

German trip inspires a wild walk

PRESERVATION: Students hitting the track for environmental and old-growth conservation, cultural projects

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More than 300 Valley students from three Duncan elementary schools will take part in an event entitled "Take A Walk for the Wild" to raise money to help preserve First Nations culture and conserve old trees.

At the same time, they are learning about ways students can take the lead on these issues in their community.

Wilderness International and Cowichan Tribes have organized the walk, which entails running or walking laps around the Cowichan Sportsplex on Chesterfield Road on Monday, June 21 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Many of the students are still looking for additional sponsors, so donations will be welcome.

Fred Roland of Wilderness International said this week that money raised from this half day event will be used for environmental conservation, cultural youth projects, as well as to acquire and conserve old-growth forests in the Cowichan Region.

Recently, a group of six Cowichan Tribes students and two elders returned from a 16-day



A contingent from Cowichan participates in a Wilderness International "Take a Walk for the Wild," one of the events the took part in when they travelled to Germany. (PHOTO COURTESY WILDERNESS INTERNATIONAL)

trip to Dresden, Germany as part of a conservation and cultural exchange and awareness program called "Wisdom Keepers - Knowledge Seekers." This program was created by Wilderness International in conjunction with

Cowichan Tribes and is being partially funded by the North American Indigenous Games Legacy Fund.

While in Germany, the students shared traditional Cowichan dances and songs that have been

passed on through their elders.

They also learned about traditions and history of three German cities, hiked in a national park, saw first hand the effects of generations of mining by touring a strip mine and joined about 2,000



Wilderness International's goal is old-growth land conservation. (PHOTO COURTESY WILDERNESS INTERNATIONAL)

students in two of the cities, who were hosting "Take a Walk for the Wild" events and helping to raise approximately \$90,000.

"These funds are helping to make possible youth projects and to conserve old-growth forests in British Columbia's coastal region in alignment with the goals of Wilderness International," according to Kai Andersch, Director of Wilderness International.

Wilderness International is a non-profit organization whose work focuses on three components: old-growth land conservation, youth leadership, and indigenous cultural preservation.