

6 High School YESS Crews Get Hands-on Learning and Work Experience This Summer

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2023 Program Overview

In the 2023 Youth Engaged in Sustainable Systems (YESS) program, high school students across the state earn credit while building their skills and exploring natural resource careers. Over 5-6 summer weeks, class time was paired with hands-on service at community partner sites. At the end of the course, each student received a document that rates their proficiency in entry level industry skills. Students can use this document to craft their resumes and describe their skills when applying for jobs.

PEI would like to thank the Recreation and Conservation Office's No Child Left Inside grant, the Dawkins Charitable Trust and The Russell Family Foundation for providing funding so that each student could earn an \$1,800 stipend. Their support made the following YESS programs possible this summer:

Glenwood School District

Glenwood School District created presentations to present their goals for a plot of land that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) "gave" them to manage. On one visit, PEI Green Jobs staff stopped by the land students are using to create forest management plans, and students shared how they learned to spot tree disease as well as how many trees they extrapolated to be on each acre.



Glenwood students visited a logging mill in Carson and an active harvest site where they learned about loading and processing logs.

Some of their favorite days included a visit to a logging mill in Carson and an active harvest site where they learned about the loader and processor.



Riverview students worked with restoration staff from the Snoqualmie Tribe on plant identification and blackberry removal.

Riverview School District

PEI Green Jobs staff recently visited our YESS Program with the Riverview School District and Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust along the Tolt River. We worked with the Riverview team and restoration staff from the Snoqualmie Tribe to help remove Himalayan Blackberry and identify and monitor native plants post-removal. By the end, students were able to explain and demonstrate the safest and most effective way to remove the invasive species.

Sno-Isles TECH Skills Center

PEI Green Jobs staff recently visited our YESS Program with the Sno-Isles TECH Skills Center and Snohomish Conservation District near Granite Falls. Students were assessing water quality at different sites... and it happened to turn out that they found the newly coined, "Frog Island!" Recent rain brought out hundreds, if not thousands, of young Pacific Northwest Tree Frogs. This was as much an 'enjoying nature moment' as it was a teaching moment!



Sno Isle Tech Center students were surrounded by tree frogs at the work site the dubbed 'Frog Island.'

Tumwater School District

Tumwater's first-year YESS program included site visits to employers that focus on forest health. Students visited with staff from the City of Tumwater, Nisqually Wildlife Refuge, North Thurston Fire District, and Sierra Pacific Industries. The students worked in small groups to create final presentations that demonstrated their learning. The class was thrilled that the Mayor of Tumwater was able to attend their final presentations.

Yakima School District 1

PEI Green Jobs staff recently visited our YESS Program with the Yakima School District & Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group. Students heard from Department of Natural Resources and US Forest Service staff about career pathways into fighting wildfire and experienced bits of the day in the life of a firefighter, including dozers and chainsaws. At the end of the day, students dug a hand line.

Yakima School District 2

Students, their teachers, Mid-Columbia Fisheries, and many other partners worked together to give students in the Yakima School District YESS Program a “Careers in Conservation” experience where they spent most of their summer in the field learning and experiencing what it means to work in conservation. Students participating in this program received a stipend of \$1,800 and course credit towards graduation. A few of these students, like Raymond, are even thinking about going into an environmental career after high school.

To launch a YESS program in your school, district, or skill center, contact us at

greenjobs@pacificeducationinstitute.org.



Tumwater students learned to take core samples from trees and other methods of measuring tree health.



Yakima students learned about fire and forest management from DNR foresters.