

# Green Jobs Initiative

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26



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# Executive Summary

In 2025–26, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) delivered a high-impact year of the Green Jobs Initiative, supported by the Government of Canada (Parks Canada) through the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS). The program created 163 meaningful employment opportunities for youth across 154 organizations in every province and territory, contributing 70,802 hours to conservation, cultural heritage, and community-based initiatives nationwide.

CPRA established 77 new employer partnerships in 2025, strengthening the program's national reach.

This year's results highlight the program's strength as a national model for inclusive youth employment. A total of 83% of participants faced barriers to employment—the highest proportion to date—with 50% identifying as members of priority groups, including Indigenous youth, racialized youth, and youth with disabilities. In addition, 35% of participants were from rural or remote communities, reinforcing the program's reach into underserved areas.

Participants gained valuable skills and experience that supported their transition into the workforce or further education. Employers reported that 99% of youth demonstrated improvement in key workplace skills, reflecting the quality and effectiveness of placements.

Demand for the program remained exceptionally strong. CPRA received 368 applications, representing over \$1.65 million in funding requests—more than double the available budget of \$693,600. Even with a deliberate approach to limit promotion, interest from employers across the country remained high, underscoring both the sector's reliance on the program and its strong capacity to support additional youth.

Despite a later-than-ideal launch, CPRA successfully mobilized its national network to deliver the program efficiently and exceed hiring targets within a condensed timeline.

The 2025–26 results reinforce the Green Jobs Initiative as a proven, high-performing model that delivers meaningful outcomes for youth, employers, and communities. With sustained demand and strong national reach, the program is well-positioned for expansion—offering the potential to connect more youth to meaningful employment while advancing environmental and cultural priorities across Canada.

# Activities and Accomplishments

The program focused on delivering high-quality placements—averaging 14 weeks in duration—that combined practical work experience with structured skill development. Youth were engaged in roles across conservation, recreation, and cultural programming, contributing to activities such as ecological restoration, park and trail maintenance, environmental education, community outreach, and recreation programming. These roles addressed local community needs while providing participants with exposure to career pathways in the recreation and parks and environmental sectors.

**Youth also contributed in specialized and emerging roles, reflecting the evolving nature of work in the sector.**

- Indigenous Trail Builder
- Cultural and Ecological Steward (Team Lead)
- Zero Waste Coordinator
- Climate Change and Environmental Intern
- Food Forest Caretaker
- Watershed Coordinator Assistant

A central priority of this year's program was ensuring that opportunities reached youth who face barriers to employment. Through targeted outreach and strong collaboration with provincial and territorial partners, CPRA supported employers in creating inclusive placements and recruiting participants from priority groups, including Indigenous youth, racialized youth, and youth with disabilities. This approach ensured that the program not only created jobs, but expanded access to meaningful employment opportunities for youth who may otherwise face barriers to participation.

Beyond job placement, the program emphasized the quality of the employment experience—a key differentiator of the Green Jobs Initiative. Employers were supported in providing structured supervision, mentorship, and additional workplace supports to help youth succeed. This approach enabled participants to build confidence, develop workplace competencies, and navigate early career decisions in a supportive environment.

**Nearly all participants returned to school or secured employment following their placement.**

Delivery in 2025–26 required a high level of coordination and adaptability. Despite a later-than-ideal program launch, CPRA worked within a compressed timeline to open applications, assess demand, and confirm funding. Leveraging its national network and established relationships with employers, CPRA moved quickly to support hiring and ensure placements were implemented efficiently across diverse regions.

Demand for the program remained strong, reinforcing its value within the sector. Even with limited promotion, employers across the country demonstrated readiness to participate and capacity to support additional youth, highlighting the program's role as a trusted and in-demand source of youth employment opportunities within the recreation and parks and environmental sectors.

Overall, the 2025–26 program cycle demonstrates CPRA's ability to deliver a responsive, high-quality national program that not only creates employment opportunities, but also supports youth development and strengthens community capacity across Canada.



# Challenges and Opportunities

While the 2025–26 program cycle delivered strong results, some challenges were identified that present opportunities to further strengthen program delivery and enhance the quality and consistency of youth experiences.

## *Strengthening Representation Among Priority Groups*

While the program exceeded its overall target for participation among youth facing barriers to employment, representation among specific priority groups—including Indigenous and Black youth—fell slightly below recommended targets, each by approximately two percentage points.

This reflects ongoing challenges in reaching and engaging certain communities at the scale intended, particularly within the constraints of program timelines and available funding.

To address this, CPRA will explore targeted outreach strategies and strengthen partnerships with organizations serving Indigenous and Black youth to better support recruitment and participation in future program cycles. Building on its existing national network, CPRA is well positioned to enhance engagement and improve representation across all priority groups.

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## *Strengthening Mentorship Across Placements*

While the majority of participants benefited from structured workplace supports, only 87% of employers indicated they had provided mentorship to the youth during their placement. Mentorship is a critical component of high-quality employment experiences—particularly for youth facing barriers to employment—as it supports skill development, builds confidence, and strengthens career navigation.

Expanding access to consistent, high-quality mentorship across all placements will be a priority for future program cycles. CPRA will explore opportunities to provide clearer guidance, tools, and resources to employers to support the integration of mentorship into placements, ensuring that all participants benefit from meaningful, supported learning experiences.

## Reallocation of Funding

Reallocating funding from approved placements remained a challenge in 2025–26, with a total of \$192,000 requiring reallocation due to declined or underspent grants—equivalent to nearly 30% of participant funding, or approximately 40 additional youth positions.

CPRA responded effectively by leveraging both its national network and the strength of the original application pool. A number of high-quality applications had scored well during the initial review process but could not be funded due to limited resources. This created a ready pool of qualified organizations that could be re-engaged in the program cycle.

While timing constraints meant that not all organizations were able to proceed with hiring, many were still in a position to move forward and were highly responsive and appreciative of the opportunity. This approach enabled CPRA to successfully redistribute funding, support additional youth placements, and fully utilize the program resources.

This experience underscores both the high demand for the program and the value of a strong and rigorous intake process in supporting efficient and equitable reallocation when funding becomes available.



# National Impact at a Glance

*A snapshot of program reach, investment, and outcomes across Canada*

**163**

youth employed

**154**

organizations

**\$693,600**

invested across Canada

**70,802**

hours worked  
by youth

**14**

weeks average  
placement length



## Post-Placement Outcomes

**60%**

returned to school  
or formal training

**32%**

employed by their  
host organization

**7%**

employed by another  
organization

*99% of participants returned to school  
or were employed following their placement*

# Reaching Youth Who Need It Most



**83%**

of participants faced barriers to employment

**50%**

of participants were from priority groups

**70%**

of participants facing barriers experienced multiple barriers

# Understanding the Barriers Youth Face

**18%**

Indigenous Youth

**18%**

Youth with Disabilities

**17%**

Racialized Youth

Indigenous Participants included:

**18** First Nations (Status) youth

**5** Inuk (Inuit) youth

**2** First Nations (Non-Status) youth

**5** Métis youth



**35%** of participants were from rural, remote, northern, or fly-in communities

**20%** of participants grew up in low-income households

**22%**

2SLGBTQIA+ youth

**8%**

Official language minority youth

**7%**

Newcomer youth



## Developing the Skills Youth Need to Succeed

**99%** developed **transferable skills**

**98%** developed **technical skills**

**71%** developed **career navigation skills**

These outcomes were made possible by strong workplace experiences.

**98%** received workplace supports

**87%** received mentorship during their placement

**84%** received ongoing, active supports

# Regional Impact: New Brunswick

Recreation NB | Loisirs N.-B. (RNB) is a not for profit organization dedicated to advancing recreation and parks by supporting its members and advocating for the value and benefit of leisure and recreation opportunities for all people.

**6**

youth employed

**3,168**

hours worked

**\$28,541**

invested in the province

**83%**

of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**17%**

of participants were from  
priority groups



## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

— ” —

*Programs like this meet a real need, they give young people a chance to build their skills and make it easier for organizations to bring in new talent.*

**TRAVIS, D  
NEW BRUNSWICK**

# Regional Impact: Newfoundland & Labrador

Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador (RNL) is a province-wide, non-profit organization that promotes the value and benefits of recreation and supports communities across the province.

**4**  
youth employed

**1,299**  
hours worked

**\$12,753**  
invested in the province

**100%**  
of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**25%**  
of participants were from  
priority groups

## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING



*This program had tremendous impact on my growth and development. It helped me stick with deadlines, develop leadership skills, and become more creative with planning activities.*

**JESSICA C,  
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**



# Regional Impact: Nova Scotia

Recreation Nova Scotia is a province-wide, not-for-profit organization that promotes the value of recreation and leisure and supports inclusive opportunities for communities across the province.

**8**

youth employed

**3,151**

hours worked

**\$29,558**

invested in the province

**100%**

of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**50%**

of participants were from  
priority groups



## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

— ” —

*I had a very positive experience. I felt very welcomed and appreciated during my time there. My thoughts and ideas were always validated and heard.*

**MARISA M,  
NOVA SCOTIA**

# Regional Impact: Prince Edward Island

Recreation PEI is a provincial, volunteer-led, not-for-profit association that advances recreation, physical activity, and facility management across Prince Edward Island.

**4**

youth employed

**2,500**

hours worked

**\$20,248**

invested in the province

**100%**

of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**50%**

of participants were from  
priority groups

## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

— ” —

*This program had a significant impact on my professional development. It provided my first opportunity to work in my desired field, and I was able to put my skills and abilities to use.*

**JOSEPH B,  
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**



# Green Job Helps Nova Scotia Youth Inspire the Next Generation of Nature Stewards

Roots and Boots Forest School Society has spent the past decade creating opportunities for children in Nova Scotia to learn through outdoor play and exploration. Unlike traditional classroom environments, forest schools emphasize curiosity, creativity, and hands-on experiences in nature.

Children build shelters, discover plants and wildlife, explore forest trails, and develop problem-solving skills – all while forming meaningful connections with the outdoors. But like many grassroots non-profit organizations, providing these opportunities isn't always easy.

“We are a very small not-for-profit that’s grassroots,” says Kellie Allen, co-founder of Roots and Boots Forest School Society. “Although we’ve been running for 10 years, we have a lot of funding challenges because we do not have core funding.”

Support from CPRA’s Green Jobs Initiative, funded by the Government of Canada’s Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) program, helped change that.



“Without the Green Jobs Initiative, we wouldn’t have been able to create this job,” Allen explains. That funding created space for a Forest School Play Practitioner at the organization and opened the door for Cassandra Nauss.

For Cassie, the role offered something deeply meaningful: the chance to help young people discover the same connection to nature that has always shaped their own life.

“I especially love being able to help kids discover the environment around them,” Cassie says. “Seeing them realize that nature isn’t just something you learn about in a book — it’s something you can experience, care for, and be part of. Watching that curiosity grow is really special.”

Cassie came to the position while navigating their own academic journey and shifting interests.

“I was in aerospace engineering and had just recently transferred to environmental science,” Cassie says. “This position definitely helped confirm that I made the right decision!” From Allen’s perspective, Cassie was a natural fit for the role. “I instantly knew Cassie would be a great fit,” she says.

Forest school environments are built around exploration, but every child approaches that experience differently. Some eagerly explore the woods or examine plants and insects along the trail, while others need a little reassurance before trying something unfamiliar.

Cassie had a special way of helping children feel comfortable enough to take those first steps.

“If a kid was really nervous to climb a tree, Cassie would come alongside and say, ‘let’s walk through this together,’” Allen recalls.

Moments like that can quietly shape a child’s confidence — and often lead to breakthroughs that last far beyond a single afternoon outdoors.

“Cassie’s strength was really in connecting with people one-on-one,” Allen says. “They were able to come alongside and help fill those gaps for kids who needed a little extra support.”

Over the course of the summer, the program reached 174 children, who collectively spent more than 36,000 hours outdoors exploring, learning, and building friendships in nature.

“In St. Margaret’s Bay, there’s no other program like this,” Allen says.

For Cassie, every day brought new discoveries – both for the children and for their own professional growth.

“I definitely did learn a lot of new skills,” Cassie says. “Especially working more one-on-one with kids and learning how to support them in ways that help them feel confident exploring and trying new things.”

The experience also provided mentorship and collaboration within the Roots and Boots team.

“At the end of every day we do a debrief – we talk about what we did that day and what we might need to work on,” Cassie says. “It’s really helpful because everyone shares ideas and supports one another.”

That supportive environment allowed Cassie to grow in confidence while strengthening skills in leadership, communication, and environmental education.

But the impact of the experience reaches far beyond a single summer job.

Through the Green Jobs Initiative, Roots and Boots was able to expand a program that connects children with the natural world in ways that simply can’t happen inside four walls. The opportunity also gave Cassie hands-on experience and mentorship that helped confirm their path in environmental science.

Most importantly, it created hundreds of quiet moments of discovery for the children who spent their days in the forest.

A child noticing the shape of a leaf for the first time.

A group of new friends building something together from branches and moss.

A young explorer realizing the forest is not just somewhere you visit – it’s somewhere you belong.

“When you see a child suddenly light up because they’ve discovered something in the forest, or figured something out on their own, it’s incredible,” Cassie says. “Those moments will stay with me as much as they stay with them.”

Through opportunities like CPRA’s Green Jobs Initiative, young leaders like Cassie are helping spark something that will endure far beyond the program: a lifelong connection to the natural world – and a deeper sense of responsibility to protect it.

# Regional Impact: Quebec

The Association québécoise du loisir public (AQLP) is a provincial organization that represents and advances municipal recreation across Quebec.

**30**

youth employed

**12,375**

hours worked

**\$122,905**

invested in the province

**83%**

of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**47%**

of participants were from  
priority groups



## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

— ” —

*Cette expérience m'a permis d'obtenir un premier emploi significatif dans mon domaine en foresterie. L'une de mes tâches les plus marquantes a été de défricher un nouveau sentier en pleine forêt — c'était exigeant, mais le travail d'équipe a rendu l'expérience très enrichissante et m'a beaucoup appris.*

**CORALIE D,  
QUEBEC**

# Green Job Strengthens Environmental Action in Montreal's Chinatown

When Xiaotian Sun graduated with a degree in humanities, he entered the job market with both optimism and uncertainty. His early professional journey was shaped by the pandemic, the challenge of adapting to the Canadian job market, and sustained efforts to improve his French in order to broaden his opportunities in Québec. Despite his motivation, one barrier continued to stand in his way: a lack of Canadian work experience.

"It was difficult to find a job that would allow me to put the skills I had gained during my studies into practice," Xiaotian explains.

Instead of stepping back, he leaned in. He began volunteering with the Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal. Volunteering kept him active, helped him develop new skills, and deepened his connections in the community. It also clarified the kind of work he wanted to do: work that makes a difference. When a Green Jobs position opened up at the organization, it became his bridge from volunteering to the workforce.



When a Green Jobs position opened up at the organization, it became his bridge from volunteering to the workforce. “This opportunity was a real turning point,” Xiaotian says. “It allowed me to develop hands-on experience in a stimulating professional environment, while strengthening my confidence and my sense of legitimacy in the labour market.”

Through the CPRA Green Jobs Initiative, funded by the Government of Canada’s Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) program, Xiaotian transitioned into a professional role supporting environmental initiatives in Montreal’s Chinatown. Founded nearly fifty years ago, the Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal supports newcomer integration and active participation in community life. In recent years, the organization has begun integrating an environmental dimension into its work, recognizing ecological transition as an important part of community vitality.

However, without dedicated staff to plan and coordinate these initiatives, environmental efforts were difficult to sustain. Catherine Dong, Coordinator of the Volunteer Department at the Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal, supervised Xiaotian throughout the placement and worked closely with him as the project developed. She says the organization lacked the human resources needed to structure environmental work in a consistent way.

We did not have the specialized human resources required to plan, coordinate, and deploy environmental initiatives in a structured and sustainable way,” Dong explains. “This limited our ability to effectively raise awareness and reach key audiences – particularly newcomers and local business owners – for whom environmental issues may be less accessible due to linguistic, cultural, or informational barriers.” Xiaotian’s role helped change that.

“He designed multilingual tools – brochures, surveys, and informational materials – to reduce language barriers and invite broader participation. Day to day, he reached out to business owners and residents in Montreal’s Chinatown, speaking with youth, seniors, and community partners to gather perspectives on sustainable development, food waste reduction, recycling, and urban gardening.

What he heard didn’t stay in a notebook. Drawing on those conversations, he helped organize targeted awareness activities and supported greening and community space improvement initiatives, accelerating work that would otherwise have taken much longer.

“I am most proud of contributing to the creation of practical tools for the community and helping organize activities tailored to their needs,” Xiaotian says. “Seeing the interest and engagement of participants gave me the feeling that I was making a real difference.”

Dong says Xiaotian's role allowed the organization to significantly expand its environmental efforts.

"The presence of this position marked a significant step forward for our organization," she says. "It allowed us to move from occasional initiatives to a more structured and strategic approach to environmental action."

With a dedicated resource focused on environmental initiatives, the organization was able to strengthen relationships with business owners and residents while making sustainability discussions more accessible within the Chinatown community.

For Xiaotian, the placement was also a mentorship experience. Dong supported him throughout the project, helping him shape ideas into concrete actions and adapt materials so they were clear, accessible, and culturally relevant. Regular check-ins provided opportunities to review progress, address challenges, and refine his approach.

"She encouraged me to share my ideas while providing constructive feedback that helped me refine my approach," Xiaotian says.

He also describes a workplace culture built on trust and collaboration, where colleagues and volunteers helped him integrate quickly and gain a clearer understanding of professional expectations.

Over time, the experience reshaped how he sees his future. It strengthened his interest in environmental issues and his desire to pursue master's studies in a field related to ecology.

For the Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal, the Green Jobs placement strengthened the organization's capacity to integrate sustainability into its work and continue building environmental initiatives within the community.

For Xiaotian, it was something even more personal.

What began as uncertainty after graduation has become clarity and momentum. The transition from volunteer to professional gave him his first meaningful Canadian work experience, but it also gave him something deeper: confidence, direction, and a renewed belief in what he can contribute.

Today, he moves forward with a clearer vision of his future, inspired to pursue further studies in ecology and equipped with the experience to support those ambitions. Programs like Green Jobs do more than fund positions. They open doors — to first chances, to confidence, to belonging, and to futures that once felt just out of reach.

# Regional Impact: Manitoba

Recreation Manitoba is a non-profit, membership-based association that provides a voice and leadership in shaping the future of recreation in Manitoba.

**9**

youth employed

**3,820**

hours worked

**\$34,207**

invested in the province

**100%**

of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**56%**

of participants were from  
priority groups



## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

— ” —

*It felt as though I was learning new things every day while building on old skills. The team I was a part of was supportive and helped me learn and grow.*

**MADISYN W,  
MANITOBA**

# Regional Impact: Ontario

Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) is a non-profit association that advances the health, social and environmental benefits of quality recreation and parks through evidence-based practices, resources and collaborative partnerships.

**40**  
youth employed

**18,882**  
hours worked

**\$180,511**  
invested in the province

**68%**  
of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**38%**  
of participants were from  
priority groups

## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING



*This program has had a lot of impact on my growth and development. This job gave me the opportunity to express myself, and learn, and I have gained so much from it.*

**CHARLIZE P  
ONTARIO**



# Green Job Helps Winnipeg Youth Restore a River and Inspire the Next Generation of Environmental Stewards

Flowing quietly through Winnipeg's neighbourhoods, the Seine River offers a rare opportunity for residents to connect with nature within the city. Paddlers glide through its winding channels, and communities gather along the greenway that surrounds it.

But protecting this urban waterway takes constant effort. Sections of the river have accumulated debris and invasive species that threaten the health of the ecosystem. Addressing those challenges requires the dedication of local organizations like Save Our Seine, a small environmental non-profit committed to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the Seine River greenway.

In the summer of 2025, that mission gained a powerful ally in Monique Ellison, a University of Winnipeg environmental studies student whose passion for conservation found a natural home on the river.

Ellison joined Save Our Seine as the Summer Team Coordinator through the CPRA Green Jobs Initiative, funded by the Government of Canada's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) program. In this role, she led the organization's Summer River Team — a group responsible for maintaining and restoring sections of the river while helping community members better understand and appreciate this important natural space.



For Ellison, the opportunity felt like a perfect fit. Growing up near Lake Winnipeg sparked a lifelong interest in water conservation and environmental restoration. When she discovered a role that involved spending the summer paddling along the Seine River, removing invasive species, and cleaning debris from the water, she immediately felt connected to the work.

“Everything about the job aligned with my values,” she explains. “I grew up around water, so being able to work on a river every day – removing invasive species, cleaning it up, and helping people connect with it – was incredible.” What she didn’t expect was just how much history the river held beneath its surface.

In some sections of the Seine, more than a century’s worth of garbage has accumulated – remnants of a time when the river was treated as a dumping ground. Over the years, cleanup crews have uncovered a surprising range of items hidden beneath the water, including an old projector from decades past. In one area, the shoreline itself contains what is now recognized as a historic landfill site – a stark reminder of the river’s past.

Yet the work of Save Our Seine is steadily transforming the waterway.

Ellison remembers spending an entire day with the team clearing debris from a single section of the river, removing an entire truckload of garbage. Today, that same stretch of water is almost unrecognizable. “When we go back there now, there’s hardly anything left,” she says.

As Summer Team Coordinator, she guided a team of four youth employees working closely together on the river each day. The role required her to balance environmental work with team management, ensuring everyone remained safe, productive, and supported.

“It’s not like a typical job where everyone is working separately,” she says. “We’re together all day, every day, so you really learn how to manage personalities and keep everyone working well together.”

Over the course of the summer, Ellison strengthened her leadership skills, learning how to navigate challenges and confidently seek guidance when needed. Her supervisor, Rob Perron, Vice-President of Save Our Seine, witnessed that growth firsthand.

“Monique transitioned from being a highly capable team member to a leader and mentor for the entire summer team,” he says. “We saw her confidence grow as she tackled challenges independently and advocated for her ideas.”

For a small environmental organization like Save Our Seine, opportunities like the Green Jobs Initiative are transformative.

“Programs like Green Jobs act as a vital bridge between the urgent needs of ecosystems like the Seine River and the career aspirations of the next generation,” Perron explains.

Small environmental non-profits often operate on limited budgets, making it difficult to take on large-scale restoration work. Wage subsidies allow organizations like Save Our Seine to hire youth teams capable of tackling labour-intensive projects such as debris removal and invasive species management, while also helping build the next generation of environmental leaders.

For Ellison, that sense of purpose was one of the most meaningful parts of the experience. “Everyone is there because they care about the work,” she explains. “You’re all trying to make a difference, whether that’s cleaning up the river or helping people connect with nature.”

As Ellison and her team paddled through the greenway, they frequently met residents exploring the water by kayak or canoe. Many returned throughout the summer, stopping to talk about the work being done.

Over time, the river became something deeply personal to her. When she first started the job, she didn’t know much about the Seine River. Today, she finds herself telling everyone about it. “Now people joke that it’s ‘Monique’s river,’” she says with a laugh.

After completing her environmental studies degree, Ellison hopes to build a career in the environmental non-profit sector — continuing work that protects natural spaces while helping communities reconnect with them. But perhaps the most powerful impact of the experience lies in what continues long after the summer ends.

Each piece of garbage removed, and each stretch of river restored represents more than environmental progress — it reflects a renewed relationship between people and the natural spaces around them. For Monique Ellison, that relationship has become deeply personal. What was once an unfamiliar river is now something she feels connected to, protective of, and proud to share with others.

And through opportunities like the Green Jobs Initiative, young leaders like her are not only restoring vital ecosystems — they are becoming the stewards who will carry this work forward, ensuring places like the Seine River are not only preserved, but truly valued, for generations to come.

# Regional Impact: Alberta

The Alberta Recreation and Parks Association is a not-for-profit organization committed to building healthier and happier communities and citizens by developing and promoting recreation and parks.

**12**

youth employed

**5,691**

hours worked

**\$54,760**

invested in the province

**75%**

of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**67%**

of participants were from  
priority groups



## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

— ” —

*I was able to get valuable experience and grow my skillset in this position. I am very grateful for this experience; it has created lots of opportunity for me, including paving a path for my future.*

**BALJOT B,  
ALBERTA**

# Regional Impact: British Columbia

British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to the enrichment of individuals and their communities through the power of recreation and parks.

**23**

youth employed

**9,802**

hours worked

**\$105,000**

invested in the province

**78%**

of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**43%**

of participants were from  
priority groups

## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

— ” —

*The program gave me the opportunity to apply the skills obtained from my schooling in a workplace environment. It has given me more clarity on the type of career I would like to pursue.*

**NICOLE C,  
BRITISH COLUMBIA**



# Regional Impact: Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Recreation And Parks Association is a non-profit, member-based organization whose purpose is to promote, develop and facilitate parks and recreation opportunities throughout the province.

**10**

youth employed

**5,179**

hours worked

**\$47,042**

invested in the province

**100%**

of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**80%**

of participants were from  
priority groups



## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

— ” —

*I now know this is the line of work I want to pursue as a career. My time here has inspired me to search for continued learning opportunities to better myself for that purpose.*

**KATIE C,  
SASKATCHEWAN**

# Mapping Confidence and Capacity: A Green Job Built Skills, Trust, and Direction in Penticton

When Nicole Clifford joined the City of Penticton, she was excited and a little unsure of what to expect. “I was studying geography and anthropology, and I knew I was interested in GIS and planning,” Nicole said. “But I didn’t really know what that looked like day to day.”

Nicole was hired through the CPRA Green Jobs Initiative, funded in part by the Government of Canada’s Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS). Early on, Nicole’s work focused on applying her GIS skills to refine the City’s parks GIS dataset and asset management, strengthening the information to better support day-to-day park operations. As her curiosity and confidence grew, she also contributed to the planning process for the Kettle Valley Rail Trail Strategy (KVRTS), supporting early exploratory work, documenting field observations, and assisting throughout the process. Together, these projects gave her firsthand exposure to municipal work and demonstrated how data can guide informed decision-making.



“It was my first time seeing how a city actually works,” Nicole said. “How information is gathered, how decisions are made, and how planning fits into everything.” As part of her work, Nicole began using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) – a technology that helps collect, analyze, and visualize geographic data through maps and spatial tools.

“GIS can sound really technical,” she said, “but it’s basically a way to use maps and data to understand a place better and see what could be improved.”

Using GIS across her various projects helped Nicole connect classroom learning to real-world application. “That’s when things started to click for me,” she said. “I could see how what I was learning in school could actually be used in a job.”

Nicole was supervised by Ysabel Contreras, who says the Green Jobs placement provided the City with valuable additional capacity – but what stood out most was how Nicole approached the role.

“She was curious,” Ysabel said. “She asked thoughtful questions and wanted to understand the work, not just complete tasks.”

As Nicole became more comfortable, she shared that she was interested in learning more about planning, which was not originally part of her role.

“When Nicole expressed that interest, it showed initiative,” Ysabel said. “That mattered to me.” Rather than keeping the role narrowly defined, Ysabel supported Nicole in expanding her responsibilities.

“I didn’t want her experience to be limited to task-based work,” Ysabel said. “This program gives us the flexibility to be intentional and responsive.”

For Nicole, that response was pivotal. “Knowing that my interests were being taken seriously made a huge difference,” she said.

As Nicole took on more responsibility and developed greater confidence in her GIS skills, she began using those skills more directly in her work on the KVR Trail Strategy.

“It combined maps, text, and observations from the trail to show different areas and what could be improved from a user perspective as well as from an operations perspective.” The project allowed Nicole to bring together technical skills, analysis, and communication – and to contribute something tangible.

“It felt meaningful,” she said. “I could actually see the impact of the work I was doing.” From Ysabel’s perspective, this kind of contribution highlights the value youth can bring when given space to grow. “When young people are trusted and supported, they often introduce ideas and approaches we wouldn’t have thought of otherwise,” she said. “It creates space for learning to happen in both directions.” For Nicole, that experience was deeply personal. Living with a learning disability, confidence has not always come easily.

“Confidence has always been something I’ve struggled with,” she said. “But Ysabel trusted me with important work, and that really helped me believe in my ability.” Being trusted – and supported – changed how Nicole saw herself professionally. “I felt capable,” she said. “I felt like I belonged there.” That confidence extended beyond the placement. “I left this position with real experience,” Nicole said. “It made me feel ready for whatever comes next.”

For Ysabel, Nicole’s experience reflects the broader value of the Green Jobs program – not just for youth, but for organizations as well.

“This program allows us to be intentional about mentorship,” she said. “It lets us move beyond assigning tasks and instead create experiences that are meaningful and mutually beneficial.” From a youth perspective, she noted, the value lies in exposure. “They get to see the realities of municipal work – how decisions are made, how departments collaborate, and how long-term planning connects to operations and the needs of our community,” Ysabel said. “That kind of experience is hard to get early in your career, and by providing it, the program helps participants build a deeper, more informed perspective they can carry forward into future opportunities.”

From an organizational standpoint, the value is clear. “We benefit from creativity, fresh perspectives, and emerging skill sets,” she said. “Technology and training are constantly changing, and youth help keep us aligned with new tools and new ways of thinking.” For Nicole, the experience helped turn uncertainty into clarity. “It helped me understand what working for a city actually looks like,” she said. “And it helped me believe that this is something I can do.”

Programs like the CPRA Green Jobs Initiative show what’s possible when youth are trusted, supported, and encouraged to explore their interests. They create space for mentorship, build confidence where it may have been lacking, and allow young people to see themselves as capable contributors – while also giving organizations the capacity, fresh perspectives, and emerging skills needed to strengthen how they plan, adapt, and serve their communities. For both Nicole and the City of Penticton, the impact went beyond the work completed. It was about trust built, skills developed, confidence gained, and the mutual support that benefited both sides – outcomes that continue long after the placement ends.

# Regional Impact: Northwest Territories

The NWT Recreation and Parks Association works with communities across the Northwest Territories to promote healthy living through active recreation.

**10**

youth employed

**2,816**

hours worked

**\$29,690**

invested in the territory

**100%**

of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**80%**

of participants were from  
priority groups



## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

”

*The program strengthened my ability to navigate challenging conversations while supporting and engaging youth in environmental and outdoor learning.*

**ASHLYN A,  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

# Regional Impact: Nunavut

The Recreation and Parks Association of Nunavut (RPAN) is a territorial organization that supports recreation and promotes active, healthy communities across Nunavut through partnerships and community-based initiatives.

**3**

youth employed

**841**

hours worked

**\$13,530**

invested in the territory

**100%**

of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**100%**

of participants were from  
priority groups

## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

”

*The program strengthened my confidence, leadership, and communication skills, while shaping me into a more responsible, patient, and positive role model for children in outdoor educational settings.*

**DANICA K,  
NUNAVUT**



# Regional Impact: Yukon

The Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY) is a non-profit society dedicated to empowering people and communities in the Yukon to adopt active, healthy lifestyles.

**3**

youth employed

**864**

hours worked

**\$9,792**

invested in the territory

**100%**

of participants faced  
barriers to employment

**67%**

of participants were from  
priority groups



## WHAT 2025 GREEN JOBS EMPLOYERS ARE SAYING

— ” —

*The project contributed directly to the upkeep and beautification of Carmacks' public parks and trails, promoting a cleaner, safer, and more enjoyable outdoor experience for residents and tourists.*

**VILLAGE OF CARMACKS  
YUKON**

# From Camper to Leader: A Full-Circle Journey in the Northwest Territories

For Richard, camp was never just a place to spend the summer—it was where everything began.

Growing up in the foster care system in the Northwest Territories, he faced challenges that many young people carry quietly. Stability, belonging, and confidence were not always guaranteed. But each summer, camp offered something different.

“Growing up in foster care, there were a lot of struggles,” he says. “But going out to camp—being on the land, in the bush, with people who understood what you’ve been through—that meant a lot.”

What started as a place of refuge would eventually become the foundation for his future. Years later, Richard is no longer just a camper. Through the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories, he has grown into a leader—someone responsible for guiding youth through the same experiences that once shaped him. In the summer of 2025, with support from the Green Jobs Initiative, Richard stepped into a leadership role that represented more than employment—it marked a continuation of a journey that had come full circle.



Each summer, youth spend their days immersed outdoors, building confidence and developing a deeper connection to the land.

“We’re out on the land all week—canoeing, hiking, learning how to be safe in the bush,” Richard explains. “The kids really get to experience and understand the land in a way they don’t normally get to.”

For many youth, especially those in care, the impact goes far beyond the activities themselves. It’s a place where kids can connect with others who understand what they’re going through,” Richard says. “That’s where those real, lasting connections begin.”

He sees himself in many of the youth he works with.

“The kids remind me a lot of me,” he says. “I didn’t grow up learning that I was capable or that I had value. Camp is where I started to understand that—and now I try to pass that on.” That responsibility shapes how he shows up every day.

“We teach things like ‘I am powerful, I am valuable, I am capable,’” he says. “Those are things every kid should grow up knowing—but not everyone does.”

In the summer of 2025, as limited funding was placing pressure on staffing capacity, support through the Green Jobs Initiative allowed the organization to create a leadership role for Richard—helping ensure the camp could continue operating at full strength.

Stepping into that leadership position marked a new chapter in his journey.

“Being in a management role was completely new for me,” Richard says. “I had to learn how to lead staff, manage time, and even handle hiring. It was a challenge, but it gave me a big confidence boost.”

That opportunity didn’t just support Richard—it strengthened the program itself.

“Richard has been part of camp for years—as a camper and in many different staff roles,” says Jessica, a staff member with the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories. “That lived experience matters. He understands the program from the inside out.”

When unexpected changes created gaps in leadership, Richard stepped up. “When we lost our camp director partway through the season, Richard took on more responsibility without ever losing his patience,” Jessica says. “He has a calm, steady way of working with the kids. Not everyone can do that—but Richard can.”

Having grown up in the foster care system himself, Richard brings a perspective that cannot be taught. He understands the barriers many of the youth face, and he meets them with patience, empathy, and consistency.

“Camp helped me learn what life should look like,” he says. “Now I try to remind the kids that this is how it should feel.”

For organizations like the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories, delivering this kind of programming in a northern, remote region comes with real challenges.

“Funding for wages was a challenge last year,” Jessica explains. “Without support, it would have been difficult to create opportunities for Richard to step into this new role, where he really flourished.”

Programs like the Green Jobs Initiative play a critical role in supporting organizations to create meaningful employment opportunities for youth, while strengthening their ability to deliver programming in communities that need it most.

In Richard’s case, the impact is both immediate and lasting.

Through land-based programming, he is helping youth develop confidence, build relationships, and connect with the environment around them. At the same time, he is gaining leadership experience, developing professional skills, and building a path forward for himself.

But perhaps most importantly, he is giving something back.

The same camp that once helped him understand his own value is now the place where he helps others discover theirs.

For the youth he works with, that impact can be life changing.

And for Richard, it is a reminder of how far he has come.

From a young camper searching for belonging, to a leader helping others find it, his journey reflects the power of investing in youth—especially those who need it most.

Because sometimes, the most meaningful opportunities don’t just change where you work.

They change who you become.

## CPRA would like to thank the following organizations who participated in our 2025 Green Jobs Initiative. Your commitment to advancing green priorities and providing meaningful opportunities and learning experiences for youth facing barriers to employment is making a difference across the country.

- Alberta Recreation & Parks Association
- Association forestière des deux rives
- BC Recreation and Parks Association
- Brightsand Lake Regional Park\*
- Camp Easter Seal (SK) - Saskabilities\*
- Canadian Indigenous Conservation Innovation Centre Association (CICICA)\*
- Catholic Youth Organization\*
- Centre communautaire Saint-Pierre inc.\*
- Centre nautique de l'Istorlet\*
- Chilliwack Park Society
- City of Brampton\*
- City of Edmonton
- City of Grande Prairie\*
- City of Lloydminster
- City of Markham - Markham Museum\*
- City of Mississauga
- City of Morden
- City of Nanaimo - Parks, Recreation & Culture\*
- City of Penticton
- City of Richmond Hill
- City of Sault Ste. Marie
- City of Swift Current
- City of Toronto
- City of Welland\*
- Innoyot Indigenous Conservation Innovation Centre (CICIC)\*
- Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society
- Community Government of Behchoko
- Community of GamèTi
- Conseil des Anicinapek de Kitcisakik
- Conservation Corps Newfoundland and Labrador
- Corporation de développement de la rivière Noire\*
- Corporation of Norfolk County\*
- Corporation of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc
- Corporation of the Town of Arnprior\*
- Corporation of the Town of Cochrane\*
- District of Saanich
- District of Sechelt
- Ducks Unlimited Canada\*
- Easter Seals Nova Scotia - Camp Tidnish
- Environmental Education Commission\*
- Evergreen\*
- Fort Folly Habitat Recovery\*
- Foster Family Coalition of NWT -- Camp Connections
- Fraser Valley Mountain Bikers Association\*
- Frontenac Arch Biosphere Network\*
- Galiano Conservancy Association\*
- Go Jeunesse
- Grand River Conservation Foundation
- Grasslands Conservation Council of BC\*
- Greater Kouchibouguac Watershed Association\*
- Groupe de recommandations et d'actions pour un meilleur environnement
- GUEPE (Le Groupe uni des éducateurs-naturalistes et professionnels en environnement)Hamiota Municipality
- Hamlet of Cambridge Bay\*
- Hamlet of Kugluktuk\*
- Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk\*
- Hantsport Memorial Community Centre\*
- Hay River Youth Centre\*
- Héritage Saint-Bernard\*
- Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group\*
- Iisaak Olam Foundation\*
- Innovation Jeunes (Direction chrétienne inc.)\*
- Island Nature Trust
- Jardin floral de La Pocatière
- Kettle Creek Conservation Authority
- LCSO, Loisirs & Culture Support Organisation\*
- Le Centre Récréatif Notre Dame Recreational Centre\*
- Living Sky Wildlife Rehabilitation\*
- Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests
- Loisir et Sport Montérégie
- Maison des jeunes de Pointe Saint-Charles inc\*
- Mattagami Region Conservation Authority
- Meewasin Valley Authority
- Moosomin Regional Park Authority
- Municipal District of Bonnyville No. 87
- Municipalité de Canton de Gore\*
- Municipalité de Lac-Étchemin
- Municipalité de Sainte-Marguerite\*
- Municipalité De Saint-Étienne-De-Bolton\*
- Municipalité de Saint-Isidore-de-Clifton
- Municipalité de Val-Brillant
- Municipality of Barrington\*
- Municipality of Chester\*
- Municipality of Leamington\*
- Municipality of Port Hope
- Municipality of West Perth\*
- North Shore Mountain Bike Association\*
- Northwest Territories Recreation and Parks Association (NWTRPA)
- Ocean Ambassadors Canada\*
- Osoyoos Desert Society\*
- Parc Harold F Baldwin\*
- Petitcodiac Watershed Alliance\*
- Recreation and Parks Association of Nunavut
- Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY)
- Regroupement du Parc Récréotouristique\*
- Relais des jeunes Gatoinois
- Reliefs mauriciens\*
- Richmond Nature Park Society
- Riverton & District Friendship Centre
- RM of St. Francis Xavier\*
- Roots and Boots Forest School Society
- Save Our Seine River Environment Inc\*
- Scotsburn Recreation Club
- Service à la famille chinoise du grand Montréal\*
- Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation\*
- Souris Glenwood Parks and Recreation
- Spence Neighbourhood Association Inc.
- Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary\*
- The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward
- The Elora Centre For Environmental Excellence\*
- The Gaia Project\*
- TłıChq Government\*
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)
- Toronto Zoo\*
- Town of Berwick
- Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury\*
- Town of Comox\*
- Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay\*
- Town of Hay River
- Town of High Prairie - Recreation\*
- Town of Montreal West
- Town of New Glasgow
- Town of Newmarket
- Town of Okotoks
- Town of Orangeville
- Town of Outlook\*
- Town of Pelham
- Town of Petawawa
- Town of Radisson
- Town of Smiths Falls
- Town of Stonewall Quarry Park
- Town of Stratford
- Town of Strathmore
- Town of Valleyview
- Town of Waldheim\*
- Town of Watson Lake
- Township of Ignace\*
- Township of King
- Township of Selwyn\*
- Township of Woolwich\*
- Truly Alive Youth and Family Foundation\*
- Umoja Community Mosaic\*
- University of the Fraser Valley\*
- Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association\*
- Village of Burns Lake
- Village of Carmacks\*
- Village of Southern Victoria
- Ville de Hearst\*
- Ville de La Pocatière
- Ville de Pointe-Claire
- Wagner Natural Area Society
- West Village Community Development Co-Operative
- Willowgrove\*
- YMCA of the National Capital Region

\*denotes new partnership