

Ocean Networks Canada Attends the 38th Annual Prince Rupert Seafest

Submitted by Max Kasprzik Tue, 2016-06-21 15:04

Seafest has been bringing together Prince Rupert and surrounding communities every June since 1978, in a celebration of coastal life with fun events, activities, food and entertainment throughout the city.

For the second year in a row, Ocean Networks Canada's (ONC) Learning and Engagement team members, Mercedes McLean and Jessica Brown, participated in the two-day festival that celebrates everything northern, including three-on-three basketball tournaments, tours of navy ships, arm wrestling competitions, a Swim for Survival race, a sail past, a kayak fire drill race, and much more.



Jessica Brown (left) and Mercedes McLean (right) with ONC's float at the Seafest parade.

On Saturday 11 June, Mercedes and Jessica were thrilled to participate in the highly anticipated Seafest parade. ONC created an orca float decked out with a dorsal fin, a tail, and broadcasting hydrophone orca vocalizations.



The ONC orca float, complete with dorsal fin, tail, and hydrophone vocalizations.

Following the parade, Jessica and Mercedes hosted a booth in the Fisheries and Oceans Canada parking lot; they shared information on ocean science, promoted ONC's new Coastal Youth Science Ambassador position, and raised awareness about the recently installed Prince Rupert community observatory.



ONC's Prince Rupert subsurface observatory prior to being deployed.

This observatory is equipped with a shore station, a weather station, and cameras. The shore station is cabled to subsurface instruments that track and record local water quality, underwater sounds of marine mammals and vessels, and sends live stream video from an underwater camera.



ONC's shore station in Prince Rupert.

A high frequency radar capable of measuring surface current speed and direction, as well as an automatic identification system antenna to track large vessels in the region, completes the observatory's instrument package.



ONC's Prince Rupert observatory is located amidst the stunning natural beauty of British Columbia's north coast.

On Sunday, ONC hosted an information booth at Waterfront Park where they were nearly blown away by torrential rain and wind, a true testament to Prince Rupert's Seafest theme, ?gumboots and rain drops?! Fellow exhibitors from BC Recycles were quick to respond as exhibitors and event organizers rallied together to ensure tents and displays remained dry and secure.



Jessica Brown prevents the ONC booth from blowing away during a northern summer squall.

Later in the day, ONC and BC Recycles joined forces to compete in the Swim for Survival race. Jessica (ONC) and Baldeep (BC Recycles) donned survival immersion suits, leapt into the ocean (extra bonus points), and swam for their lives to the life raft, securing a third-place finish in the race. This was an incredible way to conclude the Seafest fun!



Congratulations to Jessica (ONC) and Baldeep (BC Recycles) who braved the chilly ocean to win third place in Seafest's Swim for Survival race! Photo credit Shannon Lough, The Northern View

While on the north coast, Mercedes and Jessica also traveled to Lax Kw'alaams in Ts?msyen Territory (Port Simpson) to visit the Coast Tsimshian Academy and introduce students to ocean science. Mercedes and Jessica shared their knowledge of ocean science and technology through interactive activities and presentations in various classrooms.



Students at the Coast Tsimshian Academy connect with ONC's scientists aboard the R/V *Sikuliaq* via live stream.

They were also able to connect the grade eight science class with ONC staff scientists at sea aboard the R/V *Sikuliaq*. Through the [Ship2Shore program](#), students gained firsthand experience of a real expedition that conducts marine research, uses ocean technology, and sees and hears life in the deep sea.

At ONC, we look forward to celebrating the ocean at Seafest in Prince Rupert every year!

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