

DATE OF MEETING SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

AUTHORED BY [KIRSTY MACDONALD, ACTING MANAGER, PARKS OPERATIONS]

**SUBJECT ALLOCATION OF REMAINDER OF FUNDS FROM THE 2024 COMMUNITY WATERSHED RESTORATION GRANT**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To review a late proposal and application for the 2024 Community Watershed Restoration Grant program.

### **Recommendation**

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve the following 2024 Community Watershed Restoration Grant:

**Applicant Name:** John Barsby School

**Project:** Chase River Stewardship and Riparian Area Restoration

**Amount:** \$2,634

## **BACKGROUND**

The Community Watershed Restoration Grant (the “Grant”) was initiated by Council in 2022 to support organizations, environmental non-profits, or individual residents whose goal is to carry out projects that advance City Plan’s green goals such as watershed restoration projects, urban stream and riparian restoration enhancement, natural environment protection, and climate change adaptation solutions. Since its inception, the Grant has been successful in various projects such as bank restoration on Walley Creek. Because many of the projects are being conducted on City parkland, administration of the Grant has moved from the Sustainability Section to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department. Coordination between this Grant, the Partners in Parks Program, and Parks Operations is now more streamlined.

The intake for the 2024 grant program was launched on 2024-FEB-12 and remained open until 2024-APR-02. At the regularly scheduled meeting on 2024-MAY-15, the Finance and Audit Committee approved money for six projects to support work in both parks and on private land. Allocations totalled \$17,366 of the available \$20,000 and left \$2,634 available for worthy projects that submitted late applications.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Chase River flows adjacent to John Barsby’s western boundary in an extension of Harewood Centennial Park. In many locations, the riparian area is very narrow (significantly less than 30m) and has a sparse canopy. Restoration of the Chase River and completion of the Harewood Centennial Park Plan are identified as strategic actions in the Integrated Action Plan.

The John Barsby School Stewardship group includes students undertaking studies in both physical and health education and outdoor education. The students are interested in stewarding and improving this neighbourhood natural resource by planting trees and ground cover within the riparian setback. As a first step, the focus for this work will be only in the area behind the Barsby “Dawg House.” But in future years, this program may request additional resources to expand restoration efforts. Equipment to provide water to the trees is also requested. The students will provide labour to install and maintain the trees.

Should Council support funding the project as recommended by Staff, the school group will be advised that funding approvals will be conditional on ensuring that City processes are followed, particularly those relating to work in potentially environmentally sensitive areas. Staff will meet with the applicants at their sites to review expectations before projects begin and monies are received. All projects must be completed within a year. A final report with visuals will be required to document successes and progress toward improving our community’s green spaces and the monitoring of City Plan goals.

### **OPTIONS**

- That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve the following 2024 Community Watershed Restoration Grant:  
**Applicant Name:** John Barsby School  
**Project:** Chase River Stewardship and Riparian Area Restoration  
**Amount:** \$2,634
  - The advantages of this option: This work helps to support restoration priorities and build stewardship and relationships within the school community.
  - The disadvantages of this option: None identified.
  - Financial Implications: All funds for this grant program will be allocated until 2025.
2. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council not approve the following 2024 Community Watershed Restoration Grant:  
**Applicant Name:** John Barsby School  
**Project:** Chase River Stewardship and Riparian Area Restoration  
**Amount:** \$2,634
- The advantages of this option: None noted.
  - The disadvantages of this option: This keen group of students would focus their education and energy on other projects.
  - Financial Implications: \$2,634 would remain in the grant program to support additional late applications.
3. That Council provide other direction.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- The Community Watershed Restoration Grant supports community volunteers and organizations with up to \$20,000 annually for projects that advance Nanaimo City Plan’s policies and initiatives.
- Staff received eight applications to date this year.

- The City supports environmentally focused community organizations and partnership projects through a number of funding sources and collaborations including the Community Watershed Restoration Grant, Community Environmental Sustainability Project Grant, and Partners in Parks process and program.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**ATTACHMENT A:** Application from John Barsby School. |

**Submitted by:**

Kirsty MacDonald  
Acting Manager, Parks Operations |

**Concurrence by:**

Charlotte Davis  
Manager of Parks Operations

Wendy Fulla  
Director, Finance

Laura Mercer  
General Manager, Corporate Services

Richard Harding  
General Manager, Community Services &  
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