

# The ȚȚÁĆES Climate Action Project Final Report

## Background

The ȚȚÁĆES Climate Action Project is broken down into four phases. **Phase 1** (May to September 2019) set goals and objectives and created a working group tasked with drafting three course curriculum frameworks. **Phase 2** (October 2019 to December 2020) presented the proposed curriculums at a 2-day symposium and with the feedback refined the three curriculum frameworks. **Phase 3** (December 2019 to May 2020) developed and delivered the three 5-day courses to 48 participants from the Salish Sea Archipelago including the W̱SÁNEĆ and Gulf Islands communities, documented the lessons learned, and recommended future follow-up. **Phase 4** (June to July 2020) reviewed the pilot project with project partners, course participants, and presenters, and planned for future project development. The [Project Summary](#) provides an overview of the project, how it got started, and its main purposes. The [Interim Report](#) summarizes the **Phase 1 and Phase 2** process. This final report summarizes the **Phase 3 and Phase 4** process.

## Phase 3: Developing and Delivering the Three Climate Action Courses

The project working group was in a difficult position after the symposium in October. There was strong community endorsement to proceed with the 3 courses, but no confirmed funding to develop and deliver the courses. The steering committee had applied to the Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) for a grant to help fund Stage 3 of the project. In December 2019, the REFBC provided a matching grant of up to \$68,000. The steering committee worked feverishly through December and January to pull the courses together, arranging course leaders and presenters, developing a schedule, arranging the details including travel, food, accommodation, advertising and promoting the courses, and registering course participants. It was a very tight timeline. Each course would be 5 days long to provide time for participants to immerse themselves in the subject matter. The links at the end of this report detail the [Project Goals and Objectives](#), the [Project Learning Approach](#), the [Project Milestones](#), and a list of the [Project Working Group](#) members tasked with bringing the project to fruition.

Course 1: “Indigenous Perspectives on Eco-Cultural Revitalization” took place from February 9<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup>. Thirteen participants took part in the course which focused on the Bedwell Harbour Basin.

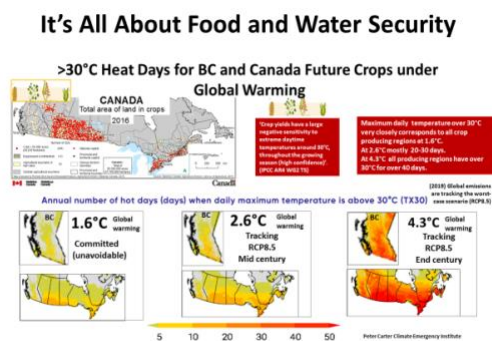


Course 2: “Youth Leadership for Climate Action” took place March 1<sup>st</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup>. The course was youth oriented, with 18 participants exploring the Gulf Islands archipelago.



Course 3: “Climate Change in the Salish Sea Archipelago” took place from February 16<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup>. Seventeen participants took part in the course which focused on the wider Salish Sea environment.

Each course included a mixture of classroom presentations, discussions, and group exercises, visiting special places on the land, and getting to know the traditional way of the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples, and how traditional knowledge could be used in dealing with environmental issues and the emerging climate crisis. W̱SÁNEĆ elders shared stories that grounded the courses in traditional knowledge and in place-based learning on the land.







Participants ended each course developing and sharing action plans they would like to take back into their communities. Each course was evaluated with participants filling out an intake survey at the beginning of the course expressing their expectations and what they hoped to get from the course, and a detailed evaluation on the last day of the course evaluating how well the course had met those expectations. One unexpected part of the evaluation included video recordings created by the

twelve-year-old son of one of the participants, who interviewed participants in each course to get their feedback on memorable events of the week. These videos are a priceless reminder to everyone about the impact the courses had on the participants. Over 95% of the participants felt the course met and often exceeded their expectations, and 100% indicated they would recommend to others to take courses of this nature if offered in the future.

After the three courses had been completed, the Coronavirus epidemic hit, and the steering committee reviewed each course with course participants via zoom meetings, identified lessons learned, and brainstormed thoughts for future course delivery. An overall Project Evaluation Summary of all 3 courses and a summary of Overall Lessons Learned are included in the links at the end of this report. A detailed description of each course including the course summary, course outline, course evaluation, lessons learned, and participant feedback video is included on the main webpage.

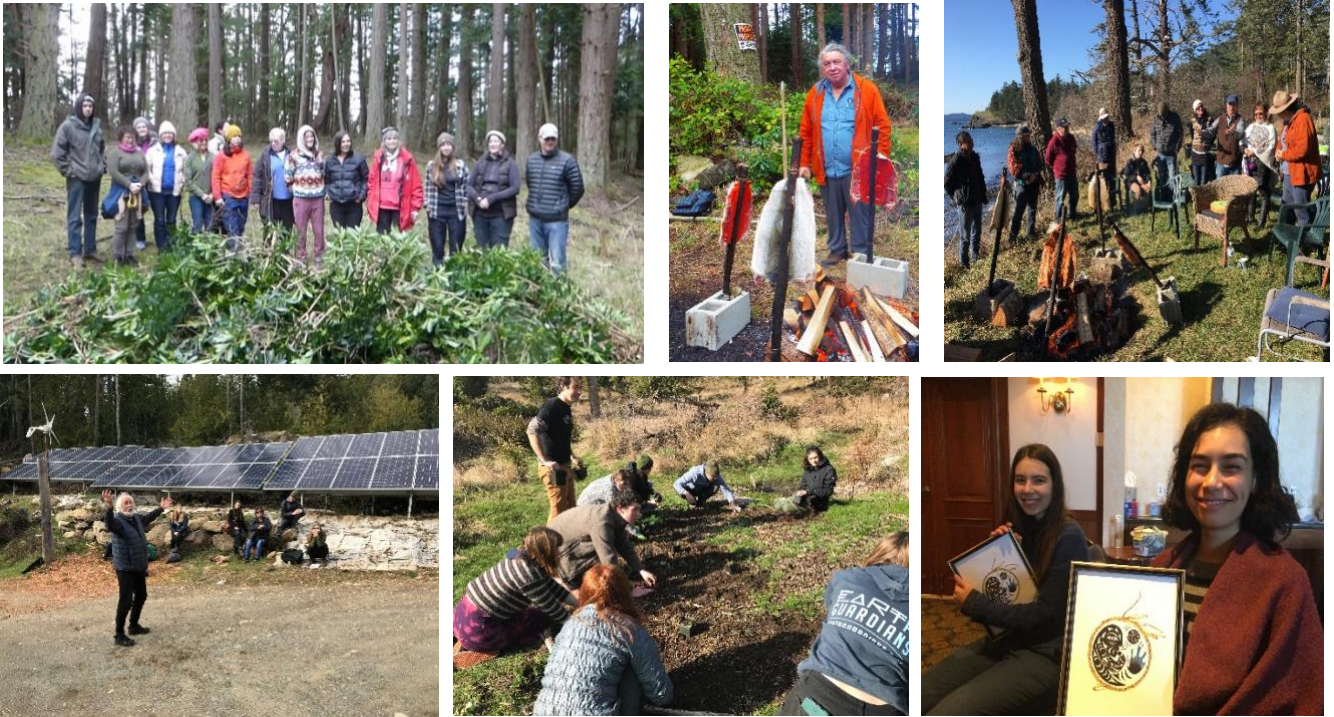


There were some important highlights that emerged from the three courses. The first was the sharing of the traditional knowledge of the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples by their elders and story tellers. It made the Courses for many people, including many first nations youth attending.

The importance of being on the land, connecting with the natural world was reiterated over and over. Participants especially liked learning about Indigenous history in Canada through participation in the emotional Kairos blanket exercise, the ritual dipping in the ocean at



sunrise to cleanse and raise the spirit, the invasive species daphne pull, the salmon pit cook, and visiting conservancy groups on the Islands putting into practice climate action science and working to preserve and bring back native species and plants to the Islands. For many of the Coast Salish peoples, it was the first time they had visited their traditional territory on the Gulf Islands, and they are eager to continue the reconnection.



Participants loved the experiential learning that took place, the individual and group sharing, eating together, coming together in a common purpose, and celebrating as a community.

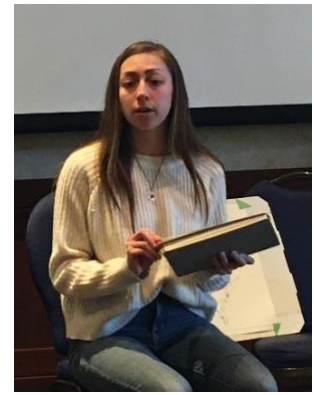
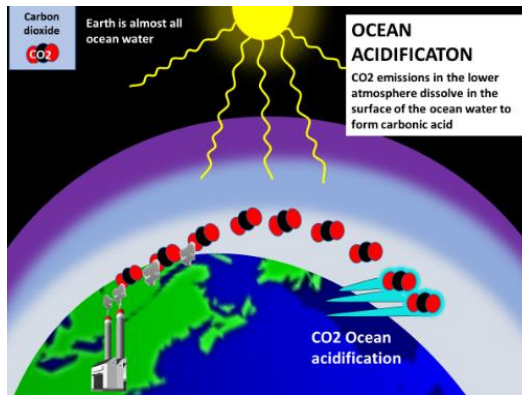
The response back from the evaluations was deeply moving. There were many suggestions for improving the Courses that are included in the detailed course evaluations, however the overriding comments were positive and inspiring. Here are some quotes from participants and course leaders:

- The course delivered in spades on Indigenous perspectives. The rich and deep ceremonial activities, brushing, smudging, and bathing gave participants an opportunity to immerse themselves in W̱SÁNEĆ culture. The contribution of elders to the Course was enormous. The Course brought climate science into the Course through David Boyd, Julie Johnson, and Peter Carter. The Course exceeded my expectations.
- The way this course-built community through shared experiences and shared learning was very well done and created a beautiful platform on which we could all branch and grow from. The whole experience has been eye-opening. I hope as many people as possible can learn all that has been offered here. I have loved meeting everyone,



dunking in the ocean in the morning, hearing the SENĆOŦEN language, and learning an incredible amount about the place I call home.

- The past week was such a unique experience. The immersion in W̱SÁNEĆ teachings and ceremony gave us a starting point for our work. The up to date climate science information helped us realize how vital the work is. What I have learned and plan to do is important to share with my larger community. There will be collaborative efforts going forward.



- HÍ,SW̱KE SIÁM for the most loving of intentions that propelled this grand undertaking into reality for the benefit of many and for the greater good of all. Your tireless efforts and sacrifices of energy HAVE ABSOLUTELY NOT gone unnoticed. Each of you who have contributed to the organization, and facilitation of these Courses – it is clear that you were raised from beautiful values and people. HÍ,SW̱KE SIÁM.
- The group of people participating and facilitating was amazing. I think that listening to the elder's words was extremely valuable, and I also enjoyed getting to visit each of the other Islands and getting a perspective that included all the Gulf Islands.



- I most enjoyed how diverse the knowledge presented was from land restoration through to pulling daphne, to all the amazing information we heard from elders.
- I really enjoyed the diversity of people that were both participants and presenters in the Course. It was exactly the type of learning I was hoping for to help gain perspectives and knowledge across all directions.

- I want to say thanks. This has been such an amazing course and it gives me a whole new way of thinking about my future, our current issues, and what I want to do. I'm so thankful for this opportunity and I know it's made a difference in my life.
- This course has been both monumental and pivotal for me, there aren't words to describe how I feel right now.
- Thank you!. It was a once in a lifetime experience.

## Phase Four: Future Directions

Originally it had been planned to have a large two-day symposium of partners, presenters, and participants, to celebrate the completion of this pilot project, to share the evaluation feedback, and brainstorm how to move forward. Due to a lack of grant funding and the establishment of strict physical distancing guidelines, that was not possible. Instead a zoom meeting took place in June, with 41 participants breaking into small chat rooms, and coming back together to share ideas on where we could go from here. There was interest in continuing to provide future courses tying W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge to the land and waters, as well as developing spin off projects. Future courses and spin off projects suggested included hands on land restoration, a canoe journey though the Islands, a course exploring the 13-moon calendar, a SENĆOŦEN language course, an immersion programs for youth, as well as many others. One spin-off project already started is an agreement to provide modest bursaries to participants in the youth leadership course to develop and implement their action plans in the months ahead. The youth are now working on a number of creative projects including researching solar power in reserve communities, and several native plant restoration initiatives. Other spin off projects are in the works, including the W̱SÁNEĆ leadership council's youth leadership initiative for a one day study trip to reserve land at QENEN,IW̱ to focus on land restoration with native plants and the importance of the Reef Net fishery, a UVIC-W̱SÁNEĆ led outdoor education and field program in the CRD and Gulf Islands, and a recently completed Future Ecologies podcast “ Chapter 6: Relatives of the Deep”, co-produced by Adam Huggins of the Galiano Conservancy that you can hear at <https://scales-of-change.captivate.fm/listen>.

Based on participant feedback it is likely these are the first of many new opportunities. It was agreed to set up a small working steering committee of pilot project partners with community participation to look at where we go from here and help chart the way forward.



## Concluding Comments

The process of collaboration has proved to work really well and has contributed greatly to the overall success of the project. The excitement generated with both participants and presenters and the new relationships built in trust and celebration has been heartwarming. The course content, especially connecting to traditional way of thinking, understanding belief systems of caring for the land and people, has been inspiring. We are optimistic the courses have helped chart the way to a healthy coming together of two belief systems that can over time braid together in harmony and help guide our way forward in caring and respect for our land and for the people who make it their home.



In conclusion a number of the W̱SÁNEĆ elders who participated in the project have shared their reflections on the ȩȩȩĆES Climate Action Project. These are included in the [W̱SÁNEĆ Reflections](#) link below.

HÍ,SW̱KE SIÁM.

### Links:

[Project Goals and Objectives](#)

[Project Learning Approach](#)

[Project Milestones](#)

[Project Working Group](#)

[Project Evaluation Summary](#)

[Overall Lessons Learned](#)

[W̱SÁNEĆ Reflections](#)