

YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION ANNUAL REPORT

For the Period of April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Cover Page – Photo of youth presentation for Kinnikinnik Day Care | 1 |
| Table of Contents | 2 |
| Acknowledgements | 2 |
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Progress and Outcomes | 3 |
| Youth Participant Summary | 3 |
| YERI 2017 to 2018 | 4 |
| YERII 2017 to 2018 | 4 |
| YERIII 2017 to 2018 | 5 |
| Community Partnerships | 5 |
| Program Promotion | 5 |
| YER Follow Up Study | 6 |
| Succession Planning | 6 |
| 3. YER Youth and Caregiver Quotes | 7 |
| YERI Youth Quotes | 7 |
| YERI Caregiver Quotes | 9 |
| YERII Youth Quotes | 10 |
| YERII Caregiver Quotes | 10 |
| 4. Budget | 11 |
| 5. Summary | 12 |
| Table 1: Youth Participant Summary | 13 |
| Table 2: Budget for April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 | 15 |
| Appendix A: YER Community Partnerships | 16 |

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Youth and Ecological Restoration funding has been provided by BC Ministry of Children and Family Development since the program started in 2004. A partnership between Comox Valley Regional District, Community Services Branch and via the annual Grant in Aid supports YER Phase II advanced program; Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards have also contributed to YERII. Unifor Local 3019 provides an annual donation and Wachiay Friendship Centre donated funds for a YER tour with their youth. Roger Albert gave his expertise for the creation of the YER Follow Up Study questions. Much gratitude for all of the youth who come to learn about local streams and forests. Through sharing communal work with others, we learn and grow collectively.

1. INTRODUCTION

Youth and Ecological Restoration (YER) has operated in the Comox Valley since 2004. YER provides a unique service that engages vulnerable youth with a blend of ecological restoration training, ecotherapy methods and a supportive environment. These practices combined with intergenerational interactions delivers a safe and effective program for youth to be immersed in the natural world and supported within the human community.

A twenty percent increase was granted to YER for the two-year 2017/2019 contract with Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). This increase was approved for the following items: providing longer YER experiences for youth; updating and maintaining YER promotional materials; interviewing early YER graduates to monitor longer term YER benefits and impacts; activating YER succession planning; and allowing for cost of living increases.

During the April 2017 to March 2018 fiscal year, twenty-four youth participated in YER; twenty in YERI and four in YERII (Table 1a). Community Partnerships have increased by three groups for a total of one hundred and forty-nine (Appendix A). The YER annual budget includes MCFD contract funds; Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) revenue for biologists on two YERII projects; Unifor Local 3019 donation; and a stipend from Wachiay Friendship Centre (Table 2).

Over the past thirteen years YER has had three hundred and eighteen youth participants involved in Phase I (YERI), forty-one Phase II (YERII) and one Phase III (YERIII). An overall eighty-eight per cent completion rate applies for the three phases combined (Table 1f). Interviews have been recorded with the youth and caregivers that articulate observations and experiences in their own words. Their voices are powerful testaments on the program success and provide rationale for YER continuance well into the future.

2. PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES

Progress and outcomes for April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 include details of youth participation for YER, Phase I (YERI), YER, Phase II (YERII) and YER, Phase III (YERIII); community partnerships; description of YER promotional resources; long-term follow up study information; and succession planning.

Youth Participant Summary

From April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 twenty-four youth participated in YER; twenty YERI and four YERII (Table 1a). Eleven boys and nine girls were in YERI; and three boys and one girl in YERII (Table 1). Nineteen youth completed and one did not complete YERI; all four youth completed YERII (Table 1a). YERI has an eighty-seven percent completion rate; YERII is at ninety-eight percent; and YERIII remains at one hundred percent completion (Table 1f). Nine out of twenty youth in YERI (forty-five per cent) were of First Nations ancestry (Table 1).

Six groups referred the twenty-four youth to YER (Table 1b). Comox Valley School District #71 referred twelve youth: three from Cumberland Community School; three from Lake Trail Middle School; three from Nala'atsi Alternate School; two from Glacier View Learning Centre; and one from Highland Secondary School (Table 1b). MCFD had five youth referred: two from Mental Health; two via foster parents; and one from Parent Teen Mediation (Table 1b). Comox Valley Community Justice Centre, John Howard Society and Wachiay Friendship Centre each referred two; and North Island Hospital Comox Valley, Adolescent Intake referred one youth (Table 1b).

Table 1c illustrates how many of the 2017/2018 YER youth are utilizing other Comox Valley youth services. Of the twenty-four youth; all twenty-four were connected with School District #71; fifteen went to The Linc; eleven used school counseling resources; nine were associated with MCFD; nine with John Howard Society; five went to Wachiay Friendship Centre; five utilized Comox Valley Transition Society services; four went to Comox Valley Boys and Girls Club; four sought unknown counseling sources; three were involved with Comox Valley Community Justice Centre; two went to Comox Valley Family Services; one to Pacific Therapy; and one was linked with North Island Hospital Comox Valley, Adolescent Services (Table 1c). This information gives a broader image of vulnerable Comox Valley youth utilizing multiple youth services.

YERI 2017 to 2018

Each youth works with an average of four local environmental organizations. The twenty YERI youth participants obtained work experience and nature connections with a total of seven local groups: twenty with Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society; nineteen at Oyster River Enhancement Society; sixteen were involved with Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards; eight with Tsolum River Restoration Society; five helped Morrison Creek Streamkeepers; three were with Comox Valley Project Watershed Society; and one with Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) (Table 1d).

For YERI completion, it is mandatory for all youth to provide a speech for a community group. While they are often nervous about it, the experience of informing an audience on their expertise of Comox Valley ecology and environmental work gives them a perception of accomplishment. It is a transformative process that allows them to shift from students to educators, and converts feelings of anxiousness to a sense of confidence and empowerment. Of the nineteen youth that completed YERI nine did presentations for School District #71; four presented at Cummings Home; two for Lighthouse Early Learning Centre; two at Wachiay Friendship Centre; and one each for Kinnikinnik Child Care Centre and Puddleduck Pre-School (Table 1e).

YERII 2017 to 2018

In 2017 there were two YERII projects and both were funded by CVRD; one with Community Services Branch and one by a Grant in Aid. These funding partnerships permit youth to engage in more advanced environmental research including ecological inventories in local parks, bird surveys in the K'omoks Estuary, GPS mapping water courses and salmon population estimates. YERII projects require guidance from an environmental professional to ensure high quality work.

Since 2008 there have been sixteen YERII projects; eleven have been funded by CVRD and five funded through Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards. YERII has a five day format that involves two youth who have completed YERI. This includes three days of research, one day of tour preparation and on the final day the youth co-facilitate a public tour. A report is produced by the environmental professional that is posted on the YER website, Ecological Reports page.

The first 2017 YERII project was conducted from May 24th to May 28th at CVRD, Royston Seaside Trail. The objective was to perform Bald Eagle and Great Blue Heron surveys in the K'omoks Estuary. The two youth, Bailey Cullen and Katelyn Love, worked with Registered Professional Biologist, Warren Warttig, who was funded by a CVRD Grant in Aid. Research methods used were to scan the estuary with a high powered telescope every 20 minutes to count the two bird species in nine sections. An inventory of marine species was also conducted. Ten people came out to the public tour to learn about the research from the two youth. This report is available on the YER website at: <http://youthecology.ca/great-blue-heron-and-bald-eagle-foraging-and-flight-observation-study-yer-2017/>

The second YERII project in 2017 was done from July 19th to 23rd in Trent River Park, which was funded by CVRD, Community Services Branch. Two youth participants, Ashtyn Schow and one anonymous youth were employed with establishing three ecological inventories with Tim Ennis of Latitude Conservation Solutions. The inventories were done in the upland forest, canyon wall slopes and riparian areas of the park along with recording wildlife observations. This information is instrumental to assist CVRD in making good management decisions about our regional parks. The YERII project ended on the fifth day with the youth led public tour of the park attended by forty-three people. The Trent River Park report can be found at: <http://youthecology.ca/trent-river-regional-park-ecological-inventory-yer-2017/> .

YERIII 2017 to 2018

Providing YERIII as a longer experience for youth was not possible in 2017/2018. Implementing YERIII will require collaboration with Comox Valley environmental organizations to generate opportunities for youth to be placed in positions of teaching and educating others. These efforts will continue as YER expands to include other people working directly with the youth.

Community Partnerships

There is now a total of one hundred and forty-nine groups on the community partnerships list (Appendix A). Since the 2017 annual report, the number has grown by three in the category of youth presentations, which are: Highland Secondary School, counselor; Kinnikinnick Child Care Centre; and Lake Trail Middle School, Grade 7. These partnerships span cultural, generational and political boundaries, and demonstrate stable Comox Valley community support for YER. Both youth and community members benefit from working together and enduring long-term committed relationships.

Program Promotion

There were several developments in regards to program promotion. The two YERII projects had facebook events to announce the youth led tours; one of the projects had a press release in the Comox Valley Record; both projects had tour announcements posted to the CVRD facebook page. A YER brochure was designed by Half Tone Pixel (<https://halftonepixel.com/>) and has received many compliments about its professional appearance (<http://youthecology.ca/yer-gets-a-brand-new-brochure/>); and new YER business cards were created by Sure Copy. The YER website had improvements by Pod Creative (<http://podcreative.ca/>) that included several text upgrades and more recent photos posted. A photo gallery was created for the eleven years from 2007 to 2017 with approximately twenty photos for each year, which can be found at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/138263890@N08/albums>.

An educational and promotional video will be created in the 2018/2019 year by Carswell Film <http://carswellfilm.ca/> ; planning and fundraising for this film was initiated early in 2018. Onsite interviews will capture the youth experiencing ecological restoration activities with community members and environmental professionals. It will highlight the youth narrative of restoring local watersheds to gain a sense of worth, belonging and place. Several youth will be featured in the video working alongside Comox Valley environmental groups. The video will document YER history from a vision to a successful program that involves youth with meaningful work and improves their sense of wellbeing and community belonging. The video goal is to promote YER as an educational and therapeutic program to empower youth at risk. It will be motivational for youth, as well as for educators interested in starting a similar program in their community.

YER Follow Up Study

Monitoring environmental and social projects is not routinely done as the initial work is often given a higher priority. Follow up studies provide invaluable information on how the projects are functioning several years later. From the perspective of assessing survival and longevity, these studies give a broader vision on how a specific project might have changed or endured over time.

A long term follow up study started in January 2018 to assess the benefit of YER on the lives of youth participants. Former North Island College, Social Sciences instructor, Roger Albert, aided with preparation of the interview questions. Two youth were interviewed in April 2018 and ten more will be questioned prior to the end of March 2019. All interviewees will have been in YER a minimum of five years prior to being interviewed; they will be paid twenty dollars and treated to lunch for participating.

An initial YER follow up study was conducted in 2009 with twelve youth through Vancouver Foundation funding <http://youthecology.ca/yer-phase-ii-report-2009/>. They had all been in YER from one and a half to four years before being interviewed. All of the interviewees spoke of the importance of the life skills and work experience they gained from involvement with YER.

Below are two examples of youth comments from the 2009 follow up study:

YERI Interviewee # A (46) (YERI April 2006; Interview July 2008)

- “It’s taught me to become more independent, to make my own goals and sort of reach out and do things for myself. I’ve gained initiative from the program. I’ve got a job, I’m working with a group of people and sort of using those skills of teamwork and community thinking that have helped me push my comfort zone.”

YERI Interviewee # I (20) (YERI April 2005; Interview February 2009)

- “It gave me a lot more respect for what’s around me and a lot more knowledge about the wilderness. It has changed my life because before I used to be reckless and didn’t care about my surroundings. Back when I had no respect for anything I didn’t care, but now I have respect for things, I have more respect for myself and other people in my life and that’s how it’s changed me.”

Succession Planning

Succession planning will allow YER to continue providing services in the community well into the future. The present YER Coordinator created and has nurtured the program since its inception for about fourteen years. Many facets of the program need to be upheld for the integrity of YER to remain intact. There is much organizing, promoting, reporting and hands on youth work that is part of the daily operational procedures. One fundamental ingredient of YER success is building and sustaining relationships with the youth, caregivers, teachers, youth support workers, social workers, environmental groups and public speaking venue organizers.

A multitude of elements are required for YER successors to maintain the program status quo which include: ecological knowledge; conflict resolution methods; organizational strengths; promotional abilities; verbal and nonverbal communication; setting boundaries; compassionate approach; proficient written communication; teaching aptitude; transmission of positive social and life skills; behavioral analysis, time management; and good work ethics. Some combination of these is essential for continued execution of YER in a similar manner in which it was created.

Transitioning YER to include other people being involved with its operation will take some time. Two people from the Comox Valley have expressed interest in continuing YER work in the spirit it was intended. They and others will be interviewed and trained over the next couple of years to assess their capacity for working with youth at risk. A comprehensive job description and list of required skills will be composed to define the position requirements.

YER has potential to grow, both within and beyond the Comox Valley. There is interest for the creation of a YER branch in the Campbell River area. Discussions will ensue with the interested parties. Other expansion opportunities will also be sought.

3. YER YOUTH AND CAREGIVER QUOTES

YER youth are interviewed for their feedback and comments at different stages throughout their involvement with the program. Youth parents or caregivers are interviewed to gain perspective of their experience with YER. Some of the best tributes to YER success come from these words. YERI and YERII youth and caregiver quotes are posted below, as well as a statement from one school counsellor.

YERI Quotes 2017 to 2018

GOAL #1: BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

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

- It was fun. I actually feel like meeting other people because usually you don't meet other people on the streets. Because usually you don't meet other people very day and when you are in a community and in a group, it is awesome. People are kind, generous, nice and they get curious about the new person who comes into their community. When we were at the hatchery with all the elders they were curious about me and they wanted to meet me. I felt like I was part of them. It felt great because they were accepting me like I was one of their own. *(YERI Participant #300)*
- I really enjoyed doing this program. I learned a lot about nature and about these programs that people make to help. The Avian Rescue Society and Oyster River hatchery are both built off donations and volunteer work, so it shows how much people really care about this sort of thing. It's important to have these people who can work together as a team to help the environment. It was a really fun experience to be able to help them and also get work and volunteer experience that can help me in the future. *(YERI Participant #313)*
- It was good just because I didn't feel like I was out of place or not supposed to be there. A lot of times you go to a place and it feels like you are not supposed to be there and you go to a place and you are checking it out and leaving. With the program it felt more like you were there and you didn't feel like a visitor and it felt like you were doing the same thing as them. I felt part of the group. *(YERI Participant #314)*

GOAL #2: GAINING VALUED WORK EXPERIENCE

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

- I'm surprised that it didn't take much time at all to do all the things required. The things that were required were properly measuring the fish and weighing them; writing down all the species of birds we saw and writing down what direction they were flying. We measured the fish from Millard Creek two fish counting fences; Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards monitor the health of the fish. We counted Great Blue Herons and Bald Eagles throughout the whole K'omoks estuary. We did counts every twenty minutes with a high powered telescope. *(YERI Participant #309)*

- On the second day we went to Oyster River hatchery. We helped catch the Chinook which is the biggest of the salmon species. We helped take salmon eggs and milt from the salmon. When we caught the salmon we used big fishing nets and garbage lids as bangers to scare them into the net. It was pretty cold. We had to communicate with each other and respect one another. *(YERI Participant #312)*
- In conclusion all the volunteers seemed to love what they do and they have a big impact on wildlife and the ecosystem. It can help you and others get a better work ethic; it helped me be more on time; it gets you to look around and see what needs to be done and instead of being told what to do all the time. It's worthwhile and I would recommend this to anyone looking for a great experience with nature. *(YERI Participant #316)*

GOAL #3: IMPROVING ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

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

- The third week I helped with measuring the water amounts and how healthy it is. I also learned what a watershed is. A watershed is all the creeks and rivers that join other creeks and rivers. All creeks and forests are part of our community, too. I also learned what a nursery log is. A nursery log is when a tree grows on a fallen tree or a log. I also learned the layers of the forest: herb, shrub, tree, canopy. *(YERI Participant #311)*
- Today we were counting spawning salmon in the creek. We had to wear chest waders so we do not get wet walking up the creek. We were walking up the creek so we could find spawning salmon. The female salmon pats her tail to make a hole big enough for her eggs and then the male comes and fertilizes the eggs, and then the female buries the eggs. It was cool to see such a beautiful thing happen. *(YERI Participant #315)*
- The group that I was working with was Project Watershed. I helped plant trees and ferns that day. I learned that you have to plant trees one metre apart from each other. The reason why we were doing this was because when they were making a big side channel. They wrecked lots of the nature that was there, so we had to help recreate the nature. They put a culvert in to bring water from one part of the river to the next part and all this is in Simms Park. Part of my job was to help little kids plant trees that were from Cumberland School. *(YERI Participant #317)*

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 how to respect myself and stop treating myself poorly and because I had no respect for myself and didn't care about anything I made some bad choices. Wendy's program has helped me stop and look back on this past year and helped me learn to respect myself and the people I worked with showed me how much they respect and care about nature and it helped me learn to respect myself. *(YERI Participant #299)*
- I really appreciate this program because it helps youth look in a different direction instead of being stuck in society's ways. I feel like we're a little bit driven from nature. We're stuck in our phones, we're stuck in our media and substances. As much as I felt like complaining and didn't like it, it is still needed and I feel like there needs to be more like it. *(YERI Participant #305)*
- My favourite part of this whole journey was Oyster River because they had hot chocolate and everyone was having a good time and they had everything organized. I learned to work hard, dexterity, commitment and confidence, and it will help me find a job in the future. *(YERI Participant #306)*

GOAL #5: ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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

- It was weird and different, I don't talk about my life, so it was weird. I don't talk about the good things I do in my life. I got to explain and answer a lot of the questions I was asked. I answered and I felt listened to. I learned to take some patience and actually pay attention because you can miss a lot of things in life and this is not one of them you want to miss. *(YERI Participant #303)*
- It was fun. I've been usually really scared to present and usually cry, but this time I didn't. They learned that your program is really fun and they should try it out. *(YERI Participant #308)*
- I had a good time even though I was really scared before. Just the kids, they were listening very well and they were asking questions and they were acting like I was just a normal person and it made me feel very comfortable. Going on a walk calmed me down. They learned about the salmon and how it works and how they fertilize. I learned that I do have anxiety and get nervous about things like this and I can push through it and do the things I want to do. It feels amazing; I am very happy because I got to do this program and I got to meet all the kids. *(YERI Participant #318)*

YERI Caregiver Quotes 2017 to 2018

- I would say that it helped working with you, helped boost his self-confidence and ability to self-advocate. With the hearing thing what you told me about him telling you about it. He was able to turn around and say I have a hearing loss. He hasn't been very vocal about expressing what he needs and wants. I'm very pleased he was able to self-advocate and work towards expressing his own needs and wants. *(YERI Participant #300)*
- Increased sense of responsibility and going back to that commitment. There were a couple of times she could have said she wasn't doing it, but instead she held strong to her commitment. It gave her a new perspective; it broadened her perspective. She was able to see the impact of a small group of people committed to making the world a better place and how that happens with baby steps. *(YERI Participant #308)*
- I think it's an excellent program. I think it opens their minds and gives them a difference from any other program. It's not like learning about a sport, it's like learning about life. It opens their minds to things that aren't typically what you see as a twelve year old boy. It opens their minds to the world and our social responsibility to everything, to animals, to nature, more than the little world we live in. *(YERI Participant #309)*
- I think it's helped her grow more and hopefully have more respect with Mother Earth. I know she enjoyed her time with the youth program because she looked forward with her days with you. She smiled every time she knew you were going to pick her up, so I know she enjoyed her experiences with you and she does love being outside. *(YERI Participant #311)*
- I think it totally helped her to get out in the world and feel more confident and being able to get out there. She wants to get a resume and go out and get work. So it definitely gave her a little more motivation and a kick start to do it. She was super positive those days, she just really liked it. *(YERI Participant #312)*
- I think it's an excellent program. I was actually really happy. I was really impressed with the program because it teaches her stuff. It gives her additional skills for a job. It's about the environment, too. It teaches her knowledge. It's more geared towards her interest. I think it helped her develop a lot more confidence, especially towards giving presentations. *(YERI Participant #313)*

- I think it gave him a slightly different perspective on the world and a different perspective on himself. It expanded his awareness. I noticed a subtle shift in the way he deals with things in a positive way. He's been a lot more receptive to a different way of doing things. He is not getting as frustrated. *(YERI Participant #314)*
- I know she was really nervous about it, but came home so proud. She came home so proud of herself and when she stood up in front of them she got through it and she thought the kids were adorable. It wasn't a huge group which was helpful, too. I think it definitely gave her some confidence. It was a good opportunity for her. Thank you for pushing her. Thanks a lot and keep doing what you do. *(YERI Participant #318)*

Lake Trail Middle School, School Counselor *(YERI Participant #306)*

- I didn't really realize there was so many opportunities. How many people are involved and how much community involvement there is and it is so amazing. So wonderful there are all those opportunities.
- I think we were all super impressed, not only in his ability to re-tell the experience, but also that he would stop from his reading and ad lib, which tells us that he really internalized and was engaged in the experience.
- For one, I know we have been using your program for many years and it is such a good way to reconnect students with nature with confidence in themselves and achieving something they didn't think they could.
- I think it came at the best time for him for his situation being at risk of dropping out or taking off – flight risk. You have such a wonderful way of being firm, but fair by setting clear boundaries and expectations. For a lot of kids, they don't have that consistency. They so strive with routine and structure.

YERII Youth Quotes 2017 to 2018

- I am capable of presenting stuff in front of a group and I can sit and focus for periods of time. I've got great difficulties with focusing. I pushed myself to talk in front of a group of people. I learned to work with other people in groups. I learned confidence and working in a group. *(YERII Participant #38-299)*
- I learned that it's good to work by yourself, but it's even better to work with other people. If you are working by yourself you might miss something and if you are working with other people, then if you miss something the other people will catch your mistake. I helped others by supporting them. *(YERII Participant #39-282)*
- I learned more teamwork skills, just how to work better as a team. I already knew how, but it got better. I helped learn about a new park, raise awareness and it felt good teaching other people, just doing a good turn for the community. We shared the work equally, so it was easier rather than one or two people doing it. It would have been harder with one or two people and it would have taken more time. *(YERII Participant #40-291)*
- Everyone does their fair share of work. They did a portion of work; I did a portion of work. You guys are not like the teachers in school who just explain it to you with words and don't actually show you. It was a lot of fun; it made me feel smart. *(YERII Participant #41-309)*

YERII Caregiver Quotes 2017 to 2018

- It gave her some self-esteem; it gave her a good feeling about herself. You listen to what she is saying, you don't tell her. You were able to listen to what she had to say and express herself. You have a way of listening to your students and expressing yourself to them and not telling them what to do. *(YERII Participant #38-299)*

- That was awesome. I was in absolute amazement. I don't know how you can do better than it was. The way he explained himself, his demeanor, the way he was standing up proud. I think it gave him one of the best shots of self-esteem, just the way he was presenting himself. (*YERII Participant #39-282*)
- I thought it was good, really interesting, he had a nice loud voice. I just think that he lacks a bit in self-confidence. Doing the tour and having that many people and them saying he did a good job, I think that's important for any kid. I even think that is one of the things he is good at and to show him it went well it could be a spark and to help him find his spark. I think he was even proud of himself. (*YERII Participant #40-291*)
- I think the biggest was connecting with other adults and building relationships, responding to other adults and taking direction from them or being responsible to them. I saw real growth and maturity. It was his self-confidence and maturity. Those were the changes I saw in his behavior. (*YERII Participant #41-309*)

4. BUDGET

YER Budget for April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018

Details of the YER 2017 to 2018 budget are given in Table 2. Revenue of \$48,900.00 included: MCFD \$42,000.00, Comox Valley Regional District \$6,150.00, UNIFOR Local 3019 donated \$500.00 and Wachiay Friendship Centre contributed \$250.00. Other contributions included \$2,000.00 as donations for training and equipment costs from ecological restoration groups.

This list gives details of YER 2017/2018 expenses:

- **Professional fees** included fees, administration costs and program evaluation for \$35,551.05; and biologist fees were \$5,650.00.
- **Honouraria** for youth participants was \$1,100.00; and \$423.93 for other benefits, such as YER hoodies for the Phase II program.
- **Program Promotion** was \$1,812.65: \$922.25 for website updates and maintenance; \$823.20 for the YER brochure design and printing; and \$67.20 was the YER business cards.
- **Transportation** costs were calculated at \$.53/kilometre for a total of \$2,728.97.
- **Supplies** of \$769.05 included office, lunches and materials required for YER work.
- **Miscellaneous expenses** in the amount of \$864.35 were: \$193.63 for bank charges; \$503.72 was a camera purchase; \$117.00 for Criminal Record Checks; and \$50.00 for Oyster River Enhancement Society.
- **Other Contributions** were \$2,000.00 for YER as in-kind training, materials and support from community members and environmental organizations.

5. SUMMARY

Youth and Ecological Restoration (YER) continues to work with Comox Valley vulnerable youth to facilitate their personal growth and empowerment through ecological restoration endeavors. Youth are employed with environmental groups to assist community members in learning about and restoring local watersheds. They gain knowledge and awareness about human and ecological relationships through immersion in nature with people who work in our streams and forests.

YER merges ecological restoration with ecotherapy practices that have a calming effect on youth with addiction, anger and anxiety issues. After completing YERI, YERII and YERIII, youth leave with a sense of being part of the larger community. Each of the three phases build on the previous phase to inspire confidence through engaging with environmental work, spending time in the natural world, collaborating with community elders and assembling their experiences to form a speech for educating others.

YER creates a safe and supportive place for youth to be themselves and has continued for thirteen years with a total of three hundred and eighteen participants. The 2017 to 2018 fiscal year had twenty YERI and four YERII youth. Fourteen youth were boys, ten were girls and forty-five per cent were First Nations (Table 1). Twelve youth were referred by Comox Valley School District #71, five from Ministry of Children and Family Development and the rest came from other youth service groups (Table 1b). Future options include generating more YERIII opportunities.

Improvement of YER promotional materials was successful with recent business cards and brochures, website revisions and a forthcoming video for next year. These advancements will assist as YER transitions to having other people lead the program and work with the youth, as well as exploring the potential for YER to be set up in other communities. Succession planning is in progress with two people interested. A second YER follow-up study was initiated and will proceed through the following year.

Another YER year is complete with many successes and events that the Comox Valley youth and community can take pride in having shared working and being together. If YER was summed up into one word, it would be relationships, both social and ecological. The YER model created in 2004 has remained the same and continues to nurture and empower vulnerable youth. A vision for subsequent years will see YER expand within and beyond the Comox Valley community.

TABLE 1: YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION (YER)

YOUTH PARTICIPANT SUMMARY TABLE FOR APRIL 1, 2017 TO MARCH 31, 2018.

YER for Comox Valley vulnerable youth funded by BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

YERI had 20 youth - 9 girls and 11 boys; YERII had 4 youth - 1 girl and 3 boys.

YERII numbering: YERII number is first and YERI is second.

YERI had a total of 20 youth - 9 or 45% were of First Nations ancestry.

| Table 1a: YER COMPLETION YERI is 20 hours; YERII is 25 hours. | YOUTH TOTALS |
|--|---------------------|
| YERI Complete: Participant # 299, 300, 301, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318 | 19 |
| YERII Complete: # 38-299, 39-282, 40-291, 41-309 | 4 |
| YERI Incomplete: # 302 | 1 |
| TOTAL YOUTH PARTICIPANTS | 24 |

Table 1b: YOUTH ORGANIZATION REFERRALS

YERI and YERII participants were referred by six agencies.

| | |
|--|-----------|
| CV School District # 71: # 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 39-282 | 12 |
| Cumberland Community School: # 312, 313, 314 | |
| Lake Trail Middle School: # 304, 306, 317 | |
| Nala'atsi Alternate School: # 303, 305, 307 | |
| Glacier View Learning Centre: Key Program: # 315 Bridgeway: # 39-282 | |
| Highland Secondary School: # 316 | |
| MCFD: # 300, 301, 310, 318, 40-291 | 5 |
| Mental Health: # 300, 301; Foster Parent: # 310, 40-291; Parent/Teen Mediation: # 318 | 2 |
| Wachiay Friendship Centre: # 308, 311 | 2 |
| Comox Valley Community Justice Centre: # 299, 38-299 | 2 |
| John Howard Society: # 309, 41-309 | 1 |
| North Island Hospital Comox Valley, Adolescent Intake: # 302 | 1 |
| TOTAL 6 YOUTH REFERRAL ORGANIZATIONS | 24 |

Table 1c: YOUTH ORGANIZATION INTERCONNECTIONS

YERI, YERII and YERIII participants interconnect with other Comox Valley services.

| | |
|--|----|
| SD #71: # 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 38-299, 39-282, 40-291, 41-309 | 24 |
| The Linc: # 300, 301, 306, 308, 309, 310, 312, 313, 314, 315, 317, 318, 39-282, 40-291, 41-309 | 15 |
| CV School District #71 Counselling: # 304, 306, 310, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 39-282 | 11 |
| MCFD: # 300, 301, 305, 306, 307, 310, 311, 314, 40-291 | 9 |
| John Howard Society: # 300, 303, 305, 307, 308, 309, 311, 317, 40-291 | 9 |
| Wachiay Friendship Centre: # 300, 305, 307, 308, 311 | 5 |
| Comox Valley Transition Society: # 299, 300, 301, 308, 38-299 | 5 |
| Comox Valley Boys and Girls Club: # 300, 301, 308, 39-282 | 4 |
| Counseling - Source Unknown: # 300, 301, 305, 318 | 4 |
| Comox Valley Community Justice Centre: # 299, 311, 38-299 | 3 |
| Comox Valley Family Services: # 301, 315 | 2 |
| Pacific Therapy: # 40-291 | 1 |
| North Island Hospital Comox Valley, Adolescent Intake: # 302 | 1 |
| TOTAL 13 YOUTH ORGANIZATION INTERCONNECTIONS | |

**TABLE 1 (Cont.): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
YOUTH PARTICIPANT SUMMARY TABLE FOR APRIL 1, 2017 TO MARCH 31, 2018.**

| Table 1d: ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION ORGANIZATIONS YERII projects have two youth and two adults. | YOUTH TOTALS |
|--|-------------------------|
| YERI Projects had youth participate with the following organizations: | |
| Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society: # 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318 | 20 |
| Oyster River Enhancement Society: # 299, 300, 301, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318 | 19 |
| Millard/Piercy Watershed Stewards: # 300, 301, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 318 | 16 |
| Tsolum River Restoration Society: # 300, 301, 303, 304, 306, 307, 308, 309 | 8 |
| Morrison Creek Streamkeepers: # 299, 313, 314, 316, 318 | 5 |
| Comox Valley Project Watershed Society: # 314, 315, 317 | 3 |
| Comox Valley Regional District: # 308 | 1 |
| YERII Projects: | |
| Comox Valley Regional District, Royston Seaside Trail: # 38-299, 39-282 | 2 |
| Comox Valley Regional District, Trent River Park: # 40-291, 41-309 | 2 |
| TOTAL 7 ORGANIZATIONS | |

Table 1e: COMMUNITY PRESENTATION LOCATIONS
YERI youth give a presentation; YERII youth co-facilitate a public tour.

| | |
|--|----|
| CV School District # 71: # 303, 304, 306, 307, 312, 313, 314, 316, 317 | |
| Cumberland Community School, Grade 8: # 313, 314 | |
| Nala'atsi Alternate School: # 303, 307 | |
| Lake Trail Middle School, Grade 7: # 304 | |
| Lake Trail Middle School, Counsellor: # 306 | |
| Lake Trail Middle School, Grade 8/9: # 317 | |
| Courtenay Elementary School, Grade 4/5: # 312 | |
| Highland Secondary School, Counsellor: # 316 | 9 |
| Cummings Home, Seniors Assisted Living Facility: # 299, 305, 309, 311 | 4 |
| Lighthouse Early Learning Centre: # 301, 318 | 2 |
| Wachiay Friendship Centre: # 300, 308 | 2 |
| Kinnikinnik Child Care Centre: # 310 | 1 |
| Puddleduck Pre-School: # 315 | 1 |
| YERII: Comox Valley Regional District, Royston Seaside Trail: # 38-299, 39-282 | 2 |
| YERII: Comox Valley Regional District, Bear Creek Nature Park: # 40-291, 41-309 | 2 |
| YERI 260 AUDIENCE MEMBERS; YERII PROJECTS 10 and 43 TOUR PARTICIPANTS | 23 |

Table 1f: YER COMPLETION RATES

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| YERI: Total number of 318 youth participants; 278 completed the 20 hour program | 87% Completion |
| YERII: Total number of 41 youth participants; 40 completed the 25 hour program | 98% Completion |
| YERIII: Total number of 1 youth participant; 1 completed the 30 hour program | 100% Completion |

TABLE 2: YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER) BUDGET FOR APRIL 1, 2017 TO MARCH 31, 2018.

This YER budget records expenses, income and other contributions required to deliver the Comox Valley program for vulnerable youth. YER 2017/2018 funds were provided by BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), Unifor Local 3019 and Wachiay Friendship Centre. Other inkind contributions were provided by Comox Valley groups for training and tools to restore local watersheds and ecosystems.

| Expense Item | Expenses | Income | Other Contributions |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Program Delivery Biologist | \$35,551.05 \$5,650.00 | MCFD \$42,000.00 CVRD \$6,150.00 UNIFOR 3019 \$500.00 Wachiay \$250.00 | Training \$2,000.00 |
| Youth Honourarium Youth Benefits | \$1,100.00 \$423.93 | | |
| Program Promotion | \$1,812.65 | | |
| Mileage | \$2,728.97 | | |
| Supplies | \$769.05 | | |
| Misc. Expenses | \$864.35 | | |
| TOTALS | \$48,900.00 | \$48,900.00 | \$2,000.00 |

**APPENDIX A: YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (Page 1 of 4)**

YER partnered with one hundred and forty-nine groups July 2004 to March 2018.

Ten groups referred youth clients from July 2004 to March 2018:

- 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 #71: Cumberland Community School; Glacier View Learning Centre; Lake Trail Middle School; Mark R. Isfeld School; Nalata'atsi
- Comox Valley Youth Resource Society
- 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; Foster Parents
- Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health www.queenalexandra.org
- Wachiay Friendship Centre, Raven Back Youth Group www.wachiay.org
- Vancouver Island Health Authority www.viha.ca

Thirty groups had youth conduct ecological restoration work from July 2004 to March 2018:

- 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 Nature 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.fbses.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 A (cont.): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (Page 2 of 4)**

YER partnered with one hundred and forty-nine Comox Valley groups July 2004 to March 2018.

One hundred and six community groups had youth presentations from July 2004 to March 2018:

- Airport Elementary School, Grade 1
- Airport Elementary School, Grade 2/3
- Arden Park Elementary School, Kindergarten
- Arden Park Elementary School, Grade 1
- Arden Park Elementary School, Grade 4
- Arden Park Elementary School, Grade 6
- Aspen Park Elementary School, Grade 2
- 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, Adventure Club www.cvboysandgirlsclub.ca
- 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, Kindergarten
- Courtenay Elementary School, Grade 2/3
- Courtenay Elementary School, Grade 3/4
- Courtenay Elementary School, Grade 5/6
- Cumberland Elementary School, Grade 5/6
- Creekside Commons www.creeksidecommons.ca
- Cumberland Community School, Grade 1/2
- Cumberland Community School, Grade 4/5
- Cumberland Community School, Grade 5/6
- Cumberland Community School, Grade 8
- Cumberland Junior School
- Cumberland Lodge
- Cumberland Rotary Club www.rotarycc.org
- Cummings Home, Seniors Assisted Living Facility
- Earth Day Festival
- Eureka Support Society and Clubhouse
- Fanny Bay Enhancement Society www.fbse.ca
- Fanny Bay Old Age Pensioners, Seniors Craft Group

**APPENDIX A (cont.): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (Page 3 of 4)**

YER partnered with one hundred and forty-nine Comox Valley groups July 2004 to March 2018.

One hundred and nine community groups had youth presentations July 2004 to March 2018 (cont.):

- Glacier View Lodge Society www.glacierviewlodge.ca
- Glacier View School, Bridgeway Program
- Glacier View School, Independent Learning Program
- Glacier View School, Key Program
- Glacier View School, Senior Alternate Program
- Highland Secondary School, Counselor
- Island Early Education Centre, After School Group
- John Howard Society, Staff Meeting www.jhsni.bc.ca/
- Kidzone Daycare
- Kinnikinnik Child Care Centre
- Kiwanis Club of Courtenay www.facebook.com/pages/Kiwanis-Club-of-Courtenay-BC
- Lake Trail Middle School, Grade 7
- Lake Trail Middle School, Grade 8
- Lake Trail Middle School, Grade 9
- Lake Trail Middle School, Pride Program
- Lake Trail Middle School, Humanities Program
- Lake Trail Middle School, Youth and Family Support
- 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, Staff
- Linc Youth Centre, Youth Council
- Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School, Life Skills Program
- Merry Andrew Day Care
- Miracle Beach Elementary School, Grade 1
- 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, Kindergarten
- Puntledge Elementary School, Grade 3
- Puntledge Park Elementary School, Grade 4
- Puntledge Park Elementary School, Grade 5/6
- Queneesh Elementary School, Earth Day Celebration
- Queneesh Elementary School, Kindergarten to Grade 4
- Robb Road Elementary School, 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

**APPENDIX A (cont.): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (Page 3 of 4)**

YER partnered with one hundred and forty-nine Comox Valley groups July 2004 to March 2018.

One hundred and nine community groups had youth presentations July 2004 to March 2018 (cont.):

- Saltwater Waldorf School
- 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/
- Tiger Too Pre-School
- Vanier Senior Secondary School, Counseling Group
- Vanier Senior Secondary School, Grade 8 English
- Vanier Senior Secondary School, Grade 8 Science
- Vanier Secondary School, Little Friends Day Care
- Wachiay Friendship Centre, Elders Lunch www.wachiay.org
- Wachiay Friendship Centre, Raven Back Youth Group www.wachiay.org
- Wee Care Early Childhood Centres, Royston Elementary www.weecareinc.com
- Youth and Ecological Restoration Program, Annual Community Celebration