

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: WORLD RIVERS DAY 2021**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. THAT Council declare the fourth Sunday in September, 2021 September 26, as Burnaby World Rivers Day.
2. THAT Council approve the proposed program for virtual World Rivers Day 2021.
3. THAT Council authorize expenditures for World Rivers Day 2021 in the amount of \$4,000 for advertising and promotion, as outlined in this report.
4. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Burnaby Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission; Mark Angelo, World Rivers Day Chair and Founder and representative of the International River Foundation; and the Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia for information purposes.

**REPORT**

The Environment Committee, at its meeting held on 2021 May 20, received and adopted the attached report seeking Council approval of the proposed online program for World Rivers Day 2021, expenditure authorization for advertising and promoting the program and declaring the fourth Sunday in September as Burnaby World Rivers Day.

Respectfully submitted,

Copied to:	Acting City Manager Director Corporate Services Director Engineering Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Director Finance Director Planning and Building Acting OIC - RCMP Fire Chief Chief Librarian President, CUPE Local 23
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Councillor J. Keithley  
Chair

Councillor C. Jordan  
Vice Chair

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**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 2021 May 11

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

**FILE:** 33000 01  
*Reference: World Rivers Day*

**SUBJECT:** **WORLD RIVERS DAY 2021**

**PURPOSE:** To seek approval of the proposed online program for World Rivers Day 2021, Council expenditure authorization for advertising and promoting the program and to declare the fourth Sunday in September as Burnaby World Rivers Day.

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3. **THAT** Council authorize expenditures for World Rivers Day 2021 in the amount of \$4,000 for advertising and promotion, as outlined in this report.
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**REPORT****1.0 BACKGROUND**

Rivers Day occurs each year on the fourth Sunday in September. Communities across BC and in more than sixty countries around the world host celebratory events to promote environmental stewardship and to celebrate the environmental, socio-economic and cultural values of waterways. The first BC Rivers Day was held in 1980 and was created by renowned river advocate and Burnaby resident, Mark Angelo. In 1993, the City of Burnaby became the first municipality in BC to proclaim 'BC Rivers Day'. Based on the success of BC Rivers Day, World Rivers Day was launched in 2005 as part of the United Nations Water for Life Decade.

In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, Rivers Day and other City programs and events were cancelled in 2020 and again in 2021 to align with social distancing and gathering size

restrictions implemented by the Chief Medical Officer of the Province of British Columbia. To align with these restrictions, there will be no public event at the Burnaby Village Museum for World Rivers Day. As outlined in this report, it is proposed the City's World Rivers Day community festival be celebrated online through the Burnaby website on Sunday, September 26.

## **2.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK**

World Rivers Day at the Burnaby Village Museum aligns with the following:

### **2.1 Corporate Strategic Plan**

Environmental awareness and stewardship initiatives align with the *Corporate Strategic Plan* by supporting the following two goals and six sub-goals of the plan:

- ***A Connected Community***
  - Social connection – Enhance social connections throughout Burnaby
- ***A Healthy Community***
  - Healthy life – Encourages opportunities for healthy living and well-being
  - Healthy environment – Enhance our environmental health, resilience and sustainability
  - Lifelong learning – Improve upon and develop programs and services that enable ongoing learning
  - Community involvement – Encourage residents and businesses to give back to and invest in the community

### **2.2 Environmental Sustainability Strategy**

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ESS) is a plan for Burnaby's 'green future' and sets directions for environmental protection, stewardship, enhancement, and resilience in the city. The framework of the ESS consists of ten sustainability themes, each with a goal and supporting strategies and actions. The "Manage" theme of the ESS focuses on governance, education and partnerships and identifies a goal of an 'environmentally aware and engaged community working together to improve Burnaby's environmental performance'. Several of the identified strategies relate to Burnaby Environment Week and its goal of promoting environmental awareness and stewardship:

- Educate citizens about ecology and sustainability (Strategy 10.1);
- Explore innovative ways to engage the public on environmental issues (Strategy 10.2); and,
- Develop and nurture community partnerships (Strategy 10.6).

### **2.3 Official Community Plan**

Section 3.2.2 of the Official Community Plan (OCP) contains the strategy of *An Environmentally Aware Community*. This strategy encourages environmental protection and shared stewardship, sharing of environmental information with the community, and meaningful community

participation in environmental decision making. The OCP identifies Community Involvement and Shared Stewardship as a component of Burnaby’s Environmental Policy Framework with an objective to ‘increase public environmental awareness and responsibility through public information programs’.

### **3.0 PARTNERSHIPS AND ROLES FOR 2021**

The World Rivers Day event in Burnaby is organized by a committee consisting of staff from the Burnaby Village Museum, staff from the City of Burnaby Planning Department and Mark Angelo. Since 2013, the Burnaby Village Museum has been the venue for the annual community celebration of the World Rivers Day event. For 2021, there will be no public event hosted at the museum. World Rivers Day will be recognized online to align with social distancing restrictions. However, the event plans to return to the museum in future years as restrictions allow.

### **4.0 PROPOSED WORLD RIVERS DAY PROGRAM**

For this year, World Rivers Day is proposed to be a virtual event scheduled for Sunday, September 25, 2021. Program planning for World Rivers Day is well underway. This year’s program aims to showcase Burnaby’s watercourses in an engaging manner online through interactive activities, short films, printable watercourse maps, and by featuring Burnaby’s Streamkeepers Program and Burnaby’s indigenous heritage. An ecosystem restoration event is also being planned but may need to be postponed depending on the social distancing requirements in place at the time of World Rivers Day.

#### ***Indigenous History & Burnaby Watercourses***

Following feedback from the Environment Committee on the 2021 Environment Week program, the organizing committee for World Rivers Day 2021 is working to incorporate an indigenous perspective into the Rivers Day program. This may include showcasing the Burnaby Village Museum educational guide on Indigenous history and the Neighbourhood Speaker Series titled “The Legend of Deer Lake and Indigenous Histories of Burnaby.”

In consultation with several First Nations, Burnaby Village Museum staff developed an educational guide that provides an overview of hənq̓əmin̓əḥ and Skwxwú7mesh history in Burnaby and how the lands and waterways were historically used. The Neighbourhood Speaker Series is an interactive online session with live presentations available from April to May. The series titled “The Legend of Deer Lake and Indigenous Histories of Burnaby” reflects the history of Burnaby’s waterways which will be recorded and may be included as part of the online content on the World Rivers Day event page.

#### ***Short Films on Burnaby Waterways***

In previous years, short films about waterways were shown on a loop in the Central Park Theatre at the Museum when it was open to the public. Since this year’s event is proposed to be online, the screening of these films will be showcased on the World Rivers Day event webpage. The short

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Re: *World Rivers Day 2021*  
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films will feature the preservation of Burnaby waterways such as the City of Burnaby Heritage Commission films *Saving Burnaby Lake* and *Saving the Salmon: the Brunette River Story*, and the film titled *Kids, Creeks and Nature* which features children from Gilpin elementary and Mark Angelo who leads children in a fish release to engage them with nature. The short film produced by Metro Vancouver titled *Urban Salmon in the Brunette River* highlights the installation of the Cariboo Dam Fish Ladder that has resulted in the return of salmon to the Brunette River and Stoney Creek, is also being considered for the webpage. Additional films on the lower Fraser River and the restoration of Britannia Creek near Squamish are also being considered.

### ***Waterways of Burnaby Map & Story Map***

To celebrate World Rivers Day, the Waterways of Burnaby Map will be featured on the World Rivers Day event page. The Waterways Map highlights Burnaby's 90 creeks, two lakes and river, includes historic information about each waterway while outlining the importance of protecting our waterways that support a vast diversity of species within the City. Visitors to the webpage will be able to view the map online or download a copy to print. In addition, there will be an option to email the Planning Department to request a free hard copy of the Waterways of Burnaby Map.

The event page will also include Burnaby's Ecosystem Story Map (Eco-Map) which highlights ecosystems in Burnaby that have been protected and restored through community development. The Eco-Map identifies the location of each project, photos of the restored environment and a summary of the enhancement work that took place within Burnaby. The Planning Department is currently working on updating the Eco-Map to ensure recent restoration projects are included on the story map.

### ***Ecosystem Restoration Event led by Lower Mainland Green Team***

The City of Burnaby is partnering with the Lower Mainland Green Teams of Canada (GTC) to deliver a streamside restoration event. The activity will provide an opportunity for the public to learn about invasive plant species identification as well as provide a hands-on learning experience to understand the importance of invasive plant removal for ecosystem conservation. The ecosystem restoration activity will be held either within the community or coordinated with one of Burnaby's Streamkeeper groups in their local watershed. Staff will reach out to Burnaby's Streamkeeper groups to gauge level of interest and to determine a suitable location for the event.

GTC Lower Mainland Green Team will organize the restoration activity, manage volunteers and participants, provide equipment during the event and deliver a post-event report to measure the success of the event. GTC will be responsible to supervise the participants as they remove invasive plants from streamside areas, instruct the participants on removal techniques and ensure social distancing measures are being followed. The City will promote the event through the City's social media channels. While the ecosystem restoration event is being planned now, it is subject to postponement, depending on public health regulations in place at the time of World Rivers Day.

### ***Burnaby Streamkeepers Program***

Burnaby Streamkeepers are local stewardship groups dedicated to protecting Burnaby's waterways and watersheds. These committed groups of volunteers dedicate their time to monitor, enhance and advocate for the protection of Burnaby waterways and adjacent streamside areas that support aquatic life. The Burnaby Streamkeepers Program will be highlighted on the World Rivers Day event page so the community can learn more about volunteer opportunities with the stewardship groups and the environmental protection work that these community groups undertake.

## **5.0 COMMUNICATION PLAN**

In 2020, the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BC Rivers Day and 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of World Rivers Day was celebrated online following the cancellation of City programs in response to the global pandemic. Burnaby's social media channels were used to promote these milestone anniversaries and to raise awareness about our waterways and to recognize the community stewardship efforts by Burnaby Stewardship groups. The event page for World Rivers Day provided the history of BC Rivers Day, introduced the founder, showcased the Burnaby Waterways Map, and included links to show films about Burnaby watercourse preservation. Metrics from the online activities and virtual event for last year's program showed good success in reaching the community.

For 2021, the event will follow a similar plan with all program activities featured online through the World Rivers Day event page. The City's social media channels will be used to push out messaging to direct the community to the webpage where they can find activities and resources about the World Rivers Day program. The event page will include links to short films about protecting Burnaby waterways, the Burnaby Waterways Map, and the Eco Story map which showcases ecosystem restoration projects throughout Burnaby.

## **6.0 ADVERTISEMENT AND PROMOTION**

An expenditure of up to \$4,000 from the Boards, Committees and Commissions operating budget is requested for promoting the 2021 online program for World Rivers Day. These funds will support the online program to advertise and promote the online event. The City's website, social media channels and community networks will also be used to advertise the event. Posters will also be placed at the City of Burnaby civic facilities to raise awareness of stewardship opportunities and to promote the program.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

World Rivers Day highlights the City's commitment to the sustainability of Burnaby's streams, rivers and watersheds and recognizes the importance of community stewardship of Burnaby's waterways. This event has special meaning in our community as Burnaby was the first municipality to proclaim BC Rivers Day in 1993. For seven years in a row beginning in 2013, Burnaby Village Museum has hosted Burnaby's World Rivers Day with events located in the heart of the Central Valley watershed. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 event is proposed to be celebrated online as the museum is not open for large public gatherings. The online

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program will aim to connect the public to streams and rivers in Burnaby through the interactive content to engage the community in becoming stewards of their environments.

Approval by Council of the 2021 World Rivers Day program and an expenditure of \$4,000 from the Boards, Committees and Commissions' operating budget is requested for promotion and advertising. This report also requests Council approval to declare the fourth Sunday in September, 2021 September 26, as Burnaby World Rivers Day.



E.W. Kozak, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING

TF/sa

cc:	Acting City Manager	OIC – RCMP
	Director Corporate Services	Fire Chief
	Director Engineering	Chief Librarian
	Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services	City Clerk
	Director Finance	President, CUPE Local 23