



## MEDIA RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

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### **Summer 2022 training opportunity for Indigenous youth focuses on trail stewardship and skills development – a Trans Canada Trail and Outland Youth Employment Program partnership**

Second annual edition of innovative week-long trail crew training offered in five provinces begins July 19 in Ontario

**Montreal, July 11, 2022** – [Trans Canada Trail](#) is proud to announce the second annual edition of its innovative trail crew training opportunity for Indigenous youth, offered in partnership with the [Outland Youth Employment Program](#) (OYEP), a part of Dexterra Group. First launched in summer 2021, the opportunity consists of a trail crew training week designed by Trans Canada Trail, which is incorporated into Outland's award-winning land-based skills development six-week summer program offered in select provinces across the country.

OYEP's summer program, originally launched over 20 years ago in 2000, provides opportunities in land-based education, training and employment for high-school-aged Indigenous youth. This summer, the OYEP program will be held in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and new this year, Quebec. OYEP collaborates with local Indigenous communities and consults with Elders to ensure youth feel culturally and spiritually supported in the workplace.

The trail crew training will run for one week at different locations between **July 19 and August 19**. Trans Canada Trail has developed a curriculum that offers Indigenous youth the opportunity to understand trails and trail use, develop important life skills and work on an actual trail project.

Since its beginnings as a pilot in three camps in 2020, to [launching a week-long program in 2021 in six camps](#), the trail crew training week is now available at eight locations in five provinces.

Last summer, camp attendees contributed to building boardwalks, an equestrian trail at Mihkowapikwaniy Cultural Camp in Lubicon Lake, AB, picnic tables and bird boxes. As the first experience for many of working on the land and of the profession of trail stewardship, youth also learned how to use manual trail building tools, work with wood and rocks, and clear trails, as well as learning about traditional uses of plants and building collaboration skills and confidence.

“We’re incredibly proud of our partnership with Dexterra in support of OYEP and of the growth of this trail crew training opportunity,” says **Eleanor McMahon, President & CEO, Trans Canada Trail**. “Our organizations share a commitment to the life-changing, transformative impacts that opportunities such as this provide for Indigenous youth.”

She adds, “We can all benefit from Indigenous-led guardianship practices and solutions, and this partnership has been the catalyst for our new Trail Builders of Tomorrow program. The opportunities for us to be enriched by the next generation of trail leaders are numerous and will help ensure the Trail’s sustainability now – and for generations to come.”

Trans Canada Trail’s Trail Builders of Tomorrow program, which includes the OYEP trail crew training along with other initiatives, is designed to support training and employment programs that contribute to the development and improvement of trails.

“This partnership between OYEP and Trans Canada Trail has led to so many transformative experiences for hundreds of Indigenous youth across the country,” says **Mark Kmill, OYEP National Manager**. “We are ecstatic to continue developing this relationship through 2022 and beyond, connecting OYEP participants across Canada.”

#### **Youth Quotes:**

“The Trans Canada Trail trail-building week at OYEP was a great experience. I loved working outdoors and learned a lot.” – Zachary, OYEP participant, Mathias Colomb Cree Nation

“Working on the Trans Canada Trail last summer was such a rewarding experience to be a part of. We were able to demonstrate problem-solving skills, while developing as leaders through the process of making a boardwalk. It’s really cool to think that with everyone’s hard work, we’ve created something that connects us physically, from coast to coast to coast, and spiritually to whomever will use the Trail, and the history of this part of the land.” – Sage, OYEP Supervisor, Biigtigong Nishnaabeg

#### **2022 Trail Crew Training Dates**

##### **Ontario:**

Quetico Provincial Park, July 19-23

Lake Superior Provincial Park, July 25-29

Eastern Ontario (Location TBC), August 2-6

Instructor: Zane Davies

##### **Quebec:**

Mont-Vidéo Resort, August 1, 2, 4 and 5

Instructor: Marc Johnson

##### **Alberta:**

Lubicon Lake, August 2-6

Instructor: Ramzey Zallum

**Manitoba:**

Duck Mountain Provincial Park, August 8-12

**British Columbia:**

Ruckell Point Scout Camp, August 9-13

Kostas Cove Park, August 15-19

Instructor: Ramzey Zallum

**Interviews are available, on request, with:**

- Eleanor McMahon, President & CEO, Trans Canada Trail
- Trisha Kaplan, National Manager, Programs and Inclusion Initiatives, Trans Canada Trail
- Mark Kmill, National Manager, OYEP, Dexterra Group
- Kevin Nytrai, Alberta OYEP Camp Supervisor, Dexterra Group
- Emilie Riopel, Quebec OYEP Crew Leader, Dexterra Group

**Resources:**

- See photos from the Trans Canada Trail/OYEP summer 2021 trail crew training [here](#).

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**About Trans Canada Trail**

The Trans Canada Trail (the Trail) is the longest recreational trail in the world, spanning over 28,000 kilometres on land and water. Linking three oceans – the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic – the Trail connects 15,000 rural, urban and Indigenous communities across every province and territory. It is a ribbon that connects Canada's diverse landscapes, seasons, people and experiences, and fosters unity, collaboration and connectedness. Trans Canada Trail is a registered charity and stewards this national trail in collaboration with local Trail partners. With funding from the Government of Canada through Parks Canada, and investments from all levels of government and generous donors, Trans Canada Trail is the largest investor in trail infrastructure projects in Canada, supporting improvements, growth and enhancements for generations to come. [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)