

, EDI POLICY

As approved at the Free the Fern AGM on Aug 31, 2024

Drafted by the Free the Fern Stewardship Society board of directors, in consultation with diverse members of the public.

This is a working document that will be reviewed and updated annually.

FREE THE FERN STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY (FTFSS) PURPOSE

1. To **restore the ecology** of the Champlain Heights Trail System by removing invasive plants and replanting native plants.

We consider our work to be an act of healing and reconciliation, replacing colonial invasive species with Indigenous plant species native to the area. We recognize, with gratitude, that FTFSS work takes place in the area now known as, “Champlain Heights trail system,” which is on the unceded and stolen territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

2. To **promote environmental stewardship** through community engagement and education

We are committed to providing an environment in which all individuals are treated with mutual respect and dignity. Just as the forest thrives through diversity, so do we as a society. FTFSS is a diverse, inclusive, and equitable nonprofit society where all employees and volunteers are valued, respected, and welcomed for their unique challenges and gifts. We aim to be inclusive of people of all genders, races, ethnicities, national origins, ages, sexual orientations, education level or abilities. We do not tolerate any behaviour that is hateful, threatening, dehumanizing, or disrespectful.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all FTFSS directors, employees, contractors, volunteers, vendors, facilitators, performers, and others associated with FTF activities wherever they are taking place. This policy does not apply to City of Vancouver staff, such as Department of Engineering staff, who must comply with City of Vancouver policies in regard to bullying and harassment. Please refer to [City of Vancouver Respectful Workplace Policy, ADMIN050](#).

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY GOALS

To provide informed, authentic leadership for environmental stewardship, FTFSS strives to:

1. See diversity, inclusion, and equity as connected to our purpose and critical to ensure the well-being of our staff and the community we serve.
2. Acknowledge systemic inequities that exist and remove any barriers to participation within our policies, programs, leadership opportunities, and services.
3. Build relationships with Indigenous peoples in an effort towards reconciliation.

4. Embrace a growth mindset, in the spirit of continuous learning.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION INITIATIVE ACTION PLAN

FTFSS abides by the following action items to help promote diversity and inclusion:

- 1) See diversity, inclusion, and equity as connected to our purpose and critical to ensure the well-being of our staff, volunteers, and the community we serve:
 - a) Publicly post and promote our EDI policy on the website and social media platforms, asking all those who participate in our events to abide by it.
 - b) Establish a diversity committee with the goal of addressing issues as they arise, updating the policy, drafting an anti-harassment policy, and reporting on goal progress on an annual basis.
 - c) Partner with diverse knowledge sharers and community organizations to engage in environmental stewardship and education.
 - d) Educate the public on our progress and goals by providing access to our annual report and available resources.
- 2) Acknowledge systemic inequities that exist and work to remove any barriers to participation within our policies, programs, leadership opportunities, and services:
 - a) Consult with local resource groups/individuals to identify and list potential barriers as well as advocate for the unique gifts of the community.
 - b) Dedicate budget towards supporting EDI accommodations and initiatives (/ex/ providing transit passes, accessible tools etc.)
 - c) Invite at least 1 volunteer to participate in a leadership role per event with the intention to ask diverse volunteers if they would like to fill that role prior to the event.
- 3) Build reciprocal relationships with Indigenous peoples in an effort towards reconciliation:
 - a) Collaborate with indigenous artists on events and workshops at least once a year.
 - b) Form strong ties with knowledge sharers who can be hired as consultants.
 - c) Create an “elder in residence” role within the organization.
- 4) Embrace a growth mindset, in the spirit of continuous learning:
 - a) Practice active listening and be open to change when engaging with the community.
 - b) Create a process for responding to feedback directly related to our mandate.
 - c) Create event promotional and welcome material with an awareness that everyone participates in unique ways.
 - d) Provide an annual educational session for the board of directors to help them feel comfortable with the concepts of this policy, public communication, and reflect on our individual positions and privileges.
 - e) Draft a “frequently asked question (FAQ)” list and post it on the website to support clear communication and community engagement.