



Free the Fern

Jan 2025 Newsletter

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Light up the Night in Champlain Heights



On Sunday, Dec 15 Free the Fern held our 4th annual [Light up the Night in Champlain Heights](#) event. Approximately 120 community members came out to enjoy the event.

The day before the event there was an extreme windstorm, which brought down many branches and several trees along the Red Alder trail. Luckily, Free the Fern volunteers and a local Landscaper, Andrew Pereda, offered to help clear the trail - just in time for our lantern procession!



At 3pm on Dec 15, 16 volunteers arrived to help set-up lanterns along the trail. This year we were grateful to have support from the Everett Crowley Park Committee, including Stewardship Coordinator, Evie Osborn, President, Damian Assadi, in addition to our other amazing community volunteers. We placed over 100 lanterns along the trail, made out of mason jars, milk jugs, toilet paper rolls, and cedar and holly branches.



The theme of this year's festival was "Connected Stories". 10 partner artists, led by lead artist, [Joshua Ralph](#), helped create art lanterns inspired by this theme. These lanterns

included a Northern spotted owl, a crow, a spider, a fox and more! Check out our [Instagram post](#) to see all the artist-made lanterns.



Under a full moon, we gathered at the Douglas Fir Teaching Garden. Then, at 6:30pm, [the Carnival Band](#) led a lantern procession along the Red Alder trail.



Along the way, we enjoyed some special performances by Olaf the snowman (Kiki Nombrado), a T-Rex (Connor Knock) and a Forest Fairy (Julia Parker). We then returned back to the Douglas Fir Teaching Garden to enjoy cookies (baked by the community) and hot chocolate.

This year's Light up the Night in Champlain Heights festival was organized by Free the Fern in collaboration with the [Everett Crowley Park Committee](#). Funding was provided by

[Neighbourhood Small Grants](#) and [Park People](#). Thank you to all the community volunteers and artists who made this event possible!



FREE THE FERN
TOP STORIES



Invasive Pull - Sat, Jan 4, 10am-12pm

Join us on [Sat, Jan 4, for an Invasive Pull](#). This will be our first Invasive Pull of the year. We will be removing wild chervil and common periwinkle along the Red Alder Trail. Come and

join us! All ages and abilities are welcome. Snacks & drinks provided! [Sign up to volunteer here.](#)



Buds, Branches, and Bark - Sat, Jan 18, 10am-12pm

Update: Registration for this walk is full.

We are excited to welcome back BCIT Instructor, [Julia Alards-Tomalin](#), for another [Buds, Branches, & Bark](#) walk with us on Sat, January 18, 2025, 10am-12pm. Her walk last year was very popular. Julia is an expert on Winter plant ID. She will help us identify the parts of a branch and then guide us on a winter walk along the Red Alder Trail. Julia won the 2023 Open Pedagogy Award for her beautifully illustrated free online resource, [Buds, Branches, and Bark](#). We look forward to learning from Julia!



Private Events

Did you know that Free the Fern offers private events to local nonprofits, businesses, and schools? These events can be catered to all ages and include native plant walks, invasive pulls, presentations, plantings, and ivy weaving workshops. These private events can be held along the beautiful Red Alder Trail in South East Vancouver or hosted by your organization with the Lower Mainland. So far, we have partnered with Fresh Roots, Stanley Park Ecology Society, SFU, UBC, and local Elementary schools to offer Free the Fern private workshops and walks. Contact us at freethefern@gmail.com to inquire about booking a private event.



T-Shirt Fundraiser

Thank you to all those who supported our Free the Fern 2024 Fundraiser in support of the [Urban Native Youth Association](#) (UNYA)! We sold a total of **62 shirts and 50 bags** designed by Coast Salish artist, [Andrea Fritz](#). On Dec 26, 2024, we made a donation of **\$1,076** (100% of the profits from our fundraiser) to the UNYA! This money will help support local Indigenous youth. Thank you everyone in the community for helping to make this such a successful fundraiser!

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Neighbouring Nature Events

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

Saturday, Jan 11, 9am-10:30 am - [Monthly Bird Point Count Survey](#) - Everett Crowley Park, Vancouver

Whether you are a new or experienced birder, join the Everett Crowley Park Committee to help contribute to vital citizen-science by engaging in bird point-counts in Everett Crowley Park.

Saturday, Jan 18, 10:30-12 pm - [The Hidden Web: Mycelial Networks and Forest Connections](#) - Stanley Park, Vancouver

Uncover the intricate relationships that bind the forest ecosystem together -- from the intricate lichens clinging to tree bark, to the mysterious mycelial network under the soil.

Tuesday, January 21 from 9:30-11:00 am - [Forest Explorers: Animal Trackers](#) - Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre, North Vancouver

Listen to far away sounds, inspect trees, and look way down low to discover who lives in Lynn Canyon Park. Ages 2-5 with an adult.

Saturday, Jan 25, 10:30-12 pm - [Winter's Green: Frosty Ferns & Firs](#) - Stanley Park, Vancouver

Gain insight into the crucial roles that plants like ferns, Douglas-firs, and other resilient plants play in forest ecology.

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

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www.freethefern.ca

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