

Park Stewardship Program: Activities that the program supports

Name	Park	Activities that the program supports
Meera Dyer	Wolfond Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-pull invasive species</li> <li>-plant native plants</li> <li>-mobilize the community</li> <li>-education on native plants, planting techniques, stewardship, invasive species</li> <li>-work with community partners</li> <li>-monitor plantings</li> </ul>
Maria Sergio	Burns Drive Park Community Garden and Forest Stewardship Program	<p>Burns Drive Park is a very grateful recipient of support through the park stewardship program- which I believe began with our small forest and community engagement. We do forest stewardship events twice a year as well as enjoy support for the community garden, with 100% of the produce going towards the volunteers and children in a high needs neighborhood. Since we began our community engagement in 2020 we've been so fortunate to have support in expanding our programming from a small garden, to a larger community garden, to forest rehabilitation. The city has been integral in selecting and providing native and food bearing trees and perennials to improve conditions for nature and our local families. We have since planted dozens of new tree and shrub species into the space, improving the local canopy and investing in biodiversity that is engaged with daily by people of all ages.</p> <p>Without the city support of staff, tools, and expertise around rehabilitating our little forest space, it would have been impossible for our volunteers to pull off any of our meaningful work. 50+ volunteers mostly under the age of 12 support our programs, with more enthusiasm than any group of adult volunteers I've led.</p> <p>The city staff are especially helpful in removing invasive species and providing guidance and encouragement, as well as organizing meetings for collective engagement and resource sharing.</p> <p>In these highly difficult times we need to invest more into the ecological well-being of public spaces, not less. It brings hope, a sense of community, and care. Park stewardship is a unique leadership role where real relationship and natural connection is built.</p>

<p>Joy Sammy</p>	<p>Goldie Park Garden, Junction Neighbourhood Group</p>	<p>The garden has been in operation for just over 10 years and is a focal point for our community. The community garden has led to numerous park gatherings, a stewardship group that is focused on tree planting, park clean ups and more. We have a small but mighty team of volunteers who manage plots (7 people) who are mostly seniors and garden as a primary food source as well as to combat social isolation. We also have a pollinator garden and rainwater harvesting bench to support education and awareness about caring for the land.</p> <p>The garden is visited by classes from the neighbouring school (unofficially) when they are in the park.</p> <p>Guelph needs more community garden and stewardship support - not less! The return on investment for the City is huge through volunteers engaged and food produced.</p>
<p>Jen Mason</p>	<p>Howitt Park Stewards</p>	<p>I have been running community stewardship events in Howitt Park on and off for twenty years—since 2005. The Park Stewards program and the association with the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition make organizing and running these events vastly easier and more pleasurable than when I did this on my own. Even more importantly, we can do so much more with the Park Stewards Program than we could before!</p> <p>In the years before the Park Stewards program existed, neighbour volunteers would come together in Howitt Park and remove litter and then have a community picnic. We partnered with Trees for Guelph a few times to plant trees, we partnered with OPIRG once or twice to do larger plantings, and, in the early days, we tried to tackle the garlic mustard. With the help of the City and the Park Stewards program, we are now able to plant around 100 native trees, shrubs, and plants at each of our events (twice a year). We continue with the garbage clean up (now supported by the Clean and Green program).</p> <p>We get between 40 and 50 volunteers out each time and, with the twice-a-year schedule supported by the Park Stewards program, we are starting to get a number of returning volunteers. This is not only wonderful for community building, but it's great to have a group of quite skilled planters to do the work.</p> <p>So that's the nuts and bolts. <b>Here's why I think this matters so much:</b></p> <p>In a world where people are bombarded with news about climate change and its astonishingly destructive</p>

		<p>and terrifying effects, and where solutions feel abstract, planting and caring for trees is a simple, joyful, and practical thing to do.</p> <p>It's positive: it's good for carbon sequestration and good for the human and other-than-human community. It feels good: it's happy work done while talking and laughing with neighbours, and it feels like it is time spent making a difference in our world.</p> <p>That positive feeling lingers well past the 3-hour planting event. Walking through the park and seeing all those baby trees and shrubs with their white protective wraps offers park goers a little glimmer of positivity and hope for the future: People cared enough to come out and work together to plant those trees for our shared future. That is a beautiful thing! Giving people across our city meaningful, practical, social, positive, and joyful ways to combat climate change is worth so much more than the cost of this program.</p>
<p>Margaret Middleton (I have signed up to be a delegate at the meeting after Meera)</p>	<p>Rickson Park Stewards</p>	<p>Our park stewardship program started through some frequent dog park users wanting to improve the quality of the plantings in our hedgerow and reduce invasives throughout our space. It has grown to encompass not only community plantings (in collaboration with the city) but also a way to better work with the two schools which abut our park. Our park encompasses not only sports fields, hedgerows and trees but also a dog park and two elementary schools. The Park Stewardship program provides a focal point and communication channel to reduce friction between all these uses and increase collaboration on adapting spaces for everyone.</p> <p>The feedback from our neighbours has been so very positive and people love that our city is so engaged and makes it easy for us to make our spaces better.</p>
<p>Meghan Lewis</p>	<p>Springdale Park Stewards</p>	<p>Our park stewardship began in 2023 as a way to protect the two Trees for Guelph plots in the park. One plot was planted over 30 years ago, and the other was planted in 2019 by Trees for Guelph with help from the elementary students at Gateway drive P.S. The park stewardship program has allowed us to protect new plantings from vandalism by providing protective tree covers and wire cages when needed for species of special concern. They have also provided us with the trees and shrubs to replace those that have been damaged/ killed. It has motivated a small group to build a strong community centered around a greenspace that</p>

		<p>connects us. Over the past few years, what started as a desire to look after a new tree planting has led to the addition of over 200 new saplings, shrubs and native wildflowers to add habitat and biodiversity to our neighbourhood greenspace.</p>
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