

# Change Management: Creating a Wilderness Risk Management Culture from the Ground Up

## The Back Story

### The Youth We Serve

Founded in 1974, the Tim Horton's Foundation Camps serve youth from Tim Horton's Restaurant communities who have limited access to opportunities for personal growth and development.

These youth come from families where the household income is below the low income cut off (LICO) in Canada or the U.S. Census Poverty Threshold as defined by the government in Canada & the U.S.

### From 1974 to 2016

Over 200,000 kids have attended a Tim Horton's camp. By 2016, there were six Tim Horton camps running classic summer camp sessions throughout the summer for kids aged 9 to 12. Kids attending those camps came for a 10-day, "once in a lifetime" experience filled with fun, adventure, new challenges, new friends, etc. When they turned 13 those kids could apply to enter the Youth Leadership Program (YLP), which operated at a seventh camp, and was for kids aged 13 to 17.

The YLP was, and is, a five year program. Each year of the program is intentionally designed to build upon the year before with an increased level of challenge, additional leadership opportunities, and targeted skill development.

Wilderness Tripping has always been a key part of the YLP for levels 2 through 5.

### At Summer's End, 2016

After a several year study of the impacts of the camp experience upon our campers, it was determined that the best results were as a result of repeated camp experiences during the middle and high school ages.

And so the decision was made to end our traditional summer camp program for kids aged 9 to 12, and go all in on the YLP. That meant that at the end of a camp session, we could happily say, "See you next year!" to even more kids.

That also meant that six camps in four different provinces and one state were about to implement a wilderness tripping program from the ground up in just less than 9 months.

## And then...

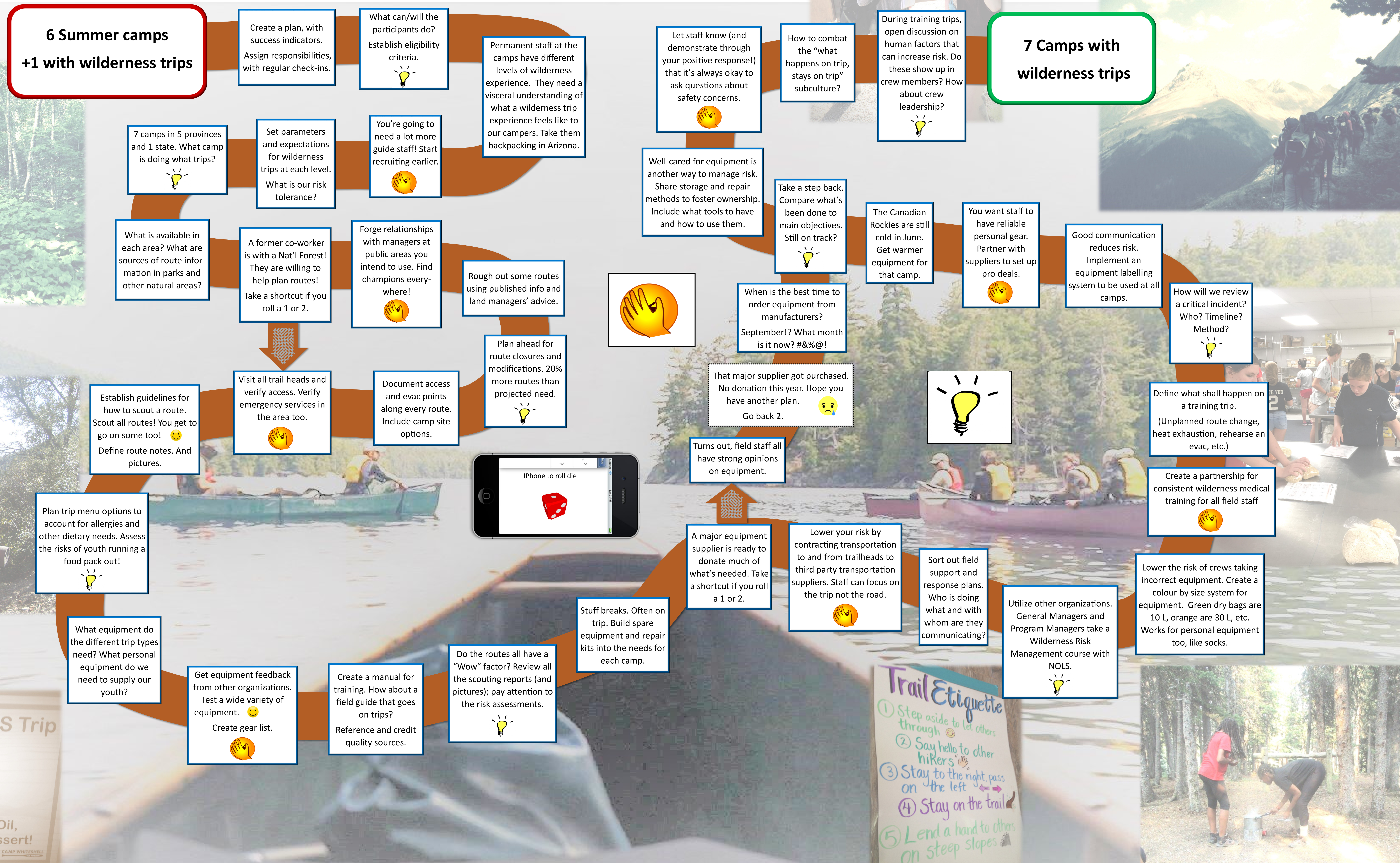
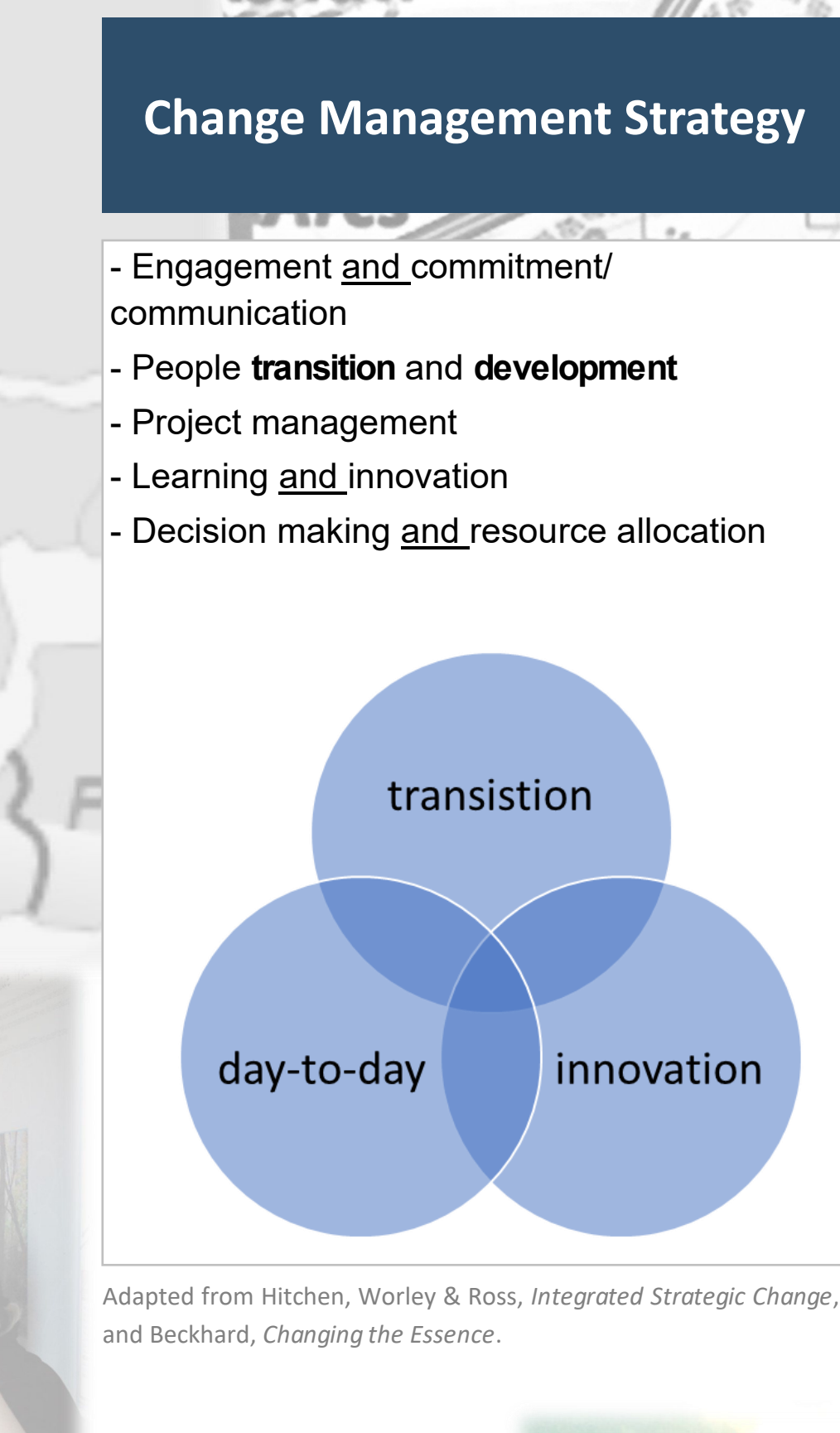
### Why This Age Group?

In terms of developmental milestones, youth aged 12 to 16 years old are still developing and defining how they think, feel, and interact with others. They are making more independent choices about their friends, studying, school, and generally deciding "who they want to be" (Heads Up, 2008).

They're highly impressionable at this age, developing opinions, and developing their sense of what is right and wrong. They're also at an age to be able to reason and think more abstractly, able to see the "grays" instead of viewing the world in black and white.

While this time in their lives is one of great opportunity, it is also one of increased risk. Young people worry about how others see them and are highly sensitive to the judgment of others. The need for acceptance and the feeling of belonging with peers is central to their self-confidence. They may put up with being treated poorly in an effort to maintain acceptance by peers.

Teens are willing to take risks in order to gain acceptance from peers, and are likely to make choices based on immediate consequences and peer acceptance rather than future consequences or adult judgment (Canadian Center for Child Protection, 2011).



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