

The City of North Vancouver's testimony to sustainability

What is sustainability? To some it's an ideology; for others it's a call to action. For the City of North Vancouver, it's a work in progress; a testimony to its commitment and continuous improvement efforts. Please read on to learn about just a few of the City's innovative sustainability initiatives.



EDIBLE GARDEN PROJECT



A non-profit organization operating on the City of North Vancouver's North Shore, the Edible Garden Project (EGP) is breaking new ground in achieving local food security through small-scale food production and innovative education. The EGP is the result of an extensive community consultation process facilitated by Vancouver Coastal Health through the Community Food Action Initiative, where food security was identified as a key priority. The City of North Vancouver is one of the partners in this project, contributing funding and assisting in securing land for food production.

The EGP leads three main programs on the North Shore: Growing Gardens, Sharing Backyard Bounty, and Building Strong Roots. Through the Growing Gardens component, the EGP locates unused

garden space, both on private and public property, to increase land use for food production on the North Shore. Sharing Backyard Bounty encourages people who grow gardens to plant an extra row for donation. The fresh local produce is distributed to organizations such as the Harvest Project, which serves those community members who require it most. Through Strong Roots, the EGP strives to create a community network around the environmental and nutritional importance of growing, harvesting, and sharing fresh local food.

"The City is proud to support such an important initiative," says Mayor Darrell Mussatto. "A healthy community, where citizens have access to fresh, affordable, locally grown foods, means a community such as ours can be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. The City is committed to supporting initiatives like the Edible Garden Project, which help to build healthy communities from the ground up."

By increasing access to fresh produce for those who cannot afford it, and by raising awareness about the health benefits of consuming locally grown foods, the EGP helps to minimize the community's carbon footprint and reduce the reliance on transporting imported food.



For more information visit www.ediblegardenproject.com or contact landscape architect Heather Sadler at 604-988-3289 or hsadler@cnv.org.

MAHON PARK STEWARDS

The Mahon Park Rehabilitation project was initiated in 2001 by the City of North Vancouver. Mahon Park includes 16 hectares of natural forested ravine area, supporting Wagg and Mission Creeks, two of the few remaining salmon-bearing streams in Metro Vancouver. This park had been affected beyond the threshold of natural recovery due to the proliferation of invasive plants, unsanctioned trail use, and the impacts from stormwater on surrounding urban areas. The rehabilitation project included in-stream habitat enhancement and bank stabilization, trail improvements, invasive plant removal, and the planting of native trees and shrubs.

It became clear from the beginning of the rehabilitation project that long-term success would depend on the engagement of park neighbours and the community. The project thus took a holistic approach of integrating rehabilitation work with education and community stewardship. In 2003, the City partnered with Evergreen, a national non-profit, and with the support of an Environment Canada Eco-Action grant, founded the Mahon Stewards. Stewards include park neighbours, local businesses, and school and community groups, who meet regularly to pull invasive plants and to plant native trees and shrubs.



"I applaud the tremendous team effort and ongoing work of the Mahon Stewards in enhancing one of the City's most unique parks," says Mayor Darrell Mussatto. "The continued success of the project demonstrates the City's commitment to taking a proactive, collaborative approach to protecting the environment and natural areas like Mahon Park."

Since 2003, the award-winning Mahon Stewards have logged 5,000 volunteer hours and have cleared invasive plants from 45,000 square meters of parkland. The rehabilitation project in Mahon Park demonstrates what can be achieved when local government, non-profit groups, and the community work together to support a common goal.

For more information, please visit www.cnv.org/MahonParkProject or contact environmental coordinator Caroline Jackson at 604-990-4224 or cjackson@cnv.org.