or afterschool programs; and a selection of our favourite resources.

Public Outreach

Earth Week







This year saw the planning, coordination, and facilitation of 24 exciting Earth Week events in the NWT. In total, our Yellowknife events saw approximately 1,100 participants, with each event bringing approximately 25-40 people in attendance, and our largest event, the Coffee House, brought together over 400 people.

In Yellowknife, we brought back some beloved events, and offered up new ones as well, including a free movie night, a creative climate writing workshop, several art sessions, a medicine walk, a bike tune-up, and a feeding the fire ceremony and barbecue to conclude our celebrations. Outside of Yellowknife, we supported a worm composting session in Fort Smith and a youth poster-making contest in Hay River.

All of our events were made possible through our many collaborations with community organizations, as well as the YKDFN, the City of Yellowknife, and the GNWT. We were likewise fortunate to draw on a strong network of volunteers from the community, who helped facilitate events behind the scenes. Insights from Dene National Chief Gerald Antoine helped guide the week's emphasis on relationships to each other, the land, and ourselves.

It was a busy, fun, joyful week of celebrating our planet, and we couldn't be more thrilled. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.



Responsible Environmental Management NWT

REMNWT
Responsible Environmental Management

The goal of the Responsible Environmental Management NWT (REMNWT) website is to empower citizens to share their input and insights with government decision-makers as they create new rules that will shape and improve the environmental health of the Northwest Territories. Visit responsible-nwt.ca to learn more!

Slope Stability in Fort McPherson

We've been working with Rat River Development Corporation over the past few years to develop a plan to address permafrost slumping in the community. This year we created resources for the community, hosted public events, spoke with students and community members, and transplanted willows along the slope.





Local Food Production

School Garden Program

This was the 9th year of our school garden program, and a huge amount of the gardens' success was due to the amazing volunteer support we received over the summer. A huge thank you to the many individuals that volunteered their time to nurture the gardens over the summer.

Students learned to plant seeds indoors and outdoors, to prepare soil, to explore the key nutrients in soil, to care for their gardens, and to harvest the garden. Some groups also learned to build garden boxes, operate aquaponics and hydroponics systems, and food preservation. There was a great harvest from the gardens we built and supported.

We held more than 150 workshops with 24 different schools, community governments, nonprofits and charitable organizations across 17 NWT communities, engaging thousands of northern youth. We started and maintained gardens at 5 Yellowknife schools, and were able to travel to Ka'a'gee Tu (Kakisa), Tthets'éhk'edélî (Jean Marie River), Líídlįį Kúę (Fort Simpson), and Nahæâ Dehé Dene Band (Nahanni Butte) to work with schools and the community at large. We're looking forward to returning to these communities in the fall for harvest activities!













Cultivating Systems of Mutual Aid

We partnered with Hotiì ts'eeda, Dechinta, and Dene Nahjo for a workshop series about mutual aid: how organizations and individuals can support each other. We held a jam making workshop and chatted about climate action. If you didn't get a chance to jam with us, check out these recipes!

Healthy Living Through Healthy Eating

This fund was a natural extension of our local foods programming, and it was so great to be able to use it to bring healthy cooking workshops to Kakisa and Fort Simpson, as well as pickling workshops in Yellowknife schools. We were also pleased to bring cooking workshops and healthy snacks to gatherings hosted by the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre.





Raspberry Maple Jam

1. Place 8 clean 250 ml mason jars on a rack in boiling water; cover jars with water and heat to a simmer (180 deg F/82 deg C). Keep jars hot until ready to use. Preheating lids is not advised. Simply wash lids in hot, soapy water, dry, and set aside until needed.

Directions

2. In a large deep stainless steel saucepan, stir together prepared berries, 1/2 tsp butter/margarine to reduce foaming, maple syrup, & pectin

3. Over high heat, bring mixture to a full rolling boil. Add all of the sugar. Stirring constantly, return mixture to full rolling boil. Boil hard 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; skim off foam, if necessary.

4. Ladle hot jam into a hot jar to within 1/4 inch (0.5 cm) of top of jar. Wipe jar rim removing any food residue. Centre sealing disc on clean jar rim and screw band.

5. Place closed jars in pot, ensuring they are completely covered with water. Bring to a boil and process jars for 20 minutes. Wait 5 minutes, then remove jars, & cool for 24 hours.

Ingredients

- 5 cups crushed raspberries
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- 1 pkg pectin crystals
- 7 cups sugar

DECHINTA · DENE NAHJO · Hotiì ts'eeda · ECOLOGY NORTH

Also available on our website!



Applesauce

1. Place 8 clean 250 ml mason jars on a rack in boiling water; cover jars with water and heat to a simmer (180 deg F/82 deg C). Keep jars hot until ready to use. Preheating lids is not advised. Simply wash lids in hot, soapy water, dry.

Directions

2. In a large stainless steel saucepan, combine apples with just enough water to prevent sticking. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat and boil gently, stirring occasionally, for 5 to 20 minutes, until apples are tender. Remove from heat and let cool slightly, about 5 minutes.

3. Purée apples with immersion blender until smooth. Return apple purée to saucepan. Add sugar, if using, and lemon juice; bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring frequently. Maintain a gentle boil over low heat while filling jars.

4. Ladle hot applesauce into hot jars, leaving ½ inch (1 cm) headspace. Wipe rim. Centre sealing lid on jar. Screw band down until resistance is met, then increase to fingertip-tight.

5. Place closed jars in pot, ensuring they are completely covered with water. Bring to a boil and process both pint (500 ml) and quart (1L) jars for 20 minutes. Wait 5 minutes, then remove jars & cool for 24 hours

Ingredients

- 12 lbs. apples, peeled, cored & quartered
- 3 cups sugar (optional)
- 4 tbsp lemon juice

DECHINTA · DENE NAHJO · Hotiì ts'eeda · ECOLOGY NORTH

Water Stewardship





Water Stewardship Gathering

The 2024 Youth Water Stewardship Gathering: Healing Our Relations To Water was held February 2-4 and brought together youth aged 18-30 from across the territory. It was a wonderful weekend of reflection, conversation, sharing, and community. We thought about water access, water stewardship, care for and from water, and strengthening our relationships with land and water; and through it all, we celebrated the many ways that water connects us all together.

We are so grateful to Northern Youth Leadership and the North Slave Métis Alliance, who helped make this Gathering possible, and to the wonderful water leaders who both led and participated in our sessions.

We're also thrilled to share a short film put together over the weekend that highlights the experiences of participants and facilitators.

#loveNWTwater

We reached out to NWT schools and held a contest for students to draw their connections to water. We had nearly 200 amazing entries, and the winning design was printed on a limited run of water bottles. Sign the pledge to reduce plastic use and you could still get one of these beauties!



Youth Water Stewardship Group

Water Stewardship Group activities included a public water testing day and tour of the Yellowknife water treatment plant. New groups members learned how to identify various compounds in fresh water sources and filter them out to create potable water.



Water Trivia

We hosted a fun-filled evening of water-themed trivia at Bluebell Eatery, thanks for having us!

Water Grants

This year, we supported two youth in developing and facilitating community-based water stewardship programs and activities. One of the projects brought participants out to Long Lake where they evaluated the health of the water before swimming in it, and the other brought community members together to go out on the land and discuss the synergies among Judaism, the Dene Laws, and water stewardship.

Rivers to Oceans Day

On June 5 we hosted approximately 250 Grades 1 and 5 students from Mildred Hall, Weledeh, K'alemi Dene, École Įtł'ǫ̀, and Range Lake in Somba K'e Park for Rivers to Oceans Day. We had 12 stations where students learned about various aspects of water, including fish dissection, fish habitats, water pollution, and invertebrates and insects.



Waste Reduction

Waste Reduction Week Education & Outreach



October is Circular Economy Month in Canada, and this year we brought a series of educational posts introducing circular economic theories to our Facebook and Instagram audiences.

We visited 37 classrooms from Oct 16-27 and gave sessions on the Circular Economy, composting and other waste reduction themes. 8 of the schools were in Yellowknife, and we also visited in Líídlįį Kúę (Fort Simpson), Délı̨nę, Tulita, Tłegǫ̀htı̨ (Norman Wells) and Rádeyı̨lı̨kóé (Fort Good Hope).

In Yellowknife, we hosted 3 Waste Reduction Week events: a clothing mend and repair workshop, a film night and potluck where we screened *Salvage*, and a Halloween costume swap with an upcycled craft.











Folk on the Rocks

The Green Team was at Folk on the Rocks, running the rent-a-plate station and making sure waste got put in its place (plus compost and recycling). We recycled more than 20,000 cans, bottles and other recyclable containers.

Trash-formation

We were excited to bring the Trash-formation art show and contest back to Old Town Ramble and Ride during the August long weekend. There were 12 amazing entries this year, thanks for showcasing your creativity, Yellowknife! We're looking forward to next year already.













Species Appreciation

NWT Species at Risk: Collared Pika



iStock photo: RONSAN4D

This year, we're developing a new species at risk resource about the collared pika. The collared pika is a lagomorph (rabbit relative) that lives among the rocky talus in the Richardson and Mackenzie mountains of the NWT. A new educator's guide and sticker are coming soon!

Bird walks

We're very grateful to local expert Reid Hildebrandt for once again hosting the Christmas Bird Count on December 27, and a Spring Bird Walk May 11, guiding birders along Niven Lake Trail, and through the Willow Flats area in Old Town. 15 species of birds were spotted in December, and the information was added to the Audubon Society's national database.













Other Projects

Building Our Capacity for Reconciliation

This project enhanced Ecology North's ability to promote diversity and inclusion. Prior to the start of this project the organization had informal practices, reliant on key individuals, and goals of reconciliation that were valuable, yet loosely defined. After the project we have more tangible goals and recommendations for changes (from the Anti-Racism audit completed last fiscal year), and more codified practices and tools (land acknowledgements, partnerships data, and increased working relationships) for staff and board members.



learning from the land, on the land

One of the final activities undertaken in this project was two days of professional development for our team with BushKids NWT.

Covid-19 Recovery

With funding from the Community Services Recovery Fund we are undertaking a comprehensive review and update of our policies and procedures. This project has also allowed us to travel more broadly throughout the NWT to strengthen our relationship with partners outside Yellowknife (see photo of Hannah attending the NWTAC AGM in February 2024), and has provided the funding to prepare a staff and board retreat to work on our next strategic plan for 2024 onward!

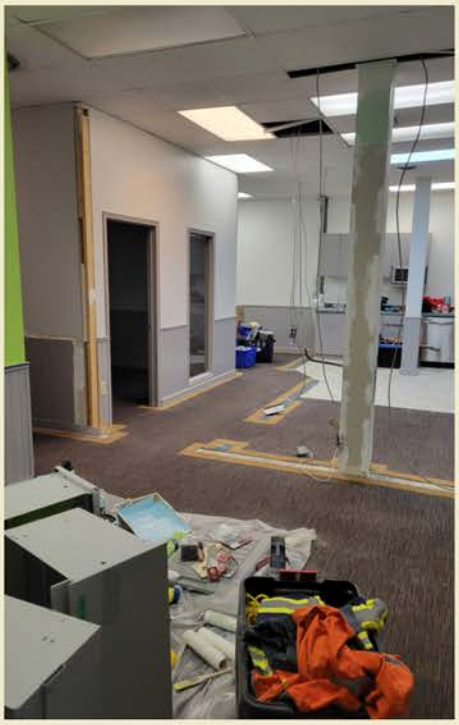


We Moved!





An office move is never a small undertaking, and when you've got an organization with more than 50 years of history it gets busy in a big way! While we felt we had settled nicely into the basement, one big goal in our 2020-2023 Strategic Plan was ensuring we were in a space that felt right for all our staff. So we've moved on up - literally - to the main floor of the Signature Building in Yellowknife. We've got larger collaborative workspaces, and windows that we can open and enjoy as much natural light as possible.



Preparations for the move began in June, and we spent the summer getting organized, packed up, and getting the new space ready for us. We couldn't have done it without the dedicated volunteers who showed up to remove walls, help paint, move bins and furniture, and all the touches that are helping to personalize the space. Our summer interns were instrumental in leading the charge. There's still some construction and re-organizing going on, but we're looking forward to hosting events in the near future!



Become a Member

Membership

Members are a key part of our organization! Any member can join a committee or put their name forward to be a board member. There are plenty of ways to volunteer your time.

Fill out the form on the last page of this document and drop it off with your membership fee to the Ecology North office, or sign up online!
https://ecologynorth.ca/get-involved/become-a-member/

Don't forget, Ecology North members are also welcome to come to the office and pick up some red wriggler worms to start their own composting bin.
We've got a handy video pinned on our Instagram to show you how it's done!

Communities in Motion

Speaking of committees, it's been a busy and exciting year for our volunteer committee previously known as TIC (Transportation Issues Committee). Communities in Motion (CIM) is a committee for folks interested in promoting active, sustainable transportation in Yellowknife.

The team brought their vision to the Spring Trade Show and a petition to the City of Yellowknife to prioritize creating safe, accessible streets for everyone was signed by 361 residents. Four critical mass bike rides were organized throughout the spring and summer, and CIM collaborated with GNWT ITI and Folk on the Rocks to establish a bike lane and bike buses along the highway for the festival weekend. They've been passionate advocates at the municipal and territorial level, thanks for all your hard work!

Donations

As a non-profit organization, donations are key to our success. If you're able, please consider a one-time, or monthly donation. Thank you, mahsi cho!
https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/ecology-north/

ECOLOGY NORTH

Membership Form

Date: _____/_____/20_____

Name: _____

Address: _____ **Postal Code:**_____

Phone: (_____) _____ - _____

E-mail: _____

By providing an e-mail you agree to recieve Ecology North news and event announcements.

Membership Purchase and Donation

Mark an X in the box that applies.

Individual:
- ◯ **Annual**: $10
- ◯ **Three Year**: $25
- ◯ **Lifetime** (never expires): $150

Family:
- ◯ **Annual**: $20
- ◯ **Three Year**: $50
- ◯ **Lifetime** (never expires): $300

◯ **I would like to volunteer:** _____

Anything specific? Organizing events, putting up posters, helping with Earth Week etc.

◯ **I would like to donate: $** _____

You can also donate online at www.ecologynorth.ca, just look for the "Canada Helps" button on the bottom right of the homepage, or in cash by dropping by our office!

Thank you! *Tax receipts available for $20 or more upon request, membership fees not applicable.*

OFFICE USE ONLY

☐ Cash ☐ Cheque

Deposit date: (D/M/Y) _____

Tax receipt issued:
☐ Yes ☐ No
Date: (D/M/Y) _____

Entered in member database: _____

E-mail entered in listserve: _____

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