

ARCTIC  
INSPIRATION PRIZE



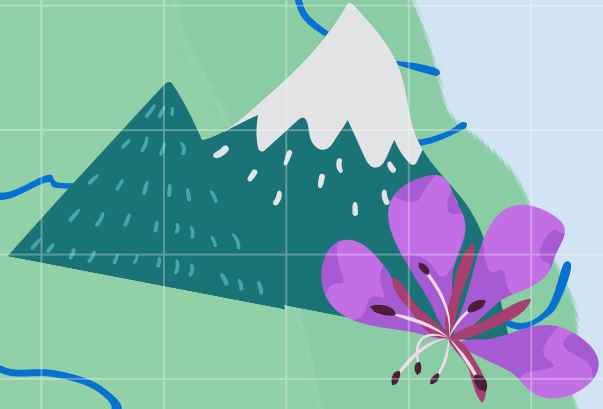
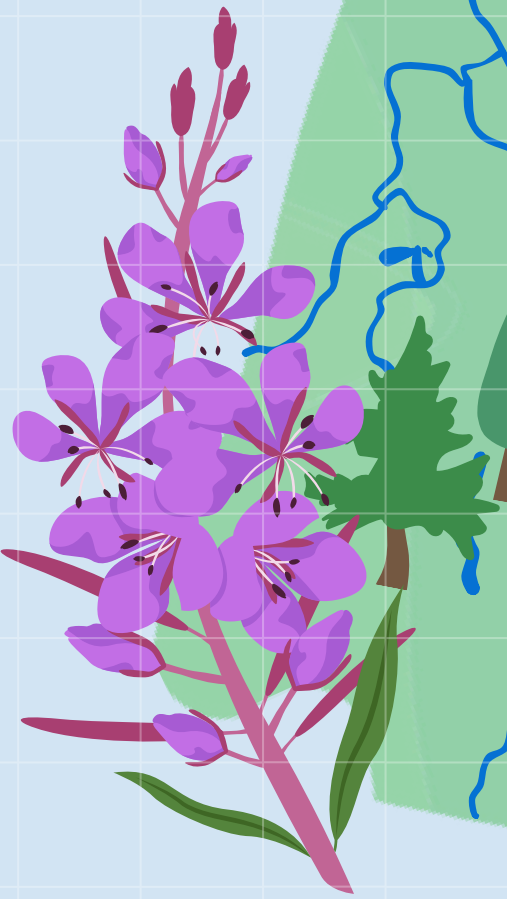
PRIX INSPIRATION  
ARCTIQUE

Rivers to Ridges

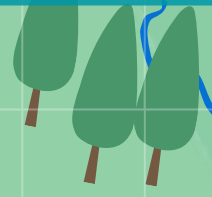


**ARCTIC INSPIRATION PRIZE  
2017 \$100,000 YOUTH CATEGORY  
WINNER**

Tágà Shāw – Great River  
Yukon River  
(the 'River' in Rivers to Ridges)



The May – Grey Rock Mountain  
Grey Mountain  
(the 'Ridge' in Rivers to Ridges)



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**The Arctic Inspiration Prize** is the largest annual prize in Canada. It inspires, enables, and celebrates the achievements of the people of the North, recognizing diverse teams with innovative projects in the fields of education; health and wellbeing; culture, arts and language; science and traditional knowledge; climate change; food security; and the economy.

## **NOMINATOR**

Remy Rodden, Manager

Environmental Education and Youth Programs,  
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## **TEAM**

Wren Nicolardi and Emily Payne (Team Leaders)

**This report was compiled and created by the Qatalyst Research Group, with the help of Katie Johnson, the project team, and AIP.**



# RIVERS TO RIDGES



Rivers to Ridges is a land-based educational organization supporting reciprocal relationships with the land through educational leadership, team training, collaborative resource design, and immersive program delivery - all on the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'an Council.



[https://youtu.be/vqV4A\\_mIO88](https://youtu.be/vqV4A_mIO88)

Empowering young learners to feel confident, aware, empathetic, and connected to their community.



[@riverstoridges9140](https://www.instagram.com/riverstoridges9140)

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF NATURE MENTORING

Rivers to Ridges is fostering curiosity through an educational philosophy that is built on the concept of nature mentoring and by encouraging learners to develop a deep sense of place through understanding their role in the natural world.

SUMMER  
CAMPS

STRONG ROOTS  
BURSARY FUND

MARCH  
BREAK  
CAMPS



# LEARNING ON THE LAND

“I was so blown away by how engaged the kids seemed - all attentive and so focused, and how engaged the instructors seem to be with the kids. Even from a distance it looked pretty special. I’m so happy my kid gets to experience this!”

PARENT OF SUMMER 2020 PARTICIPANT

Summer camps have been held every year since 2018. In total, there have been 1,125 attendees, with another 170 children expected to attend in 2024.

- 2018 - 100 children
- 2019 - 160 children
- 2020 - 215 children
- 2021 - 220 children
- 2022 - 260 children
- 2023 - 170 children



## LOCAL LANGUAGE SHARING

Programming includes resources that are used with the children that mainly focus on animal and place names.

Another language resource that Rivers to Ridges uses to teach staff and young people is the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board, which includes phrases and audio clips of areas within the Yukon.

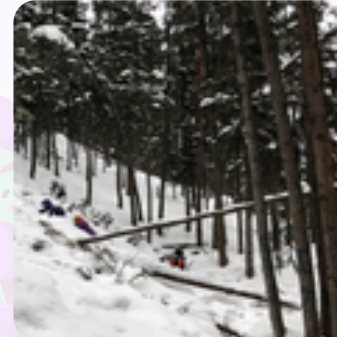
<https://yukonplacenames.ca/dakeyi/maps/map1/grey-mountain/>

SHĀW NÍTHĀN - GUNALCHÉESH | MÁŠIN CHO - THANK YOU

# NEST FOREST SCHOOL

The Nest Forest School was open from January 2021 to June 2021. Programming was outdoors, child-led, imaginative, and focused on nurturing curiosity and wonder.

ACTIVE CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO BECOME ACTIVE ADULTS.





# THE INVOLVEMENT OF ELDERS & KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS

7 Elders and Knowledge Holders were involved in programming with children and youth in 2023.

Elders are involved in guiding program development such as curriculum design, and are also welcomed to all outdoor and land-based programs with children and youth. During staff training weeks Elders are also invited so that staff can learn how to best support Elders' needs and offerings while engaging in programming with children and youth.



# REDUCING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Rivers to Ridges wants to empower all families to get their children outside more often. Since 2019, 22 children have attended programming with the support of the Strong Roots Bursary Fund.



In 2018, the Strong Roots Bursary Fund was created in order to welcome all children into the forest.

This fund is made possible through the generous offerings of local donors and sponsors.

In addition, a portion of organizational revenues are donated back into this fund.

The Bursary Fund may award up to 70% of a child's program costs.



## EMPOWERING A NEW GENERATION TO BE STEWARDS OF THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

The Heartwood Youth Leadership Training camp focuses on youth 13 and up. Individuals join the Rivers to Ridges team for a week of youth-focused training, bringing their skills and passions to life on the ground as youth leaders volunteering with younger participants. The program introduces game facilitation, empathy through play, crafting and building, skill development, and much more.

Some youth who began as campers 6 years ago have returned to Rivers to Ridges to become youth leaders who support the Heartwood Youth Leadership Training camp.

# DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING RESOURCES

## **SOUTHERN LAKES CARIBOU IN THE SCHOOLS: A COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING RESOURCE**

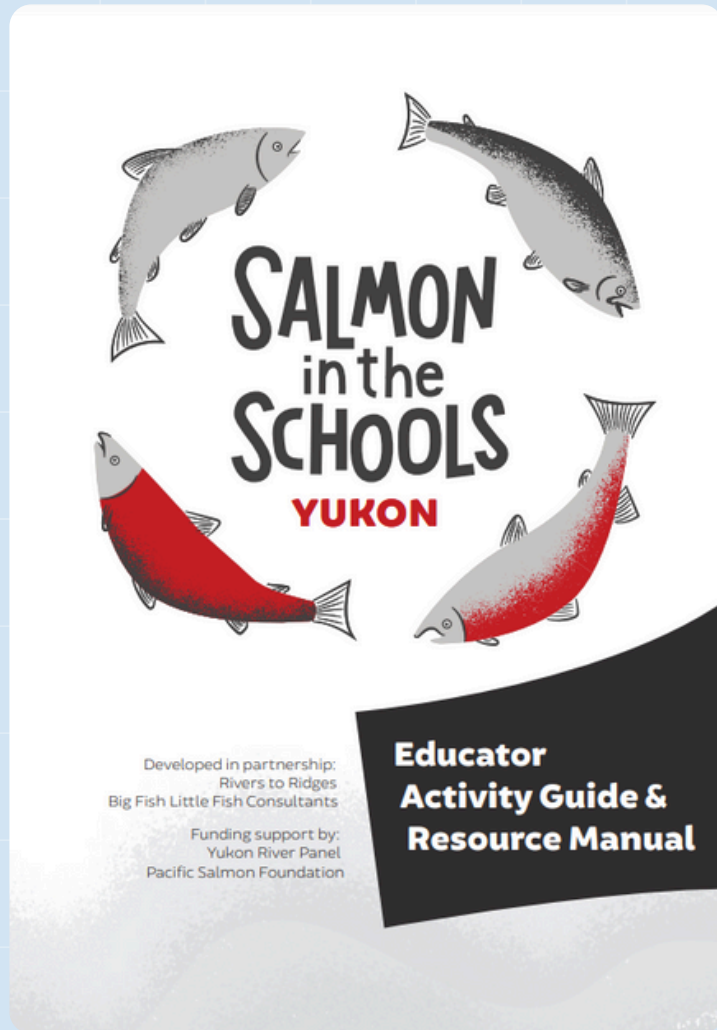


Caribou in the Schools: A Southern Lakes Caribou Learning Resource, allows educators to engage students in the unique history and ongoing story of the Southern Lakes Caribou.

In addition to the Learning Resource, six Community Booklets have been created to celebrate the distinct perspectives, knowledge, and language of each First Nation in the Southern Lakes Region. The resource combines a Western Science worldview with the perspectives and contributions of Elders and Knowledge Holders who have been a pivotal part of the incredible story of the Southern Lakes Caribou.



# DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING RESOURCES



The educator activity guide and resource manual has been designed with revised Yukon curriculum in mind.

Salmon in the Schools aims to strengthen education and awareness around Yukon salmon, including those in the Yukon River, Porcupine and Alsek River drainages. The program is creating a community of educators who are working to engage their students with local salmon stories, and to foster a sense of stewardship for Yukon's salmon populations.



# RECONCILIATION IN EDUCATION

- Engaging First Nations Elders and Knowledge Holders
- Integrating Southern Tutchone Language
- Advocating for more outdoor education and connection with the land, First Nations, and communities
- Supporting early learning practitioners to incorporate land based learning

“I want the education system to crumble and dissolve so something else can show up that better serves all the young people. We continue to hope that if we do work in a way that aligns with our values and the needs of the Community, we will keep figuring out where we are most useful in supporting long term solutions, reconciliation, and resiliency.”

**WREN NICOLARDI**



# OTHER FUNDERS & SPONSORS



# SUPPORTERS



# PARTNERS

