

## MAPPING THE FUTURE OF TROUT LAKE

“This is our opportunity to do something for the good of the community. Trout Lake should be transformed into a place that people want to go to for reading, studying, enjoying the scenes and socializing. We should plant more flowers and trees in our park, and disallow dogs to destroy this possible beautiful haven. As a community we should treasure this great place to be. We shouldn’t let go of what our dreams are, and also what our beloved park could be.”

– Connie Batore, Grade 10 Student, speaking at the Trout Lake Community Centre on “Envisioning the Future of Trout Lake,” November 3rd, 2001

Students in the Grade 9 Class at Gladstone Secondary School Montessori Program came up with the idea of making two maps presenting alternate visions of the future at Trout Lake. One map would show the best possible future: restored creeks teeming with fish, lots of trees, and an engaged community. A second map would show the worst possible future: pollution, dead plants and animals, social problems.

Grade 9 student Emily Nixon spoke passionately at the Community Centre on both November 3rd and December 15th:

“I see that we have two choices, one: to continue this way and lose the hope of restoring [Trout Lake] forever, or two: through hard work and determination bring back what we lost. To have Trout lake be pure and clean, to be able to sit on a bench and feel like you’re right inside a forest, to go out for a morning walk and see a deer drinking from the lake. Do you even need to think about which one you want? I think that we all know, but are we willing to put work into it? I hope so.

“Now is the time to take action. Trout Lake can be restored to what it once was. All we need is people who care and are willing to help is with funding and give us their time. It’s people like you, who showed up today, that prove there is hope for Trout Lake. That yes, it can be restored to the beautiful sanctuary it once was.”

The Grade 9 students had studied wetland ecology and water stewardship, as well as spending many hours in the park documenting ecosystems and features. They had many ideas for restoring Trout Lake.

“More plants and less playing fields,” suggested Alicia Campbell. “Improve the Community Centre to get more youth involvement,” Ian Chalmers wrote. “People should stop littering and start picking up their dog feces,” snapped Lanna Fujiyama.

Meghan Gartlan-Close felt that education was the answer. “I think if we want to preserve or restore Trout Lake we have to inform the community of what actually lives in Trout Lake. If our community knows how many different plants and animals live in Trout Lake they might stop to think about what they do. They might not litter. We should put flyers up to tell the community what animals live in Trout Lake and how littering affects their life. There should be a night when people can come and hear about the living life of Trout Lake. We could have one day a month where people can volunteer and come help clean up Trout Lake.”

Alex Murphy took a more aggressive approach: “Trout Lake is going downhill. Less wildlife and nature means a less-nice area to live. If I were the steward of Trout Lake I would clean it up and sort it out. I would start by getting a crew of teamsters and make them clean up anything unnatural: fences, structures or sidewalks.”

Emily Nixon was disturbed by the Provincial Government’s practice of stocking Trout Lake with Rainbow Trout twice yearly. She wrote, “We need to restore Trout lake before we can enhance it. How are the fish supposed to survive in a dump? When people fish for the trout they’ll probably leave some sort of garbage behind. So I think that adding fish is partly why Trout lake is such a garbage dump.”

Many of the students were distressed by all the garbage they found at Trout Lake. Krista Orellana wrote, “We should take care of our home if we want a place to live.”

In addition to the Grade 9 students two maps of possible futures, we painted another map on the theme of “Envisioning the Future” onto a log burl from an ancient forest. Karen Stanley, adult participant, wrote on this map, “I would pick up litter until everyone notices and there is no more litter or garbage ever found.”

Head of the Montessori Program, Sharee Proudfoot, contributed this vision, “I would like to see the marshes around Trout Lake restored to produce the habitat for many birds of the Pacific Flyway, so all people in the community could enjoy the life they bring to an area.”

Environmentalists, teachers, community activists and educators participated in a day-long workshop on water stewardship presented by Wild B.C. as an aspect of the Trout Lake Community Mapping Project. In addition to learning new educational techniques, we



made connections with one another and built a network of support that will assist us in future stewardship work at Trout Lake.

The map the Grade 9 students made of the worst possible future includes burning buildings, a dead hooker, and a discarded syringe. The best possible future includes trees, creeks, fish and flowers – and there is also a place for people. Around the entire border of the “Best Future” map Krista Orellana painstakingly rendered a circle of tiny stick figures, holding hands – her symbol of community.

Connie Batore and Emily Nixon confer with Sharee Proudfoot and Karen Stanley at the workshop “Envisioning the future of Trout Lake,” November 3rd, 2001

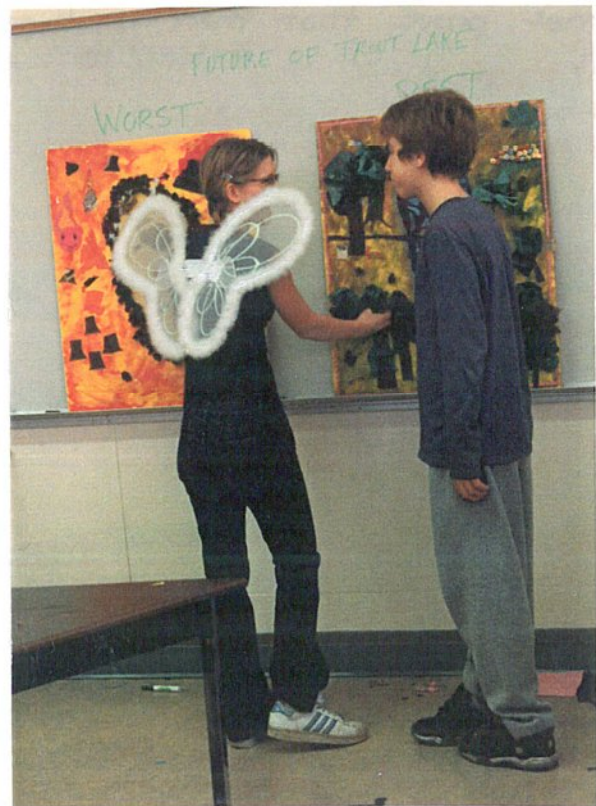




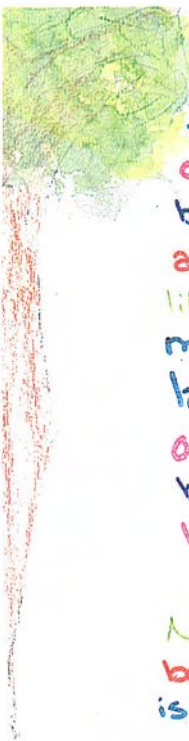




Gladstone Grade 9 students at work on the two maps, *The Worst Future* (below left) and *The Best Future* (right)







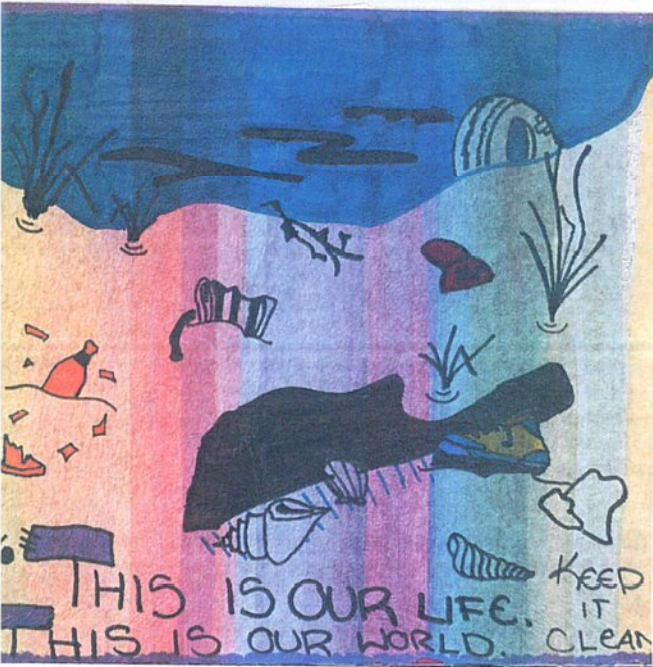
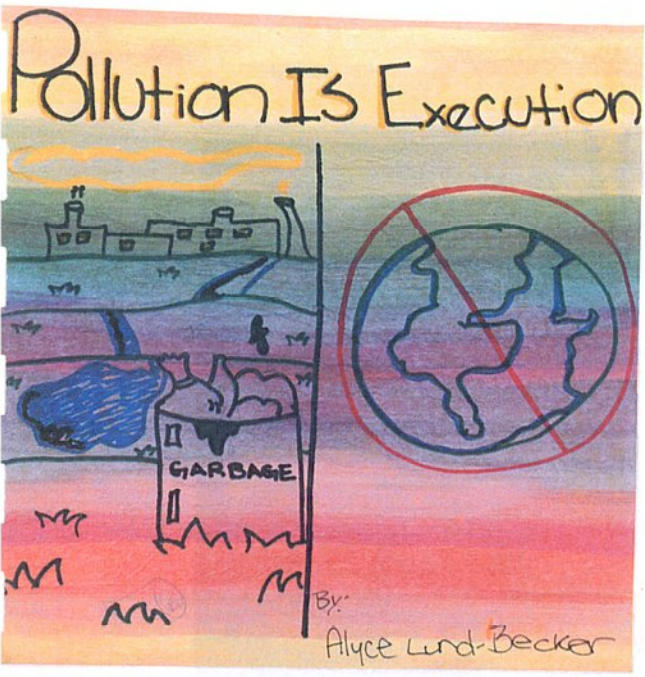
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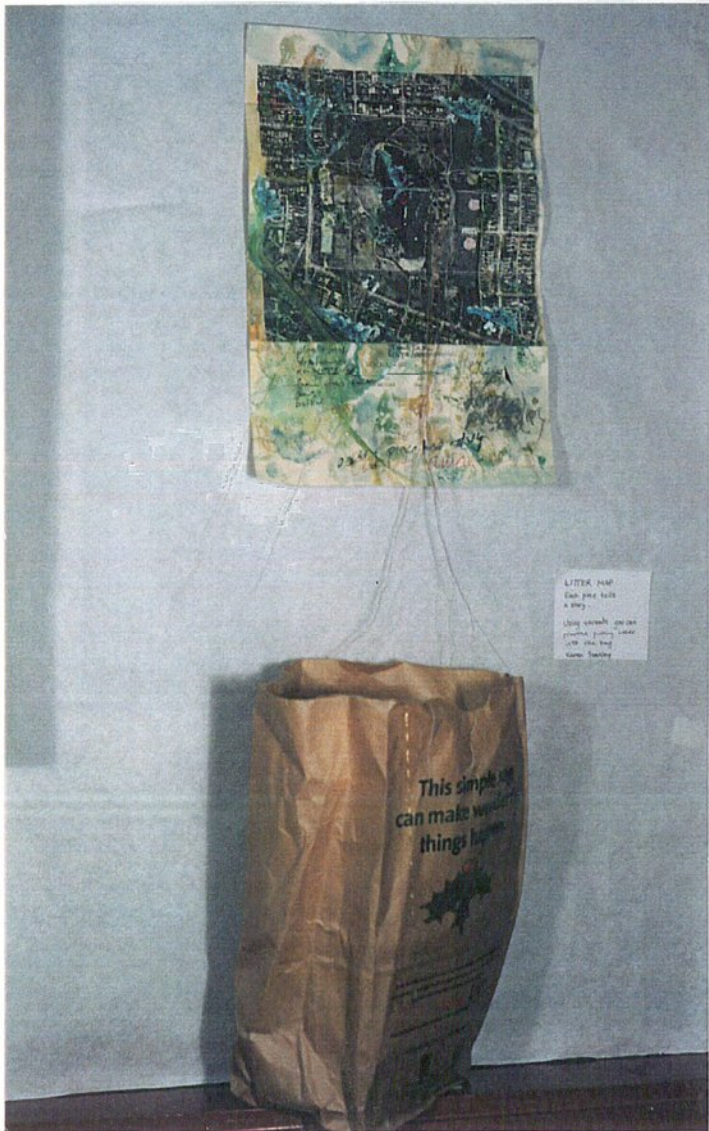




above: © Karen Stanley, 2001, Trout Lake sign installed in park

left: Signs for the future of Trout Lake by Gladstone Secondary School Montessori Program Grade 9 students





© Karen Stanley, 2001: Left: *Litter Map*: Each piece tells a story. . . using thread you can practice putting litter in the bag. Above: Trout Lake signs, installed in park and on display at the Community Mapping Project celebration. Karen is now leading "Trout Lake Walks" on the first Saturday of each month. Neighbors are invited to meet at 1 pm, pick up litter around the lake and share stories.

overleaf: © Karen Stanley, 2001. Photographs of Trout Lake and *Map of Trout Lake as a Garbage Can*



