

## Connecting People to nature – and creating meaningful results Campbell River

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We are not doing anything earth shattering in Campbell River\* but we do devote quite a bit of staff time to connecting people with our parks and green spaces. This has proven to be quite successful for our community. Our programmes started in 2013 and include:

- Starting a Community Garden
- Free Garden workshops
- Adopt a Walkway
- Neighbourhood events.

**Community Gardens:** Up until 2014 Campbell River only had two community gardens. With



City support another garden was established in 2014. It was so popular that the garden doubled in size in 2015. Now we have another project in the works. It has been so rewarding to see how the community comes together to develop a garden and improve their personal access to fresh, affordable food.

**Free Garden Workshops:** To support people who are developing community gardens and to encourage the public to get outside and “grow”, we offer a series of free garden workshops. Attendance varies from 20 – 30 people and the presenters are community volunteers. Our topics have ranged from Gardening for Wildlife, Growing Blueberries to Seed Saving for the Beginner. It is an inexpensive and effective way to getting people interested in gardening.

**Adopt a Walkway:** We encourage schools and community groups to adopt walkways in their neighbourhood. The volunteers remove invasive species and garbage. The City supports them through education on invasives as well as supplying equipment. Our Parks Department also come by to remove any plant material or garbage accumulated by the activity. The first school group that adopted a walkway spent time identifying the invasive species



in their chosen area. They then returned on a regular basis to remove invasives and plant native species. This leadership class is now into year two of the project. We have another school ready to adopt the walkways adjacent to their facility. The activity is both educational and gets the students outdoors. Participating groups have a sign erected at the walkway to acknowledge their community contribution.

**Neighbourhood events:** In order to foster a greater sense of community in neighbourhoods the City offers to support groups that want to host a block party, do a trail clean up or host a



local art or music event. We started this in 2016. The public love to host parties in parks. It is so rewarding to see all ages and abilities having fun in the fresh air and to know that neighbours are getting to know each other. We are about to embark on year two of this project.

We have found that simply dedicating some staff time to getting the public involved in our outdoor spaces has produced some very meaningful results.

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*\*Researcher/story collector's note -- Earth Shattering is overrated – this research project is about sharing small ideas and stories that contribute in a meaningful way to connecting people to nature. Small but mighty....and doable.*