

Climate change in my community & CAC retreat reflection

By: Leonie Steigenberger



This picture was taken on August 15th, 2021, around 4:30 pm in Vernon BC. Smoke from the nearby raging wildfires completely blocked out the sun, creating an eerie ambiance of nightfall in the middle of the afternoon on a hot summer day. It was raining ash and burnt pine needles. The thick smell of smoke was heavy on the lungs, a stark reminder that as every minute passed the monster fire grew more powerful as it was fanned by intense winds.

Summer in the Okanagan is usually known as beach days, sunny weather, and countless outdoor adventures. Yet it is increasingly known as the time of year when wildfires create havoc on the local communities, devastating livelihoods, destroying wildfire habitats, and polluting the air that is usually so clean. The extreme heat wave last summer caused the fire season to be seemingly worse than ever locally, and with the impacts of the changing climate, the outlook is glum. Taking powerful climate action now is key to the continued livability and survival of the BC interior for future generations.

The CAC nature retreat was an incredible week reconnecting with the SOI community and fellow youth alumni passionate about our planet. Through workshops and discussions, I have been given a broader knowledge of climate policy, project planning, and successful action implementation. Moving forward, I have a renewed enthusiasm for tackling some of the pressing

environmental challenges present in my community, and I look forward to staying connected with the cohort throughout this process. Together, we can create the change we desire, and ensure the success of our future on the planet we call home.