MY CLIMATE STORY

Project Summary Report

A FRASER BASIN COUNCIL
YOUTH PROGRAM INITIATIVE

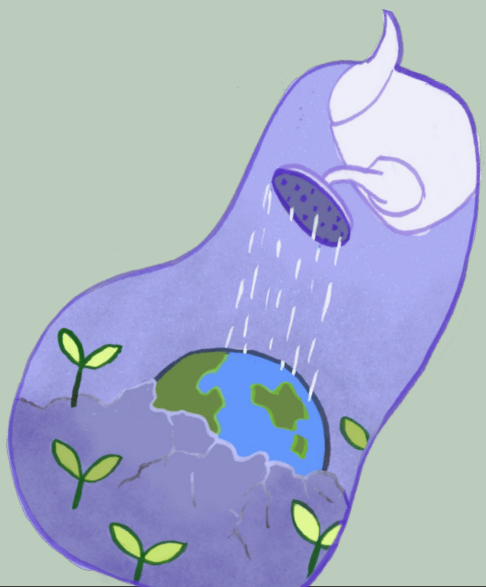

Photo of Alix C.
Hope, BC
Ecosystems theme

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A Fraser Basin Council Youth Program initiative

May 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BC Parks and Environment and Climate Change Canada.

My Climate Story illustrations made by Dory Xu
https://doryxu.wixsite.com/design

The Fraser Basin Council Youth Program
www.myclimatestory.ca

Fraser Basin Council

Fraser Basin Council YOUTH PROGRAM

Photo of Miranda A.
Port Moody, BC
Leadership & Education theme

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ABOUT THE FBC YOUTH PROGRAM

Youth engagement and capacity building is a key component of FBC. Since 2006, the FBC Youth Program has been focusing on building capacity for youth to engage in sustainability initiatives, deepen understanding on complex issues, gain skills, and access opportunities to take on leadership roles to serve their communities. FBC's vision for youth engagement is for youth and young adults to actively participate and contribute to social, environmental, and economic well-being in communities throughout the Fraser Basin and across BC.

Learn more at: www.fbcyouthprogram.ca

Project Summary & Vision

My Climate Story (www.myclimatestory.ca) is an online platform for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth (under 30 years old) to share their personal stories of climate change impacts and learn about youth-led climate solutions in British Columbia.

My Climate Story provides a space for youth to share their diverse perspectives on how climate change affects them and their communities. The storymap also showcases inspiring climate solutions, and communicates opportunities to take action and create a positive narrative for the future. Stories are shared in a variety of formats, including filmed interviews, short films, art pieces, written stories, songs, and spoken word poetry. By visiting the site, youth will become more aware of inspiring grassroots climate actions led by their peers, and will be able to see how individual actions can add up to make a change of global proportions.

Youth are a critical demographic group that needs to be empowered to learn about and take action on climate change as much of their future and coming challenges will have to do with building resilience to the changes it brings. The diverse local experiences shared in the storymap help expand general understanding of the complexities of climate change impacts and the correlation between changes in climate and our environment, health, social and cultural lives, and economy. A holistic understanding of climate change is crucial if society is to make a significant shift towards a more sustainable future.

By engaging youth and providing a space for their stories on climate solutions, we validate their efforts and encourage policy and decision makers to make it common practice to consult and integrate youth voices.

Project Objectives

- Showcase the impact and the role Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth have in addressing climate change
- Provide space and tools for youth to tell their stories and increase awareness on climate change and how it affects their daily lives
- Increase access to information and awareness of climate change impacts in local and regional contexts and build a better understanding of different culturally informed approaches to climate solutions
- Provide opportunities to engage youth from underrepresented groups and all levels of education
- Strengthen young people's connection to their communities, and empower them to serve their communities
- Encourage young people to collaborate with each other and increase their capacity to take action on climate change

Key Principles

Engaging Youth Across BC	Climate Change is Here and Now	It's Not All Doom and Gloom	Youth Actions have a Ripple Effect
Climate change is an area of common concern for young people across BC, and they have diverse stories to tell as climate change impacts them in a myriad of ways.	From erratic weather patterns to floods and fires, youth are already experiencing the effects of climate change in BC.	Young voices are key in finding innovative and hopeful solutions to climate change, and many youth are already taking action across BC.	Youth can easily get involved in climate action with their peers to effect change on a larger magnitude.

Why Storytelling

Storytelling is an integral part of our world, as we use stories to remember each other, to connect with others and to build relationships. Stories are inherently powerful as they can shift opinions, raise awareness, and inspire change. We are able to more easily connect to and empathize with other people's lived experiences when they share these experiences through stories.

Storytelling can bring a human face to the complex issue of climate change, and encourage creative responses and solutions to this urgent issue. My Climate Story provides youth with the opportunity to share their stories and consequently have their voices heard and woven into climate action.

Photo of Harvy, T.
Delta, BC
Low Carbon Solutions theme

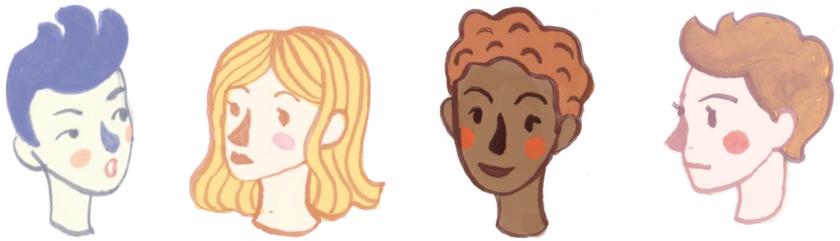
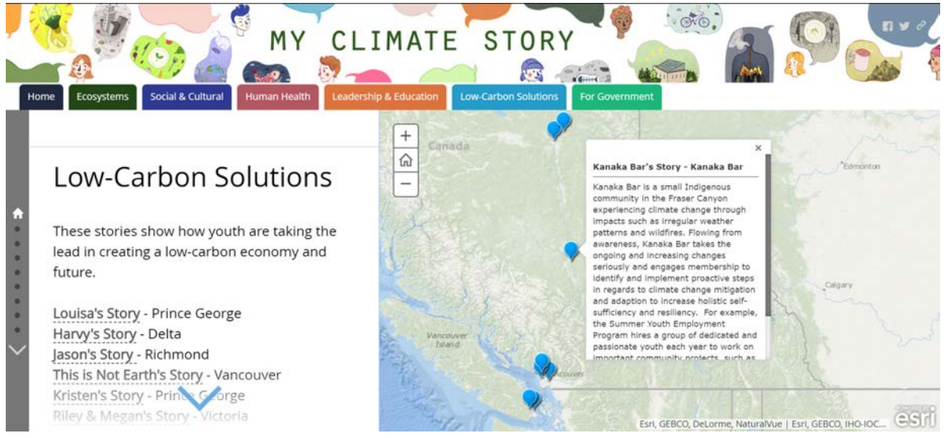


Photo of Dan L.
Prince George, BC
Ecosystems theme

What are Storymaps?

A storymap is an online web-based application on the ArcGIS platform where stories are told using maps combined with multimedia elements such as videos, images, and web links. Storymaps are an engaging and effective communication tool to share information and showcase solutions in a highly interactive way. They are especially useful for telling stories about climate change, as climate stories are inherently tied to people's connection to place and community.

The My Climate Story project utilises storymapping platform to illustrate the diversity of stories shared from all corners of BC. The collected stories are organized in 5 major themes: Ecosystems, Social & Cultural, Human Health, Leadership & Education, and Low-Carbon Solutions. Each section features a map with pins that offer a preview of related stories from diverse geographical locations with a brief story description. This makes it possible for the viewer to quickly preview how each region in BC is impacted by climate change in a different way and choose the stories of interest as each individual story has its own unique perspective on how climate change affects lives of BC youth and on how youth can take climate action.



The My Climate Story website includes interactive maps, stories, and links organised across different themes.

Ned's story (Saanich, BC), Leadership & Education

Ned took climate action and became more involved in supporting his community by becoming involved in local politics. At the age of 19, Ned was elected as a councillor to the District of Saaanich.

Kristen's story (Prince George, BC), Low Carbon Solutions

Kristen bikes! She bikes everywhere all year long. She bikes because it feels good, and she's not only reducing her own carbon footprint; she's inspiring others to make biking a common form of transportation to get around town.

Diversity of Stories

Soliciting diverse stories is an important element of My Climate Story, as we want to illustrate that climate change impacts BC youth in a myriad of ways, and that climate solutions can be creative and varied as well. My Climate Story features compelling stories from youth across BC with different backgrounds and lived experiences.

Youth shared tangible and deeply personal experiences of how wildfires, flooding, loss of habitat and species, and other climate impacts affect their health, communities, and places of importance, and how these experiences serve as inspiration for them to take bold action. The stories also showcase a diversity of voices in the climate change conversation, as youth shared how climate change intersects with their culture, status, identities, and lived experiences. Visitors to the My Climate Story website will find that there are many unique differences but also unexpected similarities between these diverse stories.

Photo of Jason P.
Richmond, BC
Low Carbon Solutions theme

“Red Woman”
Coralee M.
Westbank First Nation
Ecosystems theme

“ᐅᑲᓇ·ᐁᔨᒧ·ᐁ°/ukanaweyimuweu”
Adrian Rain F.
Burnaby, BC
Social & Cultural theme

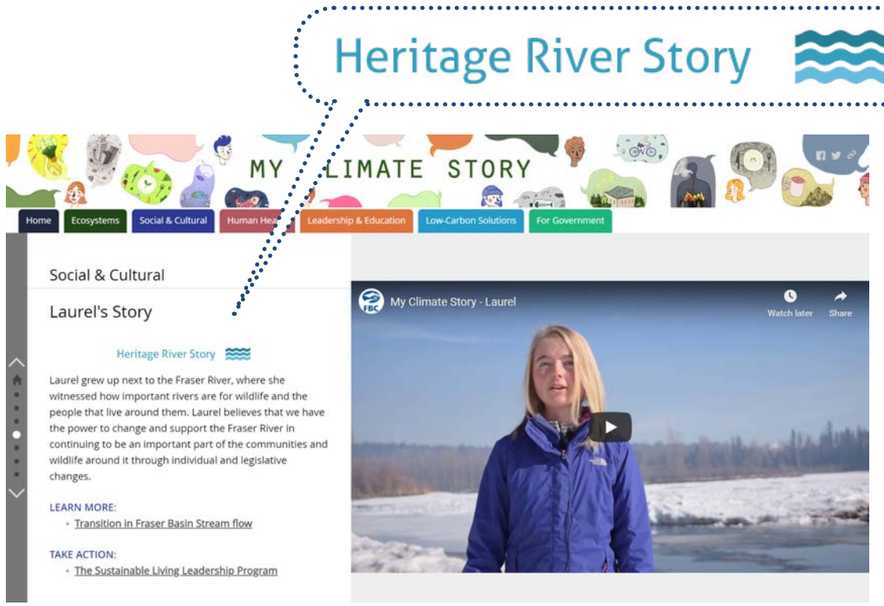
Heritage Rivers

Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth were also invited to share personal stories about their experience with climate change impacts on the Fraser and Cowichan rivers, the associated cultural impacts, and existing youth initiatives that are dealing with the issue.

The Fraser and Cowichan are designated as Canadian Heritage Rivers in BC because of their natural, cultural, and recreational significance to Canadians. The My Climate Story project highlighted how the natural, cultural, and recreational values of these two rivers are threatened by climate change, through the perspective of youth.

Stories on the My Climate Story website about heritage rivers are specially marked with a symbol.

We contacted various environmental non-profit organizations and community groups that do work along the Fraser and Cowichan rivers, such as conservation groups, advocacy groups, naturalists’ societies, and interpretive centres. These groups helped share the project with their networks and with youth, which helped us collect 13 Heritage Rivers stories for this project.



An example of a Fraser River story with the special Heritage River Story symbol.
Laurel B., Dunster, BC
Social & Cultural theme

Outreach & Engagement

Many community organizations and leaders helped with project outreach in communities across BC. We successfully reached out to approximately 120 diverse organizations and groups in BC, who helped share the call for stories and promote the project to youth. Examples of groups that were contacted include youth-serving organizations, environmental non-profits, municipalities, Indigenous communities, and school districts. These groups helped share the project via social media, word-of-mouth, email lists, and at events.

In addition, we contacted 13 post-secondary institutions in BC to help outreach to post-secondary students.

These supporters also helped to share the call for story submissions on social media and other platforms.

We attended various community events to promote the My Climate Story project, such as attending a high school environmental fair in Coquitlam, a university climate fair in Vancouver, and an environmental trivia competition for secondary students in Abbotsford. These events were a great opportunity for youth to meet with our staff on a face-to-face basis and to learn more about the project and ask questions.

A group of students from Richmond and Vancouver who produced the documentary "This is Not Earth".
Leadership & Education theme

Reach & Promotion

Partners & Advisors

Several partnerships were developed for the My Climate Story project. We identified and reached out to several community leaders to be advisors on the project, whose role included helping to identify youth with stories, advising on the process of story collection, and assisting with project outreach. Project advisors are shown in the graphic below.

In addition, we worked with a team of high school students from Prince of Wales Secondary in Vancouver as a community partner for the students' Community Action Project. The student team helped us to research and develop a social media strategy for project outreach that is appealing to high school youth. The Prince of Wales students also assisted us in developing posters, social media posts, and outreach emails that were shared with high school youth, educators, and youth-serving organizations in the Lower Mainland.

Finally, Esri Canada was instrumental in helping us set up the storymap website on the ArcGIS platform by providing code and web development advice. We are very grateful for the support from partners and advisors throughout the project.

PROJECT ADVISORS

Kari Tyler
User Engagement & Training Specialist, Pacific Climate Impacts Consortorium

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Cowichan Valley School District

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Dana Reiter
Regional Climate Change Coordinator, BC Assembly of First Nations

Patrick Lucas
Aboriginal Youth Mountain Biking Program and Storyteller

Blaine Grinder
Councillor at Tl'etinqox-t'in Government Office

Rebecca Reid
Regional Director General, Pacific Region, Fisheries & Oceans Canada

Fraser Basin Council
Youth Advisory Committee

Raising Awareness

Our FBC Youth Program staff spoke at and presented the My Climate Story project to BC teachers and educators at the annual Classrooms 2 Communities 2019 Provincial Conference in October 2019. A My Climate Story teacher's resource was created for this event as a takeaway item for attendees. The resource includes a list of guided discussion questions that teachers can adapt and use for their classes.

The FBC Youth Program was a featured speaker at the Lower Mainland Local Government Association's annual CivX symposium in November 2019, where we presented the project to an audience of 25 local mayors and councillors from BC's Lower Mainland. There was much interest from these mayors and councillors after the presentation to learn more about how to better engage youth in climate discussions and planning at a municipal level.

We co-planned and co-moderated a panel entitled "Youth & Resilience: Stories of Resilience and Youth Engagement" alongside youth organization CityHive at the national Adaptation Canada 2020 Conference in February 2020. The panel featured 3 youth leaders and 2 decision-makers who shared their stories about climate resiliency and adaptation. This panel session built off of the success of the My Climate Story project, and featured one youth speaker who had shared a story on the My Climate Story website.

Finally, the FBC Youth Program was invited by Metro Vancouver Regional Parks to speak at their annual ParksFest event in April 2020. We were invited to present My Climate Story and to moderate a panel with youth and decision-makers to share their personal stories of climate change. This event has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Youth & Resilience: Stories of Resilience and Youth Engagement" panel at Adaptation Canada 2020.

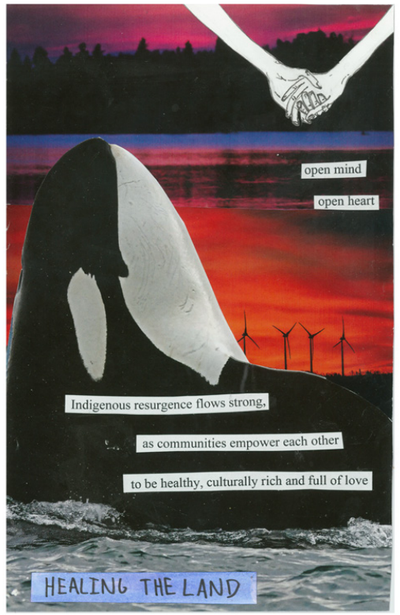
Lessons Learned

The My Climate Story project has had its share of successes and challenges.

Personal touch is key. The value of strong partnerships and networks with other youth-serving organizations and youth really came to surface with this project. Reaching out to individuals in a more personal way rather than relying only on social media and newsletters was key in having so many youth share their stories. The success of this project is largely through word-of-mouth communication and we are thankful to all the youth organizations and youth that shared this opportunity with their networks and peers. These strong connections will also be invaluable for the FBC Youth Program's long-term vision of creating a BC-wide "Youth for Climate Solutions Network".

Getting diverse stories takes time. Similarly, a challenge that we faced in the earlier stages of the project was collecting stories in particular from Indigenous youth. This was also presumably due to a lack of awareness of the My Climate Story project. As we worked to reach out to FBC's existing networks, we became more successful in finding Indigenous youth stories. Our project advisors also helped identify and introduce us to Indigenous youth to share their climate change stories. We also worked with other internal FBC staff who had created an Indigenous Youth Climate Art Contest for another program to solicit climate art to be added to the My Climate Story site.

Everyone has a climate story to share. We are all impacted by climate change, whether we realize it or not. Thanks to the generosity of all that took their time to share their personal stories, we were able to increase the awareness of young people's experiences with changes in their personal lives and in their communities brought on by climate change. We were also able to showcase wonderful and inspiring ways young people deal with this complex issue.



"UNEVEN GROUND: laying down complex root systems"
Leah A.
Nak'azdli Band
Leadership & Education theme

Youth cannot be viewed as a singular population with homogeneous views and experiences. Youth are indeed a complex group as with any other age demographic, and all youth voices need to be taken seriously. Each of the individual stories shared has its own unique perspective on how climate change impacts the lives of BC youth and on ways youth can take climate action. Youth have candidly shared their experiences with climate change impacts from flooding, wildfires, and extreme weather, to climate anxiety and loss of culture.

Moreover, diverse climate solutions shared by the youth included grassroots organizing, working within political systems, performing academic research, and carrying out everyday actions that reduce emissions. This serves to highlight the importance of including as many youth voices as possible in climate decision-making and planning, as they are the ones that are feeling the impacts and taking action at the moment, and will continue to do so far into the future.

A youth who created an informational video about how climate change impacts health.
Celia W., Vancouver, BC
Human Health theme

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