

Youth Leadership For Climate Action in the Southern Gulf Islands - Course Summary

The Youth Leadership for climate action in the Southern Gulf Islands was successfully delivered between March 1 and 6, 2020. Eighteen youth and young adults attended and completed the course, eight participants from the WSÁNEĆ First Nation and 10 from five different Gulf Islands. The project provided tuition bursaries for the eight WSÁNEĆ participants and five of the ten Gulf Island participants as part of the core funding from the Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC). The remaining five Gulf Island participants received either full or partial bursaries from donations provided by Island residents and project supporters.

The course was facilitated by Tye Swallow, MA, SENĆOŦEN Language Revitalization Coordinator with the Saanich Adult Education Centre (WSÁNEĆ School Board) and Mary Anne Paré, MA with Pender Ocean Defenders. Tsawout Elder Belinda Claxton (SELILIYE) provided Elder guidance throughout the 5-day course.



Elders Sharing

The highlight of the course was travel to Galiano, Mayne and Saturna although this involved logistical challenges due to limited ferry schedules. Climate action initiatives on each Island were explored through presentations from each Island's conservancy association outlining climate action initiatives on each Island.



Mayne Island Conservation

The course included presentations from WSÁNEĆ Elders John Elliott (J,SIN̄TEN) and Linda Elliott (ÇOSINIYE) and Penelakut Elder Karen Smith (Sha aal tin aat) focusing on Indigenous traditional Knowledge. Climate activist Julie Johnstone provided an insightful presentation on current climate science and strategies for taking climate action.

The Kairos blanket exercise with Lillian Underwood provided participants with an experiential engagement with the history and impact of colonization and the resulting suppression of Indigenous natural laws. Tsawout Elder Earl Claxton Jr. (XET̄XÁIT̄TEN) presented a traditional salmon pit cook and Judith Lyn Arney led a daphne removal project on Hay Point reserve land.



Ready for the Feast

The course participants presented their action plans on Friday morning and completed course evaluations. The [Course 2 Curriculum](#) outlines in detail the richness of the course content . The [Course 2 Evaluation](#) illustrates the positive impact of this course for the participants. Using the evaluation feedback, the course facilitators and evaluator summarized the [Course 2 Lessons Learned](#) from this pilot program to provide guidance for future courses. The [Course 2 Video](#) is a reflection of the moving experience the course had for participants.

With support and encouragement from the project funders REFBC, the course facilitators initiated post course mini-grants (up to \$250) to support development and delivery of their climate action projects. A final report on the climate action projects will be posted when they are completed.