



FORESTEDWEST

FOREST EDUCATION CONFERENCE CONVERSATION

FINAL REPORT

ForestEDWest
is presented by

Inside
education

INTRODUCTION

Inside Education is extremely pleased to have hosted the return of Western Canada's premiere forest education conference with ForestEDWest 2022.

Held in Canmore, Alberta from March 17-20, 2022, this program was an opportunity for teachers, educators, non-governmental organizations, post-secondary institutions, industry, and government to convene and share best practices, resources, and ultimately set the direction for forest education in western Canada.

"I felt invigorated and loved connecting with other teachers and industry leaders. I've learned a lot and look forward to taking so much back to my students. Plus the opportunity to be on an "adult field trip" since Covid started is amazing, freeing and connective!!!"

— **Wanda Landshoff**
Edmonton Islamic Academy



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ForestEDWest was a successful partnership between stakeholders committed to ensuring a vibrant future for forest education. Thank you to the advisory committee for their leadership in setting the direction for the conference, determining the themes and topics, and promoting participation among their networks.

- **Kathryn Wagner** - *Inside Education | Co-Chair*
- **Natalie Graveline** - *Inside Education | Co-Chair*
- **Alex Drummond** - *NorQuest College*
- **Emma Kniel** - *Alberta Forest Products Association*
- **Cori Klassen** - *Lesser Slave Forest Education Society*
- **Jessica Kaknevičius** - *Sustainable Forestry Initiative*
- **Jim Costley** - *BC Council of Forest Industries*
- **Sean Green** - *Calgary Board of Education*
- **Steve McIsaac** - *Inside Education*
- **Ann Normand** - *Millar Western Forest Products*
- **Greg Branton** - *CAREERS: The Next Generation*
- **Todd Hebert** - *Columbia Outdoor School*

PARTICIPANTS & SPEAKERS

ForestEDWest was designed as a forum for conversation and collaboration between stakeholders with ties to forestry and forest education. With that goal in mind, the majority of individuals who attended to speak at this conference also actively participated as delegates.

Altogether, 120 delegates gathered in Canmore from a wide range of forestry and forest education interests, including K-12 teachers, post-secondary educators and students, forestry practitioners, government representatives and forest educators from several education outreach organizations.

ForestEDWest was an opportunity to discuss key topics in forest education, share ideas, best practices and resources and develop an understanding about forests, forestry and forest education. Delegates left inspired to build and enhance their programs, lessons and communication channels with current and locally-relevant content.

A total of 47 experts helped guide the dynamic conversations during plenary sessions, panel discussions, roundtable discussions, breakout sessions, workshops and site tours. The program also included two keynote speakers, Bruce Kirkby and Simon Jackson, who related engaging and inspiring insights to the topics being addressed throughout the ForestEDWest Conference and Conversation.



Thank you to the ForestEDWest speakers and workshop/tour hosts:

PLENARY SPEAKERS

- **Beverly Yee** - Alberta Environment and Parks
- **(Hon.) Dr. Garry Merkel** - UBC Faculty of Forestry's First Nations Council of Advisors
- **Mark Pearson** - Canadian Institute of Forestry
- **Jessica Kaknevičius** - Sustainable Forestry Initiative
- **Dr. Nadir Erbilgin** - University of Alberta
- **Dr. Brett Purdy** - Alberta Innovates

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON FORESTS PANEL

- **Sandeep Singh**
- **Maya Carr**
- **Kayla Carrillo**
- **Ava Vanderbeek**

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Bruce Kirkby
Canadian adventurer,
photographer, and writer.



Simon Jackson
Nature Labs/
Ghost Bear Institute



FIELD TOUR AND WORKSHOP HOSTS

- **Sue Arlidge** - Biogeoscience Institute at University of Calgary
- **Annie MacNeil & Thomas Hooper-Wolff** - Parks Canada
- **Shannon Bennett** - Connect Charter School Field Experience Centre
- **Jordan Ede** - Mahikan Trails
- **Danika Strecko** - Project Learning Tree Canada
- **Colin King** - Inside Education
- **Anastasia Drummond & Kirk Hawthorne** - Alberta Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development



SESSION HOSTS

- **Bill Belsey** - Rocky View School Division
- **Catherine Brown** - Ducks Unlimited Canada
- **Rob Buchanan** - Academy of Inquiry and Adventure - Okanagan
- **Jim Costley** - British Columbia Council of Forest Industries
- **Alex Drummond** - NorQuest College
- **Sithara Fernando** - NorQuest College
- **Michael Flynn** - FireSmart Alberta
- **Michelle Holland** - Canadian Wildlife Federation
- **Jen Janzen** - Alberta/Canada Tomorrow
- **Cori Klassen** - Lesser Slave Forest Education Society
- **Emma Kniel** - WorkWild
- **Warren Lake** - Calgary Board of Education
- **Dr. Simon Landhausser** - University of Alberta
- **Janis Lawrence-Harper** - CAREERS: The Next Generation
- **Chelsea Martin** - Ducks Unlimited Canada
- **Steve McIsaac** - Inside Education
- **Brock Mulligan** - Alberta Forest Products Association
- **Trevor Nichols** - Junior Forest Rangers
- **Dr. Charles Nock** - University of Alberta
- **Dan Pigat** - FluidPlanet
- **Gary Redmond** - West Central Airshed Society
- **Adam Robb** - HOWL
- **Bernadette Slager** - Saskatchewan Forestry Association
- **Michael Wagner** - Alberta Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development
- **Caroline Whitehouse** - Alberta Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development
- **Lee Woodham** - Alberta Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Development

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

ForestEDWest was an opportunity to have critical conversations that will ensure the future of Western Canada's forests and forest sector through education.

WHY A "CONVERSATION"?

Readers of this report will notice the alteration from "Conference" to "Conversation". While ForestEDWest had 'typical' conference elements, it was designed to engage western Canada's forest education leaders in an ongoing dialogue. Designing the program this way ensured that knowledge sharing, network-building and direction setting could take place throughout our time in Canmore. Coming out of two years of pandemic-required isolation, we believe this was the most meaningful use of our time - not just to learn from, but to learn with one another.



Educators gained insight into current forestry practices and learned how to introduce this information into their classrooms. Meanwhile, those who work in the forestry and forest education space discovered the depth and breadth of western Canada's forest education programming and identified supports needed to enhance their programs. Connecting these stakeholders is critical to the future of forest education as participants take their experience into classrooms and communities.



TOPICS & THEMES

The multi-sectoral ForestEDWest Advisory Committee took great care to make sure that the topics and themes of the program were current, relevant, and comprehensive. The speakers and presenters were selected to address this wide range of topics, from the current state of the forest industry in Canada, to more specific topics like facilitating nature inquiry and the impacts of forest fires.

KEY FORESTEDWEST CONVERSATIONS

- Forest science, including wildfire, watersheds, forest pests, and climate change
- K-12 through to post-secondary forest education pathways
- Diversity and inclusion in forestry and forest careers
- Indigenous perspectives on forest management
- Best practices for forest education and bringing students outside
- Public engagement - resources, tools and best practices
- Innovation, technology and research for the future of forests & forestry

"I made some amazing connections and loved the opportunity to share the Forest Education work that the BC Council of Forest Industries is doing in British Columbia."

— **Jim Costley**

Education Manager, BC Council of Forest Industries

JAMES M. MARTIN LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN FOREST EDUCATION AWARD

At the 2006 ForestEDWest Conference, Inside Education, along with its ForestEDWest Network partners, created an award reflecting careers dedicated to fostering and furthering education about Canada's forests. The inaugural award, and the award's namesake going forward, was distinguished educator, principal and founder of Inside Education, Jim Martin. The third ForestEDWest Conference saw longtime British Columbia forestry educator Debbie Sluggett presented with the award.

ForestEDWest 2022 saw the revival of the James M. Martin Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was presented to ForestEDWest co-founder, current NorQuest College instructor and longtime forestry and forest education leader, Alex Drummond. Together we acknowledge Alex's career and contributions bringing experiential forest education learning to a generation of Alberta foresters and environmental leaders.



Alex's Award video played at the ForestEDWest Celebration dinner can be found here:

<https://youtu.be/eljYa6ceAn8>

PARTNERS

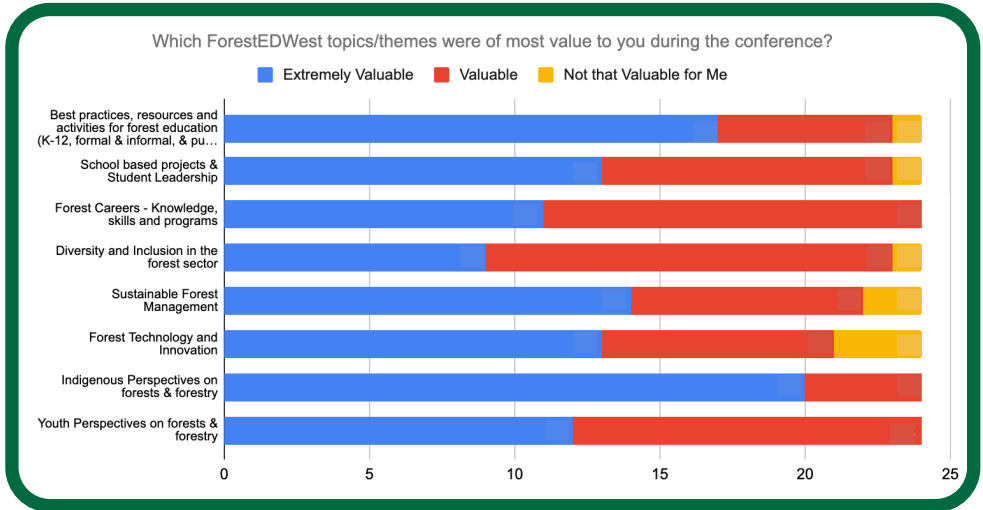
As the coordinators of ForestEDWest, Inside Education secured partnership support that enabled teachers from Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan attending the 2022 ForestEDWest conference to attend at no cost. Additional support was directed towards the participation of not-for-profit forest education organizations across Alberta and western Canada. Inside Education extends its appreciation to the following organizations for their laudable, ongoing support of forest education in Alberta and beyond.



OUTCOMES

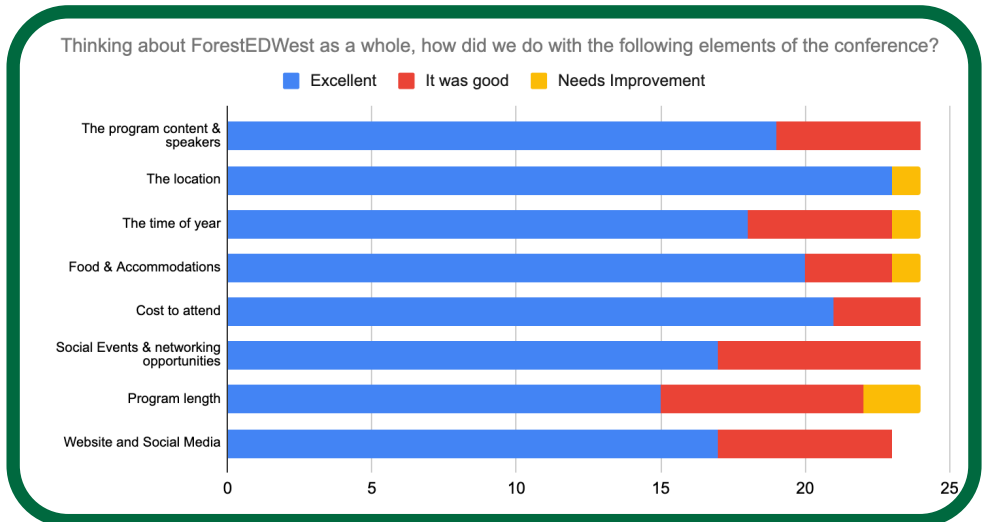
ForestEDWest was successful in advancing forest education and providing a forum for discussion and collaboration. Inside Education has been made aware of several post-event outcomes including hiring new staff, program updates and new classroom lessons on forestry. Following the conference we surveyed the delegates who overwhelmingly reported their appreciation for ForestEDWest as a personal and professional development opportunity that offered in-person networking with a diversity of stakeholders.

Data collected from a post-conference survey indicates that the program’s topics and themes were valuable and relevant, with Indigenous Perspectives, Best Practices and Sustainable Forest Management at the top of the list (chart 1). Inside Education prides itself on hosting professional learning opportunities that happen to also be fun, and overall delegates rated the conference elements as excellent (chart 2).



“As a new teacher, I was able to connect with like-minded people and get many new ideas. I learned that the sky is the limit on what I can do with my students and I learned a lot about forestry that I had no clue about before.”

— Jillian Senek
Foothills Academy Society



SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Delegates to ForestEDWest were nearly unanimous in their feedback that ForestEDWest could and should become a regular opportunity for forest educators, industry, government, NGOs, academia, Indigenous peoples and teachers to gather to share leading practices, insights and directions for education about our forest resources. This feedback is on par with what Inside Education, as conference organizers and managers of the ForestEDWest Network, learned at the three previous conferences in 2004, 2006 and 2008.

Participants in the 2022 ForestEDWest Conference/Conversation noted that the timing of the event was excellent, as we return to normalcy in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a chance for many delegates to return to in-person connections for the first two years, and it was clear that although virtual options exist there is no substitute for the meaningful conversations that come from connecting with one another in-person.

Inside Education plans on regular check-ins with our Advisory Committee, program partners and educators to assess appropriate timing for another ForestEDWest gathering. We further commit to working with participants, partners and others who wish to spearhead similar initiatives in the interim. We believe that the delegation to this year's ForestEDWest reflects the leadership in K-12, post secondary and public education about Canada's forests. We look forward to the opportunity to grow and diversify the means through which we, collectively set a direction for forest education, and continue the conversations that began at **ForestEDWest 2022**.

The conference chairs and advisory committee again extend our sincere appreciation to all who attended, shared expertise and supported ForestEDWest 2022.

Contact

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