



## 2021: Year in Review

It would be nice to pretend like 2021 didn't happen. The year had a Groundhog Day vibe and the public, political leaders, acute care practitioners, and, of course, environmental health professionals grew tired from a long battle against the seemingly endless war with COVID-19. In seeking out environmental public health news for 2021, it was not surprising that COVID-19 dominated the headlines. Stories about rat infested meat processing facilities, Salmonella and Legionnaires outbreaks, and the overdose crisis were still scattered throughout, but the old mainstays of environmental public health seemed few and far between (Global News, 2021).

While it seemed the traditional public health stories were not making the headlines, there was an environmental public health crises that wasn't far behind the pandemic in notoriety: Climate Change. As we have all come to understand, climate change impacts many of the core environmental public health programs while still bringing novel challenges our way. 2021 laboured under extreme heat, devastating drought and wildfire, and catastrophic rain events.

### Heat Dome

In late June – early July, British Columbia found itself grappling with an extreme heat event. The temperatures experienced by British Columbians were record breaking. On June 28, 2021 in the Lytton area, national records were shattered with temperatures reaching 47.9°C (Government of Canada<sup>2</sup>, 2021). These temperatures weren't just uncomfortable, they were lethal. Nearly 600 people died over the summer of 2021 including a single day death toll of 231 people on June 29<sup>th</sup> (CBC, 2021). Heat-related illnesses are caused by the body's inability to cool itself rapidly enough, resulting in brain and internal organ damage (CDC, 2017). To support people in their effort to stay cool, health authorities, local governments, and aid groups mobilized cooling centres and communicated mitigation strategies to the public. This event was a stark reminder that our society is not adequately prepared for climate change.

### Wildfires

While B.C. fortunately experienced a quieter wildfire season in 2020, this wasn't the case for 2021. With the ongoing stress of drought and the above-noted heat wave, 2021 hosted a wildfire season that far surpassed the 10 year average (BC Government, 2021). Following the peak of the heat wave in June, the Town of Lytton experienced a wildfire that decimated the entire community, destroying homes, vehicles, museums, businesses . . . everything (New York Times, 2021). This wildfire and others triggered air quality advisories, evacuation alerts and orders,

. . . Continued on Page 2

## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 Getting to Know— Lydia Ma
- 10 Environmental health role in atmospheric flooding
- 11 BC Branch Awards

## 2021: Year in Review Continued . . .

and even the issuance of a Provincial state of emergency in July (BC Government, 2021). Emergency shelters were put in place, local and provincial health officials disseminated information about protection against the wildfires and the resulting smoke, and B.C. endured.

### Atmospheric Rivers

The term “atmospheric river” was created in 1998 but has recently become a household name in B.C. Atmospheric Rivers are enormous bodies of water vapour that eventually condense into rainclouds. These enormous rainclouds can carry a month’s-worth of rain that fully discharges in just a day or two, wreaking havoc on the receiving lands. Southern B.C. experienced this meteorological phenomenon in November of this past year (CBC, 2021). The torrential rain event started on November 13<sup>th</sup> causing widespread damage and chaos. As the event persisted, every major highway connecting B.C. to the rest of Canada was closed by mudslides, or collapsing roadways and bridges. This loss of infrastructure caused thousands of British Columbians to be stranded on those very highways without resources. Flooding in many communities caused the destruction of homes, crops, and farmland, as well as the death of livestock, and failures of water and wastewater infrastructure (CBC News Interactives, 2021). Again, 2021 saw evacuation orders and alerts, declarations of states of emergency, and the activation of emergency response processes. British Columbians far and wide were subject to the ripple effect of this weather event, creating fuel shortages and other disruptions to the supply chain, as highway closures slowed the movement of goods (The Washington Post, 2021). However, these small nuisances were insignificant compared to those endured by individuals in Sumas Prairie, Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Hope and Merritt who returned to the complete loss of their homes, farms, and livelihoods. Those individuals are now grappling with the daunting tasks of remediating mould damage in their homes, clean-up of flood debris from thousands of acres of land, and the overall rebuilding of their communities.

Quietly tucked into the tail end of the metaphorical dragon that was 2021, Dr. Theresa Tam released her, “Chief Public Health Officer’s Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2021”. It was published on December 13, 2021. Dr. Tam aptly declares that our nation is at a “pivotal moment” where we need to dramatically alter the way we do things. Alongside the pandemic and other emerging and evolving public health issues, climate change is a challenge requiring a public health revolution. (Government of Canada, 2021).

It is from within the public health void that many believe was left behind by the events of 2021, that we may chose to re-focus our attention upon the possibilities available to us all in 2022. We can find inspiration in the full title chosen by Dr. Tam for her report: *A Vision to Transform Canada’s Public Health System*; a title that is inherently and undeniably optimistic! The report contains multiple data sets, analyses, and conclusions that appear to strip bare the cloak of pride and self congratulation that may have formed part of the Canadian identity in past years. The report identifies the chronic, entrenched inequities foundational to Canadian culture that have perpetuated health disparities within the population. These were brought into stark contrast by the pandemic. The report requires that we critically re-examine the importance of the determinants of health to Canadians and apply them in a fulsome and equitable way (Government of Canada, 2021). As Environmental Public Health Professionals, we must acknowledge and hold space for the disheartening calamities with which 2021 was fraught, but we also must renew both our hope and commitment to protect public health using our hard earned knowledge from 2021.

Last year may not have brought us all of the answers we sought, but it certainly brought many of the right questions into public focus.



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

“When you receive incomplete applications from an unreachable applicant in limbo and the stack of pending files grows. . .”

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@ciphi.bc.ca](mailto:bcpageeditor@ciphi.bc.ca). Let’s all share in the hilariously annoying joys of our environmental public health experiences.

---

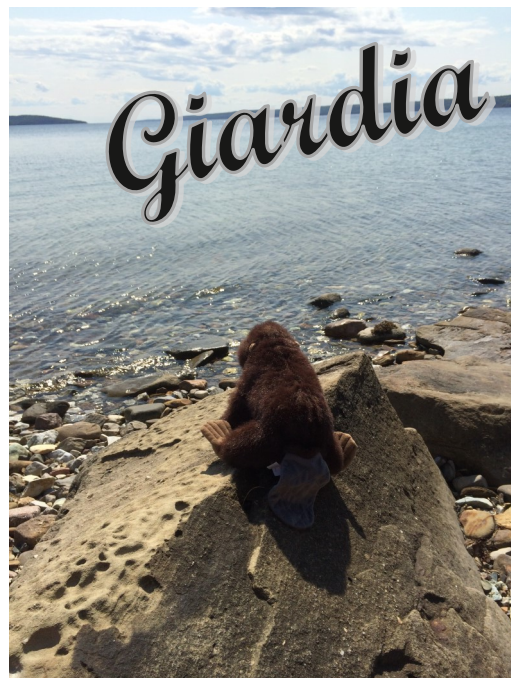
### 2021: Year in Review Continued. . .

#### References:

- BC Government. (2021). Wildfire Season Summary. Retrieved at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/about-bcws/wildfire-history/wildfire-season-summary#provstat> on January 14, 2022.
- CBC. (2021). 595 people were killed by heat in B.C. this summer, new figures from coroner show. Retrieved at <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada-british-columbia/bc-heat-dome-sudden-deaths-revised-2021-1.6232758> on January 13, 2022.
- CBC. (2021). What are atmospheric rivers, and how are they affecting B.C. floods? Retrieved at <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/whatonearth/what-are-atmospheric-rivers-and-how-are-they-affecting-the-b-c-floods-1.6253763> on January 14, 2022.
- CBC News Interactives. (2021). In a Single Week. Retrieved at <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/bc-flooding-2021-timeline-how-once-in-a-century-flooding-unfolded> on January 14, 2022.
- CDC. (2017). About Extreme Heat. Retrieved at [https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat\\_guide.html](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.html) on January 13, 2022.
- Global News. (2021). Public Health. Retrieved at <https://globalnews.ca/tag/public-health/> on January 7, 2022.
- Government of Canada. (2021). Chief Public Health Officer’s Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2021. Retrieved at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/corporate/publications/chief-public-health-officer-reports-state-public-health-canada/state-public-health-canada-2021.html#a1> on January 14, 2022.
- Government of Canada<sup>2</sup>. (2021). Weather Summaries. Retrieved at [https://web.archive.org/web/20210630002621/https://weather.gc.ca/warnings/weathersummaries\\_e.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20210630002621/https://weather.gc.ca/warnings/weathersummaries_e.html) on January 13, 2022.
- New York Times. (2021). Heat Wave Spread Fire that “Erased” Canadian Town. Retrieved at <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/10/world/canada/canadian-wildfire-british-columbia.html> on January 14, 2022.
- Washington Post, The. (2021). Major flooding in Canada leads to widespread supply chain disruptions. Retrieved at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/11/18/british-columbia-floods-canada-supply-chain/> on January 14, 2022.

Hello Environmental Public Health Professionals. 2022 is upon us and EPH is changing everyday and challenging us even more. The New Year brings hope of amending our ways and tweaking our perspective. We have found ourselves on a path, mostly unmoving, however, a map is being slowly pieced together as we acknowledge the many obstacles in our way and strive toward a common goal. Environmental public health professionals have always been a Jack-of-all-trades kind of people. . . we open our ready arms to the emerging and recurring tasks ahead of us. Let's do this, 2022.

What better way to ring in the new year but to have the opportunity of getting to know Lydia Ma, Manager of the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health? Lydia's work affects the work of environmental public health professionals everyday, giving us all knowledge and power. Many of us know Lydia from afar but be sure to get a closer look with her insightful responses and incredible depth.



## Lydia Ma — National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health (NCCEH)

### Q1: Where have you worked and what roles have you been in throughout your career?

A1: I came into my current role as Manager of the NCCEH in 2014 while wearing (still) an academic hat. I hold an Adjunct Faculty appointment in the UBC School of Population and Public Health. This explains in part why I actually have four Zoom accounts and even more individual Meeting IDs. Triaging my various inboxes is a day's worth of work each week!

### Q2: What environmental public health background/education do you have?

My education background is a mix of both research, occupational and environmental health. I earned my PhD from UBC in research pathology, then obtained a Master of Science in Occupational and Environmental Hygiene, also at UBC. While my doctoral and post-doctoral training were invaluable, my desire to be more involved in applied health sciences steered me toward the latter.

I did some consulting work prior to returning to academia to create and grow the Continuing Education program in the then-named School of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene in the late 90's. I already began to interact with Public Health Inspector colleagues in the early 2000's when I offered courses that brought occupational health and safety professionals together with environmental health officers.



. . . Continued on Page 5

I continue to manage a scaled-down Continuing Education program after joining the NCCEH in 2014. That was when I became much more immersed in environmental public health and got to know many EPH colleagues from all across the country.

**Q3: How do you see the differences and similarities in occupational health and environmental health?**

A3: I see them as complementary and both are critically important toward maintaining, promoting and protecting health of individuals and populations when exposed to physical, chemical, and biological and microbiological, psychosocial hazards which are present in the environment, be it the home, in public, or the workplace. Together these two disciplines help our communities and societies thrive and flourish.

I often use my training in occupational and environmental hygiene, a discipline anchored around the tenets of *anticipation, recognition, evaluation, and control* in my approaching environmental public health issues.

**Q4: What is one of the most memorable moments or situations in your career?**

A4: CIPHI colleagues who attended CIPHI AEC 2019 will remember that to be one of the more unforgettable moments. The conference held in Halifax coincided with Hurricane Dora making landfall. Thankful for a safe arrival after spending the entire day traveling, I arrived at the conference hotel with no power which meant no light, no hot water, no meals. I remembered sharing a power bar (not the edible kind!) with many colleagues in the hotel lobby. Many of us needed to charge up our devices. It was also memorable to set up our exhibit booths in candlelight.

Still without power to start our day but glad there was natural daylight in the ballroom, the opening keynote plenary took place without electricity which also meant no Powerpoint presentations and no food service. Thanks to the creativity and persistence of our organizing hosts, we were able to get the sessions underway. Thankfully, power was restored mid-morning and the remainder of the conference was a success.

**Q5: How does your role, with NCCEH, help environmental public health professionals and the like?**

A5: Since our inception in 2005 after the post-SARS-CoV-1 establishment of the Public Health Agency of Canada, we continued to work with our core mandate which is to conduct evidence-driven knowledge synthesis and translation, identify practice and research gaps, and to mobilize knowledge for environmental health practitioners and policy-makers. We continue to work toward building capacity in Canada's public health system through facilitating connections with and for practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers.

The NCCs of Public Health\* stepped up to the challenge upon the arrival of SARS-CoV-2 in early 2020. Along with the other NCCs, NCCEH immediately went into action to support COVID-19 response and recovery through our evidence synthesis and translation work, and bridging gaps between evidence, policy and practice by providing Canada's public health with a myriad of evidence-informed resources and translation services. As the COVID-19 pandemic evolved, we were able to stay on task. Our extensive networks across systems, sectors and jurisdictions were further fostered when collaborations are urgently needed to combat the pandemic. We feel that our KT work, experiences and key learnings can be leveraged for future crises.

[\*Other NCCs of Public Health: [NCC of Determinants of Health](#), [NCC of Infectious Diseases](#), [NCC of Indigenous Health](#), [NCC of Healthy Public Policy](#), [NCC of Methods and Tools](#)]

**Q6: What do you see as the biggest challenge being faced in the world of Environmental Public Health?**

A6: No crystal ball is needed to know that we are facing a confluence of inter-related problems -global climate change that drive extreme weather related disasters, a global pandemic, antimicrobial resistance, opioid crisis, alcohol and substance abuse, mental health and addictions, food/water safety and security, chronic diseases, and other long-standing public health issues such as health inequity, environmental racism, and more. All of these impact our society at both an individual and population level.

. . . Continued on Page 6

As their environmental public health practice scope has already been evidently expanded through this pandemic, environmental public health professionals will likely need to utilize all the tools in their toolkit and perhaps to use them differently, and know what new ones to put into it. EPHPs could be part of a multi-disciplinary effort in restoring institutional trust, and they can support and participate in setting up early alert frameworks (e.g., for disease outbreaks) and to innovate new ways to address emerging issues.

### FOR FUN

**1. What is one of your favorite quotes?**

- Learning is a treasure that follows its owner everywhere.

**2. What’s your favorite indoor/outdoor activity?**

- I am interpreting this question as something I can do both indoors and outdoors. That would have to be meeting my daily step goal!

**3. If you could witness any event past, present or future, what would it be?**

- Witnessing how this planet was formed would have been a glorious yet frightening experience.

**4. If you could learn to do anything, what would it be?**

- I would like to be much more proficient in French! That would be very handy in my line of work at the NCCEH which, as a federally funded organization, is to make available “products” in French language.

### WHICH WOULD YOU RATHER?

Read on a Kindle or paperback book?

**I like the physical realness of a paperback but love more the portability of e-books. So I would pick Kindle, which is where I do much of my reading nowadays (both professionally and for leisure).**

Drink a glass of Guinness or Fat Tire?

**Definitely Guinness because that will remind of the wonderful time I had while watching how the Black Stuff is brewed and taste-testing them inside the Guinness Storehouse in Dublin, Ireland!**

Vacation in Hawaii or Alaska?

**I won’t ever pass up a trip to Hawaii but feel a sense of time urgency with visiting Alaska, when there are still glaciers left!**

Win the lottery or find your perfect job?

**Not only do I not gamble but I also don’t believe winning (a big) lottery is statistically favourable to buyers of lottery tickets!**

**I also am a realist and know there is no such thing as the perfect job. “Perfect” could be dependent on timing and circumstances. I’d rather find a job that is a perfect *fit* for me, at the right time, in the right place. The rest is up to what I make of it and how I look at it!**

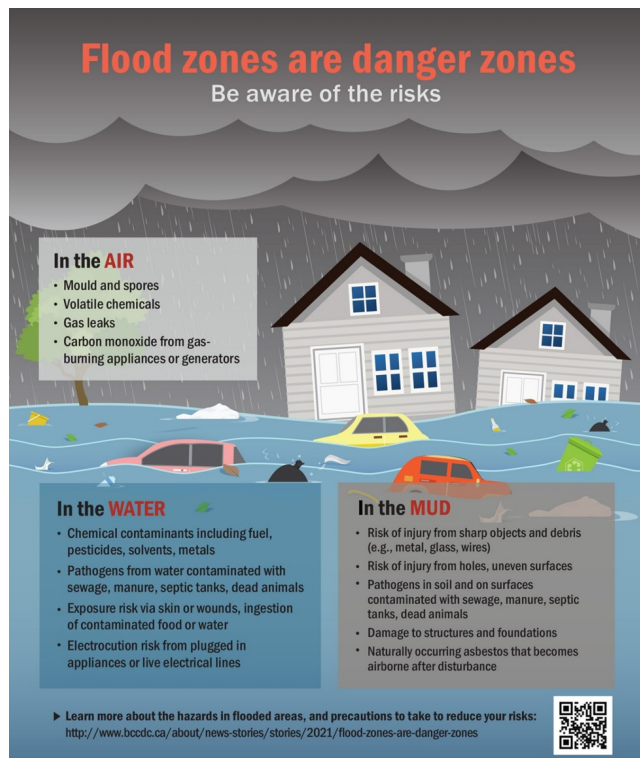
## BC's perfect storm of climate-driven disasters during a global pandemic

In the Fall 2021 issue of this newsletter, and without prescience of what was to come, the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health (NCCEH) submitted an article entitled [Disasters that moved us: how can we protect the health and well-being of Indigenous evacuees](#). It highlighted work that began two years ago through the NCC for Public Health, which focused on the long-term effects of evacuations from natural disasters. Two weeks after its publication, British Columbia experienced large-scale flooding and community evacuations due to sequential atmospheric rivers that overwhelmed a number of coastal and southern inland communities to varying degrees. In some cases, the storm compounded the devastating impacts of this summer's historic climate-related events: our second-worst wildfire summer season and a catastrophic heat dome that resulted [in heat-related mortality](#) far above normal across British Columbia. Natural phenomena such as these exacerbated vulnerabilities and challenges that British Columbians already have had to deal with during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to these events, the term "atmospheric river" was new to most people. However, to climatologists and atmospheric scientists this is a known [phenomenon](#) that involves plumes of water vapour, originating from warmer tropical oceans that travel great distances and are influenced by topography as they move inland and shed moisture. For southern BC and the Pacific Northwest, this situation formed the literal "perfect storm" at an intensity that shocked even atmospheric scientists. The persistent systems caused mass-scale flooding particularly in plains, such as the Sumas Prairie that had been saturated from early fall precipitation, as well as mudslides and halting the flow of traffic to/from the lower mainland.

Although provincial and local response agencies are the primary responders in these acute situations, environmental public health (EPH) professionals are also mobilized to address health protection measures related to physical, chemical, and microbiological contaminants associated with flood waters. There are also psychosocial implications arising from these events, already being a health risk due to the global pandemic. The NCCEH, in support of the BC Centre for Disease Control, created a poster (see graphic) and updated our [Floods: prevention, preparedness, response and recovery](#) resources to enable EPH professionals to access information that covers food safety/security, water quality, and more. Our NCCEH animated video, [Finding safe drinking water in an emergency](#), is also applicable for other disasters that may result in potential drinking water contamination.

As post-disaster recovery efforts continue and affected community members return to homes and properties to deal with remediation, mould will be a critical, widespread issue. EPH professionals provide guidance to the public regarding safe return to their homes and inspection tips on foods and household items that may have been damaged by water. In spring 2020, the NCCEH launched a free, online, self-paced, PDH-approved course: [Mould Investigation: an online course for public health professionals](#). This four-module course covers a general overview, sampling methods, interpretation of results, and mould remediation and prevention, with module quizzes as one progresses through the course. The time to complete it thoughtfully varies between individuals, ranging from 4 to 6 hours to longer when external resources are accessed. This course received the [Excellence and Innovation in the Integration of Technology – Non-Formal Learning Environments award](#) from the Canadian Network for Innovation in Education in 2020. As demand continues, this course does not currently have an end date. It is also required course work assigned to students in several Canadian schools with environmental public health programs.



ncceh.ca

Reproduction of this document is prohibited unless granted permission by NCCEH

... Continued on Page 8

BC's perfect storm of climate-driven disasters during a global pandemic continued. . .



The banner features a background image of various types of mould growing on a textured surface. In the top right corner, there is a green circular logo and the text: "National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health" and "Centre de collaboration nationale en santé environnementale". The main title "Mould Investigation" is in a large, bold, dark blue font, followed by the subtitle "An online course for public health professionals" in a smaller, dark blue font. Below this, a white box contains the registration information: "Course registration:", the URL "https://ncceh.ca/courses/mould-investigation-online-course-public-health-professionals", an email icon followed by "contact@ncceh.ca", and a globe icon followed by "ncceh.ca".

In summary, the changing climate is increasing the magnitude and/or frequency of extreme weather events related to heat, cold, and precipitation. Although there are multiple factors that fuel two notable and extreme events - wildfires and flooding – it can generally be agreed upon that health is impacted negatively. As much as climate change adaptation must be in place to future-proof communities, EPH professionals can support efforts in establishing early warning systems to alert public in a more efficient emergency preparedness and response regimen. EPH professionals can also conduct interdisciplinary work with land use planners to collaborate in planning and managing our lands, as well as addressing preparedness and responses for those who already live on flood plains. In addition, EPH professionals can support colleagues in other sectors regarding forest and agriculture practices to minimize or eliminate chemical and microbiological contamination sources should flooding events happen. The NCCEH [Healthy Built Environment Forum](#) is a national platform that is open for public health, planning, and other sectors to join for conversations, collaborations, and sharing of best practices and lessons learned.

Submitted by: Lydia Ma, National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health



National Collaborating Centre  
for Environmental Health  
Centre de collaboration nationale  
en santé environnementale

## Want to see your voice on these pages?

The BC Page team is seeking an Assistant Editor.

Reach out to Stacey Sowa at [bcpageditor@ciphi.bc.ca](mailto:bcpageditor@ciphi.bc.ca) for more info!



## Retirement—Chris Laughlin



Chris Laughlin started his career as an Environmental Health Officer in 1987 with the City of Winnipeg. Following that time, he then moved to Sarnia Health Unit in Ontario in 1988. In 1989, when he realized how cold it was out east, he moved to Kamloops Health Unit. He finally found his way to Victoria's Capital Health Region (now Island Health), in 1992. After being dedicated to Island Health for 30 years and in the profession for the past 35 years, Chris had his final day as an Environmental Health Officer on January 7, 2022. Chris plans to spend time travelling, continue his passion for antiques hunting, and focus on his artistic talent in metal sculpting.



Best of luck with your retirement, Chris!

## Baby Announcements



Sammie Hwang and Michael Wu welcomed Jenson GeonHoon Wu on the morning of December 20, 2021 at 7:03am! He was 7lbs 11oz.



Congrats!!!

## News from Island Health



Congratulations to Jade Yehia who was awarded the Island Health Celebration of Excellence Award. Jade was recognized for her efforts and successes in advancing evidence-based practice.

An abundance of applause and ample thanks for all the work you do, Jade!

# Environmental Health Role in Atmospheric Flooding

2021 was a unique year for public health inspectors and environmental health officers in BC: in addition to various waves of COVID-19 and ever-changing public health restrictions and orders, there were also unprecedented heat events and wildfires, destroying whole communities and blanketing the province in a thick layer of wildfire smoke. And then, just when it looked like the year would go out peacefully, the November 15 atmospheric river came through.

A number of communities in the Interior and Fraser regions were either completely or partially flooded, damaging dozens of homes and leading to pollutants and contaminants entering rivers and waterways. Environmental Health Officers were called into action to support communities during the response and recovery phases of the atmospheric river flooding and landslides, putting their emergency management and public health response skills to the test yet again.

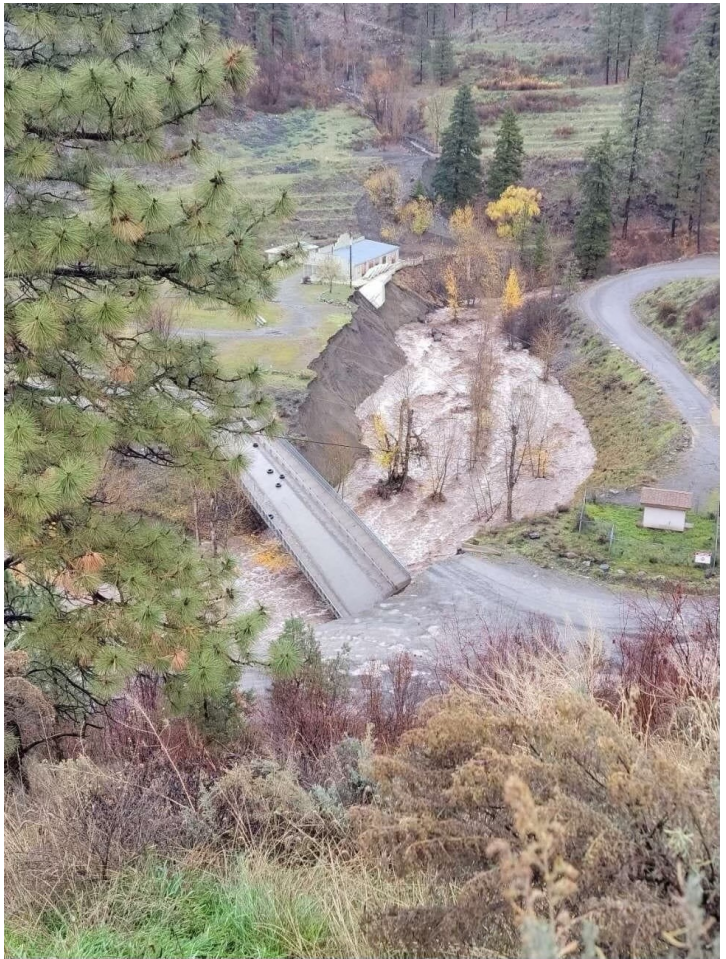
The First Nation Health Authority EHOs in the Interior, Fraser-Salish, and Island regions provided rapid damage assessments of homes immediately after the waters had subsided, in collaboration with the First Nations Emergency Services Society. This teamwork allowed the EHOs to provide rapid public health assessment while the FNESS staff supported with structural rapid damage assessments. Houses, wells, and sewage disposal systems were all quickly inspected while maintaining worker safety to identify the scope of damage, and how long it might be before residents were able to return home. Subsequent inspections of properties, including source water assessments and sampling, provided additional details on the scope of damage and recovery that would be required for long-term community rebuilding. And now that many communities have been repatriated, EHOs are continuing to provide health in housing inspections to assess water damage and the potential for (or current) mould growth.

As the recovery work continues across the province, the knowledge and expertise of environmental health professionals continues to be called upon to make sure individuals are able to go home to safe environments, with clean, safe, reliable tap water, and fully functioning wastewater systems. EHOs are involved in provincial monitoring of surface water for public health risk assessments, as well as supporting the preparation for upcoming freshet impacts – the next flood season isn't far away!

While 2021 has been a challenge for so many reasons, the environmental health teams from across BC have come forward as leaders in supporting members of the public during some of those emotionally and logistically devastating times in their lives. The environmental emergencies of this year have given us a glimpse into what a changing climate will bring in years to come, and the skills, knowledge and – most importantly – commitment of environmental health professionals will continue to be a foundational aspect of emergency management activities.

Casey Neathway

BC Branch Past President / National President Elect



## Member of the Year Award



Stephanie Tooke, BC Branch President (left) presents the award to Gary Tam (center). Kuljeet Chattha (right) was one of the nominators!

Sara Li and Kuljeet Chattha hereby nominate Mr. Gary Tam to be the recipient of the 2021 BC Branch Member of the Year Award.

There are so many reasons why Gary is deserving of this award. His service to the profession and Institute and his achievements are too many to mention here. Gary graduated from UBC with a Bachelor of Science degree and went on to complete his Bachelor of Technology degree from BCIT. Ever since he received his Certificate in Public Health Inspection (Canada) in 2005, he has been an active CIPHI member serving in various capacities on a local and national level. Volunteering has been a huge part of Gary's life since coming to Canada 26 years ago. He was the BC Branch President from 2011-2013, National Treasurer, BOC examiner, National BOC member in 2017 and most recently Vice Chair of BOC National.

In the early 2010s, when the provincial budget was very tight; health authorities could not send EHOs to branch conferences, he led the branch to pioneer the first virtual education series to break the financial constraints and provided continuing education opportunities for the EHOs in BC. The series was a great success and yielded substantial profits. It lifted the BC Branch out of a five-year financial deficit.

In addition, as the National Treasurer, his committee made numerous cost-saving strategies and helped rebuild the national financial situation. For his contribution, he was awarded the 2016 National CIPHI President's Award.

In 2017, a great idea came about to change the submission format of BOC reports from paper to electronic. He was instrumental in the process and the CIPHI BOC Go Green project was successfully implemented across Canada in the 2018.

Gary is a regular speaker at BCIT promoting CIPHI and the profession. This led to him teaching at BCIT for the Environmental Health Program in 2017. His passion for student training and mentorship is evident in his extraordinary commitment to improve on student practicum experiences, its evaluation rubric and certification process. He never passes on an opportunity to promote our profession, the most recent helping to draft a letter to the Ministry of Health advocating for recognition of the roles and contribution EHOs played during the pandemic.

Gary began his career working in High Level, Alberta before moving back to BC to join Vancouver Coastal Health working out of the Richmond office. During this time, Gary served as a local rep in the VCH Regional Food Safety Committee who, in a collaborative effort, led the the development of Safe & Healthy Food Guidelines in Child Care Facilities and the comprehensive study into safety of Cantonese-style barbecue meats. The study was published in the Environmental Health Review in 2019. Currently, he works out of the North Shore office as a senior EHO. Given the background of increased workload from COVID, Gary was able to complete his Masters Degree in Business Administration in 2020, another great achievement. He lives in Burnaby with his wife Monica and their dog Riesling. Both are avid animal lovers working with non-profit agencies to rescue dogs.

Anyone who has had the fortune of working with Gary knows and appreciates his steadfastness and commitment to excellence. His desire to make a difference is evident in his work.

His support never wavers. His significant contribution to the profession and Institute makes him a perfect candidate for the Member of the Year Award. We so nominated and signed below.

Sara Li

X

Kuljeet Chattha

# BC Branch Awards

## Alexander Officer Award

Dr. Patty Daly and the VCH Environmental Health Officers were awarded the Alexander Officer Award for their ongoing and successful efforts in the COVID-19 Pandemic response. Dr. Daly was recognized for her leadership of the public health team and her ability to inspire Environmental Health Officers to take on new challenges amidst the pandemic. VCHs Environmental Health Officers were commended for their tireless contributions and adaptability during the COVID-19 response.

CONGRATULATIONS!



President Stephanie Tooke (left) presented the Alexander Officer Award at the December 2021 AGM. Phil Muirhead, North Shore (center) and Celine Hsin, Whistler (right) accepted the award on behalf of VCH Environmental Officers.



Dr. Patty Daly with the Alexander Officer Award.

**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 know the BC Branch is on Facebook and Twitter?**



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.

## Alex Nilsson Award



It is our great pleasure to nominate Maxine Marchenski for the 2021 **Alex Nilsson Award** for volunteering. Maxine is a 1974 graduate from the BCIT Public Health Inspection/Environmental Health Program. Shortly after graduating Maxine started her career in public health with the Northern Interior Health Unit in Prince George and joined the Institute at that time. After several years gaining valuable experience in a rural setting Maxine applied for a position as a Public Health Inspector with the Capital Regional District providing public health services to Greater Victoria and the lower portion of Vancouver Island. Being closer to the operating center of the BC Branch Maxine soon volunteered and was elected as a Councillor on the BC Branch Executive. Then after several years Maxine was elected as BC Branch Vice President.

In 1981, the BC Branch proposed to host the 1982 National Conference to be held in Victoria, BC. The National executive accepted that offer and Maxine volunteered to be on the conference organizing committee and over that year and during the conference Maxine was a key volunteer.

In 1994, the BC Branch again volunteered to host the 1995 National Conference in Victoria and again Maxine volunteered to be a member of the organizing committee. The conference was truly great and Maxine was there assisting during the proceedings.

For many years, a Christmas luncheon was organized at a local restaurant by health agency staff and Maxine was normally part of the organizing and welcoming committee. It was so popular that not only did local inspectors attend but also Inspectors with Health Canada and the Ministry of Health headquarters. A large number of retired PHIs made a regular point of joining the festive occasion.

Not long after Maxine retired she volunteered to be a BC Representative on the CIPHI National Retirees Advisory Committee and is still a member of this committee.

Unfortunately Covid arrived in Canada including BC and Greater Victoria. Contract tracing and enforcing health related orders and legislation regarding the operation of public premises has placed a significant burden and pressure on existing Health Inspectors. Maxine has taken a break from retirement and gone back to work to help out in the office dealing with the myriad of problems, complaints and questions that arise daily.

It is clear to us that based on her spirit of volunteerism and dedication to her profession throughout her career Maxine Marchenski is a most worthy candidate to receive the **Alex Nilsson Award** for volunteering in 2021.

Moved: Tim Roark

Seconded: John Gibb

November 27, 2021

# National Awards

## Life Member Award



Stephanie Tooke, BC Branch President (left), presenting Claudia Kurzac (right) with the Life Member Award.

Gary Tam & Tim Roark hereby nominate Ms. Claudia Kurzac to be the recipient of the 2021 CIPHI Life Membership Award.

Claudia Kurzac is a well-deserving candidate to receive this Award for her resilient dedication to the profession and the Institute throughout her career. Claudia received her Certificate in Public Health Inspection (Canada) in 1980 upon graduating from BCIT. She started working as an EHO in the Portage office, Manitoba. In 1991, she continued her career with Vancouver Coastal Health and subsequently became involved in CIPHI – BC Branch activities.

Claudia served two terms each as a BC Branch President from 1999 – 2004, and National President from 2004 – 2008. With the development of the Board of Registration and the registration for EHOs under the Society Act in BC in the 1990s, Claudia quickly recognized their values and importance to propel the profession forward. She envisioned that a similar model should be established with a separate governing body at the national level. Claudia’s extraordinary vision manifested when she was seconded to work in PHAC, where she was pivotal in obtaining the largest grant CIPHI have ever had in developing the CIPHI ongoing education program. She led CIPHI by forming an advisory group

and working groups to lay down the foundation for the CIPHI’s discipline-specific competencies. In 2010, serving her ‘second term’ as a National Past President, the official Continuing Professional Competency program was established and the Council of Professional Experience (CoPE) was formed. It was her exemplary leadership and determination that raised our profession to a new frontier.

Claudia is an exceptional volunteer. Besides leading the monumental CPC project, she also co-chaired the five-day International Federation of Environmental Health Congress in the same year when the Vancouver Winter Olympic was held in 2010. Without having taken a break, she chaired the CIPHI Centenary Celebration Committee from 2011-2013. As many had experienced the centenary celebration, many Environmental Public Health Professionals further learned about the rich history of the institute and experienced showers of celebratory activities. When National CIPHI was desperately looking for a hosting education conference province, Claudia co-chaired the sold-out education conference in 2017.

Claudia never took her foot off the pedal in her leadership work during her 30 years of service at Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. She had been the Health Protection Manager in Vancouver and Richmond since 2013. The vision of VCH Health Protection is - be the leader in public health protection. Claudia did not only talk the talk of the vision, but she also championed the walk as the leader. She committed to bringing regional and provincial consistencies on various food safety issues by chairing the VCH Regional Food Safety Committee and the Health Authority Food Safety Council in the province. During this COVID-19 pandemic, she led the VCH Health Protection Committee of Guidelines to develop guidance documents for many types of regulated and non-regulated facilities, many of which were subsequently adopted provincially. She advocated the importance of designing a robust student practicum training program, a comprehensive new-hire onboarding system, and an ongoing staff education program. She journeyed humbly with many emerging leaders in the organization and encouraged them to actively identify and courageously reach for higher competencies. Most staff, who had the privilege to work with her, always felt strongly motivated for their betterment.

**. . . Continued on Page 12**

**Life Member Award continued. . .**

Claudia’s enthusiastic volunteer work, impressive professionalism, and revolutionary visions received multiple achievements over the years. She was first awarded in 2006 for the PHAC/CPHA Public Health for her outstanding volunteering efforts in moving the profession forward. She was the recipient of the 2010 CIPHI Alex Cross Award for promoting higher professional standards in EHOs. Then, Claudia received the BC Branch Alex Nilsson Award in 2012 for her long volunteering service in CIPHI. With all the recognitions she accomplished, she was selected as one of the 100 Members of Distinction in the CIPHI centenary year. Finally, she was once again awarded the 2017 BC Branch Member of the Year Award for her stellar leadership.

In 2021, she decided to retire so she can spend more quality time with her husband, Robert, and her rescue dog, Nellie. This CIPHI Life Membership would be a well-deserved honour to cap off her remarkable 41-year career in public health.

**BC Branch AGM—Christmas Luncheon**



The BC Branch AGM and Christmas Luncheon was hosted on December 16, 2021. The meeting was hosted in-person (with all the COVID protocols in place, of course) and 16 members even attended via Zoom.



(Left to Right) - Gary Tam, Kuljeet Chattha, John Pickles, Stephanie Tooke, and Valerie Jackson.



**. . . Continued on Page 15**

(Photo to the right). BCIT student attendees!

BCIT Students expressed immense gratitude for the opportunity to partake in CIPHI activities and to network with the BC Branch Exec, EHOs, and managers!



(Left to Right) - Keith Herle and Tim Roark.



# NOW RECRUITING

What can a role with the BC Branch Executive offer you?

Find out more by contacting [president@ciphi.bc.ca](mailto:president@ciphi.bc.ca) or one of the existing executive members listed on Page 16.



# BC Branch Executive 2021

www.ciphi.bc.ca

<b>President</b>	Stephanie Tooke	president@ciphi.bc.ca
<b>President Elect</b>	Valerie Jackson	president-elect@ciphi.bc.ca
<b>Past President</b>	Casey Neathway	past-president@ciphi.bc.ca
<b>Treasurer</b>	John Pickles	treasurer@ciphi.bc.ca
<b>Executive Secretary</b>	Celine Hsin	celine@ciphi.bc.ca

## Councilors

Jessica Ip	Jessica.ip@vhc.ca
Michael Wu	Michael.wu3@vch.ca
Jackie Chiu	Jackie.chiu@vch.ca
Amber Lee	amber@ciphi.bc.ca
Tegbir Gill	tegbir@ciphi.bc.ca
VACANT	-----
VACANT	-----
VACANT	-----
VACANT	-----
VACANT	-----

## Branch Appointees

<b>BC Page Editor</b>	Stacey Sowa	bcpageeditor@ciphi.bc.ca
<b>BC Branch Historian</b>	Tim Roark	tdroark@shaw.ca
<b>B.O.C. Coordinator</b>	Angela Whalen	angela.whalen@vch.ca
<b>B.O.C. Member</b>	Gary Tam	bocbcbranch@gmail.com
<b>Webmaster</b>	Elden Chan	EldenLChan@gmail.com
<b>CoPE National Chair</b>	Lorelle Pegus	chair@cope.ciphi.ca
<b>CoPE BC Representative</b>	Stacey Sowa	stacey.sowa@islandhealth.ca

### BC Branch Address

c/o Stephanie Tooke  
1200-601 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4C2  
FAX: 604-736-8651  
[info@ciphi.bc.ca](mailto:info@ciphi.bc.ca)

## Editorial Team

### Associate Editor

Casey Neathway (FNHA)  
#770 – 175 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Kamloops, BC V2C 5W1  
Casey.Neathway@fnha.ca

### Associate Editor

Tim Roark  
3301-164A Street  
Surrey, BC V3Z 0G5  
tdroark@shaw.ca

### Associate Editor

VACANT

### Editor

Stacey Sowa (Island Health)  
489 Alberni Highway  
Parksville, BC V9P 1J9  
bcpageeditor@ciphi.bc.ca

## Editorial Policy

The objective of this newsletter is to keep the members of the BC Branch and other colleagues informed of the local and national events that are of interest and importance to them.

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.

The Editorial Team reserves the right to edit material submitted, solicited or unsolicited, for brevity, clarity, and grammatical accuracy.

## Advertising Policy

The BC Branch will accept advertising relating to health & environmental issues, products, and services. Advertisements that the editorial team concludes are contrary to good public health practice or environmental protection goals, or those deemed offensive or not in good taste, will not be accepted.

### Advertising Rates

FULL PAGE.....\$75 per issue

HALF PAGE.....\$50 per issue

QUARTER PAGE.....\$30 per issue

BUSINESS CARD.....\$20 per issue

There is a 25% discount for a commitment of at least six consecutive issues. Changes can be made in the ad format or content during this period. Ads should be camera-ready; any extra costs necessary to prepare the ad material may be charged to the advertiser.