



At Carlin, on Wednesday April 20<sup>th</sup>, the staff and students planted 63 trees on our school grounds in honour of the memory of Secwepemc children and to recognize Earth Day 2022. This project connected our students to our school grounds and provided them with an opportunity to 'lend a hand' to make our school site more attractive. Additionally, this project served to improve the biodiversity of the area, as well as provide future shade and a much needed sound and sight barrier from the Trans Canada highway. We look forward to observing the long term impact of this very positive environmental initiative.

At Carlin, Barb LeBeau, our Indigenous Education Worker, spearheaded the project and she, along with Stephanie Dumont (IEW) worked tirelessly to ensure it all came together. The tree species were carefully chosen for their value related to traditional use and for their adaptation to our local environment (Douglas Fir, Trembling Aspen, Ponderosa Pine, Lodgepole Pine, Paper Birch, Rocky Mt. Maple, and Choke Cherry). Our classes, with support of the teacher librarian, Geri Ellis, learned about these plant species. Our 7 middle school classes worked to prepare the planting holes and did all the planting. Our younger, elementary kids will participate in an ongoing way through watering and tending to the trees through the months of May and June.

To celebrate our work, we gathered in two assemblies (elementary and middle) to learn more about the project and the impact of tree planting, and understand the connections we all have to the Secwepemc history of this area. Elder John Jules, from the Shuswap Lake Band and Elder Virginia Woolridge were present at the assembly. John Jules spoke to the students about the history and connection of the Secwepemc people to the land and the work required to overcome the impact of residential schools. Virginia Woolridge participated in a drumming and singing session with a small group of Carlin students. Molly Cooperman of WildBC was on site during our prep work, planting and to help celebrate during our assembly. Barb Craven, from the BC Small Wetlands Association, also played an enormous role in the planning and execution of this planting event and we are deeply grateful for her time and effort.

This project was part of a reforestation initiative through Natural Resources Canada and it was completed with the support of BC Small Wetlands, who supplied the trees. Reimer's Farm also donated a 'Big Yellow Bag' of soil and we are so grateful. The Carlin PAC parent community was also invited to take part, and their dedication and commitment to our school is commendable. While in the end, we did not make use of their offer to supply a mini-excavator, we are so thankful for the support of Tim and Rhonda Witzke.



