



News Release

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Unique Eco-Art Partnership Launched

A unique partnership has officially been recognized by the Regional District of Central Okanagan and the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies at the University of British Columbia's Okanagan campus.

The two have teamed up through a Memorandum of Understanding and Lease Agreement to use a portion of the recently expanded Woodhaven Nature Conservancy Regional Park in order to implement a unique Eco-Art program on the new park property.

The formation of the Woodhaven Eco Culture Centre builds on a highly successful Eco-Art project that was held in the main part of the park during 2010. It saw student artists from UBCO create multiple works of Eco-Art within the park. The key principle behind Eco-Art is that it doesn't harm the environment of the park in any way and utilizes the natural surroundings in the creative arts process. Earlier this year at Woodhaven, the Faculty hosted a number of public events involving the Eco-Art theme with a visiting artist from Newfoundland.

The agreement will see graduate students of the Faculty and visiting artists residing in and using buildings on the property as they explore Eco-Art projects and provide activities, events and workshops. The 3.5-hectare property was added to Woodhaven Nature Conservancy Regional Park earlier this year. While it remains closed to the public until a management plan and trails are developed, it will be accessible and open for publicized special activities and events that are related to the Eco-Art and Culture Centre partnership.

Regional District Chair Robert Hobson says, "Woodhaven's unique natural setting was preserved thanks to the vision and environmental activism of Joan and Jim Burbridge many years ago. The Eco-Art projects with UBC have been a huge success and show that creative endeavors can take place with total sensitivity to the natural environment. Through this formal agreement with UBC, we look forward to expanding the artistic horizons of graduate students by providing them with a unique natural canvas and inspiring residents across the region through the Eco-Art creations and programs offered through the Woodhaven Eco Culture Centre."

The university is pleased that students and faculty will now have access to an exceptional property to enhance their educational experience.

"It is vital that our students have opportunities to learn and express their creativity beyond the classroom," says Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Principal Deborah Buszard. "The Woodhaven Eco Culture Centre provides a wonderful new opportunity for artists, writers and poets to study in a stimulating, natural setting."

For Nancy Holmes, poet, creative writing professor and associate dean for UBC's Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies, the Woodhaven Eco Culture Centre is the culmination of a long-

held dream for an innovative multi-use space where visiting artists, scholars, and graduate students can live, work, create and research.

“This has been on our wish list for a long while,” says Holmes. “The Woodhaven Eco Culture Centre provides facilities to focus on art, research and culture. Students can delve ever deeper into their studies and stroke their creative process without distraction.”

The Faculty plans to develop summer artist and research programs at the Centre and is promoting partnerships with local groups for activities, events and educational opportunities.

“The Eco Culture Centre has been established as a resource for the public as well as students and faculty,” says Holmes. “As this becomes a thriving hub of cultural activity the more people will benefit from this unique partnership UBC has with the Regional District of Central Okanagan.”

The Memorandum of Understanding and Lease Agreement between the Regional District and UBCO will run for two years.

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