



## Not Only in My Backyard: Food gardening and environmental public health.

Anna Chow, NCCEH

Many people participated in food gardening [worldwide](#) during the pandemic lockdown and Canada was no exception. British Columbia, along with the Prairies, has one of the highest proportions of food gardeners than elsewhere in the country according to respondents of a [survey](#) by Dalhousie University's Agri-Food Analytics Lab administered in the fall of 2020. More than half (54.7%) of the respondents from BC indicated that they grow food at home. Amongst all survey respondents, a large number of millennials, those who live in condos, and with higher education have participated in home food gardening in the past year which may indicate that this population may not necessarily be food insecure, but gardens for personal health and recreation. The isolation of the pandemic lockdown, with restaurant and entertainment venues closed, was a factor in people taking up food gardening. In addition to home food gardening, community gardens are also popular with long [waiting lists](#) shown across the province.

As the food growing season is upon us, the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health (NCCEH) recently produced a [blog](#) about urban agriculture to highlight its benefits, particularly during the pandemic, and to discuss potential issues such as soil and rainwater contaminants. The latter was spurred by a consultation with colleagues at Alberta Health Services about questions they were receiving about the safety of water collected from rain barrels. This BC newsletter article highlights some benefits and challenges of urban agriculture in the local context of community participation.

One of the most challenging aspects of urban agriculture is accessing land suitable for growing food. In BC, an informal system of [yard-sharing](#) exists, where land owners allow gardeners to grow food on their land with an agreement to share harvests. Some municipalities such as Campbell River may provide an [inventory of land](#) available online. In addition to the urban realm, in rural areas, the [BC Land Matching Program](#), delivered by [Young Agrarians](#), matches new farmers with landowners interested in having their land farmed. The program has had [success](#) in matching over 100 farmers with land since 2016.

In comparison, in Ontario there exist more established systems for yard or land sharing. The Toronto Urban Growers (TUG) facilitates a [Garden Exchange](#) page where available land and gardeners looking for land are listed. Interested parties then request contact information and connect on their own. TUG doesn't screen people but provides [tools](#) such as questionnaires for landowners and growers to vet each other. A template is also provided so that parties can draft a yard sharing agreement. In addition, with more land available in urban areas around Metro Toronto than in Vancouver, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority [leases](#) over 279 hectares of agricultural land to farmers.

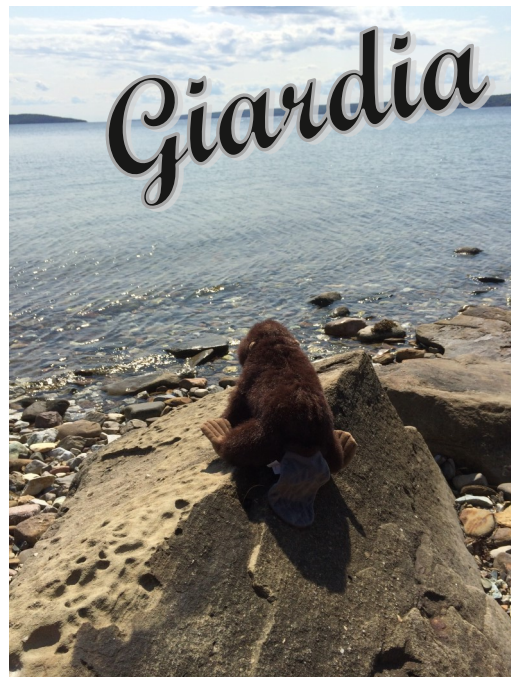
### HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE. . .

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Hello Environmental Public Health Professionals. The chaotic nature of life has gotten in the way of providing you with a meaningful insight into another one of our environmental public health colleagues. As we continue to forge forward, please consider joining the CIPHI BC Branch Executive so we can highlight you in our next Edition. The Branch has a number of vacancies and as our Education, Website and Social Media, and Promotion and Engagement committees begin to revitalize Branch activities, the team could certainly use your help. Please see the ad on Page 11 for further information.

Make sure to check out the Fall Edition of the BC Page for the Branch President's next BC Branch Update.



## This could be you...

You — BC Branch Executive Member

**Q1: What school did you go to for the ENVH program? What year did you graduate?**

A1: Where you went to school, YEAR.

**Q2: Where have you worked and what roles have you been in throughout your career?**

A2: The lovely location your office is at with one of our many Health Authorities (or maybe a fun partner organization like BCCDC or NCCEH).

**Q3: What is one of the most memorable moments or situations in your career so far?**

A3: When you joined the BC Branch Executive.

**Q4: As an EHO/PHI, one of your primary roles is to look for problems or issues; how have you stayed positive?**

A4: By networking with your colleagues across the province through the Branch Exec!

**And on and on and on.....**



## Not Only in My Backyard: Food gardening and environmental public health continued. . .

When land is available for urban agriculture, its benefits, such as food security and social connectivity can be observed. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, many municipalities, including Vancouver, declared community gardens and urban farms to be [essential services](#) and many of these venues donated food to support local communities. For example, at the Government House in Victoria, the “[Victory Over COVID](#)” garden, in the spirit of victory gardens in past world wars, was set up along with donated [aeroponics pyramids](#), to produce vegetables for food banks and non-profit organizations. A [Prince Rupert resident](#), after seeing that grocery shelves were bare early in the pandemic, placed vegetable planter boxes in vacant parking spaces and donated the harvest to individuals and a food bank.

Food security is also being addressed beyond the pandemic. As [16.4%](#) of Northern Region households are food insecure, [a food demonstration and teaching farm](#) on a vacant downtown lot in Prince Rupert is being planned. A [high rate](#) of food insecurity exists in this city, especially amongst the [Nisga’a citizens](#) living in Prince Rupert. This farm is part of a larger initiative to increase food security in the region, teach agricultural techniques to new gardeners and provide a venue for social connection. This effort aims to help mitigate the long held belief that land in BC’s Northern Region is not flat enough for farming.

Education about growing food is also gaining popularity in schools. Food gardens such as [Fresh Roots Urban Farm](#) in Vancouver or the [Mason Street Farm](#), an urban farm located on school grounds in Victoria, can teach [children](#) about how food is grown, especially if they are from urban areas and lack exposure to farms. [Sole Food Street Farms](#) in Vancouver is an urban farming project located on vacant and contaminated urban land in the city that trains and employs low income residents of the Downtown Eastside. On a larger scale, teaching and research centres, such as the [UBC Farm](#), experiment with innovative farming strategies towards a goal of sustainable food systems locally and globally.



For the general public who are interested in food growing, [City Farmer](#) in Vancouver offers a compost demonstration garden and hotline, and numerous resources on its website.

While minding the benefits of urban agriculture, it is also important to note some of its challenges. Urban planning and policies that arise can encourage urban agriculture or urban farming, but these can sometimes become an obstacle for farmers. In 2016, the City of Vancouver implemented an urban agriculture [by-law](#) to officially recognize urban farming as a legal activity. Regulatory requirements of the by-law that create costly permits and upgrades to meet building codes and obtain a license, has been driving [multiple urban farms](#) out of the Vancouver area. The

by-law was to be evaluated after a two-year pilot project but has stalled due to a municipal election and the pandemic.

[Past](#) and [recent](#) discussions facilitated by the Vancouver Urban Farming Society with stakeholders led to suggestions for reducing barriers. Some of these recommendations include eliminating or providing an alternative to the permit requirement, creating bylaws that are specific to farm infrastructure, and easing the process for business license applications for urban farms. The city aims to continue talks and review urban farming by-laws with the Vancouver Urban Farming Society later in 2021.

It is useful for environmental public health professionals to recognize that some local by-laws may present obstacles to stakeholders. If health professionals have a role in reviewing municipal plans addressing urban agriculture, an educational vs a regulatory lens can be implemented to advise the planning process and urban farmers directly about soil, water, and food safety. Some examples could include helping to identify potential environmental health concerns in [greenhouses](#), [hydroponic gardens](#), and public-facing [food stands](#).

**. . . Continued on Page 4**

## Not Only in My Backyard: Food gardening and environmental public health continued. . .

Accessibility could be another barrier. [Ethnic communities](#), seniors, and people with disabilities may not have easy access to participating in community gardens in Vancouver. Through dialogues with community leaders and garden coordinators in Vancouver, a [report](#) on inclusive community gardens acknowledged that participants in these gardens do not reflect the diversity in their surrounding communities. Key issues found included a lack of intent to address the needs of minority groups and of people with disabilities, and available programming (e.g. workshops, activities, and education) suited to their needs and interests. Digital and English-only forms of communication limited the reach to non-English speaking groups and populations who don't use technology.

In going forward, suggestions were made for community garden managers to foster more in-person communication such as welcome gardeners individually, early intent of inclusion when planning gardens, and implement programming appropriate to various groups. An example of success in the [Urban Farming Poh-Pohs](#) at Vancouver's Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood house show the social and cultural connectivity that appropriate programming can bring. Designing communication materials in multiple languages, physically accessible features (e.g. raised beds, wide and smooth pathways) for seniors and people with disabilities, and garden elements that create a more welcoming atmosphere (e.g. seating, tables, shade, trees, wildflowers, art) were voiced by stakeholders to make community gardens in Vancouver more inclusive.

Public health professionals can help educate urban farmers and community garden organizations about best practices for soil safety and rain barrel use. They can also recognize when inclusion is needed, to balance cultural sensitivity with education such as when talking to non-English speaking groups, or addressing populations with specific cultural food production practices (e.g. Indigenous food) so that they can help keep urban gardeners safe to experience the benefits of urban agriculture.

Small-scale food growing in both urban and rural areas may be catalysts for [discussion](#) about larger scale food production and the need for improved policies in peri-urban, rural, and global food production regions as part of the whole food system.

In addition to our [Growing resilience and promoting health through urban agriculture](#) blog, related NCCEH resources include:

- [Irrigating Food Crops with Water Containing Cyanobacteria Blooms](#)  
Discussion about the possible accumulation of cyanotoxins and its health effects when watering crops with water containing cyanobacterial algal blooms. The degree of cyanotoxin bioaccumulation depends on the concentration of cyanotoxins in the irrigation water as well as irrigation methods.
- [Indigenous Food Safety and Security: Community Adaptations in the Wake of Climate Pressures](#)  
Some of the potential safety concerns with the traditional food production methods of Indigenous food are highlighted. Methods reviewed include: smokehouse construction, using tires and treated timber as planters in gardens, greywater used in crop irrigation, traditional preservation techniques with sun and wind drying, and hydroponic growing systems.

### BC Resources

- [Urban Agriculture Garden Guide](#) (City of Vancouver)
- [Vancouver Urban Farming Census](#)
- [City of Vancouver Accessibility Guidelines for Community Gardens](#)



BC Centre for Disease Control



National Collaborating Centre  
for Environmental Health

Centre de collaboration nationale  
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## We Asked, You Answered, Here's What's Next!

Based on the 2021 Education and Engagement Survey, we have created an action plan for the CIPHI BC Education, Website and Social Media, and Promotion and Engagement committees. The committees will be sorting these actions into immediate, short term and long term goals as they progress forward.

### Education

The preferred educational areas, identified from the survey, were: drinking water, allied health professionals, and food. The highest rated education format was even with EHO project review, hands on discussion, and panel discussion. Preferred times were in the morning on Wednesdays (\*also noted students are free Wednesday after noon once classes resume is in person.)

We will be reaching out to allied health professionals, mostly in drinking water, such as the Ministry of Environment, and in food, Ministry of Agriculture/CFIA. We will be seeking 1-hour presentations directed toward EHOs and regulatory officials. We will try to focus these as discussion panels and hands on as possible. If you have ideas for who you would like to hear from, please email [president@ciphi.ca](mailto:president@ciphi.ca).

We will be focussing on getting a drinking water program started. We are looking into EHO's presenting case studies on unique or challenging systems. Stay tuned for a call out seeking individuals to join a working group.

As job shadowing and mentorship is high on the list of where members get PDHs. Executive has been workshopping a mentorship option for BCIT students, and considering retired members as a way to connect them. There is an option for regular members to be included as well. The Executive committee has created a working group for creating a mentorship program. If you would like to be involved, please contact [Aletta.Schurter@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Aletta.Schurter@northernhealth.ca)

We want to create an environment where EHOs are encouraged to do small projects, create scientific reports for the Environmental Health Journal, and present their findings to other EHOs. There will be a call out for a working group to create the process. If you are interested, please email [president@ciphi.ca](mailto:president@ciphi.ca)

### Website and Social Media / Engagement

We are becoming more visible on social media. Our goal is to have a minimum of 2 Facebook posts per month. We are currently looking for someone to run/take over the Twitter or Twitter and Facebook administration. Currently our Facebook is a public group but may changed to a page to be aligned with other provinces.

CIPHI National is updating the webpage and member service centre. We are waiting to see how connectivity will change with these updates. We will start sending out targeted emails along with the newsletter, such as surveys, educational opportunities, and volunteer opportunities. Ensure your email address is up-to-date with CIPHI.

Social events and virtual social events are wanted from CIPHI members. At this time we do not have the capacity to plan events. If someone has ideas for virtual events please let us know.

### Promotion

We currently have CIPHI branded navy golf polo shirts and non-medical face masks available for sale. Cost vary based on shipping. We will be looking into what other items we can float. They may be on hold until in person events are planned, or require pre order. We are looking for people to focus help coordinate this.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey to help shape the direction for the BC Branch.

# COVID-19 and the EHOs of VCH

At the start of the pandemic, I thought that we would be in this for a few months. As the days went by, cases rose and further into the dark tunnel, it's been challenging to bring positive influence to people working and living around me.

I have to say I have had a very wide breadth of public health experience for the past 14 months. I was first called to translate for a medical health officer who visited the very first COVID case in BC. I was seconded to do case follow-ups and contact tracing in a large COVID outbreak in a poultry slaughtering/processing plant. When cases dropped and the economy was slowly restarting, I had to review COVID Safety Plans for events, markets, and sometimes non-regulated facilities. Further to that, I was involved in the development of a COVID guidance document for event organizers. With the frequent amendments to the Provincial Health Officer Orders and their associated guidance documents, I was constantly answering public, business inquiries on what activities they were allowed to do. As the number of cases rose in the Fall, I was frequently pulled to lead COVID pod work and had to work with communicable disease nurses and medical health officers to manage clusters in first nation communities. When there were confirmed COVID transmissions in non-regulated facilities, EHOs were deployed to serve Closure Orders on behalf of the medical health officers. If there were suspected transmissions in regulated facilities, I had to coordinate between pod leads and EHOs, and sometimes bylaw officers or RCMP officers, to conduct communicable disease inspections, or sometimes closures. With the rollout of increased vaccine doses, the health protection team was tasked to coordinate and contact food processors and selected groups to get priority vaccination in specific clinics.

During this pandemic, many EHOs, including myself, have been asked to sacrifice our own personal time with our loved ones and serve communities at large. Many believe that the major fight of this COVID-19 pandemic has been the frontline healthcare workers, such as doctors, nurses, and care aids. Another major component of infection control work has been the public health staff and Environmental Health Officers. Further to that, in order to continue making sacrifices during this pandemic, their loved ones have been providing supports when many of us have to report to duty on countless occasions.

Gary Tam, CPHI(C)  
Environmental Health Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health



**YOU KNOW WHAT  
REALLY GRINDS  
MY GEARS . . .**

“When a new operator submits an application on a Thursday and wants to be open by Friday.....”

Please submit your “heard it a thousand time before one-liners” that you hear in the field over and over and your EPHP pet peeves to [bcpageeditor@ciph.bc.ca](mailto:bcpageeditor@ciph.bc.ca). Let's all share in the hilariously annoying joys of our environmental public health experiences.

# COPE IS EVOLVING: NO MORE CPC CODES!

THE COUNCIL OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (CoPE) IS STREAMLINING THE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES (CPC) APPROVAL PROCESS.

CoPE has invested efforts in the process to approve educational opportunities and activities, and has conducted a review of the CPC code activity approval procedure.

1



## HOW WILL THE CPC PROCESS BE STREAMLINED?

- ▶ You are no longer required to complete the activity approval application, and the CPC codes will be discontinued. CoPE and the National Executive Council (NEC) are working together to provide a list of educational opportunities consistent with CIPHI discipline-specific competencies.

2



## WHERE CAN I FIND THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES LIST?

- ▶ A list of approved environmental public health organizations is on the [CIPHI website](#) and on the [Member Service Centre \(MSC\)](#).
- ▶ Details of activities hosted by any of these organizations can be submitted to [social.media@ciphi.ca](mailto:social.media@ciphi.ca), for posting to the CIPHI website and social media.
- ▶ Members seeking professional development hours (PDH) opportunities can visit the [CIPHI website](#) and social media pages. Members can also access the list of organizations as a guide.

3



## WHAT ABOUT ACTIVITIES FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS?

- ▶ The list is not exhaustive! Activities hosted by other organizations may still be eligible for PDHs, provided that sufficient detail is provided for an auditor to evaluate the entry.
- ▶ Members can send names of other organizations to [cope@ciphi.ca](mailto:cope@ciphi.ca). CoPE and the NEC will review the list several times per year. If approved, the organizations will be added to the list.
- ▶ For CIPHI branch-specific activities, contact your CoPE representative.

4



## WILL THIS AFFECT HOW I ENTER MY PDHS?

- ▶ You will no longer be required to find the CPC code for the activity you are entering.
- ▶ Members will still need to obtain their annual requirement and maintain a record of the activity in the MSC.
- ▶ The list of educational opportunities will be a readily available resource.



# News from BCIT

Dear CIPHI Members:

This letter is directed to those who graduated from BCIT's Environmental Health Program between 2002 and 2013.

My name is Helen Heacock and I am an instructor in the ENVH Program, and have been since 2000. Hopefully, some (many?!) of you will remember doing a research project as part of your graduation requirements. The course was co-taught by me and Vince Crozier (formerly Chiodo) or Bobby Sidhu during that time. The projects contain important and relevant environmental and public health related research.

Since 2014, the research projects have been published in the BCIT Repository, an electronic database: [https://circuit.bcit.ca/repository/islandora/object/repository%3Aenvh\\_journal](https://circuit.bcit.ca/repository/islandora/object/repository%3Aenvh_journal)

Since 2020, the research papers have also appeared in a more widely accessible journal – the BCIT Environmental Public Health Journal <https://journals.bcit.ca/index.php/ehj>

By having the research projects published electronically, the student research can reach a wider audience. Not infrequently do I receive requests from individuals outside of BC for more information about student research that has appeared in either the BCIT Repository or Journal. Attached please find the article I recently wrote for the BC Page about the BCIT Repository and Environmental Public Health Journal.

On my BCIT office bookshelf are 12 years of bound student research papers; many highlighting important and relevant public environmental health research. The only people who view these papers are instructors and current students when looking for research project ideas. It is a shame that such important research is currently not more accessible.

The research papers completed from 2002 – 2013 can also be found on a list in the Repository of Archived papers. Please see attached a list of previous student research projects that do not appear in full in the BCIT Repository or Journal. The Archive contains only Project Titles, Year Project was Completed and Study Type (eg microbiological). There is no access to these complete research papers. I would love to have the complete research papers from 2002- 2013 appearing in the BCIT Repository and Journal, as many important, relevant and well written research projects were undertaken in those years.

In the past we did not ask authors to give us permission to make their papers accessible, which is now required for the open journal and BCIT repository.

I am sending you this letter to ask that you consider having your research project published in the BCIT Repository and Journal of Environmental Public Health. If you agree to have your paper published, all that is needed is for you to complete a short form, Lib 73 INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORY NON-EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION LICENSE (attached). I have also attached a completed form from one of this year's students as a template. It will not take more than a few minutes to complete the Lib\_73 form. Once we have the completed Lib 73 forms, there are a couple of summer library interns who will happily scan the 2002-2013 research papers into the BCIT Repository and Journal.

If you have any questions, feel free to email or phone me: [hheacock@bcit.ca](mailto:hheacock@bcit.ca) or 604-813-4062.

Thank you for your time and for all you do to safeguard the health and safety of the BC and Canadian population.

Sincerely,  
Helen Heacock, PhD

**Keep up to date on the latest news at  
the BC Branch website:**

[www.ciphi.bc.ca](http://www.ciphi.bc.ca)

The page also contains information on membership, conferences, career opportunities, documents, and much

more. Check it out regularly.

Did  
you



Click on the icon to find the BC Branch on Facebook and *Like* the page.



Click on the icon and *Follow* the BC Branch on Twitter.

## Getting to know our Tobacco Enforcement Officers from across the province!



**Kim MacLean, Tobacco Enforcement Officer, Northern Health**

### **If you won the lottery, what is the first thing you would do?**

Setup a not for profit and build an environmental centre in Prince George to educate residents and visitors about the regional ecology, wildlife, forest ecosystem, watersheds and environmental concerns in the area. Specifically working towards certification of Prince George as a Bear Aware Community and reducing the number of bears killed each year; reducing the amount of waste in landfills; protection, conservation and connectivity of more areas; employing a team of garbage pickers; building a network of non-motorized trails for people to move around the city safely.

### **What's your favorite indoor/outdoor activity?**

Hiking through the forest, breathing the fresh air, appreciating nature's sounds and sunlight.

### **What advice do you have for kids who are struggling with tobacco?**

Think about who you would like to be. If you would like to be healthy and able bodied and not financially burdened as an adult stop smoking now! Go to Quit Now website and get started. Speak up and tell your friends that you decided to quit because you don't like the smell on your clothes and breath, your parents yelling at you, being out of breath when doing something fun like skiing, not having money to spend on other things and feeling like a slave to tobacco and nicotine. Think about an activity that you would really like to do in the future, each time that you would normally buy cigarettes or vape – put that money in a piggy bank in your room, after a year count up your cash and do that activity that you planned a year ago! If you're short on cash, you will be surprised who will chip in to help you achieve your goal because people respect and admire others who set goals and take steps to accomplish them!

### **What would you most like to tell yourself at age 13?**

At age 13 for me there was no internet, cell phone, cable TV or Google and I lived on an island in the Atlantic Ocean with limited career options. Given that I would tell my 13 year old self: "Start exploring what you would like to do in life as early as possible. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Use whatever resources available to you – library books, conversations with working adults, career counsellors in schools, university and college recruiters, write letters to anyone and anything that sparks your interest!"

Buy a house and property in your twenties and get creative to pay it off as fast as possible! Enjoy the financial benefits of this for the rest of your life!!

### **How do you define success?**

Feeling good about where you are and what you are doing in your life. Overcoming challenges and barriers that others, and often yourself, construct to obstruct you from reaching your goals. Being financially responsible for your present and future yourself. Being appreciated for characteristics that you value about yourself. Sharing knowledge and helping others with their goals. Feeling balanced with work and personal life. Acting responsibly and respecting the environment and other species on earth. Acknowledging the consequences of my actions and willingness to change.

### **What is your favorite thing about working at as a TEO?**

My favorite thing about working as a Tobacco and Vapour Enforcement Officer is the challenges and rewards of building and fostering diverse relationships in a large territory.

In the Northern Interior Health Service Delivery Area of the Northern Health Authority in British Columbia that means interacting with employees, managers and owners of approximately 200 tobacco/vapour retailers to educate people obligated to comply with the provincial Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act and Regulation, the E-Substances Regulation and the Public Health Act. Each interaction is unique and I find it helpful to be open and aware of the challenges each retailer faces in the daily operation of their business.

As a TVEO, I also engage with dozens of local and First Nations governments, educating people about provincial tobacco

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## World Tobacco Day continued. . .

co/vapour legislation that influences policy change in each community. This part of the job is interesting as I have learned a lot about the communities each government serves and the unique challenges faced by these communities. I also appreciate the landscape and environment when visiting communities to conduct retailer inspections. I have also learned a lot from the people that I work with in Public Health – fellow TVEOs, Environmental Health Officers, Licensing Officers, Administrative staff, minor test shoppers and Management. As well as opportunities to interact with people in these roles with other Health Authorities in the province.

Enforcement activities often result in new relationships being fostered with RCMP, local police and other government ministries, such as the BC Ministry of Finance and Health Canada. When focusing on tobacco/vapour research and reduction, additional relationships are built with those people and agencies working on reducing the negative health effects of these products.

Working as a TVEO provides a rich mixture of relationships of diverse experiences, ages, job roles, cultures and geographies.



**Lindsey MacDonald, Tobacco and Vapour Products Reduction Coordinator, Vancouver Coastal Health**

**What's your favorite indoor/outdoor activity?**

Being in the mountains; whether it's skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, hiking and/or biking.

**At what age did you become an adult?**

Federally it was 18, in Ontario it was 19, in Québec it was when we were old enough to drive ourselves over the border so ~16.

**What three traits define you?**

Empathy, introversion, assertiveness

**What advice do you have for kids who are struggling in with tobacco?**

Ask for help, talk to your school counsellor, health care provider, check out [www.quitnow.ca](http://www.quitnow.ca).

**What would you most like to tell yourself at age 13?**

Your best friends will still be there for you in 25 years, all of them.

**What is your favorite thing about working at as a TEO/TRC?**

My favourite thing about working as a TRC is the people I work with - within Tobacco Control, Health Protection and Public Health. I am supported, inspired and motivated by these people every day.

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**Kevin Kouris, Senior Enforcement Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health**

**If you won the lottery, what is the first thing you would do?**

I would leave the country, fly to a tropical paradise, gather my thoughts and try and figure out my plan of attack before the madness starts. More money more problems!

**If you could be any fictional character, who would you choose?**

Superman

**What was the last experience that made you a stronger person?**

Living through the pandemic, personally and professionally

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World Tobacco Day continued. . .

Kevin Kouris continued:

**What is your favorite indoor/outdoor activity?**

Hockey

**What would you most like to tell yourself at age 13?**

Dream big and don't let anything get in your way!

**What is your favorite thing about working as a TEO/TRC?**

The people I work with.

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**Karen Zabras, Enforcement Officer/EHO, Interior Health**

**When you have 30 minutes of free-time, how do you pass the time?**

Read

**What chore do you absolutely hate doing?**

Cleaning and organizing our outbuildings

**What would you do (for a career) if you weren't doing this?**

Nursing

**What advice do you have for kids who are struggling in with tobacco?**

Ask yourself 'why' you are smoking (or vaping). If it's a form of stress release due to home situations, look at other options to help relieve that stress..Learn all the health effects on your body and mind, the cost financially over time, the smell, the mess left by butts, dirty ashtrays etc., how the general public views you. Some believe it still 'cool' to smoke so we try to make it harder for them to access it and get them to understand they are the minority now and it's no longer 'cool' to smoke or vape....

**How do you define success?**

Being happy with your life both in work and personal settings

**What is your favorite thing about working as a TEO/TRP?**

Educating retailers, the general public and the kids (both those we hire as MTS and those we come in contact with). Meeting and getting to know others, going to places we normally wouldn't go to. Education is the main part of our job and the most rewarding...Enforcement is at the bottom of the list and a last resort.



**JOIN US  
NOW!**

CIPHI BC Branch is seeking new members to revitalize its force.

- Are you looking to build your professional network?
- Have you been looking for an opportunity to get involved and help elevate your profession?
- Looking to apply your skills and make a difference with them?

The CIPHI BC Branch has councillor positions ready and waiting for you. Contact [president@ciphi.bc.ca](mailto:president@ciphi.bc.ca) or one of our existing councillors (Page 16) for more information.

## In Memoriam—Paolo Ciocca



It is with a heavy heart we inform you of the sudden and unexpected loss of our colleague and friend, Paolo Ciocca. Paolo passed away on Thursday, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Paolo was our Environmental Health Officer who worked with both Vancouver Coastal and Fraser Salish communities for 25 years. 2021 would've marked his 25th year of service with First Nations communities in BC.

Paolo Ciocca was husband to Kristina Haraga. Besides being a loving husband – on his days off he would often help and support his parents at their acreage and home in Richmond. He'd often speak about their beautiful edible garden and trees and many home projects he would assist his father with. It was apparent he cared and loved for his entire family as he would speak of them often.

Paolo was an asset to our team and our communities. Many of our team members and community members would have a great story with Paolo as he got along with anyone he met and worked with. One great example of this would be his support in Heiltsuk, Bella Bella, Tribal Canoe Journey in 2014. Paolo, supported with his colleague, Brian Standing, were providing advice and guidance at the event with the expectation of 9000 participants. In anticipation of the large event, Paolo taught 3 sessions of FOODSAFE prior to the event. There were no commercial kitchens in Heiltsuk in 2014 and the mobile kitchen that was rented could not get on the ferry from Port Hardy. Paolo and Brian helped scramble around town looking for spider burners and large cooking pots. Paolo sat in the back of the 1 ton truck and used his legs to brace the pots as they maneuvered around town. They eventually found space to set up. The cooking groups asked for volunteers so Paolo and Brian assisted with the prep and cooking after their day of work. They were so exhausted from the day, Paolo was in the middle of a text during afterhours on his Blackberry when he fell asleep. He awoke with the phone in his hand and a series of “eeee...” on his screen. These made for long days for our team but Paolo shared that he felt the overwhelming need to help in this way and was happy to help cook – something he enjoyed doing. The staff were appreciated of the support and overjoyed by the big personality that Paolo brought to the group.



Paolo started his career with Health Canada after graduating BCIT in 1995, and later transferring to the First Nations Health Authority in 2013. He quickly made a name for himself as the ‘rover’, covering several offices for staff vacancies, and even in those early years he became the ‘go-to person’ for anything ‘techy’. Paolo settled into an EHO position with the Vancouver office where he remained till his recent passing. His passion for his work was very evident in his commitment to the First Nation communities he served for many years.

No matter how much work was on Paolo’s plate, he always made the time to support people in a meaningful way. Although not a manager, he was a leader. He was thoughtful and respectful in his work and support to others. Paolo made each person he talked to feel they were meaningful and important. He also had the best stories to tell and the best recipes to share.

Paolo is a significant loss to our Fraser Salish and Vancouver Coastal team both personally and professionally. We will hold Paolo in our thoughts and hearts as we continue our work. Paolo truly cared for the health and wellness of his communities and we will honor Paolo by continuing our good work.

Peter Mazey, FNHA

## In Memoriam—Kirklan Sellers



Kirt passed away peacefully on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020 due to complication from heart surgery. It was also that same date some 61 years earlier that he was born. Kirt graduated from the Public Health Inspection/Environment Health Program at BCIT and upon certification started work in Invermere. The Kootenays were the perfect place for Kirt as he loved the outdoors and roughing it (camping on the edge of cliffs – in all weather conditions) and he loved to rock climb right up to the end. He also had a passion for his Environmental Health career and really enjoyed engaging with the public to help them with their project or problem. Although climbing was his passion it was not without its dangers and he had at least one bad fall rock climbing and had to be airlifted to a hospital in Calgary. He had broken his back but that didn't stop him from rock climbing after he recovered.

Kirt had a great sense of humour and he had the huge personality that could dominate social gatherings (especially with his wit and humour). He had a booming baritone (or bass) voice that could be heard down hallways; but he was always respectful when dealing with clients, the public or friends. He never suffered fools, he was practical and maintained his common sense attitude. He was smart too.

His good friend Brian Gregory reminisced about getting to know him and the great times they had together playing tennis, catching movies, occasionally going to a nightclub for a few dances and beverages. “Kirt was a smart guy with an even smarter wit. He was a big guy with a big heart.” He indicated our Class of 1988 reunions will never be quite the same without ole Kirt. “That deep baritone voice will be missed (immensely) at our reunions.”

Ann Thomas, another member of the Class of 88 said this is devastating news. “After Kirt managed to survive a number of serious health crisis over the years I really thought he was pretty much invincible! I am so shocked and saddened to lose our lovely, funny, engaging, entertaining and kind hearted friend. Thanks to those of you that have shared photos and memories.”

Paul Ross from Saskatchewan stated, “Kirt took 2 prairie boys under his wing during the school years at BCIT and showed us how to drive and climb like a true BC maniac! He mentored us in rock climbing; starting with north shore cliffs-where if you fall you're in the ocean, to the chief ledge in Squamish. We have lost a kind soul and a true friend.”

Warren Boychuck said “Kirt was gifted with a wit and sense of humour second to none! He likely would have excelled as a stand-up comedian as an option to being a PHI. Thank you Kirt for the great memories and Rest In Peace. Until we meet again!”

Kirt is survived by two daughters Alex & Jen and former wife.

Tim Roark, BC Branch Historian

*Many thanks to all his friends who shared their great memories of times with Kirt.*



Kirt Sellers (front right) and the BCIT grad class of 1988.

# BC Branch Executive 2021

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The views, comments, or positions of the BC Page are those of the Editorial Team or the author and do not necessarily reflect those of either the BC Branch or the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors.

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