



NANAIMO & AREA LAND TRUST

office located on the territory of the Snuneymuxw Peoples

School Water Stewards



What is the School Water Stewards Program?



The SWS program was created to help foster ecological literacy about freshwater in elementary school aged students by providing them with opportunities to learn about and interact with local freshwater resources and associated ecosystems

Building a culture of stewardship

- Piloted in 2020 - 2021 at two schools in Nanaimo
- have been expanding within SD 68 & 69 to deliver to over 35 classes

- participating schools in SD 68:
 - McGirr Elementary
 - Georgia Avenue
 - Frank J. Ney
 - Ecole Hammond Bay
 - Pauline Haarer
 - Ecole Quarterway
 - Rocky Point
 - Cedar
 - sywencct
 - Departure Bay



Program Notes

The program has been growing steadily, with new recruitment happening primarily through word of mouth by teachers, as well as some online and ProD promotion.

- managing growth with respect to our capacity and the need to be equitable in our delivery



Key features of program

- delivered by NALT staff
- curriculum-linked
- free to participating classes
- focuses learning on and at local watershed features in walkable distance from school





CORE LESSONS

guided lessons to introduce students to local freshwater resources and associated ecosystems

STEWARDSHIP ACTIONS

give students an opportunity to take their stewardship education one step further



Core Lessons

Grade appropriate, curriculum-linked lessons that provide a basis for understanding the purpose of freshwater stewardship



Teachers select a number of core lessons from our offerings, based on their class interest and nearby freshwater features

Grades K-2

- Introduction to Water Stewardship
- Water quality and filtration
- What is a watershed?

Grades 3-5 & Grades 6-7

- What is a watershed?
- Aquatic macroinvertebrates: indicators of ecosystem health
- Stream health assessment
- Native and invasive plant identification
- Groundwater

Stewardship Actions

Created to give the students an opportunity to take their stewardship education one step further and complete a stewardship action

Based on the location and class interest, we help classes participate in an appropriate stewardship action

Grades K-2

- Additional offerings (K-1)
 - wildlife trees, birds' nests, microscope exploration
- Potential for stewardship action within a 'buddy' context

Grades 3-5 & Grades 6-7

- salamander monitoring
- invasive plant removal
- riparian planting
- native plant propagation
- turtle or bird surveys
- community outreach



What is the impact?

Benefits of an outdoor, nature-based and place-based program that teaches basic concepts of water stewardship through hands-on lessons and activities



Research indicates that immersive play and learning in natural places during childhood is linked to the development of strong ecological values in adulthood (Chawla 1998).

"One transcendent experience in nature is worth a thousand nature facts"

environmental educator David Sobel (2008)

- **"Let's do this every week! Then we can *really* make a difference."**
 - **Grade 6 student, during invasive pull in riparian area**
- **"Wow! Who knew there were so many things living in this muddy water."**
 - **Grade 2 student, during aquatic invertebrates lesson**
- **"This is more fun than recess!"**
 - **Grade 5 student, during salamander monitoring activity**