



Spring 2025

Collaboration: A Force of Nature

by *Desmond Berghofer, Vice Chair*

At a time when the world seems out of joint, with old alliances being swept aside and economic self-interest asserted against the rights of nature, it is important to remember a foundational principle of the living world: collaboration in support of the greater whole.

This is the principle behind the success of ecosystems to support a rich diversity of life. Students at GICEL summer camps learn to appreciate this principle in action as their teachers lead them

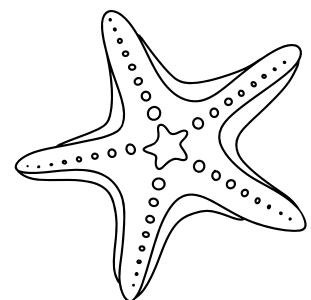


through a myriad of experiences with nature. This learning will serve them well as they grow up to be leaders with the responsibility of creating a peaceful and sustainable future for their generation and all the generations to follow.

Past generations have built the world of today with its many amazing achievements in technology and culture, but the guiding principle has been mainly on separation and competition, which has inevitably led to a world of disconnection at a time when the need for connection and collaboration has never been more important.

The good news is that we are a learning species with powerful minds that can embrace new ways of living together on Earth. If we take the model that nature has provided us of collaboration, resilience, and mutual support, and if we teach this to our children, then we can look forward to a human future as sustainable as the one we have inherited from the natural world.

This is the spirit of ecological learning that GICEL has fostered and promoted for more than 20 years in the Gulf Islands of British Columbia. It is revealed and celebrated in the stories and photographs in this and every issue of our Newsletter. We offer them as inspiration and hope for success in creating the best possible future for our children, grandchildren, and all of their children and grandchildren after them.





**THE GICEL CAMP
"IS THE HIGHLIGHT
OF THE YEAR FOR
ACTIVITIES FOR
YOUTH ON
SATURNA"**

-CAMPER PARENT 2024

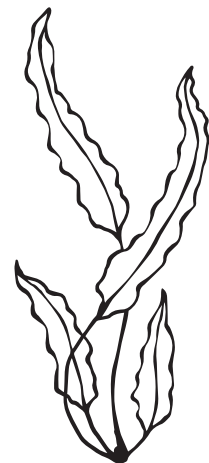
GICEL 2024 Year at a Glance

by Michael Dunn, Programs Director

The 2024 Summer Program was again a busy and successful undertaking. The Program ran over 5 weeks and took place on Mayne, Pender and Saturna islands. The demand again was very high and tested our on-line registration system to its limits. Our Mayne Island program placements were sold out in about 4 minutes of the registration opening. We had waiting lists for most of the weeks offered, but at the end of the process (including increasing our cap per week) we were able to accommodate virtually all who wished to attend. In all, we had 153 registrants in our program. We relied on our youth leadership team and had a complement of 4 coordinators and 36 young leaders who developed and designed the programs that were delivered.

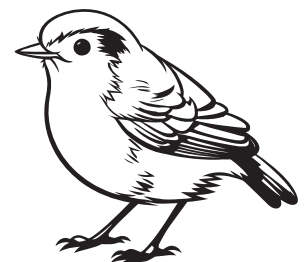
Again, this year, before the camps our annual leaders' weekend was held on Mayne Island and it included youth leaders and leaders in training from Saturna, Pender and Mayne Island. Coordinators provided a range of learning experiences to support the youth leaders to identify, describe, and reflect on various aspects of taking on a leadership role. Along with brainstorming the roles and responsibilities of each level of leader. Basic wilderness first aid and role playing on how to manage challenging situations that may occur during camp, were also covered. In addition, the leaders team spent time focused on developing the program for each week of camp. These weekend sessions have proven to be an important part of the young leaders' summer and an opportunity to interact with their peers and build a mutually beneficial team culture.

Over the year, our new part time registrar came on staff and made tremendous improvements to the email and the many forms we have for registering. The registrar also managed the registration site and took calls and questions from the parents or guardians of the potential participants. The result was that the coordinators could spend more time organizing the programs and assigning the youth leaders to the different weeks.



During the year as well, coordinators and the Program Director met with the Mayne Island Early Childhood Education Society to discuss a partnership with them in the creation and delivery of a Seedlings Program for 3 to 5 years old. The boards of both organizations supported this initiative. The key piece for the Early Childhood group is that they are a licensed organization for the delivery of pre-school/day-care services. So, the parties are discussing how a partnership between our organizations could work and meet the potential licensing requirements. A meeting held early this year and again in the spring continued the discussions in which we have set a target of delivering a pilot Seedlings program during this year's camp season. The demand is there for this program, and we are now working through how staffing would be done, wages and who is responsible, and location.

Another program area being discussed is the creation of a Summer Earth Education Program for adults. This program was conceived early last year and has been a discussion with our senior leaders, who would be delivering. For 2025, we will work with some of the youth leaders and flesh out a possible program, its content, cost and logistics, who to bring in, and when to launch the program. The possibility of a pilot program in the Fall will be explored and possible first participants canvassed to measure potential interest in such a program.



Pender Island

Andrea Mills

With 9 campers in total, we had five participants pay the full cost, while one received 100% subsidies, three received partial subsidies. Thanks to the Pender Island Lions for their funds to cover fee subsidies.

The leadership team included two youth leaders.

The camp theme was Nature Appreciation and Wilderness Survival. Activities included: Journal making, outhouse and change room shelter building, outdoor sanitation and hygiene discussion, initiative games, making/ getting safe drinking water, weaving, food gathering, navigation, map making, first aid, fire response, hiking, swimming, as well as games, crafts and other activities. The Pender Island School was the home base and afternoon trips to Medicine Beach, Mortimer Spit and day trips to Roesland/ Shingle Bay and Community Hall/ Hope Bay were done from there.



Saturna Island

Kelly Nordin

For 2024 there were 33 campers for the full week. The popularity of the program is such that the camp was full within twenty minutes of general registration opening. As in previous years, on behalf of all the Saturna resident campers, a Saturna parent successfully applied for a grant from the Saturna Island Parks and Recreation Commission.

There was a full complement of 12 leaders plus coordinator, made up the leadership team – all but the three Senior Leaders were based on Saturna.

The program for the week introduced ecological themes through a range of activities. This year, the themes of diversity, food webs, community, and inter-relationships were highlighted in active games, explorations of the beach and forest areas of Winter Cove, and quiet reflective moments during journal time. Additionally, circle time songs, fort building and afternoon beach time, especially swimming, were an integral part of camp.





This year included two special guests. Bea Martin shared her curiosity of the natural world during a wonderful nature journaling session; she joined us for the day cycling to and from Richmond! We were also honoured to have Aiya Bartleman, a W̱SÁNEĆ knowledge-holder working as a Parks Canada Interpreter, share some of traditional teachings/stories about local plants and animals. The session included teaching the campers a few words in SENĆOŦEN! A huge thanks to Athena George on Saturna Island for arranging this special visit.

Thanks also to a member of the Group of 30 who hosted the Senior Leaders and Coordinator at their camping area during the week.

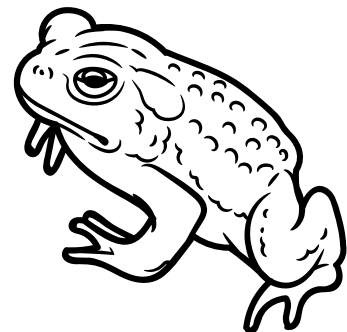
Mayne Island

Jess Willows and Amy Kamarainen

Again, this year, interest in the camps was very high with multiple email enquiries early in the new year. Due to financial reasons, we offered three weeks of programs for 2024. As a result, during general registration, all three camps were filled within minutes. We increased the cap to 36 participants per week to ensure as many as possible had the opportunity to participate in at least one camp. In the end we had 108 registrations for the three camps on Mayne Island.

As in past years, the leader team for each camp on Mayne was composed of three senior leaders (aged 17 or older), three junior leaders (15-16 years of age), and four to six leaders-in-training (13-14 years of age).

The Mayne camps provide weekly explorations of forest ecosystems and marine ecosystems so that the participants can immerse in these themes through explorations, hands-on experiences, games, journaling, wildcrafting and free time at the amazing venues we use. The programs were enhanced by activities led by the Mayne Island Conservancy and sessions provided by Bea Martin, a well-known nature journalist and artist.



The work of GICEL is supported with funding from the Barraclough Foundation, the Capital Regional District Grant-in-aid, the Stewart Fund through the Vancouver Foundation and private donations. The Mayne Island programs were additionally supported by the Mayne Island Parks and Recreation Commission and the Mayne Island Lions Club. Thank you to them all for the long-term support of GICEL.

We are also extremely grateful for the extended GICEL community that supports the campers and leaders alike throughout the weeks of the programs and beyond.



GICEL Board Chair report for January – December, 2024

by *Michael Hoebel, Chair*

As is reported elsewhere in this newsletter, GICEL was once again very busy with summer programs on Mayne, Pender, and Saturna Islands in 2024. The popularity of GICEL's programs means that when registration opens, available spaces are very quickly filled. To manage this, GICEL used an online system for registration in 2024, and plans to use an improved version for 2025.

Board Membership

Members of the GICEL Board of Directors for 2024 were *Michael Hoebel (Chair), Des Berghofer (Vice-Chair), Shelly Johnson (Secretary), Jesse Guy (Treasurer), Michael Dunn (Programs), and Adrian Pendergast.*

2024 Board Meetings and AGM

Meetings of the Board were held on January 5, March 15, April 26, and May 10, 2024. The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on May 10, 2024.

2025 AGM

All GICEL members are invited to attend the AGM on May 9, 2025, which will be online by Zoom.

A Note of Gratitude on Kelly's Retirement



On August 29, 2024, a group of leaders, Board members, family members and friends gathered to say a fond farewell to Kelly Nordin after her last Saturna camp. We shared food, stories and letters from those who could not attend. Kelly has provided leadership, guidance, organization and mentorship to our young leaders over the years she has been a coordinator of our Mayne Island and Saturna Island summer programs. Her deep marine ecology and education background and willingness to share provided immeasurable value to the young leaders and participants as they transitioned through our programs. Her commitment to these summer programs stood out in that their quality and delivery were enhanced immensely. Her attention to all the fine details ensured that every day of programming ran smoothly and was full of themed activities and where possible, honoured guest experts. We ended the celebration with cakes that were shared by the attendees.

Kelly's influence on the GICEL programmes will continue to be felt and we wish her well on her next adventures.

2025 Annual General Meeting

May 9th 2025

You're invited to attend GICEL's annual general meeting via ZOOM from wherever you are, at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, May 9th, 2025.

If you would like to attend, please contact us at mayne@gicel.ca and we'll send you the link!

Support Nature-Based Learning in Our Communities!

For the last 25 years GICEL has championed learning programs that revitalize within children their connection and relationship to the natural world and to encourage and support lifelong awareness, understanding, and comfort with Nature. This is ecological learning.

We would be honoured if you would become a supporter of this hopeful story and consider a donation to us to continue our work.

GICEL is a federally registered charity and will provide tax receipts for donations over \$20 CDN.

Registration no. 88355-4503 RR0001.

YES! I want to support the work of GICEL.

I want to send a Child to Camp for a week!

1 child \$250

2 children \$500

3 children \$750

Or, personalized donation

E-Transfer to **accounting@gicel.ca**

subject line ***“send a child to camp”***

Please make cheques payable to GICEL, and mail to
171 Georgina Point Road
Mayne Island, BC, V0N 2J1

BECOME A MEMBER

Throughout the world awareness is spreading that people must form a new relationship with the Earth—one that will allow civilization to prosper rather than flounder in global conditions hostile to life. The key to building this new relationship is ecological learning. For twenty five years, GICEL has championed the new learning programs that must one day be taught to all children. We are honoured to have your support. By becoming a member, you'll be the first to know about any new programs we are offering.

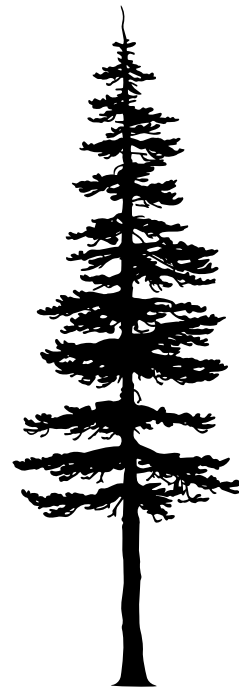
To become a member, please visit:
<http://www.gicel.ca/about/become-a-member/>

Membership Fee

\$5 individual

\$10 family

\$15 corporate/company



CONTACT INFO

Mailing Info:

171 Georgina Point Rd.
V0N 2J1

Mayne Island, B.C.

gicel@gicel.ca

www.gicel.ca

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