

YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION ANNUAL REPORT



**For the Period of April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022
Completed on September 30, 2022**

YER PROGRAM FUNDED BY:
BC MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

REPORT PREPARED BY:

WENDY KOTILLA
4327 MINTO ROAD
COURTENAY, BC V9N 9P7
250-336-8487
wkotilla@shaw.ca
www.youthecology.ca

Table of Contents

Cover Page Photo – Youth and Ecological Restoration, Youth Participant #401, Riley Vigni walking Millard Creek to count spawning salmon. Photo by Graham Hilliar.

Table of Contents	2
Acknowledgements	3
1. Introduction	3
2. Progress and Outcomes	4
Youth Completion and Referrals	4
Youth Organization Interactions	4
YERI 2021 to 2022.....	4
YERII 2021 to 2022	5
Community Partnerships	6
Program Promotion	6
YER Succession	6
3. YER Youth and Caregiver Quotes	6
YERI Youth Quotes	6
YERI Caregiver Quotes.....	8
YERI Youth Follow-up Questions	9
YERII Youth Quotes	10
YERII Caregiver Quotes	10
4. Budget	11
5. Summary	11
Table 1: Youth Participant Summary	12
Table 2: Budget for April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021	14
Appendix A: YER Community Partnerships 2020/2021	15

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Youth and Ecological Restoration (YER) respectfully acknowledges that the land we work on is the unceded traditional territory of the K'omoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

YER is now in its eighteenth year and has worked with four hundred and four exceptional youth since 2004. Much gratitude for the ongoing funding from BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). Thanks to Curtis Cameron, MCFD, Comox Valley, Community Services Manager for sponsoring YER over the past several years and best wishes for his retirement. We look forward to working with the new manager, Kyla Talbot.

For the school year, September 7, 2021 to June 29, 2022, YER received Ministry of Education, Mental Health (MOE) funds from Comox Valley, School District #71 (SD#71). Gratitude and respect to Comox Valley Schools, Superintendent, Tom Demeo, for recognizing and honouring YER with this new funding source.

Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) continues to supply funds for YER. CVRD Directors, Daniel Arbour, Edwin Grieve and Arzeena Hamir have been especially supportive with providing the annual Grant in Aid. CVRD, Manager of Parks, Mark Harrison maintains yearly funding for YER, Phase II projects to conduct ecological inventories in regional parks.

Biologist, Carrina Maslovat, has supervised YERII projects to ensure professional standards for YER ecological reports over the past three years. YER, Youth Support Worker, Graham Hilliar, has worked in this position for two years and is a major asset to the program.

So much gratitude for our amazing Comox Valley community that supports YER to help youth in discovering the beauty and ecology of the natural world that surrounds us. This support benefits young people as they engage in the program and plants seeds that they will carry throughout their lives. We may never know when these seeds will grow and blossom. Together as a community, we guide them to realize their true potential.

1. INTRODUCTION

For eighteen years, YER has been honoured to be entrusted with Comox Valley youth who struggle during their teenage years. Four hundred and four youth have participated during that time. Over the past two years, Covid restrictions have made significant contributions to increased isolation, anxiety, suicide attempts and general declines in mental health for our young people.

YER is a twenty-hour program for at-risk youth that engages them with community members to restore the ecological health and integrity of Comox Valley watersheds. Blending the social and ecological aspects helps youth build relationships and make connections with positive community members and the natural world. YER does this via ecological restoration methods, ecotherapy practices and mentoring support. Getting youth outside into the natural world while connecting them with encouraging mentors are proven antidotes for their mental health issues.

From April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, twenty-eight youth participated in YER. Since 2004, YER has been involved with one hundred and seventy-four community groups (Appendix A). Financial support in the 2021/2022 fiscal year came from MCFD, CVRD, SD#71, Village of Cumberland, McIntyre Media and one individual donation (Table 2). YER is a reputable program, guiding Comox Valley youth through these times of pandemic lockdowns, isolation increases, substance abuses and technology addictions.

2. PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES

This YER report is for the period from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. Twenty-eight youth participated in the program; twenty-four youth in YER, Phase I (YERI) and four in YER, Phase II (YERII). In YERI, youth work with one adult mentor for twenty hours of work experience and training doing ecological restoration with local environmental groups. YERII focuses on a specific project to conduct ecological inventories in local parks and watersheds; two youth, who have graduated from YERI, work with a YER staff person and a professional biologist. Since 2004, participants of YER have achieved a ninety-three percent completion rate (Table 1f).

Table 1 gives information on YER completion rates, referral places, youth agency connections, ecological work placements and presentation locations. A list of the one hundred and seventy-four community partnerships created since 2004 is in Appendix A. Each youth is interviewed several times to collect qualitative data on their experiences. They are asked questions prior to starting YER, given daily debriefs, as well as post work and post presentation enquiries. Their caregivers are interviewed once after program completion. This information is invaluable and several quotes from these interviews are given in the report to convey their YER experiences.

Youth Completion and Referrals

Twenty-eight youth participants were referred to YER from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. Twenty-four participated in YERI and four were in YERII (Table 1a). There were eighteen boys and six girls in YERI, with fifty percent being First Nations; YERII had two girls and two boys and twenty-five percent were First Nations. The twenty-four youth completed YERI; and all four finished YERII (Table 1a).

The twenty-eight 2020/2021 YERI youth referrals came from SD#71 and one independent school. The twenty-seven from SD#71 were: seven from Lake Trail Community School; six from Highland Secondary School; five from Glacier View Secondary School; four from Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School; three from Cumberland Community School; and one each were from Nala'atsi Alternate School and Miracle Beach Elementary School. One youth was referred from Beachcombers Academy, which is located in Fanny Bay (Table 1b).

Youth Organization Interactions

Many youths referred to YER have connections with several youth service groups in the Comox Valley. The 2021/2022 fiscal year was no exception to this trend. Table 1b illustrates the twenty eight youth and agencies they had connections with as follows: twenty-seven were involved with SD#71; twenty-three had been to counseling at their schools; seventeen had connected with The Linc; thirteen associated with MCFD; ten with the RCMP; eight had been to Wachiay Friendship Centre; six with John Howard Society; five had connected with unknown counseling services; and one each had been to Comox Valley Family Services, Comox Valley Boys and Girls Club, Sexual Abuse Intervention Program, Pacific Therapy and Comox Valley Transition Society (Table 1c). Table 1c also shows the services that individual youth accessed. This information provides a broader impression of YER participant needs for other community services.

YERI 2021 to 2022

The 2021/2022 year was another year of Covid restrictions, although not as severe and the YER Covid Plan remains in place (<https://youthecology.ca/covid-plan-2020/>). A significant number of our young people are being chronically isolated from the restrictions, substance abuses and technology addictions. Part of the YER work is to bring them out of their isolation, and introduce them to positive community members and the natural world. Both of these social and ecological influences have benefits for YER youth participants.

The twenty-four YERI youth worked with seven Comox Valley environmental organizations. Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society had twenty-four youth help with their animal care facility; Oyster River Enhancement Society involved twenty-two with their salmon enhancement work; Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards employed fifteen participants; Tsolum River Restoration Society involved thirteen; Morrison Creek Streamkeepers had nine youth help out; Comox Valley Project Watershed Society had two youth participants; and Brooklyn Creek Watershed Society included one youth. Six hundred and forty-two community members interacted with the twenty-four YERI youth, for an average of twenty-seven volunteers per youth (Table 1d).

Twenty-four youth completed YERI by giving speeches to community groups. This segment of YERI gives youth an opportunity to review their work experiences, organize their thoughts in a speech, obtain public speaking skills and teach others about what they have learned. Youth gave presentations to the following: thirteen for SD#71 at Brooklyn Elementary School, Cumberland Community School, Glacier View Secondary School, Highland Secondary School, Lake Trail Community School, Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School, Miracle Beach Elementary School, Nala'atsi Alternate School and Queneesh Elementary School; five presented for daycare children at Lighthouse Early Learning Centre; four for elders at Cummings Home; and one each for Beachcombers Academy and Royal Canadian Air Cadets – 386 Komox Squadron (Table 1e). After completion of their speech youth are presented with a YERI certificate, recommendation letter, YER crest and waterproof sticker, and a fifty-dollar honourarium.

YERII 2021 to 2022

Joining YERII requires youth to have completed YERI and shown themselves to be dependable, reliable, trustworthy and have good social interactions with community members. Two YERII projects with four youth participants were concluded in 2021/2022. One YERII project partnered with CVRD, Community Services Branch and the other with Village of Cumberland (Table 1d). This year there were less Covid restrictions, so more people came for the two tours. After the tours each of the four youth were presented with a YERII personal photo certificate, a reference letter tailored for the specific project, a YER hoodie and fifty dollars.

The first one was with CVRD, Community Services Branch who funded Registered Professional Biologist, Carrina Maslovat to guide two youth in conducting an ecological inventory at Goose Spit Park. YER Coordinator, Wendy Kotilla, also provided guidance and expertise with this YERII project. The project was similar to the 2021 YERII project and provided CVRD with additional data on the rare Yellow Sand-verbena plant, so that its distribution can be better understood and protected. The two youth co-facilitated a public tour for nineteen people. The YERII report is: <https://youthecology.ca/goose-spit-park-yellow-sand-verbena-inventory-2021/>.

The second project was done in partnership with the Village of Cumberland and Cumberland Community Forestry Society. The village gave funds that supported Ecological Professional, Tim Ennis, to assist with designing the project and writing the report; and the society contributed with project design through Meaghan Cursons and providing staff member, Zoe Cilliers, to work with the youth. YER, Youth Support Worker, Graham Hilliar, was in a leadership role as part of the YERII team. This YERII project collected data for an ecological assessment and inventory at Cumberland Community Forest Park. There was a focus on Western Redcedar tree health and wildlife tree assessment. The youth jointly gave a tour for eleven people. The YERII report is at: <https://youthecology.ca/cedar-health-and-wildlife-tree-assessment-perseverance-creek-2021/>.

Community Partnerships

Part of YER success is the partnerships created with community groups. Ten community groups have been added to the list this year, for a total of one hundred and seventy-four (Appendix A). Referral groups are now at eleven, having increased by one, which is Beachcombers Academy. Ecological restoration groups remain the same at thirty-one. Presentation locations went up by the following nine groups: Beachcombers Academy, Grade 6/7; Cumberland Community School, Strong Start Program; Glacier View Secondary School, Environmental Club; Highland Secondary School, Advantage Club; Lake Trail Community School, Grade 7; Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School, Queer Ally Club; Miracle Beach Elementary School, Grade 5/6; Queneesh Elementary School, Grade 6/7; Royal Canadian Air Cadets – 386 Komox Squadron (Appendix A). Building positive relationships with various community groups has become a pillar of the program.

Program Promotion

YER program promotion continues in various ways. The website (<https://youthecology.ca/>) is revised every year with news and updates, annual reports, ecological reports and additions to the photo gallery by Pod Creative (<https://podcreative.ca/>). The YERII tours are advertised through the website, press releases and Facebook posts. YER has a long-term and reliable reputation in the Comox Valley community for doing principled work with our young people. As a marketing strategy, ongoing maintenance of promotional methods is critical for advertising YER services.

YER Succession

YER succession is ongoing with Graham Hilliar continuing in his role as YER, Youth Support Worker. With time his skills are improving and becoming well honed. His relationship building and communication abilities with the youth are exceptional and his familiarity of the ecology of Comox Valley lands and waters outstanding. It is this combination of knowledge and experience that make him a good fit for the YER, Youth Support Worker position. Founder and Coordinator, Wendy Kotilla, will remain in the position of administration, report writing, fund raising, youth scheduling and promotional aspects of the program.

3. YOUTH AND CAREGIVER QUOTES

Youth and caregiver interview quotes are provided in this section to give voice and reflection of their YER experiences from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. Below are: YERI youth quotes for the five main program goals; YERI caregiver citations; YERI youth follow-up answers; YERII youth completion quotes; and YERII caregiver responses. This qualitative data collection was established when YER started in 2004, and remains a significant piece of recording youth and caregiver observations of the program

YOUTH AND CAREGIVER QUOTES 2021 TO 2022

PARTICIPANTS 381 to 404

YERI Youth Quotes 2021 to 2022

GOAL #1: BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

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

- That volunteers need more recognition for the work that they are doing. Because it takes a lot of hard work strength and courage. Because it is a very powerful thing to become a volunteer and to help things. There just aren't that many people that do that in the world today. It's given me the opportunity to get out in nature with people that know lots about nature, and that specialise in it, and can help me understand it better. (*YERI Participant #385*)

- It has enabled my drive to go outside again and also to think about the Valley differently. This program has changed my perspective to one of a more questioning type. I've found myself thinking more about how the Valley and the people impact itself and places around it. I don't think that without this program that I would have been able to do something quite like this. *(YERI Participant #399)*
- That they are teaching a lot of young people about nature and how to take care of it, because a lot of people don't get to experience that stuff, so they are teaching people about nature and the rivers and the wildlife. It made me feel good because people are learning about it and they should be learning about it. It felt nice, I got to know more about my community and my whereabouts. It was educational, I got to learn way more than I used. They helped me learn and it was nice to learn from them about the river systems and about how they flow and where they go. *(YERI Participant #402)*

GOAL #2: GAINING VALUED WORK EXPERIENCE

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

- Communication skills, by meeting new people and going to different community groups, and time management. Just like waking up and getting ready to go early and being ready to be picked up. Its another thing for my resume and again it helped with my time management, and keeping the schedule on my mind, and setting an alarm and stuff like that. *(YERI Participant #391)*
- It feels really good that I completed it and I have more stuff to put on my resume and now I can move into phase two. The feeling inside me feels good. I completed it. That I can commit to twenty hours of work experience and wildlife restoration training it's big for me to commit because the more stuff I do gives me a better chance of getting a good job. *(YERI Participant #393)*
- Her house sits next to the headwaters of Millard Creek, this is where the creek begins by flowing from ground water. In this water we test the Ph, the total dissolved solids, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, water level, and water temperature. This data is collected once a month. We're monitoring these areas to see if changes occur in the data. These changes can be caused by development, pollution, drought, floods, and other effects of climate change. *(YERI Participant #398)*

GOAL #3: IMPROVING ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

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

- I learned that eagles don't turn white on there heads or tails until they are five, I thought that eagles did that in their first year. So, now when I see an eagle in the wild with a white head and tail, I will know it is at least five years old. *(YERI Participant #389)*
- I was fascinated by generally how everything plays a part in the ecosystem, like the streams that start on this property here and flow into Millard Creek, which then flows into the estuary. Well, the water starts here and goes into Millard where the salmon make redds, and then the young fish go out to the ocean and get older and feed humans and the other creatures. Then, the salmon come back to the creek and start the whole process again, and it all starts right here underground. *(YERI Participant #396)*
- It was me learning to be still when there were fish near by, because when I saw fish at the first place, I ended up scaring a couple of fish, so I learned that I had to move slow so I wouldn't scare them. It's the most important because if I hadn't have learned that I would have scared all the fish that we were trying to count. *(YERI Participant #400)*

GOAL #4: INCREASING PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS

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

- It got me time out of school to go and do something fun. It was something nice instead of getting in trouble. Because I wasn't at school and if I'm not at school I can't get in trouble. It was something to do. (*YERI Participant #387*)
- It felt good. I was satisfied that I did everything even though sometimes I didn't want to go I still went and followed through, and I got the program done. I'm proud of myself for finishing the program even though I didn't have motivation, but I pushed through, and I did it. (*YERI Participant #397*)
- I think the biggest lesson was probably learning to be less anxious around people because they are not all always going to judge me. That was a big thing in my life and holding me back from doing what I want to do. Just like being able to go to events and being part of social events and I can do that now. Just working with other people made me more comfortable. (*YERI Participant #403*)

GOAL #5: ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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

- I definitely learned I can be pretty stubborn sometimes and can get pretty mad pretty quickly. I learned that I'm a pretty good presenter and that I was standing there being like, can I do this, and I just did it. I can just think back and think about how shy I was, but that I did that presentation. I was thinking that if this was the last time I was going to see you I didn't want to leave it on a note where I was rude, because I know I can be like that sometimes, and I just wanted to apologize to you. (*YERI Participant #383*)
- I was nervous to present, but once I got presenting it just got easier. I really don't know I just can't think of anything. It feels good because this is the part that I was most nervous about. So I guess you could say there has been a weight lifted off of me, cause I'm not dreading it anymore. I learned that I get really nervous about presenting in front of people, but that this was easier, because I learned that I should just do it rather than get all nervous about it. (*YERI Participant #388*)
- It felt awesome, I felt really proud of myself. I felt proud of myself because at first, I thought everyone was going to laugh at me or that they just won't pay attention. I guess I just felt nervous, and I don't know why, but I overcame that by just pushing forward and I just did it and I felt proud. (*YERI Participant #401*)

YERI Caregiver Quotes 2021 to 2022

- I think it was really valuable for him because it was like work, and you have to learn about follow through, and I think he left with a sense of accomplishment, and being rewarded for the work that he did, so he was very excited. There is not a whole lot of tangible things that come out of school, so I think this gave him a good idea of what work would be like. (*YERI Participant #381*)
- I was quite pleased about it. He was so proud about doing it because he was quite nervous, and he was very frustrated that he had committed to doing that presentation. So, I think it was a huge accomplishment for him to follow through on that commitment, even though he didn't want to. (*YERI Participant #383*)
- I thought it was a fantastic opportunity. It was a good thing for him to have a good break from the classroom and from school, and a good chance to get some hands-on experience doing something he wouldn't normally get the chance to do. I really liked how you made him responsible for himself, and you called him, and it wasn't all on me to organize him. It was up to him. (*YERI Participant #387*)

- It was super positive, he would come home super positive, so different from a regular school day. At school he comes home super quiet and frustrated, when he would come home from the program, he would be super amped and tell me all about his day and stuff. He was put in the program because he was struggling at school. He is at the moment being assessed for ADHD, and for a kid like that and in the classroom, it is hard to show their true potential, but in a one-on-one situation like this he does really well. *(YERI Participant #389)*
- It was really good for him. It was a really good thing for him to do and a really good goal of his to overcome as far as the public speaking part goes. He has done a lot of occupational therapy and doing this program has just added to that and really increased his confidence in himself. He has been doing occupational therapy for five years and this program has been comparable with that experience, and he was able to overcome a lot, like speaking in front of his class. It was just really great to see. *(YERI Participant #392)*
- One is the presentation. I hope it has got her one step closer to being more comfortable with that sort of thing. As for the program, I think it is great and I'm glad she got the opportunity to see the wider picture of how things work. The reward and certificate at the end was great. To see that you get rewarded for completing something, and then the guidance and being with a knowledgeable person like yourself. That is very important. *(YERI Participant #397)*
- Excitement, and just really wanting to get out and do this, she was really motivated. That is very different, we are dealing with someone with a lot of depression. It just changes things up and puts something new in her day. It kind of pulled her out of her depression and it gave her change, and put some brightness in her life, and when I say it was a surprise, it was a good surprise. It gave her a unique perspective and a chance to learn new things and retain it. Wildlife is an interest of hers and always has been. *(YERI Participant #398)*
- I think it is a wonderful program and it has done absolute wonders for my kid, but I think it should be a bit longer, more like ten weeks. It has just really built his confidence and he just seems to be a lot more motivated. He's more motivated to look for a parttime job and get his learner's licence. Just the three big ones that I said: self-esteem, self-confidence and motivation. *(YERI Participant #403)*
- I wish he was able to participate with this program more going forward... I'm going to get emotional here... he is a kid that gets kicked out of class everyday and this program gave him a sense of belonging. I hope he can do more one day with this program. When he did go those days, he was in a better mood and more happy and there wasn't someone telling him he was doing something wrong all the time. So, yeah, he was just generally happy. *(YERI Participant #404)*

YERI Youth Follow up Questions 2021 to 2022

- The most important thing I learned is that everything has a purpose and we need to treat everything with respect. I learned that it's like a big circle of life. Each thing leads to another of growth and life and it's just a whole world of magic. Like there are so many different aspects and components that you can learn, but there is always something else that you don't know. *(YERII Participant #54-371)*
- It was good. I liked it a lot, it was a great learning experience for me. Graham was very nice, very understanding, a great leader and teacher. He was very persistent in his way of teaching. Instead of telling or ordering you to do something, he would explain the back story and the importance of the things you were doing. He didn't make it feel like work, he made it fun. *(YERII Participant #55-385)*
- I think I just got a little better at socializing with people. It just gets easier to talk to people the more I talk to them. They were all nice people they were kind and they cared. They cared about volunteering and the animals they worked with and the environment. Its important because if everyone cared about the environment the world would be less polluted.

I learned how to be more comfortable talking to big groups of people and working with new faces. I just got more comfortable doing it. *(YERII Participant #56-380)*

- I got a little bit better at asking people what they mean when I don't understand. I do not understand most times, sometimes it's a little difficult for me to grasp certain concepts. So, I had to ask because I was helping out and I also had to do a presentation so I couldn't blindly go through it. *(YERII Participant #57-370)*

YERII Youth Quotes 2021 to 2022

- I learned that I was really interested in plants and learned a lot about them. That is why I got Pojar and McKinnon. I was tired at times with the heat and all the clothing, but I pushed myself to keep going and having fun and I'm so happy how much more I learned and how I learned to carry on. *(YERII Participant #54-371)*
- I learned that I could lead a tour. I was nervous at first and thought I wouldn't be able to do it, but when the time came it was great. I wouldn't say it was easy, but it was nice to do. Talking in front of people is a great skill to have and letting people know what we had been doing for the past five days was nice because if you can learn something that is great, but if you teach something it's cemented in you. If you learn something and teach it, it becomes locked in. Working with people, it was nice to have a group there of support people. It was helpful with the presenting part of the project. *(YERII Participant #55-385)*
- I learned about the decay classes of trees and how to do it. There is level one which is a healthy tree standing and then there is number nine, which is a decayed stump on the ground. Number five is when the inside of the tree starts to decay, and the branches start to fall off. Most of the trees we looked at today were between a five and an eight, at that stage it is good for insects to burrow into it, and fungus grow on it and the birds start to feed there. *(YERII Participant #56-380)*
- I kind of already knew that it was fun, but I would also say that things are generally easier working with others, you know teamwork. Being able to talk to people in general and having others to bounce your ideas off of, and the work gets done a lot faster than by yourself, and it's just nice being around people. It was just nice, and having each others company, and getting things done together as a team. *(YERII Participant #57-370)*

YERII Caregiver Quotes 2021 to 2022

- I think more kids should do more of this. I think it has helped her personal experience with being around other people. It helped with public speaking and just being able to be out in the field learning things. She was holding her head up higher. She felt smarter, but it wasn't just a feeling, she was smarter and then being able to teach Dad made her feel in high esteem. *(YERII Participant #54-371)*
- Obviously with how much I learned I thought he did an absolutely amazing job. It's given him something to do for the summer. It's nice for him to be getting out and learning something. It's nice to see him working well with others. It was more, in the first case it was one-on-one. With this he had the whole group. I really noticed, especially with his presentation even the larger crowd. He handled the large crowd really, really well. *(YERII Participant #55-385)*
- I think it is good for him to learn to speak with other people and to learn how to teach older people what he has learned, and I think that is definitely beneficial. I know that he was so excited about it even though he doesn't like to talk in front of people, but it was just good for him. He is bottled up, and with everything he has been going through with his mom, and his dad dying. So, any opportunity like this just gets him out of his room and out of his shell. *(YERII Participant #56-380)*

- I think it was good for her to come out of her shell and speak with people and I think it is good for them to learn to speak with other people and to learn how to teach older people what they have learned, and I think that is definitely beneficial. I know that they were both so excited about it even though neither of them likes to talk in front of people, but it was just good for both of them. (*YERII Participant #57-370*)

4. BUDGET

YER Budget for April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022

The 2021/2022 budget had income of \$63,880.53 and \$3,800.00 was deferred to 2022/2023. The following made contributions to the operation of YER: MCFD funded \$42,000.00; CVRD gave \$9,300.00; SD#71 granted \$8,000.00; deferred from the 2020/2021 budget \$2,421.10; Village of Cumberland approved \$2,100.00; McIntyre Media royalties for the YER film \$18.02; the parent of a youth participant \$40.00; and interest of \$1.41. Comox Valley environmental groups give an in-kind value of approximately \$2,000.00 by providing equipment and training (Table 2).

This list gives details of YER 2021/2022 expenses:

- **Professional fees** were: Coordinator, Wendy Kotilla of \$18,162.79; Youth Support Worker, Graham Hilliar of \$23,962.50; biologist fees were \$4,000.00 and \$2,100.00; and a K'omoks Elder honourarium of \$100.00.
- **Honouraria** for youth participants was \$1,200.00; and \$640.85 for YERI crests and YERII hoodies.
- **Program Promotion** was \$1,040.27 for website maintenance.
- **Mileage** costs were calculated at \$4,776.95.
- **Supplies** were: lunches for \$1,175.05; general supplies at \$511.92; office supplies of \$38.58.
- **Equipment** was \$1,775.72 for water quality monitoring.
- **Miscellaneous expenses** were \$100.00; and bank charges at \$295.90.

5. SUMMARY

Youth and Ecological Restoration (YER) had another successful year in 2021/2022. Twenty-eight youth participants completed Phase I and Phase II of the program. Since 2004, the overall completion rate for four hundred and four youth doing both YER phases is ninety-three percent. Ministry of Children and Family Development continues as the primary funder and School District #71 funded YER for the first time in the history of the program. Two YERII projects were funded and completed, one with Comox Valley Regional District at Goose Spit Park and another with the Village of Cumberland at Cumberland Community Forest Park.

Youth and caregiver quotes in this report demonstrate the learning that is achieved by participants and the growth witnessed by their caregivers. The list of Community Partnerships continues to expand every year and is now at one hundred and seventy-four. A description of the program in one word would be relationships, with youth, their caregivers, youth referral agencies, ecological groups and with their presentation audiences. Through YER, youth develop a perception of the Comox Valley community in a broader sense as a place that surrounds and supports them. This program is a community-based success, as we all benefit from youth building confidence within themselves and a sense of knowing the nature of the place where they live.

TABLE 1: YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION (YER)

YOUTH PARTICIPANT SUMMARY TABLE FOR APRIL 1, 2021 TO MARCH 31, 2022.

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

YERI 24 youth (6 girls and 18 boys; 50% were First Nations); YERII 4 youth (2 girls and 2 boys; 25% 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 # 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404	24
YERII Complete: # 54-371, 55-385, 56-380, 57-370	4
TOTAL YOUTH PARTICIPANTS	28

Table 1b: YOUTH ORGANIZATION REFERRALS

YERI and YERII participants were referred by two agencies.

CV School District # 71: # 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 54-371, 55-385, 56-380, 57-370	27
Lake Trail Community School: # 381, 383, 385, 389, 393, 395, 55-385 Highland Secondary School: # 384, 386, 387, 394, 396, 404 Glacier View Secondary School: # 397, 398, 399, 402, 403 Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School: # 388, 390, 56-380, 57-370 Cumberland Community School: # 382, 400, 54-371 Nala'atsi Alternate School: # 391 Miracle Beach Elementary School: # 401	
Beachcombers Academy: # 392	1
TOTAL 2 YOUTH REFERRAL ORGANIZATIONS	

Table 1c: YOUTH ORGANIZATION INTERCONNECTIONS

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

SD #71: # 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 54-371, 55-385, 56-380, 57-370	27
CV School District #71 Counselling: # 381, 382, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 393, 394, 395, 396, 398, 399, 400, 401, 403, 404, 54-371, 55-385, 56-380, 57-370	23
The LINC Youth Centre: # 381, 383, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 393, 396, 398, 399, 400, 403, 404, 55-385, 56-380, 57-370	17
MCFD: # 381, 382, 385, 388, 395, 397, 398, 399, 400, 403, 55-385, 56-380, 57-370	13
RCMP: # 384, 385, 388, 391, 395, 397, 403, 404, 55-385, 56-380	10
Wachiay Friendship Centre: # 383, 385, 390, 391, 398, 399, 401, 55-385	8
John Howard Society: # 386, 391, 395, 397, 399, 56-380	6
Counseling - Source Unknown: # 384, 394, 404, 55-385, 57-370	5
Comox Valley Family Services: # 388	1
Comox Valley Boys and Girls Club: # 402	1
Comox Valley Family Services, Sexual Abuse Intervention Program: # 54-371	1
Pacific Therapy: # 386	1
Comox Valley Transition Society: # 55-385	1
TOTAL 13 YOUTH ORGANIZATION INTERCONNECTIONS	

**TABLE 1 (Cont.): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)
YOUTH PARTICIPANT SUMMARY TABLE FOR APRIL 1, 2021 TO MARCH 31, 2022.**

Table 1d: ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION ORGANIZATIONS	YOUTH TOTALS
YERII projects have two youth and two adults.	
YERI Projects had youth participate with the following organizations:	
Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society: # 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404	24
Oyster River Enhancement Society: # 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404	22
Millard/Piercy Watershed Stewards: # 382, 384, 385, 386, 388, 389, 390, 393, 394, 396, 397, 398, 399, 401, 402	15
Tsolum River Restoration Society: # 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 389, 390, 392, 395, 403, 404	13
Morrison Creek Streamkeepers: # 381, 393, 394, 397, 398, 399, 400, 402, 403	9
Comox Valley Project Watershed Society: # 395, 404	2
Brooklyn Creek Watershed Society: # 396	1
YERII: Comox Valley Regional District, Goose Spit Park: # 54-371, 55-385	2
YERII: Village of Cumberland, Cumberland Community Forest Park: # 56-380, 57-370	2
TOTAL: 9 ORGANIZATIONS; 642 COMMUNITY MEMBERS (average of 27 per youth)	

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

CV School District # 71: # 382, 383, 385, 390, 391, 393, 394, 395, 398, 399, 400, 401, 404	13
Brooklyn Elementary School, Kindergarten Class: # 404	
Cumberland Community School, Grade 6/7: # 382	
Cumberland Community School, Strong Start Program: # 400	
Glacier View Secondary School, Environmental Club: # 398	
Highland Secondary School, Advantage Class: # 394	
Lake Trail Community School, Grade 7: # 383, 393, 395	
Lake Trail Community School, Grade 9: # 385	
Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School, Queer Ally Club: # 390	
Miracle Beach Elementary School, Grade 5/6: # 401	
Nala'atsi Alternate School: # 391	
Queeneesh Elementary School, Grade 6/7: # 399	
Lighthouse Early Learning Centre: # 381, 384, 387, 397, 402	5
Cummings Home, Seniors Assisted Living Facility: # 386, 388, 389, 403	4
Beachcombers Academy, Grade 6/7:# 392	1
Royal Canadian Air Cadets - 386 Komox Squadron: # 396	1
YERII: Comox Valley Regional District, Goose Spit Park: # 54-371, 55-385	2
YERII: Village of Cumberland, Cumberland Community Forest Park: # 56-380, 57-370	2
YERI 336 AUDIENCE MEMBERS; YERII PROJECTS 19 and 11 TOUR PARTICIPANTS	

Table 1f: YER COMPLETION RATES

YERI: Total number of 404 youth participants; 359 completed the 20 hour program	89%
YERII: Total number of 57 youth participants; 56 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, 2021 TO MARCH 31, 2022.**

This YER budget records expenses, income and other contributions required to deliver this Comox Valley program for vulnerable youth. YER 2021/2022 funds were provided by BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), Ministry of Education, Mental Health (MOE, and Village of Cumberland (VOC). Other contributions were provided by Comox Valley groups for training and tools to restore local watersheds and ecosystems.

Expense Item	Expenses	Income		Other Contributions
W. Kotilla	\$18,162.79	MCFD	\$42,000.00	Training \$2,000.00
G. Hilliar	\$23,962.50	CVRD	\$9,300.00	
C. Maslovat	\$4,000.00	MOE	\$8,000.00	
Latitude Solutions	\$2,100.00	2020/2021	\$2,421.10	
K'omoks Elder	\$100.00	VOC	\$2,100.00	
		McIntyre	\$18.02	
		Donation	\$40.00	
		Interest	\$1.41	
Youth Honourarium	\$1,200.00			
Youth Benefits	\$640.85			
Program Promotion	\$1,040.27			
Mileage	\$4,776.95			
Equipment	\$1,775.72			
General Supplies	\$1,686.97			
Office Supplies	\$38.58			
Misc. Expenses	\$100.00			
Bank Charges	\$295.90			
TOTALS	\$59,880.53		\$63,880.53	\$2,000.00
Defer to 2022/2023			\$4,000.00	
			\$59,880.53	

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

YER partnered with one hundred and seventy-four groups July 2004 to March 2022.

Eleven groups referred youth clients from July 2004 to March 2022:

- BC Children's Hospital www.bcchildrens.ca
- Beachcombers Academy www.beachcombersschool.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 Secondary School; Lake Trail Community School; Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School; Nalata'atsi Alternate School; Huband Park Elementary School; Highland Secondary School; Miracle Beach Elementary School
- 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 2021:

- 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.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 seventy-four Comox Valley groups July 2004 to March 2022.

One hundred and thirty-two groups had youth presentations from July 2004-March 2022:

- 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
- Beachcombers Academy, Grade 6/7 www.beachcombersschool.ca
- Berwick Retirement Society www.berwickrc.com/comox
- Brooklyn Elementary School, Grade 5
- Brooklyn Elementary School, Kindergarten
- 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, Counselor
- Cumberland Community School, Strong Start Program
- Cumberland Community School, Grade 1/2
- Cumberland Community School, Grade 4/5
- Cumberland Community School, Grade 5/6
- Cumberland Community School, Grade 6/7
- Cumberland Community School, Grade 8
- Cumberland Community School, Grade 9
- Cumberland Junior School

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

YER partnered with one hundred and seventy-four Comox Valley groups July 2004 to March 2022.

One hundred and thirty-two groups had youth presentations July 2004 to March 2022 (cont.):

- 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
- Fanny Bay Old Age Pensioners, Seniors Craft Group
- Glacier View Lodge Society www.glacierviewlodge.ca
- Glacier View Secondary School, Bridgeway Program
- Glacier View Secondary School, Independent Learning Program
- Glacier View Secondary School, Key Program
- Glacier View Secondary School, Senior Alternate Program
- Glacier View Secondary School, Environmental Club
- GP Vanier Senior Secondary School, Counseling Group
- GP Vanier Senior Secondary School, Grade 8 English
- GP Vanier Senior Secondary School, Grade 8 Science
- GP Vanier Senior Secondary School, Grade 11, Social Sciences class
- GP Vanier Secondary School, Little Friends Day Care
- GP Vanier Secondary School, Grade 10, Social Justice class
- Highland Secondary School, Counselor
- Highland Secondary School, Grade 11
- Highland Secondary School, Advantage Class
- 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 Community School, Grade 6/7
- Lake Trail Community School, Grade 7
- Lake Trail Community School, Grade 8
- Lake Trail Community School, Grade 9
- Lake Trail Community School, Pride Program
- Lake Trail Community School, Humanities Program
- Lake Trail Community 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, Grade 11, Life Sciences
- Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School, Life Skills Program
- Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School, Counsellor
- Mark R. Isfeld Secondary School, Queer Ally Club
- Merry Andrew Day Care
- Miracle Beach Elementary School, Grade 1
- Miracle Beach Elementary School, Grade 5/6
- Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards

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

YER partnered with one hundred and seventy-four Comox Valley groups July 2004 to March 2022.

One hundred and thirty-two groups had youth presentations July 2004 to March 2022 (cont.):

- 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
- North Island Distance Education, Navigate – Grade 4
- Oyster River Enhancement Society www.ovsterriverenhancement.org/
- Puddleduck Preschool
- Pumpkin Patch Daycare
- Puntledge Park Elementary School, Kindergarten
- Puntledge Park Elementary School: Grade 2
- Puntledge Park 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
- Queneesh Elementary School, Grade 6/7
- Robb Road Elementary School, Grade 4
- Roseberry Pre-School
- Rotary Club of the Comox Valley <https://www.facebook.com/rotaryclubofcomoxvalley>
- Royal Canadian Air Cadets - 386 Komox Squadron <https://386komox.com/>
- Royston Elementary School, Grade 7
- 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
- Wachiay Friendship Centre, Bears Group
- Wachiay Friendship Centre, Eagles Group
- 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