



## NEWS RELEASE

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### Bringing the Outdoors into Classrooms

For immediate release

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**COMOX VALLEY, B.C.** – Comox Valley Schools has taken a bold step forward in enhancing environmental learning opportunities by creating a new teaching position that will be responsible for integrating the outdoors with education curriculum.

The Board of Education recently hired Serina Allison as the district's first Environmental and Outdoor Education Lead Teacher.

Within a few short months, Serina has begun to formalize the district's Environmental and Outdoor Learning (EOL) programs and has laid the foundation for establishing richer community connections with organizations that are already providing students and teachers with resources to aid in learning about the environment.

The district's goal is to seek new opportunities with an array of organizations that exist throughout the community and may wish to get involved in outdoor education programs throughout the district.

Serina is a district secondary educator of more than eight years and comes with a wealth of experience fitting for the position. She obtained an undergrad degree from VIU and a Bachelor Degree in Education from Lake Head University specializing in Outdoor Experiential Education and Environmental Science. Her background is in adventure guiding with a focus in sea-kayaking.

"Guiding has brought me to amazing places on the west coast of North America and has solidified my passion for the outdoors, for sustainable practices and environmental advocacy. What motivates me in education is the chance to expose students to the outdoors whether it is the schoolyard or on extended overnight expeditions," expressed Serina. "My commitment is to making outdoor learning accessible to all our students with the guidance, support, and collaboration of teachers and administrators."

Comox Valley Schools is moving toward becoming a leader in environmental advocacy and building upon the opportunities already created to help educate youth about the unique and diverse environment that exists in our region.

"Outdoor experiences should not be left to chance but be encouraged. Students should be invited to learn about the complexities of nature and to gain an understanding of the emerging issues in environmental protection," explained Serina. "There are many environmental champions in the district. For example, the 11 young women from our high schools who participated with 35 other females in an ocean literacy camp this summer on Hornby Island. "The camp was a district initiative accomplished in partnership with Ocean Wise and won an award for collaborative work around the environment, proving that outdoor learning opportunities are value added in today's education curriculum."

The guiding principles for Environmental and Outdoor Learning (EOL) for the school district include:

- Support every student's success in understanding their connectedness to nature;
- Structure learning opportunities for K-12 students to develop care, compassion, ownership, and stewardship of the environment;
- Provide broad and deep learning opportunities that demonstrate the interconnectedness of systems that exist in nature such as biodiversity;
- Provide diverse learning opportunities that promote, encourage and foster learning for personal and interpersonal growth through outdoor exploration, education and challenge.

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For more information about Outdoor Education visit, <http://tribunebayoutdoored.ca/>

**IMAGE:** Serina Allison is the district's first Environmental and Outdoor Education Lead Teacher hired recently to enhance the ongoing efforts to increase outdoor learning opportunities in the district's education programs.