

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

SUBJECT: 2025 ENVIRONMENT WEEK, ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS AND WORLD RIVERS DAY

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the report titled “2025 Environment Week, Environmental Awards and World Rivers Day” dated March 31, 2025, of the Environment Committee meeting, be received for information.

REPORT

The Environment Committee, at its meeting held on March 31, 2025, received and adopted the attached report summarizing the activities, events and communications that are proposed for 2025 Environment Week, Environmental Awards and World Rivers Day.

On behalf of the Environment
Committee,

Councillor J. Keithley
Chair

Councillor M. Santiago
Vice Chair

TO: ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE (EC)
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: **2025 ENVIRONMENT WEEK, ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS AND WORLD RIVERS DAY**
PURPOSE: To provide information about 2025 Environment Week, Environmental Awards and World Rivers Day.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report titled “2025 Environment Week, Environmental Awards and World Rivers Day” dated March 31, 2025, be received for information.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

Civic promotion of environmental awareness, stewardship and climate action aligns with the following Council-adopted plans and strategies:

- Corporate Strategic Plan (2022);
- Climate Action Framework (2020);
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016);
- Social Sustainability Strategy (2011); and
- Official Community Plan (1998).

2.0 BACKGROUND

The City of Burnaby’s Environmental Awards, Environment Week, and World Rivers Day are three environmental events that have been celebrated annually in Burnaby for thirty, thirty-six, and thirty-one years, respectively. While the Environmental Awards program recognizes achievement in environmental sustainability, the Environment Week and World Rivers Day include a series of free and low-cost, family-friendly activities occurring at various locations throughout the city. These events aim to increase awareness, promote stewardship and climate action through a range of environmentally themed public events and activities. This report summarizes the activities, events and communications that are proposed for 2025.

2.1 History

Burnaby Environment Week was first held in 1989. Environment Week is scheduled for the first week of June which aligns with Canadian Environment Week and United Nations World Environment Day, which for this year is recognized on June 5.

Burnaby’s Environmental Awards program began in 1995. The program currently recognizes achievements of individuals, groups, organizations, and businesses in six

categories: communications, planning and development, community stewardship, youth, green choices, and business stewardship (see Attachment 2). The nomination period and selection process occur in the first part of the year so that recipients can be announced to the public and their accomplishments recognized as part of Environment Week.

World Rivers Day (WRD) has its origins in BC Rivers Day (BCRD). BCRD was founded in 1980 by Burnaby resident and renowned river conservationist Mark Angelo, and the City of Burnaby was the first municipality in BC to proclaim it in 1993. Building on the success of BCRD, WRD was launched in 2005 as part of a United Nations initiative. BCRD and WRD are scheduled annually on the fourth Sunday of September, which is September 28 this year.

These programs and events have evolved over the years. Presently, Environment Week aims to have interactive information displays at events within the community, support to environmental stewardship groups within the community, and have a digital presence on social media. For the Environmental Awards, the categories were expanded in 2006 to include Business Stewardship and revised in 2009 to include Green Choices. Since 2016, the award recipients are recognized in person at a regular meeting of Council in June. Rivers Day celebrations in Burnaby have occurred in several locations over the years, including Fraser Foreshore Park and Guichon Creek at British Columbia Institute of Technology. Since 2013, the Burnaby Village Museum has hosted our community's Rivers Day celebration.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

A schedule of events (and milestones) planned for the 2025 Environmental Week, Environmental Awards and World Rivers Day are summarized in Attachment 1. Planning for Environment Week is ongoing with the program to be finalized by mid-April. WRD planning will continue through the spring and summer with the program finalized by end of August.

3.1 Community Partners

There are many community partner organizations who play important roles in delivering environmental stewardship and education programming in the City. The 2025 Environment Week and World Rivers Day will feature activities led by the Byrne Creek and Eagle Creek Streamkeepers, the Cariboo Heights Forest Preservation Society, and the Burnaby Lake Park Association (BLPA). The City also contracts the Lower Mainland Green Team to lead ecosystem restoration events and to complement efforts of other volunteer-based organizations. In addition to Environment Week and World Rivers Day activities, community partners also organize their own public facing events throughout the year such as the Great Salmon Sendoff, the Eagle Creek fish release and the BLPA winter open house.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Corporate Services (Marketing and Communications) will lead the promotion of the Environmental Awards Program, Environment Week, and World Rivers Day. The events will be promoted through the City's regular communication channels, including the City website, social media channels, and posters at civic facilities. Staff will also promote the events directly to partners in the environmental stewardship community, School District 41, the Burnaby Youth Sustainability Network, Burnaby's Inter-Agency Council post-secondary institutions, and others. City partners, such as the Lower Mainland Green Team, Cariboo Heights Forest Preservation Society and Burnaby Lake Park Association, will further promote their events to their networks.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Funding for the 2025 environmental events has been allocated in the annual operating budget of the Planning and Development Department.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee-Ann Garnett, Deputy General Manager Planning and Development, on behalf of
E.W. Kozak, General Manager Planning and Development

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – 2025 Environmental Stewardship Events

Attachment 2 – 2025 Environmental Awards Terms of Reference, Promotional Poster, and Nomination Form

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Hafsa Salihue, Environmental Planner, and reviewed by Mark Sloat, Senior Environmental Planner, Johannes Schumann, Director Community Planning, and Lee-Ann Garnett, Deputy General Manager Planning and Development.