



Grounds for Change

The Calgary Zoo's Schoolyard Naturalization Program

Workshop Series

The workshop series are listed in the order they should be taken. Please contact us if you are interested in any of the sessions – we may be able to tailor a presentation to your school or a small group of schools.

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ASPHALT TO ASPENS

the ABC's of schoolyard naturalization

What is schoolyard naturalization? Why are schools doing it? What can it look like and how does it happen? If you are a parent, teacher or community member who believes kids benefit from a greener, more creative and diverse schoolground setting, all these questions and more will be answered in this introductory session. Get the information and tools you need to help generate interest and enthusiasm from those around you...and sow the seeds of a great idea.

GROWING DREAMS

Have you noticed that every schoolyard naturalization project looks different? This diversity results from each school's unique vision for a project that reflects its school population, location, history, academic focus and the community it inhabits. This workshop will explore creative methods for getting input from all stakeholders into what the project will look like and how it will be used. As well, discover how best to assemble and structure a naturalization committee, and what to expect when looking for school board approval of your project.

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

The success and sustainability of schoolyard naturalization projects depends directly on the involvement of student. By creating opportunities for kids to measure, map and re-invent their school ground, they gain a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the site. Most if not all of the essential activities can be connected directly to the AB curriculum, offering powerful examples of project-based learning, and the enquiry-based model. This workshop will introduce these links, and suggest ways to incorporate the planning into the classroom throughout the entire 2-3 year process. Emphasis will be placed on the Site Survey and Preliminary Bubble Drawings. Please note, this session is equally appropriate for both teachers, and parents on the naturalization committee.

BUDS AND BUGS

schoolyard flora and fauna

Whether you are in the midst of planning a naturalization project, or are enjoying an existing project, join us to learn about the schoolground's plant and animal inhabitants. We will provide an introduction to Alberta native plants commonly found in naturalization projects, and explore how these plants can be used to create habitat for local wildlife. We will also touch on elements (such as bird houses) that can be added to the site to increase its appeal to wildlife.

BLUEPRINTS AND BUDGETS

Before you can create a budget for fundraising or get approval for your project you need to have a final scale drawing of the site (including plant list). Join us to learn how to develop a detailed plan, and find out how and when to seek help from a landscape professional. We'll also discuss options for elements such as seating, pathways and edging by profiling existing projects in the Calgary area.

SHOW ME THE MONEY

Here we talk about the other green stuff needed to make schoolyard naturalization projects a reality. Learn about the gathering of not only cash donations and grants, but donation of skills, services and materials. We will explore the full range of possibilities, then profile some organizations that can be significant funders of these projects. Included will be a discussion on writing grant applications

PLANTING PREP

Planning to plant this spring? This workshop will help you put together a game plan that will ensure no details are forgotten. We will examine the logistics of assembling the necessary equipment, materials, plants and labour for your project, and discuss ideas and suggestions for how best to organize your workdays. If you have a final design or plan, please bring it along!

KEEPING IT GREEN

Schoolyard naturalization projects are living entities that need care and attention to ensure they endure into the future. This requires physical maintenance of the project, as well as active use of the site by teachers, and by community members. In this workshop we will explore strategies for orchestrating maintenance utilizing parent and community volunteers and students. We will also discuss strategies for encouraging use of the site by all stakeholders. This program is ideal for Parent Council Rep's responsible for a naturalization projects, or committee that are overseeing their care.

HABITAT FOR LEARNING - Divisions One, Two and Three

The foundation of schoolyard naturalization, and the key to its success, is the integration of the project into all areas of the curriculum, throughout the entire school year. Designed specifically for Divisional teachers, we offer three professional development sessions (one for each Division) to model simple, effective activities that enable staff to utilize the schoolyard as a teaching resource. Get suggestions and ideas for creating lesson plans that take full advantage of the amazing teaching opportunities, learn about resources that are available, and take home simple activities that you can use the next day.