

The Interim Report

Phase I: Preparing the Curriculum Frameworks

The ᑕᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ Climate Action Project was launched on May 9, 2019 with the installation of MENEᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ's 13 moon ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ image. Tsawout Elder SELILIYE's prayer and MENEᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ's honour song guided the launch in a good way. At the May 9 gathering 26 ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ Elders and leaders and Gulf Island representatives unanimously supported a project to develop 3 five-day climate action courses to be delivered in early 2020.

Those gathered included ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ elders, leaders, and knowledge keepers along with representatives of Southern Gulf Island communities. They appointed a 15-person working group to develop curriculum frameworks to be reviewed at an October symposium of the larger group. The project committed to support capacity for First Nations participation through honorariums wherever possible. The working group received funding from a grant-in-aid from Capital Regional District Director Dave Howe for preparation of the curriculum frameworks in phase I.



The Southern Gulf Islands Community Resources Centre (CRC), a non-profit society, agreed to administer the project. The working group initially sought funding from the Canadian Government Climate Action Fund to support phase II (curriculum review symposium) and phase III (development and delivery of the 3 courses in early 2020). We were notified in late August that the application was not approved.

Poets Cove Resort agreed to host the curriculum review symposium and the delivery of the 3 courses in their off season in February and March 2020 at significantly reduced rates as an in-kind contribution to the project. The ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ School Board provided some supplementary funding for Elder participation in Phase I. The South Pender Historical Society provided in kind support for a volunteer project coordinator and secretary.

The working group met five times over the summer to research and prepare curriculum frameworks for three 30-hour courses that "braid" Indigenous Traditional Knowledge with current climate science to identify climate action initiatives to meet the challenges of the emerging climate crisis.

The working group developed curriculum frameworks for the following three courses:

- *Indigenous Perspectives on Eco-cultural Revitalization* - This course focuses on the rich eco-cultural history of the Bedwell Harbour basin - ILEĆEN - and applies the W SÁNEĆ world view of reciprocal stewardship to the protection of these eco-cultural values.
- *Youth Leadership for Climate Action in the Southern Gulf Islands* - This course focuses on supporting youth leadership from the W SÁNEĆ FN and the four Southern Gulf Islands and explores each Island's climate change challenges and examine each Island's strategies to respond to these challenges.
- *Climate Change in the Salish Sea Archipelago* - This course explores the history of changing lands and waters in the Southern Gulf Islands, San Juan Islands, and surrounding Salish Sea, to understand challenges of climate change impacts on the wider region and offers a cross-border perspective on land and marine use planning.

Phase II: Reviewing and revising the three curriculum frameworks

The working group applied for and received a grant from the Union of BC Municipalities Community Works Fund with CRD support to fund the Phase II curriculum review symposium. This grant provided for honorariums and expenses to support First nations participation in the symposium in keeping with our commitment to support capacity to fully participate wherever possible. The Community Resources Centre provided supplementary funding from their edu-tourism grant to help cover expenses for Gulf Island participants in the symposium.

The October 9-10 curriculum review symposium was held at QENEN, IW, where Poets Cove Resort is now located. Twenty- three W SÁNEĆ Elders, leaders and knowledge keepers participated in the symposium along with twenty-two Gulf Island community leaders including trustees from three islands as well as CRD representatives.



The major portion of the symposium was devoted to reviewing the 3-curriculum frameworks to gain feedback and recommendations for consideration in preparing the final curriculum modules in phase III of this project. The symposium also offered opportunities for cultural engagement including:

- Opening prayer by Elder J, SINTEN (John Elliott) and a welcoming song by J, SINTEN, ÇOSINIYE (Linda Elliott), and PENÁĆ (David Underwood).

- The Kairos blanket exercise presented by Lillian Underwood and former chief Harvey Underwood - a participatory engagement in FN history including the Indian Act and the Reserve system, the residential school experience, outlawing of cultural institutions including the Reef Net Fishery, the Potlatch, and other cultural and spiritual practices. This exercise brought all participants together and fostered a deeper understanding of the importance of WSÁNEĆ resurgence that this project supports.
- A presentation of the documentary film *Dust & Bones* by Emily Olsen to explore the challenges of protecting, restoring, and repatriating Indigenous cultural artifacts and Ancestral remains when they are unearthed or disturbed. The showing was followed by a dialogue session around the important issue of ancestral relations and other issues raised in the film with producer & film lead Harold Joe.
- An ethnobotany plant walk to QENEN, IW Hay Point reserve, with Elder Earl Claxton Jr. & PEPÁKĒN HÁUTW ethno-ecologist Judith Lyn Arney. This early morning walk at sunrise reinforced the importance of eco-cultural restoration that is central to the curricula in this project.
- A closing prayer by J, SINTEN, and a tribute song "Home to my Village" by J, SINTEN and PENÁĆ, which honours QENEN, IW, the place where we gathered for the symposium.



J, SINTEN (John Elliott) and PENÁĆ (David Underwood) sharing the closing song

This contribution illustrated the important role of WSÁNEĆ cultural protocol in guiding and reinforcing the integrity of our work together.

The comments by the symposium participants provide a rich response to the symposium and are included under "Reflections" below.

For information on Phase III - Curriculum Development and Delivery and Phase IV - Project Evaluation see [Project Final Report](#).



Symposium Closing time

REFLECTIONS on TETIÁCES Climate Action Symposium

The following are reflections that were provided at the last session of the October 9-10 symposium.

"Thank you for putting on this two-day symposium. It was amazing to connect with the trustees, Island members and other first Nations people. The blanket exercise connected us all together in spirit. I really enjoyed the richness of the elders and knowledge keepers. Thank you for accommodations and wonderful food. Indigenous way, science and climate change all go hand-in-hand. We are one."

"A good step forward in the work we have come together to do. I felt a level of honesty, mutual respect and trust, and appreciation of the gifts and knowledge each of us brings. Some hard moments brought a deeper understanding to sharing feelings. Much good work to come."

"HÍSWKE ETTE SCA thank you for your good work. IY, SE TFE SOT CENTAL our work will be good together. IY, S, TUO. It's a good beginning"

"Wish list: Time on the land; Space and time for restoration to elicit the sense that positive change is possible. Gratitude: for the support to participate and connect with this good circle."

"A deeper understanding of this place, what we do to Mother Nature we do to ourselves."

"Do the difficult things while they are easy to do, the great things when they are small. A journey of Thousand miles must begin with a single step."

"This project really opened my eyes about climate change and how we should all respect the earth."

"Aim for the sky, but move slowly, enjoying every step along the way. It is all those little steps that make the journey complete."

"I knew about the cultural genocide of turtle Island original people - the blanket exercise allowed me to FEEL IT! All Canadians need to do the blanket exercise."

"I think this was a great idea to come together for everyone to share their thoughts and feelings and all of us to come and start to see the bigger picture. I also think the blanket exercise really helped everyone better understand where we are coming from. It brought feelings and better understanding about the history and brought all of us together and made the group come together as one. And thank you for putting this altogether and taking that time."

"The two days were great. First day a great way to make connections and develop relationships. Day two felt very comfortable collaborating together on the courses, lots of great ideas and stories shared. I feel a greater connection to the first Nations. Well done—look forward to the courses."

"Connection with the land= hope. Restoration VS lecture. When restoration replaces greed."

"Thank you for educating me about climate change and teaching me about the plants, water and how we should take care of our earth. In learning more about the 13 moons, and residential school. And I'm glad to come and witness this project and thank you for planning this!"

"I compare the residential school blanket exercise to our peoples (WSÁNEĆ) in relationship to our people like the land and our ocean. The way of life. We were free - strong, loving when taken away to residential schools. We were weakened by the schools, and then returned, we have nothing - the way of life was taken. The schools did a good job. Just like the land and ocean are as tired as our selves. We need to be given a fresh breath of air - as well the ocean and land need. As early as 1800s that's when our land and ocean started dying as much as I can say now until next time."

"It is wonderful to sit and be our true and whole selves, with each other, on the land and with our ancestors, as we do work, in a good way, together."

"Our ancestors are watching our work."

"I appreciate being invited to sit at the table and not only participate in discussions and ideating, but feeling like my input is more than simply consultation."

"The incredible humanity of first Nations people!"

"We are following behind our ancestors. We are following their way, our teachings of sacredness." (in both beautifully written SENĆOŦEN and English)

"A really essential gathering! Great place - hearing Eric Pelkey speak to history of the place would have been great with John's intro. Wonderful mix of folks – perfect especially first Nations and settlers. Evening session (maybe a fire?) Could have been more opened. I would only have added a little more popular education and participatory gifts, visions, values to give and to share. Paul and Pender team are fabulous."

"It was very good for us all to spend time together. We begin to know each other as individuals. Together we can do much."

"I felt profoundly moved by the past two days. The ambition, passion, and intellect of this group is inspiring and admirable. I am so grateful to be part of this crew, developing things for the future. I learned a lot and am happy to be of service wherever I can. I'm glad I could have input to provide opportunities for young people to have similar ideas and values that I do." (accompanied by a beautiful drawing!)

"You are from here. Your heart is open your mind is open. This is a great gift, to be able to accept the ways and teachings of the people that are of this land. Remember to keep your mind and your spirit strong. A simple prayer will help with this. Know that this will bring peace to the people who were here, as well as to yourself. These gifts that are yours will open many great doors for opportunities that are yet to come."