



# Stqeeeye' Learning Society 2022 Annual Report



## Our Organization

Stqeeye' is an Indigenous led non-profit organization based on Salt Spring Island, BC in the traditional territory of the Quw'utsun Peoples. The mission of the Stqeeye' Learning Society is the restoration and preservation of lands and waters withing Xwaaqw'um (Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park). The non-profit was created by family descendants, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Youth, and other like-minded individuals for the common purpose of restoring the land and cultural sharing. Stqeeye' is com-mitted to preserving the Xwaaqw'um village site in partnership with Quw'utsun mustimuhw (Cowichan people).



*Board President Tousilum*



*Board Members Sume'el & Tousiliye*

## Our Board of Directors

The Stqeeye' Learning Society is led by 11 board members, a majority who are Quw'utsun mustimuhw. As an Indigenous non-profit we are actively seeking to decolonize the governance structure imposed upon us, creating a governance structure that better reflects our traditional ways of knowing and being.

## Our Misson

The Stqeeye' Learning Society supports self-determination - nothing about us without us; relationship-building as the foundation of our community; and the sharing of traditional and ecological restoration practices through land-based education.

## 2021 Board of Directors

Tousilum - Ron George - President  
Rosanna Jackson - Secretary  
Rhonda Sullivan - Treasurer  
Queletstunaat -Audrey George  
Fred George  
Sume'el - James John (JJ) Allen  
T'awaxwultun - Joe Akerman  
Kimberly Sullivan  
Saleliye'naat -Stephanie Peter  
Tousiliye - Terri Allen  
Q'utxu-lenuhw - Tim Kulchyski

## Our Staff

Sulsameethl - Deb George - Co-Manager  
Leanna Boyer - Co-Manager  
Rachel Bevington - Administrator  
Brianna Thorne - Education Coordinator  
Sulatiye' - Maiya Modeste -  
P'hwulhp Restoration Project Coordinator  
Liamb Sylvester - Indigenous Land Steward  
Tye Joseph - Indigenous Land Steward

## Our Vison Statement

Stqeeye' Learning Society is committed to preserving the land and water at the Xwaaqw'um by strengthening our Quw'utsun relationships. This will be accomplished by Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Youth working in collaboration with all our staff and partners to develop programs for future generations. We wish for our Youth and Elders to be proud, to value one another for who they are, and to serve as educators, land stewards and advocates for Xwaaqw'um.

## Our Core Values

All staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, and community partners will emulate these values as we work in partnership to deliver our programs: Reciprocity, Honesty, Tradition, Integrity, Respect, Inclusive, Trust, Communication, Accountability and Honouring of Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

## Staff Biography - Maiya

Sulatiye' (Maiya Modest)

'Uy' Skweyul siiem nu' siiye / good day my honoured friends and relatives. My traditional name is Sulatiye' and my English name is Maiya Modeste. My parents are Brianna Thorne and Chris Modeste. On my Father's side my grandparents are late Wes Modeste and Diane Modeste (nee Seymour) and on my Mother's side my grandparents are Deb George (nee Nash) and my biological grandfather is Ken Thorne, however I have had the honour of growing up with my grandfather Ron George. I come from the village of Quamichan in Quw'utsun.

Throughout my life I have always had a special place in my heart for nature. I grew up walking the many trails in Cowichan with my grandparents, learning about our natural "grocery stores" and what they had to offer. My grandparents planted many seeds of passion in me from a very young age. This passion manifests in many different ways now, such as in the way I show up for the land, for culture, our elders and for the generations to come. I am eternally grateful for the experiences that my family has gifted me especially, considering just two generations ago growing up with culture and access to our natural world was illegal.

I work with the Stqeeye' Learning Society as the Project Coordinator of the P'hwulhp (Garry Oak) Restoration Project which has been my grandmothers dream for me since I was a child. My hope for this garden is to create an accessible space for Indigenous folks to learn about, harvest from and interact with the diversity and the increasing rarity of native food systems. I have the honour of working in and around the village of Xwaaqw'um. During my time here, I have been given the space and encouragement to learn more about myself, my culture, ancestry, and what is truly means to have a relationship with the land. As an indigenous woman I feel that it is my inherent responsibility to take care of the land as my ancestors have since time immemorial and to revitalize our once thriving food systems. It is my hope and dream to one day see youth harvesting from Xwaaqw'um.



*Clockwise from top left: Liamb, Tye, Maiya and Brianna, 2022*

## Award Nomination

Stqeeye's Restoration team were nominated for Real Estate Foundations 2022 Land Award in the Fresh Water category thanks to our work for the Healthy Watersheds Initiative. The team were invited to the Land Awards Gala and represented Stqeeye' on a grand scale as a finalist. This experience was an amazing networking opportunity, even though another group was selected for the award. Our team got a chance to be photographed and speak to our important work with funders and changemakers at the Gala. Thank-you to our beautiful team for making the journey and representing us.



## Restoration at Xwaaqw'um is a Reciprocal Experience

*Ts'its'usum' (growing: child, mind, plants)*

Since 2014 Stqeeye' Learning Society has been building relationships with BC Parks, Salt Spring naturalists, organizations, businesses and the larger community to bring Indigenous priorities back to the land. Together with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, ecologists and restoration experts, we developed a comprehensive plan and strategy for restoring the land and estuary (within BC Park boundaries) to pre-contact condition.

In the fall of 2021 we planted over 900 native plants in and around our 3 wetlands and completed a stream repair.

***"It is a rare experience in my lifetime to have those from the Western perspective listen and engage meaningfully in the teachings of our ancestors. Also to be ever-so-willing to share their knowledge in return."*** - Liamb S

## Partnerships

Stqeeye' has many key partner groups, without whom the work would not happen! We wish to acknowledge and thank all of our Partners: Cowichan Tribes, BC Parks, Cowichan Cultural Connections, School Districts 64 and 79, the Nature Conservancy, the Water Preservation Society and John Milson, Dr. Briony Penn, RBC Museum, BCWF, Tony MacLeod, Ren Ferguson, UBC and Dr. Tara Martin, Robin Annschild, Miranda Cross, and Kenny and Colleen at Cowichan Native Plants.



Joel and Henry from RBC Museum showing some entomology skills.

We strive to work with partners who value the Traditional Ecological Knowledge that our Elders hold, and work to find ways to incorporate Western science alongside the TEK. For example, the BCWF Wetlands Workforce team came to Xwaaqw'um to mentor and guide the team on how to monitor our wetlands and to teach us how to use wetland monitoring equipment. Stqeeye' started off the fall 2021 project by building a relationship with the waters and watershed. We learned that wetland monitoring work includes water chemistry and in-stream techniques.

At the p'hwulhp (garry oak) garden restoration, summer students Molly and Ava helped restore a traditional food garden. Dr. Tara Martin from UBC is supporting this project that is applying experimental techniques for invasive species control in a 50x50m fenced enclosure on a deep soil Garry oak site. This work will help inform future restoration efforts in the Garry oak meadows of Xwaaqw'um.

Stqeeye' has partnered with Kenny and Colleen at Cowichan Native Plants to learn from a lifetime of native plant knowledge and experience. We are very grateful for this opportunity to learn from Quw'utsun Elders.

We invite our partners to participate alongside us in honouring the land. In this way, the two ways of knowing can walk together, building traditional knowledge and scientific literacy at the same time.

# Education & Inspiration

Stqeeye' is committed to bringing Indigenous issues and teachings forward in all that we do!

We utilize Hul'q'umi'num' language and culture to provide opportunities for healing the land through ceremony and traditions. Through our Youth on the Land programming, we have reached over 250 students in the 2021-22 school year. We were able to provide food cards to youth experiencing food insecurity in this fiscal year.

Youth on the Land works with Indigenous youth to bring stories, skills and traditional knowledge to life. Harvesting skills, cedar weaving, drumming and story-telling are all taught on the land, as well as knowledge of the seasons and the history of the land.

Our partnerships include SD 64 and 79, Mill Bay Nature School, Indigenous People's Resiliency Fund, Indigenous Community Support Fund, Salt Spring Island Foundation, Victoria Foundation, New Relationship Trust and Lush.

Local SD 64 Teachers and Staff spent two professional development days on the land with Stqeeye' Elders and Staff SD 79 Indigenous Education Department came for a retreat on the land with Stqeeye'. These relationships will continue to expand.

Stqeeye' has participated in Indigenous Advisory meetings at SD 64 for a second year. Since BC has moved to embed indigenous education into highschool graduation requirements, our development of the land-based curriculum is extremely important. Stqeeye' is working to design curriculum with our Curriculum committee and Elder's Advisory. Our work has garnered the attention of Pawanka - an international fund for empowering Indigenous people's to action UNDRIP in local communities.

Stqeeye' is honoured to have skilled curriculum advisors and Elders walking with us to create rich and living curriculum for youth. Stqeeye' is committed to focusing on youth, to close the circle between the future and the past, by bringing critical information from Elders to the next generation, and to ensure intergenerational transfer of knowledge. This education ensures that Indigenous people's have the knowledge to advocate for the Indigenous rights of self determination and free, prior and informed consent.



*Youth on the Land brings Indigenous youth and Elders together on the land at Xwaaq'um.*

# Funding & the Future

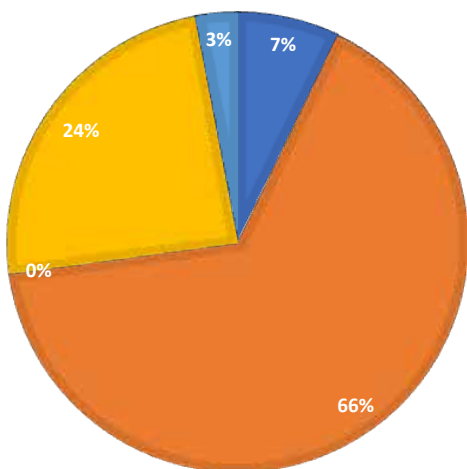
Huy steep q'u to all that made this funding possible. We raise our hands in gratitude for making our dream become reality for the Stqeeeye' Learning Society: to work in close relationship with the land, to connect with ourselves, our ancestors and for helping us ensure a future for our generations to come. Supporters include private donors, businesses, and community organizations.

## Financials

### STQEEYE' 2021-22 INCOME

- Donations
- Grants Income
- Interest Income
- Market/Fundraising
- Program/Workshop Income

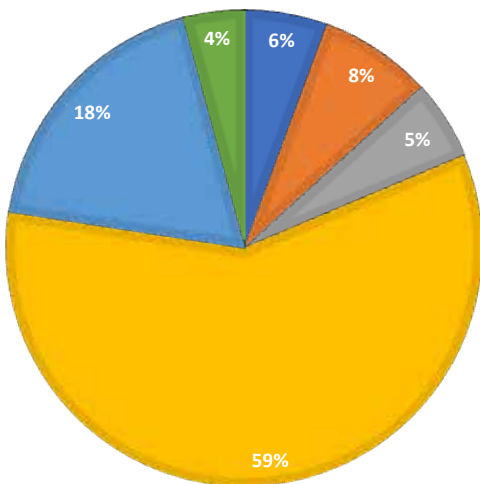
<b>Income</b>	
Donations	\$37,197
Grants	\$342,866
Interest	\$14
Fundraising	\$126,425
Programs/ Workshops	\$15,246
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$521,748</b>



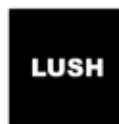
### STQEEYE 2021-22 EXPENSES

- Food
- Materials & Supplies
- Operations
- Payroll Expenses
- Professional fees
- Travel

<b>Expenses</b>	
Food	\$29,168
Materials & Supplies	\$39,653
Operations	\$28,143
Payroll	\$305,039
Professional Fees.	\$96,018
Travel	\$21,162
Surplus	\$2,565
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$521,748</b>



## 2021-22 Funders



## 2021-22 Monthly Supporters





## Message from our Elders

Prior to contact, the Indigenous People of Xwaaqw'um lived in reciprocal relationship with the land, harvested from the abundant natural food systems, and tending the land and waters with great care. Families passed down the responsibility to tend to these important areas to their children, and the members of Stqeeeye' Learning Society are direct descendants of the last Indigenous Stewards of the land. Due to this direct connection to this place, Stqeeeye' Land Stewards and Knowledge Keepers are intimately connected to the land and ecosystems at Xwaaqw'um. We share our responsibilities to the land, sea and each other in this spot, as we always have.

## Support Stqeeeye' Learning Society

Stqeeeye' is a registered charity (CRA # 8089 94555 RR 0001) and we gratefully accept donations.

Ts'ewut (contribute) on our website through Canada Helps, by e-transfer to [admin@stqeeeye.ca](mailto:admin@stqeeeye.ca) or by mail to: Stqeeeye' Learning Society, PO Box 407, Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2W1.

Sign up to our newsletter and volunteer list online at [www.xwaaqwum.com](http://www.xwaaqwum.com)



Xwaaqw'um



@xwaaqwum

[www.xwaaqwum.com](http://www.xwaaqwum.com)



*P'hwulhp (Garry oak) restoration partnerships at Xwaaqw'um - from left to right: Leanna Boyer, Tara Martin, Brianna Thorne, Liamb Sylvester, Katy Fulton, Tye Joseph, Maiya Modeste, Sarah Joannis and Erica McClaren.*

