



Free the Fern

Feb 2025 Newsletter

Nature is for Everyone!



We are excited to launch our [Nature is for Everyone Program](#) this month!

In 2024, Free the Fern members approved an [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy](#). Since then, we have made it a priority to be more inclusive and welcoming at all of our events. We acknowledge that some groups may face barriers to participation in stewardship. So, with our Nature is for Everyone Program, we hope to increase access to nature for everyone.

This year, our program will be focusing on welcoming more children, youth, and families (of all kinds) into stewardship. We are grateful to have received funding support for this project from the [Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation](#). Thanks to this support, we are able to:

- offer tools and gloves of all sizes
- provide a variety of yummy snacks at events
- partner with knowledge-sharers to plan some fun, kid-friendly, workshops this spring (stay tuned!)
- network with local schools, the Community Centre, Scouts Canada, and Girl Guides, to lead invasive pulls and nature walks with children and youth

If you have a child or teen in your life, we encourage you to bring them out to one of our [upcoming invasive pulls](#) or any other events we are planning!



FREE THE FERN
TOP STORIES



Invasive Pull - Sat, Feb 1, 10am-12pm

Join us on [Sat, Feb 1, for an Invasive Pull](#). 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! We also have fleece-lined gloves to keep everyone warm. [Sign up to volunteer here](#).



Mushroom Felting Workshop - Sat, Feb 15

On Sat, Feb 15, 10am-12pm, join felter, Anna Bondartchouk, for a [Mushroom Felting Workshop](#). Anna frequently runs felting workshops with [Stanley Park Ecology Society](#), and

we are honoured to have her join us for the first time. Anna will demonstrate how to create an *Amanita muscaria* mushroom out of felt. Those under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. This workshop is currently full, but please add your name to our [waitlist](#), as space will likely open up.



Buds, Branches, and Bark - Sat, Jan 18

On Sat, Jan 18, we were honoured to welcome back BCIT Instructor, [Julia Alards-Tomalin](#), for a second annual, [Buds, Branches, and Bark Walk](#). Julia taught 27 eager participants about the parts of a branch (passing out her amazing collection of sticks!) She then led us on a walk down the Red Alder Trail. We were able to learn how to ID a variety of native plants, including osoberry, big leaf maple, red flowering currant, oceanspray, thimbleberry, and snowberry. To read more about her walk and see photos, check out our [blog post](#).



Social Housing Rezoning

The City of Vancouver is [proposing rezoning](#) our neighbourhood of Champlain Heights, along with other neighbourhoods throughout the city, to allow 15-18 storey social housing. Currently, the Champlain Heights Trail System, which Free the Fern stewards, is included within the [planned map](#) for this rezoning. Thank you to the many local Champlain Heights residents who gave their feedback and signed our petition (started by Free the Fern board director, Catherine Munn) in late 2024. The city has now [summarized this public feedback](#) (see pages 12-13). 68% of the public feedback was in opposition to rezoning Champlain Heights, in particular due to concerns about its impact on our sensitive ecosystem. Free the Fern will continue to advocate to protect the Champlain Heights Trail system. There will be one more round of public feedback for this proposal in June, before it is brought to city council for a vote. [Check the city page](#) to stay up to date on this rezoning and please express your opinion during the second round of public feedback in June.



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, Scouts Canada, 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.



Fleece-Lined Gloves

Thank you to the [Green Streets Program](#) for giving us some warm, fleece-lined garden gloves, in sizes S, M, & L. We tested them out at our Buds, Branches, and Bark walk, and participants were grateful to keep their fingers warm. We will have them on hand (pun intended) at each of our upcoming winter invasive pulls (the next being on Feb 1, 2025).



Neighbouring Nature Events

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

Saturday, Feb 8, 10am-1pm - [Park Stewardship](#) - Everett Crowley Park, Vancouver

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

Saturday, Feb 8, 1:30-3 pm - [What's That Tree?](#) - Stanley Park, Vancouver

If you're curious about learning some beginner tree identification, join SPES Educator Julia Taylor for a relaxed outing in Stanley Park!

Saturday, Feb 15, 9am-10:30am - [Monthly Bird Count Survey](#) - Everett Crowley Park, Vancouver

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

Sunday, Feb 23 from 11am- 3pm- [Places that Matter Community Fair](#) - Heritage Hall, Vancouver

Free the Fern will have a table set up at this community event. This is an all-ages community fair with table displays, items for sale, and crafts. Learn about the many stories and people that connect us to the places that matter in our communities.

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

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