



Parks Services

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Property Resident
489 Raymer Road
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Dear Park Neighbour;

New Forest Preschool Coming to Woodhaven

Last year, the Regional District of Central Okanagan's (RDCO) Board gave approval to parks staff to explore the concept of an outdoor forest preschool at Woodhaven Nature Conservancy Regional Park, as an innovative way of providing much needed child care space in our community. Enclosed is information about this 3-year pilot partnership program with the Clubhouse Child Care Center to provide the Treehouse Forest Preschool. You can also join us for an information session:

- Thursday March 14, 2019 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Woodhaven Nature Conservancy Regional Park (4711 Raymer Road Kelowna)

Benefits to children

Supporting Central Okanagan children to develop their potential through the freedom to explore and engage with the natural world will benefit not only the children, but also our community's quality of life and our parks.

There are many benefits to playing and learning outdoors. As the North American Association for Environmental Education summarizes, "Extensive research confirms the benefits of playing and learning outdoors; doing so promotes children's physical, cognitive and social development." Nature-based preschools such as the one proposed here, are designed to provide safe, affordable curriculum and "are sensory-rich, ever-changing spaces proven to improve academic performance, enhance critical thinking skills, and developing personal growth, life-building skills, confidence, autonomy, and leadership."¹

Things you'll see day-to-day

Each day during the school week, the Clubhouse Child Care Center will host two learning sessions at the Treehouse Forest Preschool. Mornings between 9:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., childcare facilities and kindergarten classes can schedule a fieldtrip to the Treehouse Forest Preschool. Then between 12:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., children registered in the Treehouse Forest Preschool will attend. Examples of Treehouse Forest preschool activities include: constructing temporary shelters, ephemeral woodland art, and other nature trail activities.

As a licensed and fully insured preschool, the learning sessions will always be supervised by certified early childhood educators, will have very low student to teacher ratios, and will subscribe to the 'leave no trace' ethos. The maximum number of children for each 2.5 hour session is twenty.

Benefits to Parks

The RDCO will receive in kind benefit from the Treehouse Forest Preschool such as daily maintenance, upkeep and security of the outdoor classroom space, the addition of bird houses and bat boxes, litter management in naturalized areas, and basic flora and fauna inventories.

Why the Clubhouse?

The Clubhouse's experience in nature-based early learning programs reaches back to 2012 with the founding of The Clubhouse Farm: Nature Classroom and Outdoor Playspace, for which the Clubhouse received the British Columbia Child Care Award of Excellence in Innovation. In 2014, the Clubhouse also licensed a nature-based preschool program in Ellison that has since grown to 25 registered children. For more detailed information about the Clubhouse, please visit their website at clubhousechildcare.com.

For more information, or if you have any questions or comments, please:

- Visit our website at www.regionaldistrict.com/your-services/parks-services/planning-and-resources
- Come to the information session on Thursday March 14, 2019, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Woodhaven Nature Conservancy Regional Park,
- Email Nicole Kittmer at nicole.kittmer@cord.bc.ca, or call 250-469-6263.

Kind regards,

Nicole Kittmer, B.Sc.

Park Interpreter

Parks Services | Regional District of Central Okanagan

