

Young Nature Leaders Grant



women for nature

Youth-Led Project Impacts



Introduction

Women for Nature Members, 2025

All across Canada, people and organizations inspire us with their leadership and devotion to our natural world. They commit their time and energy not for credit but for the results. They choose to take up the call to protect, engage, and advocate on behalf of nature.

Women for Nature, an initiative of Nature Canada, gathers leaders who care deeply about nature and want to inspire others to make a difference. In particular, we want to encourage, foster, and nurture youth (under 30) to demonstrate their leadership for nature.

To that end, the Young Nature Leaders Grant was established in 2017. Each successful applicant receives \$1000 to develop and implement a project centered around promoting sustainability in Canada. To date, 49 young people have been awarded the Grant, each carrying out important and impactful projects.

This document compiles these stories, in the hopes of inspiring future generations of Young Nature Leaders to apply. Potential applicants can also check out the Nature Playbook to spark project ideas.

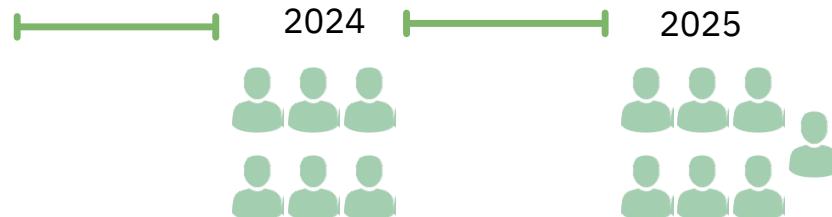
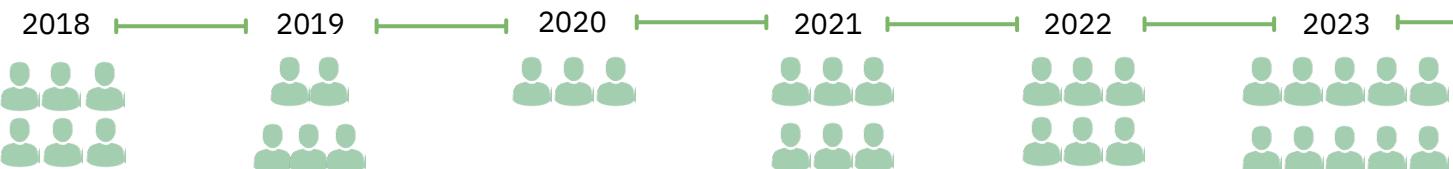


“ It brings me great hope and happiness to see these young people taking leadership in their local communities to help and heal nature. Through their actions and advocacy, young Canadians across the country are paving the way to a cleaner and brighter tomorrow. **”**

The Honourable Rosa Galvez
Honorary Chair of Women for Nature

Past Youth-led Grants at a Glance...

To date, there have been **8** cohorts, totalling **49** recipients who



come from **10** different provinces and territories.



So far, **26** projects have actively focused on underrepresented groups. We strongly encourage Indigenous youth to apply, as well as youth from any racialized and/or underserved community. At the same time, we actively seek out projects that will purposefully engage members of such communities.



As of 2025, these youth-led projects have reached **6090+** Canadians in schools, universities, natural parks, community centres, and online.

Youth Project Highlights:

Martha Henderson

Whitehorse, YK

Martha organized workshops with a Girl's Nature Club to empower teenage girls, aged 12-15, with the wilderness skills to help them become comfortable and confident with nature. They learned important outdoor skills like fire-building, orienteering, outdoor cooking, and trip planning.



Humza Hassan

Toronto, ON

Humza hosted "Park and Trail Group Clean Up Days" with Muslim community members. This past fall, he engaged two grade nine classrooms of students to participate in two park hike and clean up days, the UWATERLOO Muslim Student Association participated in a third event and the final hike and cleanup session involved participants from a local Waterloo mosque.



Margaret Atwood Young Nature Leader Grant:

Denise Miller

Six Nations of the Grand River Territory

Denise expanded her youth-led Revitalizing our Sustenance Project that addresses food security issues within her community. The project works to advance land and agricultural restoration and provides educational resources on Indigenous foods and local environmental issues. Denise shares that "as a Haudenosaunee woman, when you restore the land, you restore your identity and responsibility to Creation."



Percy Ager

Cape Breton, NS

This past Fall, Percy hosted a series of seed-saving workshops in their local community in Cape Breton. It is their hope to create a flourishing agro-tourism space that is accessible and inclusive bringing together diverse communities.



Élise Laferrière

Hudson, QC

Élise developed and distributed a downloadable, bilingual, solutions-based curriculum about the human impact on birds for elementary school-aged students to educate them about how to save bird lives. Students will be able to learn about human-caused injuries as well as indirect causes of decline in wild bird populations.



Kareina D'Souza

Dartmouth, NS

Kareina organized a 5-month leadership and management training program, 'Women of Colour Leadership in Nature.' It provided an inclusive educative space for 15 young women of colour to connect with nature, build community and develop professionally. She helped foster a sense of leadership in women of colour through nature-based workshops and settings.



Youth Project Highlights:

Luke Nguyen

Ajax, ON

Luke led a workshop to showcase native plant species and traditional Indigenous agricultural practices and over 30 youth volunteers were involved in the planting and maintenance of the Ajax's Indigenous Community & Healing Garden. Over the entire growing season, this special garden area welcomed hundreds of visitors at the

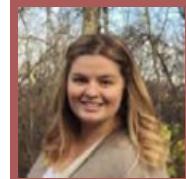
local hospital and community members from the Town of Ajax, and surrounding communities.



Alana Tollenaar

Spruce Grove, AB

In collaboration with the Edmonton and Area Land Trust, Alana hosted 8 Bee-The-Change workshops, during which over 100 participants built their very own bee hotels to set up back home. The funds were also used to assemble and distribute an extra 100 smaller construction kits for children.



“ Lots of people want to support nature conservation, but they don't have enough money or time to do it. Building bee hotels is a great way [for them] to help in their own backyards.

-Alana Tollenaar ”

Chevaun Toulouse

Sagamok First Nation, ON



Chevaun led land-based cultural programming in her First Nation community. Her programs consisted of identifying species at risk in the community, planting and teaching community members about cold-hardy gardens, as well as research to create Ojibwe ecosystem name lists and resources to share with her own and many other First Nation communities and environmental organizations.

“ Growing up on Sagamok Anishnawbek gave me an interest in and respect for the natural environment. I explored my surroundings, becoming familiar with the plant and animal species that lived around me and in my community [...].

-Chevaun Toulouse ”

Megan Turluk

Kelowna, BC

Megan organized day trips into South Okanagan National Park for international students attending the UBC Kelowna campus and connected them with Indigenous Elders who spoke about key natural places and their local culture.



2025 Young Nature Leaders

Wendy Ihama:

St. John's, NL

Championed The Nature-Based Leadership Program, a summer initiative that empowered underrepresented youth through outdoor adventures and leadership training focused on sustainability and community advocacy.



Jasmin Skinner

London, ON

Coordinated Restoring Ecological Knowledge workshops, which taught participants to identify native and invasive plants in the Carolinian EcoZone and promoted biodiversity through hands-on ecosystem restoration skills.



MAPEI Canada Young Nature Leader Grant:

Aidan Williams Dale

Brampton, ON

Bridged children and the public in reptile and amphibian conservation through curriculum-based workshops, hands-on learning, and citizen science in Brampton.



“ My goal for this grant was to promote citizen science. Through a workshop on native ecology, we focused on Ontario’s turtles during their nesting season as they faced high road mortality.

-Aidan Williams Dale



Megan Castelino

Montreal, QC

Led Bridging Generations in Nature, a Montreal-based initiative that connected racialized youth and elders through nature activities, promoting cultural exchange, wellness, and environmental stewardship.



Senaqwila Wyss

Squamish Nation, BC

Led Sovereign Seedlings, a cultural and ecological program that taught Indigenous youth traditional plant knowledge through intergenerational learning and sustainable practices.



Mehvish Khanam

Scarborough, ON

Engaged post-secondary students in building wildlife shelters through workshops in Scarborough to support local biodiversity and foster hands-on conservation and environmental stewardship.



Kaite Martin

Kimberley, BC

Connected youth and seniors as citizen scientists through the intergenerational engagement initiative to monitor lake health, fostering environmental stewardship and inclusivity through hands-on data collection and mentorship.

