

RCE Facilitation Group (RFG)
Minutes

Date: Monday, March 1, 2010
Location: Luther College (Board Room) and Skype Participation
Time: 3::00 to 4:45 p.m.

Note: Action items are in bold type.

Attendance:

- Curt Schroeder (RCE Technology Group Coordinator, SIAST)
- Dale Weisbrot (Saskatchewan Agriculture)
- Doug Macyshon (SIAST)
- Janet McVittie (University of Saskatchewan College of Education)
- Jon Yee (Coordinator, RCE Youth Committee)
- Kish Cox (Receiving SIAST training for LEED credentials; Renewable energy product distributor in Bahamas; Seeking to establish an RCE in the Bahamas)
- Lyle Benko (RFG Co-coordinator, L.A.M.B. Consulting)
- Paul Hart (Faculty of Education, University of Regina)
- Roger Petry (RFG Co-coordinator, Luther College)
- Steven McDavid (RCE founding member and Regina environmental activist)
- Tanya Dahms (Co-coordinator, Health and Healthy Lifestyles TAWG, University of Regina Department of Chemistry and BioChemistry)
- Xia Ji (Co-coordinator, RCE Reconnecting to Natural Prairie Ecosystem & Sustaining and Bridging Culture TAWGs; University of Regina Faculty of Education)

1. Welcome and Approval of Agenda

Individuals introduced themselves and organizational affiliations.

2. RCE Theme Area Working Groups (TAWGs)

Update and ideas from RCE working groups regarding their activities and directions

A) Health and Healthy Lifestyles TAWG

- Brief presented to the Government of Saskatchewan's legislative committee on Saskatchewan's Energy Future on January 28, 2010. Brief challenged the assumption that Saskatchewan's energy need had to continue to grow and emphasized energy conservation. Younger MLA's showed interest. Report from the committee will be released in the near future. RCE brief posted on website. Authors of brief were thanked by RFG.
- Follow-up study of Uranium Development Partnership (UDP) process with presentation by Katherine Arbuthnott, Brett Dolter, and Jim Harding (Campion College, 7:30 p.m., March 1, 2010)
- UN University facilitating workshops on traditional medicine; Barb Fraser from FNUniv has been involved on behalf of the RCE
- **Action: Tanya Dahms will e-mail Dale Weisbrot regarding report on biodiversity in British Columbia with a First Nations component**
- **Action: Tanya Dahms talking to GoGreen Fund to finance talk by Vic Ellis on sustainable energy solutions**

B) Reconnecting to Natural Prairie Ecosystems

BioKit Project

- BioKit Project application developed over one week on very short notice to the Eco-Action fund; Dale Weisbrot noted the good synergy and the connections of the people attending allowed the proposal to come together very well
- A biokit is a tool to connect families with the outdoors; developing initially by Environment Canada but adapted for a SK context
- Andre Champoux of Environment Canada hosted by the Saskatchewan Science Centre in the fall of 2010 to discuss the project
- Michelle Bidden of RCE SK attended a workshop at the Biosphere in Montreal in November to learn more about the Biokit process
- Meeting of the TAWG held last week by Karen McIver and Xia Ji at the Faculty of Education at the U of R
- Will hear in April as to whether funding received
- Dale Weisbrot noted he has connections with Saskatoon, Regina, and rural centres that may be useful for this project
- May want to promote specific stages of the project as part of the International Year of Biodiversity

Prairie Species-at-Risk: Beneficial Management Practices Project

- Dale Weisbrot noted Saskatchewan Agriculture is developing a pilot project on species at risk identifying agricultural practices that are beneficial to 13 species at risk; project profiled in UNU RCE Bulletin); helps identify how land managers can make a living while enhancing species
- Tanya Dahms noted this project could connect with science summer camp at the University of Regina.
- **Action: Dale Weisbrot will post a link to these materials once they are in their final form and available on line.**

C) Bridging and Sustaining Cultures TAWG

U of S Spring Into Action Event, June 8-9, 2009

- Event Connected sustainability and the provincial school curriculum through an aboriginal perspective Many aboriginal teachers and representatives from the Ministry of Education
- A good networking opportunity
- Question as to whether there has been follow-up and whether the Ministry had implemented any new things as a result of the event.

Innaugural meeting of TAWG held in Craik on February 19, 2010

- A lot of good energy from working group
- Good discussion regarding what is the role of culture in sustainability discussion
- Possibility of a world heritage site in SK discussed (see below)

Learning Circle on Culture through Treaty Education

- Learning Circle focusing using treaties as a focus: emphasis on how we can learn from First Nations with and a future project around treaty education
 - Lyle provided information on the learning circle on treaty education to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Culture; project can provide some research opportunities through the RCE
- A list of questions was developed to ask in evaluating future initiatives of the working group; each TAWG might find value in identifying principles for their respective working group
- Thank you of RFG expressed to M.J. Barrett for organizing the meeting in Craik and to the

team organizing the Spring Into Action event.

Western Development Museum Project

Glenn Sutter of the Royal Saskatchewan museum discussed the possibility of doing a project related to sustainability and culture with the Western Development Museums in the province.

UNESCO World Heritage Site

- Jonathan Yee discussed the possibility of establishing a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Saskatchewan; Cypress Hills was suggested with its connection to spirituality, the role of abiding by treaties, and its serving as a traditional meeting place during the winter time due to its abundance for First Nations; also a park that crosses borders (Saskatchewan and Alberta) and contains unique species; role of the Cypress Hills as a dark sky preserve
- Noted the UNESCO application is lengthy with 10 criteria set out (6 for cultural and 4 for a natural site); Cypress Hills could meet both cultural and natural
- Could be used as an education site for maintaining First Nations and sustainability education, eco-tourism and economic development; could have educational tours (e.g. dinosaur park and paleontologists); should involve elder;
- Application requires a community to look after the site cypress hills as well as creating a buffer zone preventing future development
- **Action Items:**
 - **Tanya Dahms will provide Jon with connections regarding aboriginal eco-tourism.**
 - **Dale Weisbrot will provide Jon with information about the local tourism group in the cypress hills (Horse Shoe/Maple Creek area)**
 - **Roger Petry to provide contact for Jon.**

D) RCE Youth Committee

- Jon Yee currently acting as coordinator
- Committee started in October, 2009
- Up until two weeks ago was waiting on documentation from UNESCO (who had their AGM in October)
- Participated in provincial political forum that included members of the government, opposition, and chamber of commerce; concerned about Youth being prepared for university and the workforce
- Jon developed a concept paper on how to create programs for youth that educate high school youth and post-secondary students on sustainability issues that include all 4 areas (culture, environmental, economic, social); once the individual met a certain criteria they would have an internship program working with a specific organizational mentor; they could then use this to help fund a masters program in a sustainability area. He noted one could get ideas related to needs areas for areas of study from the other 74 RCEs; could also partner with businesses in SK to help transfer resulting technology (UNESCO is pushing for commercialization in the green sector)
- Jon and Lyle met with Saskatchewan Tourism, Parks, Culture, and Sport who liked the idea of a world heritage site and liked the possibilities for research
- Jon also spoke with Premier Brad Wall who was interested in his ideas and also met with the Minister of Tourism
- Canadian Commission for UNESCO is currently reviewing a youth project (Canada Action Plan for Youth)
- Need to put youth on RCE committees (i.e. in each working group area of the RCE); need to recruit youth at RCE events (e.g., Lyle profiled working group opportunities to youth at the

Campion sustainability fair)

Action Items

- **Dale Weisbrot will provide Jon Yee with contacts at the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture's Youth Committee**
- **Paul Hart will mention youth committee and RCE opportunities to his group of young teachers ("Youth" are considered ages 15 to 30); this range of ages will enable mentoring between age groups on the RCE Youth Committee**
- **Curt Schroeder to ensure a youth committee working group space is enabled on the RCE website**
- **Roger Petry will send out RCE electronic letterhead to working group coordinators; also noted that printed paper letterhead with RCE logo is available to working groups.**

3. RCE Technology Group (RTG)

- Curt Schroeder (Co-ordinator) noted that the group had not met recently but is trying to set up a meeting date
- Periodic failure on our server due to a lack of storage, memory, and old hardware; committee looking at options; Tim Maciag maintaining the site
- Curt is updating/finishing off the section for the RCE Recognition Awards 2009; some files to be uploaded, pictures to be added
- Curt showed a sample of the RCE Recognition Award that had been handed out to the SIAST Green Group; good to see how the awards are being used by groups and publications in local papers
- Tim has made some changes to the health interface; one can go in and have a map and that highlights 4 projects
- Tanya suggested it would be good to start applying for funding for data mining of the information gathered thus far in the ESD project database to see what we can do with it and share it with other RCEs (especially obvious things related to the UN University theme areas); we should work as a group for continuous funding on this level (e.g., could have a CS student and a student mentored through each of the working groups)
- Roger Petry noted that some funding (\$3000) received from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education and \$2000 from SOEEA to update the site with a mapping of the ESD projects, with ESD projects in schools to be entered once the prototype is developed by Tim
- Lyle noted the value of linking to different working groups and information on how to blog and sign in
- RFG expressed a big thank you to the RCE Technology Group

Action Items

- **RTG to meet to discuss updating hardware for the RCE website (www.saskrce.ca)**
- **Curt to update site with material from recognition event.**
- **Roger to work with Peta and Tim to develop mapping tool on site and send invitation letter to schools to enter ESD information**
- **Roger, Curt, and Daryl Hepting approaching respective institutions (Luther College, SIAST, and U of R) for ongoing support/funding to maintain RCE site**

4. RCE Facilitation Group—RFG

- Several RCE members and Chuck Hopkins met with the President of the University of Saskatchewan, Peter McKinnon, and its Vice Provost for education, Ernie Borger, in June, 2009. Considerable interest in the role the new school of sustainability and environment could play along with the leadership the College of Education could play in reorienting education at

the university for ESD. Janet McVittie noted that sustainability is a target area of the university and that she is now chairing a university working group looking at how to incorporate/advance sustainability in the teaching of faculty/courses at the University of Saskatchewan; the big push is from students who are demanding changes.

- Roger Petry noted completion of reporting for funding received from the Go Green Fund (final report submitted in September, 2009)
- Lyle and Roger have been participating in conference calls with RCEs in Canada/the Americas organized by Susan Kingsbury of Environment Canada; specific topics have been discussed (e.g., International Year of Biodiversity; upcoming 5th International RCE Conference in Curitiba, Brazil); new RCE beginning in British Columbia (RCE British Columbia North Cascades); note: since the meeting Susan has indicated she has been re-assigned to other responsibilities at Environment Canada and is no longer our link)
- Lyle noted letters of support for First Nations University of Canada were sent to both the President of the University of Regina and the recently appointed Chief Operating Officer of First Nations University of Canada to express the importance of FNU for ESD work in Saskatchewan and its distinctive contribution and future potential contribution globally; letter produced on short notice to assist in meetings with 2 levels of government and current planning period (see RCE SK letter (letter #24) posted at <http://fnuniv.wordpress.com/>)
- RCE Toronto did a review of the activities of RCEs in the Americas.

Action Item:

- **Roger Petry to provide link to RCE Toronto review of RCE Activities. It is available here:** <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-26577.pdf>

5. ESD research

1. Flagship Project Updates

Re-Engineering Education for Sustainability initiative:

Noted that the vertical axis wind turbine will be mounted at the University of Regina within 6 weeks. On Thursday March 4, Severin Cullis-Suzuki will be returning for a 3rd time to Saskatchewan; Thursday evening she will be speaking to young teachers at the Education Auditorium (starting at 6:30 p.m.); In Motion event at Queensbury Downs on Friday, March 5 (see <http://www.saskrce.ca/content/severn-cullis-suzuki-event-regina>)

She will then be present at 2:00 p.m. Friday at a meeting of the President of the University of Regina, Deans, Faculty, and Administrators looking at the role of sustainability with the new U of R Strategic Plan and how University can model sustainability;

Upcoming Publications

- Roger Petry authored a 1500 word article on the development of RCEs in the Americas for a Mid-Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) publication of the UN University on RCEs. The UN University has invited RCEs to submit photos. Thank you to Curt and Dale for allowing their photos to be submitted.
- **Action Item: Members to consider sending further photos to the UN University of ESD activities and of our region (see <http://www.saskrce.ca/content/opportunity-submit-photos-rce-esd-activities-issues-and-landscapes-un-university>)**

6. RCE Saskatchewan Events

RCE ESD Recognition Event 2009

- Doug Macyshon reported the event was held on Dec. 3, 2009. 22 groups recognized in Humboldt, Saskatchewan. The event was well attended and received. Corporate sponsorship totaling \$2100 was received from SaskPower, SaskTel, SaskEnergy, The Cooperators, and SIAST Green Group.
- Doug, Roger, and Lyle sent out letters of thanks to the sponsors including the recognition award winners.
- Association of Professional Engineers had a full page in their publication highlighting that RCE SK had recognized its poster series
- RCE Facilitation Group thanked the event organizers for their great work and their success with the event.

Action Item

- **Lyle will send out a the copy of the page from the Association of Professional Engineers.**

Upcoming Events

RCE ESD Recognition Event 2010

- Discussed the possibility of having a recognition event specifically for high school students; something similar to science centre at a particular time of the year; could include university students too in a mentoring role (e.g., younger students see older students at university); suggestion could have a single event but with specific sections dedicated to different areas of education

Action Item

- **Janet McVittie and Curt Schroeder to discuss possibilities for upcoming year and convene a meeting (note: likely worth opening up the invitation to members of the RCE through the website and perhaps to past award winners who might like to volunteer).** (Note: Doug has since indicated he is unable to participate on the committee this year).

Spring Into Action II

- Lyle suggested an event entitled“Sustaining our future through youth engagement”; a focus on organizations looking at involvement with youth and how to draw them in (e.g. through ESD work); could have a hot topic (e.g. working on UNESCO World Heritage Site and other youth projects)
- Could potentially use to highlight the International Year of Biodiversity
- Valuable having a recognition event in the fall and a spring into action event in the spring

Action Item

- **Jon Yee and Lyle Benko to take leadership on this possibility.**

RCE Green Drinks

- Suggestion that RCE members could periodically gather for informal socializing (e.g., pick an odd friday for a sustainable drinks session.

Action Item

- **Lyle and Doug informally agreed to look into this.**

5th International RCE Conference, Curitiba, Brazil (May 18-20, 2010)

- Roger noted that all 5 attachments (including the invitation letter, conference program, registration form and a pre-conference survey) are posted on the RCE Saskatchewan posting for

this meeting (see <http://www.saskrce.ca/content/rce-facilitation-group-meeting>)

- Roger noted Canadians will need to get a visa from the Brazilian Consulate
- The event includes a poster session
- Lyle suggested we may need shots for yellow fever
- Roger encouraged RCE members to attend and gather sponsorship from their respective institutions or other RCE partners (either by using the letter of invitation or requesting a specific letter from Lyle or Roger)
- Roger noted Air Canada has a seat sale until March 9 (one can fly to Toronto to Sao Paulo and then take a local airline connector to Curitiba)

Action Items

- **Roger to sent out an e-mail to RCE members.**
- **Individuals to register using the form provided by the UN University that directly is submitted to the UN University. Individuals also to send an e-mail to roger.petry@uregina.ca by Wednesday March 10, and Roger will send an e-mail to the UN University listing RCE Saskatchewan participants known by that date. (Note: registrations need to be sent to the UN University by March 12 to be eligible for UN University accommodation bookings)**

7. Identification of ESD Resources

Action Items:

- Jon Yee to post documents regarding youth and culture and opportunities for sponsorship

Education Resources

Upcoming Courses being offered:

Bob Regnier is offering a graduate course at the University of Saskatchewan entitled “Education, Wisdom and Nature” (EFDT 881.3 (01), CRN 41416; Limit 15)

- This class has non standard dates, running over 4 weekends from May 7-June 19
- Fridays and Saturdays, May 7/8, May 28/29, June 4 /5, and June 18 /19.
- Fridays: 5:00- 7:50 p.m.; Saturdays: 9:00 a.m. - 3:50 p.m.
- *The course investigates notions of education and wisdom in relation to current discussions of ecology, environment and education for sustainable development through*
- *current western and Indigenous theory.*

Roger Petry is offering a graduate course in May and June in philosophy entitled “Environmental Ethics and Public Policy” (Phil 880)

Marcia McKenzie offers Ed Foundations 885 from January to April (on Tuesday evenings) investigating culture and related socio-ecological issues.

8. United Nations University RCE Network

March 15th; 2010, is the next deadline for the next *RCE Bulletin*. See

<http://www.saskrce.ca/content/request-material-next-rce-bulletin-deadline-march-15-2010>

Action Item

- **Garth Pickard to develop a short article about his events at the University of Regina this**

week (March 4 and 5, 2010).

9. Partnerships with SK ESD Network and other existing or emerging RCEs

Invitation for new RCE applications to the UN University now posted:

<http://www.saskrce.ca/content/call-applications-new-rces-2010>

Action Items:

- **Lyle and Roger to share contact information with individuals who attended RCE of the Americas meeting with Kish Cox who is exploring developing an application for an RCE in the Bahamas.**

10. Communications

Upcoming Reports

- RCE Saskatchewan agreed to pilot the on-line UN University reporting system for its annual activities this year.

11. Other Business

None.

12. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.