

## **NCLGA Student Mentorship Opportunity 2019**

May 13, 2019

From May 7-10<sup>th</sup> I had the privilege of being able to accompany Council to Williams Lake for the North Central Local Government Association conference. The conference provided an opportunity to understand how municipalities work together to solve problems that are exclusive to Northern B.C. I was amazed to see how the communication between municipalities was pleasant and productive with a constant emphasis on making our communities a better place to live and work in.

The theme for this year's NCLGA conference was '*naturally resourceful*'. I found this a very fitting theme, as the first activity I was able to participate in was a tour of the Gibraltar Mine just north of Williams Lake. Seeing an active mine up close and personal was truly remarkable, and it gave me a greater appreciation of how resilient our northern communities are when it comes to our dependence of natural resources. The tour and presentations made by the mining company clearly demonstrated how intertwined our local economies are with natural resources.

The following day was the first real day of the conference sessions. I attended sessions on Emerging Trends in North Central B.C., Tourism in the North, Universal Childcare, and Species at Risk to name a few. I found all the presentations very interesting, but the Species at Risk session was the most intriguing. It provided a platform for many different perspectives on the Provincial Caribou Recovery Program to present their ideas and discuss viable solutions with other municipal stakeholders.

The second day of presentations provided me the opportunity to learn more about the great work the Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) is doing in Northern B.C. As a UNBC student I am well aware of the great work NDIT does with newly graduated students, and it was great to be able to network with some of their interns who were in attendance at the conference. I also was able to attend a session on 'Preparing for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure in Northern & Rural

Communities'. I found this session not only relevant for today's transportation demands, but also notably educational in regard to the various levels of charging stations and the costs associated with each level of station. The day ended with a wonderfully attended banquet that provided me an opportunity to network with elected leaders from other communities in North and Central B.C. Through this valuable networking opportunity, I was able to get a glimpse of some of the innovative work going on within our neighbouring communities in the north.

The final day of the conference was full of more informative presentations on Code of Conduct, Local Government Funding Initiatives, Universal Design for our Communities, and The Risk of Wildfire and Flood. The presentation on Wildfire and Flood Risk provided an opportunity to learn from members of the communities hit hardest by the recent natural disasters about how they managed through the recent wildfire and flood season. They also presented how they are becoming better prepared to adapt to the changing climate and an ever-increasing wildfire potential.

The NCLGA conference provided me with an educational experience that has evolved my understanding of how municipal governments operate. As a third year Environmental Planning Student at UNBC, I understand that a cohesive government is needed to be able to make informed decisions that benefit not only the condition of the community and its citizens, but also the environmental conditions in the area. I am very humbled by my selection to the Student Mentorship Program and I hope this opportunity is afforded to future students for years to come. I believe the knowledge I have acquired during my week at NCLGA will follow me throughout my professional career as a planner and be visible in my future work.

Thank you for this phenomenal opportunity.

Redacted



Devin Croin