

2023 AGM Co-chairs Report

This past year has seen an increase in face-to-face activities as the pandemic restrictions have abated, and an increased sense of urgency as climate conditions remain critical. First Things First Okanagan added “Climate Action” to our branding to reflect this reality.



Thanks to the excellent years of leadership from Jim Beattie (who stepped down from chair to be replaced by co-chairs Margaret Holm and Khati Hendry this past year), and thanks to enthusiastic new members joining a strong and active Board team, it has been a busy year. The committee reports provide details, but among the highlights:

In-person outreach activities: We were able to sponsor an in-person “Clean Energy Expo” at the Lakeside Resort, including an impressively wide choice of different electric vehicles and electric power tools from local vendors. Volunteers stepped up to help organize and staff the event—thanks to all who did.

First Things First Board members staffed a booth at the Penticton Farmer’s Market and Naramata Market with the help of a summer intern and volunteers, with the goal of improving awareness and outreach. We also participated in the Summerland Earth Day event again.

Virtual outreach: Monthly “Deep Dive” sessions on Zoom have continued, and thanks to the communications committee, we now have improved curated video clips on our web site.

We continue to support the “Cool It” program and work with two educators delivering climate programs to over 250 students in Summerland and Penticton in 2022. Both municipalities give funding support to Cool It!

Local fossil fuel infrastructure issues: First Things First was recognized as an intervenor in the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) review of Fortis’ proposal to add an extra gas pipeline from Penticton through Naramata to service increase demand from new buildings. This clearly contravenes the warnings against new fossil fuel infrastructure from international agencies and the climate action plans of Canada and local governments. Nearly 100 people joined us to write to BCUC opposing this pipeline—thanks if you were one of them. The proposal was delayed, but has not disappeared, so please stay tuned to speak up again.

Local Government policies: While good climate action plans have been passed by local governments, the implementation remains critical. First Things First continues to participate in a variety of climate action networks, though we remain primarily locally focused. We sponsored a well-attended debate on climate issues for Penticton City Council candidates that highlighted the popular support for environmentally friendly

policies. As new development plans unfold, it remains necessary that we continue to urge consideration of the climate impact at every step.

Growing: We are pleased to note that we have added about 200 more people to our contact list through our work this past year. We welcome each one. Our valley and our earth need you. Thanks to the dedicated Board and all First Things First volunteers, members, and supporters. Become informed, spread the word, speak up, and join together to take climate action.

Margaret Holm and Khati Hendry, Co-Chairs

Communication Committee Report for 2022

Members of the Communication Committee: Lori Goldman, Margaret Holmes, Sue Kirschmann, Henry Sielmann

The Communication Committee is focused on Goal 1 of our Mission Statement which is to “Inform Okanagan communities about the consequences of climate change and inspire them to take action.” We work towards this Goal by

- monitoring various news channels, media, and announcements made by industry, governments and like-minded organizations;
- publishing articles of interest on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages and website;
- organizing online “Deep Dive” sessions where members of the community share their expertise with attendees;
- recording these sessions and publishing short videos on the FTFO You Tube channel.

We now have over one thousand people that we contact monthly with our newsletter and political action campaigns. In 2022 we hosted nine Deep Dive webinars with between 15 and 70 participants. Topics included:

- “Fracking the Peace” movie and discussion
- FortisBC’s Okanagan Capacity Expansion gas pipeline
- impact Investing
- update on the City of Penticton & RDOS climate initiatives
- transportation solutions in the Okanagan Valley
- emission reduction options for residences and home energy audits
- domestic solar energy and heat pump installations



Political Action Committee Report for 2022

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



In 2022 a major focus for our committee was working to prevent new fossil fuel infrastructure. In February, First Things First Okanagan applied successfully to the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) to become an intervener on a local gas pipeline project - FortisBC's proposed Okanagan Capacity Upgrade (OCU) which would run above the Naramata bench. We prepared a submission but have not yet delivered it as the project was placed on hold in March and remained so until recently. Meanwhile, with the help of Dogwood BC, we launched a campaign to inform locals about the OCU and encourage them to submit comments on it to the BCUC. To date about 95 people have written comments opposing the OCU project.

In August FTFO also became an intervener on another BCUC proceeding - FortisBC's 20 year gas resources plan. We jointly submitted questions with another climate group (BC Climate Alliance) and since then have been sharing information and ideas with other climate groups throughout the province on how to counteract FortisBC's push to continue expanding usage of gas in buildings.

Throughout 2022 we kept an eye on local government issues and provided input where possible via surveys, at public meetings and through letters. Some of the issues we engaged in were:

- Development proposals including Wiltse, Spiller Road (Canadian Horizons), and the Naramata Vista project;
- RDOS - Regional Growth Strategy, OCU project, ESDPAs (Environmentally Sensitive Development Permit Areas), and "renewable natural gas" ("RNG");
- City of Penticton bylaw amendments and plans including streamside protection, EV charging rates, relaxation of building codes for passive homes, EV-ready parking requirements, bike parking requirements, Northern Gateway plans.

We also hosted an All-Candidates Forum on the Environment in the fall prior to the municipal elections, in which all but one of Penticton's mayoral and council candidates participated. Approximately 100 members of the public attended.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Kirschmann

Education Committee Report for 2022

Members of the Education Committee: Lori Goldman, Kathleen Davies, and Corinne Durston



The Education Committee oversees the Cool It! Leadership Program through the BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSEA). We have enjoyed a good partnership with BCSEA and received grants from the City of Penticton and the District of Summerland as well as **got / delete** funding from **Wiltse and Uplands** PACS in 2021/2022.

The program is presented by an educator to two classes in a school. The students then take a climate challenge home to attempt to reduce their carbon and ecological footprint and to see which class is able to do the boldest actions.

Ella Braden ran 4 class deliveries in Penticton to Wiltse Elementary in 2021 and Uplands Elementary in 2022 for that school year. The PACS provided funds to augment the cost of delivery that we pay to BCSEA. Even though COVID was still hampering some activities, the participation was great. She delivered workshops to **4 classes**, reaching **110 students** who collectively completed over **400 actions** focused on climate change and sustainability. BCSEA crunched the data and expects the City of Penticton student actions to result in the estimated annual savings of a total of **13.4 tonnes** of carbon dioxide emissions (CO₂e) if they commit to maintain their actions completed during the program for one year.

Ella indicated that the information sent to the parents to inform them of the program was too cumbersome, so we hope to reduce it to make it more user friendly for homes.

Ella Braden, our previous educator, has had to pull out of most activities due to a busy schedule of farming, family, and other personal concerns.

The Committee reached out to Bobby Bovenzi, with help from Barry Loewen, former Committee member and retired teacher. Bobby has **an** MEd, is familiar with the schools and classes having done music programs in the system for a while. He ran the Cool It! Program in Summerland at Giant's Head Elementary in the fall of 2022. He worked with **six classes**, reaching **145 students** who collectively completed over **600 actions** focused on climate change and sustainability. This could result in **15.5 tonnes** of carbon dioxide emissions (CO₂e) if the students and families commit to maintain their actions completed during the program for one year.

FTFO Climate Action is committed to running the programs in 2023 and will continue to work with Penticton and Summerland and BCSEA to educate youth on what they can do to improve their air, water, land, and homes.

Events Report for 2022

Members of the Events Committee: Lori Goldman, Jim Beattie

The Events Committee is focused on Goal 3: Inspire individuals and communities to reduce their GHG footprint by inviting the community to participate in organized events.

We work

towards this Goal by

- planning events with local organizations;
- joining public actions with other groups;
- and sharing climate solutions information with our community.

In 2022 we organized or participated in these events:

- Earth Day April 2022 with Naramata and the District of Summerland: organized an EV (Electric Vehicle) parade and show by Memorial Park in Summerland, presented a slide show on climate, and spoke to attendees about climate solutions and FTFO activities. Had an EV show and display table in Naramata.
- Farmer's Markets in Naramata and Penticton through the summer educated the public on personal actions they can take on emission reductions and informing them about the ForEsBC proposed pipeline from Penticton to Chute Lake to increase fossil fuel capacity and fracking in northeast BC.
- Clean Energy Expo October 1 at the Lakeside Resort had 30 retail and wholesale building and appliance dealers, non-profits, and others with emission reduction solutions. Okanagan College promoted its Sustainable Building Technology Program, only one of two in Canada. EV owners displayed their vehicles, and over 350 visitors attended presentations by local and visiting experts.

