



# Corporate Report

NO: R068

COUNCIL DATE: April 10, 2006

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **April 7, 2006**  
FROM: **General Manager, Engineering** FILE: **4806-905**  
**General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture**  
SUBJECT: **2006 Environmental Stewardship Program – Nature Matters**

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council receive this report for information.
2. That a copy of this report be forwarded to Surrey's MLAs, MPs and the Ministry of Environment (MOE).

## PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to apprise Council of:

- The progress towards the development of the New Environmental Stewardship Program initiated by Council in 2005 referred to as "Nature Matters" and key planning initiatives for 2006 and beyond;
- The integration of the 2006 watershed stewardship component (SHaRP) in the Nature Matters Program; and
- To seek authorization for the activities to be undertaken by the students in this summer's watershed stewardship component of the program.

## BACKGROUND

In October 2005, Council adopted an enhanced environmental program for the City. This program was to cover an expanded range of environmental initiatives to the residents and businesses of Surrey through year-round initiatives. The program objectives were to include a broader scope of environmental work and to ensure that stewardship initiatives were undertaken in an effective way.

## **DISCUSSION**

The new Environmental Stewardship Program has initially been referred to as “Nature Matters” by staff. The program is being directed by initiatives in the Engineering and Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments. Overall media and Corporate communication is being provided by the Marketing, Communications and Development Section of Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.

Each Department is coordinating environmental initiatives so as not to overlap or duplicate endeavors. Overall program initiatives will:

- Increase awareness of Surrey residents to a broad scope of environmental initiatives.
- Spark interest in residents to become actively involved in the sustainability of their community.
- Create partnerships with organizations in the area that have similar stewardship goals.
- Build on current success of environmental programs in place.

To meet these goals, each Department is developing or enhancing environmental initiatives. The following is a summary of each Department’s approach:

### **Engineering Department**

Within the Engineering Department, environmental programs were initially adopted to enhance riparian areas, address drainage concerns and educate residents of issues associated with waterways. Program initiatives being developed or enhanced include:

- Broaden the scope of summer SHaRP initiative to include other engineering programs employing approximately 36 students.
- Integrate Swap for 5 (Solid Waste Reduction Education Program) and promotion of Adopt-a-Street Programs into the overall program.
- Restore and enhance natural areas through plant installations, invasive species control, garbage/debris removal and residential education programs. Focus will be on areas outside of City owned Park lands.
- Integration with Surrey School District Curricula through developing environmental educational materials, work with career counselors at high schools to provide diverse work opportunities, link and coordinate other environmental educational providers for schools so as to develop a data base of programs available for teachers as curricula for all grades.
- Promote Agricultural Stewardship through promoting the Environmental Farm Plan program, developing programs to emphasize the importance of agriculture in Surrey and to increase agricultural awareness highlighting community interfaces.
- Continue program outreach through development of multi-lingual information, coordination of activities at community events and day camps, presenting Surrey-based environmental education programs on and development of an interactive web page.
- Expand and coordinate community education on topics of Water Conservation, sanitary and storm sewer system use, mosquito control and West Nile virus,

sustainable development initiatives, solid waste and recycling, and pollution prevention.

### **Parks Recreation & Culture Department**

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department operates a wide range of environmental programs that involve and educate residents and businesses on the value and importance of a sustainable and green City, the benefits of wildlife and importance of ecologically healthy natural areas. These programs, such as the *Stewardship of Natural Areas Partnership* (SNAP), *Eco Rangers*, *Environmental Extravaganza*, *ReLeaf Days*, *Arbor Day*, and the *Salmon Homecoming* celebration, will continue to be delivered and enhanced.

Additional program areas and enhancements being developed through the new 'Nature Matters' stewardship program are as follows:

- Significantly expand the 'SNAP' community partnership program with the Green Timbers Heritage Society, Sunnyside Acres Heritage Society and the White Rock Surrey Naturalists by increasing the number of students employed from four to ten.
- Build strong neighbourhoods through fostering increased volunteerism in environmental initiatives with the benefits accruing to the environmental and the social community. Focus on involving youth in environmental stewardship, leadership and volunteer initiatives year-round in support of the City's Social Well Being Plan and Active City initiative.
- Promote stewardship of the Surrey's 'urban forest' by developing programs to emphasize the importance of tree planting, nature-scaping and providing for wildlife on private and public property.
- Implement programs that raise the awareness of the threat to the City's green infrastructure due to introduction of alien invasive plants and animals.
- Develop and implement initiatives and programs directed at promoting eco-tourism within the City.
- Increase the number of community special events that highlight the City's efforts and public opportunities to be involved in environmental stewardship.
- Create outdoor learning areas and implement environmental outreach school curriculum relevant programs in natural area parks to school children and families.

### **Funding for the Water-based Engineering Programs**

The funding breakdown for the 2006 Nature Matters program is as follows:

	Range	
	From	To
Existing level of funding from Drainage Utility	\$200,000	200,000
Interest on \$3.0 million Environ. Stewardship Reserve	120,000	120,000
1% of Building Permit Revenues	<u>250,000</u>	<u>250,000</u>
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$570,000</b>	<b>570,000</b>
Other partnering agencies	<u>80,000</u>	<u>150,000</u>
Total	\$650,000	720,000

Of this funding – each Department will maintain its current contributions and those of the other partnering agencies. The additional funding will be distributed to both Engineering and Parks for operating the new programs. Marketing will receive funding from the programs under both Parks and Engineering dependent on program needs.

***2006 Watershed Stewardship Program (originally SHaRP)***

The 2006 Watershed Stewardship Program is only one component of the Nature Matters initiative. The SHaRP program started in 1996, employing 18 high school and post-secondary students during the summer for the purpose of fish habitat enhancement. Through the following years, the program has grown in size and scope and has evolved a more integrated approach to watershed restoration. Our program is unique amongst municipalities due to its size, its integrated watershed-based approach, and its commitment to career-oriented leadership training for local youth.

This program fulfills two roles, namely fish habitat protection/restoration and summer youth employment/training. The following levels of funding for 2006 is either available from confirmed sources or has been applied for from external sources:

General Drainage Utility	\$200,000
Operations	\$ 15,000
West Nile Virus (UBCM Finding)	\$ 10,000
Habitat Conservation Trust Fund*	\$ 10,000
School District 36 Funding*	\$ 10,000
AEPI*	\$ 30,000
HRDC*	\$ 33,000
PSF*	\$ 10,000
HCTF*	\$ 10,000
Unilever - Evergreen*	<u>\$ 10,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$338,000</b>

*\* Funding to be applied for but not confirmed. Staff do not anticipate that all of the funding applications will be approved.*

Based on the above assumed funding, the 2006 program would comprise of up to 9 team leaders and 27 high school students working in the following areas:

- **Watershed Environmental Enhancement**

The Watershed team's focus will be to complete in-stream enhancement work and plantings that complement ongoing City projects. The team will work extensively in Campbell Heights and the Stokes Pit area to enhance the creek relocation initiative and wetlands created for the Campbell Heights development. They will also be involved with site education to residents using the facility and try to educate the owners of the off-road vehicles currently trespassing and harming the area. The team will also continue to undertake stabilization of erosion sites identified in the ravine assessment report completed in 2005. Plantings in riparian areas as part of the City's commitments to fulfill planting requirements within various DFO authorizations for a variety of capital projects will also be a priority. By linking the needs of Surrey capital works projects and the abilities of the SHaRP team, the City is able to obtain better value for certain types of work.

- **Community Education**

The focus for the Community Education team will continue to be directed at raising awareness of natural areas and fish habitat within Surrey. This year, emphasis will be placed on improving water quality within Surrey's watercourses and limiting intrusions into watercourses, wetlands, and riparian areas. The team will link with programs developed by Parks tying into various community events and deliver education programs at day camps throughout the spring and summer. The team will also work on developing new display materials and programs that focus on various environmental initiatives that are a part of the overall ESP program; the new displays and programs will be utilized throughout the year by the ESP program.

- **Industrial Education**

The Industrial Education team will again target industrial areas within Surrey and go door to door providing educational information to businesses. The team will also gather information to add to the City database that is being developed to help track pollution and spill events when they occur in the City's storm sewer system and/or watercourses. The Industrial Education team will continue to work with Surrey's Operations staff to remove graffiti from City structures, an initiative that was started last year, and help with debris clean-ups at key sites in Surrey. It should be noted that areas targeted last year by the students have had a significant reduction in the reoccurrence of litter; this would indicate that the education initiatives within the targeted areas played an important role in community awareness.

- **Agricultural Stewardship**

The Agricultural Stewardship team will continue to be active in the agricultural community. In the five years that this team has been part of SHaRP, they have expanded their scope from on-farm in stream projects to include community outreach, education, and participation in many agricultural events, including the Cloverdale Rodeo. Last year's team worked on several projects in partnership with local community groups and provided information to the local farm community on noxious

weed and invasive species control. In 2006, we hope to continue to develop partnerships within the farming community and to work closely with the Surrey AAC and MAFF to ensure that their initiatives within Surrey are achieved. New initiatives in 2006 will include an active partnership with the BC Agriculture Council to assist with contacting farmers and distributing information for the Environmental Farm Plan Program, and creation of educational programs to foster the understanding of the inter-related aspects of urban and agricultural functions in Surrey, and to increase the interaction of the general community with the agricultural community.

- **Media & Public Relations**

The Media & Public Relations team presents the visible component of the program that is essential to the overall success of the Watershed Stewardship Program. This team actively searches for opportunities for multimedia coverage to highlight the environmental initiatives accomplished by Surrey through its various programs. The media team will link with the overall ESP program team to facilitate media for the larger initiative and to help host joint events throughout the summer.

These five work areas were selected on the basis of their contribution to enhancing existing City projects, restoring and enhancing creek and stream locations, and the benefits perceived by the general public and government agencies.

### **2006 Watershed Stewardship Consultant Assignment**

The 2006 Watershed Stewardship (previous SHaRP) program will be overseen by the Engineering Department with the day-to-day management being provided by Dillon Consulting Ltd. (Dillon). Dillon has managed the program in all previous years.

In the case of the Dillon appointment, the consultant is in a unique position to do this work because they have successfully managed all previous Watershed Stewardship programs. Dillon has developed a comprehensive training program for the students and is intimately familiar with the community events and stewardship groups involves. They have also been successful in securing funding on our behalf through Human Resources Development Canada. Loss of this continuity will result in an increased workload for the Environment staff in Engineering due to the need for more 'hands on' management of the program in the event that a new consultant is brought in.

We are, therefore, using Section 1.2 of the Engineering Department Practice CCM3 under Authorization Policy H8, which allows a consultant to be awarded a contract on a sole source basis where it is clearly beneficial to the City to do so. The value of the contract will be approximately \$70,000.

## CONCLUSION

The new environmental initiative “Nature Matters” demonstrates Council’s commitment to Surrey’s natural environments. This initiative will continue and expand youth employment and leadership opportunities for the residents of Surrey with approximately 46 students being employed this summer. This program builds on the success of SHaRP, SNAP and other environmental programs and brings all City environmental initiatives to the forefront in a more coordinated and comprehensive manner.

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