



University of Waterloo  
Environmental Assessment  
Review Society

# Engaging Student Expertise for Impact Assessments

Presented By  
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# Why participation?

- Empowerment and advocacy
- Democratization of environmental governance
- Generating confidence in other knowledge sources
- Legitimizing process and Responsible Authority
- Implementing the project
- Conflict resolution



# Why students?

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Indicators of ecological risk

Informed

Diverse perspectives

Dialogue

Social learning outcomes

Exposed to new technologies

Seen as underdeveloped

Involved

Lack of capacity

Political, economic and cultural  
barriers

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## Needs..

Collaboration  
Education  
Youth-focused  
Mentorship  
Adapt the context

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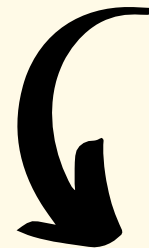
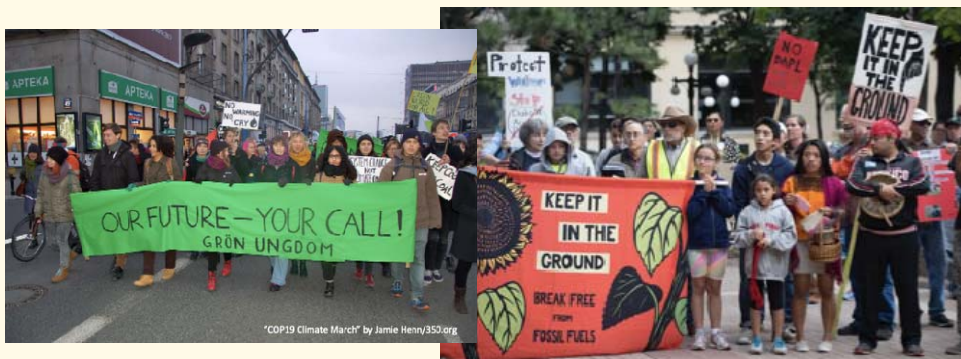
# State of youth engagement

General absence

Lack of effective social media use

Disobedience as governance

Collectives and grass roots organizations



	18-29	Net daily use
Facebook	70%	70%
Instagram	71%	59%
Twitter	42%	49%

Pew Research Centre survey of US adults conducted January 25 – February 8, 2021

# UW EARS

University of Waterloo's Environmental  
Assessment Review Society



University of Waterloo  
Environmental Assessment  
Review Society

"...a group of students passionate about EA and its role in sustainable development. We work collaboratively to review current high-profile assessments and advance the IA field."

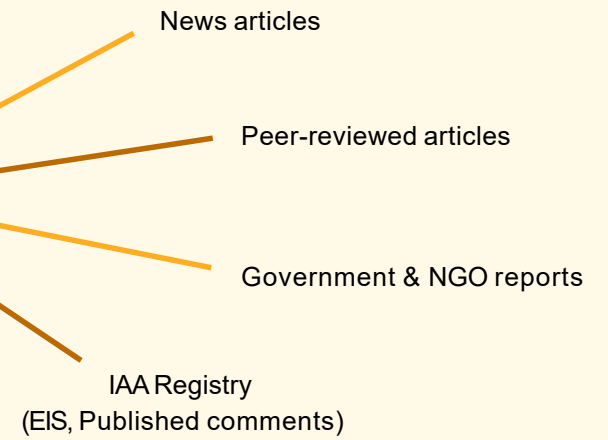


**DECIDE**  
on the project

**RESEARCH**  
the chosen project  
& Terms of Reference  
**DISCUSSION**

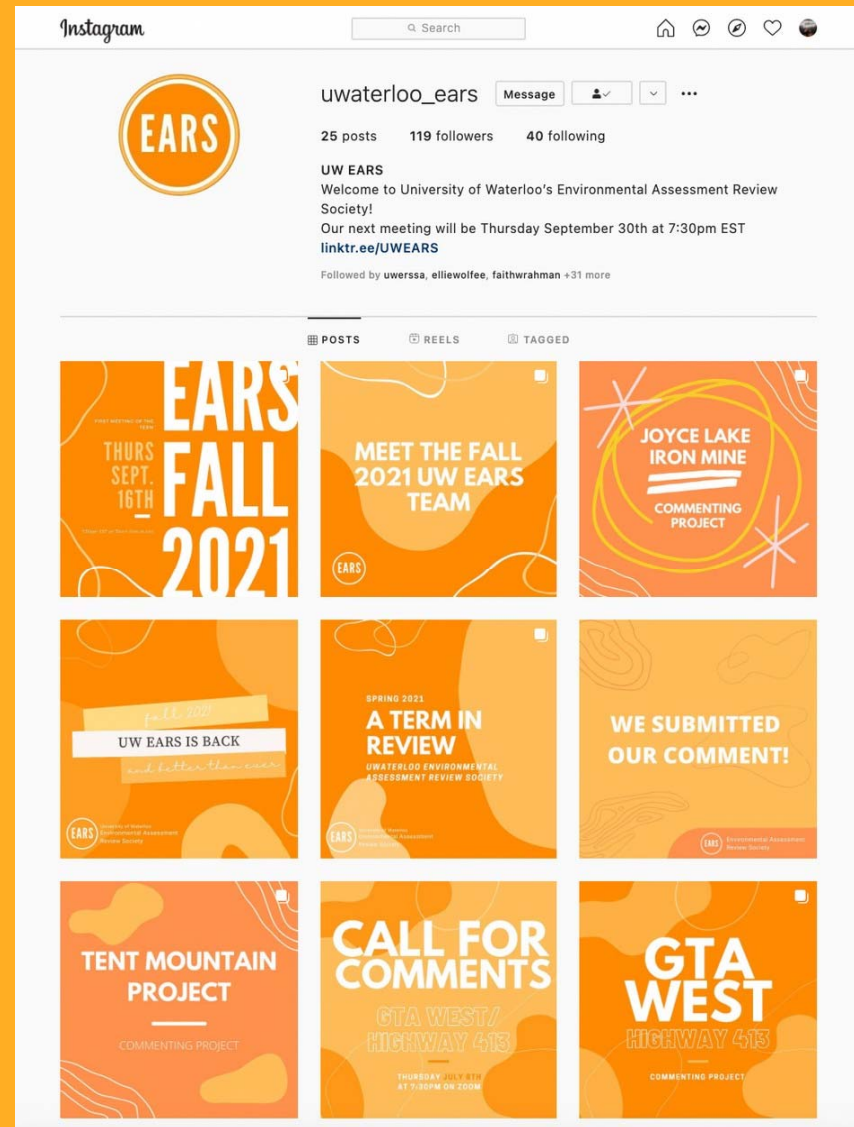
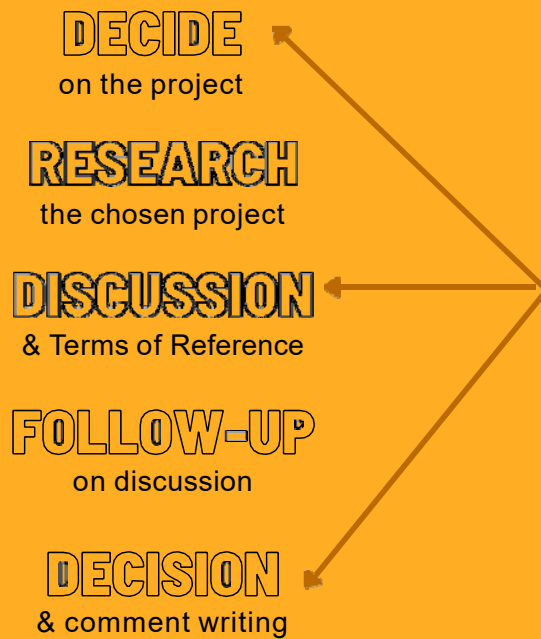
on discussion  
**FOLLOW-UP**

& comment writing  
**DECISION**



Total of 5 weeks...

# Meanwhile on social media...





# The results

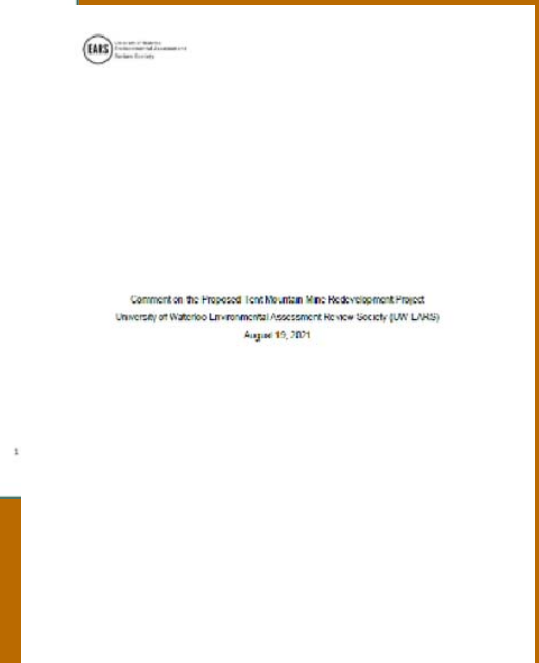
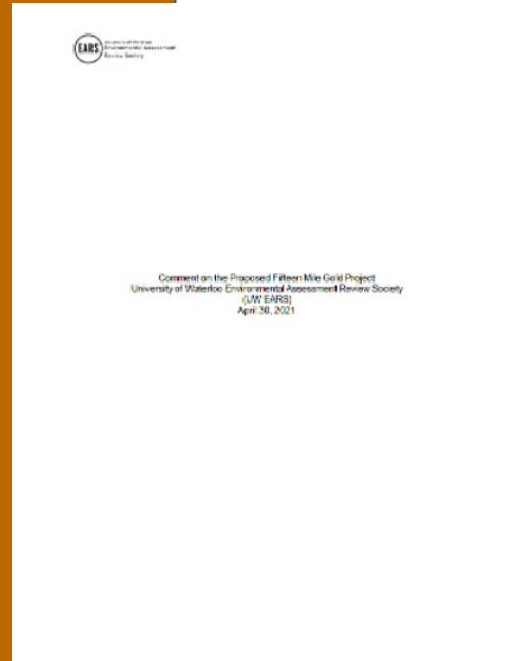
Since April 2021...

## - 2 fact sheets

- "Tips for Reading an Environmental Impact Statement"
- "How to Comment on Environmental Impact Statements"

## - 3 official comments submitted

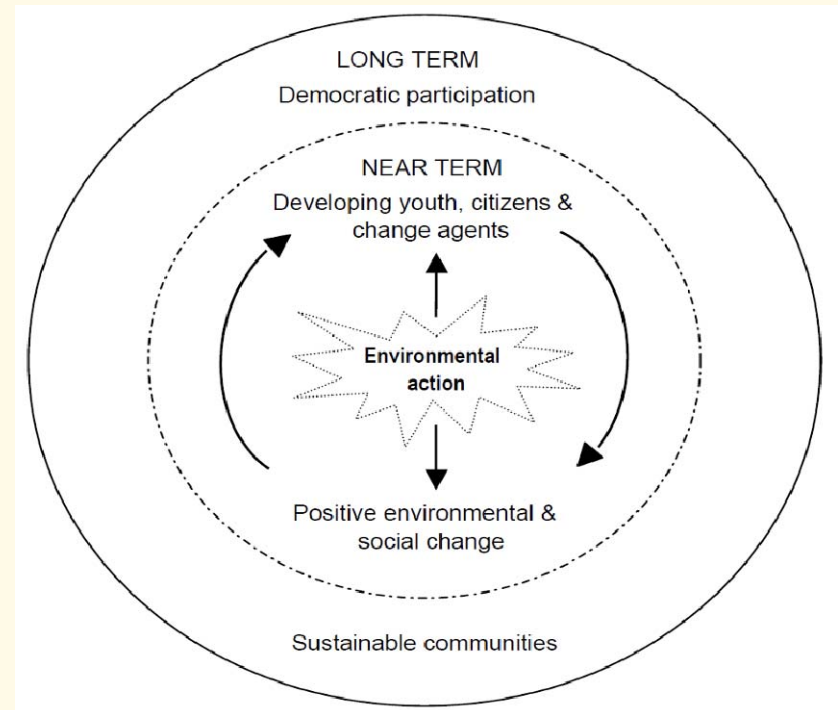
- Fifteen Mile Stream Gold Project
- GTA West (Highway 413)
- Tent Mountain Redevelopment Project



# Why it matters

“a process of co-creating environmental social change while building individuals’ capabilities for further participation contributing to personal and community transformation”  
(Schusler et al., 2009)

- A model for youth/student consultation
- Developing assessment practioners
  - Developing analytical skills
  - Social responsibility
  - Environmental citizenship





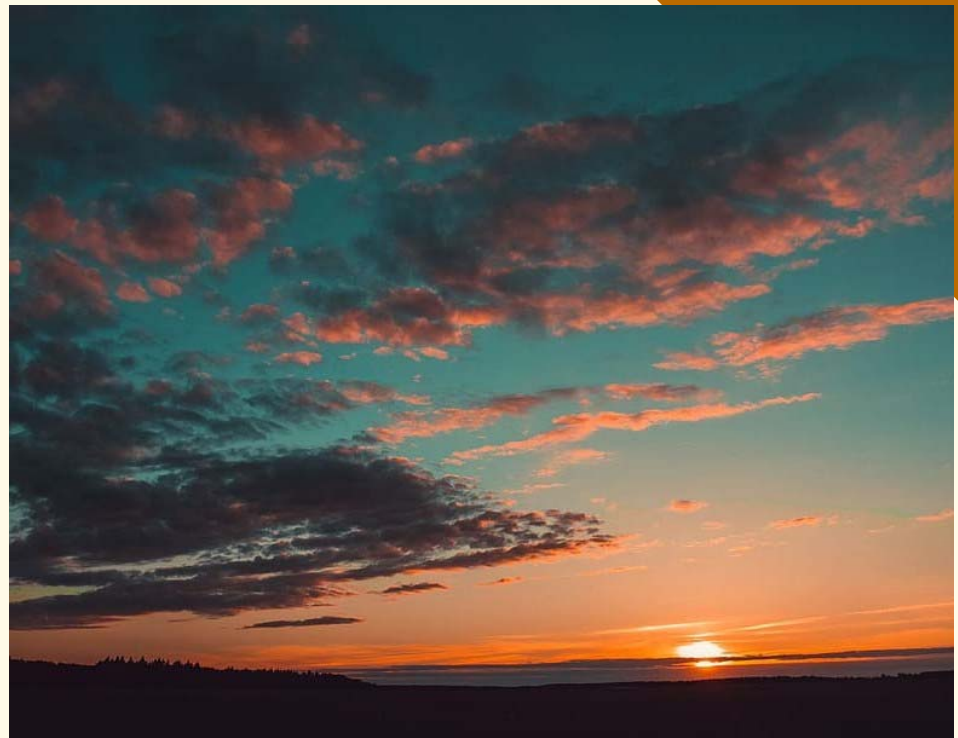
# What's needed...

## **3** principles

1. Make it RELEVANT
2. Make it MATTER
3. Make it ACCESSIBLE

# Where UW EARS is headed

- "Training the next generation of EA professionals"
- Formal agreements with the University of Waterloo to promote the Environmental Assessment Diploma
  - Network & host career building events
    - Talks with industry professionals
  - Pursuing collaboration
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# THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

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