



# REEL EARTH DAY CHALLENGE

## 2025 Report



# CONTENTS

**3. OVERVIEW: 2025 IMPACTS**

**4. PROJECT 1: PICNIC IN THE PARK NEWCOMER EVENT**

**5. PROJECT 2: BIRD VIEWING TOWER**

**6. PROJECT 3: FLOODGATE & SALMON RESEARCH**

**7. PROJECT 4: INDIGENOUS-LED SUMMER CAMPS**

**8. PROJECT 5: BAT & OWL HABITAT BOXES**

**9. PROJECT 6: INVASIVE SPECIES & LOCAL FOOD EDUCATION**

**10. PROJECT 7: ECOBLITZ STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES**

**11. PROJECT 8: NATURE HOUSE NATIVE SPECIES PLANTING**

**12. 2025 SPONSORS & CHALLENGER TEAMS**

**13. DONORS**

**14. CONTACT**

# SUMMARY

---

In 2025, the fifth annual REEL Earth Day Challenge continued to inspire local film crews, productions, sponsors, and other industry stakeholders to raise funds for Metro Vancouver Regional Parks Foundation, a registered charity that supports the region's parks.

REEL Earth Day remains a special opportunity for B.C. film productions, who frequently film in these regional parks, to give back to the natural spaces where they work, live, and play.

**This year, REEL Earth Day raised an impressive \$81,430 to support Metro Vancouver Regional Parks.** These funds will help advance five transformational park projects across the region. Since its inception in 2021, the event has raised over \$555,000 to build biodiverse, inclusive park spaces and a more sustainable world.

Industry sponsors once again contributed to the top teams' daily challenge totals, with the production raising the most funds overall recognized as the winner. **In 2025, Team Virgin River once again stole the spotlight, claiming the top spot on the leaderboard with their unstoppable drive for success and amassing a grand total of \$28,090 raised.**

While the bulk of the project work is scheduled for later in the year, this report will summarize the planned projects and provide updates for the Summer 2025 season.

**It's important to note that restoration is not a one-time event but a process that may take years to fully restore the health and resiliency of parklands.**



# PROJECT 1: PICNIC IN THE PARK NEWCOMER EVENT

## Surrey Bend Regional Park

Picnic in the Park is a welcoming event designed to connect newcomers to Metro Vancouver’s regional parks by removing barriers such as unfamiliarity with outdoor spaces, language challenges, and transportation. This event provides a safe and inclusive environment where participants can connect with nature, practice English, build community relationships, and experience the health benefits of the outdoors. By fostering a sense of belonging and confidence in exploring parks, this event encourages long-term engagement with nature and increased participation in public programs, helping newcomers feel at home in their new environment.

## Latest Project Update:

Picnic in the Park was successfully delivered in June 2025 as a welcoming and inclusive event for newcomers to Canada, designed to remove common barriers to accessing regional parks such as safety concerns, language, transportation, and cost. Through partnerships with community organizations, the event welcomed 234 participants who connected with nature, practiced English, built community, and enjoyed time outdoors with family and friends. Feedback highlighted how well organized, accessible, and engaging the experience was, especially for children, and how meaningful it was for families to connect with others from similar cultural backgrounds. Supported by two volunteers contributing 10 hours, the event achieved its goals of creating positive first park experiences, encouraging future visits, and inspiring participation in programs and stewardship opportunities, while recognizing the support of the REEL Earth Day Challenge.



# PROJECT 2: BIRD VIEWING TOWER

## Boundary Bay Regional Park

A partnership between Metro Vancouver Regional Parks and the UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, this project will develop a bird viewing tower at Boundary Bay Regional Park to enhance wildlife observation and environmental education. The structure will provide an accessible, low-impact way for visitors to experience the park's diverse bird populations while minimizing habitat disturbance. By creating a dedicated space for birdwatching, the project will support conservation awareness, improve visitor experiences, and foster a deeper connection to the region's rich coastal ecosystems.

## Latest Project Update:

Stay tuned! UBC staff and students are working closely with Metro Vancouver on the planning and design of the bird viewing tower. Permitting is well underway, with construction planned for spring 2026.



# PROJECT 3: FLOODGATE & SALMON RESEARCH

## 📍 ʕéxətəm Regional Park

This project will build off of funding previously raised by the REEL Earth Day Challenge to investigate how different types of floodgates impact fish passage, particularly salmon, in the Coquitlam River. The research is crucial for understanding and improving the conditions for salmon populations, which play a vital role in ecosystem health as well as informing future floodgate designs to minimize ecological impact while ensuring effective flood control. This innovative study is in partnership with Resilient Waters, UBC Pacific Salmon Lab, kwikwə́łəm (Kwkwetlem First Nation), and Metro Vancouver Regional Parks.

## 🔄 Latest Project Update:

BC researchers, alongside Resilient Waters, Kwkwetlem First Nation, Metro Vancouver Parks, and the Watershed Watch Salmon Society, completed a collaborative floodgate research project in ʕéxətəm (Colony Farm) Regional Park. By tagging and monitoring approximately 2,400 juvenile coho salmon and tracking their movement through three floodgate designs, the project generated valuable insight into salmon passage, habitat access, and floodplain connectivity. The research strengthened partnerships, increased awareness through presentations to academic, government, and sector audiences, and engaged the public through events like Salmon Day, which drew more than 100 participants. Together, these efforts advanced understanding of flood resilience and salmon habitat health in the Lower Fraser watershed and laid the groundwork for future research and restoration initiatives.



# PROJECT 4: INDIGENOUS-LED SUMMER CAMPS

## 📍 Various Regional Parks

For it's fourth year in a row thanks to REEL Earth Day Challenge funding, "Mishkoopitum" summer camps (hosted by CTS Youth Society) provide a culturally rich and empowering environment where all participants can learn from Indigenous knowledge and practices, fostering a deep connection to heritage, traditions, and the land. Through storytelling, traditional crafts, and land-based learning, these camps offer valuable opportunities for cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

## 🔄 Latest Project Update:

This summer marked the fourth year of Mishkoopitum Summer Camps and its largest reach to date! With support from the REEL Earth Day Challenge, CTS Youth Society expanded programming to four camp locations: Tynehead, Pacific Spirit, Capilano River, and Burnaby Lake Regional Parks. Alongside youth programming, a staff-only training session was added to strengthen program delivery. Lorelei from 2MétisWomen led the pre-camp training, sharing Métis cultural teachings and traditional crafts so staff could better support youth during camp sessions.

Youth took part in reconciliation-focused programming that included Métis storytelling, shared meals, hands-on cultural activities, and guided reflection led by CTS camp counsellors.

### Program Stats & Highlights:

- 4 camp locations offering Mishkoopitum programming
- 1 staff-only training session led by a Métis knowledge keeper
- 103 youth registrations
- 124 total participants, including staff training attendees
- 20+ youth waitlisted, demonstrating strong demand
- Strong engagement with reconciliation-focused, hands-on learning



# PROJECT 5: BAT & OWL HABITAT BOXES

## Campbell Valley Regional Park

This project will incorporate ą̄w̄a:ńł̄əń cultural recognition and knowledge into the design and installation of bat and owl boxes. These boxes, crafted with Indigenous cultural significance, will enhance local wildlife habitats while honoring the history and connection of Indigenous peoples to the land. By integrating cultural perspectives into this conservation effort, the project provides an opportunity for visitors to learn about Indigenous teachings and the importance of preserving biodiversity in regional parks.

## Latest Project Update:

Stay tuned! This project is moving ahead with a \$5K investment to build a maternal bat colony box in Campbell Valley Regional Park, featuring Kwantlen artwork on the exterior. The location for the box has been selected, construction of the bat box is currently underway, and Kwantlen has identified Wes Anton as the artist, with final confirmation forthcoming.



# PROJECT 6: INVASIVE SPECIES & LOCAL FOOD EDUCATION

## East Area Regional Parks

The Invasive Species & Local Food Education project aims to raise awareness about the harmful impact of invasive species, such as ivy and canary grass, on local food sources and ecosystems. Through informative displays and educational materials, the project will highlight how these invasive plants threaten native species and disrupt local food systems. By educating the public on why these species are harmful and how to address them, the project will promote more sustainable land management practices and encourage community involvement in invasive species control.

## Latest Project Update:

Stay tuned! Metro Vancouver is currently exploring an approach by connecting with Kwantlen Elder Karen Gabriel to develop an educational display for the Campbell Valley Nature House.



# PROJECT 7: ECOBLITZ STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES

## 📍 15 Regional Parks

EcoBlitz is an annual environmental stewardship event aimed at restoring, enhancing, and protecting regional parks while engaging volunteers. While a very productive time for environmental stewardship, the event also fosters a sense of community ownership and responsibility towards the preservation of regional parks, empowering individuals to take an active role in environmental conservation.

## 🔄 Latest Project Update:

This year, 720 volunteers participated in 40 EcoBlitz events in 15 regional parks. They contributed over 1,950 hours, planting 7,344 native trees and shrubs and removing over 2.5 tonnes of invasive plants.

### Highlights included:

- Riparian planting along Davies Creek at Crippen Regional Park
- Dune ecosystem planting and invasive plant removal at Iona Beach Regional Park
- Wetland planting at Boundary Bay Regional Park
- Native vegetation planting at Burnaby Lake Nature House
- Restoration of a hayfield into native vegetation and wildflower habitat at Campbell Valley Regional Park
- Hedgerow planting next to new Perimeter Trail extension at Campbell Valley Regional Park
- Buffer plantings at Derby Reach, Tynehead, and Aldergrove regional parks
- Invasive plant removals at Burnaby Lake and Minnehada regional parks
- Wildlife camera monitoring at Widgeon Marsh Regional Park

Thanks to these efforts, regional parks are thriving with restored habitats and flourishing ecosystems!



# PROJECT 8: NATURE HOUSE NATIVE SPECIES PLANTING

## 📍 Burnaby Lake Regional Park

After years of invasive Himalayan blackberry suppression, the forest behind Burnaby Lake Nature House will be restored with native trees and shrubs, enhancing habitat for wildlife and improving biodiversity. As the Nature House serves as a hub for public education, this project will provide a living example of ecosystem restoration, demonstrating the importance of native species in maintaining healthy forests. By revitalizing this space, the project will support long-term ecological resilience while enriching environmental education for visitors.

## 🔄 Latest Project Update:

The Nature House Native Species Planting project successfully cleared invasive plants, planted 558 native species, mulched areas, and constructed 116 m of split rail fencing, fully achieving all project goals. Over 26 volunteer events, 269 volunteers contributed 804 hours, supported by Regional Park staff who helped with material procurement, site preparation, training, and safety. Monitoring and maintenance will continue for the next 5–10 years, with additional spring planting or upkeep planned as needed to ensure the long-term success of the restoration.

# 2025 SPONSORS

These sponsors donated \$69,250 in support of the REEL Earth Day Challenge projects. Together they represent the commitment of the motion picture industry to implement sustainable practices, benefit our local community and protect the environmental.

The contributions from these sponsors were pivotal in enabling the REEL Earth Day Challenge to achieve its ambitious goals. Their support underscores the growing awareness and responsibility within the motion picture industry to not only entertain but also to lead by example in sustainability. By prioritizing these values, these sponsors are helping to create a lasting impact on our local ecosystems and inspire others to follow suit.



WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM



# 2025 Challenger Teams

A HUGE thank you to the 2025 Production Teams. You made all of these projects possible. It's the individual team members who make this event so wonderful.

This year, it was once again Team Virgin River that sailed to the top of the leaderboard, riding the current of their incredible fundraising efforts to a remarkable victory, raising an impressive \$28,090 with sponsor prize top-ups.

Team Virgin River now has their name proudly added to the champions plaque on the REEL Earth Day Chairs along Brunette Fraser Regional Greenway, symbolizing their exceptional contributions to environmental storytelling and inspiring visitors to take action for a sustainable planet.

We'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our production teams. Your generosity has created a blockbuster impact, providing vital support to Metro Vancouver Regional Parks Foundation and the five amazing projects we've funded this year. With your help, we've made a lasting difference for our parks, wildlife, and local communities.



# 2025 Donors

In addition to the \$69,250 raised in sponsor contributions, we had 74 donors contribute over \$12,180, for a grand total of \$81,430 raised. Thanks to these amazing fundraising efforts, eight transformative park projects will be brought to fruition.



## A Lasting Legacy: Tracey Friesen



In memory of Tracey Friesen, a beloved champion of the REEL Earth Day Challenge and a true advocate for sustainability in the film industry. Tracey's leadership, from her roles as a producer and editor to her time as Managing Director of the BC Branch of the Canadian Media Producers Association, left a lasting impact. Her passion for using media to promote environmental change and her commitment to the Canadian film industry's sustainability will be remembered. Tracey's dedication to real, positive change inspires us to carry forward her work. Let's honor her legacy by continuing to collaborate for a better, greener future.

---

**Thank you for  
your generosity.**

**Your continued support for Metro Vancouver  
Regional Parks allows us to keep up the good work  
(and the good news).**

### Questions?

Metro Vancouver Regional Parks Foundation  
(778) 900-1053  
mvrpfoundation.ca  
hello@mvrpfoundation.ca