



Living Lab Youth Eco-Stewardship Program

Summer 2023 Report

Living Lab is a community-school-campus partnership supporting
land-based learning, eco-cultural restoration and Indigenous
resurgence.

www.livinglabproject.ca

LIVING LAB

Eco-Youth Stewardship Program Summer 2023



Youth Sharing Circle at PAUQUACHIN - BÓKEĆEN (Coles Bay)

Fun, Friends, Food, Restoration and Resurgence, everyone!

Living Lab is a community-school-campus partnership supporting land-based learning, eco-cultural restoration and Indigenous resurgence. The Eco-Stewardship Youth Camps program started in the summer of 2017 between the Songhees and the University of Victoria.

Since its inception, it has grown to include the Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) and Pauquchin Nations, PEPÁKEN HÁUTW Foundation, the W̱SÁNEĆ School Board, School District #61 Indigenous Education, Parks Canada, Science Venture, Camosun College and many other communities and NGO partners. Our Eco-Stewardship Youth Camps program supports local Indigenous youth to restore and maintain the environment and traditional food systems through outdoor, creative, and “fun science” activities. We also aim to establish and strengthen all generations' bonds, grow friendships, and recover ancestral connections to our history, language, lands and waters.

Highlights of Summer 2023

Fun and Excitement

This past summer, our Eco-Stewardship Youth Program engaged 35 youth from Songhees, Esquimalt, Pauquachin and W̱SÁNEĆ Nations. Over 4 weeks youth experienced hands-on land and marine-based learning and restoration activities throughout their homelands and 'TETÁĆES' - Islands in the Salish Sea.



TOP: PEPÁḴIYE (Ashley Cooper) showing cultural modified tree

Looking Ahead

Moving forward, we are committed to creating a year-round program. Our core partners are SD#61 IED, W̱SÁNEĆ School Board, PEPÁḴEN HÁUTW Foundation and local Nations. Together, led by youth and community vision, we plan to create education/training pathways and opportunities between schools, Camosun College and the University of Victoria (UVic) as appropriate and needed.

Food and Harvesting

In 2023, our activities in Lekw̱əŋen and W̱SÁNEĆ territories focused on traditional food & plant systems, visiting the forest, ocean, beaches, parks, lakes, rivers and creeks and understanding how the sea & camas gardens sustained the youth's ancestors for thousands of years. We weaved ecosystem & science with history, heritage, archaeology, ethnobotany, marine biology & more! Community knowledge keepers, including Yux'wey'lupton (Butch Dick), x̱wəlq̱wəléṯsə (Bangus George) and TE, TES, ȚE ȚE (Lyndsey Joseph) from the Lekwungen Nations and PEPÁḴIYE (Ashley Cooper), Sarah Jim, XEṮXÁȚEN (Earl Claxton Jr.) and Mark Sampson from the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations, along with archaeologist Darcy Mathews and educator John Harris, shared their knowledge and stories.

The Songhees Marine Team supported the youth trips to Tl'Ches and Parks Canada (Erich Kelch and team) coordinated the day to ȚEMÁ, ȚES (Russell Island). The youth went fishing & clamming, harvested traditional medicine & wild berries, and prepare a feast for the elders and community. The youth also witnessed the fantastic restoration of BOKÉĆEN (Coles Bay) by the Pauquachin Nation & Marine Teams.



TOP LEFT: PEPÁḴIYE (Ashley Cooper) sharing Traditional knowledge with youth
BOTTOM: Youth Canoeing and Swimming at the Gorge

Golden August Day! End-of-Summer Trip



Rebuilding the Sea Garden at WEN,NÁ,NEĆ (SaltSpring Island) Summer 2023

Coast Salish Indigenous peoples throughout TETÁĆES (Islands in the Salish Sea) designed & cultivated sustainable food systems on the lands (e.g. camas, hunting) & seas (e.g. clam beds, reefnet fisheries) for thousands of years. Today, these systems are being recognized & restored in magical places such as WEN,NÁ,NEĆ and Tl'Ches. Local Indigenous youth re-connect with pride and excitement to their incredible & beautiful living heritage.

Healing ourselves, our communities, our land and the planet.

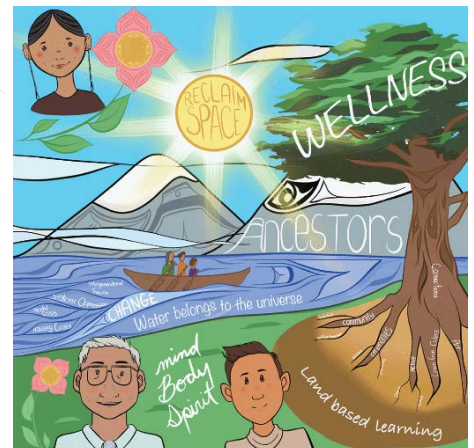


L to R: Mark Sampson, WSANEC Knowledge Keeper and Lekwungen-WSANEC youth at WEN,NÁ,NEĆ (SaltSpring Island) Sea Garden, built and sustained for over 3000 years.



"For us, the foundation for caring about climate change and wanting to protect our living heritage IS reconnecting to our homelands. We are recovering the practices of our ancestors who stewarded the lands and waters since time immemorial. We want to serve our communities while gaining meaningful, related employment skills tied to environmental protection and community-ecosystem wellness."

Jess Joseph, Songhees Nation- LLab Arts & Community Engagement Coordinator



Visual created by Jessica Joseph

More Adventures



Image 2: Elder Butch Dick sharing stories with youth (up in the tree and ground) at Meeqan/Beacon Hill

Youth Quotes

"Fun and friendship" "lots of laughter" "new friends" "visiting new places" "archaeology" "forest walks" "good food" "swimming in the ocean and Gorge" "being on boats" "singing 'Call Me Maybe' in the Community Action Bus on our last day" "catching crabs and fishing" "making a feast for community and elders" "local food systems" "connection - pride in our heritage and thousands of years of eco-stewardship of our lands" "speaking our language"



Image 1: Summer Youth Eco-Stewardship Program Staff
L to R: John Harris, Jessica Joseph, Ben Jimmy, Kyle Clarke



Image 3: Community Feast Lunch (for youth, families and elders)
Front: John Harris and Elder Bangus George (opening with prayer)



Image 4: Youth Team @ SNIDÇET

Our Goals

Restoration and Resurgence

Organize community-driven ecosystem and climate action projects which affirm Indigenous knowledge, rights, and access to/ use of traditional lands and waters.

Capacity Building and Engagement

Create community skills, capacity-building activities, and a regional Indigenous eco-stewardship program focused on children and youth.

Educational Transformation

Develop land-based learning and school programs connecting sustainability and environmental/science education, student well-being and success and the transformation of the education system.

Community -Driven Research

Lead and support community-driven research projects based on Indigenous and community knowledge and priorities, healing and wellness, and restoring the connection to lands and waters.



Lyndsey (TE,TES,TE TE) Joseph photo from Tl'Ches

Our Partners and Funders



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