

Salt Spring Cooperative Preschool Yard Expansion Project

Abstract:

The Salt Spring Cooperative Preschool Yard Expansion is a multi-faceted, multi-year, legacy project which will expand the outdoor play yard and create a dynamic woodland-meadow landscape with ecological play structures, opportunities for environmental education, and plenty of space for active play. Currently the preschool operates with a small yard consisting of sand and wood play structures. The new land will double the current yard space and is leased from the school board on a two-year basis, with the hope of a longer lease and eventually a rent-to-own arrangement. There are three phases envisioned for the 2020/2021 school year.

Phase 1 - clearing the site and planting grass

Phase 2 - planting trees and creating a central hill

Phase 3 - building new bike storage, an additional bike loop, and a covered play area

Phase 4 - populating the yard with new playthings

Phase 5 - as envisioned by future parents

The project will be funded through grants, private donations, fundraising events, and in kind donations, with a total budget of approximately \$25,000. The preschool is owned and run by the cooperative of parents and therefore the project is envisioned, managed, and supported by parents and alumni from start to finish. If you are interested in joining the expansion project parent pod please contact Claire Jutras vicepresident@saltspringcoopreschool.com

To donate funds please do so via the DONATE button on our website.



Statement of need:

Active, outdoor play and nature-based learning are core values of the Salt Spring Coop Preschool. Expanding the play-yard will diversify the types of outdoor play the children can engage in, give more space for running and active pursuits, and support the increase in outdoor programming required during the COVID pandemic. In addition, through the installation of creative natural architecture and native plants/trees, the new play-yard will provide opportunities to explore active, nature-based play that haven't been available with the current yard, which mainly consists of sand and wooden structures. Beyond the obvious benefit to the children who attend the preschool, the expanded and enhanced play-yard will benefit preschool families, who have access after school and on weekends through the cooperative model. Finally, the benefit of turning an abandoned parking lot into a natural paradise is overwhelming; planting native species and fruit/nut trees, building animal habitats, capturing water and stabilizing the soil are just a few of the steps planned to restore this ecosystem. All around Salt Spring, nature classrooms at the elementary school level have become very popular, and it is only natural that this type of education should be available in the early years as well.

Project Activity, Methodology, Outcomes

The yard expansion project has been on the preschool wish-list for many years, but with minimal funds and any extra fundraising going to current school facilities, the project has not been realized. The initial cost to get the project going is high because major land clearing and earth moving is required to ready the site.

Thankfully, each year brings new parents to the preschool and this year there are families who are available to help with machine work and lend the preschool the equipment required to get the project initiated. Below is a timeline of activities and who will do them.

Table 1: Timeline of Activities

Phase	Action	Date	Who
Phase 1	Clear blackberries in the yard and along the path to the yard with excavator and bobcat	October 2020	Ellis
Phase 1	Build a berm with blackberries and other excess vegetation to project from elevation drop on the West side and to provide privacy from neighbor	October 2020	Ellis
Phase 1	Clear garbage, do dump run, make burn pile	November 2020	Parents
Phase 1	Rake the site and remove rocks and wood	November 2020	Parents
Phase 1	Get top soil delivered and spread with machine	November 2020	Ellis
Phase 1	Plant grass and clover	November 2020	Parents
Phase 2	Secure property with new fence	March 2021	Hired Contractor
Phase 2	Plant Fruit and Nut Trees	March 2021	Parents
Phase 2	Build interactive hill with culvert tunnel and slide	March 2021	Ellis
Phase 2	Willow tunnel	March 2021	Zack
Phase 2	Plant evergreen trees to create woodland	March 2021	Parents
Phase 3	Delivery of new bike shed shipping container	June 2021	Hired Contractor
Phase 3	Artwork on shipping container	June 2021	Volunteer
Phase 3	Build cantilevered shelter off of shipping container	June 2021	Hired Contractor
Phase 3	Develop new bike path loop	June 2021	Hired Contractor
Phase 4	Purchase and install new playthings	June 2021	Cash and volunteer

This is a multi-year project and even when it is complete it will continue to be worked on by parents to come. The main outcome for 2020/21 is to clear the land, create specific zones and plant shrubs/trees and seed grass. Year 2021/22 and beyond will bring new play structures and increased detail in the landscape, as

imagined by the new preschool parents. Parents have always been the initiators and the executors of Salt Spring Cooperative Preschool projects, from building the preschool building to all the play equipment in the current yard, so it is reasonable to assume they are the best group to manage this job as well. In addition, since they have a vested interest in their child's experience, parents are the best group to decide how this yard will look, feel, and operate.

Budget and Continuation Funding

This is a legacy project for the coop preschool and will be continued by the new parents that enter the preschool each year. There are some initial costs to get the project going, some ongoing costs to maintain the project, and a spectrum of costs for later phases of the project that will be determined by the group of parents and the executive in charge at that time. There are four phases of the project for the 2021 year. Phase one involves clearing the site and the main expenses are the machine operator and rental as well as the top soil and grass seed to create a blank slate. Phase two involves laying out a basic landscape with trees and shrubs and a central hill. Main expenses for this phase are plant costs, machine rental and operator costs, and soil. Phase three is all about creating play space and action in the site. The main cost is a shipping container to store bikes, a new bike loop, a covered play area connected to the shipping container, and large garden boxes with benches. Phase four will be populating the site with toys and playthings to create action and engagement throughout the landscape. Drawing heavily on the skills of parents in the preschool, many volunteer labourers will be involved to do machine work, carpentry, and landscaping. Materials will be sourced from both in kind donations and cash purchases. Collaborating with local businesses and alumni that value the preschool will be key to fulfilling the needs of the budget.

Table 2: Materials and Labour Budget

Item	Expense	Date	Type
Excavator Rental - 8 hours at \$60 per hour	\$480.00	October 2020	Cash
Excavator Operator - 8 hours at \$150 per hour	\$1200.00	October 2020	In Kind Donation
Grass and Clover Seed	\$100.00	November 2020	Cash
Gate Repair	\$100.00	November 2020	In Kind Donation
Bamboo Hedging to stabilize slope and give privacy to neighbor	\$200.00	November 2020	In Kind Donation
Removal of Garbage from Site	\$50.00	November 2020	Cash
Top Soil	\$600.00	November 2020	Cash
Excavator Operator to make hill and culvert tunnel - 4 hours	\$600.00	March 2021	In Kind Donation
Excavator Rental	\$240.00	March 2021	Cash
Culvert	\$50.00	March 2021	In Kind Donation

Slide	\$200.00	March 2021	Cash
Soil for Hill	\$600.00	March 2021	Cash
Fruit and Nut Trees	\$500.00	March 2021	Cash
New Fence - Cedar fence and chainlink	\$3000.00	March 2021	Cash and In Kind Donation
Evergreen Trees	\$250.00	March 2021	Cash
Shrubs for privacy and to create woodland	\$500.00	March 2021	Cash
Shipping Container	\$2000.00	June 2021	Cash
Artwork	\$500.00	June 2021	In Kind Donation
Shade Structure on Container	\$1500.00	June 2021	Cash and In Kind Donation
Bike Path continuation	\$3000.00	June 2021	Cash and In Kind Donation
Garden Beds and Benches	\$3000.00	June 2021	Cash
Toys and playthings for new space	\$5000	June 2021	Cash and In Kind Donation
	\$24000.00		

Table 3: Continuation Funding Requirements (Yearly Costs)

Item	Expense	Date Due
Yearly Rental Fee	\$500.00	September 2020
Landscape Contractor to manage lawns and fencelines	\$1200.00	April 2021
Portion of insurance policy	\$300	September 2020
Maintenance to play structures and fences	\$1200.00	April 2021
	\$3200.00	