

Scout Island School Report 2025

As the school year comes to a close, we are reflecting on our time with the students who visited Scout Island, and looking forward to the beginning of summer programs. It was quite a busy two months at the Nature Centre! Our summer staff this year consisted of three students from Williams Lake. This year's returning staff member is Adrien Zimmerman



who is studying Integrated Science at UNBC. Our new staff this year are Timu Kruus, who is studying Conservation Biology at UofA, and Addyson Cullum, who is beginning studies at TRU this fall.



The summer staff could not have led such awesome programs without support from countless others. Our Environmental Education Coordinator, Martin Kruus oversaw the development of the programs. Michaela Waterhouse helped the summer staff learn bird identification, Sue Hemphill aided the staff in learning about local plant-life while Leo Rankin educated them on the invertebrates of the area. The Executive Director, Lara Roorda, mentored the summer staff; aiding them in planning and executing school lessons. In addition, the staff were joined by one UBC teacher candidate, Jessica Tagger. She spent three weeks at the island,

learning about Nature Education and sharing her educational expertise.

The Teacher Naturalists continued to teach through the coyote mentoring platform which emphasized learning through connection with nature. Kids were encouraged to engage using their owl eyes, deer ears, coyote noses, raccoon touch, and bug tongues in order to experience the outdoors through different points of view and senses. The Teacher Naturalists asked children questions to encourage problem-solving and thought-provoking answers. This technique, along with nature walks, games, and lessons, provided opportunities for all school children to learn about nature while keeping them interested and confident in their own abilities.

This year we offered seven different programs: Bugs, Birds, Reptiles and Amphibians, Life in the Marsh and Ocean, What's Happening Around the Nature House, Nature Crafts, and Trees. Additionally, if classes could not come to us, we took Scout Island to them, and showed them the nature in their school yard with our Explore the Outdoors at your School program. The Summer Staff brought programs to schools in Williams Lake, as well as a trip to Centennial Park in 100 Mile House, and a visit to Tatla Lake School. We had one very special class that took the opportunity to sleepover in the Nature House to learn about bats.

The Stream to Sea program was also offered through Scout Island. Classes raised Chinook salmon from eggs to fry, which were then released into the Williams Lake River at Scout Island in May and June to travel down the Fraser and out to the Pacific Ocean. This release program was led by Martin Kruus who did a phenomenal job of educating the students not only about the salmon they raised, but also about the ecosystem they live in. The release was accompanied by lessons on salmon anatomy with a dissection, marsh ecosystems, and intertidal ocean invertebrates.

In addition, Grade 7 classes were invited to the island for a day of climate change themed programming. Students interacted with our ocean animals, learned about the different ecosystems in our region, partook in roleplaying games, and explored.

The Birds program was led by Addyson. This lesson emphasised the diversity of bird anatomy and nesting habits. Children spent time looking at our nests and stuffed specimens, then students got hands on time with binoculars and went bird watching. They marvelled at





the beauty of birds, from the beautiful colors of the red winged blackbird to the needle-thin beak of the hummingbird. Classes also learned about the talent and skill that goes into building nests. Throughout the lesson, the connections between birds, people, and the rest of the ecosystem was emphasised

The Life in the Marsh and Ocean program was led by Adrien. The students were engaged in learning about marine life from the intertidal zone, with hands-on stations where students could handle creatures from five main phyla: Arthropoda, Cnidaria, Echinodermata, Porifera, and Mollusca. This program involved half the class at a time, with the remaining half dipping for marsh invertebrates. Students further learned about tidal activity, ocean currents and ocean

acidification.

Adrien also took the lead for the Reptiles and Amphibians lesson. This program involved teaching students all about these cold-blooded animals, including the chance to observe and touch our turtle. The students then caught water bugs and explored the marsh to learn more about reptile/amphibian habitat.

Timu led the Bugs program, which was exceedingly popular. This program emphasised learning classification and adaptations of different invertebrate types. In this program, children touched, held, raced, and caught bugs. The program began with a lesson on metamorphosis and insect classification. They then got a chance to look at and sketch bug specimens. Finally, the children went on a walk to look for and catch bugs in the wild as well as racing their captured bugs against each other.

Addyson also taught Nature Crafts this year, a new program that had not been tried before. The classes made “nature plates”. Students started the program with a walk to the far end of Scout Island to collect “nature items”. Upon returning from this adventure, they were given a plate, newspaper, and a ball of salt dough. Then they used their nature items to either make a collage or their favorite animal in the salt dough. Students were able to take

the newspaper and their nature plate home for it to dry. This new program was a resounding success!

Timu led the lesson on trees. This program emphasized basic aspects of tree identification as well as the ecological importance of trees to animals, the ecosystem, and the environment. Students began with a tree walk, after, they were given a lesson on trees and played a game involving learning how to recognize distinctive and differentiable parts of trees. They finally put their tree identification skills to the test by going on a walk and scavenger hunt where they tried to identify as many trees as possible.

All three of the summer staff led the Explore the Outdoors at you School and the What's

Happening Around the Nature Centre programs, where the kids put into practice their coyote eyes and deer ears to discover more about nature. These programs focused on anything that was particularly exciting at the school that day, and allowed the students to engage with nature in a more meaningful way.

There were a total of 69 programs this year. We had 1,725 students participate in programs from May 1st to June 24th. Most school days were filled to capacity in terms of staff time, with some days so busy staff were running to keep up. These groups came from almost all schools within School District 27, even some as far as Yunesitine, Likely Elementary, 100 Mile House Elementary, and Lac La Hache Elementary.

These fantastic programs were funded by the City of Williams Lake, School District 27, Fisheries and Oceans BC, the Canada Summer Jobs Program and local donations. Without this support and contributions from individuals and businesses, these outdoor education programs would be impossible to carry out.

Total Kids: 1,725

Total Lessons: 69



Number of bookings for each program

Reptiles and Amphibians: 9	Bugs: 8	Birds: 13	Overnight: 1	Nature Crafts: 4	Trees: 2
What's Happening: 5	Marsh and Oceans: 8	Salmon Release: 12	Visits to School Yard: 2	Climate Change: 3	