



Free the Fern

March 2024 Newsletter

Douglas Fir Watercolour Workshop



On Saturday, February 24, we were honoured to partner with artist, [Marisa Pahl](#), to run a [Douglas Fir Watercolour Workshop](#).

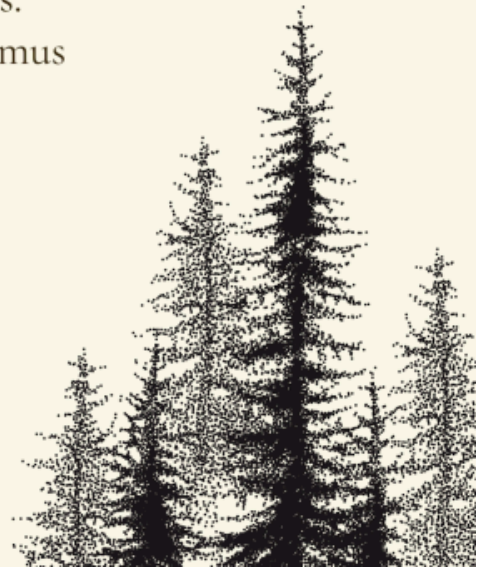


For the workshop, Free the Fern supplied Indigenous handmade, [Beam Paints](#), brushes, and a variety of paper. Participants were invited to begin by exploring the paint, creating wavy lines of various thicknesses. While we were painting, Marisa shared a poem by Wendell Berry:

Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front

by Wendell Barry

Ask the questions that have no answers.
Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.
Say that your main crop is the forest
that you did not plant,
that you will not live to harvest.
Say that the leaves are harvested
when they have rotted into the mold.
Call that profit. Prophesy such returns.
Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years..
hear the faint chattering
of the songs that are to come.



Marisa shared some visual prompts, before providing the first invitation: to paint the shape of the Douglas Fir tree.



Each participant created their own unique interpretation of the tree.

Marisa then shared how she first became connected to the Douglas Fir Tree when she was renting in a hundred year old home in Vancouver. Beside the home, there was an old shed with piles of wood within it. Marisa was encouraged by the owners of the home to clear out and use the wood as she wished. So, she proceeded to build shelves with the wood. Marisa assumed the wood she found was cedar, but discovered later that it was, in fact, old growth Douglas Fir. Old growth Douglas Fir forest, which once was abundant across the city of Vancouver, now is no longer. Even in our wider province, so little of our old growth forest remains. Let's treasure and value what remains.

Marisa then offered the next invitation: to paint the circular rings within a Douglas fir stump. She invited us to use all the paint colours and even mix to create new colours to create a free-flowing image.



Many found the exercise of painting with watercolour, especially with the repeated brush strokes, to be very calming and meditative. Several participants commented how it seemed to be reawakening a creative part of themselves.

Thank you so much to Marisa Pahl for sharing your creativity with us in this workshop. We all came away feeling more connected to the Douglas Fir tree and to our own inner sense of self.

This workshop was made possible thanks to generous funding from [Park People](#).

FREE THE FERN
TOP STORIES



Invasive Pull - March 2, 2024

Come help us [remove invasive ivy](#) from the Red Alder trail on Saturday, March 2, 2024, 10am-12pm. Gloves, tools, and complimentary refreshments provided. 2-zone transit passes available for those who arrive by bus. All ages welcome. Sign up on our [events](#) page.

CEDAR BRACELET WEAVING WORKSHOP

WEAVE TO HEAL



Cedar Bracelet Weaving Workshop

March 16, 2024

Join xwməłkwəyəm cedar weaver and natural wool dyer, Rita Kompst, for a morning of cedar bracelet weaving. Rita will teach the art of weaving as an act of healing. Ages 12+
WORKSHOP IS FULL - [WAITLIST IS AVAILABLE](#).



Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Policy

Free the Fern Board of Directors have decided to work on drafting an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy. We want to make sure that Free the Fern is an organisation where all members of the public feel safe and welcome. To draft the policy, our board has formed an EDI Committee. In June, the committee will be inviting members of the public to view the

draft policy and contribute their perspective. Finally, in August at our AGM the final draft of the policy will be presented and brought to a vote. We look forward to how this policy may enrich our organisation and help us better serve our community.



T-Shirt & Bag Fundraiser

Free the Fern is continuing our T-Shirt & Bag Fundraiser, with 100% of the profits going towards the [Urban Native Youth Association](#) (UNYA). The fern design was created by Coast Salish artist, [Andrea Fritz](#) and printed on sustainable cotton at [Pressing Matters](#).

You are welcome to purchase bags (recommended donation of \$20) and shirts (recommended donation of \$30) via e-transfer or cash at this [link](#).

Funding for this project was generously provided by [Park People](#)

Free the Fern Update

From January-February, 2024

Operational Activities:

5 stewardship areas

10 board directors

57 event volunteers

107.5 volunteer hours

47 native plants planted

8,400 L of invasive plants removed

Outreach & Education:

2 invasive pulls

2 workshops or walks

4 total public events

31 workshop or walk participants

37 Instagram posts



Neighbouring Nature Events

There are many other amazing groups in Metro Vancouver organising events this month. Check out what is happening below.

Saturday, March 9, 10am-1pm - [Everett Crowley Park Stewardship](#) - Everett Crowley Park, Vancouver

Get dirty, have fun and help the environment! Join ECPC for monthly stewardship events to help remove invasive plants and learn more about the unique history and ecology of Everett Crowley Park.

Sunday, March 10, 2:30pm-5:30pm - [Nature Sketchbook Journaling](#) - 3791 Commercial Street, Vancouver

Explore nature journaling as you learn about local wildlife and plants with botanical illustrator, Vicky Earle.

Monday, March 18-22, 9am-4pm - [Crafty Critters EcoCamp](#) - Stanley Park, Vancouver

The wonders of nature comes to life through hands-on exploration and creative adventures!

Sunday, March 24, 1-2:30pm - [Nature Kids: Peek into the Creek](#) - Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre, North Vancouver

Visit a small creek in Lynn Canyon Park, find invertebrates, and do chemistry tests to learn about water quality. For families with children ages 5 to 13.

Monday, March 25-28, 9am-4pm - [Spring Wings EcoCamp](#) - Stanley Park, Vancouver

Embark on a feathered adventure at our Spring Wings EcoCamp, where the skies come alive with the enchanting world of birds!

If you know of a local event happening next month, let us know!

[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)

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