

2021 Report of the Chair of First Things First Okanagan

The cloud of Covid did not dissipate in 2021 and First Things First Okanagan wrestled with an overriding feeling that all plans which included people gathering needed to be tentative and that we were to be prepared to defer too the stubborn pandemic. In early February the Energy Expo planned for late spring was cancelled for the second time in two years. This was disheartening to the extent that FTFO's Expos had been core events which served to bring many to the discussion about climate heating and introduced them to some of the tools and actions that mitigate that heating trend. Fortunately, Board members invested time and energy in our popular "Deep Dive" series and through the Zoom medium many great speakers and informative topics were shared with folks in the Okanagan and across the Province. This series became a focal point bringing issues and people together and broadened the Board's engagement with the public and with activists and professionals working to build sustainable communities. It was through this series that FTFO became recognized, in many quarters, as a climate leader.

The FTFO monthly newsletter was a constant which kept our 700 subscribers up to date on our activities. In 2021 climate groups and individual activists in British Columbia began to network with the intention of building a unified voice to seriously challenge the need for continuing dependence on carbon fuels. FTFO became a member of regional and provincial networks and through the newsletter worked to tie the local to the provincial.

FTFO's efforts continued at the municipal level with its engagement on the City of Penticton's "Sustainability Committee" and with the continued delivery of the British Columbia Sustainable Energy Association's (BCSEA) "Cool-It Program to middle elementary grades in Penticton, Summerland and Kelowna. FTFO lobbied our local leaders for stronger climate action, supported municipal councils in their energy and transportation efforts and met with municipal staff to better understand the path to greater climate action.

FTFO has a "working board", and that means FTFO has no hired administration, and all activities are organized and implemented by Board members and dedicated volunteers. Apart from discussing and planning at the Board table,

individual Board members stood in front of our MLA's office calling for greater forest protection, worked with students to raise the profile of their climate concerns, participated in marches and rallies, and spent many hours polishing our website and publications to keep climate and sustainability front and centre in our community. As Chair of the Board, I feel very grateful to have had the opportunity to work with a wise, caring and energetic team. My sincere thanks to each of them.

Jim Beattie, Chair

Communications Committee Report for 2021

Submitted by Margaret Holm and Lori Goldman

Communications outreach includes our monthly newsletters, the First Things First web site, as well as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. The newsletter, edited by Margaret Holm, goes out to over 700 people. Lori Goldman is active posting on Facebook and Twitter, sharing local activities and reposting climate articles from all over the world. Hundreds more people are reached through these social media channels.

Jim Beattie and Margaret Holm developed, “Our Climate Future” a Powerpoint presentation that was given to two Penticton Rotary Clubs in 2021. The board of directors also attended Naramata and Summerland markets with a climate display.

Deep Dive Zoom meetings, hosted by Sue Kirschmann, Lori Goldman, and Margaret Holm continue to be a popular monthly forum for discussion with 20 to 60 people joining us each month. Topics in 2021 included heat pumps, home energy audits, permaculture, community action, and Penticton’s new Community Climate Plan.

Communication includes letters to the editor, letters to local councils, and to provincial and federal governments. We comment on improving climate policy and remind elected officials of the urgency of the climate cause.

In 2022 FTFO learned about new fossil fuel infrastructure proposed from Penticton along Naramata Bench to Chute Lake. For our “Say No to More Gas” campaign against expansion of a Fortis pipeline in the Okanagan, we have created additional campaign web pages to gear up for a higher level of communication and engagement and reached out to our subscribers and the public. Lori is working with other climate organizations in BC such as Dogwood, and West Coast Climate Action Network, who have spread the message about our campaign to their members.

We now have 243 individuals who have signed up to support our campaign and write to BC Utilities Commission about the pipeline expansion.

2021 REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE TO THE AGM, September 14, 2021

The Education Committee members were Kathleen Davies, Lori Goldman, Ruth Campbell and Barry Loewen.

The work of the committee continues to be one of adaptation. We have been mainly concerned with getting the BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSAE) “Cool It!” programs in schools. It is a program that builds climate leadership by encouraging students and their families to find ways to lessen their GHG footprint. Ella Braden continued as the classroom workshop presenter in 2021.

In 2021, delivery of the program continued to be affected by Covid; it continued to be more difficult to recruit classrooms as educators were stressed out and not keen to add something new to an already altered teaching situation. FTFO, BCSEA, and Ella worked closely together to make it happen. FTFO arranged the funding, identified the schools and classes to whom the program would be delivered, and communicated with Ella. BCSEA and Ella worked closely together to deliver the program in the identified schools. BCSEA provided the final report for each delivery which was forwarded to all sponsors.

As reported in 2020, BCSEA modified the Cool It! program to one that could be delivered online through virtual conferencing technology. During the 2021-22 school year, teachers were given the option of participating with their class via a virtual or in-person workshop.

In 2021, with generous ongoing annual funding from the District of Summerland, workshops were delivered to 146 grade 3 to 5 students at Giant’s Head Elementary School in Summerland during the Fall semester. The 4-week challenge encouraged students to perform actions at home, resulting in an estimated total reduction of 10.7 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions (tCO₂e).

Also in 2021, City of Penticton funding and sponsorship by the Wiltse Parent Advisory Committee enabled BCSEA to deliver Cool It! workshops to two Grade 5 classes at Wiltse Elementary School. The actions performed by the students at home resulted in an estimated total reduction of 8.0 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions (tCO₂e). The City of Penticton also approved our application for a grant for Cool It! delivery in Penticton for 2022.

The program is usually delivered in units of four classrooms. The cost for delivery in person is \$500 per classroom plus \$500 for program presentation and facilitator costs, and an additional \$250 per unit for online.

The Education Committee plans to organize further deliveries of Cool It! in both Summerland and Penticton in 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Davies

Political Action Committee Report for 2021

Members of the Political Action Committee: Khati Hendry (chair), Margaret Holm, Jim Beattie, Lori Goldman, and Sue Kirschmann.

2021 was a busy year for the committee. Below is a list of what we undertook.

Strikes and marches:

- Sep 8 - 350.org Day of Action, "Penticton's Still on FIRE" march down Main St to Gyro Park. This coincided with Penticton releasing its Community Energy and Emissions Plan. The City and FTFO both had booths set up at Gyro park.
- July, Aug - Weekly protest outside our MLA's office against old growth logging.
- Sept 24 – 'Uproot the System' Global Climate Strike. This march down Main St, followed by speeches at Gyro park, involved numerous students as well as adults.

Lobbying and meetings:

- Feb - Members of FTFO's youth committee met with MP Richard Cannings.
- March – Committee members met with RDOS's new Senior Energy Specialist (a new position, funded by Fortis).
- Nov – Presented to Penticton City Council in support of the draft Community Climate Action Plan and to encourage a Climate Emergency declaration.
- Dec - Lobby meeting with MP Dan Albas, joint with Citizens Climate Lobby-Okanagan (CCL-OK).
- Several MLA lobby meetings, carried out jointly by FTFO and BC Climate Alliance (BCCA).

Letters:

- Feb - Letter complimenting the government for tabling Bill C-12 (The Canadian Emissions Net Zero Accountability Act) and suggesting amendments that would strengthen it.
- Feb - Letter in support of Summerland's solar project.
- Apr – Submission to RDOS recommending changes to their solar energy systems bylaw.
- May - Letter to RDOS with concerns about their proposal to downgrade the ESDP (Environmentally Sensitive Development Permit) requirements.
- June - Letter to support the City of Penticton's Emotive grant application.
- Aug – Letter to provincial government with recommendations on how to improve their 'BC Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy'
- Sept – Submission to the BC Budget 2022 Select Standing Committee on Finance with recommendations on funding allocations for building retrofits, retrofit job training programs, and improved climate action communications.

Input on surveys, budgets, and plans:

- Feb - Federal pre-budget consultation (on-line questionnaire)
- Apr – Climate Emergency Declaration presentation to the City's Sustainability Committee. This presentation was originally made in 2020 but nothing happened as Covid restrictions began shortly after.
- Apr - Penticton's Northern Gateway Plan (on-line survey)

- May - RDOS survey re BC Step Code for new buildings (on-line)
- June 16 byelection – FTFO sent questions to each of the 10 candidates asking about their plans for climate action. Our press release of the candidate’s responses was posted on Castanet.
- July – Provided individual input on BC Hydro’s draft 20-year Integrated Resource Plan (online survey)
- Sep - Prepared a question for the Sep 7th all candidates Climate Forum for the federal election.
- Sep 3 - Presentation to the Select Standing Committee on Finance re BC Budget 2022 (via Zoom).
- Dec – Submitted recommendations to BC’s Natural Gas Deep Royalty Review on how to redesign the gas royalty system so it no longer props up the unsustainable and polluting fracked gas industry.

Due to the ongoing Covid pandemic, lobby meetings and committee meetings were all held online via Zoom. Covid protocols were followed for all marches, strikes and in-person presentations.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Kirschmann