

**GREENEST CITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM**  
**UBC Sustainability Scholars Program, Summer 2018**

**Research project title**

Nature Play in Vancouver Parks: Use of Parks by Teachers

**Research supports the following policies -**

Greenest City Action Plan

Specific goal area (s): Access to Nature; understanding the capacity for Vancouver Parks to support outdoor education by school teachers

Healthy City Strategy

Specific goal area (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Renewable City Action Plan

Green Operations

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Outline scope of project and why it is of value to City and describe how and when the scholar's work will be actionable**

Recent updates to the BC school curriculum encourage teachers to incorporate outdoor experiential learning into their lessons. There has been an informally observed increase in requests by teachers to use Vancouver Parks as an extension of their classrooms and it is suspected that many other teachers are using these spaces without making requests.

The Park Board has identified a need to characterize use of parks by teachers in an effort to plan for increased park use for 'nature play' considering both ecological robustness of nature areas and necessary infrastructure and resources for engagement and safety. Questions to drive this inquiry might include:

- What is our capacity to support outdoor education in our current network of parks considering potential for environmental impact and increased volumes of people overall and at different times of day?
- What can we do to improve facilities and prepare natural areas to support environmental education-specific activities?
- What resources/permissions/facilities are teachers looking for to successfully engage their students in parks?

The student will liaise with Park Board staff, local teachers and the Vancouver School Board to better understand these issues and develop a set of recommendations for Park Board staff to consider in future planning and management activities.

**Deliverables**

- Literature review of current body of research on nature play in public parks;
- Collecting anecdotal and observed information from teachers using parks on use and needs and recommendations for resources and infrastructure teachers might need support their needs; and
- Recommendations for improved management of parks and natural areas for nature play-specific activities, including projected increased use
- A public facing final report or executive summary for the UBC Sustainability Scholars online project library

Submit applications here: <http://bit.ly/2DC2jpP>

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**Time Commitment**

- This project will take **250\*** hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between **April 16 and August 10, 2018.**
- The scholar is to complete hours between **Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:30pm**, approximately **10-15** hours per week.

**Skill set/background required/preferred**

- Excellent research and writing skills.
- Demonstrated interest in outdoor education.
- Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
- Familiarity conducting focus group research
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently
- Demonstrated time management skills
- Deadline oriented
- At least one year's experience in education
- Familiarity with qualitative research methodologies and implementation
- Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys

**Additional Project Needs**

- **Willingness to work alone in public spaces**

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