

Youth on Water

Tides C4C- 2016 Final Report



Youth on Water, Bulkley River 2016



Background

The Skeena Watershed Conservation Coalition's legacy is embodied by the projects we deliver which increase the connection and sense of responsibility that people have with the physical, cultural and spiritual landscape of the Skeena. These projects strive to nourish the most powerful levels of citizen engagement; a sense of responsibility & love of place. No program that SWCC offers represents this commitment more than our annual Youth on Water & Women on Water programs.

SWCC began Youth on Water as a volunteer pilot project in 2009 with 9 participants. Youth on Water has grown annually, establishing itself as a flagship summer program for families in the villages, reserves and communities of northwest British Columbia's Skeena river watershed. In 2016, SWCC was directly responsible for supporting over 1,000 river days for residents of the Skeena.

Youth on Water

The objective of Youth on Water (YOW) is to offer youth in our watershed a white-water guide training program that is focused on safety, technical river skills and watershed awareness. YOW specializes in youth empowerment through sincere relationship building between youth and the river and among the diverse participants with a dynamic challenge-by-choice program. SWCC envisions YOW as a training ground for the Skeena's next generation of river guides and community leaders.

YOW Structure

YOW is structured as a five-day program, Monday – Friday, in the communities of Terrace, Smithers, Moricetown, Gitsegukla and Hazelton. Participants generally range in age from 13-19. The program is free and provides all necessary personal gear, locally sourced lunches, and transportation.

We also deliver Women on Water (WOW), a unique ladies only program with all female participants and guides ranging from young women to matriarchs. WOW follows the same five-day structure and is offered in the communities of Terrace and Hazelton.

The annual YOW season (June – August) is highlighted by a remote three-day wilderness expedition down a pristine stretch of the Upper Skeena river. This 110km life-changing adventure consists of 10-12 selected youth from each YOW program, representing each of the communities in our watershed.

2016 YOW and WOW Program Summary

In 2016, our core YOW and WOW programs supported 118 youth and 39 female participants. This equals a total of 785 days on the rivers of the Skeena for youth and women from communities across our watershed. Annual participation continues to be driven by new participants who have never been on a raft or swam in the river in their life. Each program also features a number of experienced returning participants, as well as special guests including; chiefs, elders, environmental educators, inspirational mentors and emerging young leaders. Each week provided evidence of transformative experiences for participants. These are recorded in personal/group reflections and personal evaluations.

Community Engagement through River Based Activities

In addition to the core YOW & WOW programs, SWCC is witnessing an annual increase in requests for one or multi-day raft trips from community and school groups region wide. We classify these trips into three categories; community engagement, education and wellness. In 2016, SWCC responded to community interest and supported 269 people to access the river through these trips.

Remote Expeditions & Research

SWCC also guides remote expeditions throughout the Skeena watershed. The river based expeditions include collaborations with First Nation's, NGO's, Conservation Foundations/Funders, independent scientists and universities. These expeditions provide access to remote locations in the watershed that support critical research & management issues, climate change adaptation and resiliency of wild salmon habitats and populations in the Skeena's most prolific ecosystems. In 2016, SWCC outfitted and guided a remote seven-day research expedition for Simon Fraser University scientists down the Class IV Babine and Skeena rivers.

Winter Connection Program Summary

Activity	Projected Outcome	Timeline	Summary	% Complete
Outreach (in-person and social media) with existing YOW participants, YOW community supporters and First Nations to explore winter programs	-Community building and relationships developed through collaborative planning and dreaming -Establish specific project partners and participants	Dec- Feb 2016	Project Partners & Participants established through winter outreach, program development and delivery include: - 'Na Aksa Gilak'yoo School - icount School_ Moricetown - Kitsumkalum Fisheries - Kispiox Fishing Company - Hook & Line Guide Outfitting - Kermodei Adventures	100.00%
Research & develop winter activities and trip planning	-Identify winter program agenda, goals, participants outcomes and activities -Create a safety and equipment list to support the winter program	Dec-Feb 2016	SWCC develops a unique trip plan to support youth from two First Nation's schools in Kitsumkalum & Moricetown to explore the eulachon run on the lower Skeena river.	100.00%
Research safety and logistics for winter activities	Develop Emergency Response Protocol (ERP) for SWCC winter programs	Feb 2016	SWCC effectively updated and expanded its ERP to address specific concerns related to the Eulachon trip	100.00%
Deliver one winter YOW pilot program	Youth empowered and connected to the Skeena landscape	March 2016	SWCC coordinated and delivered two river trips in March 2016. Trip One Summary: Date: March 10, 2016 # of Participants: 14 Students & 4 Teachers Project Partners: 'Na Aksa Gilak'yoo School, Kitsumkalum Fisheries and Hook & Line Guide Outfitting Trip Summary: 10:15- Kwinitisa West Boat Launch: Kitsumkalum Fisheries lead Jetboat safety briefing and discuss traditional eulachon harvesting	100.00%

ecology, dip netting technique and research goals.
 What, where and how the nets are set to catch eulachon?
 Importance of eulachon for thousands of years for the Kitsumkalum people. Traditional food use and local trading-(grease trails).
 What Kitsumkalum Fisheries is doing with the data they are collecting form surveys?
 11:00- Load two boats to explore the tidal area of lower Skeena river. Observe natural phenomena, behaviour and habitats specific to the eulachon run, including up close interactions with birds, seals and sea lions.
 12:00- Lunch at Kitsumkalum Fisheries eulachon research site.
 12:30 – 2:30- Youth are mentored by Kitsumkalum Fisheries to participate in pulling the eulachon net, harvest eulachon and lead the research counting process.
 3:00- All participants return to Kwinitsa West Boat Launch and head home

Trip Two Summary

Date: March 13, 2016

of Participants: 16 Students & 2 Teachers

Project Partners: icount school, Kispiox Fishing Company, Kermodei Adventures

Trip Summary:

10:00- China Bar Put-in_ Skeena river
 Kitsumkalum youth and elders welcome Wet'su'wet'en youth to Kitsumkalum territory. They discussed the importance of eulachon for thousands of years for the Kitsumkalum people, traditional food use and local trading-(grease trails) and sang a traditional welcoming song.

11:00- SWCC and Jetboat Drivers lead a safety briefing.

11:30- Load two boats to explore lower Skeena river. Observe natural phenomena, behaviour and habitats specific to the eulachon run, including up close interactions with birds, seals and sea lions.

2:00- Campfire lunch on China Bar with Kitsumkalum youth and elders and icount students.

			3:00- Load buses and head home	
Deliver one winter trip with First Nations on traditional territory in the Skeena	First Nation house members empowered with traditional skills, knowledge and connection to Skeena landscape	March 2016	SWCC provides capacity support for Gwininitxw house members to use and occupy two different remote cabins on Maxhla Didaat territory in the upper Skeena watershed from Nov- March.	100.00%

Extend and diversify SWCC rafting portfolio

Activity	Outcome	Timeline		
SWCC delivers rafting programs additional to the scheduled YOW program from May - October	Regional schools, colleges, leaders and community groups have access to SWCC guides and equipment that allows them to connect with the Skeena river	May - Oct 2016	See <i>Community Engagement, Education, and Wellness Trips</i> in SWCC's river based activity summary below	100.00%
SWCC delivers one multi-day trip or remote expedition outside of the YOW schedule	Community interest for more in-depth experiences on the Skeena river are meet	May – Oct 2016	See <i>Research Expedition</i> in SWCC's river based activity summary below	100.00%
SWCC delivers one non-rafting water-level program ie. canoe, ducky, stand-up paddle board etc.	SWCC is able to meet the community interest to explore different aspects of the Skeena watershed (such as lake and marshes) by providing access and skill development with different water craft	May – Oct 2016	<p>In an effort to offer returning YOW & WOW participants a next step in their skill development, we organized a certified three-day Swift Water Rescue course free of charge. In exchange for the certification, the graduates committed to volunteering for one week of YOW or WOW over the course of the summer. The 12 SRT graduates responded enthusiastically, providing valuable volunteer hours in every program of the 2016 season and the River's Day events.</p> <p>We also incorporated youth instruction and experience of an inflatable kayak (ducky) in all YOW programs. One youth and one SWCC guide were able to independently study, navigate and experience different features of the river from the rafts.</p> <p>The ducky was also used as a one-on-one outreach tool for wellness or healing trips with youth who were confronting difficult issues in</p>	100.00%

			their personal life.	
SWCC mentors one community or First Nation group to offer rafting programs in their own communities	One community group or First Nation receives training and mentorship to organize water-level experiences independent of SWCC	May – Oct 2016	SWCC worked closely with the Nisga'a Lisims Government to develop, plan, deliver and reflect on a 3 day rafting expedition for 14 Nisga'a youth and mentors as well as a dedicated support team of elders including Order of Canada Officer Joe Gosnell.	100.00%

Summary of SWCC's 2016 river-based activities:

Date	Program Title	Location & Description	# of Participants
Core Youth and Women on Water Program			
July 4-8	Women on Water	Terrace	20
July 11-15	Youth on Water	Terrace	21
July 18-22	Youth on Water	Smithers	17
July 25-29	Youth on Water	Moricetown	20
July 27-29	Youth on Water	Nass river expedition from Gitlaxt'aamiks (Old Aiyansh) to Laxgalts'ap (Greenville)	12
Aug 1-5	Youth on Water	Gitsegukla	14
Aug 8-12	Youth on Water	Hazelton	19
Aug 15-19	Women on Water	Hazelton	19
Aug 22-24	YOW Expedition	Kuldo – Kispiox Village	11
Community Engagement, Education, and Wellness Trips			
March 17	Oolichan Run	'Na Aksa Gilak'yoo School & Kitsumkalum Fisheries Jet boat access on Lower Skeena	18
March 18	Oolichan Run	I-Count School- Jet boat access on Lower Skeena	18
May 28	Wilp Si S'atxsw Healing Lodge Trip	Hazelton-Community Wellness Float	18
June 11	Kispiox Family Empowerment Trip	Hazelton-Community Education Float	16
June 30	Moricetown Elementary Staff Trip	Hazelton-Staff Wellness Float	14
August 16	Kispiox Youth and Elders Group	Hazelton-Community Wellness Float	10
Sept 3	Into the Current	Hazelton- Community Float	8
September 7-8	'Na Aksa Gilak'yoo School	Terrace-Youth School Trips	20
September 24	Smithers Rivers Day	Smithers- Community trip promoting conservation and	107

September 25	Hazelton Rivers Day	celebration of our rivers Hazelton- Community trip promoting conservation and celebration of our rivers	40
Capacity Building and Training			
June 24,25,26	YOW Swift Water Rescue Training	Hazelton	12
Research Expeditions			
August 29 – Sept 4	Babine River Climate Change Project	Babine River Fence – Skeena river Collaboration with Lake Babine Nation Fisheries, Gitxsan Watershed Authority, Skeena Fisheries Commission and Simon Fraser University	6
TOTAL RIVER DAYS			1054

Financial Reporting on Projected Budget

Expense Type <i>(add rows as needed)</i>	Expense Detail	Total	Amount Requested	Actual
Winter Community Outreach	Web design and outreach Workshops hosted with schools and First Nations house groups Database management	\$5,000.00	\$5,000	\$5,000.00
Winter YOW program delivery	Program delivery expenses travel guides wages insurance food equipment documentation (photo & video) database management		\$7,500	\$7,500.00
Winter First Nation Territory Trip delivery	Program delivery expenses travel guides wages insurance		\$7,500	\$7,500.00

	food			
	equipment			
	documentation (photo & video)			
	database management			
	outreach follow-up			
Rafting education, connection and empowerment	Program delivery expenses (May - Oct)	\$81,275.00	\$10,000	\$10,000
	travel			
	guides wages			
	insurance			
	food			
	equipment			
	documentation (photo & video)			
	database management			
	outreach follow-up			