

The dynamic ocean keeps surprises in store every day, magic you can never find without spending the time to get up close and personal with the beach community.



“The impact of hands on environmental studies of our local environments provide students with a lasting vision of the environment, it’s significance and why we need to provide stewardship for our environment.” David Hockley, Retired Principal, School District #61.

EcoRowing is an all day adventure at Esquimalt Lagoon. After creating name tags that incorporate some of the rich cultural history of this extraordinary bird sanctuary, students in teams have the opportunity of paddling a First Nations canoe or a rowing scull while observing the wide diversity of bird and other marine life. Collecting a myriad of life forms off the dock, studying oceanography in a nearby laboratory, exploring a local wetland and fashioning cord bracelets and wish ducks from native grasses are just a few examples of the many possible adventures that await participants

To register for *Living Watersheds*, please contact Nikki Wright, Executive Director, SeaChange Marine Conservation Society

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LIVING WATERSHEDS

*Environmental Education for Schools
Within the Capital Regional District*



“Building Environmental Awareness Through Respectful Ecological Experiences”

**2004 EcoStar Award Winner for
Environmental Education**

Funded in part by NSERC, Vancity,
School District #61, DFO and
the Ministry of the Environment

 **eaChange Marine Conservation Society**

Overview of our Programs

Providing students with opportunities to be outdoors and learn more than they ever imagined about their local environment . . .

The Living Watersheds Programs offer primary and middle school students exciting outdoor educational opportunities that meet learning outcomes while providing meaningful experiences within their communities. Classroom and field outings weave hands-on learning and physical activities such as rowing, treasure hunts and beach games with traditional teachings of local First Nations culture.

The goal of *Living Watersheds* is to offer rich learning opportunities for young people to connect directly with their environment – something that is too often lacking in an urban setting. Over the last five years more than 6000 primary, middle school and high school students, staff and parents from Victoria and Vancouver have participated in these interrelated *Living Watersheds* programs.

“When we have to go back to the classroom it makes it that much easier because they have something to hold on to from this experience”.
Jeremy Ross, Central Middle School Teacher

Seaquaria in Schools is the gateway to *Living Watersheds* adventures. *Seaquaria* has established 13 saltwater aquarium ecosystems in schools and community centers. They provide young people with the chance to observe the wide variety of colorful sea creatures found in our ocean. Students themselves take care of these lively tanks and teach other community members about the life within them and our relationship with these special neighbors. The saltwater ecosystems incite curiosity and motivate students to explore the life in their own watersheds. The next natural step is *Opening Minds with Water*...

Opening Minds with Water is a four-part study of diverse watersheds, animal life and plant life in our local community.

I. Watershed Models: We begin our studies with three-dimensional models of local watersheds within the Capital Regional District. Students learn where our local streams begin, where the water travels, what is carried with it and what they can do to keep the water clean in their own watersheds.



II. Invertebrate Investigations introduces students in the classroom to the wide diversity of ‘strange looking bugs’ they are likely to encounter during visits to their local streams. They peer through microscopes to view these wonderful creatures and observe the magnificent detail in their form before learning how they fit in with their habitat. Drama is used to demonstrate the niches these invertebrates occupy. Students then venture into their field trips with the *Stream Study*.

III. Stream Study includes an outdoor visit to the beautiful Colquitz River. Here they will learn how the “bugs” they studied in the classroom are good indicators of the degree of health of a local stream. They will also take water quality measurements and observe the stream’s behavior. Sometimes a shy mink or river otter can be seen fishing for food along the riverbank!

IV. Ocean Life Studies is the final stop on the students’ watershed tour. *Ocean Studies* offers children creative ways to discover the rich marine life of the Pacific Northwest. SeaChange divers collect ocean plants and animals from the watery depths and place them in a habitat aquarium on the beach. Kelp, rocky shore or eelgrass “homes” are re-created in the aquarium for all to observe. The animals are then returned to the depths from which they were collected. You never know what you’ll find on the beach. Some days it may be a huge jellyfish or a giant predatory sea star!