History of the Northwest Regional Science Fair

Briefly:

Most Pacific Northwest regional fairs have been held in Smithers. Regional board is here and we tend to host/organize the fair. It was often held at Northwest Community College (now called Coast Mountain College). They have always donated the space and labs - it is a great new building and it was nice for students to spend time there.  It has brand new college-level labs and it has good spaces for project display and awards ceremony.

2023 was held at Bulkley Valley Christian School because of small expected turn out and all of their students Grade 6-9 were doing a project. We thought that their school would have largest contribution to the fair in terms of students, which was true. They were keen to support the regional board (which has small numbers currently - 3 of us). I supported/guided Shawna and the principal Chris Steenhof, as well as other staff at BVCS (Helga Steenhof, Annie Van Damme, Tom Grasmeyer, admin) to run fair.  Total was: approx. 30-40 students. Bulkley Valley Christian School, Muheim Elem, Heartwood, Smithers Secondary Schools participated. We are sending 4 students and one delegate to CWSF in Edmonton.

Covid years 2020-22 - overall low participation.

2020 - one project went to CWSF but we had lots of students with projects in progress (Covid policies made us cancel 2 weeks or so before fair).  Some participated in the virtual fair hosted by SFF BC for BC and Yukon.

2021 - no fair but encouraged participating in virtual fair hosted by SFF BC. Sent out email to large list of contacts.

2022 - one project went to CWSF, only one student was interested in regional fair so they joined in with virtual fair held by CWSF for regions not hosting fairs. I reached out to every school in zone but no response.

2018 and 2019 were held in Prince Rupert and co-hosted by Peter Scott (Karen Price as chair supporting him and with our board running registration, awards, judging, finances, etc). We had very good turn out in Prince Rupert with a fair number of students traveling from Smithers and as far as Hartley Bay to attend.  Peter Scott facilitated Hartley  Bay participation. 100+ students.

2018 we sent 4 finalists and 2 delegates to Ottawa, 2019 - we sent two (I think) - Prince Rupert parent went as delegate. I will need to look into numbers of participants for these years. But these were big years  - 100+ students.

2017 - last regional fair in Smithers prior to 2023. I recall it being a big fair as well. 80-100 students. We sent 2 finalists and one delegate to Canada Wide Science Fair Edmonton. Good school turnout in Smithers - Home schools, Prince Rupert middle school, Bulkley Valley Christain, St. Joseph Elementary, Muheim Memorial Elementary, Telkwa Elementary, Roosevelt Park Elementary, Anunciation School, Twain Sullivan

2016 - big fair. Approx. 70-100 student. We sent 4 finalists and 2 delegates to Montreal CWSF.

The teachers at Muheim have supported students over the years to do projects, some in class but other times as lunch hour club (consistent over the years, though smallest # this year).

BV Christian every 2nd year has a lot of students

Telkwa and St Joseph used to have school fairs each year but teacher champions have retired.

Walnut park had a school fair this year (first time) - they have a new teacher and new-to-science fair students so they did not participate at regional fair. I think they could have  - teacher is great.

Smithers secondary school is the major high school. Teachers haven't actively encouraged students to do science fair (I think there was push-back at one time). We have always been short on high school student participation. It would be great to have more. BVCS had Grades 7, 8 and 9 every 2nd year but does not include older grades.

\*Most schools are listed in this email somewhere but there have been others. I do not have access to the old registration records.

We had a stable solid board of excellent volunteers up to 2019. Karen Price, Dave Daust, Kiri Daust, Paul Glover, Barb and Bob Purney, Carole Sutherland, Marilee Yee, Bev Busby and myself.  Then we lost all of them except for me and Paul G. in 2020, and we gained Shawna last year (2022).

Kiri Daust is Karen's son. He created and maintains our on-line registration system (though it wasn't used by BV Christian School - they did their own).

Karen Price still helping as judge and selected CWSF finalists this year (and supporting finalists with final posters). She has put her heart and heaps of energy and time into science fair over the years, going to many CWSFs and nurturing and empowering numerous students.

Paul Glover has been chief of judges for many years and is fabulous in this role - finding good kind scientists. There are >100 judges that have volunteered over the years under his leadership.

Prior to this, we also had Rick Friesen who was another long-time, excellent board member and fair organizer (played significant role in web site, registration, etc).  Regina Saimoto was treasurer before I took on her role in 2016. Jill McKnight (teacher) has helped out a lot over the years - going to Canada-Wide Science fair as a delegate and helping with logistics at the regional science fair).

Consistent sponsors of the fair include:

Bulkley Valley Credit Union - donating significantly every year

Rotary Club - donating significantly every year

Bulkley Valley Research Centre - sponsoring special effort awards and donating significantly to fair

School District 54 - donating each year

Smithers Exploration Group - donating each year and sponsoring an award.

BV Kinsmen - we used to have an arrangement with them - we would volunteer with science activities at a big barbeque they host and they would donate to us but it has stopped

Smaller donations by Hytech drilling, Summit reforestation, Bulkley Valley Insurance, Smithers Lion Club, Tyhee Forestry, McElhanney.

There are many other small donors that have helped over the years by sponsoring awards/trophies and money toward the fair.

Northwest Community College (Coast Mtn Collegge now) - in addition to donating fair venue they also had people helping out at the fair (science demonstrations/labs etc). Reto Riesen, College professor.

We also received a large grant in 2016 from the Wetzinkwa Forest Community Grant Program

Prince Rupert fairs (2018, 2019) had additional donors.