

Guide to Environmental Stewardship 2021 / 2022



NUTS'A'MAATSHQWALUWUN

*Working together with
one heart, one mind.*

Program Overview

The Environmental Stewardship Program is a land-based program at Cowichan Secondary School, located in the Cowichan Valley School District.



The program is available to grade 11 and 12 students, in which they take English 11 or 12, Environmental Science 11 or 12, Physical Geography 12, Outdoor Education 11 or 12, and Career Life Connections. These five courses are taken in a cohort with other students and instructed under the same co-teachers. This is either half-day all year in a semester system (either all morning or all afternoon), or full day for Q1 and Q4 in a quarter system.

These courses are woven together through a lens of historical to modern-day practices and perspectives, connecting and learning about the culture and knowledge of our local area. The program involves interacting with local places and people in the community while also contributing to the Environmental Stewardship of the Cowichan Valley.

Students have multiple opportunities to choose their studies and demonstrations of learning. In this way, the program embraces inquiry and encourages a growth mindset.

The main themes we will be exploring this year are: **The Interrelationship of Salmon and People** and **Gardening the Land and the Sea**.

What to expect in Environmental Stewardship?

- **A supportive classroom learning community where:**
 - *Indigenous pedagogy is valued and included*
 - *Positive social connections are established with teachers and peers*
 - *Learning is intergenerational*
 - *Student strengths are honoured and recognized.*
- **Authentic learning opportunities in local community**
 - *Learning with and from community organizations and experts in the field*
- **Projects that make a difference in the lives of others**
 - *A choice in what the learning focuses on and how to share what is learned*
- **Outdoor experiences that:**
 - *Directly influence the local landscape*
 - *Involve hiking in local forests*
 - *Build connections and understanding of local natural resources*
- **An expectation for academic work to reflect the interconnectedness of subject areas**
 - *A deepened understanding of environmental issues*



Why should I join Environmental Stewardship?

- ▶ Join if you want to be with the same group of students for multiple courses in order to have more opportunity to build stronger connections to each other.
- ▶ Join if you want to learn more about the local ecosystem through memorable experiences
- ▶ Join if you like being outside.
- ▶ Join if you want to contribute to your community.



What we do in Environmental Stewardship:



- ▶ Actively monitor the ecosystem health of Bings Creek
- ▶ Learn from the Salmon Enhancement Program on the Cowichan River
- ▶ Explore perspectives through current issues pertaining to environmental stewardship
- ▶ Work with guidance from a local Cowichan Elder, including visits to Somena Longhouse

What we do in Environmental Stewardship:

- ▶ Research and share our learning collaboratively
- ▶ Develop an understanding of local plants and animals in the Cowichan Valley, including endangered and at-risk species
- ▶ Explore a variety of texts for both academic and personal enjoyment
- ▶ Use engaging games and simulations to develop relationships and build academic competencies



Our Values and Commitments

- ▶ We are committed to incorporating Indigenous principles of learning.
- ▶ We are committed to allowing for student choice and input.
- ▶ We are committed to creating opportunities for students to experience the outdoors.
- ▶ We are committed to authentic community engagements.
- ▶ We pledge to listen and care for our students.
- ▶ We value relationships and relational learning.
- ▶ We value taking joy in our learning experiences.



Organizations we have connected with



- ▶ Somenos Wildlife Society
- ▶ Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable
- ▶ Pacific stream keepers federation
- ▶ Cowichan Land Trust
- ▶ Cowichan Green Community Society
- ▶ Municipality of North Cowichan
- ▶ City of Duncan
- ▶ Cowichan Tribes
- ▶ Plan Bee Now
- ▶ Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Examples of student stewardship projects involved:

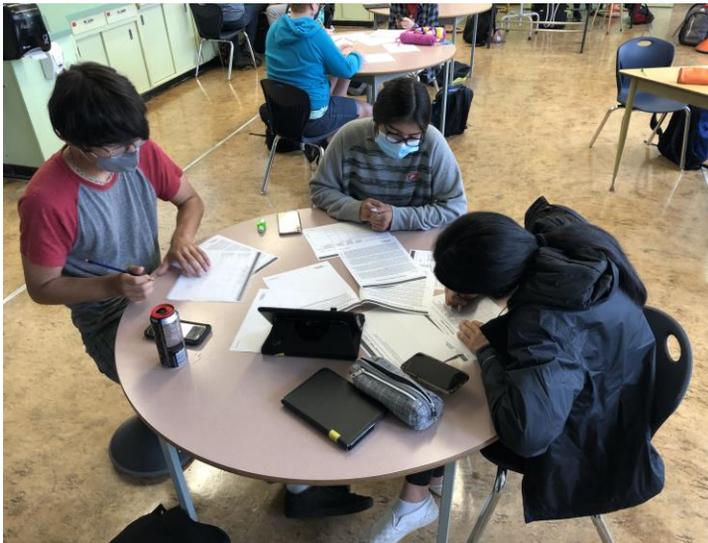
- ▶ Native plant gardening
- ▶ Mason bee housing and processing
- ▶ Violet-green swallow bird box installment
- ▶ Cedar weaving
- ▶ Recycled motor re-build
- ▶ Salmon dissection and education video
- ▶ Xeriscaping public service announcement
- ▶ Air quality and forest fire awareness posters
- ▶ Invasive species removal



Student Testimonials



- ▶ “This class taught me about the importance of helping the world.”
- ▶ “You would be so lucky to join this program! There are so many cool things waiting for you. You will get to learn about our world and nature.”
- ▶ “I like that we have elders talking to us.”
- ▶ “You’ll form close connections and relationships with your fellow classmates, even your teachers.”



Student Testimonials pt 2

- ▶ “I’ve learned many interesting pieces of information about the environment. I’d tell kids to take it if they care about the topics, and not to take it as just an easy class, it’s actually fairly difficult.”



- ▶ “I’d recommend this course because it has a broad variety of learning hands-on.”
- ▶ ”This program is a good idea because it has all your courses in one course! So handy, plus your capstone gets taken care of.”



You're in? Here's what you'll need:

- ▶ Hiking or running shoes
- ▶ Boots
- ▶ Rain jacket & rain pants
- ▶ Warm clothes for colder days
- ▶ Sun hat & sunscreen
- ▶ Gardening gloves
- ▶ Gardening trowel

