



## MEDIA RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

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### **Trans Canada Trail and Outland Announce Indigenous Youth Employment Partnership Summer 2021 Education Opportunity to Focus on Trail Building and Skills Development**

**Montreal, June 18, 2021** – [Trans Canada Trail](#) (TCT) and the [Outland Youth Employment Program](#) (OYEP), a part of Dexterra Group, are pleased to announce an innovative trail building education opportunity for Indigenous youth launching in summer 2021. This trail building module will be added to Outland’s award-winning land-based skills development program that was launched over 20 years ago, in 2000.

OYEP’s six-week summer program provides opportunities in land-based education, training and employment for high-school-aged Indigenous youth. The program is held across the country including the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario. OYEP collaborates with local Indigenous communities and consults with Elders to ensure youth feel culturally and spiritually supported in the workplace.

Running July through August, the OYEP summer program will now include a week dedicated to trail education and training. TCT designed a curriculum that offers education to Indigenous youth on understanding trails and trail use; and how to plan, sustainably design, build and maintain a trail, all under the guidance of instructors recruited by TCT. Youth build important life-long skills while working on real-life projects that benefit their communities. In Ontario, the trail week incorporates training from the [Ontario Parks Association](#) (OPA), and all youth who successfully complete the training will also receive OPA’s Trail Specialist Certificate.

As a leader in cross-country trail development since 1992, TCT has enduring relationships with many Indigenous communities, which have led to the creation of the world-class Trans Canada Trail. OYEP is based on 20 years of respectful, mutually beneficial relationships with over 100 First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities across Canada. [Watch the video](#) about the TCT-OYEP partnership.

“Trans Canada Trail has an important role to play in the essential act of reconciliation and relationship building with Indigenous peoples,” said Eleanor McMahon, President & CEO, Trans Canada Trail. “Our partnership with OYEP signifies our shared commitment to reconciliation and relationship building, as we both firmly believe in the life-changing, transformative impacts opportunities such as this provide for Indigenous youth. This program is also an opportunity for us to be enriched by the knowledge and the skills associated with Indigenous stewardship, particularly in terms of the future of land use and resource management across Canada. We are proud to provide this trail education week in OYEP’s summer program, and help develop the next generation of Canada’s trail builders,” she added.

“Through our national network, OYEP’s mission is to provide land-based education, training and work opportunities for high-school-aged Indigenous youth. This partnership with Trans Canada Trail will provide

the youth participants across the country with tremendous learning opportunities about the Trail, the lands it connects and the maintenance it requires,” says John Mac Cuish, CEO, Dexterra Group. “They will gain leadership skills and work experience that they can take back to their communities and inspire other young people and those around them.”

“The Outland Youth Employment Program is excited to announce our partnership with Trans Canada Trail,” said Alex Luengo, Divisional Vice President at Dexterra. “Both organizations have long histories and a strong commitment to providing transformative opportunities for Indigenous youth across the country. Together, we can amplify opportunities in the trail building sector and support meaningful connections for youth coast to coast to coast.”

The new five-day program is an expansion of a highly successful TCT-OYEP trail building education pilot project for Indigenous youth launched in 2020. This initial trail project took place in OYEP camps in northern Alberta and Northern Ontario, where participants worked with trail operators on trail projects near Lesser Slave Lake, AB, and in Quetico Park in Ontario. The 2021 program builds on the successful pilot and expands trail education to all OYEP camps across Canada.

According to an OYEP participant survey conducted between June and October 2018 by the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), 97% of OYEP graduates surveyed agreed that attending OYEP has put them on a positive path in life that they would not have found had they not participated.

#### **Camp dates:**

**Ontario:** July 14-18, July 20-24 and July 26-30 (three camps)

Instructors:

- Luke Wassegijig, [Wikwemikong Tourism](#)
- Zane Davies, [Ontario Parks Association](#)

**Manitoba:** July 19-23

Instructor: Alan McLauchlan, [Opasquia Trail Association](#)

**British Columbia:** July 27-31

Instructor: [Patrick Lucas](#), [Indigenous Youth Mountain Bicycling Association](#)

**Alberta:** August 3-7

Instructor: Patrick Lucas, Indigenous Youth Mountain Bicycling Association

#### **Media spokespeople**

Interviews are available, on request, with:

- Eleanor McMahon, President & CEO, Trans Canada Trail
- Mark Kmill, OYEP Manager, Central Canada
- Brittany McCoy, OYEP Manager, Western Operations
- Patrick Lucas, Trail instructor, Alberta and BC camps

#### **Multimedia**

- See a video about the TCT-OYEP partnership [here](#).
- Photography from OYEP’s camps are available for [download](#).

## Contact information

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## About Trans Canada Trail

Trans Canada Trail (TCT) seeks to promote and assist in the development and use of the Trans Canada Trail (the Trail). Stretching for more than 27,000 km and profiling Canada's diverse landscapes and cultures, the Trail is the world's longest network of recreational multi-use trails and is situated on the traditional territory of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples from coast to coast to coast. The Trail includes land and water routes that were created and used, both historically and presently, by Indigenous peoples as seasonal travel and trade routes. As the steward of the network, TCT is in a unique position to partner with First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples and Indigenous organizations in every province and territory.

[tctrail.ca](http://tctrail.ca)

## About the Outland Youth Employment Program

The Outland Youth Employment Program is a national network of innovative education, training and work opportunities for Indigenous youth that includes our award winning six-week land-based summer program. OYEP wrap around support services are available across the country and summer-based programs are currently available in Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia. OYEP has worked towards equity and opportunity for Indigenous youth and communities since 2000. [oyep.ca](http://oyep.ca)