



KOH-LEARNING KHIT/KHVI (WINTER) FESTIVAL



February 23-26, 2021



Above: Nechako River (photo by Barry Booth).

Winter Festival Week

Our winter gathering this year took place through a series of virtual events. Over the course of four days, students, educators, researchers, and community members came together from across and beyond the Nechako watershed and School District 91 to create, learn, share knowledge, and celebrate ongoing initiatives in the watershed. More than 450 elementary and secondary students participated in the festival, representing over 25 classes!

The virtual setting of our festival events provided an unprecedented opportunity for the Koh-Learning project to foster student engagement and connection across the watershed. We are delighted to share some highlights of these events with you here.

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Read on for a summary of festival highlights and links to more information!

In conjunction with the Aboriginal Education Council of SD91, we are pleased to profile Dakelh, Nedut'en and Wet'suwet'en language that is integral to the Koh-learning in our Watershed project. For example, Koh (waterways) and Khit/Khui (winter).

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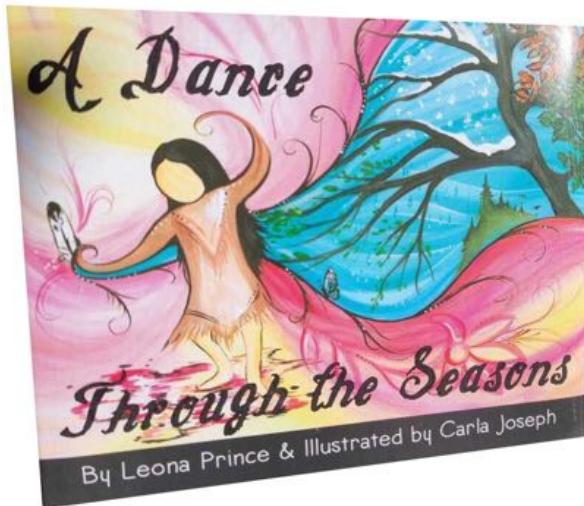


Photo by Ella Parker

Workshop: Drawing & Storytelling

Drawing and storytelling with local Indigenous artist Clayton Gauthier was a big hit! Teachers and students were able to learn together and create beautiful artwork.

Below and right: Student artwork created during Clayton Gauthier's workshop.



Photo by Mia Moutray

Festival Opening

We were honoured to have Leona Prince, SD91 Principal of Aboriginal Education, open our festival with a reading of her book, *A Dance Through the Seasons*. Leona also presented the seasonal rounds diagram that guides Koh-Learning activities and encouraged personal reflection on our own ways of moving through the seasons.



Photo by Deb Koehn

Workshop: Visual Journalling

In another well-received art workshop, Lyn Baldwin led participants through a series of visual drawing exercises. Students, educators, and community members alike were encouraged to consider new ways of seeing, learning about, and interacting with nature.

Stories & Plant Identification

Elder Jonas Morris joined us from around the firepit on Nak'azdli Whut'en territory for a round of storytelling in Dakelh and English. He also shared teachings about traditional uses of plants. This event saw great audience participation with many student questions about plants and the Dakelh language.



Student Spotlight: Waterways Mentors

Five students in grades 11 and 12 at NVSS shared about their experiences in the Waterways Mentors program. They discussed what they had learned from conducting water quality monitoring and from teaching these skills to younger students in fall 2020. The mentors were very animated in describing how they had also developed their own projects, and ended their presentation with ideas for why other students should consider becoming mentors themselves!

Left: David Hoy Elementary students gather round the firepit to listen to Elder Jonas (photo by Deb Koehn).

Below: Waterways mentors learn about water monitoring at Murray Creek (fall 2020; photo by Casey Litton).

Workshop: Through the Portal to Experiential Learning

This workshop reviewed how to use mapping apps to collect data and upload it to Koh-Learning's geospatial web-tool, the portal! A recording of the workshop can be viewed [here](#).

The portal is now accessible to the public. To start exploring the portal, you can:

- Check out the [portal website](#) and select different layers using the panel on the right
- Watch the 'how-to-use the portal' [video series](#) on YouTube
- For access to more, sign up for a portal account by emailing Ella Parker at parkere@unbc.ca



Student Spotlight: Driftwood Apprenticeship Program

Four students from Takla Nation joined us from the Driftwood Outdoor Guide and Business Apprenticeship Program to share about their experiences learning on the land. If you missed this student spotlight, a video about Driftwood can also be viewed [here](#).

Parallel Events

The Koh-Learning Khit/Khui (Winter) Festival was also pleased to highlight several parallel events taking place in the watershed during our festival week:

Evening on the Nechako with UNBC's Integrated Watershed Research Group

On February 23, UNBC's [Integrated Watershed Research Group](#) (IWRG) hosted an "Evening on the Nechako" to share the latest developments of their research in the Nechako watershed. The evening featured a presentation by IWRG researchers, conference-style poster presentations by graduate students, and opportunity for discussions and dialogue between participants and presenters.



Above: Nechako River (photo by Tavia McKinnon).



Professional Learning with SD91's Outdoor Learning Group

On February 26, SD91's Outdoor Learning Group hosted an engaging session that sent participants outside to try out individual outdoor learning activities. Afterwards, participants gathered for a discussion on place-based learning and a presentation by Dr. Hartley Banack on exploring the "where" of education beyond the walls of the classroom.

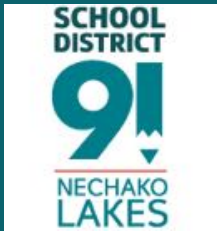
Nechako Watershed Roundtable Annual Meeting

On February 24, the [Nechako Watershed Roundtable](#) (NWR) gathered for their 5th annual meeting. During the meeting, SD91 students in grades 9-12 took part in a youth engagement "breakout session" which sought student input regarding NWR strategic planning and youth engagement. The youth were guided in a presentation about watersheds and discussed the importance of watershed and community health. They returned to the main meeting to present their thoughts on what it might mean for youth to continue to be involved in the NWR over the long term.

In Closing...

The Koh-Learning in our Watersheds team would like to extend a huge thank-you to all our presenters, with special thanks to Leona Prince for opening the festival and to Elder Jonas Morris for his closing remarks. We are grateful to everyone who attended and contributed their time and energy to gathering with us throughout the festival week.

To learn more about the Koh-Learning in our Watersheds Project, please visit our [website!](#)



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Background:

Elder Jonas shares a story with students from David Hoy Elementary on Nak'azdli Whut'en territory (photo by Deb Koehn).

