

Nisma Project Society Report Summary – 2006/2007

Overview

Building on the success of our programs from the 2006/2007 school year, the Nisma Project Society has expanded its activities in the Ucluelet area. We now have activities on Sundays of most weekends, which are attended by youth from the town of Ucluelet and the Ucluelet East. The Tofino area programs continue to be very popular and are usually fully attended every Saturday. These programs are attended by youth from Opitsaht, Tofino and Esowista. While we are not experts in child behavior or measuring results, we have been noticing what we consider to be real positive effects as a result of role-modeling, outdoor play and education, and cultural learning.

The Ucluelet trips got off to a bit of an unanticipated slow start. There were many people to contact and many meetings to go to work out the society's relationship with the Ucluelet First Nations Band office. This all went very smoothly, but it took some time. Now that we have a good relationship with the band office and the youth and their families we anticipate that the 2007/2008 programs will continue on smoothly.

The Tofino area trips were even more successful this year. The improved behavior and attentiveness of the kids was very noticeable over the previous year. The kids also know a lot more places, which was one of the goals of the program. They request revisits to their favorite spots, which we think is awesome!

In the beginning of the Nisma/school year notices were distributed to all classes via the public schools about the Nisma programs. This has resulted in a wider variety of youth participating in the trips. There is still a core group of kids with whom the programs have struck a chord, and they continue to attend every weekend.

For More detail on the trips themselves please see the reports. We have selected our favorites for brevity.

Expenditures Summary

Admin costs	\$5475.00	: Includes pay for office time, misc. office supplies, travel to meetings, and other expenses such as phone and gas.
Co-op (lunches)	\$1662.27	: On all trips we provide light lunches and healthy snacks.
Tofino Bus	\$1171.30	: We often charter a van from Tofino bus to carry our groups. One of the leaders has a class 2 license, so we can cover the driver ourselves.
Leaders wages	\$3150.00	: There are usually 2 trip leaders on each trip. Occasionally we will bring an elder or a special interest activity leader to whom we pay an honorarium.
Total	\$11,458.57	(*\$8,000 CBT funding, \$2,000 Wilderness Committee funding, + remainder from Victoria Foundation grant from previous year.

Year 2 Nisma Trip Report Summary:

Oct 29 2006

Today was a beautiful windy October day.

We landed at Echachist, Juiced up on the beach while Doug tied the boat up, and then went berry picking on the trail. She said she was afraid of walking in the forest, and insisted on walking very near. But it seems that fear was forgotten under the berry-laden branches.

When they all became distracted from the berries, we continued to the meadow.

We climbed up the spruce fringe and explored underneath.

Jonathan slipped right thru to the bottom.

We didn't go out to the blowhole, as the waves were pretty big today.

We made our way back to the longhouse beach, and had lunch there, humming bird style.

They would grab a cracker or whatever, then go to the rock islands to explore, and then come back for more.

We went to the cave, only Cecelia and Jon came in, and Tsimka part way. We told them about the cougar that use to live there, and looked at the old bones and huge crickets.

On the way back the (after our hot chocolate break by Stubbs)

The kids requested more boat rides during Nisma. Can we come for a salmon BBQ here?

Go to that graveyard again? Soap Island? Okmin?

Chips and Salsa was a hit.

Margaret left her red Nisma pack under the spruce fringe, so we will have to go back and get it...

Nov.5 2006

We ended up going to the swimming pool; it was so gnarly out with icy rain! Doug Gisele and 8 kids...

Lots of fun of course, and they were so tired and quiet on the way home, except for the pizza chant.

Nov.19 2006

This trip was a success.

We were a bit late picking up the kids, but they were all eagerly awaiting us at Long Beach.

Tsimka led the walk on the Rainforest Trail, pointing out different types of mushrooms and getting them to search more out and examine the different kinds. It was fun to see them get so excited about mushrooms.

We did half the trail, the highway side.

For lunch we went to the undercover picnic area at the Wickanninish Center.

Our bread was still frozen, so they went to play on the beach while it thawed in the winter sunshine.

On the way back in the van the kids requested rap music. We played a little old school stuff, and then I switched it to traditional Nuu-chah-nulth music. Half the kids covered their ears like it was torture, and a couple listened to it and mouthed along, recognizing the song.

When I asked them if they knew what the song was about they removed their hands from their ears and became attentive for the answer.

Wi-e-tes-kee-a-koo : we go this way and that way...

I reminded them of the war Tla-o-qui-aht people had centuries ago, and explained that the song was about our traditional territory, about how we can go this way and that way, exploring the Nisma all over!

Then a few asked questions, 'we go this way and that way? What about to Ahousaht?

It was an interesting discussion.

It would be interesting to play more of our songs and explain what the dances and songs mean to them.

They requested Baloney sandwiches for our next lunch. They didn't like the chewy granola bars.

We mentioned if they really wanted pizza we could do a bottle and can collection one day, to raise funds. They liked that idea. There are so many lying around everywhere there.

Nov.26 2006

This was a short trip! It was the first time this season that we had 10 kids, and we really could tell the difference...

The walk on the Bog trail was good. It was beautiful and covered in snow.

Kids picked some Laboradore leaves, and some tried scalp massages on the twisted shore pine. We couldn't look for cranberries, as there was too much snow.

When we got back to the van, almost everyone's feet were freezing. We cranked the heat and drove to the undercover lunch area. Some stayed in the van with Doug, but most came out with Tsimka and I.

A couple had really wet runners and numb feet, so I got them to take their wet footwear off, then took the strips of fleece I brought along and wrapped up their feet like mummies while they ate lunch. When they all started getting restless and wanting to run around in their foot scarves we decided it was time to bring them back home. (We couldn't have them walk anywhere any more unless they put their freezing wet socks and shoes back on anyway.)

We dropped them off home, and it was evident that they hadn't burned up all their energy on this trip. They threw snowballs as we drove away.

Dec.5 2006

The dunes are always fun. There was snow upon them this time and it was very beautiful. Tsimka showed the kids the Kinnicinic plant where it showed through. I brought socks and scarves this time and both were well used.

Some of the kids are not listening to Leaders directions, and constantly run off in different directions. Before we go anywhere next trip, they will have to agree to listen before the van leaves their doorstep.... And we should ask that they leave their cell phones behind.

All in all though, it went well. Walking back on the beach we talked about the area we were in and how it was Ucluelet FN's ancient village site.

Dec.10 2006

We scrambled this morning. Once the trip was underway it went pretty well, with the exception of a bit of misbehaving on part of Cecilia and Nadine and a little of Jonathan. First off, they were cruel to the new kids, calling them stinky and making mean remarks about them joining the Nisma trips.

Cecelia threw things in the van, little Christ ornaments.

We went to North Chestermans Parking lot, went over the Nisma trip rules for the sake of the new kids, and a couple of kids who increasingly have been breaking them.

We walked to the carving shed in the rain.

At the shed, they said the cedar shavings smelled good. Joe showed them the raven mask, and told them about our creation myth. Then he showed them the bentwood box and told them the son-of-deer legend, and they were all quiet and captivated for a while.

We ate a messy lunch there, and then took off to the info center parking lot.

Cory found a head carved out of soapstone there...

We walked down the mudflats trail, got to the end, slipped down the mud, stood on the piles of seaweed, climbed on the mushroom covered log, found some licorice fern, drank some water, then left.

Cory, Cora, Simian and Preston were all great. Cory helped to haul us out of the mud pit. Preston was very careful with his bush wacking stick. Cora showed interest in the ferns. Margaret really worked on her licorice fern finding skills with Tsimka. Now were back home and I'm going to get out of my soggy boot clothes.

Quote of the day#1:

"I think those are the kind of rocks that Indians can pray to... But the lighter ones have to get a tan first, they have to get at least as dark as me" - about the carved soapstone head that Cory found.

Quote of the day #2:

"But if I throw my garbage on the ground, a wind will come and take it away, and blow it into a tree or something" - one of the kids arguing against the no-littering rule.

Dec.17 2006

Today's Nisma trip good moments: Beautiful forest, good weather, crunching crusty snow, gathering rosehips for tea and medicine, finding cute little spiders in the snow, watching Simian practice his stream crossing skills, Tamra practicing her photography skills with Jen's camera, kids making bull kelp horns, Shey and Felicia finally becoming friends.

Next week we will have mint tea.

Jan.14 2007

Today was an overcast day, snow still on the ground but warmer than it has been in maybe a week. The Meares Island Big Tree trail was covered in snow, with no other human prints on it. It was a beautiful walk.

At the hanging garden tree we had lunch. Robinson called my dad on his cell phone to say that there was a wolf on the mudflats, not far from us. This caused quite a stir among our group. After herding the dogs together my father started to Howl for the wolf. They got frightened and began to cry.

We calmed to kids down and soon we got all the kids howling together. Tamra took some recordings. Nadine recorded it on her phone. We were all tricking each other after that because we would howl then listen only to hear recordings.... DO YOU hear that!

No....that?!

It was funny.

We went back to the boat, got on, went along the shore a few meters, and there was the wolf!

It was great to see the transformation in attitude towards that wolf. At first the kids had been very frightened, expecting a big bad wolf to come and eat them. When we saw the little lone gray wolf all the kids were mesmerized, most needed to pee, but none wanted

to leave! They wiggled on the boat benches and insisted on staying and watching the wolf.

We watched it, then howled and the wolf howled back at us several times. It was the most beautiful sound I have heard in along long time

On the way home we had a bathroom break at the Esso gas station. We dropped them at Esowista off in a flurry of snowballs.

It was a wonderful Nisma trip!

Jan.21 2007

This was a good trip. We were going to go to Echachist, but the sea was too rough, so we planned to go up lemons inlet. There were 7 kids signed up this morning, but when we got to LB, 11 came running!

So with that many we changed the plan. We went to town to find Tsimka, but didn't see her. So we went to Cox bay, where we explored the shoreline, looked at a mermaids purse, worm casings...and had a good bushwhack behind the spruce fringe.

When we got back to the van they were all tired, wet, cold and hungry.

We decided to take them to Gary's kitchen and ordered 11 French fries and 9 gravy. I have never a seen a group of kids being that quiet and then say thank you!

A very fun Nisma day.

Feb.17 2007

It was pouring rain! It was hard to talk with all the rain, it was so loud and our ears were all covered with our raincoat hoods. We were going to make a fire and eat hotdogs, but everything was wet and we decided to go home a little early. Everyone was pretty wet and starting to get cold.

We played a game with Katie, called Camouflage. We climbed around some Huge Cedar trees on the rainbow beach trail; we ate some granola bars, and explored the lake beach. And that was the trip...

There is now a huge pile of soaking wet gear on the floor for me to put away!

Feb.24 2007

It was a cold day but we had a great time at the beach. We met the kids at Lise's house, got some bamboo poles. Alen had a big scrape on his left knee, so I put a new band-aid on it. Then we went to the island in front and looked for crabs and had some hot chocolate.

Allen came with no jacket and got cold, so Tsimka walked him back up the hill early. Meanwhile Kara marina and Janine and I delved into the dried apples, crackers and cheese. When Tsimka came back we went down to the tide line with a shovel and began digging 8 holes in search of Ghost Shrimp

The girls got really excited when they saw the water from clams squirting out of the holes and went into a digging frenzy, it was hilarious. Their fingers were freezing so they switched turns between the shovel and wearing the gloves. Kara marina is a good shoveler!

They didn't want to stop digging thought the cold wind blew on us, so when 2 pm rolled around, they began arguing over whose shoveling turn it was, we called it quits.

I dug a bit with my hands, and they now have the wonderful smell of Long Beach on them. Sand clams and sea...

Janine stated several times that she wishes to come on every Nisma trip.

March 3 2007

It was a nice day, a fine drizzle falling. We went to Radar and ate lunch on the hill. Chatted about the war history of that area, and read the park signs. We found some pinesap and did a little demo of how it catches fire easily, and talked about forest fires. I explained that the hard pitch is better for lighting fires and for chewing gum. Cameron really wanted to find a cut trunk to count the rings and find out the age of a tree. The kids started noticing that the Pine tree has long needles and that the needles come off in pairs.

After we explored Radar hill, we went to Grice Bay point, where we threw rocks and sticks in the water for the stinky dogs, saw some ducks, ...

Then the kids really got into making boats out of various pieces of wood and putting people rocks on them, floating them around. This amused us for quite a while, with eelgrass attacking the boats like giant squids.

It was a fun mellow trip, with a nice small group. Refreshing, cheerful and we learned some!

March 10

We went to the pool instead, it was pouring rain. We had a lot of fun; they practiced diving, swimming, headstands, played shark games...etc. We were going to go to the gazebo at the village green to eat lunch, but it was all covered in bird poop and the rain was blowing sideways, so we went to our house down the street to eat indoors.

The kids were very quiet on the way back and all tuckered out when we dropped them off!

I was too. Dragging a train of kids thru the water is a good little workout

It was nice to have my dad along as it brought up a good conversation about the cultural importance of family relations, and the various ways that we are related with these kids...

March 17 2007

A very nice trip in the spring drizzle!

We walked down the Tonquin Park trail, and at the beach they wanted to continue, so we followed vague pathways in the forest for a while, letting the kids take turns leading us in different directions. We found an old rotten stump, with crumbling white alder wood. We Found a CMT< bark strip, which we discussed, and they all exclaimed that yes, they have a grandma or uncle who uses Cedar bark. After that we recognized many more CMT's.

We Found licorice fern, which we collected, and saw some witches butter.
We climbed over and under roots, and balanced on small logs over bubbly streams.
It was a lot of fun, and good exercise.
On the beach we made our way to the middle of the little island, where we had lunch, and watched with binoculars a beautiful black and white sea bird that was duck-diving under the waves.
The kids are starting to recognize the twisted shore pine tree, as I keep pointing it out for its sap and needles.
We explored the graffiti rock wall before heading back on the trail.
Halfway back to the parking lot we realized that one of the kids left the cashew container on the rocks, so we all walked back to go and get it.
We huffed and puffed up the stairs for the second time.
At the parking lot we were tuckered out!

Doug came and met us in the van just up the street, and we went home

March 24 2007

A rainy drizzly spring day.
We walked the traditional Canoe-drag trail to the meadow. It was beautiful, with little plants budding. We brought some traditional digging sticks and mats to kneel on.
All of us except for Doug and the dogs really got into digging for the roots.
Especially in the cool mud on the bank. There were long fat roots there. The mud was very clay like, and wormless. It was interesting to compare the different kinds of roots with the above ground parts.

We talked about how these are the kinds of roots our people ate before the potato was introduced, and how we had gardens in these estuaries.
We also tried some clover roots, which Jen and I had dug the day before, and Jen had cooked with butter. They looked like spaghetti, and were delicious, like asparagus.

Nisma trip Summery for Ucluelet, season 2

February 11, 2007

This trip finally happened! It was great!
Though there were 8 kids signed up the night before only 3 showed up in the morning.
We met at the Wick parking lot, and had a great time. I rearranged the lunch stuff.

Eugene told us all sorts of interesting things the whole time

We made a fire with wet cedar and pine pitch at the last beach. The boys got a few mussels. We had a great time looking at shells and all the rock colors. In the tide pool we saw the hugest Black turban snail I have ever seen in my life...And a boy crab in an acorn barnacle shell.

We saw an eagle, a seagull, and a raven that called back to us.

We examined some dog prints, and talked about wolves. I told them about the carving in the rocks. We talked about stinging nettle...

This trip was so great. Both Andrew and I were tired in the morning, but it was so worth it to be there!! I could just see the kids absorbing so much from the environment too, like sponges!

We could easily do another trip there, there is so much to see and look at and explore. I didn't get to show them how to collect Spruce pitch. And we could have roasted mussels on the fire.

Eugene talked about junk food, relations and marriage, eating anemones, wolf clan, making a small fire instead of a big fire, the glacial rock that once was the marker placed at Greenpoint as a territorial boundary between our tribes...then it was moved to Florencia...

So much..!

Feb 25, 2007

We met at the Bog trail, walked it. It was raining and the new kids didn't want to put on raincoats, as they don't look very 'cool'. I showed them a Labrador leaf, some said:

EWww Its smells! We talked a bout how many plants are used as medicines.

Told them about cranberries that grow there, and how it takes so long for the trees to grow in the bog.

We had lunch at the undercover picnic tables.

We walked to the dunes after, and they had a hoot

Some said, 'Can we come here next week again? Every week? Every Day?'

They were so cute with their rosy cheeks in the cold wet dunes, with huge smiles smeared in wet sand!!

March 11 2007

It was pouring as we left, but mellowed to a heavy drizzle for most of the trip, which was bearable. We had lots of fun. The Ukee kids may have come to appreciate real raincoats today, and I think they will be more willing to wear them next time. We walked and ran down the trail, they took turns with Quama on a leash again. The trail to Halfmoon bay was closed, so we went to Florencia. Some seemed quite new to the challenge of getting over logs and boulders and crossing small rain streams.

We huddled under a massive log and ate lunch. They wondered what the black stuff on the log was, and we told them it was Spruce bark. They noticed witches butter and Bracket fungus growing on it

We picked up various hardened kelp root sticks.

Then we huffed and puffed back up the many stairs to the van, where we lined up and did the Cancan dance before entering.

The kids were a tad cold and wet, but had a lot of fun. They requested to go to the Vet, the Wild pacific trail, Mussel beach, and to explore the Bay right in their community.

Maybe we could dig for clams sometime or something.

Lots of smiles and fun!

March 18 2007

It was the first day that really felt like spring. It was semi- warm, with a hint of sunshine. We dashed down the trail, and found a few guarder snakes on the way. The first ones I've seen this year! At first some of the kids were frightened of it, but then they took turns holding the snake we found, a beautiful Guarder with a bright yellow stripe. Then they let it go nearby in a sunny spot.

It is spring break, and there were many tourists near the lighthouse.

We climbed over the rocks to a high point with a couple small Spruce trees, and ate lunch there.

Then we hiked the rest of the trail.

We saw some Bufflehead birds in the bay and watched them with binoculars. We found turkish towel seaweed on the beach, and talked about its various uses. We played with singing beach grass and made an orchestra. Kathleen found some strange rock formations. The kids played on a swing for a little while by the beach, and then we headed to the van and returned them all home.

Carrots and dip were a good hit on this trip.