

Who is Doing What

# VWS Alumni Corner

## Michelle Parry

Class of 2010



**VWS:** Tell me about your work and education after graduating from the VWS. (post-secondary schooling, travel, work experience, family, etc.)

**MP:** Once I finished High School I took a year to travel and spend time with my family before going to university. I enjoyed my time at UBC and came away with a BA in Cultural Anthropology. I basically powered through university working restaurant jobs and studying power dynamics within various modern contexts, subjects ranging from world diseases to housing and gender struggles in urban cities. However, I eventually found that a career in social development alone was lacking in some of my career objectives. I've since shifted focus to incorporate environmental conversation into my future. I have to credit my education and upbringing for this I think, of which VWS played a role.

**VWS:** What kind of work/study are you involved in now?

**MP:** I'm currently part of the Canadian Conservation Corps program run through Canadian Wildlife Federation. This is a service based environmental education program aimed at 18-30 year old "youths". It's a pretty fantastic three part program, including a two week Outward Bound adventure, three-four month internship in environment (I completed mine in Quebec with the McGill Gault Nature Centre) and finally ending with a service project. All flights, transport, meals and accommodation are paid for so it's a very neat initiative. I'm in my third stage which I will implement this fall. Hopefully I will be introducing communities and new Canadians to our parks and how to safely enjoy and live with/in nature. Presently, I have been co-facilitating another group in the same program on Mt. Washington, Vancouver Island.

I have included some information about my journey with the Canadian Conservation Corps as I am part of a Group of 5, known as the Mountain GOATs. There are introductions and pictures from our meeting, to a Rocky Mountain adventure and finally our placements.

<http://cwf-fcf.org/en/explore/conservation-corps/group-5/>

A couple of my blog entries about my experience were also pick out for the website so if you want to hear a bit more about what I did over my time in the CCC feel free to follow the links.

<http://blog.cwf-fcf.org/index.php/en/a-cake-worth-climbing/>  
<http://blog.cwf-fcf.org/index.php/en/gravitating-toward-gault-letting-go-of-expectations/>

**VWS:** What advice would you give to this year's graduates?

**MP:** Say yes to things and find value in yourself. Sure you can always improve and gain skills but at the root if you aren't happy with who you are it's going to be harder to find and do the things you really want.

**VWS:** What are your fondest memories of your time at the VWS?

**MP:** The people are pretty important, both teachers and classmates. I have to say some of the camping trips definitely stick out in my mind and have defined me in ways I never imagined.

**VWS:** How did Waldorf education affect your life, and your choice of career?

**MP:** Looking back there were a few basic things that were lacking but so much more made up for it. Where else can you find a university level Philosophy class in High School? A course called "History through Music"? I tell people about that now and not a single person has been unimpressed. I can't speak to what the curriculum is now, but in my life I've noted three important aspects of Waldorf School that stick to me. First, the focus on play and creativity in the younger grades. Second, the consistent camping trips open to all the classes (don't underestimate this importance, especially of going with friends). Third, in High School, having to compete a Grade 12 Project put me head and shoulders above many people entering university and I think life in general. It is such a unique and worthwhile mandate especially for the age group/life stage.

*Interview by Ronaye Ireland for Development,  
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