



NELSON DISTRICT TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

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Columbia Basin Trust
445 13 Ave #300,
Castlegar, BC V1N 1G1

March 10, 2023.

Dear Columbia Basin Trust Board Members,

I write this letter in support of funding for CBEEN, the Columbia Basin Environmental Educators Network. Many educators in SD 8 (Kootenay Lake), including myself, have had the fortune to take advantage of field trip and guest educator opportunities for our students that were provided through CBEEN. Students love these activities, and as educators we believe they provide long-term dividends as they help students understand their connection to and impact on the environment. They encourage students to act as environmental stewards, live sustainable healthy lives, and become more engaged with their communities.

At the start of every school year, teachers race to book workshops through CBEEN for their classes because they know how hard it is to organize, fund, and lead engaging outdoor programming. The Nelson and District Teachers' Association and its members were, therefore, alarmed to learn that all this amazing programming is about to be defunded. This seems to be contrary to the direction we should go. In an age of environmental degradation and climate crisis, we should instead be doing everything in our power to create positive change for the future. We need to equip youth with the knowledge, connection and hope to be that change. Removing funding for youth and their teachers to have quality experiences and learning outdoors will not do that.

In addition, CBEEN provides many opportunities for professional development for teachers, as well as learning for the public at large. Presently, some of our teachers are taking part in a course to learn Ktunaxa. Without CBEEN, this chance to learn this language and move forward with acts of reconciliation would likely be lost, or at the least greatly diminished. I therefore ask you to reconsider your decision to no longer fund CBEEN. An organization that has had such significant impact on numerous students and educators would be difficult to recreate if disbanded.

Thank you for your consideration and for all you do for our beautiful basin.

With much appreciation on behalf of our members,

Carla Wilson

Carla Wilson
President of the NDTA