

Connecting People With Nature



Photo by Don Enright

President's Message



On behalf of the Board of Directors of Stanley Park Ecology Society, thank you for helping us connect people to nature. It has been an ambitious year for SPES, and a rewarding one. This year, our public face has had a lift, and we hope you like it. We have launched an exciting new website and with it we've solidified a whole new look and feel to our organization. Now, while the whole area of branding might strike you as being a bit corporate, we discovered that an exercise in visual branding involves taking a serious look at who you are and who you aspire to be to your community. And here at SPES, we found through a bit of introspection that we are passionate, committed, responsible, inclusive, diplomatic, credible and engaging. Our new look and feel is meant to celebrate and communicate those qualities.

For any of you who have taken part in an ivy pull, a school program, or a guided walk, the fact that we are passionate, committed and engaging will come as no surprise. We throw ourselves into our work with everything we've got; just spend an afternoon watching our volunteers in action (or better yet, join them!) and you'll see.

We also realized that our work in Stanley Park relies on our being responsible, diplomatic and credible. We have become a serious scientific organization, and the go-to experts for many aspects of wildlife management and conservation in our community. And that is something we will continue to take seriously, whether it involves the fine art of bog restoration, helping our community co-exist with coyotes, or being a leading voice for migratory bird conservation in partnership with the City of Vancouver and other like-minded groups.

Lastly, we are inclusive. As a modest non-profit organization, we couldn't succeed without our volunteers, our partners and our financial supporters, who happen to be a remarkably diverse network of passionate, committed, engaging citizens who share with us a belief that a healthy community grows from a healthy environment and vice versa.

See you in the Park!

Don Enright
President, Board of Directors

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Executive Director's Address



As a world-hailed urban park that is almost 125 years established, Stanley Park still has many mysteries, and evolving management considerations. To these ends, in 2011-2012, SPES accepted new roles in Vancouver Park Board's Stanley Park Ecological Action Plan:

Behind the scenes, we built a thick compendium of Best Management Practices for species of significance and mapped the spread of invasive plants. Out in the field, the most exciting new initiative has been the community-engaged restoration of a sizeable but long-hidden bog, uncovering the second of only two such rare habitats in Vancouver.

This year spanned the fifth anniversary of the wind-storm that felled 10,000 trees in Stanley Park in December 2006. While the ensuing Restoration Era officially wrapped up in 2009, SPES continues to work on impacted areas to remove aggressive non-native plants, close off unsanctioned trails, and involve the community in ongoing habitat renewal. We celebrate that many of the native seedling trees that were introduced to the Park are now over two metres high.

In August 2011 we undertook the first ever "Bioblitz"

Staff

Patricia Thomson

Executive Director

Suchitra Reddy

Office Coordinator

Robyn Worcester

Conservation Programs Manager

Brian Titaro

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Greg Ferguson

Stewardship Coordinator

Bryan Jackson (outgoing) & Dan Straker (current)

Co-Existing with Coyotes Coordinators

Anita Georgy

School Programs Manager

Sarah McSkimming & Kristjanne Vosper

Environmental Educators

in Stanley Park, a 24 hour relay to gather information on its habitats and wildlife. From early morning small mammal surveys and beach seines to late night owl and bat patrols, more than 1000 public participants helped to confirm species in this diverse ecosystem. Together, we added more than 150 species that are new to the Park's records – albeit a fifth of these being alien invasive plants.

Despite Teacher Job Action that negatively impacted the reach of our School Programs, our mandate for education has also continued creatively. One of the most alluring outreach projects has been the innovative "Urban Weavers" community engagement project: We collaborated with environmental artists to explore how to re-purpose or 'upcycle' invasive green waste into useful products including baskets and jewellery.

We encourage you to read on for measurable insights into our challenges and ultimate successes of another year of growth for SPES. Thank you for supporting us in supporting your urban ecology.

Patricia Thomson

Executive Director

Amelia Frame & Jesse Eckert

Urban Camping Leaders

Roger Keyes (outgoing) & Krystal Pyke (current)

Public Programs Managers

Julie Sabau (outgoing) & Patricia Gooch (current)

Eco Ranger & Creatures of the Night Coordinators

Ann-Marie Bennett (outgoing) &

Louise Askjaer Pedersen (current)

Fundraising & Communications Specialists

Koren Johnstone (outgoing) & Julie Sabau (current)

Volunteer Coordinator & Nature House Interpreters

Sivananthakumari Sivakaran, Kevin Fan,

David Thomson, Jonathan Marr & Sheyona Melani

Cob House Staff

Anthony Ho

Nature House Host

Playing a Leadership Role



SPES works closely through a Joint Operating Agreement with Vancouver Park Board as a Park Partner and in an advisory planning role. This year we worked alongside Park staff on a number of different initiatives, including Stanley Park bog restoration, forest de-fragmentation, best management practices and invasive species mapping.

We held monthly bog restoration events throughout the year, and volunteers transformed the remnant salal-covered bog back to a healthy ecosystem composed of sphagnum moss, round-leaved sundew, and other bog indicator plants.

Restoration of unsanctioned trails and forest fragments

is a challenge but we made great headway in key areas including geocaching trails that have been replanted and closed with the use of coarse woody debris.

SPES created a report for the Park Board which outlines Best Management Practices for over 29 groups of wildlife and plants of significance in the Park. These plans will aid in the long-term ecological management of the Park and its wildlife.

The blowdown areas created during the 2006 wind-storm were mapped by SPES to determine the distribution and extent of highly invasive plants that have since moved into these areas. These maps will be used as a tool by forest managers.

“ I am pleased with the excellent progress made by SPES...the Beaver Lake bog is a unique site in Vancouver and I am thankful that it is finally being brought back to its former glory.”

Laurence Brown, BSc, PhD, Co-chair, Camosun Bog Restoration Group





Stanley Park is not only an ideal outdoor classroom for school kids learning about ecology, it is also an excellent site for post-secondary research and field studies. Stanley Park's first ever Biodiversity Blitz event was co-hosted by SPES and South Coast Conservation Program in August 2011. This Bioblitz involved local researchers, ecology experts, stewardship groups and the public in a 24-hour science relay, which resulted in 152 new species added to the list of known species for the Park.

SPES co-led Vancouver's second annual World Migratory Bird Day event in conjunction with the City of

Vancouver, Bird Studies Canada, Vancouver Park Board, Nature Vancouver and Tourism Vancouver this year. Walks were held in parks across the city and a special event was held at the Central Library.

This year's student research projects were partnerships with BCIT's Fish, Wildlife and Recreation and Ecological Restoration programs, as well as UBC's Department of Geography and Faculty of Forestry. The students produced interesting projects which enhanced their applied skills and experience, while benefitting SPES' conservation research initiatives and furthering our knowledge of the Park's ecosystems.



Water testing at BioBlitz

“I hadn't used binoculars to look at birds before. This was really exciting! It was also amazing to listen carefully and realize how many different species are all around you.”
SPES Conservation Volunteer



Monthly bird count. Photo by Peter Woods



Conservation Programs

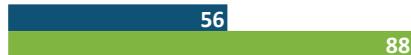
Workshops, training sessions, walks and field trips



Participants engaged in workshops and tours (including BioBlitz)



Wildlife surveys accomplished



Wildlife reports produced



Map layers created



Partnerships created or maintained



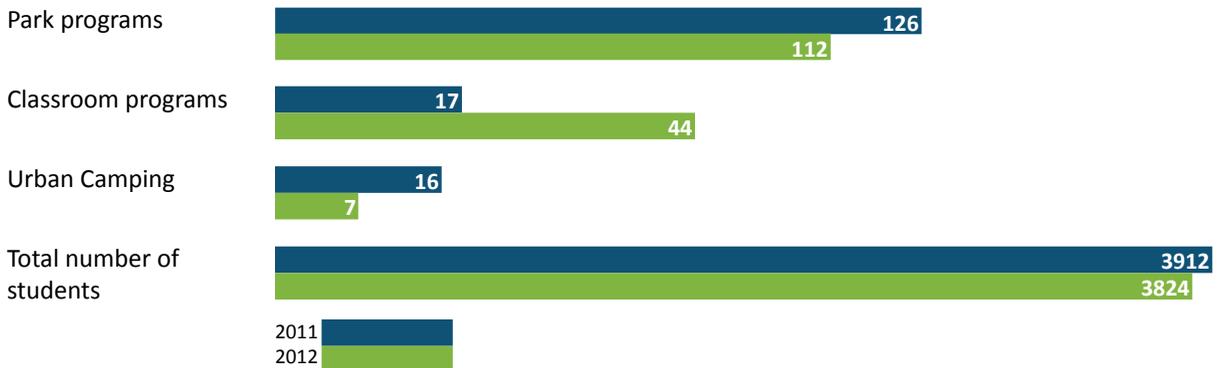
“ After seeing the sundews I learned the difference between regular moss and sphagnum moss. Regular moss is flat and not very squishy, but sphagnum moss is like a small, wet sponge! It can be red, and green... WOW, I never thought I could learn so much in three hours!”
Maja Lampa, 14 year old member of Stanley Park Young Naturalists' Club who helped restore the bog.



Inspiring our beginnings in 1988, SPES has recognized the transformative power of environmental education and engagement in connecting people of all ages with nature and creating positive change. This is still at the heart of what we do, and our work uses a two-pronged approach. Our School Programs engage school children from K-7 with nature, and our Public Programs give families and individuals opportunities to learn about Stanley Park’s fascinating wildlife and plants while being outside in the fresh air.

School Programs

In the past year our environmental educators inspired close to 4,000 elementary students about nature and wildlife through hands-on, experiential education programs in the Park and in the classroom. A grant allowed us to waive program fees for a number of inner city schools, which enabled more school children to enjoy a valuable day out in the Park while learning about science, arts and ecology. SPES’ educational “Urban Camping” program remained popular, but the BC teachers’ job action resulted directly in less program enrollment than expected.



“ [Urban Camping] was great, very hands-on and engaging and the teamwork activity (building a shelter) was so much fun! All of my students were engaged and just enjoyed being outside doing something active.”
Whiteside Elementary





Public Programs

Through our public events programs, including Discovery Walks and the roving Eco Rangers, thousands of people get introduced to SPES, find new inspiration in nature and learn about what they can do to shrink their environmental footprint.

SPES participated with information and activities at numerous community events. Through Creatures of the Night, an annual month-long event in October, our staff and volunteers enchanted more than 6,000 participants about the mysterious, nocturnal lives of wild animals on candle-lit walks. In spring 2012, the public program offerings were expanded with four new daycamp programs: Wildlife Safari, Rainforest Rangers, Wonderful Wetlands and Outrageous Owls. More than 10,000 people visited the Stanley Park Nature House,

Vancouver's only ecology center which is managed by SPES.

SPES heads up the Young Naturalists' Club in Stanley Park, a nature discovery and environmental action program for 5-14 year olds. The program continues to go from strength to strength, hosting more than 200 participants in 12 events this year.

SPES' Eco Ranger Program broke all of its records. Fifty one volunteer naturalists had more than 10,000 interactions with Park visitors as they roved Stanley Park from the beginning of July through to the Labour Day weekend, providing interpretation to visitors about local animals, plants and cultural history.

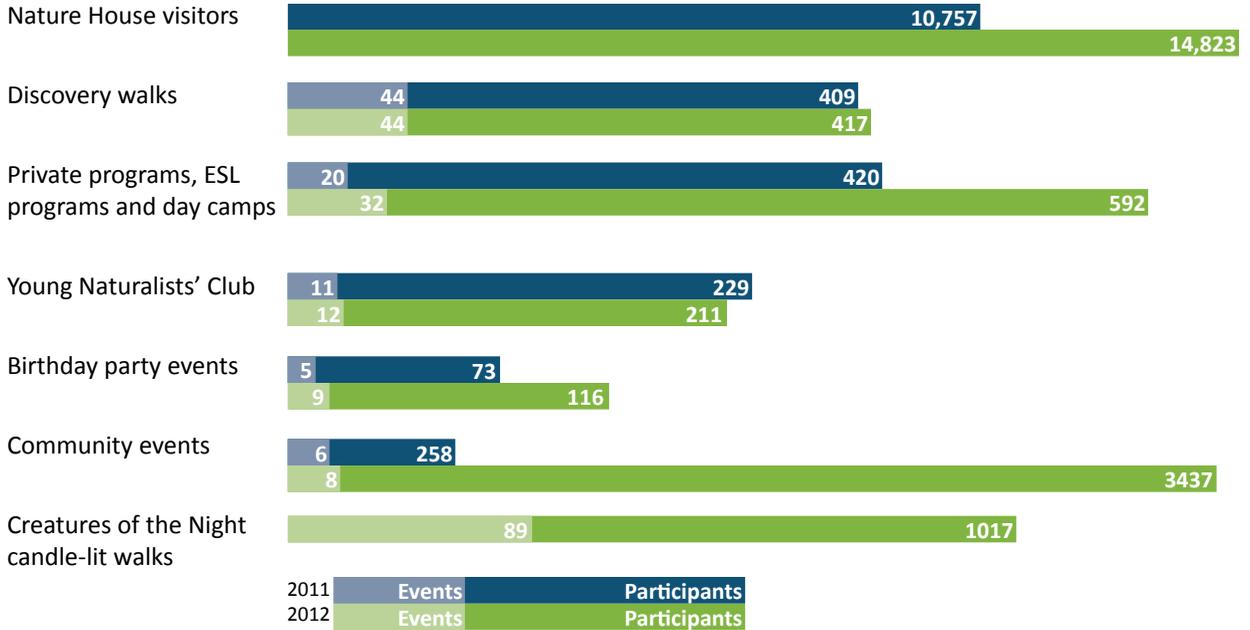
“Thank so much for the awesome walk today. The girls had a blast and were very excited by all the animals they saw.”
*Jennifer, GEMS KidSafe program leader
(community youth program)*



Connecting People With Nature



Public Programs



Eco Ranger showing bird spectacle to Park visitors

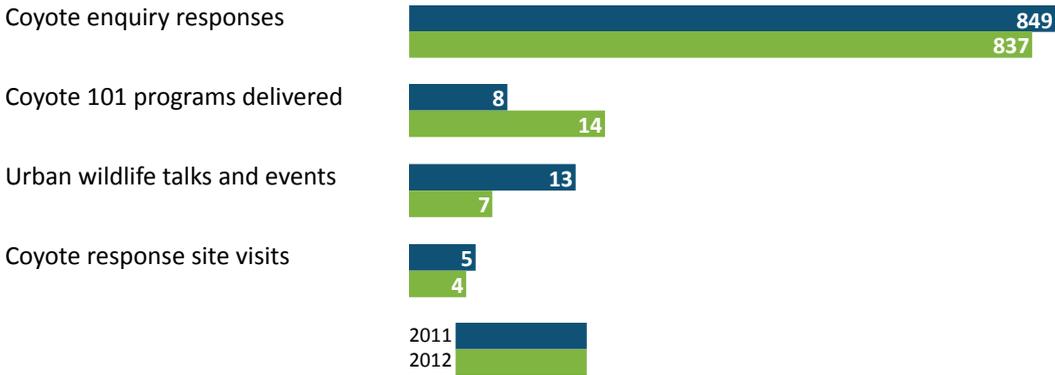


Co-Existing With Coyotes

SPES' long-running awareness and action program, Co-Existing with Coyotes (CWC), provides innovative and effective education for students and communities on how to prevent conflicts between humans, pets and urban coyotes.

In 2011-12, the program team helped the Town of Oakville, ON create a Co-Existing with Coyotes strategy

through the sale of a Coyote Awareness Resource Package. This was followed up with the sale of a smaller resource package to the City of Toronto. The CWC team was engaged with the Vancouver Urban Coyote Network, delivered school talks and introduced Mr. Coyote (the program mascot) at public events. With the re-launch of SPES' website, a new coyote sightings map was set up, and it has already proven popular.



“ Thank you so much for your very comprehensive response which I will share with my neighbours. Much appreciated.”
Resident with coyote enquiry



Stewardship in Action

Restoring areas of habitat fragmentation, updating invasive species maps, and continuing to manage invasive species and enhance habitat for wildlife in Stanley Park have been the key priorities of SPES' stewardship programs this year.

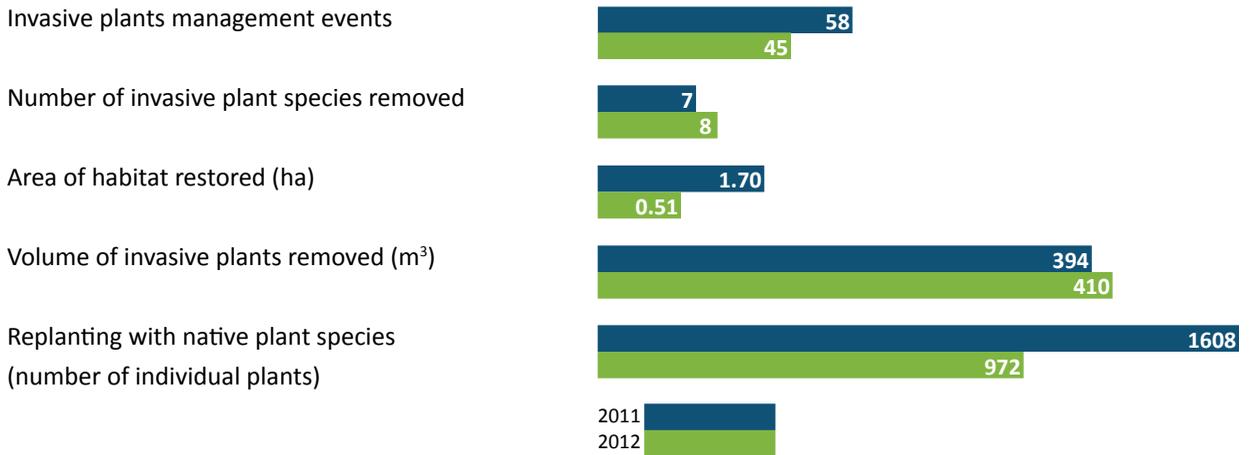
Stewardship Programs, with the help of 349 volunteers, restored native habitat in eight areas through the removal of invasive plant species, planting of native species and closure of illegal trails.

In its third year of ongoing stewardship work, SPES' tree ivy management program continued to achieve great results through the involvement of a core team of

volunteers and have freed more than 3,000 trees and shrubs of English ivy within the Park.

Breeding bird enhancement efforts continued this year with the placement of 13 swallow and wood duck nest boxes around Lost Lagoon and Beaver Lake. Mature trees in riparian areas were wrapped with wire to protect this important wildlife habitat from the Park's resident beavers.

With the help of volunteers and support from Vancouver Park Board, we piloted SPES' first ever nursery in Stanley Park to store, grow, and maintain native plants for restoration projects.



Volunteers restoring the forest



Native plant nursery **11**



Building Skills and Experience in the Community

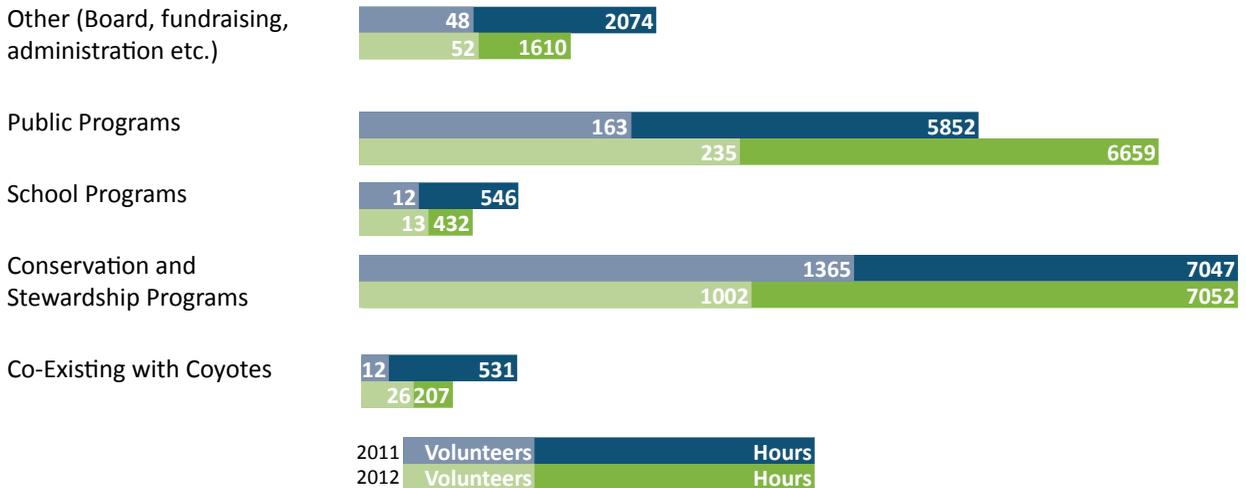
This fiscal year SPES provided the community with 1,509 volunteering opportunities across a broad range of over 70 program areas. More than 1,246 individual volunteers contributed 15,960 hours of service.

Our wide range of volunteer opportunities allowed hundreds of people to build job-ready skills, enhance their resumes, collect required service hours for high school, develop public interaction skills, improve their English language, and give back to their community all while becoming environmental stewards and contributing to the achievement of SPES' goals. Roles included helping to monitor birds and bats, selling popcorn at SPES' Cob House (a fundraising enterprise), removing invasive plant species, baking cookies for the volunteers, dressing up as a coyote to educate about coyotes

with SPES' Co-Existing with Coyotes program and more.

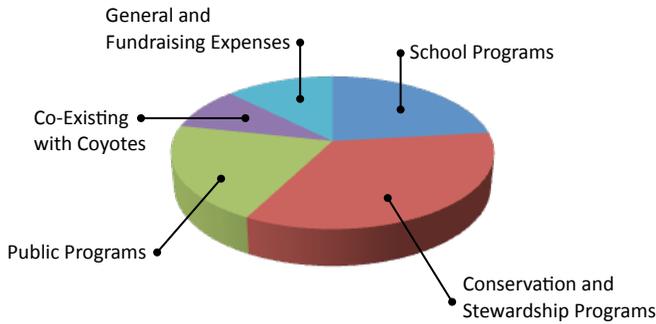
SPES offered eight internships this past year (three of which were three months in duration or longer). Interns work full time with SPES in a wide range of program areas during their internship. The interns reported that their internships at SPES were very worthwhile, helped them build useful career skills and were invaluable to their personal growth. SPES' programs benefit greatly from the long term help of these enthusiastic young people.

SPES continued to work towards an inclusive and flourishing community by collaborating with the Developmental Disabilities Association of BC to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities for its members.

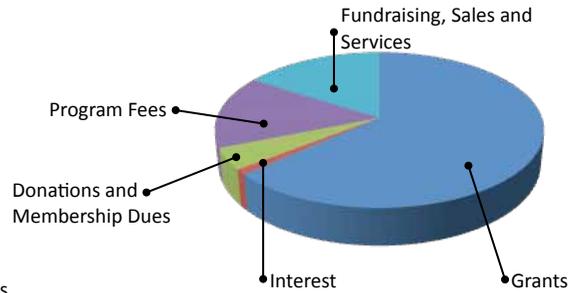




Expenses



Income



Statement Of Activities

Support and Revenue

Grants	\$353,679
Interest	\$5,846
Donations and Membership Dues	\$24,892
Program Fees	\$84,623
Fundraising, Sales & Services	\$89,073
TOTAL	\$558,113

Expenses

Program Supplies and Equipment	\$52,894
Cost of Goods Sold	\$4,956
Administrative Supplies, Services and Support	\$34,695
Wages and Benefits	\$456,536
Professional Fees	\$4,748
TOTAL	\$553,829

Net Ordinary Income **\$4,284**

Statement Of Financial Position

Assets

Cash - Unrestricted	\$202,123
Cash - Restricted	\$100,000
Accounts Receivable	\$3,536
Grants Receivable	\$3,203
Interest Receivable	\$1,803
Supplies Inventory	0
Prepaid Expenses	\$2,826
TOTAL	\$313,491

Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenditures	\$8,777
Wages Payable	\$18,581
Sales Taxes Payable	\$5,803
Deferred Income	\$162,886
TOTAL	\$196,047

Net Assets

Internally Restricted	\$100,000
Unrestricted	\$17,444
TOTAL Liabilities & Net Assets	\$313,491

*The complete unaudited financial statements can be obtained without charge through SPES. The unaudited financial statements contain notes that provide additional relevant information to the financial information contained in the annual report.

A Special Thank You for Financial Support



Visionary (\$30,000+)

HSBC
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Gaming Commission
Vancity

This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Federal Department of the Environment.

Sustainer (\$10,000+)

Collette Foundation Charitable Fund of Tides Canada Foundation
British Columbia Arts Council
National Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada – PromoScience

Supporter (\$1000 - \$10,000)

City of Vancouver
Earthwatch
Futureworks
Human Resources Development Canada
Keith Lord Sport Foundation Fund held at the Vancouver Foundation
Lower Mainland Christmas Bureau
North Face Explorer Fund
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RBC Foundation
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TELUS
Spectra Energy
SPES is receiving funding through the Job Creation Partnerships Program by the Ministry of Social Development.





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Times Square Suites Hotel
Rory Wallace
Cora Whiting
Whole Foods Market
Renata Wiggles
Monica Wilson
Art Wolfe
Alex Woodside
Marianne Worcester



Volunteers putting up nestboxes. Photo by Don Enright

And 1,246 volunteers who donated \$239,400 worth of service time.

Stanley Park Ecology Society promotes awareness of and respect for the natural world and plays a leadership role in the stewardship of Stanley Park through collaborative initiatives in education, research and conservation.



The SPES staff team at an educational day-retreat

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