

THANK YOU!



2018 Youth Summit participants, Daynan Lepore

Symbiotic Partnerships EcoFund

For supporting the 2018 Youth Summit for Biodiversity
& Environmental Leadership



November 29, 2018

Dear Symbiotic Partnerships EcoFund,

Thank you for your support of Ontario Nature's 2018 Youth Summit for Biodiversity and Environmental Leadership. By sponsoring my peers to attend, you gave students an opportunity to learn how they can create positive environmental change in their own communities and helped inspire future environmentalists across the province.

To recap, 106 youth from 74 communities across Ontario attended this year's summit – the diversity was truly incredible! Of those, a record-breaking 101 youth were sponsored to attend by 71 nature groups, conservation authorities, schools, corporate partners and individuals. This support means a great deal to us and it allows more youth to get involved each year.

We had the pleasure of participating in a wide variety of outdoor activities and educational workshops. Some of the things we learned included:

- How to protect our wild pollinators
- How to conduct amphibian surveys and why this data is vital for conservation
- The natural habitats found in our province
- How to harness our power to affect change, both locally and provincially
- Traditional Indigenous medicine
- Understanding Indigenous clan systems
- Freshwater ecology
- The urgency to address climate change and how we can start
- Birds of prey in Ontario
- How to become effective young leaders
- Identifying invasive species and understanding their impact on the environment
- Primitive living and survival skills
- How to reduce our ecological footprint
- The negative impact of plastic waste on our environment

Other memorable moments included morning activities like yoga, bird watching, swimming in Lake Couchiching, getting up close and personal with native reptiles and amphibians, and an evening campfire with stories and songs to bring everyone together. The Great Group Challenge had teams facing off in fun challenges and participants were able to connect and discuss ideas with their peers in the Networking Forum.

On behalf of the Youth Council and Ontario Nature, thank you again for your support of this great event. Because of your generous contribution, you gave me and over 100 of my friends the ability to meet, share ideas and discover our potential to become the environmental leaders of today and tomorrow. Please enjoy the photos and testimonials from the Summit on the following pages.

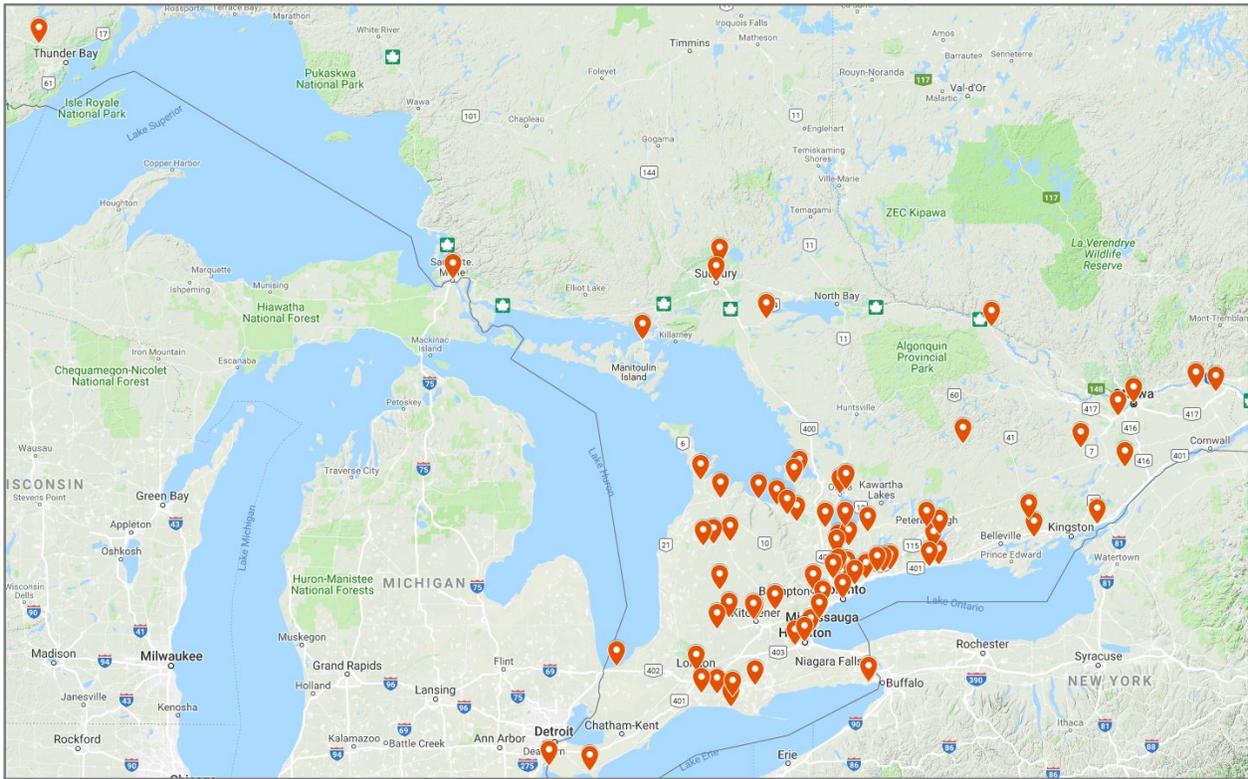


Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trevor Fung". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Trevor Fung, Ontario Nature Youth Council

Celebrating the diversity of Ontario!



106 young leaders from 74 communities across the province attended the 2018 Youth Summit

- | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Alfred | Hamilton | New Lowell | Scarborough |
| Amherstburg | Hanmer | Newmarket | South Bruce |
| Ancaster | Hanover | Nithburg | Peninsula |
| Aylmer | Innisfil | North York | St. Thomas |
| Bancroft | Kaministiquia | Oakville | Stayner |
| Brampton | Kanata | Orillia | Stratfordville |
| Bright's Grove | Keene | Oshawa | Stratford |
| Burlington | Kitchener | Ottawa | Sudbury |
| Cobourg | Lanark | Owen Sound | Sunderland |
| Collingwood | Leamington | Penetanguishene | Sutton West |
| Courtice | Listowel | Peterborough | Thornbury |
| Crystal Beach | Little Current | Pickering | Tiny |
| Deep River | London | Port Burwell | Toronto |
| Delhi | Markham | Port Hope | Vankleek Hill |
| Durham | Merrickville | Rama | Vaughan |
| East Gwillimbury | Mississauga | Richmond Hill | Walkerton |
| Gananoque | Monetville | Ridgeway | Waterloo |
| Gores Landing | Mount Albert | Roblin | Whitby |
| Guelph | Napanee | Sault Ste. Marie | |

“I learned how we can better our lives and the planet by becoming waste free personally. The workshops I attended gave me valuable insight on what our planet will look like if we do not start to take care of it. I have also learned how to identify different species to help collect data on the populations of wildlife in my area. Some of my favourite activities during the Summit were the morning walks as we spotted birds, making our own toothpaste, the late night walks looking for salamanders, and waking up early to watch the sunrise as the local otter cruised by the dock.”

– Logan, age 15, Kaministiquia



“In my culture, Mother Earth is held with high regard and the Youth Summit allowed me to value the environment and understand that we all have a purpose to protect it.”

– Whitney, age 15, Chippewas of Rama First Nation

“During the Youth Summit I learned a great deal through all the workshops, but even more so through all the unique people I met. It was so refreshing to be with such like-minded people, as we all care about the world we live in. We were all able to share our unique environmental experiences and stories with each other. It gave me hope for the future.”

– Delenn, age 18, Scarborough



“I got to really appreciate the environment for how amazing it really is. It also got me to learn more about climate change and similar problems, which I find very interesting and made me want to do something in order to make a change. I also met so many amazing people during the summit. It was truly astonishing to see so many different people coming from different places, cultures, families and race all come together for the same goal. Though I only knew these people for 2 days, it felt like I've known them all along.”

–Yuna, age 14, Toronto



“I had the opportunity to meet many individuals in my age group who share the same passion for protecting the environment. Often, as a youth, we think that we are alone and no one else shares this passion of sustainability and our voices remain unheard. It is with Youth Summits like these that we can really notice that this is not the case and that together we can make a difference and shape our future for the better.”

–Joseph, age 17, Sudbury



“I would just like to say that the summit was an unforgettable experience! I got to meet over 100 people who are passionate and dedicated to the environment. I made many new friendships and learnt so many new things. I hope to come back next year!”

– Kaylee, age 16, Hanmer



“Hearing inspiring environmentalists, going through thought-provoking workshops, and meeting like-minded people made this year’s youth summit like no other. The summit opened up my eyes to an incredible amount of environmental issues affecting our society today, and showed me that we can’t wait any longer to start fighting for the environment. The summit showed me that I have to start now and genuinely make an effort every day to help protect the environment.”

– Raj, age 17, Brampton

“I believe that other students should have the same experience that I had; being able to connect with and genuinely appreciate nature has motivated me to continue my efforts of protecting our planet. With the knowledge gained from this summit, I think that students will be empowered to take action against many serious issues such as climate change. This whole summit was so inspiring!”

– Jasmine, age 16, Kanata



"The Youth Summit was an amazing experience, being surrounded by fellow Youth Council members and summit attendees gives me hope about the future of the environment. It's incredible to be surrounded by people who care for the environment as much as I do. The summit creates connectivity and enthusiasm for the environment and its conservation. I hope to be able to take away what I learned at the summit to inform others and help them to become aware of the importance of being connected with the environment and protecting it."

– Emma, age 16, Vankleek Hill



"The summit was absolutely amazing! When my friend and I arrived at Geneva Park, we were immediately greeted with open arms. I got to enjoy many seminars and I learned a lot of thing that I would not otherwise have been able to learn. The summit inspired me to become a better person and become more conscious about the things that affect our planet and how I can help try to change it."

– Adia, age 17, Thornbury

"The Ontario Nature Youth Summit is truly one of my favourite parts of my year. I am continually inspired to make a difference in my community and province, and connected with other like-minded youth who I can work with to make this happen. After this year's summit, I can't wait for the great projects that lay ahead in the Youth Council and am excited for the change we are going to make!"

– Ben, age 17, Waterloo



SAVE THE DATE

September 20-22, 2019

Ontario Nature's 10th annual Youth Summit for Biodiversity

For more information, please visit ontarionature.org/youthsummit or contact Christine Ambre at christinea@ontarionature.org.

Hello, my name is Emily Stinson,

I am 15, from Rama, I am currently attending Orillia Secondary School. This year I had the great opportunity to attend this year's Youth Summit. I wanna thank Symbiotic Partnerships Ecofund for sponsoring me.

Because of them I met so many new people, learned new things, and made so many memories. I had some much fun learning about ways to help the earth, that I have applied so much into my daily routine.

I just wanna thank Symbiotic Partnerships Ecofund one last time for giving me the opportunity and experience.

Emily Stinson

Dear Symbiotic Partnerships Ecofund,

My name is Whitney Masterson and I am 15 years old from the Chippewas of Rama First Nation. I currently attend Orillia Secondary School in the 10th grade. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for sponsoring me to attend this year's Youth Summit for Biodiversity and Environmental Leadership hosted by Ontario Nature.

At the summit, I attended the following workshops: Children in the woods, Freshwater life, Be the change, Aboriginal clan system and primitive living and survival skills. My favourite was Aboriginal clan system because we got to explore around and collect all types of different items and turn it into artwork everyone during the session got put in a group and got a clan to find items with my group was the fish clan. I met a large number of students the same age as me from across the province who share the same interests and goals. In my culture, Mother Earth is held with high regard and the youth summit allowed me to value the environment and understand that well have a purpose to protect it. I would like to see more environment and nature based workshops brought to my community so that other youth can develop the same appreciation for nature as I do.

As seen below, here are some of the images of me at the summit, as well as some of the images I took.



In my Ojibway language, we say "Gchi Miigwech" which means thank you very much. I would like to say Gchi Miigwech to the entire Symbiotic Partnerships Ecofund organization. The Youth Summit for Biodiversity and Environmental Leadership was a weekend to remember and I will treasure all of the memories I made. If anyone from the organization would like to get in contact me, I can be reached at wmasterson14@hotmail.com

Thank you,

Whitney Masterson

