

Alberni NFP National Forest Week - Grade 5 Event Planning Summary

- The South Island Natural Resource District management team has provided support for the staff to take on a leadership role in coordinating the event. This is critical to the continued success of the National Forest Week event.
- In early June invitation letters are sent to all the schools in the geographic area, including the public and private schools. This letter provides an overview of the planned activities, the date of the event, and a request to confirm attendance including numbers of students. Quite often this information is not actually received back from the schools until the new school year starts in September, but at least the event is on the radar screen of the principals and teachers. We assign one contact person to liaise with all the schools to keep communications clear. Final numbers are typically not firmed up until the weeks leading up to the event in September.
- An invitation is sent to the Alberni Network of Forest Professionals to join a planning committee for the event.
- Over the summer months invitations to participate in the event and request for financial support are sent to the local forest companies. This financial support is used to fund transportation of the students to and from the event, food for the students and volunteers (in some years a volunteers breakfast has been organized), swag is purchased for swag bags for the students, the helicopter showing at the event, and any other expenses the committee encounters.
- Government, industry, consulting professionals meet as a network of forest professionals committee to brainstorm a plan for the year's event. We have found that interactive stations work well for the kids, they love to get hands-on.
- Station themes have included:
 - Invertebrates
 - Riparian Areas
 - First Nations values
 - Forestry – regeneration (samples of cones, seedlings), ecology
 - Wood products
 - Wildfire – demo of pumps and hoses, helicopter water drop
 - Harvesting – old time logging demo steam donkey at McLean mill, could apply to modern practice
- Volunteers are solicited from all participating parties to assist in the delivery of the event. In 2017 year we had about 60 volunteers representing government, industry, First Nations, the school district, and the consulting community.
- A pre-meet occurs onsite where station locations and logistics are agreed upon, it is encouraged that all presenters attend this meeting to agree on their designated location.
- In advance of the event, teachers are provided with a summary of what content will be covered at each station in order for them to prepare their students to maximize learning opportunity.
- The day of the event having one person assigned to lead logistics and a having a method of communicating to team leaders is critical, handheld radios work best but air horns have also

been used to signal rotation timing. A station map and schedule is produced that guides all team leaders for the day.

- Timing and logistics can be tricky with the number of students and stations. We have found that keeping stations close together to minimize walking time between each is most effective. Also need to consider washroom facilities and allow for enough down time in the day for the students.
- The students are split up into groups of approximately 20-25. The teachers much prefer keeping all their students together in one group if at all possible. This is planned ahead of time and each group is assigned one volunteer as a team leader. The team leader greets their students upon arrival and swiftly escorts them to the first station. The teacher usually brings one parent helpers to assist as well.
- First Aid attendant on site has been utilized in some years.
- Thank you letters are sent by the committee to all organizations that contributed to the event.
- The committee holds a wrap up meeting to provide feedback on what worked well, what was tricky, and ideas that are documented for next year's event.

Tracy Andrews, RPF

Tracy.Andrews@gov.bc.ca