RCE Saskatchewan Education for Sustainable Development Project Inventory

Student Researcher Final Reports

Student Researchers: Ann-Marie Urban, Billy Patterson, Brooke Leurer, Emma Findlater, Holly McKenzie, Jill Arkles, Kimberly Dohms and Peta White

Under the Direction of Roger Petry and Lyle Benko
RCE Saskatchewan Co-coordinators

December 2008
Regina, Saskatchewan

Ann-Marie Urban-Health and Healthy Lifestyles – RCE Student Researcher
FINAL REPORT

RCE Work Activities:

   -Describe the activities you have engaged in as part of this project (for example, kinds of contacts made with educational projects, student researcher meetings, data entry, etc.). Estimate the percentage of your time directed at each of these activities.

My work has been comprised of meetings (15%), phone calls (10%), e-mail (30%), follow-up e-mails (30%) and data entry 15%. Meetings also took some of my time however I did not log this as time.

   - number of projects entered into project database -17 entered.

   - Describe strategies you employed in undertaking your work. What successes and challenges did you observe in employing these strategies? Setting priorities and timelines.
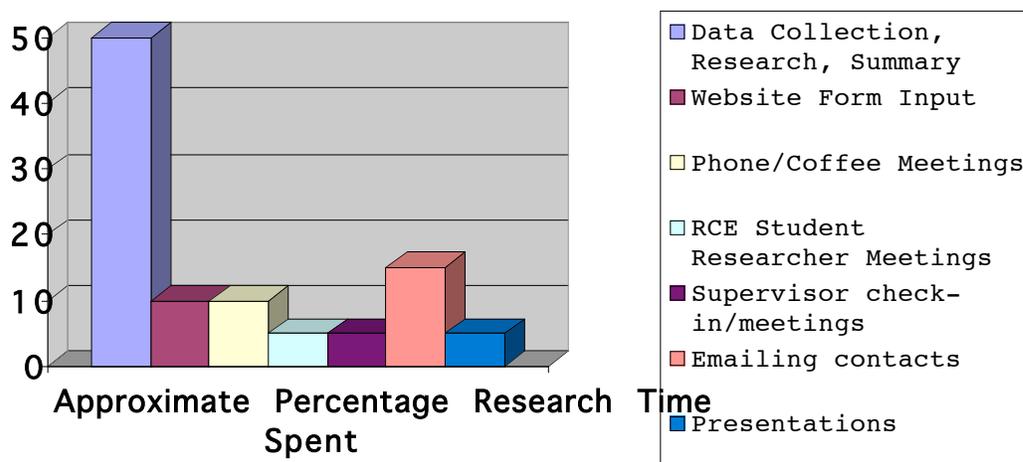

Completed Surveys –Entered On-Line

- Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit- Fleur Macqueen Smith, Muhajarine, Nazeem –June, re-entered July 13, 2008
- Five Hills Health Region – Ferguson, Dianne -Dianne.Ferguson@fhhr.ca- July 13, 2008
- Meewasin Valley Authority-Doug Porteous-July 13, 2008
- Craik Sustainable Living Project –three entries-Local Food Production & Consumption, Environmental Pollutants Reduction, Promotion of Physical Activity-July 13, 2008
- Prevention Program –cervical cancer -Gladys.Wasylenchuk@saskcancer.ca- Aug. 17, 2008
- YMCA-Regina-Aug. 17, 2008
- Heart and Stroke-Aug. 17, 2008
- Seniors Physical Activity Sampler-Aug. 24, 2008
- Summer Active –August 24, 2008
- Regina in *motion* Community Walk: Walk A Block August 24, 2008
- Creatures in our Midst August 24, 2008
- The Power of Play/ Play in the Park (PIP) August 24, 2008
- Commuter Cycling Workshops (in Partnership with the Green Ribbon Committee) August 24, 2008
- Pedometers in motion (in Partnership with Regina Public Library) August 24, 2008
- THE DR. PAUL SCHWANN APPLIED HEALTH AND RESEARCH CENTRE Exercise Therapy & Workplace Wellness August 24, 2008
- THE DR. PAUL SCHWANN APPLIED HEALTH AND RESEARCH CENTRE Cardiac Rehabilitation & the Blue Cross Chronic Disease and Prevention Program August 24, 2008
- Street Culture Kidx Project Inc-August 24, 2008

Billy Patterson: Final Report - Student Researcher for Climate Change Theme Area Working Group, Regional Center of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development – Saskatchewan

Work Activities:
(1) *Describe the activities you have engaged in as part of this project (for example, kinds of contacts made with educational projects, student researcher meetings, data entry, etc.). Estimate the percentage of your time directed at each of these activities.*
The majority of my time was spent researching climate change projects within the region and summarizing them in my own format. I put off data entry until the very end of the project to allow for the authors/contact-people to have their own say if possible. I had also really encouraged (often following up two or three times) that data be entered by the project contact. I had hoped that I would be able to check which projects had been inputted to avoid duplicate entries, but there may be some. I will try and pie-chart my use of time.

Chart legend:
- Data Collection, Research, Summary
- Website Form Input
- Phone/Coffee Meetings
- RCE Student Researcher Meetings
- Supervisor check-in/meetings
- Emailing contacts
- Presentations

X-axis label: Approximate Percentage Research Time Spent

(2) *Provide any quantitative or qualitative measures that relate to your work activities and outputs (for example, number of projects entered into project database).*
Projects entered into database: 20
Number of climate change contacts/organizations personally contacted and made aware of project: 15
Number of subscribers to website climate change blogs: 81
Number of highschool students directly exposed to project: 350
    (Lecture on climate change and the environment to grade nines at Campbell highschool eco-fair)
    Hosted by Campbell Environmental Club, April 24, 2008
Number of post-secondary students directly exposed to project: 75
    (Sharing campus success stories at CFS-SYC spreading sustainability tour)
    Hosted by Canadian Federation of Students and Sierra Youth Coalition, October 29, 2008

(3) *Describe strategies you employed in undertaking your work. What successes and challenges did you observe in employing these strategies?*
My strategy was to recognize I am not as knowledgeable as the researchers who dedicate their lives to climate change or environmental education. I saw my position more as a researcher of climate change research. Also to look for the gaps between formal, informal, and non-formal climate change education.

New Learnings:
-What new learnings or understandings do you have as part of this process as they relate to:
(1) *education for sustainable development (ESD) in your specific theme area (e.g. climate change, sustainable infrastructure, etc.) occurring in the RCE Saskatchewan region (for example, are there any interesting patterns or trends in the ESD projects you have identified)*
As I started researching climate change ESD projects, I found the scientific evidence of anthropocentric climate change (compared to government action/policy) first alarming, then depressing, and finally enraging. I was amazed by the high level of world-renowned climate change scientists within our tiny region and some of the research and programs they had worked on. In stark contrast to the trends of our federal and provincial economic activity, which was exponentially increasing our individual and regionally collective ecological footprint. At first I saw this as a failure of ESD, too focused on the formal aspect of climate change to have any real impact. I wondered how climate scientists were able to maintain silence and sanity while our economy and society was heading down such a suicidal path. Climate change

encompasses so many different areas, it was hard to find an ESD program that's end result would not decrease anthropocentric climate change.

(2) *the nature of education for sustainable development in general*
It's important to put ESD in 3 different areas; formal, non-formal, and informal.
My formal university education gave me a context for ESD that starts with some basic environmental studies history. The United Nation's 1987 Brundtland commission, which had sustainable development "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future." In 2002 at the Earth Summit, the preventative principal was added to the idea of sustainable devlopment. Most recently, the RCEs are the (in my opinion) United Nation's and UNU's attempt to implement viable realistic sustainable development technologies and lifestyles at a local, bio-regional, and community-based level. Formally, within the university. Informally, with the conversations people are starting to have about issues like this. And non-formally with the changing mentality of citizen's to demand a different approach be taken from their governments.

(3) *the applicability of this work to other areas (e.g., to your studies and research in your own field of study, to other areas of your livelihood and/or lifestyle)*
Right now I am an independent major in 'Transdicsiplinary environmental studies.' This program/degree is not formally approved by any faculty or professor, yet a similar program is in the making (though recentlly tabled from it's 2009 launch). That being said, I personally seek out classes that fit into this 'program,' and have (minimally) helped professors and faculty launch supplementary classes (such as Environmental Psychology and two Environmental Engineering classes geared for non-engineering majors). This research project was a very valuable tool in my education, allowing a regional specialization for my theoretical environmental knowledge.

(4) *Based on the experience and perspective you have gained from this project, how might the process you have been engaged in be improved?*
As the only student researcher on the conference planning committee, I felt like I was able to bring a valuable perspective that resulted in an extraordinary event. However, I felt that the cost was unrealistic for students to be able to attend, and in retrospect, I wish I had advocated free or very discounted cost for students (like free, no food provided). I also know that myself and another researcher-friend struggled a bit with the lack of structured supervision (unlike our post-secondary conditioning). Overall however, this was a very rewarding and valuable experience for me.

(5) Are there any other issues you feel are important to be documented associated with this project?
Firstly, I think we really have a chance to come up with some solid action on climate change with a plausible progressive coalition, power-sharing federal executive power. And **consensus-based sustainable development policy development**!

The most recent scientific data suggests that most estimates regarding climate change effects on ecosystems were underestimated and happening sooner than expected. The solution was brought up by (RCE conference of the America's keynote) Severn Cullis-Suzuki, when at the age of 12 she addressed the closing of the Rio Earth Summit (1992); "If you don't know how to fix it, then stop breaking it!"

Brooke Leurer

**RCE – Building Sustainable Infrastructure (including water and energy)
Final Report**

Initially my main activity was devoted almost exclusively to getting in contact with individuals and organizations. I spent considerable time sending emails and only slowed down during this summer, although I still continued sending a few emails up to the present. Roughly half of my hours were spent trying to get in contact with people through email. Earlier in the year I made over half a dozen phone calls to various people to obtain information or to schedule meetings. Most of the phone calls weren't very productive, however a few were helpful at least to schedule meetings. I met with a few individuals early on which, in a couple of cases, seemed to help with my research. However, I found that for the type of research I did for this project it wasn't necessary to meet with anyone since anything that needed to be discussed could be done just as easily through email. I also found email easier as I was able to present myself and what I was asking for in a clear and concise way, in a single document, and that way people could read it and respond within their own time frame. While email proved useful for me, I found the majority of people either don't respond (even after resending the email) or they do respond to tell you they have no initiatives that fit the survey's criteria, which sometimes is either not true or they don't realize they do indeed have useful information. Many times I replied to these people to clarify the information I needed and to actually give them examples of initiatives from the organizations they work for (City of Regina for example) that would fit my research criteria. I usually didn't get another response. I came to the conclusion that if people want to get back to you they will, and if they don't want to then they will ignore you all together or try to get out of it. Hounding people or giving them timelines doesn't always work if they are not eager to respond in the first place. Although most people were not very helpful, there were a number of people who both responded and gave me information on initiatives undertaken by their organizations. I found that these people understood what I was looking for and were more than happy to oblige.

The rest of my time was spent gathering information from various websites and entering information into the online survey. Since many people didn't respond to my emails I decided to gather the information myself online, which was fairly easy since a lot of organizations post their initiatives or projects on their web pages for viewing. Initially I rewrote what I found online, but I later realized that I should be documenting projects as they are presented online rather than putting them into my own words. I also think the best thing to do in the absence of a response is to try to represent the organization as they would themselves. I found the RCE survey tool a straightforward and easy tool for anyone to use and I think if more people looked at it they would have a better understanding of what we are asking for and would not feel that we were asking for a lot of time and energy on their part. In total I entered 57 initiatives into the survey including a few entered by someone I emailed who was willing to participate. I think I covered a lot of ground but there are also a lot of organizations and initiatives that I did not get to in the amount of time allotted for the project.

A very small portion of my time was dedicated to attending the student researcher meetings once a month. I attended almost all of them with the exception of a few because of conflicts with my school schedule and workload. In some ways I found the meetings helpful to keep me on track, to update me on where we are at as a group, to make any necessary announcements, and to hear the other student researchers experiences. But I also found that most of the time I didn't really have anything new to report and I just ended up unintentionally repeating myself. Sometimes I came out of the meetings feeling like they helped, and sometimes I didn't. Nevertheless I think it is important and necessary to have meetings for the reasons I mentioned above.

Overall I would say I do not have a great understanding of ESD for sustainable infrastructure or ESD as a whole. This project helped me to learn about specific initiatives in Saskatchewan and how they are providing education on sustainable infrastructure. Basically, my knowledge is more narrow and specific rather than an overall and general knowledge. Regarding sustainable infrastructure I found that there is a lot of overlapping of different groups and organizations, which I think is very positive and productive. For example, Communities of Tomorrow, The City of Regina, and the National Research Council have come together on numerous projects. Since infrastructure is such a big and broad area it takes a lot of the larger corporations and organizations participation to get things moving and certainly now with the environment being a hot topic today, I've noticed this happening in Saskatchewan. The City of Saskatoon has teamed up with Road Map 2020 to develop their Energy and Greenhouse Gas Management Plan, the University of Saskatchewan recently opened the School of Environment and Sustainability, and the Government of Saskatchewan launched the Go Green funding, just to name a few. Along with these new projects and initiatives springing up in Saskatchewan there seems to be a growing awareness and desire to educate people about sustainability on a broader level, like the City and University of Regina offering composting workshops, or Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council's website that provides information on where to recycle in Saskatchewan as part of it's promotion of waste reduction. This is a good start but there are still many improvements to be made in educating all people about sustainable infrastructure especially because it encompasses issues from highways and roads to waste reduction to engineering and building design and so on. There needs to be a better connection between

grassroots organizations and larger corporations and governments. Which brings me to my point about ESD itself: education is the most important tool for generating a well-informed public which in turn will have the knowledge and energy to build a more sustainable world. We absolutely cannot achieve sustainability without education at all levels. Period.

While education on sustainable infrastructure has nothing to do with my film major per se, it is an important part of my life. I like to think that I am fairly environmentally conscious and this project, as well as the increased awareness within the public right now, has really shifted my ways of thinking. For starters it makes me just plain happy to read about a project like Saskatoon's Rivergreen Ecovillage. No, excited, optimistic, and closer to nature are better descriptions of how that project makes me feel. But I have also found other projects or organizations useful to me personally. In fact it was Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council's website that I went to in search of information about composting. They had contacts of people who sell (and deliver) compost bins ready to go with worms and bedding. I am now an official indoor composter. On a broader level the idea of sustainability has increased my awareness of steps I can take in my own life to live a more sustainable and eco-friendly life: I've switched to energy saving light bulbs, I use biodegradable cleaning and household products, I've started buying organic food, I've cut down on my water usage, I've gone vegetarian, and I am currently obsessed with switching all of my personal care products over to organic, paraben and pthalate free, vegetarian or vegan (biodegradable, fair trade, sustainable, recyclable, etc.) products that are good for my own health and for the environment as well. Those are just a few steps I've taken, and I think that overall my research has certainly had a positive impact on my life.

I think some improvement needs to be made in the ways researchers and the RCE itself connect with organizations and the public. As I said before it is kind of a problem with people wanting to be involved, but it is also a problem because the type of information we are gathering doesn't need to be discussed in depth over an hour-long meeting. People simply need to fill out a short survey. And the fact that I could simply go to a website and get all the information I needed without a response from anyone made me wonder why I spent so much time trying to contact organizations, and why those organizations would want to respond.. However, I do think that the point of this research is education, and connecting with organizations is incredibly important so there needs to be new strategies to help with this. But I think a lot of challenges are part of a learning experience for a new organization that I'm sure will grow and progress over time.

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Final Student Researcher Report
Farming and local food production, consumption, and waste minimization
Researcher: Emma Findlater

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Work Activities:
- Researched for and entered data in *Local Food in Saskatchewan* map
    - Available at http://maps.google.ca/maps?client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&hl=en&tab=wl
    - The map identifies producers, retailers, Farmers Markets, and restaurants growing/selling locally produced food.
    - Over 230 entries with names, products, address, phone numbers, email address, etc.
    - Over 15,000 hits as of November 30, 2008
    - Research involved networking at the Regina Local Bounty Conference, internet research, contacting Saskatchewan Farmers' Markets, and contacting Saskatchewan retailers and restaurants.
- Created two surveys, one for local producers and another for consumers
    - To understand the local food market, the dynamic between producers and consumers, producer/consumer values, issues involved with local food production/distribution/ consumption, the actors connected within the province, information flow, use of technology to communicate and circulate information, and personal involvement inventory
    - Involved extensive research into the best methods to obtain this information. This was done mostly through use of academic journals and books. In particular using the following methods:
        - Personal Involvement Inventories
        - List of Values (LOV)
        - Technology Adoption Model
- Research and data entry into Sask RCE Research Survey for ESD theme area
    - Entered 22 ESD initiatives into the Survey
    - Most of these ESD projects are not well known making them difficult to find
    - While many Saskatchewan producers are supplying to the provincial market and producing in a sustainable fashion, ESD projects directly related to production were scarce
    - I was unsuccessful at finding any ESD projects related directly to waste minimization
    - Research involved networking at the RCE Americas Conference and the Regina Local Bounty Conference, internet based research, telephoning and emailing individuals and organizations
    - For the most part, telephoning and emailing was unsuccessful as very few people replied. This may be because I was working on this during the summer months when a lot of people go on vacation.
- Attended student researcher meetings over the summer months

I would estimate roughly 5% of my time was directed toward attending student meetings, 30% toward the *Local Food in Saskatchewan* map, 30% toward RCE Survey, and 35% toward the producer and consumer surveys.

New Learnings:
ESD projects within my theme area seem to be very new and slowly emerging. After talking with farmers producing for the local market, it seems many barriers to the development and success of the local food market exist within the province. These include unrealistic consumer pricing expectations, seasonal availability of locally produced food in Saskatchewan, lack of widespread consumer interest, lack of infrastructure within the province to allow for efficient and effective distribution and growth of the local food market, and lack of government support. As most ESD projects are relatively new in the Saskatchewan local food sector, I think within the coming years if the popularity of ESD continues to grow the province will see a substantial growth in the number of projects. If these projects are successful in helping the sector overcome current obstacles, the future and development of the provincial local food sector would be very promising. However, realistically a lot of work has to be done, not only with consumer awareness which most ESD projects are centered around, but within government, agriculture, infrastructure creation and more.

Personally, I am uncertain of the potential ESD has to spur large-scale change within this sector. While I think ESD has an important role to play, many barriers exist to the development of the Saskatchewan local food sector that I do not think ESD can overcome or at least cannot overcome alone. For example, Saskatchewan produced food could never satisfy a healthy well rounded diet as production and variety is greatly limited by season and climate. These barriers do not mean there is not ample room for growth in this sector, but it may explain why Saskatchewan seems to be behind the curve with regards to local food. I think ESD can be employed successfully within the local food sector but that the issues it is unable to address with regards to the development of the sector cannot be overlooked.

This project has helped me appreciate the role ESD has to play in nearly every aspect of life. As I am considering pursuing further education in the field of food security, working on this project has broadened my perspective with regards to sustainability.

Activities

- *Activity Log*

Approximately 75 % of my time was spent contacting organizations, creating database entries for review of the organizations, doing data entry and following up with organizations. As well, 25% of my time was spent preparing for meetings, attending meetings and following up on meetings. I have entered six projects into the database and am in the process of preparing three more entries. The research assistant who was employed in this theme area during the first part of 2008 completed twenty entries.

- *Strategies*

During my short contract with this project (I was employed in October and my contract ended December 15th, 2008), I contacted organizations hosting education initiatives for sustainable development. Due to working with a Community Based Organization (CBO) in the city, I had some existing contacts with organizations. As well, other members of the Health and Healthy Lifestyles committee also had contacts with various organizations. I believe that having already existing contacts with organizations made getting the information for the database easier.

A strategy I found successful when contacting organizations was explaining the RCE as well as the inventory before asking for a summary (or to be directed to a website where there was a summary) of any educational initiatives that would qualify for cataloging. Then, I filled out the template and sent it back to the contact person, who would let me know if there was anything their organization would like added or changed. This strategy was met with a lot of success during my short contract (I was hired in October and my contract ends December 15th) because it both minimized the work that the organization had to undertake and gave them a level of control and ownership over the entry.

New Learnings:

i. *Trends within Health Education for Sustainable Development*

Within the Saskatchewan region, I have noticed that there is a trend concerning which organizations are hosting education initiatives promoting sustainable development in health. While the Medicare system continues to operate predominantly in a reactive, unsustainable fashion, CBOs and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) host numerous education initiatives for sustainable development in health. As well, many Aboriginal organizations and communities are engaging in innovative health education initiatives.

ii. *Trends within Education for Sustainable Development in General*

In mainstream society, education for sustainable development is mostly understood as an environmental issue. However, sustainability is becoming more and more commonly associated with a number of disciplines. Indeed, health education initiatives are not often viewed as promoting sustainability. In addition, mainstream health education is frequently offered in the form of billboards and pamphlets. While these forms of education provide an opportunity for individuals to get new information, it does not actively engage the participant in relearning more sustainable health behaviours. However, many of the initiatives catalogued do engage participants in this relearning, such as Sustainable Tools for Youth, Planned Parenthood Regina's Young Women's Wellness Program and Completing the Circle: End of Life Care with Aboriginal Families.

iii. *Applicability of this work to other areas*

As I am finishing up my Bachelor of Arts majoring in Health Studies and Women's Studies, working with RCE has added another dimension to my knowledge of health. The projects that I have catalogued have provided me with real-world examples of how health education can be sustainable. I will draw on these experiences within my studies and future work. My time and process working as a student researcher with the RCE was positive. It could have been improved if the student researchers were allowed more time to collect and catalogue initiatives.

Work Related Activities

During the duration of the project, I have engaged in multiple work related activities. The majority of my work hours were spent searching the internet for relevant projects and initiatives, and then emailing these projects and initiatives to get feedback or other information. I spent approximately 60% of my work hours searching and emailing. The use of the internet was extremely significant for my area on community and cultural sustainability because many projects did not have information available elsewhere. Many of the people that did not get back to me after emailing, so finding information on websites was extremely important. I spent another 15% of my time attending community events related to the initiatives and projects that I was documenting. Going to community events was helpful because I would obtain information on other projects and initiatives, and have the opportunity to network. Collecting and entering data was another significant use of my work hours. Typically, I collected the data in word files and would then enter the data into the template. Attending researcher meetings took up the last 5% of my time. While I found it somewhat useful to attend meetings, sometimes I felt as though the same information was being discussed multiple times and it wasn't always a useful usage of my work hours.

Student Researcher: Kim Dohms, *Reconnecting With Natural Prairie Ecosystems Working Group*

Objective	Progress	Percent of Time Allocated
Develop template for collecting information; use business cards and email signatures to facilitate communications.	Complete; business cards and template in use for research communications.	1%
Develop list of potential entries into inventory database	List complete; excel spreadsheet with 97 entries compiled.	10%
Contact those on list; grow list and increase entries into database	Despite repeat contact attempts, 7 did not respond; 10 determined as out of target area; 1 contact no longer involved in research; 65 entered online into database; 14 still in progress (waiting on information from contacts); contact through email, phone, and in-person meetings.	70%
Attend Student Researcher meetings; network with other student researchers	Attended 6 student researcher meetings and worked together with other researchers throughout contract term.	5%
Participate in Student Researcher-led workshop/presentation at RCE Conference May 26-27	With other researchers, prepared and presented poster at RCE Conference May 26-27; chaired morning Reconnecting with Natural Prairie Ecosystems session.	10%
Deliver final report and database	Database entries in progress.	1%
Create searchable database linked into RCE website with map of Native Prairie Ecosystems ESD initiatives	Mapping options researched; googlemaps account set up; currently investigating compatibility of googlemaps with RCE website; ongoing.	2%
Other activities	Distributed Joel Salatin posters; attended conference trip planning meeting and assisted with trip planning.	1%

Strategies employed

1) Creating list of initiatives

    iv. To create a list of education initiatives that are striving to reconnect people with natural prairie ecosystems, I used knowledge of programs and people gained during previous employment at Nature Saskatchewan. From this knowledge, I formed the starting entries for the list and then used these contacts to find additional programs and people to add to this list. I also used suggestions from other student researchers and working group coordinators.

    v. This combination of strategies was the most successful at creating this list of contacts.

2) Contacting programs/projects/sites/etc.

    vi. For contacts that I had an established relationship with and others that I did not, I used a combination of email, phone, and networking during the RCE conference to gather information for the inventory.

    vii. I had the most success gathering information if I collected the background information I required from websites and promotional material, entered them into the template I had created, and sent these on to the contacts for additional information, revision, confirmation and approval.

New Learnings:

- During my research, I noticed that all programs that I listed in my inventory were often in strong partnerships with other agencies and there was very little duplication in effort and activities between agencies and their programs. All the agencies seemed to find their niche whether it was the target audience, type of material, or delivery approach that set them apart.

- In the theme area of Reconnecting with Natural Prairie Ecosystems, education for sustainable development seems to fall into two different strategies – very interactive, hands-on, and involved, through programs like on-farm visits, workshops, or planting prairie gardens, or passive through activities like educational posters, or online resources.

- This work is applicable to my field of study in that it allows me to identify and provide additional information on grassland species at risk (i.e. Sprague's Pipit) to programs that may require this information. In addition, this work provided me with a greater understanding and knowledge of education for sustainable development programs throughout the province and link some of these programs with two organizations that I volunteer for – Nature Saskatchewan and Friends of Wascana Marsh – in addition to providing a place to increase the profile of those organizations.

- By participating in this process, I believe it has already been improved. Developing templates for information gathering, sharing our challenges and successes, creating an online survey tool, and identifying the next steps for this process has improved it throughout the process. Using the next steps we have identified, such as improvements to database by making it searchable among other things and mapping programs and projects, this process will be further improved and could likely be used as a model for other RCEs seeking to do this same thing in their area.

By Peta White

Upon hearing about this project, I was eager to participate because I saw so much opportunity to link with the work I am currently engaged in with my PhD research. However, as this job unfolded I saw myself taking on a different, more facilitative, role. As I was not clearly focused on just one themed area working group I had the flexibility to support all of my fellow student researchers in their efforts to locate ESD projects and events. By the end of the project, I realised that this facilitative position is very important as the entire group benefited from some coordination.

Work Activities:
Group Facilitation – offering meeting reminders and agendas, taking meeting minutes and posting these onto the RCE website, supporting fellow student researchers and thinking strategically about what could ease the processes of information collection.

Survey Development – it became apparent that all student researchers were collecting similar information. Initially, I assisted the group by working to develop a form that would enable the collection of similar information in a similar format. This idea developed with further conversation into the development of an online survey. I researched possible online survey programs and presented them to the group who made the decision to utilize the freeware web program that was used to create the RCE website (Drupal). I then learned the programming requirements and developed our survey. All members of the student researcher group tested the survey and once consensus was achieved we made an announcement for individuals and groups to begin to use the survey to enter their own data. Some ongoing management of survey data and tweaking of the survey was required.

Data Entry – was important to capture the many and varied projects and events that occur in the research field. I spent considerable time reviewing the data and offering suggestions for further projects and events.

RCE Conference of the Americas – was an important event for the RCE and as a student researcher I felt it was essential to be present and to offer as much assistance as I could. I took on many roles at the conference and I am confident that my assistance added to the success of the event.

Poster Development – in an effort to share the RCE Student Researcher process and findings it was decided that we needed a communication tool. Kim Dohms and I spent quite some time designing a poster that was included in the RCE conference poster session and has since been displayed at many other events, including the international RCE Conference in Barcelona (2008).

Successes and Challenges:
Successes:
Working with fellow student researchers
Working with the RCE leadership team
Investigating the correct online survey tools/software (comparing the many available options and offering informed opinion.
Being involved with the RCE Conference of the Americas, in a practical, hands-on way

Challenges:
Not being able to complete my initial research plan (I had planed to be more involved with data collection, however as the facilitative roles unfolded I found my time being consumed in different ways).
Supporting student researchers in ways that were useful.

Strategies employed:
Participation in this project has provided essential experience and understanding in how to effectively support similar projects in the future. I believe that having someone in a group facilitation role is essential to the smooth development and continued success of the project. As the project unfolded I found that my time was best utilized supporting my colleagues by developing the survey tool, conference support, and poster.

New Learnings:

(1) education for sustainable development (ESD) in your specific theme area (e.g. climate change, sustainable infrastructure, etc.) occurring in the RCE Saskatchewan region (for example, are there any interesting patterns or trends in the ESD projects you have identified)

As I worked on the cross cutting themes I did not have any particular findings in relation to the above-mentioned areas. I was very interested in the breadth of projects identified however. As I scanned the data I was constantly impressed with how many ESD initiatives are being conducted in and around Saskatchewan. I look forward to having this information presented in a way that makes searching easier. I intend to use this data to look for gaps and opportunities for further ESD work.

(2) the nature of education for sustainable development in general

In my work for the RCE Conference of the Americas I was involved with developing a keynote presentation that set the stage for conversations around ESD at the beginning of the conference. I utilized local faculty working in the ESD field and together we designed a presentation that involved audience participation. The event came together very well and as I collated the information from the session I was very impressed with the outcomes. Audience members were asked to define ESD and then to describe if/how ESD is different to EE (environmental education). The results were fascinating, especially given my own biases. I was pleased to have been given this opportunity.

(3) the applicability of this work to other areas (e.g., to your studies and research in your own field of study, to other areas of your livelihood and/or lifestyle)

As this project unfolded I gained valuable experience and understandings about how to best facilitate work of this nature in the future. Having one person focused on group support and facilitation was invaluable. This allowed the leaders to lead and the student researchers to get on with their research. My main task became supporting to enable others to get along and do the important work.

I also believe that the processes implemented in this project are worthy of documentation and as such, I will be undertaking to write an academic paper describing the processes utilized. Many other RCE organisations have been eager to find out more about this project and by preparing a document that describes the project (pluses and minuses) I hope to be sharing the wealth of our knowledge.

Potential Improvements to this project:
Having a person in a facilitation role is essential. This has been my most significant learning from my involvement in this project. I hope to take this learning and utilize it in many projects in the future.

Are there any other issues you feel are important to be documented associated with this project?
Yes, the leadership provided to this project and the Sask RCE in general is essential to its success. It has been a pleasure working with and for the Sask RCE. I would certainly look for further opportunities to continue this association.