



OCEAN BRIDGE STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

JUNE 13, 2019

Delta Hotel - Thunder Bay, Ont.

Present:

James Bartram
Joana Augusto
Scott Bohachyk
Mike Wong
Lisa Nyman
Nicole Straughan
Ailsa Barry
Matt Miller
Kareina D'Souza

Minutes:

1. Introductions

- Quick introductions of committee members/Ocean Bridge alumni Matt Miller and Kareina D'Souza
- Matt: Doctorate student working with ocean plastics. Expresses thanks for bringing alumni out – says Ocean Bridge was a great opportunity, and is very excited to give back as an alumnus.
- Kareina: Working with youth in downtown Halifax, recently did intertidal survey with some of the youth who've taken the ocean for granted. Thanks for the opportunity to join steering committee in Thunder Bay

2. Events - Montreal recap and plans for future events (speaker: James B.)

- We don't have funding secured for 2020 yet, but all indications are program will be extended and expanded. Expansion is exciting, but does cause some challenge because we don't have same depths of relationships in places like Québec as we do on west coast.
- Members of Ocean Bridge alum/current cohort attended Montreal Youth Nature Summit April 24-25. It was great opportunity to have Ocean Bridge alumni featured. Many politicians, but also big corporate leaders (WalMart, etc) and heads of big charities (CEO of WWF, Conservation Intl., etc.).
 - Ocean Wise (with help from Earth Rangers) was asked to deliver "Meaningful Engagement Session" in Montreal
 - Youth had dialogue session about values, practices and elements, as well as barriers
 - Ended with panel discussion featuring Catherine McKenna, Enrico Sala, Alexandra Cousteau
- There is discussion about Ocean Bridge repeating that workshop at international events coming down the line. We brought in local youth to Montreal this time around – would we get same response if we did it in Thunder Bay, or Lisbon, or China, for example?

Comments:

Mike Wong: Expansion should be approached cautiously. Situation internationally is very different than in Canada, or even North America. The urgency and scale isn't the same. We have challenges in Canada, but nothing compared to the urgency in other places around the world. Ocean Bridge is a "pleasure cruise" compared to what you'd get in Asia or in Africa. That's not a critique of the program – it's just the reality.

James: Maybe the best opportunity in that path is more around Impact 5, when a lot of people will be in Canada on their home turf. It might be a better space for that.

Mike: What are the ocean conservation issues the world is facing, and how the youth can grab that and run with it? Issues like loss of livelihood, loss of species.

Matt: Speaking about Ocean Literacy to a room of international youth might fall flat if those youth have larger-scale problems, like clean drinking water.

Mike: We've brought some really energetic youth to Hawaii, we brought them to Poland, we want to bring them to Marseille, but they didn't really have a role – what do they want to do?

Matt: Could consider putting "meaningful action" in the hands of youth, rather than acting as "token youth" on behalf of organization.

Kareina: I enjoyed the aspect of being able to plan our ocean service. If it was all pre-planned – what would be the point? It's also a great opportunity to travel, something many wouldn't otherwise have the chance to.

James: Model of Saturna Island (bonus trip organized last year with extra funding) will become part of programming with “federal family”. It would be a “mini-version” of Saturna voyage for federal employees. We think it'd be good for oceans if federal departments work more collaboratively and young professionals have access to these experiences.

James: If we have a successful program, you get these kinds of residual opportunities. Not the main purpose of the program, but if we can spread the love a little, that's a good thing.

3. 2018 Recap/Objectives - Even better if... (speaker: James B.)

- 4 things we report to ESDC:
 - Culture of Service
 - Geographic Representation
 - Representative participation
 - Real tangible benefits to ocean health, ocean literacy

- Culture of service: Are participants of Ocean Bridge more likely to initiate or participate in activities like shoreline cleanup, volunteer for parent council, contribute to civic engagement or in their home communities?

- We've had some strong communications and outreach activities. This year, we seem to have more environmental assessment type things – and we'd like to keep moving in that direction (while maintaining importance of education) and cover all ocean health.

ACTIVITY: Brainstorming on how to improve the above four concepts within Ocean Bridge program.

- Culture of service:
 - Connecting current and past cohorts (including continuing Alum newsletter to promote opportunities, as well as activities of current cohort)
 - Active offers from steering committee members to meet/connect with OB youth

- Ocean Conservation:
 - Finding ideal balance between education/communications and field-based/environmental action.
 - Habitat restoration – Local/On Expedition?
 - Species propagation?
 - Microprotected areas?
 - Multi-year monitoring projects
 - Awareness-Advocacy-Action
 - Specialists on staff
 - Different specialists bring and encourage different opportunities

James: You need a community to be ocean literate so that they don't go backwards when they do make gains.

James: maybe we can do a better job on connecting our Ocean Bridge youth with our experts and our people on the ground

Matt: I would have loved having national calls with the actual researchers

Mike: On Ocean Bridge application, we could have a question that would force applicants to go through the Ocean Wise website and learn

- Geographic Representation
 - Targeted recruitment
 - Peer-to-peer recruitment
 - Proportional to population concentrations?
 - Nicole: That's how the applications start, but numbers get shifted (from Ontario, for example) to other places (like B-C) based on proportions of submissions received
 - Easier if more than 40 places each year
 - Targeted/encourage communications/social media in underrepresented regions

Comments:

- Matt: Would investing in youth in larger population centres ensure they can reach more people?
 - Lisa: But it's important to remember that in larger centres, many of those opportunities already exist – must also offer opportunity to those who don't have any
 - Lisa: Life is different if you don't live on the water, you're not thinking about water.
- Representative participation:
 - Grassroots recruiting
 - New Canadians
 - Multilingual recruitment materials
 - Target
 - Alumni visits to ?

Comments:

James: Important to balance societal gains, where everyone regardless of their background can thrive. At the same time, you want high-performance, high-impact program that brings to light ocean conservation

For example, YMCA targets something like 70-80% youth at risk – Ocean Wise is different, but still something to think about.

Scott: There's an important national unity piece – what does it mean to be Canadian? Having very diverse viewpoints in the cohort and allowing them to discuss those in meaningful, constructive ways is extremely important.

Matt: As middle-class white male, we had workshops about diversity, stereotypes, struggles – I learned so much from my Indigenous colleagues and others. It was very important for me personally.

Kareina: Having that balance of people from different perspective and the “token” diverse youth. It doesn't feel like tokenism if there's a lot of diversity.

Mike: It's not the fine-tuning that will make Ocean Bridge make a difference in society – it's the scale and reach.

James: To get young professionals to spend months away from home without earning income – the world has changed. They might do a week or two, but any more is a lot to them.

3. Ottawa Plan - Objectives - Celebrate and amplify

James: January 2020: Given that it's the end of funding phase, we'll be celebrating what has been a tremendously successful program.

Ailsa: Museum of Nature has a lot of capacity – but only if we know far enough in advance. If you want activity rooms for breakout groups, we need to make sure they're available.

In Vancouver we did: Coding workshop, networking night/human library, francophone soirée, eco-friendly fashion show.

Ailsa: The Museum just opened new ocean plastics exhibit. Ocean Bridge could potentially take over the entire marine section for a day.

Ailsa: We have a theatre too for screening

Nicole: We do have a youth (Pierre-Antoine) who wants to create a short non-fiction documentary related to ocean issues and people across Canada.

Nicole: Lake Superior communications team is also planning to put together a few short videos. Another youth (Frankie) is vlogging all year long.

Could use Cisco Unit for call-in education session

Nicole: In Ottawa, two mandatory events:

- Final wrap-up dinner (Monday/Tuesday)
- Human library networking event (on extended hours night)
- Rest of nights are completely open to youth's service projects

Comments:

Scott: Would be great to connect other Canada Service Corps members in Ottawa

Nicole: We would love to have other coalition members join us

Scott: Could be some very interesting contacts at University of Ottawa, or Carleton University

Kareina: We ran a successful trivia night during Oceans Week – went to a bar that already hosts trivia night. It was essentially an Ocean's Week trivia night takeover.

Scott: Connecting with embassies/other nations?

Mike: What's the goal, is it to reach parliamentarians?

James: What we want is for the youth to be able to share their experiences.

Nicole: The urban expedition is the youth's opportunity to take everything they've learned and done over the course of the year then come together and collaborate on really creative service projects.

James: There is a budget for Ottawa for the youth.

Ailsa: At what time during the year will we know what projects the youth are doing in Ottawa?

Nicole: A little different than last year – but they're going to start brainstorming, talking about ideas as a group in July. In September, we'll know what the projects are, and over following months they'll be fine-tuned and completed.

Kareina: Last year was a bit of a blur – we were always moving, and we didn't get to see each other very much.

Nicole: We are planning on limiting it to 5 projects, with each person planning or supporting just one project.

Nicole: We didn't have much time to promote the projects. This year, we hope to start promoting them well in advance.

James: Can we do something like Hill Day? (set up booths with coalition members and invite parliamentarians, senators, etc. to join)

Ailsa: You could possibly get some booths set up on the Hill as well.

Matt: Introducing the youth to their local MPs (or a letter-writing campaign)

Matt: Would be important to get on the media involved ahead of time.

Mike: December issue of CanGeo?

Ottawa Citizen / Globe And Mail / Hills Times

Mike: We can have lots of activities, lots of outreach – but what do we want from this? Let's create a plan for reaching out to parliamentarians, and for getting an article in CanGeo, for example. We need to make sure we're reaching the objectives we want out of this.

James: Primary goal is to support youth to create public debate surrounding ocean issues

James: If youth were co-creating with a government department that evening, inherently it would help them build relationships with people in those jobs

Mike: If you have 40 youth from across the country who want to walk to political leaders about ocean conversation, the media will want to buy a ticket to that.

Scott: Getting Nestle and other corporations involved, that would be really interesting.

Ailsa: We'd have room to hold that at the Museum, so that would make sense.

James: Could also have some speakers – maybe get some bigwig celebrities to speak, or alternate Ocean Bridge youth, minister, Ocean Bridge youth, etc.

Matt: Maybe we should ask the youth what they want out of it?

Ailsa: We talked about some of the soft-skills, like public speaking, needed to be successful. Is skill-development being done with this cohort?

4. 2020 plan – Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park

- Key Collaborators in Montreal? (brainstorming)
 - Montreal Science Centre
 - Biosphere
 - Montreal Port Authority
 - Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
 - Marc-Andre Blanchard, Canada's ambassador to the UN
 - Quebec History/Quebec Natural History Museum

- Does it have to be Montreal? Could it be Quebec City?

Mike: You may want to re-think, take a step back: What are the criteria? Look at the struggles trying to meet the criteria.

Nicole: Didn't quite have 40 francophone applicants this year, but I think if we advertised Sag-StL/Montreal was a french-focused program, we'd get more applicants.

James: We're trying, but we are not a bilingual program. It's an area where we can improve. If we get the expansion, you can hire a team for that exact purpose.

JUNE 14, 2019

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Jacob Porter

1. Expansion and extension - 2020 Proposal

- Four concurrent cohorts
 - Challenges
 - Opportunities
 - Threats

James: We want to take "Ocean Bridge Classic" and build a couple of streams around that. The government seems keen. We want to find a balance between growing the program, but don't want to compromise its quality.

Scott: (Re: Unpaid 3-month placements.) I think the purpose of Ocean Bridge is to reach marginalized Canadian youth who don't have service opportunities in their communities – how do placements fit into that?

James: Our job is to try and balance that as best we can. CWF does have 3-month placements that are inclusive. They can't pay them, because it has to be volunteer service, but they have a ~\$200,000 slush fund to support the youth.

Ailsa: You may be limited by the kind of organizations the youth can have placements with.

Nicole: We put in a request for updated schedule with milestones through to March 31, 2022 + comprehensive budget with a lot of requests, which includes staff wages for youth aged 16-18. Whether we'd have money for the volunteers/interns, we don't know yet.

Expanded Ocean Bridge Classic program would look like:

- Ocean Bridge Pacific
 - Haida Gwaii and Vancouver
 - Ocean Bridge Great Lakes
 - Superior/Ottawa
 - Ocean Bridge Quebec
 - Saguenay-StL/Montreal or Quebec City
 - Ocean Bridge Atlantic
 - Eastport/Halifax or St. John's
- Programs would be staggered by about one month each, so expeditions would be staggered.
- That's 160 youth, and four identical staff teams. Staff would largely be based in Vancouver, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax.

- Looking to have specific funding for Ocean Bridge youth so they don't have to go outside of org.

- Funding request also includes international conferences and other opportunities

1a) Immersive placements:

Nicole: 18-30 year-olds (20 youth per year) would be 3-month placements working with either Ocean Wise researchers or other conservation bodies that do field work. We've put in request for living expenses, training and courses they need to take before field-work. They'd live somewhere near the field site. There's also talk about this being for Ocean Bridge alumni, as a next step or transition.

Nicole: 16-18 year-olds – Letting youth entering the workforce to develop those skills, or for youth finishing high school but not yet going to college or university. Would be 20 youth for 2 months in the summer, with a few weeks of online/part-time training leading into it.

- Interpretive work on ferries
- Summer camp programs

Nicole: Youth would likely be local/regional, so they can stay with family/friends and we would only have to be responsible for them during the work day, not for entire two months.

Comments:

James: Honestly, we're not expecting the government to support this part of the proposal.

James: Ocean Bridge is in ESDC's Engagement stream. There's also stream for Work Integrated Learning (Green Corps, Summer Jobs). And the stream on Skills, which is about creating gateway opportunities for marginalized communities. Our challenge is they really want to maximize the number of permanent placements across the Canada Service Corps. That's not completely our job, but we have to show we've at least thought about it.

Ailsa: Do you have enough admin/regional support to coordinate?

Nicole: We put request for administrators who would work only on Ocean Bridge. Also increased those hours proportionally to cover extra HR staff.

James: Other questions we're thinking about is would we be able to hire the right staff if we were to ramp up this quickly? And would we be able to find 160 youth each year?

Ailsa: Are you also looking at some kind of long-term evaluation of things like alumni and how it's impacted their future choices.

Nicole: Two studies: FSU is looking at participant experience – Waterloo is studying relationships with communities and how program is received.

James: Service Canada is doing some longitudinal studies as well

James: The investment we're suggesting for 16-18 year olds would go to alumni, all kinds of interesting stuff could happen.

Kareina: When I first read the 3-month placement for 18-30 year olds, I couldn't think of anyone my age who'd be able to drop their lives and join. But if you could find a way to blend it with placements for grad/masters students, it could be more feasible.

Jacob Porter: Could look into tapping into education departments and offering credits to youth who take placements. That could help them justify financially taking 3 months away rather than for simply for "a good experience."

James: There's 12 national partners – and Ocean Bridge of those 12, we're among the more influential ones. The government really like the quality of the program and the impact. The only issue they have is the scale – they'd like it to reach more people, and it almost doesn't matter what it costs. We don't know if it's possible unless you had a 5-year window to get there. But on the other hand, it's an opportunity for Ocean Wise to take the program internationally. We want to tenfold Ocean Bridge globally in the next 5 years, so we have to make sure we don't commit everything we've got to Canada because we want to take this globally.

Ailsa: Does it all have to be in one chunk? Can we break it up in smaller blocks?...and build up to what the government wants, then it becomes manageable.

Kareina: Youth are more wary of unpaid internships now more than ever.

Lisa: It's also a lot of work for an organization to take on an intern – but it can work if it's done well.

Kareina: Indigenous aspect of program?

Nicole: Unsure we'd have the numbers, but we've had requests to incorporate Indigenous circle or another larger component in program.

James: ESDC expectation is to reach 10x as many youth with 3x the money. In that regard, Ocean Bridge doesn't help them reach the big numbers right now. Our contribution is much more in the quality of the experience. In terms of numbers, it's YMCA and Boys and Girls Club representing the big numbers.

Mike: That's another reason why we should be focusing on "Ocean Bridge Lite". The progression of the program is to continue Ocean Bridge Classic, but let's define what Ocean Bridge Lite is, which will give better investment.

Mike: Applicants should identify in their application a community group they'd work with

Scott: To increase cost or scale of numbers, what kind of connections could be made online? (all while considering communities that may lack internet access)

Matt: The backbone of Ocean Bridge Lite is Ocean Bridge Classic. Classic creates the community, and the Classic people can help the Lite group.

Nicole: Currently, minimum threshold for Canada Service Corps is 120 hours of service, which is about 1-2 hours a week.

Mike: We have the Alumni program, with the Classic, with the Lite. Can we provide option for graduates of Lite to go to a conference, for example? Then you don't have to do the Classic two-week immersive expedition with all its complexities.

James: Perhaps the best way to articulate the successes of the program is to have alumni interact with councillors, MPs, MLAs, etc. So question could be: What are we doing to set up alumni for those opportunities?

Action item:

- Invite Kareina, Matt, Jacob to future steering committee meetings and communications





