

YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM

PROGRESS REPORT

For the Period of April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

Completed on July 12, 2013

PROGRAM FUNDED BY:

**BRITISH COLUMBIA
MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
DEVELOPMENT**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Youth and Ecological Restoration Program (YER) started on July 1, 2004 with the objective of taking vulnerable youth aged twelve to eighteen outside into nature. Youth who are struggling with a wide variety of issues in their lives are introduced to Comox Valley watersheds, their streams and ecological values through work experience and training with local environmental groups. The YER coordinator supervises the youth, combining periods of one on one support and working with community members. This blend bodes well as the youth benefit from personal guidance and interacting with positive individuals. Our greater community also benefits from the ecological restoration efforts and empowering young people to create healthy future options.

YER follows five main goals designed at the inception of the program for best practices of positive youth development. These goals are: building healthy community relationships; gaining valued work experience, improving ecological knowledge, increasing personal and social skills, and enhancing communication skills. The original funders of YER were the Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children through the Vancouver Island Strategic Initiatives Investment Fund (SIIF). An evaluation consultant assisted in developing a guide to assess project progress and outcomes. Periodic reference to this evaluation guide has shown YER to be closely tracking the process (Appendix A). YER was concluded to be in the top three most successful SIIF projects.

British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) have funded YER since March 31, 2006. A two year contract was renewed in 2013 assuring that YER will continue through to March 31, 2015. Since 2004 two hundred and sixteen youth have participated in YER Phase I (YERI) and twenty youth have been involved in YER Phase II (YERII). Completion rates for youth participants are ninety-six percent for YERI and one hundred percent for YERII (Table 1f). Youth have been referred by ten groups, done ecological restoration work for thirty and finished YER with public presentations for eighty-three groups (Appendix B).

This report covers April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013 when twenty-four youth participated in YER; eighteen in YERI and six in YERII. The Youth Participant Summary Table has six categories: youth completion rates (Table 1a); youth referral organizations (Table 1b); youth organization interconnections (Table 1c); ecological restoration groups (Table 1d); community presentation locations (Table 1e); completion rates (Table 1f). Table 2 presents the YER 2012 to 2013 budget. Appendix A is the 2004 YER Evaluation Guide; Appendix B lists one hundred and twenty-three YER Community Partnerships from 2004 to 2013; Appendix C is a MCFD letter acknowledging YER contract renewal.

2. PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES

Progress and outcome accounts for April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013 detail the Youth Participant Summary Table (Table 1) and descriptions of the YERI and YERII projects. Quotes from the youth and caregiver interviews tell stories in their own words. YER Evaluation Guide (Appendix A) is briefly analyzed. Community support and celebration describes YER partnerships and the annual celebration. Program promotion includes advertising and marketing through the website, newspaper articles and video. Future options are given for program expansion and evolution.

Youth Participant Summary

Twenty-four youth participated in YER; eighteen in YERI and six in YERII; eight were girls and sixteen were boys (Table 1). Seventeen youth completed YERI and one was incomplete; all six youth completed YERII (Table 1a). Four Comox Valley groups referred youth to YER: School District #71, MCFD, Community Justice Centre and John Howard Society (Table 1b). Referred

youth had connections with nineteen other youth services that include local schools, government agencies, women's support, restorative justice, counselling and recreational activities (Table 1c).

Ecological work conducted by the twenty-four youth was done for eight environmental groups; YERI youth worked with seven groups on a range of ecological restoration jobs and YERII youth were employed by two groups on three ecological research projects (Table 1d). Completion for the seventeen YERI youth was done through presentations for fourteen Comox Valley groups; for the six YERII youth, two co-facilitated public tours for each of the three project sites (Table 1e). Out of the seventeen YERI youth who finished the program, fourteen received fifty dollars and three completed community service hours. The six YERII youth received payment and hoodies after the guided tour. Three youth gave extra presentations at the YER celebration (Table 1e).

YERI Description

A majority of YER work happens in the spring and fall as these are the busiest times for most of the organizations. There are five main groups that wholeheartedly welcome us every year: Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards, Morrison Creek Streamkeepers, Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society, Oyster River Enhancement Society and Tsolum River Restoration Society. They assign work experience and training for the youth, which is outlined in more detail below.

Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards protect and promote the natural beauty of the watershed. They have fish counting fences in the spring and conduct salmon broodstock captures in the fall. The fish counting fences allow the youth to gain experience with identifying juvenile salmon, trout and other freshwater species. They learn operation of the fences, how to catch fish with dip nets and care for them as we monitor the salmon populations in these creeks. Coho broodstock are captured in the creek using a large seine net, eggs are then taken and fertilized for their micro hatchery. YER has also done much planting and monitoring native plant species with this group.

Morrison Creek Streamkeepers work to maintain the health of this small and productive creek. They had a fish counting fence, but in more recent years YER has been involved with monitoring water levels, removing beaver dams and counting adult salmon returning to spawn in the creek. Monitoring the water levels in the creek requires walking quite a distance and is done to provide a database if the levels change from possible housing developments in the headwaters. Beaver dam removal provides access to the upper levels of the creek for spawning salmon and streamwalks are done to count their numbers.

Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society is a wildlife recovery centre that helps wildlife, mainly birds, recover from injuries. YER participants see a large variety of bird species from hummingbirds to eagles; and snowy owls to brown pelicans. Youth are allowed to feed some of the juvenile birds and fawns in the spring, but only observe larger or more aggressive species as they require more specialized care. We clean animal cages, plant native plant species, remove invasive plants, perform yard maintenance and during brush burning season have hot dog roasts with volunteers. Their annual open house in April has YER greeting all of the visitors and assisting with parking.

Oyster River Enhancement Society mandate is to enhance, restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat on the river. Early every Tuesday morning we join about thirty volunteers who gather to help the salmon stocks recover. In the spring we feed salmon, clean screens and salmon rearing areas, and move salmon fry and smolts to larger locations as they grow. Fall is when broodstock captures for pink, Chinook, coho and chum salmon are done in the river. After testing the salmon for ripeness we do egg takes that are then placed in incubators over the winter. There is also site maintenance and attending monthly meetings to learn and exchange information.

Tsolum River Restoration Society works towards a healthy, diverse and productive river. In 1999 it was named the most endangered river in British Columbia because of salmon declines due to acid mine drainage from a copper mine in the sixties. YER is part of a team every spring that monitors the river's recovery with a Rotary Screw Trap designed to capture a portion of juvenile salmon migrating to the ocean. One of the jobs that we consistently do for this group is monitor water quality in two of the river's tributaries, Towhee and Finlay creeks. We record dissolved oxygen, acidity, water temperature, total dissolved solids and weather conditions.

YERII Description

These youth complete YERI before being involved with YERII, which advances their learning in the five YER goal categories. YERII youth have higher expectations placed on them to increase their levels of commitment, cooperation, responsibility and success. Different teams of two youth worked together on each of the three YERII projects with YER coordinator, Wendy Kotilla and Registered Professional Biologist, Ian Moul. The projects were all done on a five day format: three days of research and data collection, one day for tour preparation and a guided tour on the final day. One project was for Comox Valley Regional District, Community Services Branch (CVRD) and two projects for Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards (MPWS) (Table 1d). Ian Moul was hired by the two organizations to guide the research and submitted three reports which are on the YER website (<http://youthecology.ca/reports/>). The projects are briefly described below.

CVRD had a YERII team do an ecological inventory in Seal Bay Park for Melda's Marsh. The area was named for Melda Buchanan, who was instrumental in securing this well known and loved regional park. We completed an inventory of the layers in the forest for moss, herb, shrub and trees at two study plots in different areas of the marsh. Instruments used for the inventory included compass, measuring tape, global positioning device and laser rangefinder. Art Martell and Maj Birch contributed time and expertise on identification of bird species, habitat, behaviour and sounds. This YERII project concluded on the fifth day with a guided tour of Melda's Marsh for which twenty-nine people attended.

One of the MPWS YERII projects was continuing the ecological inventory in the headwaters of Millard Creek that was initiated the previous year. In addition to the instruments listed for the Melda's Marsh project above we used a multi tester and a dissolved oxygen meter to check the water quality. In 2012 we established two study plots in this forest and in 2013 added a third study plot and mapped several watercourses. Landscape Architect, Will Marsh, joined us the second day to teach the youth on interconnections between the forests, geography, wetlands and groundwater. MPWS Director, Chip Ross, came the third day to give a watershed perspective and ask the youth pertinent questions that improved the content of their tour. On the fourth and fifth days the two youth prepared for and presented the tour for nine community members.

The second MPWS project was to conduct fish population estimates in the Millard Creek Rearing Channel. This was also done as a YERII project in 2008 and 2011. The channel was constructed to increase habitat for fish in the watershed, so monitoring the species and their numbers gives MPWS information on the channel's productivity. We measured water quality as mentioned in the above project, as well as stream discharge and water levels. A marked recapture method was used and the caught fish were identified, counted, measured and weighed. The guided tour was given by the two youth for twelve participants on the last day.

YER Goals and Youth Quotes

The five main YER goals are listed below emphasized by quotes from the YERI and YERII youth to highlight the goals (YERII numbering: YERI first and YERII second). The quotes are from youth interviews that give feedback for the program, as well as from their presentation notes.

GOAL # 1: BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Cooperation, Support and Compassion; Positive Role Models and Mentoring; Increased Community Capacity and Caring

- Unlike when I usually work in a group like at school they weren't jerks, they were really decent people. At school I have to deal with people who are less than nice. They treated me like I was a person and I didn't feel like getting mad in the least. At school I'm considered a living death threat. When I get angry I am considered like a rabid grizzly bear with huge claws. *(YERI Participant #200)*
- I learned to get along with people around me. Normally, I don't get along with people around me so I got to learn about people around me. I got to meet a lot of people and it was really cool because I don't get out of the house normally, I'm a computer addict. I got to learn a lot about other people and I got to learn to take care of nature because they taught me how to care a lot about nature and our country. *(YERI Participant #201)*
- Different, sometimes I usually work alone, I'm independent. They are good people, good experience, hear their side of the story. What stories they tell are really interesting, all different about the same thing – nature. Plus what the people are doing for the community and the ecosystem, it is also helping them. *(YERI Participant #203)*
- Every place I went I felt valued. Everyone I've met through the different organizations and societies were very welcoming and supportive. Everyone was very nice and I felt I wasn't treated just as some kid tagging along. I felt people were taking me seriously and this has been a wonderful experience and I definitely think I have learned a lot. *(YERI Participant #214)*
- We all worked as a team. It was impressive because we all put our heads together and thought of new ideas and helped each other out. If there was just one person you wouldn't have that much time to brainstorm because you wouldn't have somebody else's ideas. *(YERI Participant #15-207)*

GOAL # 2: GAINING VALUED WORK EXPERIENCE

Data Collection Methods; Working with Tools; Worksite Safety; Job Variety; Good Work Ethics

- I learned how to be a little more responsible than I was and I find it easier now to take direction and follow people and get help from them. I think it was because I was doing something I like; I really enjoyed it and it was easier for me to get into it. *(YERI Participant #199)*
- I learned how to work with other people, being able to cooperate with other people and have other people depend on you. I learned that I really care about this and when there is a whole bunch of people I get kind of shy and I like getting involved in the community. Working in the community is a big role in having a job, you have to have communication skills, you can't just keep to yourself in most jobs. *(YERI Participant #202)*
- We used a screen and a small clear plastic container to determine the species of the fish. The pink has no spots, rainbow trout has a red line on the side of its body, coho has a black stripe on the anal and dorsal fins. The Tsolum River was polluted by an old copper mine a long time ago and now they are using a rotary screw trap to check on the populations of the fish in the river. *(YERI Participant #206)*
- This program helps kids learn more about their community. You work with experienced people and learn to do more hands on work rather than sitting inside a classroom. It's definitely more of hands on experience to work outside with people that have a lot of experience doing it. It's better than sitting inside and looking at stuff and saying this is what you do, when you actually get to go out and do it yourself. It helped me with more outside

learning skills with my hands and more talking with people, more communication skills. (YERI Participant #213)

- I was able to help you measure and do the fish so further in the future I can help out with more Ecological Restoration. I believe it is a very good thing on my resume that I am persistent and wanting to help and get things done. (YERII Participant #19-197)

GOAL # 3: IMPROVING ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Ecosystem Cycles and Interconnections; Identification Techniques for Plants, Animals and Fish; Understanding Environmental Impacts

- On the first day, we started at the Tsolum River. We checked temperatures of the river and other streams connecting to the river. Those smaller streams connecting to the big river are called tributaries. If you look at a pattern on a leaf you see the mainstem going through the middle of the leaf. That would be the Tsolum River. Then there are the little roots going off the sides of the leaf. That would be the smaller streams connecting to the river and that is what a watershed is; a big cycle of streams and rivers. (YERI Participant #207)
- Salmon are important to our ecosystem because if you take them away it affects everything around them. For example, the animals that eat the salmon would need to find something else to eat. Also, when salmon die they bring ocean nutrients into the rivers because they spend most of their lives in the ocean, so they eat things from the ocean. (YERI Participant #208)
- I learned that beavers are mostly active at night and build their dam out of sticks, mud and even tree roots. Beavers are very fast and hard workers that can nearly repair a dam in a single night. Beaver dams are built to slow the flow of water to store water in a deep pool. Beaver dams are surprisingly sturdy and well built, being made of sticks carefully lodged in or against any objects around for support. (YERI Participant #210)
- We went to the Airpark and planted camas bulbs, which is a lily bulb. Camas lilies like to grow beside Gary oak trees. A long time ago the First Nations people would use a special pointy stick to dig up the big bulbs and eat them, but would leave the small ones to develop. (YERI Participant #211)
- Underground spring starts there and travels underneath the ground seeping up from point to point. It is blocked here and makes a pool. Skunk cabbages are indicator species of water and sedges are an indicator of year round moisture. (YERII Participant #16-170)

GOAL # 4: INCREASING PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Meaningful Participation and Empowerment; Commitment, Respect and Responsibility; Patience and Endurance; Accomplishment, Self-confidence and Success

- I learned cooperation, listening, patience. I gained a little bit more of that. Work experience, understanding, getting involved in more things. Keep up the good work and have a smile on your face – have a positive attitude and thought. It made me feel better about how useful I am, less doubtful because it inspired me to think I can do more instead of just sitting around. (YERI Participant #203)
- I've learned a lot of stuff I probably wouldn't have learned at school. There are not that many places that would teach you that. They wouldn't have taught you how to feed the birds and different birds have to be fed differently. I think it was good to learn something different instead of the usual English and math. I would say learning that was more valuable than learning five plus five. I just think it's more important to learn how to help animals than some math equation. (YERI Participant #204)
- It was a really good experience. It feels really wonderful. I think it's really good that I completed something and didn't quit. At the start I wasn't sure that I wanted to do it, but I thought I would keep doing it and I think it is a really good program. I learned more or less,

it's not what you think about at first, you have to go and learn and have the experience. More or less just try and not quit. (*YERI Participant #213*)

- It was good, I like the good vibes and how happy everyone was. It felt like I definitely did something good today. I learned more today than I did any other day in school and my brain doesn't hurt. (*YERI Participant #215*)
- I learned that not everyone hates me. I learned patience, acceptance, tolerance, annoyance façade; professional skills in a professional situation – not to be rude or a smart ass or swearing as much. Yeah, calm me down when I go into hysterics, which happens quite often. (*YERII Participant #17-190*)

GOAL # 5: ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Public Speaking and Leadership; Active Listening and Engagement; Interpersonal Relationships

- It was exciting, they actually do really appreciate the environment. It made me feel mature because I was older than them and it made me feel good that they were attentive and they were listening. They learned a little bit about trees and fish and how to reach out to the environment. If they are still concerned in the future and it is good for them to know these things and they're out there for them to do in the community. (*YERI Participant #205*)
- It was cool. I never really done a presentation before. They learned just about nature; that birds got physio and the watersheds and the leaf thing and that fish place where they have the manmade streams and how they breed them there. (*YERI Participant #209*)
- It felt really good, especially since they were my counselors when I was going through bad phases and it was awesome. They were a great audience and I felt like I was being productive and I've come a lot further than this time last year. They learned some interesting facts and that I am in a good head space and I'm doing good. It feels awesome; I feel accomplished. (*YERI Participant #214*)
- It was pretty awesome because they hit me with some really good questions. Some of them were really hard to answer and overall they were really good questions. I think they learned that they need to kind of explore nature more often. Because a lot of kids today don't have the courage to get up and say something about the habitat of fish. (*YERI Participant #216*)
- We did quite a bit of work and raised awareness of the place, so I feel like we have done some good. At points there were a couple that said, be calm, speak up. The people on that tour were supporting me as much as you and Ian, everybody was supporting me; it was amazing. If I can deal with thirty people listening to me, I can deal with one. It definitely raised my confidence. (*YERII Participant #18-183*)

Caregiver Interview Quotes

Responses from parents and caregivers add another layer to YER feedback. They are interviewed within days or weeks after the youth complete their community presentation. Below are quotes from the people who live with the YER youth. Quotes are listed for both YERI and YERII.

YERI Caregiver Quotes

- He was proud of himself and I was proud of him and I learned more about the program and how it can benefit the kids we have today. It builds community; I think that's huge. I think that kids have a sense of community and how community supports them. How important it is to have other adults in their lives that they can trust and look up to. I learned that this work makes a huge difference to the kids, the community and the environment and they are building their value system. (*YERI Participant #199*)
- For those that are silently angry and holding everything in there is silent pain and he found a place that he could release that and let the wholeness of life in. One word – serenity. It's meant a lot to him. The silent anger and pain that he holds inside contradicts who he is and

the serenity that I witnessed when he came home from your program is an indication of how desperately needed this type of program is for youth like that. He kept coming home saying we needed to be there to keep this for future generations. (*YERI Participant #203*)

- I think it just opened his eyes. We are constantly talking with him about what you are going to do out of school. Even if you volunteer and make commitments and people say he's a hard worker; that's going a long way when you write a resume. I think it is a good program that you are running and this gives kids another opportunity for job experience and gives them the idea of places to volunteer and help build up their resume. (*YERI Participant #204*)
- It was great. I was glad she had something going on. I was glad she was doing something other than facebook. From day one she was excited. She loves animals and feeding birds was great. It was kind of hard getting her to finish something without me hounding her and she was ready when you came to pick her up. It showed some responsibility. She was proud to have a certificate, she put it on the fridge; an accomplishment; it means a lot. (*YERI Participant #205*)
- I think it helped her with some work ethic and getting out there to see what it is like to work. The place she went to do the presentation. It is great; one in four people will get Alzheimer's. It's good for the younger kids to see and understand what people are dealing with and going through. We used to respect our elders and listen to their stories and I think we have lost that. (*YERI Participant #208*)
- She needed it. I think that students, especially her, get a lot out of doing things outside the classroom. Because she's smart and gets bored with the monotony of the classroom work. She's a whole different person. Her and I were having a really hard time and she has done a one eighty. She has taken on more responsibility at home and her attitude is a lot better. I feel you relate with students and my daughter really well. (*YERI Participant #214*)
- It was nice to see her working with adults during the program. It was nice the response from the adults, she got a lot of positive feedback from them. Just when you were connecting with her, the positive connection she was having. I think she was having a connection with you about connecting with kids. She really enjoyed working with you. She was interested in the work you are doing and how you are trying to connect with the students and how you are trying to turn them around. (*YERI Participant #215*)
- I was very impressed. I was impressed with what he learned and what he has done. What he learned about the environment stuff I don't even know and I have my young child telling me. A perspective outside of school and what you can do better for the environment and everyone else. And what schooling can help you with also, something outside of schooling, sometimes hands on would be where it's at. A lot of things people learn outside of school. (*YERI Participant #216*)

YERII Caregiver Quotes (YERII numbering: YERI first and YERII second)

- That was very positive, he felt like he had some experience so he had a better idea of what he was doing. It was very informative, very thorough. I didn't realize my son was quite a presenter. Just that presenting thing, learning and showing the little tour was quite important. I was surprised with the good presentation. Just helped him with some social interaction, touring, talk, and show people stuff, and measuring the trees, and knowledge stuff. (*YERII Participant #15-207*)
- I think that it is a good thing for sure. Most kids are in concrete and they don't get to go outside in the woods. It's hard to fathom what is out there beyond computer and technology. There's fish in the water and wildlife out there, but for kids to get out there and experience it and see what kind of footprint we are leaving. I think its really good experience for any kid to see that kind of thing. (*YERII Participant #16-170*)

- She's not really shy, she is withdrawn. She has so much to offer that when she gets an opportunity to be with you it brings out the creativity and all the positive parts of my daughter. (*YERII Participant #17-190*)
- After YERI he was a totally different kid, out of his shell, more happy and easy going at home. He got to get out on YERII. He's been quite good, why it brings him out of his shell, more confidence. (*YERII Participant #18-183*)
- I thought he did fabulous, I was so proud of him. He was so articulate, which is amazing for him because he's not a talker. It taught him a bit of responsibility. It taught him a lot about the environment. He's looking around and being a bit less self-centred. All and all it was really good for him. (*YERII Participant #19-197*)
- I think that he came out of his shell even more than the first one and that was reflected in the way he took charge showing us through the forest. I witnessed his respect for the water, the creatures he was involved with and the outdoors. What he reflected at the end was awareness of the great outdoors. They were in their glory sharing the outdoors in a very respectful way. They also had a real connection with those that were there with the program. I saw teamwork and cooperation, very visible. It gave him a peaceful mind and state. This is all part of learning, but he did it with joy. He had a joyful journey. (*YERII Participant #20-203*)

Community Support and Celebration

The community partnerships that YER has created are one hundred and twenty-three (Appendix B). These include ten referral groups, thirty ecological restoration groups and eighty-three for youth presentations (Appendix B). This represents a large number of people that youth have interacted with and have witnessed them make positive contributions. The youth receive many encouraging responses from community members. This occurs through the ecological restoration activities and with the speech they each present for YERI completion. YERII youth conclude by co-facilitating a guided tour of the ecological restoration project sites.

On June 14, 2012 the annual YER celebration was held at Glacier View Leaning Centre with thirty-six people in attendance. They were: YER youth, Glacier View students and teachers, youth parents and caregivers, and other YER community supporters. Three former YER youth participants repeated their completion presentations. One participant gifted the coordinator with a bouquet of flowers and a card as an expression of gratitude for being involved with YER. We had juice, pop, pizza and the famous homemade carrot cake with cream cheese icing. Gathering together to celebrate our victories is important and a good time was had by all.

Program Promotion

Program promotion has been a critical component for YER to highlight its current and long-term achievements. This was accomplished in 2012/2013 by: nine articles in local newspapers (seven by YER Coordinator, one came from a tour member and one by a youth participant); one article in Vancouver Sun by Stephen Hume; television coverage by local Shaw cable station; letters of support; and YER website development. Below is a chronological list of promotional efforts.

- June 1, 2012, Comox Valley Echo "Youth and Ecological Restoration celebrates two milestones at annual pizza and cake gathering"
- June 8, 2012, Comox Valley Record "Youth learn about ecology"
- July 10, 2012, Comox Valley Echo "Young people to lead Millard Creek sensitive ecosystem tour on Friday"
- July 11, 2012, Comox Valley Record "Youth lead outing"
- July 24, 2012, Comox Valley Echo "Seal Bay Park tour led by local youth on July 27"
- July 25, 2012, Comox Valley Record "Youth leading tour of Melda's Marsh at Seal Bay Park"

- July 25, 2012, Vancouver Sun by Stephen Hume “Healing power of troubled waters” on YER website at <http://youthecology.ca/wendy-kotilla-and-yer-featured-in-vancouver-sun-article/#more-528>
- August 1, 2012, Shaw TV North Island, Video by Franco Noviello, community broadcast service, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUKh41gZE1A&list=UU0gKepT7udZM5HF03Wv6o6Q&index=99>
- August 21, 2012, Comox Valley Echo “Third youth-led nature tour of the season”
- August 31, 2012, Comox Valley Echo, Beefs and Bouquets submission by YER tour participant
- December 12, 2012, Comox Valley Record, YER presentation notes by Daniel Perry “Youth learn so much about the natural world” <http://www.comoxvalleyrecord.com/community/183017961.html>

Letters of support have been helpful to draw attention to the YER service for Comox Valley vulnerable youth. In January and February 2013 eighteen letters were collected from individuals and groups who support the continuance of this unique method of service delivery for youth. A list of the support letters was included in a letter to thank MCFD, Community Services Manager, Curtis Cameron for the YER 2013 to 2015 contract renewal (Appendix C).

Continual Palingensis, Social Media Solutions (<http://continualpalingensis.ca/>) updated and maintained the YER website (www.youthecology.ca) in 2012 and early 2013. The quality of this work done to sustain the website has been outstanding. Keeping the YER information current is important and another update will be made soon after this report is submitted.

YER Evaluation Guide

A YER Evaluation Guide (Appendix A) created in 2004 with assistance from Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children has been periodically reviewed over the program history. Bringing it forward for this report has prompted a closer examination to see most of the guide categories being followed. Listed on the guide are expected outcomes for youth/family, youth worker and community levels. Feedback from interviews of youth and families are occurring and providing excellent comments for the program. An interview process could be created to obtain feedback from youth workers and community members to augment YER for evaluation.

Future Options

YER has proven to be a viable and cost effective program that delivers consistent and dependable results. Over its nine year history, YER has advanced with slow, deliberate and confident steps. YER has a first phase (YERI); a second phase (YERII); and there have been requests for a third phase. YERIII would have graduates of YERI and YERII mentoring youth participants involved in the first phase, which would be done under supervision of the YER Coordinator. Additional options for YER future development include: making a display for conferences and community events; promoting YER in other parts of BC; creating a DVD of youth participants conducting YER work; and replicating YER in other communities.

3. BUDGET

Budget for 2012/2013

Final budget for YER from April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012 is presented in Table 2. The income of \$35,000.04 (Table 2) was contributed by MCFD. Expenses and other YER contributions are itemized below.

- **Professional fees** included fees, administration costs and program evaluation for \$28,153.21.
- **Honouraria** for youth participants was \$985.00: \$50 for eighteen youth, \$25.00 for one youth who did partial community service hours and \$20.00 each for the three youth who made presentations at the YER Annual Celebration.
- **Program Promotion** was \$1083.76 for website updates and maintenance.

- **Transportation** costs were calculated at \$.50/kilometre for a total of \$2904.00.
- **Supplies** for \$1448.53 included office, lunch expenses and materials required for YER work.
- **Miscellaneous expenses** in the amount of \$425.54 included insurance fees, bank charges, a membership fee and the YER community celebration.
- **Other Contributions** were \$2,000.00 for YERI and YERII training from experts within the community; \$7,500.00 for a biologist on the three YERII projects (\$2,500.00 each); and \$500.00 for ecological work tools.

4. SUMMARY

YER has been contributing to positive development of vulnerable youth in the Comox Valley community since July 1, 2004. Uniting youth with ecological restoration activities gives them a strong sense of worth, belonging and place. It bonds them with the land and waters where they live and the people who live here. It introduces them to a world that many know little about, opens their eyes to the wonders of nature, and supports them in recognizing their personal power and value as contributing members of society.

Since YER inception a total of two hundred and sixteen youth have participated in YERI and twenty in YERII; completion rates are respectively ninety-six and one hundred percent (Table 1f). Community partnerships total one hundred and twenty-three for referrals, ecological restoration groups and presentation locations (Appendix B). From April 2012 to March 2013 eighteen youth were in YERI and seventeen completed the first phase of the program (Table 1a); worked with eight ecological restoration groups (Table 1d); and gave community presentations at fourteen locations (Table 1e). The six YERII youth all finished the second phase of the program (Table 1a) with two youth co-facilitating a public tour for each of the three projects (Table 1e).

Youth and caregivers are interviewed to obtain comments and suggestions for YER improvement. Their voices reflect commentary and sentiments that enhance a deeper understanding of the YER contribution to vulnerable youth in our community. Youth consistently share: feeling accepted and appreciated; having cooperation modeled; valuing the work experience; expanding their knowledge of ecology; taking responsibility; making commitments; and overcoming public speaking fears. Caregivers disclose youth: valuing adult mentors; feeling heard and supported; building their resume; sensing pride and accomplishment; respecting elders; learning practical skills; and teaching ecology to family members. Including youth worker and community member interviews would add another dimension to program feedback.

There is a higher completion rate for YERII (Table 1f) as these youth build on YERI experiences and readily meet the increased expectations placed on them for YERII. Another opportunity for youth advancement would be to implement a YER phase three. Additional future options could include creating promotional displays and initiating YER in other communities. Some of these ideas may be explored over the two year contract renewed by MCFD on April 1, 2013.

Community support, the annual YER celebration and partnerships with local groups engages our broader Comox Valley community in YER operation. Involvement of youth with ecological restoration work is valuable, equal worth exists in them sharing their YER experiences with a community audience. Gaining experiences with community members and being empowered to teach others are huge life lessons for vulnerable youth. It is all part of the youth learning and growing with our community as witness to their steps forward into becoming healthy and productive adults. We are all working together to make our community a better place.

TABLE 1: YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER); YOUTH PARTICIPANT SUMMARY

TABLE FOR APRIL 1, 2012 TO MARCH 31, 2013. YER is for Comox Valley vulnerable youth funded by BC, Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). YERI had 18 participants; 7 girls, 11 boys. YERII had 6 participants; 1 girl and 5 boys. YERII numbering: YERII is first, YERI is second.

Table 1a: YER COMPLETION	YOUTH TOTALS
YERI initial program is 20 hours; YERII advanced program is 25 hours.	
Total YERI Complete: Participant # 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216 (340 hours)	17
Total YERII Complete: # 15-207, 16-170, 17-190, 18-183, 19-197, 20-203 (150 hours)	6
Total Incomplete: # 212 (5 hours)	1
TOTAL 495 WORK EXPERIENCE HOURS	24

Table 1b: YOUTH ORGANIZATION REFERRALS

CV School District 71: # 200, 201, 204, 206, 211, 212, 213, 215, 16-170	9
Glacier View Learning Centre: Bridgeway # 201, 204, 211, 16-170; Key Program # 212 Independent Learning # 213, 215; Lake Trail Middle School # 200, 206	
MCFD: # 199, 202, 205, 216, 17-190, 19-197	
Mental Health Team # 199, 216, 17-190	6
Over Twelve Team # 205 Under Twelve Team: # 202, 19-197	
Comox Valley Community Justice Centre: # 207, 208, 210, 15-207, 18-183	5
John Howard Society: # 203, 209, 214, 20-203	4
TOTAL 6 YOUTH REFERRAL ORGANIZATIONS	24

Table 1c: YOUTH ORGANIZATION INTERCONNECTIONS

SD #71: # 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 15-207, 16-170, 17-190, 18-183, 19-197, 20-203	24
The Linc: # 200, 201, 202, 203, 205, 206, 208, 214, 215, 15-207, 16-170, 17-190, 18-183, 19-197, 20-203	15
MCFD: # 201, 202, 203, 205, 206, 209, 211, 216, 16-170, 17-190, 18-183, 19-197, 20-203	13
John Howard Society: # 203, 209, 214, 215, 16-170, 17-190, 20-203	6
Comox Valley Community Justice Centre: # 205, 207, 208, 210, 15-207, 18-183	6
Comox Valley Boys and Girls Club: # 202, 206, 215, 19-197	4
Wachiay Friendship Centre: # 202, 203, 206, 207	4
Pacific Therapy: # 200, 206, 207, 15-207	4
Counseling - Source Unknown: # 202, 204, 210	3
Comox Valley Transition Society, Girls Group: # 201, 17-190	2
Lake Trail School Counseling: # 200, 206	2
Glacier View Learning Centre Counseling: # 212, 213	2
Mark Isfeld School Counseling: # 207, 15-207	2
Valley View Elementary School, Counselling: # 207, 15-207	2
Cumberland Elementary School, Counselling: # 216	1
Royston Elementary School, Counseling: # 216	1
Comox Valley Family Services: # 211	1
Comox Valley Transition Society, Counselling: # 17-190	1
Strathcona Counseling: # 199	1
TOTAL 19 YOUTH ORGANIZATION INTERCONNECTIONS	

**TABLE 1 (Cont.): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
YOUTH PARTICIPANT SUMMARY TABLE FOR APRIL 1, 2012 TO MARCH 31, 2013.**

Table 1d: ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION ORGANIZATIONS

YERI work events were attended by 1336 community members; average 58 per youth. YERII specific research projects were collaborative teams of two youth and two adults.	YOUTH TOTALS
Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society: # 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216	17
Millard/Piercy Watershed Stewards: # 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 209, 213, 214, 216, 15-207, 16-170, 19-197, 20-203	17
Oyster River Enhancement Society: # 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216	17
Tsolum River Restoration Society: # 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 209, 210, 211, 213, 215	14
Morrison Creek Streamkeepers: # 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216	9
Comox Valley Natural History Society: # 209, 211	2
Comox Valley Regional District, Community Services Branch: # 17-190, 18-183	2
Comox Valley Land Trust: # 203	1
TOTAL 8 ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	

Table 1e: COMMUNITY PRESENTATION LOCATIONS

YERI youth gives an oral presentation; two YERII youth co-facilitate and guide a public tour. Twenty-three youth completed YERI and YERII; three youth presented at the celebration. Community members in attendance at presentations/tours are in brackets in the youth total column.

Comox Valley Alternate Schools: # 201, 203, 204, 211	4
Bridgeway # 201, 204, 211 Nala'atsi # 203	(10, 19, 9, 7)
YER Community Celebration: # 201, 202, 203	3 (36)
St Joseph Hospital, Transitional Ward: # 207, 216	2 (7, 13)
Comox Valley Regional District, Seal Bay Park: # 17-190, 18-183	2 (29)
Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards, Ecological Inventory: # 15-207, 16-170	2 (9)
Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards, Fish Population Estimate: # 19-197, 20-203	2 (12)
MCFD, Probation Services: # 209	1 (3)
John Howard Society: # 214	1 (3)
Arden Park Elementary School, Grade 1: # 199	1 (18)
Glacier View Lodge: # 200	1 (20)
Youth for Christ: # 202	1 (29)
Ecole Puntledge Park Elementary School, Grade 4: # 205	1 (26)
Lake Trail Middle School, Pride Program: # 206	1 (9)
Aspen Park Elementary School, Grade 7: # 210	1 (55)
Cumberland Elementary School, Grade 5/6 (Mrs. Klassen): # 213	1 (22)
Cumberland Elementary School, Grade 5/6 (Ms. Price): # 215	1 (25)
Comox Valley Senior Peer Counseling Society: # 208	1 (12)
TOTAL 18 COMMUNITY PRESENTATION LOCATIONS; 373 AUDIENCE MEMBERS	26 (373)

Table 1f: YER COMPLETION RATES

	COMPLETION
YERI: Total number of 216 youth participants; 207 completed the 20 hour program	96%
YERII: Total number of 20 youth participants; 20 completed the 25 hour program	100%

**TABLE 2: YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
BUDGET FOR APRIL 1, 2012 TO MAR 31, 2013.**

Expenses, income and other contributions are required to conduct YER work experience and training for vulnerable youth in the Comox Valley. YER 2012/2013 funding was provided by BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). In kind contributions are provided by Comox Valley groups for training and tools to complete projects to better understand and restore local watersheds and ecosystems.

Expense Item	Expenses	Income	Other Contributions
Program Delivery	\$28,153.21	MCFD \$35,000.04	Training \$2,000.00 Biologist \$7,500.00
Youth Honouria	\$985.00		
Program Promotion	\$1,083.76		
Mileage	\$2,904.00		
Supplies	\$1,448.53		
Other	\$425.54		Tools \$500.00
TOTALS	\$35,000.04	\$35,000.04	\$10,000.00

Appendix A: Youth and Ecological Restoration Program (YER) Evaluation Guide

The evaluation guide was developed to assess YER progress and outcomes. It was developed in consultation with Queen Alexandra Foundation, who funded YER under the Vancouver Island Strategic Initiatives Investment Fund for the period of July 1, 2004 to March 31, 2006.

	Youth/family level	Youth Worker Level	Community level
Expected Outcomes	Public Speaking Skills Ecological Awareness Increased confidence Family participation in activities	More collaboration with youth workers More referrals from agencies Feedback from youth workers and agencies	More awareness of ecological restoration More interactions with youth and community members
Activities to Achieve Outcomes	Restoration projects One on one experiences Field trips to observe work completed Feedback from families Family attendance at presentations	Consultations with youth workers Interactions with youth workers Participation in activities and presentations	Working collaboratively with community volunteers Youth presentations to community groups
Evidence of Progress	Knowledge of ecological restoration Number of youth completing program Certificates completed Restoration projects completed Social skills gained Other knowledge gained	More referrals Number of youth completing the program	More referrals from environmental groups Number of youth completing the program Number of community members interacting with program youth
Evidence will be Obtained From	Youth Youth groups Family members	Youth Workers Service Agencies Government Agencies Schools	Environmental groups Community volunteers Community groups
Method to Obtain Evidence	Youth interviews Family interviews Tracking and monitoring data of youth in program Youth oral presentations Number of completions Journal entries Recording behavioural observations	Youth worker interviews Agency consultations Networking with youth workers Communicating with youth agencies and schools	Networking and communicating with environmental and community groups Interviews with group members

**APPENDIX B: YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (Page 1 of 3)**

YER partnered with one hundred and twenty-three groups July 2004 to March 2013.

Ten groups referred youth clients from July 2004 to March 2013:

- BC Children's Hospital www.bcchildrens.ca
- Comox Valley Community Justice Centre www.cjc-comoxvalley.com
- Comox Valley Family Services Association www.comoxvalleyfamilyservices.com
- Comox Valley School District: Lake Trail Middle School; Mark Isfeld School
- Comox Valley Youth Resource Society
- Glacier View Learning Centre: web.sd71.bc.ca/glacier_view/
Bridgeway; Independent Learning; Key Program; Nalata'atsi; Sandwick; Senior Alternate
- John Howard Society of North Island www.jhsni.bc.ca/
- Ministry of Children and Family Development: www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/
Probation Services; Mental Health; Parent Teen Mediation; Over Twelve
- Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health www.queenalexandra.org
- Wachiay Friendship Centre, Raven Back Youth Group www.wachiay.org

Thirty groups had youth conduct ecological restoration work from July 2004 to March 2013:

- Brooklyn Creek Watershed Society www.bcws.ca
- BC Hydro, Bridge Coastal Fish & Wildlife Restoration Program
- BC Ministry of Environment www.gov.bc.ca/env
- BC Ministry of Environment, Environmental Protection www.gov.bc.ca/env
- BC Ministry of Transportation www.gov.bc.ca/tran
- Comox Valley Environmental Council
- Comox Valley Land Trust www.cvlantrust.org
- Comox Valley Natural History Society www.comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca
- Comox Valley Project Watershed Society www.projectwatershed.bc.ca
- Comox Valley Regional District www.rdc.bc.ca
- Comox Valley Sustainability Network
- Comox Valley Water Watch
- Comox Valley Watershed Assembly
- Courtenay & District Fish & Game Protective Association www.courtenayfishandgame.org
- Cumberland Community Forestry Society www.cumberlandforest.com
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca
- Fanny Bay Enhancement Society www.fbse.ca
- Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team www.goert.ca
- Georgia Strait Alliance www.georgiastrait.org
- Hart Watershed Society
- Millard/Piercy Watershed Stewards www.millardpiercy.org
- Morrison Creek Streamkeepers www.morrisoncreek.org/
- Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society www.wingtips.org
- Natural Journeys Society
- Oyster River Enhancement Society www.oysterriverenhancement.org/
- Perseverance Creek Streamkeepers
- Streamside Native Plants http://members.shaw.ca/nativeplants/streamside_home.html
- Sunrise Rotary Club www.strathconasunrise.bc.ca
- Tsolum River Restoration Society www.tsolumriver.org/
- World Community Development Education Society www.worldcommunity.ca

**APPENDIX B (cont.): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (Page 2 of 3)**

YER partnered with one hundred and twenty-three Comox Valley groups July 2004 to March 2013.

Eighty-three community groups had youth presentations from July 2004 to March 2013:

- Airport Elementary School, Grade 1
- Airport Elementary School, Grade 2/3
- Arden Park Elementary School, Grade 1
- Arden Park Elementary School, Grade 4
- Arden Elementary School, Kindergarten
- Aspen Park Elementary School, Grade 3
- Aspen Park Elementary School, Grade 4
- Aspen Park Elementary School, Grade 7
- Berwick Retirement Society www.berwickrc.com/comox
- Brooklyn Elementary, Grade 5
- Casa Loma Seniors Village www.retirementconcepts.com/homes/comox-valley
- Comox Rotary Club www.comoxrotary.bc.ca
- Comox Valley Aboriginal Head Start Program, Pre-School Group
- Comox Valley Boys and Girls Club, Voices Choices Group www.cvboysandgirlsclub.ca
- Comox Valley Community Justice Centre www.cjc-comoxvalley.com
- Comox Valley Land Trust, Annual General Meeting www.cvlandtrust.org
- Comox Valley Land Trust, Board Meeting www.cvlandtrust.org
- Comox Valley Natural History Society www.comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca
- Comox Valley Senior Peer Counselling
- Comox Valley Project Watershed Society www.projectwatershed.bc.ca
- Comox Valley Regional District, Community Services Branch
- Comox Valley Watershed Assembly
- Comox Valley Women's Resource Society
- Comox Valley Youth for Christ www.comoxvalley.yfccanada.org
- Comox Valley Youth Resource Society
- Courtenay & District Fish & Game Protective Association www.courtenayfishandgame.org
- Courtenay Elementary School, Grade 3/4
- Courtenay Elementary School, Grade 5/6
- Courtenay Middle School, Grade 8
- Cumberland Elementary School, Grade 5/6
- Creekside Commons www.creeksidecommons.ca
- Cumberland Rotary Club www.rotarycc.org
- Earth Day Festival
- Ecole Aspen Park Middle School
- Eureka Clubhouse
- Fanny Bay Enhancement Society www.fbases.ca
- Glacier View Lodge Society www.glacierviewlodge.ca
- Glacier View School, Brideway Program
- Glacier View School, Independent Learning Program
- Glacier View School, Key Program
- Glacier View School, Senior Alternate Program
- Island Early Education Centre, After School Group
- John Howard Society, Staff Meeting www.jhsni.bc.ca/
- Kidzone Daycare
- Kiwanis Club of Courtenay www.facebook.com/pages/Kiwanis-Club-of-Courtenay-BC
- Lake Trail Middle School, Grade 8
- Lake Trail Middle School, Grade 9
- Lake Trail Middle School, Pride Program

**APPENDIX B (cont.): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (Page 3 of 3)**

YER partnered with one hundred and twenty-three Comox Valley groups July 2004 to March 2013.

Eighty-three community groups had youth presentations July 2004 to March 2013 (cont.):

- Lewis Centre, Youth Program, Day Camp www.courtenay.ca/recreation/programs.aspx
- Lighthouse Early Learning Centre www.cvcdcs.com/
- Linc Youth Centre, Action Committee
- Linc Youth Centre, Youth Council
- Merry Andrew Day Care
- Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- Ministry of Children and Family Development, Mental Health Team
- Ministry of Children and Family Development, Over Twelve Team
- Ministry of Children and Family Development, Probation Services
- Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society, AGM www.wingtips.org
- Nala'atsi Alternate School
- North Island College, Human Service Worker Program
- North Island College, Human Services Articulation Conference
- Oyster River Enhancement Society www.oysterriverenhancement.org/
- Puddleduck Daycare
- Pumpkin Patch Daycare
- Puntledge Park Elementary School, Grade 4
- Puntledge Park Elementary School, Kindergarten
- Queneesh Elementary School, Earth Day Celebration
- Queneesh Elementary School, Kindergarten to Grade 4
- Roseberry Pre-School
- Royston Elementary School, Grade 7
- St. Josephs Hospital, Adolescent Support Group
- St. Josephs Hospital, Residential Care Facility
- St. Josephs Hospital, Transitional Ward
- Scouts Canada, First Comox Scout Troup
- Scouts Canada, First Tsolum Cubs Group
- Stevenson Place (Seniors Independent Living) www.novapacific.ca/page131.htm
- Tsolum River Restoration Society www.tsolumriver.org/
- Vanier Senior Secondary School, Counseling Group
- Vanier Senior Secondary School, Grade 8 English
- Vanier Senior Secondary School, Grade 8 Science
- Wachiay Friendship Centre, Elders Lunch www.wachiay.org
- Wachiay Friendship Centre, Raven Back Youth Group www.wachiay.org
- Youth for Christ
- Youth and Ecological Restoration Program, Annual Community Celebration

APPENDIX C: Youth and Ecological Restoration Program (YER) February 8, 2013 letter to Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) acknowledging YER contract renewal for April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014. It includes a list of eighteen letters of support from Comox Valley individuals and organizations.

Wendy Kotilla, Coordinator
Youth and Ecological Restoration Program
4327 Minto Road
Courtenay, B.C.
V9N 9P7

Curtis Cameron, Community Services Manager
Ministry of Children and Family Development
2455 Mansfield Drive
Courtenay, BC
V9N 2M2

February 8, 2013

Dear Curtis,

Thank you very much for the renewal of the Youth and Ecological Restoration Program (YER) two year contract from Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). YER was created to involve vulnerable youth with the natural world to facilitate building personal, social, community, communication and employment skills. The program helps youth to build healthy relationships with themselves, their community and the ecology that surrounds us. As quoted on the YER website “Through restoring local watersheds with community members, youth gain a sense of worth, belonging and place”.

YER has been in operation since July 2004 and a second phase was created in 2007: 216 youth have participated in Phase I for a 95% completion rate; 20 youth have participated in Phase II for a 100% completion rate. YER has partnered with 123 groups through agency referrals (10), ecological restoration work (30) and presentations (83) that youth are required to do for program completion. Mutual respect, benefit and exchange occur as youth and community members work together on common ground for the common good of the Comox Valley. Attached is a list of YER partnerships from 2004 to 2013.

Advertising and promotion play an important role in the success of YER. In 2012 there were nine articles about YER in Comox Valley newspapers, one video on Shaw TV North Island, one article in the Vancouver Sun and an update for the YER website. Attached are the following articles and links:

Comox Valley Echo, YER submission, Friday, June 1, 2012

Vancouver Sun, Stephen Hume, Wednesday, July 25, 2012

Shaw TV North Island, Video by Franco Noviello, Wednesday, August 1, 2012:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUKh41gZE1A&list=UU0gKepT7udZM5HF03Wv6o6Q&index=99>

Comox Valley Record, Daniel Perry (YER youth), Wednesday, December 12, 2012

www.youthecology.ca

Community support has been the backbone of YER as local organizations provide referrals, work placements where youth gain employment experiences and venues for youth to give their presentations. Through YER, youth are accepted with no judgments and community members give positive role modeling that frequently supports the youth to consider an alternate worldview from their regular lives and struggles. Attached are eighteen letters of support provided by the following individuals and organizations:

Aboriginal Outreach Program, Aboriginal Outreach Clinician, Meredith Martin
Comox Valley Community Justice Centre, Chief Administrator, Bruce Curtis
Comox Valley Regional District, Community Services Branch, Michael Nihls
Foul Bay Ecological Research Limited, Registered Professional Biologist, Ian Moul

Glacier View Secondary School, Bridgeway Alternate Program, Rob Prescott
Glacier View Secondary School, Community Support Worker, Lynne Powell
John Howard Society, Manager, Courtenay Community Programs, Vicki Luckman
Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards, President, Steve Williams
MCFD, Child and Youth Mental Health, Robin Meeking
MCFD, Group Home Coordinator, Jennifer Caine
MCFD, Probation Services, Kevin Rushton
MCFD, Regional Youth Justice Director, Doug Hillian
MCFD, Social Worker, Rebecca Gorman
Morrison Creek Streamkeepers, President, Stephen Harvey
Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society, Manager, Maj Birch
Oyster River Enhancement Society, President, Rick Janzen
Tsolum River Restoration Society, Executive Director, Jack Minard
Wachiay Friendship Centre, President, Cora Beddows

YER has reached a point in its history and value of service delivery that it provides is accepted as a core program for vulnerable youth. Letters of community support and program promotion are critical pieces that would just not happen without the proven benefit of YER to our youth. Thank you for your ongoing support for YER and I look forward to continuing this important work with young citizens of the Comox Valley.

Yours Respectfully,

Wendy Kotilla, Coordinator
Youth and Ecological Restoration Program
www.youthecology.ca
wkotilla@shaw.ca

Cc:

Stephanie Cadieux, Minister of Children and Family Development
Stephen Brown, Deputy Minister of MCFD
Tom Webber, MCFD Executive Director of Service for North Island
Don McRae, Comox Valley MLA, Minister of Education
Claire Trevena, North Island MLA, Official Opposition for MCFD