

AKALA
OUTDOOR EDUCATION
SOCIETY



Finding Ourselves on the Land

Impact
Report
2024

Table of Contents

01

Our Story
so far

02

Objectives
and goals

03

Expedition
overview

04

Outdoor Skills
development

05

Community
outreach events

06

Outcomes

07

Participant
feedback

08

Budget

09

Community
support and
Fundors



Our story so far

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to create land and water-based educational opportunities for Musgamakw Dzawaḏ'enux̱w citizens.

We

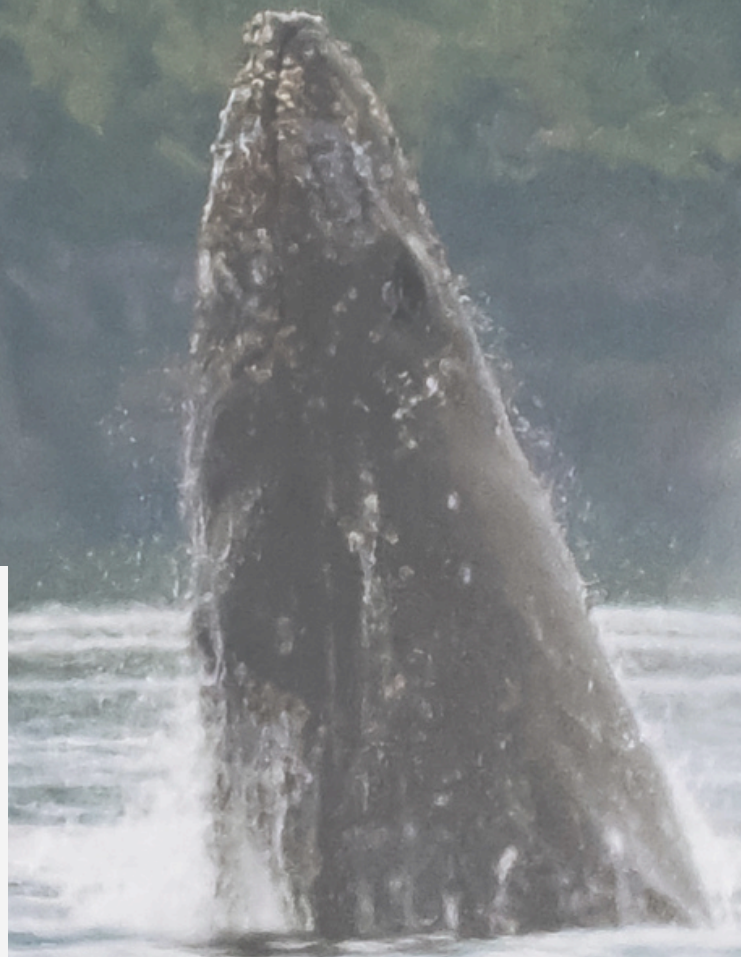
- Provide programming based on best practices to support mental and physical wellness.
- Facilitate leadership training
- Teach outdoor skills that promote the safe use of Musgamakw Dzawaḏ'enux̱w traditional territory.
- Provide certifications in the outdoor education field

The programs are delivered with a Musgamakw Dzawaḏ'enux̱w worldview. Our traditional laws and values govern how we operate and deliver programs.

Values

Āḵala Society is guided by the Musgamakw Dzawaḏ'enux̱w law of may̱a'x̱ala, a word that does not have an English language counterpart, but is akin to respect and reciprocity. Within may̱a'x̱ala are values of gratitude and spirituality. We continue to learn how to weave may̱a'x̱ala into our lives and programs and understand that this will be a lifelong journey. No matter where you are in your understanding and practice of may̱a'x̱ala, you are welcome to join the Āḵala 'ṉamyut.

Āḵala means
"fish jumping
out of water"
in Kwaḵwala



Our 2024 goals



1

**Connect Musgamakw
Dzawadą'enuxw participants
back to the territory.**

Eighty (80) Musgamakw Dzawadą'enuxw citizens travelled to their ancestral territories in 2024 on our programs. We spent 31 days exploring and paddling over 76 nautical miles (nm).

2

**Create a language and cultural
learning environment.**

Each participant left with a greater understanding of what it means to be Musgamakw Dzawadą'enuxw. They learned about the history of specific parts of our territory and were engaged in Kwakwala lessons while camping and paddling.



3

Support equity, inclusion and safe spaces on our ancestral territory.

Each night, we finished the evening with a circle to discuss the day. Each person was encouraged to speak from the heart and was actively supported on and off the water.

4

Provide leadership training and outdoor skills learning opportunities.

Each participant left with a Paddle Canada certification in lake water and coastal canoeing. They learned about navigation, tides, weather, paddling technique, camping and safety skills. We had an Instructor Training program this year that provided future/current Akala instructors with how to run a program.

5

Host a Paddle Reunion with Past and Present participants

This year, we wanted to gather all past participants to keep the paddling community well alive and gather in a place that has deep cultural importance. We camped for two nights and hosted a community day where others joined us for a few hours. This was also an opportunity to create a film that highlights the voice of our youth.

6

Create a film to support giving a voice to youth

There has been a string of deaths within the Kwakwaka'wakw nations due to substance abuse and suicide. Our youth have expressed the need to have more opportunities to access their territories and their culture so that they can have other options than using substances. The youth are the storytellers in this film; it will be a way they can communicate what they need from our Nations.



Expedition overview

Youth Leadership Paddle Program (Thrill) Big Canoe

Date: March 17th–23rd, 2024

Route: 'Yalis to Hada

Distance: 48nm (89km)

Who: Seven Musgamakw
Dzawadā'enuxw participants, one
Musgamakw Dzawadā'enuxw
instructor and one
Greek/Estonian instructor

Ages: 15–30



Women & Gender Diverse Canoe Journey

Date: May 21 – 28, 2024

Route: Lixis to Gwa'yasdams

Distance: 14.5nm (27km)

Who: Six Musgamakw
Dzawadā'enuxw women and
gender diverse people and
two Musgamakw Dzawadā'enuxw
instructors

Ages: 8 to 59



Youth Leadership Paddle Program (Chill)

Date: July 21st–28th, 2024 +
Paddle reunion Until July 30th
Route: Gwa'yasdams to Lixis
Distance: 14nm (27nm)

Who: Eight Musgamakw
Dzawada'enuxw participants,
two Musgamakw
Dzawada'enuxw instructors &
one Musgamakw
Dzawada'enuxw language
instructor

Ages: 11 – 17



Summary YLPP Thrill

Written by Julia Power

The 2024 YLPP Thrill was unlike any paddle trip we'd done before. First, it was scheduled in March, meaning the weather would be colder and less stable. Second, we were starting in Yalis, and third, we were paddling together in a 39' fibreglass war canoe.

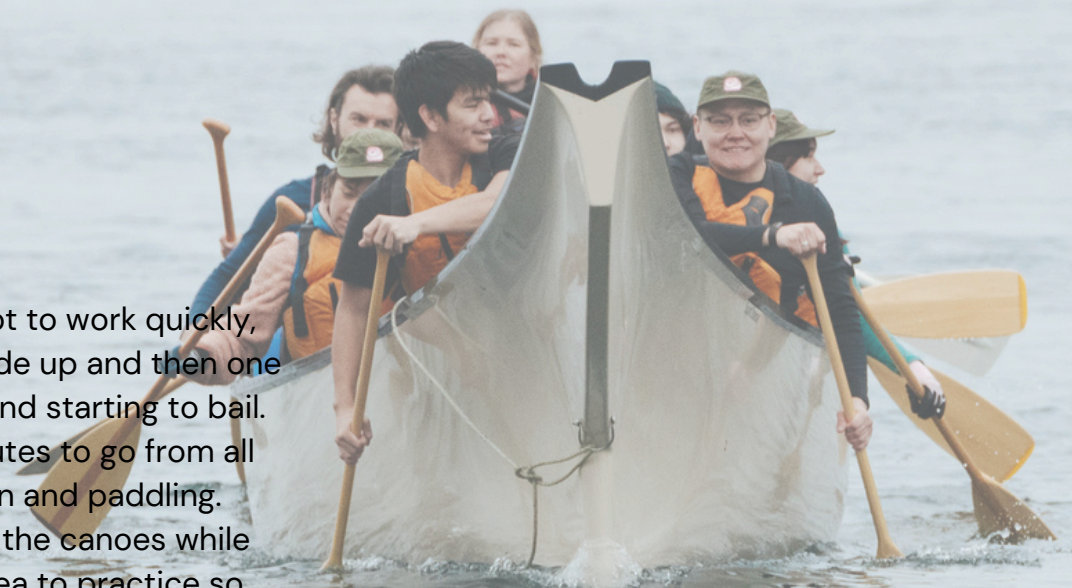
The group met at the Alert Bay Cabins for dinner on March 17th. We discussed the plan, the route, and how this program would differ from previous ones. Uncle Dick Dawson joined us to talk about his time on a big canoe. He shared many stories and lessons of his time, such as building and paddling big canoes. Before starting on our journey, we needed to make sure everyone felt comfortable in the big canoe. We spent a day going over stroke maneuvers, and of course, we ended the day with a flip. These big canoes are hard to flip. We were practically all leaning out on one side of the canoe, and it still wouldn't flip. We had to force it to go over.

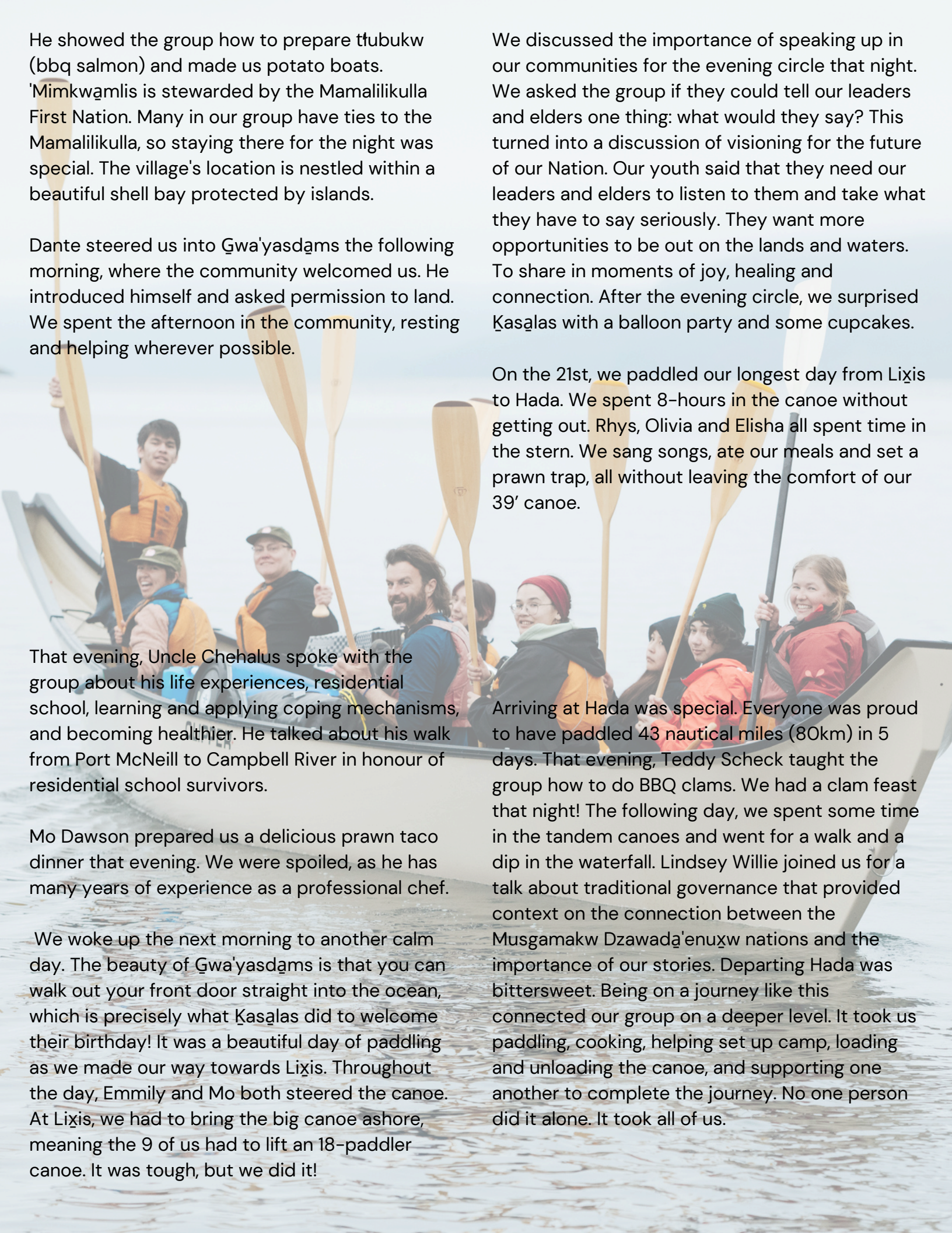
Once in the water, the group got to work quickly, flipping the canoe back right side up and then one at a time getting in the canoe and starting to bail. All in all, it took us about 5 minutes to go from all in the water to everyone back in and paddling. Though our plan is never to flip the canoes while travelling, it is always a good idea to practice so that everyone is comfortable being in the water and knows what to do to stay safe

On the 19th, the group was ready to leave. We had to cross Weynton Passage, an area known for significant currents. Knowing this, we needed to time our crossing of Weynton at slack so that we would not get caught in the dangerous currents.

Multiple people came to say goodbye to our group as we pushed off the dock at 'Yalis. We were sent off with a prayer and a song. Our paddling skills were displayed as we showed off with several maneuvers leaving the dock. The day was calm, and spirits were high as we set out on our 5-day journey from 'Yalis to Hada.

Our crossings were calm, and the team paddled hard. We weaved through the Pearse and Plumper islands and across Blackfish Sound toward 'Mimkwāmlis, our first campsite. There, we were welcomed by Andy Puglas of the Mamalilikulla Guardians.



A group of about ten people are in a large, light-colored canoe on a body of water. They are all wearing life jackets and holding long wooden paddles. The people are of various ages and ethnicities, and they appear to be in good spirits. The background is a soft, hazy landscape with water and distant land.

He showed the group how to prepare t̓ubukw (bbq salmon) and made us potato boats. 'Mimkw̓amlis is stewarded by the Mamalilikulla First Nation. Many in our group have ties to the Mamalilikulla, so staying there for the night was special. The village's location is nestled within a beautiful shell bay protected by islands.

Dante steered us into G̓wa'yasd̓ams the following morning, where the community welcomed us. He introduced himself and asked permission to land. We spent the afternoon in the community, resting and helping wherever possible.

That evening, Uncle Chehalus spoke with the group about his life experiences, residential school, learning and applying coping mechanisms, and becoming healthier. He talked about his walk from Port McNeill to Campbell River in honour of residential school survivors.

Mo Dawson prepared us a delicious prawn taco dinner that evening. We were spoiled, as he has many years of experience as a professional chef.

We woke up the next morning to another calm day. The beauty of G̓wa'yasd̓ams is that you can walk out your front door straight into the ocean, which is precisely what K̓as̓alas did to welcome their birthday! It was a beautiful day of paddling as we made our way towards Lix̓is. Throughout the day, Emmily and Mo both steered the canoe. At Lix̓is, we had to bring the big canoe ashore, meaning the 9 of us had to lift an 18-paddler canoe. It was tough, but we did it!

We discussed the importance of speaking up in our communities for the evening circle that night. We asked the group if they could tell our leaders and elders one thing: what would they say? This turned into a discussion of visioning for the future of our Nation. Our youth said that they need our leaders and elders to listen to them and take what they have to say seriously. They want more opportunities to be out on the lands and waters. To share in moments of joy, healing and connection. After the evening circle, we surprised K̓as̓alas with a balloon party and some cupcakes.

On the 21st, we paddled our longest day from Lix̓is to Hada. We spent 8-hours in the canoe without getting out. Rhys, Olivia and Elisha all spent time in the stern. We sang songs, ate our meals and set a prawn trap, all without leaving the comfort of our 39' canoe.

Arriving at Hada was special. Everyone was proud to have paddled 43 nautical miles (80km) in 5 days. That evening, Teddy Scheck taught the group how to do BBQ clams. We had a clam feast that night! The following day, we spent some time in the tandem canoes and went for a walk and a dip in the waterfall. Lindsey Willie joined us for a talk about traditional governance that provided context on the connection between the Musgamakw Dzawad̓'enux̓w nations and the importance of our stories. Departing Hada was bittersweet. Being on a journey like this connected our group on a deeper level. It took us paddling, cooking, helping set up camp, loading and unloading the canoe, and supporting one another to complete the journey. No one person did it alone. It took all of us.

Summary Women and Gender-diverse Canoe Journey

Written by Julia Power

May is generally a beautiful time of year. The sun often shines, the weather is stable in a high-pressure system, and the winds are mild. This was not the case for the Canoe Journey this year. We were met with heavy rain, cold winds, and big waves. It seemed that every time we got into our canoes, the wind and rain would pick up, and then, as soon as we set up camp or stopped for lunch, the wind and rain would die right now. Often we would hear someone in our group say “our ancestors must be testing us”. And they were, and boy, did we meet the challenge.

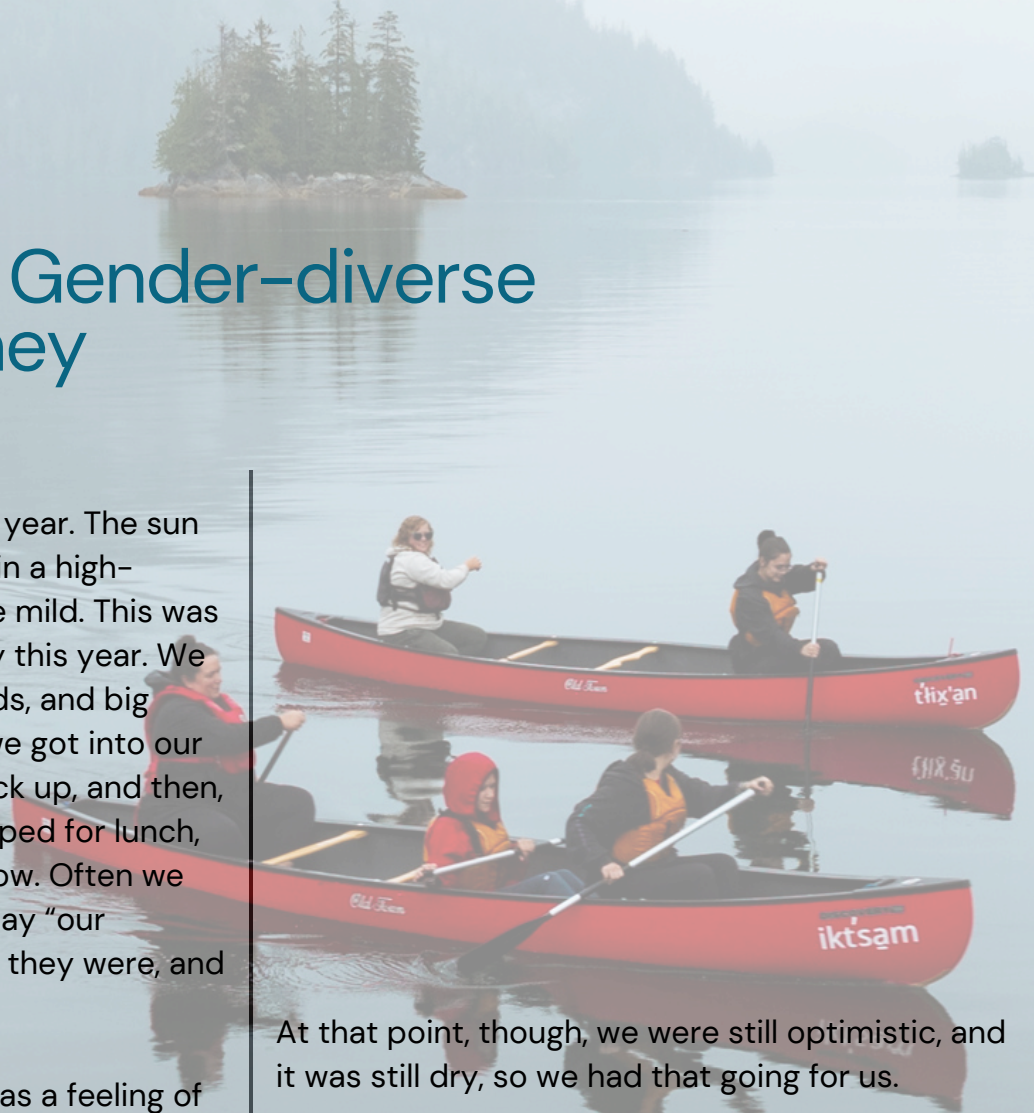
Our journey began at Lix̱is. There was a feeling of excitement and some trepidation as everyone unpacked and set up camp. The group ranged in age from 8 to 59 years old. Many had been on the trip the previous year, but we had some newcomers as well. Chelsea and her daughter Justina had never been further than 'Yalis before. Connecting people back to their ancestral territory and their families is an integral part of our programs. As a Scow, Chelsea and Justina had many relatives on the trip. Auntie Sherry-Lynn was our group's matriarch. She's the mom of another participant, Shadow, but she ended up being a mom to all of us on the trip and always made sure we had a roaring fire to gather at.

Our first evening was cold. Everyone was bundled, and all the extra sleeping bags were in use. This was our first hint that this trip was not going to be the calm, hot and sunshiny trip we had the previous year.

At that point, though, we were still optimistic, and it was still dry, so we had that going for us.

We spent a day learning some paddle strokes and exploring around the Burdwood group. The following day, we paddled to Miṯap̱dzi. There, we saw a momma black bear and her cubs and returned to Lix̱is. The plan was to stay at Lix̱is for three nights and then paddle to X̱ox̱opa. However, we woke up early on May 24th to a 20–30 knot north wind forecast. We decided to stay put. We spent the day sleeping, carving, and talking by the fire. Lindsey led us in singing our traditional songs, and Dani guided us through a language lesson, which consisted of us yelling our introduction to the territory. As women and gender-diverse people, our voices often go unheard. Practicing using our voices in singing and in our language is a powerful tool.

The theme of this year's journey was rest. With that in mind, the group decided to spend more nights at each campsite and go for day paddles.



We hired two cultural facilitators, a traditional medicine teacher, and a body energy worker to heal people in our territories. They were going to join us at Xoxopa on the 24th. Unfortunately, due to the high winds, they could not join us.

On the 25th, the forecast was for lighter winds, so we decided to go for it and paddle to Xoxopa. The water looked dead calm as we loaded the canoes and paddled along the Burdwood group towards Denham. It wasn't until we started crossing the channel that the waves picked up. As a way to increase stability, the canoes rafted up. We had a support boat with us as well and rafted up with them, too. It took us a long time to get from Denham to Powell Point. The group were all-stars as they held tight to the raft. Of course, in true bakwam style, we made jokes and laughed along the way. Once we arrived safely, albeit a little rattled, across the channel, we paddled alongside Gilford Island towards Echo Bay. Our challenges continued as we made our way past the point. The waves were big, and the currents were strong. Our group paddled hard. Auntie Sherry had a look of determination on her face. You could tell that she wanted to be on firm ground but wanted to get there by paddling there herself. Shadow, Dani, and Kayla all smiled, showing their excitement about putting their paddling skills to the test.

We arrived at Paddler's Inn, just north of Echo Bay, around 2 pm. We sheltered there to wait out the wind, and we discussed the day. An essential piece of our program is that people feel they have the space to debrief. We spent the night at a cabin at Echo Bay. Everyone could dry their wet clothes, warm their bones and eat some junk food.

Though paddling in those conditions is challenging and tests your limits, making it through on the other end strengthened our bond. There was an increased level of trust we had with each other.

The following morning, the group visited Billy Proctor, an elder who has lived his entire life in the Broughton Archipelago. Though a settler, he has many memories of our ancestors and shares those memories and his knowledge openly. We made our way to Xoxopa in the afternoon. The wind and rain were with us, but at this point, they had become a part of the group, like an old friend. Xoxopa was a welcome sight. We took a moment to have a coffee and snack before lugging our gear up the hill. Unfortunately, while unloading, Kayla took an unplanned dip in the ocean. The ancestors must have wanted her to have a spiritual bath.

We only ended up with one night at Xoxopa, but what a night it was. A deluge came for us. Turns out the ancestors wanted all of us to have a spiritual bath. Luckily, with our handy tarp and fire-building skills, we were able to stay mostly dry and mostly warm. We sang more songs that night and shared even more laughter.

On our final day, we woke up to the sun and calm winds. It was a beautiful and peaceful paddle to Gwa'yasdams. We stayed at a house on the beach and spent the day visiting with family, resting, and searching for trade beads.

It's always hard saying goodbye at the end of these trips. The feeling is excitement to get back home to a bed and a toilet but also sadness. Living communally on the land is what our ancestors did, so it is part of who we are as well. Eating, paddling, laughing, and struggling together create an unbreakable bond. Saying goodbye to that is difficult, but the group was already planning the Canoe Journey in 2025. Perhaps next year, we will achieve our goal of rest.

Summary YLPP Chill

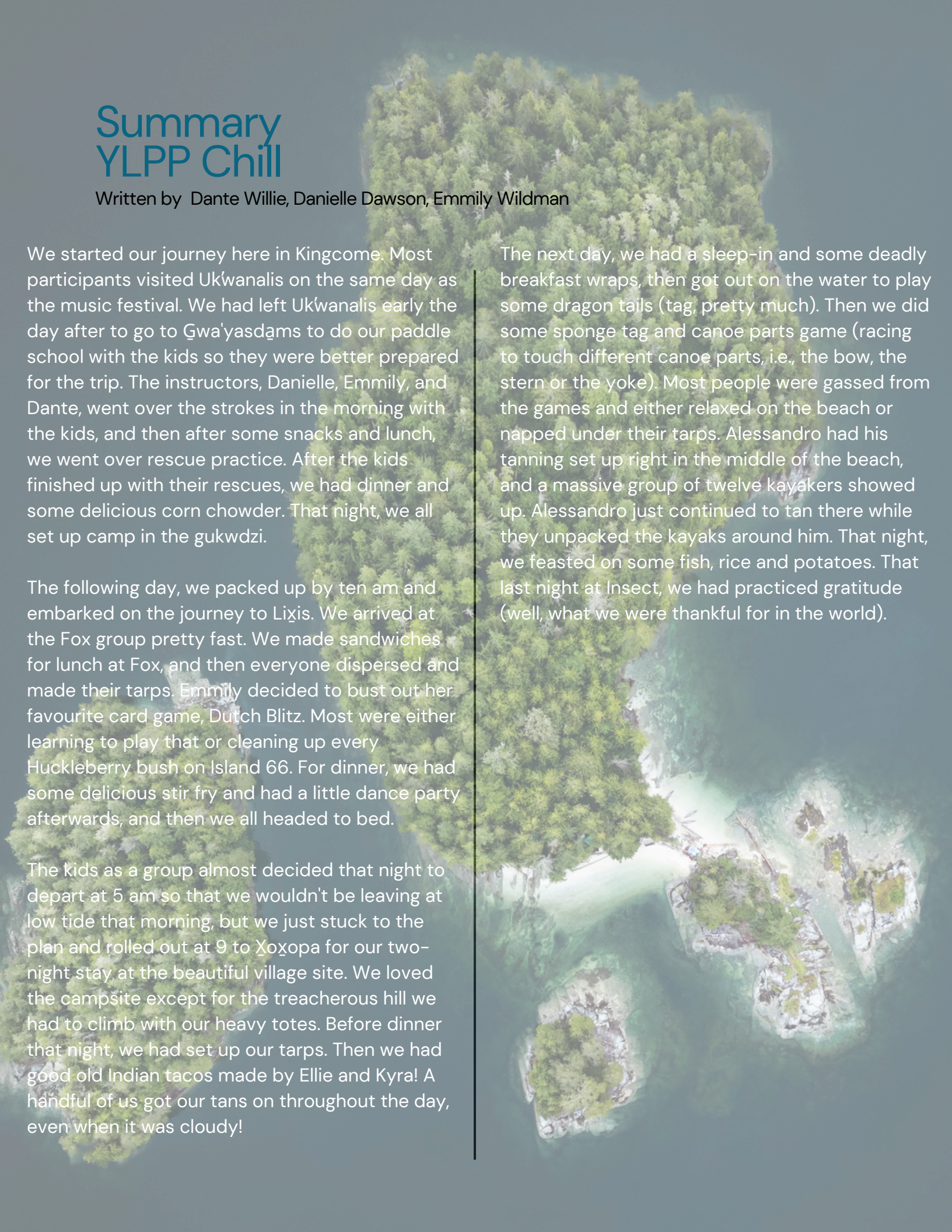
Written by Dante Willie, Danielle Dawson, Emmily Wildman

We started our journey here in Kingcome. Most participants visited Uk'wanalis on the same day as the music festival. We had left Uk'wanalis early the day after to go to Gwa'yasdams to do our paddle school with the kids so they were better prepared for the trip. The instructors, Danielle, Emmily, and Dante, went over the strokes in the morning with the kids, and then after some snacks and lunch, we went over rescue practice. After the kids finished up with their rescues, we had dinner and some delicious corn chowder. That night, we all set up camp in the gukwdzi.

The following day, we packed up by ten am and embarked on the journey to Lixis. We arrived at the Fox group pretty fast. We made sandwiches for lunch at Fox, and then everyone dispersed and made their tarps. Emmily decided to bust out her favourite card game, Dutch Blitz. Most were either learning to play that or cleaning up every Huckleberry bush on Island 66. For dinner, we had some delicious stir fry and had a little dance party afterwards, and then we all headed to bed.

The kids as a group almost decided that night to depart at 5 am so that we wouldn't be leaving at low tide that morning, but we just stuck to the plan and rolled out at 9 to Xoxopa for our two-night stay at the beautiful village site. We loved the campsite except for the treacherous hill we had to climb with our heavy totes. Before dinner that night, we had set up our tarps. Then we had good old Indian tacos made by Ellie and Kyra! A handful of us got our tans on throughout the day, even when it was cloudy!

The next day, we had a sleep-in and some deadly breakfast wraps, then got out on the water to play some dragon tails (tag, pretty much). Then we did some sponge tag and canoe parts game (racing to touch different canoe parts, i.e., the bow, the stern or the yoke). Most people were gassed from the games and either relaxed on the beach or napped under their tarps. Alessandro had his tanning set up right in the middle of the beach, and a massive group of twelve kayakers showed up. Alessandro just continued to tan there while they unpacked the kayaks around him. That night, we feasted on some fish, rice and potatoes. That last night at Insect, we had practiced gratitude (well, what we were thankful for in the world).



The following day, we were a little behind schedule, but we weren't in a rush, so we weren't too worried, but we got to Echo Bay. That day, we made more sandwiches for lunch, and then the kids found a handsome toad named Todd. Then we relaxed till dinner time, and we had what was supposed to be mac and cheese, but Rhys called it prison food.

We got up a little earlier to leave for our hike from the dock at Paddlers Inn the following day. A few had gone for a swim or a paddle while we were at the lake, and then we got an escort from Salmon Coast across to Denham Island from Powell Point. We had some fantastic vegetarian chilli for dinner at our final camp location.



Skills Development Overview

Moving Water Canoe

July 6th-7th, 2024

Certifications: Paddle Canada – Intro Moving Water Canoe Skills

2 Participants, 1 Instructor

Two participants met with the instructor to discuss the course, river hazards, and safety and to review some strokes and maneuvers before heading up the river. They spent some time doing throw-bag practice and discussed other ways of rescue while on the river. They discussed visualizing hazards and self-rescue as they paddle downstream so they are prepared. They discussed route finding and different ways of moving across the river, such as lateral movement. They put to practice the skills learned on the ocean, such as carving and turns under power, and practiced on eddy lines at Clearwater.

When everyone felt confident enough, the group canoed onto the river. When there was an appropriate place, they did a rescue practice, learning how to self-rescue their canoe if it capsized. Later, the participants got pushed too close to a deadhead and capsized. They performed well and took care of each other while in the water. The rescue went well, and they continued down the river. They stopped at Aklatzi to visit some community members who told stories of canoeing on this river years ago.

Over these two days, these participants gained much about paddling abilities, river knowledge, and how to stay safe on the river.

Instructor Development

June 20th-23th

Certifications: Paddle Canada – Wilderness Camping

Skills & Intro Tandem Lake Canoe Skills

7 Participants



Outward Bound Training Academy collaborated with Akala Society to develop a 4-day staff training to better equip Akala's outdoor leaders with skills such as risk management, program development, route planning, youth care, and more.

The training began in Ukwan̓alis, where participants expressed hope for using these skills. Some will be leading a week-long youth canoe program this summer, others work with a youth camp and will be teaching canoeing, and others hope to develop some multi-day canoe programming in future years, all in Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw territory. Participants were engaged in the training and shared their experiences and knowledge.

Some of the topics covered this week include the intention of outdoor programming, the flow of a longer program, student care, group management, meals, route planning, risk management, legalities/waivers, paperwork, first aid and repair kits, gear organization, cultural teachings, charts, navigation/compass, camp set-up (kitchen, bathroom, fires, tarps), hygiene, LNT, river hazards, intro canoe skills, canoe rescue, and evening meetings. Participants needed time to hone skills, practice, and even teach each other.

Lilawagila Outdoor Education

June

12 participants



The Lilawagila School in Ukwanalis goes from kindergarten grade 7. 12 students came to our lessons. We learned about four culturally essential trees and their spiritual and medicinal purposes. This involved learning the dances associated with each tree. An important story about our ancestral relationship to the non-human world was shared with the kids. It is a story of a boy and grouse that is remembered through dance in the gukwdzi. The kids learned how to tie three knots, and using those knots, they knew how to build a shelter with a tarp. A new addition this year was learning about the scraping portion of deer-hide tanning. Each kid was given the chance to help scrape a deer hide while also talking about its relationship to the animal kingdom and what it means for that deer to give of itself for us.



Big Canoe

March 2nd

Certifications: Paddle Canada – Intermediate

Big Canoe Skills

2 Participants

To prepare for the Big Canoe program, two of Akala's lead instructors become certified in Paddle Canada's Big Canoe Leader's skills. The program took place in Victoria. To be certified Julia and Shawn needed to show proficiency in their manoeuvring skills, communication skills, and their rescue skills. They needed to successfully navigate the big canoe through a skills course, and rescue a flipped canoe four times. This was all done in the Victoria Gorge at the beginning of March. This provided Julia and Shawn with the skills necessary to lead the YLPP Thrill program in the big canoe.

Community Outreach Events

Paddle Reunion

Our biggest event this year was the Paddle Reunion, a 3-day campout and Lixis and included 50 MD citizens from close and far, many of whom have been participants of previous paddle programs. People canoed, practised Kwakwala, sang songs and gathered around delicious food. From this campout, a film was produced that will be used for future community outreach events and allowed the youth to express their views and needs to MD elders and leaders. Events like this are integral to our community wellness. It brought together our sister nations, which are rarely given opportunities to gather in our shared ancestral territories for community-building.

Walking Tree Tour Stanley Park

Our second event was hosted in Vancouver by Talaysay. Founded in 2002, Talaysay Tours is owned and operated by Candace and Larry Campo, Shíshálh (Sechelt) and Sḵwḵwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation members. They are active participants in the Indigenous tourism and education sector, and their goal is to build the next generation of businesses, tourism, and education employment while supporting cultural revitalization, land-based education, and Indigenous reclamation in harmony with nature.

"Each plant, each tree has its own special story. On this nature walking tour, you will hear the stories of how shíshálh (Sechelt) Coast Salish & Sḵwḵwú7mesh (Squamish) People have been utilizing the land for food, medicine, and technology for thousands of years."

We wanted an event that fostered the MD community away from the territory while being respectful of the nations we live in. The Walking Tree Tour was hosted in Stanley Park on November 9th.

Following the tour, we shared a meal and facilitated a discussion about Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw unity, barriers that keep people from coming home, and land/water-based programs.

Paddle Reunion Summary

Written by Julia Power

July 28th–30th, 2024

50 Participants

In total, we had 35 campers who were all people who had been on an *Ak̓ala* trip before, 2 cultural facilitators, and 15 visitors on our community day. The ages of participants ranged from 3 to 79 years old. We brought people in from Vancouver, Victoria, Campbell River, Port Hardy, Alert Bay, *Gwa'yasdams*, and *Ukwānalis*. It was a beautiful event that connected our sister tribes and uplifted the accomplishments of *Ak̓ala* program participants. The place where we hosted the event is accessed by boat only. We had one group arrive by tandem canoes, and the rest joined by motorboat. There was a traditional healer present who set up a table to do body and energy work. We also hosted a Kwakwaka'wakw language discussion and a traditional medicines walk. The participants could canoe, fish, relax and find joy in each other's company.

Additionally, at the campout, we had a film crew working on a documentary that highlights the voices of our youth. The film crew caught so much good footage and had really good interviews with the youth present.

The campout was a huge endeavour with lots of moving pieces. Organizing the boats alone was a complicated task. It was all worthwhile as we gathered on our ancestral lands that held so much power. Everyone left with smiles, having made new connections and renewing old ones. A result of the reunion was that we brought people who hadn't been home for a long time. Two of them ended up going back and living in the village for the summer. One is still in the community. Bringing people home is an essential piece of the work we do.



Outcomes

INTENTION	OUTCOME
Increase access to the outdoors for Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 80 Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw participants and instructors paddled/camped in MD ancestral territory.
Increase confidence in outdoor settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All participants felt confident in their roles on the expedition. All of them said they would do it again.
Create safe spaces for Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw citizens to engage in language and cultural learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kwakwala lessons throughout the journey enhanced participants uptake of the language• Singing traditional songs with pride when otherwise would not feel comfortable doing so
Support and develop mental, emotional, spiritual, cultural and physical wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants were encouraged and supported in growing their emotional, cultural, mental and physical wellness through their journeys on the water and the nature of group expeditions.
Build capacity in outdoor skills and leadership skills within the MD nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All participants were left with a new tool box of skills they can apply towards future employment. They all earned the Paddle Canada Certification.• YLPP Chill was delivered by the instructors we trained the previous year.• Instructor Development Program trained 7 MD outdoor instructors

Participant feedback

"The Thrill program allowed me to connect with family, and I got to experience working as ONE while paddling the Big Canoe!"

"We need more Big Canoe trips and more paddlers to go even further"

"I love that I got to visit with my aunty in Gilford and that we made our bannock."

The Best part of the program was the people and sea creatures, discovering the territory for myself, teh stories and working together as a collective to get a destination."

" The best part was connecting with everyone and learning more about the land."

"The instructor's willingness to give to those in need."

"I would feel comfortable doing another trip like this. It was an amazing way to build confidence and connect with the land, water and where our people come from."

"I was surprised how well my body held up. I was nervous about my abilities and my capacity, but that anxiety quickly dissipated."



"What surprised me the most was how welcoming the community was and how short the days were even though we paddled so many nautical miles."

" I never thought I would ever paddle such a distance."

"The instructors helped me learn to paddle, rescue, life-saving, and navigation skills, on top of learning more about our culture every night and providing all the gear I needed to participate in the program."

"I would like to see longer trips, more music and language incorporated. The different types of views and the group surprised me the most."

"The Best part was the feeling of connection; with the team, the land, the waters, just the expedition being a really nourishing challenge for the spirit and body."

"Truly an amazing opportunity to learn and develop your outdoor skills! They [Julia and Shawn] helped me build up my confidence and passed on some great knowledge.."

"The only thing that needs to be added is more rescue and scenario practice so that the changing behaviours and sea states in a canoe are understood. I also would love more game ideas so that they can be used for interactions. I am limited in my knowledge of group leadership for games, facilitating friendships, and team development."

"What I found most useful was how open, supportive, and encouraging Julia and Shawn are... I loved the circles they facilitated and all the information they shared with us. It felt like we had some really good dialogue going on."

"The most useful thing I learned was setting up the camp, like where to put the kitchen on hard and stable ground and low in case it does fall; it won't splash back and burn someone."

"The staff training sparked conversations around the differences between commercial guiding and program development for intentional travel with participants. How to end a trip to continue the learning and growth when it's done, and how to cultivate an environment of learning.."

"The staff training was very helpful; Everything was very helpful; I found the tarp information and knots that go with it very useful.."

"I loved the chart and compass work. It is empowering to have a better understanding of how to calculate distances and take bearings on and off the chart. I left it feeling inspired on so many levels."

"The staff training delivered by Akala in U'kwanalis was fulfilling on so many levels. Capacity and confidence building to keep groups safe on the water through well-thought-out content from Julia and Shawn's years of experience. The choice to host the training in Ukwanalis fed our spirits and helped both reconnect us to our lands and waters, as well as deepen our roots and help us understand more about who we are and where we come from.."

"Great job putting everything together! I appreciated being able to bring my family along as well! It felt like a very welcoming and inclusive experience."

"The only thing missing was white water training."

"The best part was all the programming, the people, the views, being on the water..."

"The best part of the program was making connections with others and the laughter."

"I learned how to tie knots, tarps and my ancestral language!"

"I was surprised the most by my physical capabilities throughout the trip."

"The best part was the challenging weather: the wind and the rain. We have overcome the toughest!"

"I do think my son benefited because he learned more about the movements of the paddle and parts of the canoe."

"I was surprised the most by scary crossings!"

"The instructors helped me learn the right way to paddle."

"The best part of the program was learning the language, singing our songs and bringing on the territory."

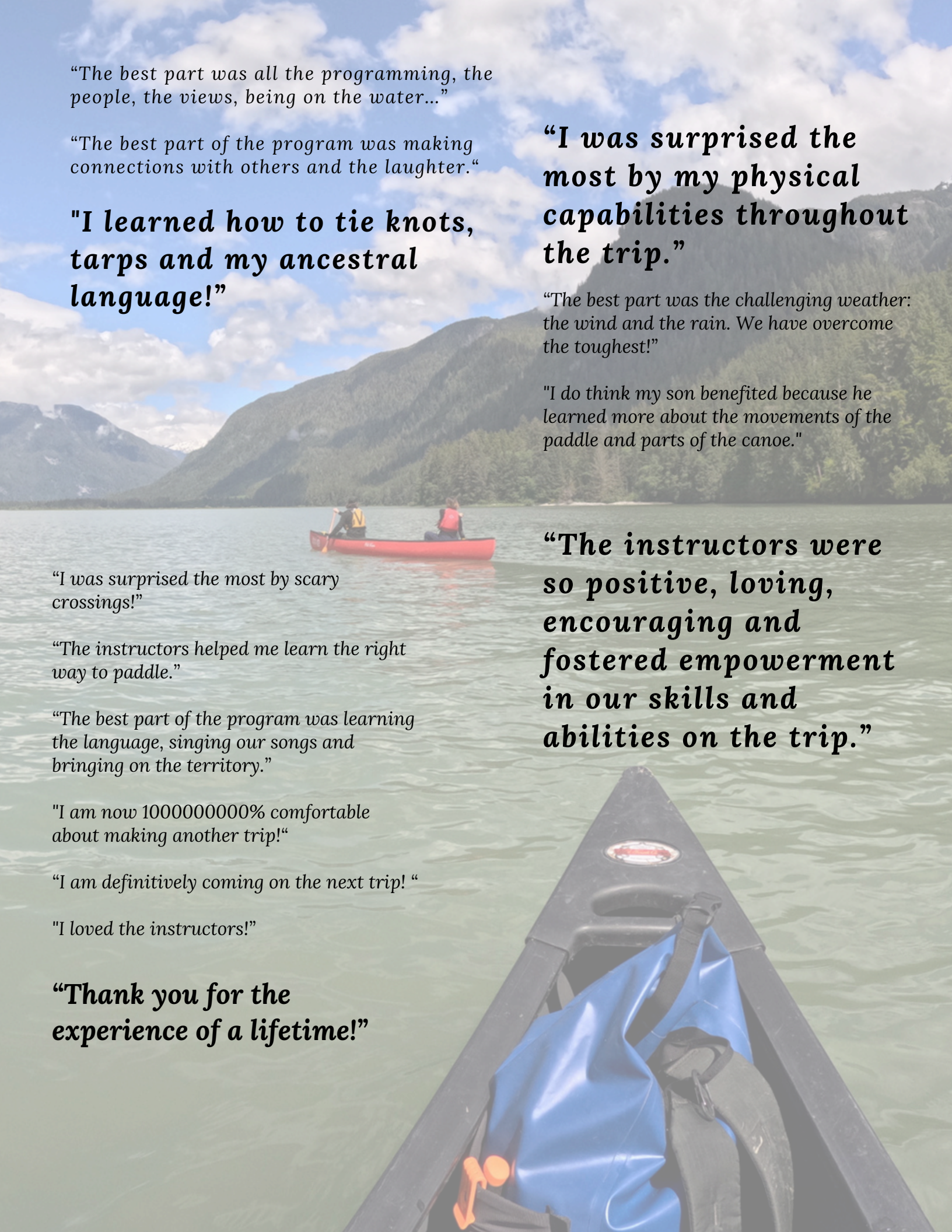
"I am now 1000000000% comfortable about making another trip!"

"I am definitively coming on the next trip! "

"I loved the instructors!"

"Thank you for the experience of a lifetime!"

"The instructors were so positive, loving, encouraging and fostered empowerment in our skills and abilities on the trip."



Total Budget

\$20,000 for the Woman's journey
\$20,000 for the Thrill Paddle program
\$15,000 for the Chill Paddle program
\$11,000 Instructor Training Courses
\$4,000 Moving Water
\$17,000 Paddle Reunion
\$20,000 Film Production and Editing
\$10,000 Community Engagement
\$75,000 Manager/Program Coordinator
\$6,000 Administrative Costs
Total: \$198,000



We thank you for your
ongoing support of
our programs!

Acknowledgements Community support and Funders

Gilakas'la to

Host Nations

Gwawə'enuxw
Kwikwasutinux Hax'wamis
Dzawada'enuxw

Funders

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The Nature Conservancy – The Earth Fund
Real Estate Foundation of BC
Peter Gilgan Foundation
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Dzawada'enuxw First Nation Health Center
Indigenous Peoples Resiliency Fund
North Vancouver Island Aboriginal Training Society