

# Environmental Education

## UPDATE – November 2018

*“In the end, we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand and we will understand only what we are taught.”*

- Baba Dioum

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Well, it is hard to believe that it has been almost two years since we put out the call to start building a community of “Nature-based” educators in our district. Over the last two years we have sent out a few updates about various programs or opportunities that are available to our students and this is an evolution of those emails. One of the needs that was identified by the group was that of a system/tool to share the opportunities and experiences that are available to learners in our district. We are working with the Learning Team to incorporate that into the Learning Hub (<https://learn.sd61.bc.ca/curriculum/envIRON-ed/>) and this information, along with other resources will be stored in this area of the Learning Hub.

This document contains three sections:

**Opportunities** – A section that contains nature based opportunities such as programs available to students and staff, funding opportunities and professional development opportunities as well

**Updates** – A section to share progress about current nature based issues/programs in our district

**Experiences** – As mentioned at our meetings, I think it is important to share/celebrate our work. This is a section to share what you have been doing and learn from others. We need you to help populate this section with stories and experiences that you and your class have been creating so if you have something to share please let us know.

As we spoke about in the Nature Based Learning series, the goal is to find ways to support and develop the great work that is taking place in our district! So, if you have other colleagues that may be interested in this information, please feel free to forward this to them.

If you have any other thoughts, ideas, or dreams about nature based education in SD61 please share them with us. **The work you do is important and we are committed to trying to support it but would appreciate your thoughts, ideas and submissions on how best to do this!**

## Opportunities

### Lieutenant Governor's Stewards of the Future program 2019

**Summary:** Stewards of the Future provides funding and support for Gr 6-12 school teachers and other educators to take students on field trips, to visit local sites of interest, and to engage in stewardship projects in their communities.

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*“If we want children  
to flourish and  
become truly  
empowered, let us  
allow them to love  
the earth before we  
ask them to save it”*

*-David Sobel*

<https://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/education-for-life/803>

**Who:** Grades 6-12

**What:** \$200 - \$800 per class/application

**Deadline:** November 30, 2018

**Further information :** <http://ltgov.bc.ca/priority-programs/>

### Healthy Living Grants Database

**Summary:** Did you know that there is a website that will give you information and links to a variety of funding opportunities? Whether it is for field trips, school projects, or community projects there are opportunities for a variety of initiatives. Definitely worth checking out!

**Who:** Grades K-12

**What:** Various funding opportunities from public and private sources

**Deadline:** Varied

**Further information:** <https://healthyschoolsbc.ca/healthy-schools-bc-resources/healthy-living-grants.aspx>

## Updates

**Environmental Plan** – As you may know we are working at a district level to develop an environmental plan. This was identified as a need through the development of the district strategic plan and has been a work in progress over the past two years. There are many aspects to this planning as it can weave through all aspects of the school district operations. We have been developing specific learning goals and are planning to have them finalized by this spring. We look forward to sharing those with you soon as we know that they are important to add further support to the great work that you are doing with your students.



**School Gardens** – Many teachers/schools have expressed an interest in initiating or expanding gardens on their schoolgrounds. As this type of project is becoming more common in our schools we are working with our facilities staff to work on a standardized procedure to follow to help schools that are interested developing school gardens. We realize that effective communication between schools and our facilities staff is vital for the effective completion of a project such as a school garden and we are hoping that providing a guiding framework will help ease the creation/expansion or even maintenance of a school garden.

**Saanich School Park Stewardship Program** – As you may have heard we are working on expanding the Saanich School Park Stewardship program that will connect schools with parks in their neighbourhood in which they can work as stewards to help protect the area. Classes take on stewardship projects such as habitat restoration work including invasive species removal, mulching and replanting native species. We are currently determining the capacity that Saanich has to expand the program this year and will be sending out information on how your school can get involved. Stay tuned!

**Nearby Nature Film Festival** – Once again this year we are looking for classes/schools that are willing to share the story of the nature based learning programs that their students are completing. The first film festival took place in May of 2017 and we are going to host this event every other year. We are hoping

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### Thoughts?

*Please take a minute to let me know if this type of information is important to you by emailing Aaron Maxwell or Dave Shortreed directly.*

### Nearby Nature Film Festival continued...

that we will be able to celebrate the great things that are going on in our district and are asking that you consider creating a video to share with your colleagues. If you are not sure how to create the video please contact Aaron Maxwell or Dave Shortreed as they may be able to help you personally or by connecting you with other groups that can. We look forward to once again celebrating the great work that you and your students are doing.

## Experiences - Exploring the Salish Sea

On November 7 our first school group was able to get out on the Salish Sea and take advantage of our district partnership with Eagle Wing Tours and the Royal BC Museum. Students from James Bay elementary were able to spend the morning in a floating classroom and explore kelp forests, Race Rocks Ecological Reserve and spent time observing seals, sea lions, sea otters, humpback whales and a variety of seabirds. It was an amazing morning an part of a three week program that helps students connect with this magical ecosystem that surrounds us. The program culminates in April at the Royal BC museum where all of the classes (up to 800 students) will have a chance to share and learn from each other. Each group will produce and share an artifact(s) of their learning from this program by putting those artifacts into the various collections in the museum itself.

Groups will be headed out every Wednesday until Spring Break and we know that each trip will be different but they all promise to build a sense of connection to this special place and hopefully start to nurture the future stewards of the Salish Sea!



Hanging out with Ollie the Sea Otter at Race Rocks



We were lucky enough to spend time with a couple of humpback whales near Race Rocks

## Feedback – It is Appreciated!

Please let us know what you think! If you have contributions, or connections that you would like to share in the next update please email Aaron Maxwell directly at [amaxwell@sd61.bc.ca](mailto:amaxwell@sd61.bc.ca). Also please email me if you would prefer not to be sent these communications/updates in the future.