



Raincoast Education Society Young Naturalists Program 2008

Final Report

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Submitted to Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, Education Committee
by the Raincoast Education Society

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Background

The Raincoast Education Society (RES) is an independent non-profit society and registered Canadian charity. Established in Clayoquot Sound in August 2000, our mandate is to encourage informed discussion of issues relating to social and environmental sustainability. Our aim is to enable citizens within and beyond Clayoquot Sound to participate *knowledgeably, effectively, and responsibly* in the work of shaping a sustainable future for our region and for our planet. We are a cornerstone institution in the region – providing core information and experiential services to thousands of visitors per year as well as ongoing programming for local schools, businesses and community groups.

We seek to accomplish our mission by delivering a broad range of high-quality educational and interpretive programs focused on the natural environment, cultures, and communities of the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve region. Educational programming for youth has always been a priority for both the RIC and the RES. Through the Raincoast Interpretive Centre we have been delivering school programs throughout the region for more than ten years. In 2001 we started a Young Naturalists program in Tofino and in 2005/2006, with funding from the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and the Vancouver Foundation, we developed a pilot “Nuu-chah-nulth Young Naturalists Program,” which delivered natural and cultural history education specifically for Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations children, to be delivered in Nuu-chah-nulth communities. This pilot program was a response to requests from both children and parents to engage youth in all of the communities of the Clayoquot Biosphere Reserve Region - many of whom were previously unable to attend Raincoast Interpretive Centre out of school programs because they lived far away and it is expensive to travel. The development and delivery of the pilot program in 2006 was a significant accomplishment because it met a request for fun and educational out-of-school activities in the more isolated communities in the region.

In 2008, with funding from the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, the Raincoast Education Society delivered another full year of Young Naturalists Programs in the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve Region. This report provides details of the 2008 program and how our funding was spent to bring natural and cultural history education to local communities.





The Young Naturalists Program

The goals of the Young Naturalists Program are:

1. To increase awareness amongst local and visiting children and youth about the natural and cultural histories of the Clayoquot Sound area through a series of themed interpretive programs designed to encourage curiosity and exploration of the environment.
2. To engage local First Nations and non-indigenous community members in on-going program development by:
 - participation in an advisory committee
 - the involvement of elders, educators and parents
 - the involvement of Nisma, a Nuu-chah-nulth cultural education program operated by the Nisma Society
3. To train local youth workers in interpretive program development and delivery by:
 - Hiring and providing training for local youth workers who co-develop and deliver the Young Naturalists programs
 - Providing a healthy working environment with positive feedback and encouragement
 - Providing specific job-related feedback to interns for on-going professional and personal development

This year, the RES Program Coordinator and Summer Interns worked together to expand on the interpretive programs developed in 2007 about the natural environment of Clayoquot Sound. Important to the success of the programs was to include a diverse array of fun, hands-on activities that were also educational in nature. The Salmon Lifecycle Program is a good example of the type of activity used in the Young Naturalists program. In this program, participants learn about the life cycle of a salmon through fun games and activities. They learn about the connection between salmon and the rainforest, the many species that depend on salmon for survival and how they can help salmon on their incredible journey. When possible, they may also take a trip to a salmon bearing stream, or participate in a stream clean-up. And, fish printing is often included as a hands-on creative activity to help learn about salmon morphology (all of their different parts and what they use them for!).





During February to September 2008, we delivered both in-school and out of school programs to more than 200 local children and youth from the communities of Tofino, Ucluelet, Itattsoo (Ucluelet First Nation), Optisat (Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation), Ahousaht (Ahousaht First Nation) and Hot Springs Cove (Hesquiaht First Nation). In addition, the Tofino-based summer program is also open to children and youth visiting from outside Clayoquot Sound.

All of our interpretive programs are hands-on, age appropriate, fun and educational. The school programs offered this past year afforded an insight into important issues like rainforest and marine ecology, shorebird migration, sea otter re-introduction and the importance of the mudflats and wildlife management area. They were also designed to target issues of special concern such as the protection of endangered species. A list of some of the Young Naturalists Programs that were delivered by the summer interns is included on page four.

Key lessons

We are constantly reminded that the amount of time it takes to coordinate travel to and activities in our outlying communities cannot be underestimated! Scheduling conflicts often arise and resulted in the cancellation of several scheduled programs. Second, the summer is often a very busy time for many local families. We are considering the option of scheduling more of our after-school programs during the school year, as opposed to during the summer, when many families are frequently out of town. We look forward to gathering feedback from local community members about this idea. Third, children and youth love the hands-on experiential learning approach to teaching that RES programs provide. For example, exploring the mudflats is always a hit, as are programs that include creative elements such as making recycled paper or fish printing. Finally, having local community members participate in the programs is an invaluable addition to the programs.

Summary

Overall, the RES has enjoyed another successful year of delivering educational programs to communities in the Clayoquot Biosphere Reserve Region. In our 2007 application, we explained that we hoped to build on and expand the programs we have been offering in previous years. We are proud to say that we have done that, and to have incorporated the Young Naturalists program as a core program area for the RES.

Acknowledgements

The staff and Board of the Raincoast Education Society would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and the Education Committee for their generous support of our educational programming for local children and youth.



**Stick me on
the fridge**



Raincoast Young Naturalists

Each week we will become naturalists and explore a new theme. Through games and activities we will learn about the natural world and have lots of fun. There is so much to discover here in Clayoquot Sound!

2008 Program Descriptions:

Forests of the Sea

That's right...forests aren't just what you think they are! Just because you can't see it doesn't mean it's not there. Seaweeds are the forests of the sea. During this program we'll discover and recreate this watery habitat through games, crafts, and lots of seaweed creations! How many uses for kelp can you think of?

Recycle Monster

Who knew so many awesome things can be done with your "waste"! Let's learn from Dr. Seuss and the Lorax. Come out and Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Bring your imagination because the activities are endless... paper making, puppet shows, games and more!

Dirty Decomposers

Decomposition and new growth is occurring all around you, but what wonderful organisms make this happen? Find out what amazing things slugs, worms, and other cool creatures do to regenerate the forest. Learn how to use them in your own home and discover why composting is cool, great for the environment, and fun!

A Hunt for Diversity

Discover hidden rainforest treasures on a biodiversity scavenger hunt! Guaranteed you haven't seen it all! Learn about the complex network of life here on the coast while solving puzzles and running the maze of trails from the forest to the mudflats.

Something Fishy

Ever wonder how salmon make it back to the exact stream they were born in after spending years in the ocean?! Curious to know how salmon feed the forest? Join us this week to answer these questions and see the world through the eyes of a salmon in an obstacle course, relay game. Become a salmon expert and discover how you can help them on their journey home!

Mysterious Mudflats

It's more than just mud! Look closely and you will be amazed by the hidden creatures here. We'll have microscopes so you won't miss a thing. The Tofino Mudflats Wildlife Management Area is a protected area home to countless ducks, shorebirds, fish, mammals, frogs, salamanders, and tons of marine invertebrates that are food for so many other creatures. This week we will act out the web of mud life, get down and dirty with mud games, and learn from professionals how to get unstuck from the mud!



Raincoast Education Society
 Young Naturalists Program
 Financial Report – March to September 2008

Item	Funds requested from CBT	Expense of CBT funds	In-kind and cash funds from others	Total project cost
Lead Interpreter/Coordinator	\$5,000	\$4,900	\$4,800	\$9,700
Summer Interns	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$6,000	\$8,500
Executive Director/Project Manager	\$0	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,000
Travel to Nuu-chah-nulth communities	\$500	\$120	\$0	\$120
Program supplies	\$500	\$480	\$1,000	\$1,480
Administrative and office costs	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
Total (\$ Can)	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$16,800	\$24,800

Note: With the grant that we received through the CBT we were able to successfully leverage other funding and resources for the project.

