

# YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION ANNUAL REPORT



**For the Period of April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023  
Completed on October 13, 2023**

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

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Cover Page Photo – Youth and Ecological Restoration, Phase II, Youth Participants, Keygan McGaw and, April Nielsen learn mapping technology with Don Chamberlain in Millard Creek headwaters. Photo by Wendy Kotilla.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Youth and Ecological Restoration (YER) respectfully acknowledges that the land we work on is the unceded traditional territory of the Pentlatch, Eiksen, Sahtloot and Sasitla, known today as K'omoks First Nations, the traditional keepers of this land.

YER has provided youth services in the Comox Valley since 2004 for four hundred and thirty-three youth participants. BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has been the main funding source for the program over the past nineteen years. Much gratitude to Kyla Talbot, MCFD, Comox Valley, Director of Operations for the continued financial support.

School District #71 (SD #71) gave YER funding support for the September 2022 to June 2023 school year, which was through Ministry of Education, Mental Health (MOE). Thanks to Comox Valley Schools, Superintendent, Tom Demeo, for the second year of these funds.

Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) has supported YER Phase II (YER II) projects since 2013. These came from two sources: CVRD Directors, Daniel Arbour, Edwin Grieve and Arzeena Hamir approved a Rural Community Grant; CVRD, Manager of Parks, Mark Harrison allocated funds for a biologist to supervise youth doing an ecological inventory in a local park.

Two YER II projects were supervised by Biologist, Tanis Gower in 2022. One was on private property in Millard Creek headwaters to professionally map streams for updating CVRD iMaps. Thanks to Don Chamberlain for his guidance with GPS mapping technology. The second was in CVRD, Masters Greenway Park to document human trampling impacts on park vegetation.

Graham Hilliar has been YER, Youth Support Worker, for three years. He began volunteering in 2015 and now has eight years of experience guiding and mentoring youth participants. Graham is an essential part of YER and will become program coordinator in 2025.

The Comox Valley community has been incredibly supportive over the past nineteen years. All of the funders, the youth agencies referring the youth, the environmental organizations providing work experience, the groups offering places for youth to give their speeches, the people that listen to those speeches, and all of the community members that offer kind words and support in many other ways. YER could not exist without our community standing behind and beside us as we walk with the youth to support them through their life passages.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

On its July first anniversary date, YER has been supporting Comox Valley youth at risk for nineteen years. Initiated in 2004, the program has worked and shared time with four hundred and thirty-three youth. YER is for exceptional youth in their teenage years, from twelve to eighteen, which can be difficult time for any in that age bracket. Some have more challenges than others for a variety of reasons and need additional support during this life phase. We welcome them all, no matter what their circumstances.

YER combines ecological and social teachings with life skills in a distinctive way that includes ecological restoration and ecotherapy practices through exposure to natural places. This twenty-hour program contains a unique blend that is highly effective in providing young people with alternative education, personal mentoring and hands on environmental work. One-on-one youth support from YER staff and mentoring from community members form the social component. Immersing youth in nature experiences with knowledgeable people assists them in learning about the Comox Valley ecology and the citizens that care for its species and their habitat. It is also effective in guiding them with interpersonal skills, self-confidence, communication, work ethics, problem solving, time management, teamwork, ecological knowledge and community awareness.

## 2. PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES

This YER annual report covers the period April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023. During that time, thirty-three youth were involved in the program; YER I had twenty-nine and YER II had four participants (Table 1a). YER has an eighty-eight per cent completion rate for four hundred and thirty-three YER I youth and ninety-eight per cent for YER II (Table 1f). Appendix A lists one hundred and seventy-four Comox Valley groups that youth interacted with for youth referrals, environmental work and presentation locations.

### **Youth Participant Summary**

Twenty-eight youth completed YER I and one youth did not finish; four completed YER II (Table 1a). They were mainly from these SD #71 schools: Highland Secondary and Lake Trail Community referred nine each, Glacier View Secondary sent seven, Nala'atsi had five, and one from Huband Elementary; one was referred through Comox Valley Transition Society (Table 1b). YER I had ten girls and nineteen boys with fifty-five per cent First Nations; YER II had two girls and two boys and seventy-five per cent were First Nations (Table 1).

Many of these youth had connections with other Comox Valley youth resources. All thirty-three attended SD #71 schools; twenty-five connected with The Linc; seventeen sought counselling at their schools; eleven had been to Wachiay Friendship Centre; nine each for John Howard Society and MCFD; eight had interacted with RCMP; seven with Comox Valley Foundry; six obtained counselling from unknown sources; three at Pacific Therapy and Comox Valley Family Services; two were at Island Health, Adolescent Outpatient Services and Comox Valley Transition Society; and Community Justice Centre had one youth utilize their services (Table 1c). These services provide a social safety net and important resources for youth that participate in YER.

### **YER I 2022 to 2023**

YER I youth worked with nine local environmental organizations, primarily these five groups: Millard Piercy Watershed Stewards, Morrison Creek Streamkeepers, MARS Wildlife Rescue, Oyster River Enhancement Society and Tsolum River Restoration Society (Table 1d). They also worked with Comox Valley Project Watershed Society, Puntledge River Hatchery, Comox Valley Nature and Brooklyn Creek Watershed Society (Table 1d). The two YER II projects were with CVRD; one was in the Millard Creek headwaters and one in Masters Greenway Park (Table 1d).

Some YER I placements are one-on-one and some have community members who interact with and mentor the youth. There was a total of seven hundred and fifty-two community members that worked alongside the youth, which is an average of twenty-six per youth (Table 1d). Experience has shown it is best to have a balance of time with volunteers, as well as with one support worker.

In 2022 to 2023 twenty-eight YER I youth speeches were given at the following: nineteen were in different SD #71 schools; three each at Cummings Home and Lighthouse Early Learning Centre; and one each at Comox Valley Rotary Club, Royal Canadian Air Cadets – 386 Komox Squadron and Tigger Too Early Learning Centre (Table 1e). There was a total of three hundred and eighty-six audience members, with an average of thirteen per youth (Table 1e). Each youth is given the option of doing their presentation for the audience where they would feel the most comfortable. Some choose the smallest number of people, which is three. This is often their first presentation, so it is best for them to stay within their comfort zone.

Sometimes YER brings attention to broader community issues. A homeless encampment was found in City of Courtenay, Millard Creek Park, so YER alerted bylaws staff. More encampment debris was found later in the creek, park and on private property. Bylaws organized a meeting including the Fire Chief, land owners, homelessness advocates, YER and RCMP. After that, twenty-one people from local businesses, homelessness and stewardship organizations restored the area. This collaborative event was a great teaching moment for several youth.

### **YER II 2022 to 2023**

YER II projects started in 2008 and YER youth are well recognized by local government and environmental organizations for the high quality of ecological data collection. This work helps parks management, environmental groups and property owners make decisions are based on sound scientific research. There were two YER II projects in 2022: the first one was done June 1-5, 2022 in Millard Creek headwaters and the second was conducted July 1-5, 2022 in CVRD, Masters Greenway Park. As of this report writing, the 2022 YER II reports have not yet been updated to the YER website, Ecological Reports (<https://youthecology.ca/ecological-reports/>).

In June the project was part of long-term data collection on private property in the Millard Creek headwaters that has involved YER youth since 2011. This year a mapping professional guided the YER team in mapping the waterways to Sensitive Habitat Inventory and Mapping standards so that CVRD could update the iMap. We also mapped the streamside vegetation, and collected weather, water quality and fish presence data. Eight people came to learn from the youth leaders.

The second 2022 YER II project was done in July in CVRD, Masters Greenway Park. Objectives were to map invasive plant species locations; measure vegetation and bare ground in trampled areas and untrampled areas; and conduct annual covenant monitoring for Comox Valley Land Trust and The Land Conservancy of British Columbia. Twenty-five tour participants came for the youth guided tour.

### 3. YOUTH AND CAREGIVER QUOTES

The youth and caregiver quotes form the heart of YER annual reports. When the program started in 2004 the original funder hired an evaluation consultant to assist the project managers with assessing successes and outcomes. As YER is mainly social work, part of data collection is based on conversations with youth and their caregivers. Their responses to being interviewed provide qualitative information and their voices provide volumes of evidence about how YER functions and serves them. Below are the youth and caregiver responses for YER I and YER II.

#### YOUTH AND CAREGIVER QUOTES 2022 TO 2023 PARTICIPANTS 405 to 433

##### YER I Youth Quotes 2022 to 2023

###### GOAL #1: BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

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

- We were helping at the Oyster River fish hatchery and there were a lot of people that were willing to give their time to help the ecosystem. It just seemed like a really strong community vibe in the organization. I felt welcome when I came in the door, it made me feel good. It was fun and exciting to learn their ways of doing things, like how people had their own way of doing things, it was just neat. *(YER I Participant #412)*
- It was really interesting to be able to hear and see all those people trying to fix the problem. There was a lady that was part of a homelessness program, two bylaw officers and a couple of landowners and they were walking along the tracks looking at the sites where people had previously camped. It gave me a new perspective of how many problems it can cause for the land owners and a new found respect for people that come out here and put their minds together to find solutions. *(YER I Participant #428)*
- I learned to go in with an open mind and to let the people that have been doing it for a long time teach you. If you go into a job acting like you know what you're doing you won't get very far. It's opened me up to new experiences that I didn't know I would ever do. I think I will be more open to similar experiences in the future. *(YER I Participant #432)*

###### GOAL #2: GAINING VALUED WORK EXPERIENCE

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

- The first thing we did was monitor the water with a multi-meter, we had to measure the depth, the amount of total dissolved solids, the temperature, the conductivity, the water acidity and dissolved oxygen. We were doing this so we could see if any changes happened over time. The water appeared from an underground spring that makes up Millard Creek. *(YER I Participant #406)*
- We went bird counting for great blue herons and bald eagles, this is monitored yearly to see their population. This could change for many reasons, including lack of food sources, human disturbance and development. I learned what great blue herons look like. We recorded the numbers; we counted in different sections of Comox Bay every twenty minutes for three hours. I learned that bald eagles at the age of five get a white tail and head and yellow beak and eyes and the females are larger. Great blue heron's nest in groups to help protect them from bald eagles, their nest sites are called rookeries. I really enjoyed counting the birds through the telescope. *(YER I Participant #418)*
- It was fun and engaging; I was never bored. It was nice that Joanne said that it was nice to work with me because I knew what needed to be done and she didn't have to ask me and didn't have to teach me how to do the job as much as she would with someone else. I don't

know how to take complements very well, so I just pushed it off to the side. I was really nervous about getting in the way today, so it was nice to hear that I didn't. (*YER I Participant #430*)

### GOAL #3: IMPROVING ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

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

- I also saw an eagle get treated for lead poisoning. When they treated the eagle, they stuck a needle into the wing and they also had to tube feed it. Eagles get lead poisoning from eating ducks that eat shotgun pellets, thinking they were rocks. They eat rocks to help them digest food. The strong acid in the eagle's stomach breaks down the pellets and gets into their blood system. (*YER I Participant #405*)
- We were preparing eelgrass to be planted. Eelgrass is very important to young salmon for their habitat and helps prevent coastal erosion. This not only benefits fish but helps us. People enjoy many types of fish and eelgrass is helpful to us because it helps those fish. Eelgrass is helpful to salmon as a living space when they are juveniles. It grows tall and shelters them and hides them from predators. Eelgrass also helps to slow erosion and helps to take carbon dioxide out of the air. (*YER I Participant #417*)
- I learned that the fish weirs were planted one thousand three-hundred years ago and they were set up so when the tide came in the fish would swim into the trap and when the tide went back out, they would be trapped and be easy pickings. The local first nations set up the traps to catch salmon. (*YER I Participant #420*)

### GOAL #4: INCREASING PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS

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

- This experience was life changing and inspiring. I met beautiful, kind and loving souls. I learned I have a higher purpose; I found my passion and so much more. I am so grateful for this opportunity and the opportunities this program gave me. One of my favorite memories was feeding birds that can't nourish themselves, it was so special, intimate and gentle. The birds and all the animals melted my heart. I highly recommend this program, especially if you're super in touch with mother nature. (*YER I Participant #416*)
- It's helped me mentally, like most times I would be happy to go. The program made me happy and not sad. I would wait for that day of the week to come and see you. Getting to hang out with you and getting to do the fun stuff, even though it wasn't all fun, I would still just be excited to come. It was amazing and it teaches kids a lot about fish and nature and all that. (*YER I Participant #424*)
- It made me feel like I was contributing to a good cause by helping the animals and helping the people help the animals. At first, I was a little nervous, but the more I worked with people the more comfortable I got with it. I had to kind of push myself, but now I am more confident and comfortable being myself and not as worried about what people think of me. (*YER I Participant #431*)

### GOAL #5: ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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

- It felt amazing, I felt so joyful after telling them about it. My stomach just felt better after telling them and I was grateful for their patience while I tried to speak. It feels amazing and I feel rejoiced to have been able to be a part of this program, but sad because it is over. It has been really nice getting to know you. (*YER I Participant #407*)



- It was very fun and a very good experience for me that I can use for later speeches. I think that they learned that eagles can be mute and that they learned what I learned. It felt like it was very fun and I'm glad I could pull through all the way. Sometimes work ethics are very hard but somehow with this one I was able to pull myself through. I motivated myself to do better and try harder. *(YERI Participant #415)*
- I was scared at first but now that I have finished, I feel like I have accomplished something and now that I have finished, I know how to talk to an audience or do a presentation. It feels good because now I have a reference letter that I can use when I get a job. It just feels amazing. That you can do anything you want to do, like the presentation if you are scared to do it you just have to wing it and you can accomplish anything. *(YERI Participant #427)*

### **YER I Caregiver Quotes 2022 to 2023**

- It definitely got him back into the community and pulled him out of the mud puddle that he has been in for the last couple of years. He got out there and it showed him that he could get out there again and get involved and he got out in front of his class and it showed him that he could be a leader and to do that in front of a group of his peers is great. Right off the top he is back in another program after yours and he is engaging with friends again. You guys are rescue rangers, you just got him out of that mud puddle and off the computer. *(YERI Participant #407)*
- She hasn't really worked before so having to be up and ready to work in the morning is a first for her, and she was getting up and ready on her own. She has just never been in that position before and I noticed a boost in confidence and when it came to the presentation and reading out loud. When she would tell us about her day as it went on it would get more detailed, like one day she went into a three-minute story about what she had done which is not something normal for her. *(YERI Participant #411)*
- I think it is wonderful, he is a total hands-on learner. He was just so into the birds he saw at MARS and he just used the science language and everything, I was just so impressed. It is such an asset to our community. I think that if you have a program where youth are learning hands on and you can measure the outcomes and they have those chances to meet new people and to do the presentation, that is what learning should be. I think that is why I love this program so much. He didn't just learn the stuff; he still talks about it and he was nervous at the start, but by the end it just increased his self esteem. I wish there were more programs like this. *(YERI Participant #412)*
- I think it is great and has helped him tremendously. I think programs like this are amazing. I think it is very beneficial for him and the one-on-one part works really well for him, it is just what works best for him. I think it is a good outlet for kids like that, where they can meet other people like you in the community and get to talk with them. Confidence, and he was pretty pumped when he came back from the presentation day. He was pretty proud of himself. *(YERI Participant #413)*
- I would love it if it was curriculum and normally was an elective, a semester or year long elective. What learning outcomes does it not meet. It meets working with others, following direction; physical activity; problem solving skills and leadership. That is what YER entails. *(YERI Participant #415)*
- I'm just glad he did it and completed it and I'm so happy he got to do that cool stuff. It helped him out a lot, so I would like to thank you guys. Before he wouldn't go to the Foundry and now, he is doing that. He has a meeting to get in there and he is now willing to do that. I think it was really great that so many people came out to his presentation. It really made him feel supported and that is really what he needs right now. It puts a lot into perspective when you see lots of people come out to support you like that. *(YERI Participant #424)*



- From the programs stand point; he would be up and ready to go, where as with school he will not get up on time or he says he doesn't want to go. With this program he was up and always ready and willing to go. I was surprised that it was not my responsibility to get him anywhere. It seems like a very well-run program and I wish there were more programs like this, that don't involve the four walls of school. I thought it was a great program and thank you for being so great with the kids. (*YER I Participant #429*)
- I guess the program is awesome for him because he seemed calm, content and happy and not stressed out. He was just happy, I think it was eye opening for him to experience real life and he used to do a lot of nature stuff with my dad who has passed away, so I think that was comforting for him. My dad was really the only good male role model for him and I think at the hatchery, having all those old guys there was really good for him. (*YER I Participant #433*)

### **YER I Follow-up Questions 2022-2023**

- I was able to go outside more doing the activities. I was more active. Into being able to identify different kinds of trees. It was really cool being able to tell my Mom and Dad what kind of trees on walks. It would help with work experience. (*YER II Participant #58-407*)
- I learned to ask for help when I needed it and communicate better with teamwork-based tasks. One example working with the big net to herd all the coho smolts. There was a big net. We needed to guide it with the lead line and needed to communicate if we needed a pause or if we were caught on something. I'm not super good at communicating when I am focussed on another task so I was glad I got to improve on that with teamwork. (*YER II Participant #59-414*)
- How capable I am, like I have confidence I didn't even know I had and I felt so inspired and I haven't felt that way for a long time and it made me feel passionate about life and being positive. I can sometimes be really negative, but this has showed me that I can do meaningful things and to do that with intention. (*YER II Participant #60-416*)
- I learned that I have a hard time missing out on things when I know I'm missing out. Like last time when I came to the program and I would know that people would be doing things together at school and I would be missing it, but it's OK to miss out on some things when you are doing something that is important as well. (*YER II Participant 61-384*)

### **YER II Youth Quotes 2022 to 2023**

- I learned teamwork is a very important thing to have in a working environment. I mean if some places you don't have that. It's easier when you have someone you can rely on if you need help. Because we worked together as a team and asked questions when needed or if we didn't know something. I think with my knowledge of animals I was able to give some knowledge of some questions we had. When I needed help with answering a question, I was able to get the help I needed. It felt amazing, I felt I was on cloud nine being able to help others and being able to ask for help. I just felt so relaxed and happy. (*YER II Participant #58-407*)
- I learned how to try to work together with people better. It's not a strong suit I have. Everyone on the team helped me to learn to co-operate with people better. I tried learning more and improving on communication. Communicating what I was doing and asking what other people were doing. (*YER II Participant #59-414*)
- When Hazel was saying that Ruth would say that not all of their ideas would work out, but by taking action it still inspired change to happen. It's like the butterfly effect, Ruth changed the world even if it is in a small way. We are so big and so small at the same time and we all have an impact on things and all have the power to make positive change. Believe in yourself. (*YER II Participant #60-416*)

- It's easier to have help with something than to do it on your own, like when doing the tracks, it was nice having someone to hold the GPS rather than do it all yourself. It was also just nice to work with a group of people. I've always been more of a social person, so I like working with others. *(YER II Participant #61-384)*

### **YER II Caregiver Quotes 2022 to 2023**

- He came out of his shell a bit. Covid changed it for him and he got into a shell more. YER I helped pull him out a little bit and this one helped pull him out a bit more, which is imperative. He used to volunteer at the soup kitchen and Covid hit and they shut it down. It was his thing and volunteering made him feel good about himself. That took away his self esteem and YER brought it back. *(YER II Participant #58-407)*
- It definitely brought her out of her shell a little more. When she would come home and she would talk about it. She would talk about you. A connection she felt, she had a connection with you because your interests and hers were the same. It was huge to find somebody that wasn't a kid that is as interested in these things as she was. She was calmer. She can get really riled sometimes, but she would come home from a day with you or Graham, it was calmer for her. She was settled. *(YER II Participant #59-414)*
- I almost cried. I thought she was just so passionate about it and so well spoken and she knew what she was talking about. I was surprised about how she was a bit anxious about doing a presentation around people, but how she pushed through and accomplished that, so I hope that she learned that about herself, that she can push through. *(YER II Participant #60-416)*
- I know he enjoyed getting out with other people who were in the same boat as him. Just because he was a bit troubled while he was in school and it was just nice for him to get out in the community. Because he was struggling in school, he didn't like being in school. Just because he was out learning about things he wasn't learning in school and not from a textbook. This way he actually got eyes out there and it was a different way to learn. *(YER II Participant #61-384)*

## **4. BUDGET**

### **YER Budget for April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023**

Total income for the YER 2022/2023 budget was \$66,210.00. Contributions were made to YER from: MCFD funded \$42,000.00; CVRD gave \$9,200.00; SD#71 granted \$10,000.00; deferred from the 2021/2022 budget was \$5,000.00; and McIntyre Media royalties for the YER film of \$10.00. Deferred to the 2023/2024 budget is \$7,500.00. Comox Valley environmental groups gave an in-kind value of approximately \$2,000.00 by providing equipment and training (Table 2).

This list gives details of YER 2022/2023 expenses:

- **Professional fees** were: Coordinator, Wendy Kotilla \$14,300.42; Youth Support Worker, Graham Hilliar \$26,122.50; Biologist, Tanis Gower \$8,200.00; and a \$50.00 honourarium for Elder, Hazel Lennox.
- **Honouraria** for youth participants was \$1,300.00; and \$973.82 for YER I crests and YER II hoodies.
- **Program Promotion** was \$1,863.70 for website maintenance.
- **Mileage** costs were calculated at \$4,000.04.
- **General supplies** were \$1,628.87 and office supplies \$88.25.
- **Bank charges** were \$182.40.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

Youth and Ecological Restoration (YER) has served four hundred and thirty-three Comox Valley vulnerable youth since 2004. During the 2022/2023 year, twenty-nine youth participated in and twenty-eight completed YER Phase I, and four youth completed YER Phase II. Financial support came through Ministry of Children and Family Development and School District #71. SD #71 referred most of the youth and one was from Comox Valley Transition Society. Participants use other Comox Valley youth services to assist them with personal issues, counselling and advocacy.

YER I youth participants worked with nine environmental organizations and presented their knowledge for six community groups. Comox Valley Regional District funded two YER II projects through a Rural Community Grant and the Parks Department. One conducted stream mapping in upper Millard Creek that was utilized to update the CVRD iMap system; the other documented vegetation trampling in Masters Greenway Park. YER has developed community relationships with one hundred and seventy-four groups over the past nineteen years.

YER is analyzed through both quantitative and qualitative documentation. The quantitative data gives the numbers of youth participants, completions, referrals, ecological work placements and presentation locations. YER qualitative data collection is conducted by interviewing the youth participants and caregivers to determine what knowledge they received, and to provide feedback, observations and comments. The youth and caregiver evaluations evoke powerful narratives that bring out the lifeblood and spark of the program.

YER I youth describe being greeted with a strong community ambience and having newfound respect for people working together. They feel engaged, acknowledged and motivated for aiding with restoration and rehabilitation. These experiences inspire passion, avert depression, improve communication and increase self-confidence. YER II predominately mention teamwork details, being supported through cooperative relationships and feeling empowered to initiate change.

Caregivers discuss their youth learning leadership, employment readiness, following direction, problem solving, outdoor physical activity, public speaking, achieving completion and feeling safe. Their YER descriptions include rescue rangers, community asset, experiential learning, one-on-one teaching and real life experiences. One of the most common comments is that the program is too short and teaches topics not in the school curriculum. They note young people who struggle in school benefit and flourish from engaging in YER alternative education methods.

## **6. SUMMARY**

Another successful YER year in 2022/2023 has seen twenty-nine youth being added to the list of participants, with the total number in almost twenty years being four hundred and thirty-three. The program offers ecological work experiences and mentoring support for vulnerable youth and is financially endorsed by Ministry of Children and Family Development, Comox Valley Schools and Comox Valley Regional District. Phase I youth engage with local environmental groups and Phase II are involved with ecological inventories in local parks and natural landscapes. Through youth and caregiver interviews, affirmative words and attributes are brought forward that identify the positive qualities of the program. Youth feel valued for contributing, while being immersed in the healing aspects of nature and counselled by caring adults. This blend creates balance for them, which nurtures and improves their mental health. Young people interact with community members for the betterment of the entire community.

**TABLE 1 (Page 1 of 3): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION (YER)  
YOUTH PARTICIPANT SUMMARY TABLE FOR APRIL 1, 2022 TO MARCH 31, 2023.**

YER for Comox Valley vulnerable youth funded by BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).  
YER I 29 youth: 10 girls; 19 boys; 55% First Nations (FN). YER II: 4 youth 2 girls; 2 boys; 75% FN.  
YER II numbering: YER II number is first and YER I is second.

<b>Table 1a: YER COMPLETION</b> <b>YER I is 20 hours; YER II is 25 hours.</b>	<b>YOUTH TOTALS</b>
YER I Complete: Participant # 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433	28
YER I Incomplete: # 425	1
YER II Complete: # 58-407, 59-414, 60-416, 61-384	4
<b>TOTAL YOUTH PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>33</b>

<b>Table 1b: YOUTH ORGANIZATION REFERRALS</b>	
Comox Valley School District #71 (SD #71): # 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 58-407, 59-414, 60-416, 61-384	32
Lake Trail Community School: # 407, 410, 415, 419, 422, 425, 427, 431, 58-407 Highland Secondary School: # 405, 406, 409, 413, 417, 418, 423, 424, 61-384 Glacier View Secondary School: # 416, 421, 428, 429, 430, 432, 60-416 Nala'atsi Alternate School: # 408, 411, 414, 420, 426, 59-414 Huband Park Elementary School: # 412	
Comox Valley Transition Society: # 433	1
<b>TOTAL 2 YOUTH REFERRAL ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>33</b>

<b>Table 1c: YOUTH ORGANIZATION INTERCONNECTIONS</b> <b>YER I and YER II participants interconnect with other Comox Valley youth services.</b>	
SD #71: # 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 58-407, 59-414, 60-416, 61-384	33
The LINC Youth Centre: # 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 413, 414, 415, 416, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 425, 426, 427, 429, 430, 431, 433, 58-407, 59-414, 60-416	25
SD #71 Counselling: # 405, 406, 407, 409, 410, 413, 416, 419, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 428, 432, 58-407, 60-416	17
Wachiay Friendship Centre: # 408, 409, 415, 416, 421, 425, 426, 427, 58-407, 59-414, 60-416	11
John Howard Society: # 414, 416, 421, 422, 423, 429, 430, 60-416, 61-384	9
MCFD: # 414, 419, 421, 424, 425, 430, 59-414, 60-416, 61-384	9
RCMP: # 413, 415, 416, 424, 425, 432, 433, 60-416	8
Comox Valley Foundry: # 421, 423, 428, 429, 430, 433, 60-416	7
Counseling - Source Unknown: # 406, 413, 415, 422, 424, 431	6
Pacific Therapy: # 429, 430, 432	3
Comox Valley Family Services: # 407, 430, 58-407	3
Island Health, Adolescent Outpatient Services: # 416, 60-416	2
Comox Valley Transition Society: # 433	2
Community Justice Centre: # 424	1
<b>TOTAL 14 YOUTH ORGANIZATION INTERCONNECTIONS</b>	

**TABLE 1 (Page 2 of 3): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)  
YOUTH PARTICIPANT SUMMARY TABLE FOR APRIL 1, 2022 TO MARCH 31, 2023.**

<b>Table 1d: ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>YOUTH TOTALS</b>
<b>YER II projects have two youth and two adults.</b>	
<b>YER I Projects had youth participate with the following organizations:</b>	
MARS Wildlife Rescue: # 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433	28
Millard/Piercy Watershed Stewards: # 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 428, 429, 430, 432, 433	25
Oyster River Enhancement Society: # 405, 406, 407, 408, 410, 411, 412, 414, 415, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433	22
Morrison Creek Streamkeepers: # 406, 408, 409, 411, 413, 415, 421, 422, 423, 424, 427, 428, 430, 431	14
Tsolum River Restoration Society: # 407, 408, 409, 410, 412, 413, 414, 416, 417, 419, 424, 432, 433	13
Comox Valley Project Watershed Society: # 417, 420, 425, 431	4
Puntledge River Fish Hatchery: # 421, 422, 423	3
Comox Valley Nature: 405, 409, 413	3
Brooklyn Creek Watershed Society: # 405, 420	2
<b>YERII: Comox Valley Regional District, Milliard Creek Headwaters: # 58-407, 59-414</b>	2
<b>YERII: Comox Valley Regional District, Masters Greenway: # 60-416, 61-384</b>	2
<b>TOTAL 9 ORGANIZATIONS; 752 YER I COMMUNITY MEMBERS (26 per youth)</b>	

<b>Table 1e: COMMUNITY PRESENTATION LOCATIONS</b>	
<b>YER I youth give a presentation; YER II youth co-facilitate a public tour.</b>	
CV School District # 71: # 405, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 414, 415, 416, 418, 420, 421, 424, 426, 428, 430, 432, 433	19
E'cole Puntledge Park Elementary School, Kindergarten: # 410	
E'cole Robb Road Elementary School, Grade 4: # 432	
Glacier View Secondary School, Personal Audience: # 424, 430	
Glacier View Secondary School, Grade 8: # 428	
Glacier View Secondary School, Grade 10: # 421	
Glacier View Secondary School, Talking Circle: # 416	
Highland Secondary School, Advantage Class: # 405	
Highland Secondary School, Indigenous Education Class: # 409, 418	
Huband Park Elementary School, Grade 7: # 412	
Lake Trail Community School, Grade 6/7: # 407	
Lake Trail Community School, Grade 8: # 415	
Nala'atsi Alternate School: # 408, 411, 414, 420, 426	
Royston Elementary School, Kindergarten: # 433	
Cummings Home, Seniors Assisted Living Facility: # 413, 419, 427	3
Lighthouse Early Learning Centre: # 417, 422, 431	3
Comox Valley Rotary Club: # 406	1
Royal Canadian Air Cadets - 386 Komox Squadron: # 429	1
Tigger Too Early Learning Centre: # 423	1
<b>YER II: Comox Valley Regional District, Milliard Creek Headwaters: # 58-407, 59-414</b>	2
<b>YER II: Comox Valley Regional District, Masters Greenway: # 60-416, 61-384</b>	2
<b>YER I 356 AUDIENCE MEMBERS (13 per youth); YER II 8 and 25 TOUR PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>32</b>

**TABLE 1 (Page 3 of 3): YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)  
YOUTH PARTICIPANT SUMMARY TABLE FOR APRIL 1, 2022 TO MARCH 31, 2023.**

**Table 1f: YER COMPLETION RATES**

YER I: Total number of 433 youth participants; 383 completed the 20 hour program	88%
YER II: Total number of 61 youth participants; 60 completed the 25 hour program	98%

**TABLE 2: YOUTH AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PROGRAM (YER)  
BUDGET FOR APRIL 1, 2022 TO MARCH 31, 2023.**

This YER budget records income, expenses and other contributions required to deliver this Comox Valley program for vulnerable youth. YER 2022/2023 funds were provided by BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), School District #71, and McIntyre Media for the YER film. Comox Valley environmental groups also provided in-kind contributions for training and tools to restore local watersheds and ecosystems. Expenses are in the table below.

<b>Expense Item</b>	<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Other Contributions</b>
W. Kotilla	\$14,300.42	MCFD \$42,000.00	Training \$2,000.00
G. Hilliar	\$26,122.50	SD #71 \$10,000.00	
T. Gower	\$8,200.00	CVRD \$9,200.00	
Elder H. Lennox	\$50.00	McIntyre/Film \$10.00	
		2021/2022 \$5,000.00	
Youth Honourarium	\$1,300.00		
Youth Benefits	\$973.82		
Maintain Website	\$1,863.70		
Mileage	\$4,000.04		
General Supplies	\$1,628.87		
Office Supplies	\$88.25		
Bank Charges	\$182.40		
<b>TOTALS</b>	\$58,710.00	\$66,210.00	\$2,000.00
<b>Defer to 2023/2024</b>		\$7,500.00	
		\$58,710.00	

**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](http://www.bcchildrens.ca)
- Beachcombers Academy [www.beachcombersschool.ca](http://www.beachcombersschool.ca)
- Comox Valley Community Justice Centre [www.cjc-comoxvalley.com](http://www.cjc-comoxvalley.com)
- Comox Valley Family Services Association [www.comoxvalleyfamilyservices.com](http://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/](http://www.jhsni.bc.ca/)
- Ministry of Children and Family Development: [www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/](http://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](http://www.queenalexandra.org)
- Wachiay Friendship Centre, Raven Back Youth Group [www.wachiay.org](http://www.wachiay.org)
- Vancouver Island Health Authority [www.viha.ca](http://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](http://www.bcws.ca)
- BC Hydro, Bridge Coastal Fish & Wildlife Restoration Program
- BC Ministry of Environment [www.gov.bc.ca/env](http://www.gov.bc.ca/env)
- BC Ministry of Environment, Environmental Protection [www.gov.bc.ca/env](http://www.gov.bc.ca/env)
- BC Ministry of Transportation [www.gov.bc.ca/tran](http://www.gov.bc.ca/tran)
- Comox Valley Conservation Strategy <http://www.cvconservationstrategy.org/>
- Comox Valley Environmental Council
- Comox Valley Land Trust [www.cvlantrust.org](http://www.cvlantrust.org)
- Comox Valley Nature [www.comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca](http://www.comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca)
- Comox Valley Project Watershed Society [www.projectwatershed.bc.ca](http://www.projectwatershed.bc.ca)
- Comox Valley Regional District [www.rdc.bc.ca](http://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](http://www.courtenayfishandgame.org)
- Cumberland Community Forestry Society [www.cumberlandforest.com](http://www.cumberlandforest.com)
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans [www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca)
- Fanny Bay Enhancement Society [www.fbses.ca](http://www.fbses.ca)
- Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team [www.goert.ca](http://www.goert.ca)
- Georgia Strait Alliance [www.georgiastrait.org](http://www.georgiastrait.org)
- Hart Watershed Society
- Millard/Piercy Watershed Stewards [www.millardpiercy.org](http://www.millardpiercy.org)
- Morrison Creek Streamkeepers [www.morrisoncreek.org/](http://www.morrisoncreek.org/)
- Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society [www.wingtips.org](http://www.wingtips.org)
- Natural Journeys Society
- Oyster River Enhancement Society [www.oysterriverenhancement.org/](http://www.oysterriverenhancement.org/)
- Perseverance Creek Streamkeepers
- Streamside Native Plants [http://members.shaw.ca/nativeplants/streamside\\_home.html](http://members.shaw.ca/nativeplants/streamside_home.html)
- Sunrise Rotary Club [www.strathconasunrise.bc.ca](http://www.strathconasunrise.bc.ca)
- Tsolum River Restoration Society [www.tsolumriver.org/](http://www.tsolumriver.org/)
- World Community Development Education Society [www.worldcommunity.ca](http://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](http://www.beachcombersschool.ca)
- Berwick Retirement Society [www.berwickrc.com/comox](http://www.berwickrc.com/comox)
- Brooklyn Elementary School, Grade 5
- Brooklyn Elementary School, Kindergarten
- Casa Loma Seniors Village [www.retirementconcepts.com/homes/comox-valley](http://www.retirementconcepts.com/homes/comox-valley)
- City of Courtenay, Council meeting
- Comox Rotary Club [www.comoxrotary.bc.ca](http://www.comoxrotary.bc.ca)
- Comox Valley Aboriginal Head Start Program, Pre-School Group
- Comox Valley Boys and Girls Club, Adventure Club [www.cvboysandgirlsclub.ca](http://www.cvboysandgirlsclub.ca)
- Comox Valley Boys and Girls Club, Voices Choices Group [www.cvboysandgirlsclub.ca](http://www.cvboysandgirlsclub.ca)
- Comox Valley Community Justice Centre [www.cjc-comoxvalley.com](http://www.cjc-comoxvalley.com)
- Comox Valley Land Trust, Annual General Meeting [www.cvlandtrust.org](http://www.cvlandtrust.org)
- Comox Valley Land Trust, Board Meeting [www.cvlandtrust.org](http://www.cvlandtrust.org)
- Comox Valley Natural History Society [www.comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca](http://www.comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca)
- Comox Valley Senior Peer Counselling
- Comox Valley Project Watershed Society [www.projectwatershed.bc.ca](http://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](http://www.comoxvalley.yfccanada.org)
- Comox Valley Youth Resource Society
- Courtenay & District Fish & Game Protective Association [www.courtenayfishandgame.org](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.fbses.ca)
- Fanny Bay Old Age Pensioners, Seniors Craft Group
- Glacier View Lodge Society [www.glacierviewlodge.ca](http://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/](http://www.jhsni.bc.ca/)
- Kidzone Daycare
- Kinnikinnik Child Care Centre
- Kiwanis Club of Courtenay [www.facebook.com/pages/Kiwanis-Club-of-Courtenay-BC](http://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](http://www.courtenay.ca/recreation/programs.aspx)
- Lighthouse Early Learning Centre [www.cvcdcs.com/](http://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](http://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/](http://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](http://www.novapacific.ca/page131.htm)
- Tsolum River Restoration Society [www.tsolumriver.org/](http://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](http://www.wachiay.org)
- Wachiay Friendship Centre, Raven Back Youth Group [www.wachiay.org](http://www.wachiay.org)
- Wee Care Early Childhood Centres, Royston Elementary [www.weecareinc.com](http://www.weecareinc.com)
- Youth and Ecological Restoration Program, Annual Community Celebration