

YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION ANNUAL REPORT

For the Period of April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019
Completed on September 30, 2019



**YER PROGRAM FUNDED BY:
BRITISH COLUMBIA
MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
DEVELOPMENT**

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The Youth and Ecological Restoration Program has been financed by BC Ministry of Children and Family Development throughout its fifteen-year history. Comox Valley Regional District, Community Services Branch and the annual Grant in Aid have supported the Phase II advanced program since 2013 and funded two projects in 2018. Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards first sponsored a Phase II project in 2013 and supported another one in 2018. Unifor Local 3019 have provided an annual donation since 2014. Numerous Comox Valley community groups and individuals provided funds for creation of the youth program film “Ecology Transforms Youth”. Carswell Films produced a phenomenal and professional film that illustrates this essential work to connect young people with ecology, community and place. Immense respect for the youth who come to learn about nature and have taught me so much about the wealth of human relationships.

1. INTRODUCTION

Youth and Ecological Restoration (YER) was established in the Comox Valley on July 1, 2004. The primary purpose of YER is to help vulnerable youth build healthy relationships with self, family and community through a practice known as ecotherapy. This is accomplished by immersing them in the natural world and connecting them with people and groups who are involved with ecological restoration activities in community watersheds. As they bond with nature they begin to see the species interconnections that creates the ecology of place. This awareness allows them to envision themselves as one small piece that is individually significant and simultaneously critical to the whole, wisdom that can be applied to both nature and human communities. For each YER youth there is an inner respect that comes with this engagement.

From April 2018 to March 2019 twenty-seven youth participated in YER; twenty-one in YER Phase I (YERI) and six in YER Phase II (YERII) (Table 1). Community Partnerships increased to one hundred and fifty-three (Appendix A). The YER annual budget included Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) contract funds; Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) income for two YERII projects; Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards finances for one YERII project; Unifor Local 3019 annual donation; contributions for the creation of the YER film; and a small amount of bank interest (Table 2).

YER has had three hundred and thirty-nine youth participants involved in YERI, forty-seven in YERII and one Phase III (YERIII) with an eighty-eight percent completion rate for all three phases (Table 1f). This level of achievement is considered high for young people who are struggling to recognize and represent the best versions of themselves. Interviews are conducted with the youth and their caregivers so that their perspectives on YER may be shared in the annual reports. YER has the potential to create change in individuals, families and communities.

2. PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES

YER progress and outcomes from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 contains information on YERI, YERII and YERIII youth participants. This includes: program completion rates; referral origins; youth service interconnections; ecological restoration work placements; and community presentation locations. The YER documentary film “Ecology Transforms Youth” was created by Carswell Film with funds raised entirely from the Comox Valley community. The YER program coordinator was recognized with a 2019 University of Victoria (UVic), Distinguished Alumni Award (DDA).

Youth Participant Summary

During the April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 period twenty-seven youth participated in YER; twenty-one for YERI and six in YERII (Table 1a). In YERI there were twelve boys and nine girls; and two boys and four girls in YERII (Table 1). YERI completion occurred for eighteen youth, while three did not complete; all six of the YERII youth reached completion (Table 1a). YERI has an eighty-seven percent completion rate for vulnerable youth; YERII is at ninety-eight percent; and YERIII continues to be one hundred percent completion (Table 1f). Six of the twenty-one YERI participants (twenty-nine per cent) were of First Nations ancestry (Table 1).

There were five groups that referred the twenty-seven youth to YER (Table 1b). Comox Valley School District #71 referred twenty-one of the youth: eight came from Highland Secondary School; six from Glacier View Learning Centre; three from Lake Trail Middle School; two from Cumberland Community School; and one each from Nala’atsi Alternate School and Aspen Park Elementary School (Table 1b). Two youth were referred by MCFD; one individual from Mental

Health and the other from Parent Teen Mediation (Table 1b). Comox Valley Community Justice Centre referred two youth; one was from John Howard Society; and one came through Wachiay Friendship Centre (Table 1b).

Many of the YER youth are interconnected with other Comox Valley youth organizations and services (Table 1c). All twenty-seven 2018/2019 youth were connected with School District #71; nineteen had been to The Linc; twelve were associated MCFD facilities; eleven had received school counseling resources; eight had been involved with the RCMP; six had gone to Pacific Therapy and Wachiay Friendship Centre; five utilized Comox Valley Transition Society services; four were with both John Howard Society and Comox Valley Boys and Girls Club; three referrals had connections with Comox Valley Community Justice Centre; and two each came through Comox Valley Family Services, North Island Hospital Comox Valley (Adolescent Services) and other unknown counseling sources (Table 1c). Documentation of this information demonstrates that the YER vulnerable youth are involved with several Comox Valley youth services.

YERI 2018 to 2019

During the 2018/2019 fiscal year twenty-one YERI youth participants worked with eight Comox Valley environmental organizations: twenty were involved with Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society; eighteen participated with activities at Oyster River Enhancement Society; thirteen linked with Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards; seven with Tsolum River Restoration Society; six assisted with Morrison Creek Streamkeepers; and one each collaborated with Comox Valley Conservation Strategy, Comox Valley Nature and Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Puntledge Hatchery on BC Rivers Day (Table 1d). Each YERI youth works with about four local groups in order for them to obtain a variety of work experiences and interactions with community members.

All YERI youth participants are required to give a speech for a community group on completion of the program. To facilitate them feeling more comfortable they are given several choices about what kind of audience they would like. With guidance from the YER coordinator the youth write out their presentation notes, which is also a process of program review and evaluation. The eighteen youth that completed YERI presented to seven groups. Nine gave speeches for School District #71 to the following eight schools: Miracle Beach Elementary, Glacier View Alternate Secondary, Aspen Park Elementary, Lake Trail Middle, Airport Elementary, Arden Elementary, Puntledge Park Elementary and Highland Secondary (Table 1e). Three youth presented for the Lighthouse Early Learning Centre; two at Cummings Home; and one each for Euphoria Nature Preschool, Saltwater Waldorf School, Puddleduck Pre-School and a City of Courtenay, Council Meeting (Table 1e). The youth presentation puts them in the position of being educators, which empowers them and imparts a sense of pride in their accomplishments.

YERII 2018 to 2019

During the summer of 2018 six youth participants completed three YERII projects which were supported by CVRD Community Services Branch and a CVRD Grant in Aid, and Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards (Table 1d and 1e). These organizations fund an environmental professional to guide the research and produce a scientific report. One of the YERII goals is to encourage teamwork and leadership qualities in the youth. Creating a team atmosphere gives the youth opportunities to learn collaboration and consensus techniques that assist with increasing their communication skills. The technical research team consists of two youth participants, the YER Coordinator and an environmental professional. The YERII projects are organized in a five-day format with three days of research and two days of tour preparation and delivery. Reports are posted on the YER website, Ecological Reports page youthecology.ca/ecological-reports/.

From July 2nd to July 6th 2018 two YERII youth, Jade Antoine and Ethan Ashurst, did field studies in CVRD, Nymph Falls Nature Park with Registered Professional Biologist, Kayt Chambers and YER Coordinator, Wendy Kotilla. Funds for the biologist were provided by CVRD, Community Services Branch to conduct a preliminary ecological assessment for the development of a narrow service road for park maintenance and visitor accessibility. Research methods included a field study to determine presence or absence of species at risk, wildlife species assessment and vegetation inventories. On the fifth and final day of this YERII project fifteen people participated in a public tour led by the two youth. The report is available on the YER website at: youthecology.ca/nymph-falls-nature-park-bio-inventory-july-2018/.

The second 2018 YERII project was conducted from July 30th to August 3rd and funded by a CVRD, Grant in Aid. It was completed by two youth participants, Jack Limmer and Brayden Graham, Tim Ennis of Latitude Conservation Solutions Company and the YER Coordinator. This project had professional assistance from Shiva Farjadian of GW Solutions Incorporated (www.gwsolutions.ca/), Verna Mumby of Mumby's Aboriculture Consulting (www.treelady.ca/) and ecological technician, Graham Hilliar. This YERII project occurred in the headwaters of the Millard Creek watershed. The youth learned to record weather and water monitoring, inventory and document the health of a western red cedar grove, map springs and watercourses, sample fish species and understand the value of long-term data collection. The youth led public tour at the end had eleven people participate. The report is on the YER website at: youthecology.ca/millard-creek-headwaters-long-term-ecological-and-hydrological-study-2018/

Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards funded the third YERII project for a fish habitat and channel productivity study in Millard Creek side channel from August 22nd to 26th. Youth involvement came from Isa Faria and Heidi Morfitt, and research was led by Registered Professional Biologist, Esther Guimond with support from the YER Coordinator and assistance from ecological technician, Graham Hilliar. During the project youth acquired fisheries research skills which included fish population estimates procedures, stream flow measurements, habitat assessment methods and juvenile fish identification techniques. Fourteen members of the public were interested and eager to learn from the two youth participants on the tour. The Millard Creek fisheries report is located at youthecology.ca/millard-creek-rearing-channel-2018/.

YERIII 2017 to 2018

YERIII is a beneficial extension of the YERI and YERII programs, but it has been suspended for now due to lack of time and resources. The goal of YERIII is for youth who have graduated from YERI and YERII teach other groups. One YERIII project was done with Comox Valley Project Watershed Society in 2015. It was extremely successful with one youth teaching many students from Royston Elementary School how to plant saltwater marsh species and the value of intertidal zones in the K'omoks Estuary. There is interest and potential for YERIII projects in the future.

Community Partnerships

Building community partnerships is a key part of YER sustainability over its fifteen-year history. These relationships with community groups and people are essential for the effective functioning of the program and form a solid foundation from which YER operates in the Comox Valley. The total number of partnerships for 2018/2019 is one hundred and fifty-three with an increase of four groups from 2017/2018. These are separated into three different groups: ten referral, thirty-one environmental, and one hundred and twelve presentation groups (Appendix A).

YER Documentary Film

“Ecology Transforms Youth” is a YER documentary film produced in 2018/2019 by Carswell Film (carswellfilm.ca/). The film trailer is posted on the YER and Carswell Film websites at (www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ra-PLJYI-E&feature=youtu.be). Planning and fundraising for the film started in March 2018 and the filming process began near the end of April. The last film footage happened in November, and then several months of editing ensued prior to its release in 2019 at the World Community Film Festival worldcommunity.ca/project/ecology-transforms-youth-245-pm-uns-35-min/. The synopsis created for the film is below:

“Travel with several youth as they explore the rivers and estuaries of the Comox Valley. Created by Wendy Kotilla in 2004, the Youth & Ecological Restoration (YER) program has had over 330 participants. Young people work with local researchers and environmental groups, while learning ecological restoration, wildlife rehabilitation and scientific methods. Guided by the power of nature, YER employs ecotherapy practices and mentoring support for youth to gain a sense of worth, belonging and place.”

Groups and individuals in the Comox Valley were approached via a fundraising letter and budget proposal requesting film funds. The final budget for the YER film was \$9,350.00 (Table 2) and generously funded by the following:

- Oyster River Enhancement Society
- City of Courtenay
- Comox Valley Community Justice Centre
- Courtenay & District Fish and Game Protective Association
- Tsolum River Restoration Society
- Paul Horgen
- Jane Gilchrist
- Small Individual Contributions
- Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards
- Stewart McIntosh
- Barbara and Gweynth Huhn
- Cummings Home

On February 21st a film event was organized youthecology.ca/ecology-transforms-youth-february-21-2019/ to celebrate YER fifteen year history in the Comox Valley, to release the community funded film and to acknowledge YER creator’s UVic 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award (DDA) youthecology.ca/journey-of-knowledge-uvic-distinguished-alumni-award-speech/. This event was attended by about one hundred and fifty people. Representatives from the film funders spoke about their experiences with the program and youth participants; Wendy Kotilla spoke about YER and gave her DDA acceptance speech (Appendix B); and K’omoks First Nation elder, Mary Everson, who was invited as keynote speaker, talked about her involvement with YER as a foster mother.

Eight YER youth were followed through the spring, summer and fall seasons as they worked in Comox Valley watersheds. Six of the eight youth had their quotes posted in the YER media kit youthecology.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Ecology-Transforms-Youth-Media-Kit.pdf and are displayed below:

- It's calm, you can sit out there and look at things and you can be peaceful. If you have a lot of stress, you can let it go. (*YERI Participant #323*)

- When I'm outside in nature, interacting and helping out, that kind of stuff is what I'm learning how to do right now. (*YERI Participant #324*)
- I like doing things with other people around me because it feels like I'm contributing to something that will lead to a bigger thing in the future. (*YERI Participant #327*)
- It was unlike anything I've ever seen before, well in person, and not through a video or something. (*YERI Participant #329*)
- If you take a moment to watch nature, you just sit there and watch for some time, you'll begin to understand it better. (*YERI Participant #332*)
- I've learned about fish and trees and how everything ties together in nature. You're actually there in the moment learning about what you are seeing and feeling. (*YERI Participant #333*)

“Ecology Transforms Youth” took approximately one year to complete. It is an incredible portal into YER that displays how the magic of the natural world allows the youth to be themselves and blossom into becoming more confident, compassionate and respectful.

University of Victoria, Distinguished Alumni Award

In 2019, YER Coordinator, Wendy Kotilla, was honoured with the UVic, DDA as a 2001 graduate of the Division of Continuing Studies, Restoration of Natural Systems Diploma Program. Each year UVic selects exceptional alumni members based on criteria that includes career accomplishments or service for their community. The DDA was in recognition of the YER program www.uvic.ca/alumni/impact/home/awards/distinguished/index.php and on February 5th, 2019 there was an awards recognition ceremony in Victoria where an acceptance speech was given (Appendix B).

Program Promotion

During the 2018/2019 year there were several events promoted through social and conventional media sources. All three YERII projects were posted as facebook events and published in the local newspaper. The YER website had several updates on the home page with photo changes, the YER film trailer being added and several additions to the News and Events page youthecology.ca/news-events-at-yer/.

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.

YERI Youth Quotes 2018 to 2019

GOAL #1: BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

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

- At Oyster River it was nice seeing so many people sharing a common goal and maintaining a sense of humour. I learned that woody debris created shallower, deeper, slower and faster parts of the stream, and that leaves offer nutrients to the stream. The trees offer shade for the fish and debris offers hiding places from predators. We moved coho fry into a pond where they will be fed for a year. (*YERI Participant #325*)
- I participated in a brood stock capture. The brood stock are spawning salmon that are looking to lay their eggs. We used a big net to circle around a pool of fish in the river, with the help of thirty to forty volunteers. After we used smaller hand held nets to scoop up the fish we

wanted. An egg take was done, which is taking eggs from the females and milt from the males, and it is then mixed and put in an incubator. The largest salmon is the chinook and they have five to six thousand eggs. (*YERI Participant #335*)

- See how community based a job could be, like how connected and how this job could affect the community and that is why they do it. It gives you a sense of fulfillment for the job. I have more respect for community programs, respect for the people that do all these jobs and really care about the jobs and gather together with like minded people and make a difference. (*YERI Participant #338*)

GOAL #2: GAINING VALUED WORK EXPERIENCE

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

- Also on the third day I did water quality measurements. The measurements we did were dissolved oxygen, pH, total dissolved solids, water temperature in Millard Creek. The reason why we did the measurements was to test how healthy the watershed is. The other reason why we do it is to monitor for any changes. Millard Creek is fed by groundwater that comes up as springs. It is warmer in the winter and colder in the summer. (*YERI Participant #320*)
- So we went to the K'omoks Estuary, an estuary is where the salt and fresh water meet, where we counted herons and eagles. I saw more herons that day than I have in my whole life. Thirty-four herons is what we saw. Also the way we counted was we had one person looking through a big telescope. When I went to look through I noticed a lot of seagulls freaking out on my right and what I saw in the telescope when I looked was twenty-seven seals in the water. That was about the craziest experience of my life. We went there at low tide because that is the best time to find herons as they are feeding their babies at that time. (*YERI Participant #329*)
- MARS is a great rescue place that helps animals like birds, fawns and racoons. Everyone has an equally important part in MARS. Some of the jobs are: animal caretaker, office work, repair men and women, cage cleaning and laundry. (*YERI Participant #332*)

GOAL #3: IMPROVING ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

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

- There was a copper mine that had leaked into the Tsolum and killed some of the fish, which confused people on why they had been losing fish so they investigated and found out there was a lot of copper in the river. They had to cover up the site resulting in them paying six million dollars. We are counting the fish to see if the river is healthy or unhealthy. (*YERI Participant #324*)
- The most important thing I learned was that if one thing stops or goes away, everything stops. That's how an ecosystem works. All parts are critical. It has increased my nature connection a little, but probably not only fish live in the water. I didn't know crayfish were a thing, that's for sure. I learned that nature is big and if one part of it goes away, it all goes away. (*YERI Participant #328*)
- After lunch I got an amazing experience watching chum salmon spawn in Morrison Creek. The fish had come upstream to spawn in the creek they were born in. Female fish were pushing gravel to make a redd, mounds of gravel that eggs are laid in, while a few males stayed nearby, waiting for their chance to fertilize the eggs and spread their genes. This was an experience I've never had and was fun to watch the fish from the bridge. (*YERI Participant #334*)

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 talk to people even though I'm socially awkward and I learned a lot about nature. It was nice just meeting new people who are actually nice. I learned how to talk to people and do conversations. That will be a little easier now. (*YERI Participant #322*)
- I wanted to do this because I could get out in nature and to get out of school. The program is very fun. You do lots of stuff with nature and fish. You learn about the rules of the woods. The rules of the woods are not to break the plants and not to bother the fish. You are caring for the woods and fish. (*YERI Participant #323*)
- Throughout this whole experience I got to meet new people and I learned to be patient and ask questions and to come out of my comfort zone. (*YERI Participant #330*)

GOAL #5: ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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

- I think I learned that I'm a little better at most things than I think because I don't have much confidence. Like they said, I'm pretty good at presenting. I learned not to be so tough on myself. (*YERI Participant #331*)
- It feels good to complete the program. I feel like I've completed an important part in my journey of growing up. It's helping me become who I am, exploring new things, talking in front of a class that I thought I'd never do and I did it and facing my fears. This program is going to help me with my future of becoming who I am. I learned that I can do things and I should stop doubting things and if I face my fears I can prove to myself that I am capable of doing that. (*YERI Participant #330*)
- The experience of being in the YER program was life altering. Getting to see and do things first hand with nature is eye opening. I feel like if more youth did this program then we would slowly start to restore and save our wildlife and environment. This program should be offered to all youth. I'm pretty sure it is, but most teens aren't into doing really life things. They're more interested in their phones. (*YERI Participant #337*)

YERI Caregiver Quotes 2018 to 2019

- Sometimes I think this kind of program is helping them to learn to respect their environment and be supportive to their own dignity, their own place in the scheme of things. When you are big into that world there is a sense of self that is enhanced and the one-on-one with you and your student, there is a sense of mutual respect. You are very careful and respectful of your students and they feel that mutual respect and creating an environment for learning. (*YERI Participant #320*)
- I think it just really helped his confidence. He was out and feeling like he had a real job, feeling like an adult. Probably just his mood, he was more happy and upbeat. He was really having some issues with his confidence and depression, and they seem to be diminished. (*YERI Participant #329*)
- It seemed to be a very good program for her, a lot of positives, at least from my perspective. I think her overall confidence level, especially from her presentation for the class, has improved. I met with her teacher, Mrs. Murphy, on the street and she was so impressed, like a night and day change. (*YERI Participant #333*)
- I think it helped her immensely. She is in a bit of a shell, so it's good for her to go out and do things out of her comfort zone. I would say she is more mindful of others. Just getting out and getting experience. It gives her more self confidence and confidence in her own ability. (*YERI Participant #331*)

- He was quite impressed with you, just the time and energy you put into it. It was also a great thing for him to see, embracing a noble cause. It comes through that this is your passion and I think that it is good to see someone's passion. (*YERI Participant #335*)
- I was just super impressed with the fact he completed it. I really appreciate that you didn't give up on him. That's what he needs. He puts up a fight, but if you don't give up on him, then he usually does what you would like him to do and he usually succeeds in the end. (*YERI Participant #339*)

YERII Youth Quotes 2018 to 2019

- That it was more problem solving and just learning to work together as a team and not just by yourself. It helped me learn new information. We reminded each other of the names and spent a lot of time learning names when we didn't know them. (*YERII Participant #42-311*)
- Interesting just giving the tour to the people and showing them Nymph Falls Park. I think they learned a lot in just the park aspect. Like the reason why we were putting in that three by three meter trail. (*YERII Participant #43-320*)
- I like trees and stuff way more than I thought I did. With the whole tour thing, that was really pushing everything. I felt like things were forced on me. I didn't really want to do the presentation, but I had to. That if I'm really under a lot of stress, I can get through it. It was nerve wracking and scary. I learned that if I push myself enough I can get through it. (*YERII Participant #44-324*)
- I had a lot of fun and I feel like your program could help a lot of people. It has helped me realize things about myself that I didn't know. Like now I know how to speak in front of people without losing my mind or freezing on the spot. The longer you freeze the more people are looking at you. I feel like it was a lot easier to do the tour than the presentation. Talking to people who were older than me was easier. I enjoyed YERII. I don't think there was a single part I didn't like. (*YERII Participant #45-327*)
- Working with the people was really fun. I normally am not that great working with other people and I get a bit snappy. It was really down to earth. The other people really helped me by giving instructions and making sure I'm not really lost. Just being kind of open to do work and help people out by holding stuff and helping them move something. I learned kind of to work with other people a bit better. (*YERII Participant #46-321*)
- The most important thing I learned was probably that we were taking turns on the traps and measurements and we had to take responsibility for actually doing it. That you can let other people have a turn, don't be selfish. I helped other people by being involved. I bet the people on the tour didn't know some of the things I taught them. They were helping me by teaching me the things there. (*YERII Participant #47-323*)

YERII Caregiver Quotes 2018 to 2019

- I thought it was pretty exciting that she got asked to participate again because she enjoyed herself so much the first time. I was excited she got to experience it again. (*YERII Participant 42-311*)
- At the end of it, it went from at the beginning being insecure and unsure of himself, mostly about the tour. Hesitation to coming out of it feeling. It gave him something, his self esteem, it contributed to his self esteem and confidence. He was really pleased. He was very happy about himself after. (*YERII Participant #43-320*)
- She definitely came back more confident. Education gives you that confidence. I think it was breaking down that anxiety barrier. Talking with people and meeting strangers, a new group of people and learning together. It's like a small class. I think everything was great. She had an amazing time. She really enjoyed it. (*YERII Participant #44-324*)

- The biggest challenge was speaking in front of people for him. He told me that because he had a lot of knowledge he felt more comfortable because he had more confidence in himself and the knowledge that he learned. He was a bit hesitant at first because of the presentation, but when he did do it he felt confident. I know he would be interested in another phase and he would recommend it to other kids. (*YERII Participant #45-327*)
- It makes her more confident. It grows her confidence and she learned a lot, so that was good and it got her outside away from her screen. I saw that she was happy that she had done it, a big smile. (*YERII Participant #46-321*)
- I think she did a fantastic job, I was impressed. She doesn't think she would be a very good leader and I think she would be. She was showing off the licorice root, that was leadership skills right there, doing something extra. It will give her a better outlook and appreciation for nature. I was really impressed with the leadership part on the tour. (*YERII Participant #47-323*)

4. BUDGET

YER Budget for April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019

Table 2 provides details of the YER 2018/2019 budget. YER income was \$61,164.64 which included: MCFD \$42,000.00; YER Film \$9,350.00; CVRD \$6,150.00; Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards \$3,150.00; UNIFOR Local 3019 \$500.00; and Bank Interest of \$14.64. Contributions for training and equipment from local environmental groups was \$2,000.00 and an in kind time commitment of \$3,000.00 was donated by the YER Coordinator for the film production.

This list gives details of YER 2017/2018 expenses:

- **Professional fees** included fees, administration costs and program evaluation for \$34,081.83; biologist fees were \$10,359.66; and the YER film budget of \$9,350.00.
- **Honouraria** for youth participants was \$990.00; and \$303.54 for other benefits, such as YER certificates, photos and YERII hoodies.
- **Program Promotion** was \$1,050.51 for website updates.
- **Mileage** costs were calculated at \$3,454.87.
- **Supplies** of \$1,228.48 included office, lunches and materials required for YER work.
- **Miscellaneous expenses** in the amount of \$345.75 were: \$185.75 for bank charges; \$100.00 for Criminal Record Checks; \$50.00 for Oyster River Enhancement Society and \$10.00 for a Mountianaire Avian Rescue Society membership fee.
- **Other Contributions** were \$2,000.00 for YER as in-kind training, materials and support from community members and environmental organizations; and \$3,000.00 worth of time was dedicated towards the YER film.

5. SUMMARY

YER has been serving the Comox Valley vulnerable or at-risk youth population since 2004 for a total of three hundred and thirty-nine participants. The twenty-hour program provides alternative resources that are based on ecotherapy practices for young people who are struggling to connect with family, school and community. YER demonstrates different ways of communicating and associating with others by joining them with nature and human communities. Youth emerge at the end of YER with a broader perspective of their place within nature, community and society.

During the 2018/2019 fiscal year there were twenty-seven youth participants; YERI had twenty-one, eighteen completed and three were incomplete; six were in YERII and all of them reached completion (Table 1a). YER referrals came from School District #71; MCFD; Comox Valley Community Justice Centre; Wachiay Friendship Centre and John Howard Society (Table 1b). Youth contributed to eight local environmental groups in YERI and three YERII projects were completed (Table 1d). Community presentations were given by the eighteen YERI youth at eight general locations; and three tours were conducted by YERII youth at Nymph Falls Nature Park, Millard Creek Headwaters and Millard Creek Side Channel (Table 1e).

A film to showcase YER was dreamt of for several years and early in 2019 the YER documentary film “Ecology Transforms Youth” came to fruition. The film was produced by Carswell Film (carswellfilm.ca/) with all associated costs donated by Comox Valley community groups and individuals. Eight YER youth were followed as they worked in Comox Valley streams and watersheds through the spring, summer and fall seasons. The UVic, 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award www.uvic.ca/alumni/impact/home/awards/distinguished/index.php was received in recognition of the YER Program (Appendix B).

Promotion of YER to heighten awareness of the program continues to be part of the work to ensure community groups and individuals know of its benefits for young people. One of the program strengths is the partnerships that have been built with Comox Valley groups; YER partnerships list has increased to one hundred and fifty-three groups through referrals, ecological work and presentation locations (Appendix A).

Relationships is the most effective single word to describe YER. The program works with youth individually to bring them out of their comfort zones, separate from social media devices and away from peer and family groups. Youth integrate with natural ecological values and people committed to enhancing and conserving these principles in our community. This extends their relationships beyond a familiar scope, gives them insights into different ways of connecting and broadens positive associations with others. YER increases the youth relationship circles which empowers them and inspires improvements in their personal confidence.

YOUTH PARTICIPANT SUMMARY TABLE FOR APRIL 1, 2018 TO MARCH 31, 2019.

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

YERI 21 youth (9 girls and 12 boys; 35% were First Nations); YERII 6 youth (4 girls and 2 boys; 30% were FN).

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

Table 1a: YER COMPLETION YERI is 20 hours; YERII is 25 hours.	YOUTH TOTALS
YERI Complete: Participant # 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 337, 338, 339	18
YERII Complete: # 42-311, 43-320, 44-324, 45-327, 46-321, 47-323	6
YERI Incomplete: # 319, 325, 336	3
TOTAL YOUTH PARTICIPANTS	27

Table 1b: YOUTH ORGANIZATION REFERRALS

YERI and YERII participants were referred by six agencies.

CV School District # 71: # 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 337, 339, 43-320, 44-324, 45-327, 46-321, 47-323	21
Highland Secondary School: # 320, 324, 327, 332, 334, 43-320, 44-324, 45-327 Glacier View Learning Centre: Key Program: # 321, 322, 330, 331, 333, 46-321 Lake Trail Middle School: # 323, 329, 47-323; Cumberland Community School: # 326, 328 Aspen Park Elementary School: # 339; Nala'atsi Alternate School: # 337	
MCFD: # 319, 336	2
Mental Health: # 319; Parent/Teen Mediation: # 336	
Comox Valley Community Justice Centre: # 335, 338	2
Wachiay Friendship Centre: # 42-311	1
John Howard Society: # 325	1
TOTAL 5 YOUTH REFERRAL ORGANIZATIONS	27

Table 1c: YOUTH ORGANIZATION INTERCONNECTIONS

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

SD #71: # 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 42-311, 43-320, 44-324, 45-327, 46-321, 47-323	27
The Linc: # 320, 321, 322, 323, 325, 327, 328, 329, 330, 332, 334, 335, 336, 337, 339, 42-311, 45-327, 46-321, 47-323	19
MCFD: # 319, 325, 326, 330, 332, 334, 335, 336, 339, 42-311, 44-324, 46-321	12
CV School District #71 Counselling: # 323, 327, 328, 329, 330, 332, 333, 335, 45-327, 46-321, 47-323	11
RCMP: # 324, 325, 326, 334, 335, 336, 338, 339	8
Pacific Therapy: # 321, 326, 332, 333, 335, 46-321	6
Wachiay Friendship Centre: # 323, 330, 331, 332, 337, 42-311	6
Comox Valley Transition Society: # 319, 326, 329, 336, 44-324	5
John Howard Society: # 324, 334, 336, 44-324	4
Comox Valley Boys and Girls Club: # 333, 334, 335, 339	4
Comox Valley Community Justice Centre: # 326, 335, 338	3
Counseling - Source Unknown: # 325, 334	2
Comox Valley Family Services: # 326, 336	2
North Island Hospital Comox Valley, Adolescent Intake: # 320, 43-320	2
TOTAL 14 YOUTH ORGANIZATION INTERCONNECTIONS	

**TABLE 1 (Cont.): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
YOUTH PARTICIPANT SUMMARY TABLE FOR APRIL 1, 2018 TO MARCH 31, 2019.**

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: # 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 337, 338, 339	20
Oyster River Enhancement Society: # 319, 320, 321, 322, 324, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339	18
Millard/Piercy Watershed Stewards: # 320, 321, 322, 323, 327, 328, 329, 331, 332, 333, 337, 338, 339	13
Tsolum River Restoration Society: # 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 326, 328	7
Morrison Creek Streamkeepers: # 331, 332, 334, 335, 337, 338	6
Comox Valley Conservation Strategy: # 335	1
Comox Valley Nature: # 325	1
Puntledge Hatchery, BC Rivers Day: # 335	1
YERII: Comox Valley Regional District, Nymph Falls Nature Park: # 42-311, 43-320	2
YERII: Comox Valley Regional District, Millard Creek Headwaters: # 44-324, 45-327	2
YERII: Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards: # 46-321, 47-323	2
TOTAL 8 ORGANIZATIONS	

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

CV School District # 71: # 320, 322, 323, 329, 332, 333, 334, 335, 338	9
Miracle Beach Elementary School, Grade 6/7: # 320 Glacier View, Key Program: # 322 Aspen Park Elementary School: # Grade 4/5: # 335 Aspen Park Elementary School: # Grade 6/7: # 333 Lake Trail Middle School, Grade 6/7: # 329 Airport Elementary School, Grade 6/7: # 338 Arden Elementary School, Kindergarten: # 323 Puntledge Park Elementary School, Grade 2: # 332 Highland Secondary School, Grade 11: # 334	
Lighthouse Early Learning Centre: # 328, 331, 339	3
Cummings Home, Seniors Assisted Living Facility: # 324, 337	2
Euphoria Nature Preschool: # 321	1
Saltwater Waldorf School, Grade 1/2: # 330	1
Puddleduck Pre-School: # 327	1
City of Courtenay, Council Meeting: # 326	1
YERII: Comox Valley Regional District, Nymph Falls Nature Park: # 42-311, 43-320	2
YERII: Comox Valley Regional District, Millard Creek Headwaters: # 44-324, 45-327	2
YERII: Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards: # 46-321, 47-323	2
YERI 260 AUDIENCE MEMBERS; YERII PROJECTS 10 and 43 TOUR PARTICIPANTS	24

Table 1f: YER COMPLETION RATES

YERI: Total number of 339 youth participants; 296 completed the 20 hour program	87%
YERII: Total number of 41 youth participants; 40 completed the 25 hour program	98%
YERIII: Total number of 1 youth participant; 1 completed the 30 hour program	100%

**TABLE 2: YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
BUDGET FOR APRIL 1, 2018 TO MARCH 31, 2019.**

This YER budget records expenses, income and other contributions required to deliver the Comox Valley program for vulnerable youth. YER 2018/2019 funds were provided by BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards, City of Courtenay, Unifor Local 3019 and community donations for the YER film. Other contributions are provided by Comox Valley groups for training and tools to restore local watersheds and ecosystems.

Expense Item	Expenses	Income	Other Contributions
Program Delivery	\$34,081.83	MCFD \$42,000.00	Training \$2,000.00
Biologist/Assistant	\$10,359.66	Film \$9,350.00	Film \$3,000.00
Film	\$9,350.00	CVRD \$6,150.00	
		Millard/Piercy \$3,150.00	
		UNIFOR 3019 \$500.00	
		Bank Interest \$14.64	
Youth Honourarium	\$990.00		
Youth Benefits	\$303.54		
Program Promotion	\$1,050.51		
Mileage	\$3,454.87		
Supplies	\$1,228.48		
Misc. Expenses	\$345.75		
TOTALS	\$61,164.64	\$61,164.64	\$5,000.00

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

YER partnered with one hundred and fifty-three groups July 2004 to March 2019.

Ten groups referred youth clients from July 2004 to March 2019:

- 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-one groups had youth conduct ecological restoration work from July 2004 to March 2019:

- 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 Conservation Strategy <http://www.cvconservationstrategy.org/>
- 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.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 A (cont.): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (Page 2 of 4)**

YER partnered with one hundred and fifty-three Comox Valley groups July 2004 to March 2019.

One hundred and twelve community groups had youth presentations from July 2004-March 2019:

- Airport Elementary School, Grade 1
- Airport Elementary School, Grade 2/3
- Airport Elementary School, Grade 6/7
- Arden Park Elementary School, Kindergarten
- Arden Park Elementary School, Grade 1
- Aspen Park Elementary School, Grade 2
- Aspen Park Elementary School, Grade 3
- Aspen Park Elementary School, Grade 4/5
- Aspen Park Elementary School, Grade 6/7
- Berwick Retirement Society www.berwickrc.com/comox
- Brooklyn Elementary, Grade 5
- Casa Loma Seniors Village www.retirementconcepts.com/homes/comox-valley
- City of Courtenay, Council meeting
- 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
- Euphoria Nature Preschool <https://www.facebook.com/euphoriachildcare/>
- Eureka Support Society and Clubhouse
- Fanny Bay Enhancement Society www.fbses.ca

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

YER partnered with one hundred and fifty-three Comox Valley groups July 2004 to March 2019.

One hundred and twelve community groups had youth presentations July 2004-March 2019 (cont.):

- Fanny Bay Old Age Pensioners, Seniors Craft Group
- 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
- Highland Secondary School, Grade 11
- 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 6/7
- 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.cvcdds.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 Preschool
- Pumpkin Patch Daycare
- Puntledge Park Elementary School, Kindergarten
- Puntledge Park Elementary School: # Grade 2
- 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

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

YER partnered with one hundred and fifty-three Comox Valley groups July 2004 to March 2019.

One hundred and twelve community groups had youth presentations July 2004-March 2019 (cont.):

- St. Josephs Hospital, Adolescent Support Group
- St. Josephs Hospital, Residential Care Facility
- St. Josephs Hospital, Transitional Ward
- Saltwater Waldorf School <https://www.comoxvalleywaldorf.com/>
- 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

APPENDIX B: YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER), UVIC AWARD

UVic, 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award acceptance speech for the YER Program

University of Victoria, 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award
for the Division of Continuing Studies
Acceptance Speech by Wendy Kotilla at Songhees Wellness Centre, Victoria, BC
February 5, 2019

I acknowledge we are on unceded traditional territory of Lkwungen First Nation.
I am incredibly honoured by this award nomination and will share how I got here.

My Speech is Called: JOURNEY OF KNOWLEDGE

My given name is Wendy Mae Kotilla. My mother was a prairie farmer's daughter in Manitoba and is English, Irish and Dutch. My father's family is Finnish and came to Vancouver Island in 1901. Our family lived on the north island from 1965 to 1969 where we were always hunting, fishing, berry picking and exploring wilderness.

In 1970 at the age of fifteen my vocation as an environmental activist began in Campbell River. That same year Greenpeace formed over the nuclear bombing of the Amchitka Islands in Alaska. With banners made in the school cafeteria we marched the streets shouting "Save Amchitka". In 1972 I was a young mother and graduated from high school in 1973. My academic credits included half of Grade 9 Math and Grade 10 English.

As a single Mom on welfare, a social worker told me I was the kind of person who would always be on welfare. In 1984 I became a commercial fisherman, which included salmon, cod, tuna, prawn and halibut fisheries. I fished nine years around Haida Gwaii, Vancouver Island, mainland inlets and a hundred miles offshore.

Salmon stocks were declining, so I started taking environmental courses and volunteering for salmon enhancement. My first conference in 1988 was called "Wild Salmon". The overview I wrote was published in local newspapers and the conference proceedings.

By 1990 I landed a job for eight years at Carnation Creek, a remote watershed in Barclay Sound that studies logging impacts on salmon. In 1993 the Clayoquot Sound logging protests were organized. A summary I wrote about Carnation Creek was published in *Witness to Wilderness: The Clayoquot Sound Anthology*. I conducted fisheries research for five years with Clayoquot Biosphere Project in Clayoquot River valley, which remains unlogged due to ecological documentation.

In 1997 I started the University of Victoria, Restoration of Natural Systems Program. I challenged university entry English and received an A- for my self-taught writing. My second course paper was presented and published with the 1998 *Helping the Land Heal* conference in Victoria. For the final project I recorded Huu-ay-aht First Nation and Carnation Creek researcher perspectives. It was presented at a 2001 Society for Ecological Restoration conference and published as "Landscape Connections and Worldviews".

In 2004 I created Youth and Ecological Restoration, which is funded by Ministry of Children and Family Development. This year it celebrates fifteen years and three hundred and forty youth participants. The program provides one-on-one work experience through ecological restoration methods, ecotherapy practises and mentoring support. Youth restore local watersheds with community members to gain a sense of worth, belonging and place.

Someone that stands out in my UVic experience is Dr. Richard Hebda. He inspired critical thinking that motivated me to work harder and produce better quality research papers. Sixteen years after I graduated, he edited a scientific report I wrote about eagle bathing rituals in a river canyon. Fond memories of Richard include his passion for ecology and his slogan "Boots Not Suits". Thank you, Richard, for coming to support me tonight.

Returning to UVic as a mature student was extraordinary because it stretched me far beyond my comfort zone. It formalized my practical experience, so I had credentials when applying for the youth program funding. Just as others have done for me, I now impart my knowledge to the youth and help them realize their unlimited potential.