

Media Release

Once-in-a-lifetime water learning “unconference” begins today

250 young leaders converge in Alberta; Vancouverite cycling to Lab

(Exshaw, Alberta, October 21, 2010) Today, engaged young Canadian leaders representing every corner of the country are arriving in Alberta for a once-in-a-lifetime learning event that focuses on protecting our most precious natural resource: water.

The Canadian Water Innovation Lab (CWIL), beginning today until October 24, 2010 amongst the breathtaking natural beauty of the Rockies at YMCA Camp Chief Hector, located between Canmore and Calgary, is an unprecedented gathering. It’s been dubbed the “unconference for uncommon young leaders.” These 200 young leaders range in age from 18 to 35 and were selected based on demonstrated passion for water. CWIL will be teaching them the skills, insights, and connections to champion water management issues throughout the Lab, aided by fifty facilitators who were trained at the Banff Centre earlier this week.

Kristian Dubrawski, a chemical and biological engineering PhD student at the University of British Columbia, was so keen on attending CWIL he left Vancouver for YMCA Camp Chief Hector last week—by bicycle. Even though he had not applied for CWIL, he embarked on his journey October 14 “on a wing and a prayer,” hoping the organizers would allow him to participate anyways. CWIL looks forward to welcoming this road warrior, whose PhD research is in water treatment for First Nations and developing world communities. He will arrive in Banff at 4 p.m. local time today.

CWIL’s mission is to develop leadership capacity, spur community water-related projects, and place water resource management issues prominently on the public agenda. Topics to be covered include water as it relates to climate change, agriculture, municipalities and infrastructure, mountain and coastal ecosystems, and energy.

Hosted by Waterlution – A Water Learning Experience, CWIL is a natural extension of Waterlution’s mission. Waterlution has already hosted more than 35 workshops in nine provinces for over 750 youth and 100 policy-makers, scientists, business, Aboriginal, and community leaders — exceptional people looking for creative solutions to our complex water resource management problems. Water holds a central place in the Canadian imagination. Waterlution builds on that emotional connection to get water issues onto centre stage. “Water is absolutely the number one issue we’ll be facing this century,” says Karen Kun, Waterlution’s co-founder and Director. “In Canada, it’s something we take for granted. We don’t understand how closely it touches on every aspect of our lives. Waterlution’s goal is to help people understand that and learn the skills to create concrete positive changes in their hometowns.”

Rather than a typical “talking heads” event, participants will learn experientially through field trips and one-to-one interactions with mentors such as water resource practitioners, policy makers, activists, educators, and Aboriginal and community leaders. These mentors include such water luminaries as R.W. (Bob) Sandford, the EPCOR Chair of the Canadian Partnership Initiative in support of United Nations “Water for Life” Decade; Alex Salki, a research biologist with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans; Tony Maas, WWF-Canada's national advisor on freshwater policy and planning; Professor Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, joint faculty member in Social Work and Aboriginal Studies at the University of Toronto; and David Henderson, Managing Director of XPV Capital Corporation and a member of the 2009 Top 40 under 40.

“New and long-term pressures threaten our water resources but our current policy and management approaches are woefully outdated,” says Kun. “There is a need for a safe □space — spanning generations, sectors, and cultures — in which solutions can be developed collaboratively. That is what CWIL is all about.”

When:

October 21 to 24, 2010

For event schedule, go to http://www.waterlution.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/AGENDA_CWIL_final-Oct15.pdf. Media is invited for opening night, field tours on October 22, and the closing presentations.

Opening night: October 21 @ 7:30 p.m.

Field Tours: See agenda

Closing presentations: October 24 @ 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Where:

YMCA Camp Chief Hector

For directions, see: <http://www.ymcacalgary.org/web/Default.aspx?cid=3482&lang=1>

Photos and updates:

Media photos will be taken the weekend of October 23/24 and uploaded to <http://waterlution.org>.

To get instant, daily updates from the Lab, follow @TheLab2010 on Twitter

Participants

CWIL’s participants come from all over Canada:

Province	# Attendees	Province	# Attendees
Alberta	51	Northwest Territories	3
British Columbia	28	Ontario	41
Manitoba	10	Prince Edward Island	1
New Brunswick	1	Quebec	13
Newfoundland	2	Saskatchewan	14
Nova Scotia	5	Yukon	5

And by city:

City Name	Province	# Attendees	City	Province	# Attendees
Aldergrove	BC	1	London	ON	1
Antigonish	NS	1	Markham	ON	1
Barrie	ON	1	Millet	AB	1
Beaconsfield	QC	1	Montreal	QC	7
Beaumont	AB	1	Moose Jaw	SK	1
Belleville	ON	2	Nanaimo	BC	2
Boucherville	QC	1	Nelson	BC	1
Bowen Island	BC	1	North Vancouver	BC	1
Burnaby	BC	2	Oakville	ON	1
Calgary	AB	19	Ottawa	ON	6
Camrose	AB	4	Pembroke	ON	1
Capreol	ON	1	Pickering	ON	1
Cardston	AB	1	Port Coquitlam	BC	1
Christian Island	ON	1	Québec	QC	2
Colinton	AB	1	Radium Hot Springs	BC	1
Conne River	NF	1	Regina	SK	6

Delta	BC	1	Baltimore	ON	1
Edmonton	AB	15	Russell	MB	1
Elgin	ON	1	Salt Spring Island	BC	1
Emyvale	PEI	1	Saskatoon	SK	5
Fenwick	ON	1	Spruce Grove	AB	1
Fort McMurray	AB	1	St John's	NF	1
Fort Smith	NWT	1	St. Albert	AB	1
Garden River	ON	2	St. Catharines	ON	1
Gatineau	QC	2	Stoney Creek	ON	1
Guelph	ON	2	Swift Current	SK	1
Haines Junction	YK	1	Toronto	ON	12
Halifax	NS	2	Vancouver	BC	9
Hartney	MB	1	Vernon	BC	2
Harvie Heights	AB	1	Victoria	BC	4
Hay River	NWT	1	Wallace	NS	1
High River	AB	1	Waterloo	ON	1
Jasper	AB	1	Waterton Park	AB	1
Kamloops	BC	1	Weyburn	SK	1
Kentville	NS	1	Whitehorse	YK	4
Kitchener	ON	2	Winnipeg	MB	8
Lakeville	NB	1	Woodstock	ON	1
Westmorland County					
Leduc	AB	1	Yellowknife	NWT	1
Lethbridge	AB	1			

For more information, interview participants and/or the organizers, and attend as media, contact:

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About Waterlution – A Water Learning Experience

Founded in 2003 by social entrepreneurs Karen Kun and Tatiana Glad, Waterlution is a water learning organization that brings together young leaders interested or working on water-related topics – for peer-to-peer and inter-generational programs. Workshops and activities often take place over a weekend or are customized to work with partners and groups at selected events.

To date, Waterlution has already hosted more than 35 workshops in nine provinces for some 750 youth and 100 scientists, business, Aboriginal, and community leaders, and policy makers — exceptional people looking for creative solutions to our complex water resource management problems.