

# The Barrier Lake experience - Conservation Leadership Programme's Leadership Training, Alberta, Canada

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Two transits and almost 18 hours of flying had already worn me down when I climbed down the elevator at Calgary Airport. Two weeks of intense leadership training was awaiting me and here I was down and under with all that field work and travel; little did I know that it was the last time I would feel that way over the coming weeks. A pretty girl holding a CLP placard welcomed me at the checkout. Alyona and I became best of friends thence. Alyona is one of the many beautiful conservationists I met at the Conservation Leadership Program's Conservation Management & Leadership Training at Barrier Lake Field Station of the University of Calgary, in Alberta, Canada from June 16 - July 3, 2012.

## Barrier Lake Field Station

Nothing could have spoken better of the training or could have endowed it with the best first impression the way Barrier Lake did. Located amidst the Rockies, with occasional visits from Grizzlies, Black bears, Rocky Mountain goats, foxes, wolves and deers, the field station was a wonderful welcoming place for us people who had travelled from all around the globe.

## Training

The next couple of weeks set abuzz with a train of activities and learning. We had training facilitators from all over the world, from different walks of conservation experience, equipping us in all aspects of conservation ranging from

project planning to fund raising, from conservation education to conservation communication.

As a beginner conservationist, I found the Conservation Leadership module of the training to be of real interest and beneficial. Drawing off the experience and wisdom of conservation leaders from across the world, the module enunciated the various styles of leadership, their strengths and lacks, and helped me realize my own leadership style. Project Planning and Management module helped understand the intricacies of project planning. We were allowed to work on an existing case study, draw out plans for a conservation project on the same, and arrive at a solution.

Communicating conservation through popular media such as newspapers and television well informed us on the nuances of developing public relations skills and techniques. The practical coursework of live interviews on our current conservation project was the highlight of the module-each of us was thrilled to hear and see ourselves on the television screen. Behaviour change through Education module allowed us to explore various outreach tools that we might use in our project. The power of group work is indeed amazing: we all came up with a creative outreach display in less than an hour.

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Media and messaging session. Photo by CLP

My favorite part about the whole training is the "CLP-POD" arrangement. All the trainees were divided into four or five groups called PODS. The idea behind CLP-POD arrangement is to connect conservationists from around the world enabling them to share their experiences and problems and draw upon each other's expertise to arrive at solutions.

**People:**

Group work and team assignments brought different cultures together and there was active sharing of ideas and experiences. Culture Night gave us all the opportunity to learn about other culture and exhibit our own. The oneness of the vision of conservation evident across all borders and boundaries was awe-inspiring and encouraging.

**A note of thanks:**

I would like to say a big huge thanks to Robyn Dalzen, Julie Lewis, Christina Imrich, Kiragu Mwangi, Stuart Patterson, Christine Ageton, Maureen Ryan, Martin Davies, Martin Fowlie, and

Nalini Mohan for the unforgettable learning experience, the chefs for the lip smacking food that allowed us to go on with the training with ever renewed strength, and all the wonderful people I met at Barrier Lake for the unparalleled awesome experience

and the ever bubbling hope I gained for a peaceful green earth. My team and I are extremely thankful to CLP for the wonderful learning experience and also for the funds that is helping us this far to work for conservation.



**At Barrier Lake. Photo by CLP**



**At Lake Louise, Alberta. Photo by CLP**