



ANNUAL REPORT 2022





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PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES

SPEC is a charitable organization that promotes practical solutions in the areas of sustainable food systems, zero waste, renewable energy and sustainable transportation.

Since 1969, we have been empowering communities and individuals to take action and build a greener future. We work with individuals, children, industries and policy makers to develop our community capacity to address a wide range of sustainability challenges using practical approaches.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

SPEC would like to acknowledge that our work happens on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lo and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We recognize that this land has been home to Indigenous peoples since time immemorial, and that their relationship with the land is integral to their cultural identity and well-being.

Vancouver is situated in a region of great natural beauty, including forests, mountains, rivers, and oceans, which have sustained Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. Colonization, industrialization, and urbanization have threatened the health and integrity of these ecosystems, and that these impacts disproportionately affect Indigenous peoples.

We acknowledge that environmental work must be guided by the principles of reconciliation, which include recognizing and respecting Indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination, protecting their lands and resources, and supporting their efforts to revitalize their cultures and languages. SPEC is committed to the ongoing education, dialogue, and action needed to address the systemic injustices that have resulted from colonialism and to build more equitable relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.



LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Another spin around the sun for this 53 year old organization, and we have a lot to show for this last rotation! Three years since the beginning of the pandemic and it feels like we are flowing again, in a good rhythm that is alive with purpose and passion. While many aspects of the pandemic are still with all of us (virtual meetings don't seem to be going anywhere), it is great to feel like the space has opened back up for other priorities to take our focus, and 2022 was a productive and focused year for SPEC.

Early in 2022, SPEC said a very warm and appreciative goodbye to then-Executive Director Oliver Lane, as he moved to a new role at UBC. Oliver was staff at SPEC for seven years and remains a deep supporter and SPEC friend. We were then fortunate to welcome Jennifer Henry as Executive Director for a year in 2022. A Master Recycler alum and Clean50 award recipient for her waste reduction and circular economy efforts, Jen brought fresh energy and experience to our team of incredibly dedicated staff and volunteers.

Throughout 2022, the SPEC board, staff, volunteers and supporters contributed to the renewal of our five year strategic plan. We undertook extensive information gathering and participated in two highly productive and energizing in-person strategic planning sessions. Keeping SPEC's strengths and impact in mind, our community and core values in our heart, and the urgency of today's environmental challenges in our sights, we have made great progress toward a clear, prioritized vision that will guide us toward our goals. As a resourceful, grassroots organization who has always punched above our weight, we are at a turning point where we have the skills, opportunities and desire to further deepen our impact. An exciting aspect of this planning work is our clarity on the critical qualities of community-building, resilience, hope and social capital that emerge from the doing of SPEC's work in our community. Articulating the benefits and communicating those often unseen but incredibly valuable outcomes is something we are excited to share with our community, our funders and our partners.

As another active year comes to a close, we look forward to continuing to work together with the amazing community of staff, volunteers and supporters who share the vision, the work and the benefits that this incredible organization brings to each of us; we are all richer for this collaboration.

With gratitude and energy,

Kate Menzies

Board Chair

2022 STAFF + BOARD OF DIRECTORS

STAFF

Jennifer Henry

Executive Director

Ashley Parshyn

Communications and
Operations Coordinator

Sharlene Singh

Program Coordinator -
School Gardens

Teresa Porter

Project Coordinator -
Ecosystem Services on
Farmland

Neala MacLeod Farley

Market Coordinator -
Farm to Plate Market

Emily McGill

Collaboration Strategist -
Textile Lab for Circularity &
Master Recycler

Sara Blenkhorn

Facilitator & Strategy Lead -
Textile Lab for Circularity

Tracy Lydiatt

Operations Manager -
Textile Lab for Circularity

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kate Menzies

Chair

Andee Wiedeman

Secretary

Dr. Eyal Lebel

Director

Mireta Strandberg-

Salmon

Director

Robin Hadac

Co-Vice Chair

Alison Krahn

Director

Kim Peterson

Director

Dr. Tara Moreau

Director

Ruth Briggs

Co-Vice Chair

Chris Gooderam

Director

Krista Sheppaard

Director

Lauren Peters

Director

Dr. Carole Christopher

Director & Guiding Elder

Enzo Casal

Treasurer



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Ace Accounting and Tax Services

Acme Delivery Company

BC Ministry of Agriculture

Bullfrog Power

Britannia Secondary School

Canadian Agricultural Partnership

CBC Vancouver

Chris Spencer Foundation

City of Vancouver

Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust

Endswell Foundation

Fashion Takes Action

Food Connection

General Brock Elementary

Government of British Columbia

Government of Canada

Gow-Jarrett and Millard Family

Grandview Woodland

Hamber Foundation

Jewish Family Services

Kitsilano Neighbourhood House

Leverage Lab

Little Mountain Neighbourhood House

Lord Selkirk Elementary

Makeway Foundation

Metro Vancouver

Nada

Recycling Alternative

Renewal Funds

Recycle BC

Riley Park Community Garden

Sitka Foundation

Spruce Harbour Marina Coop

TD Friends of the Environment

Telus Future Friendly Foundation

Textile Lab for Circularity

The KidSafe Project Society

Threading Change

Thunderbird Elementary

UBC - Botanical Garden

UBC CALP

UBC Centre for Engaged Learning

UBC Center for Sustainable Food Systems

UBC ENVR400

UBC Farm

UBC INFO 250

UBC POLI 373

UBC Partnership Recognition Fund

Urban Impact

Vancouver Community Fund

Vancouver Foundation

Vancouver Master Gardeners Association of BC

Vancouver School Board

Vancouver School Food Network

Watson Gloves

West Coast Seeds

...and more

Thank you for an amazing year!



Program Highlights



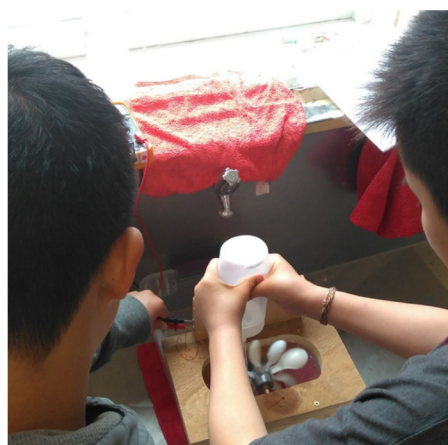
790 children provided
with ecological
literacy lessons
through School
Gardens Program



3 Cohorts of Master
Recycler celebrated
their graduation



Increase ecosystem
services for 43 small
scale farmers through
the Small Farms
Sessions program



Developed an
Indigenous-led
curriculum for CAWS
program



First Westside
Community Market
since the start of the
pandemic



\$39,580 of food
purchased from local
farmers and vendors
for the community
through F2PM

Zero-Waste Team

Leadership: Eyal Lebel

PURPOSE:

To tackle the current waste crisis, SPEC's Zero-Waste Team advocates for a Zero Waste model that is about creating community. We foster grassroots projects that promote practical tools to help us prevent unnecessary consumption.

The Zero-Waste Team has been meeting all year, and acting as a Hub for waste related projects around the city and metro Vancouver.

PROJECTS

- Master Recycler
- MURB Group (Multi-Unit Residential Buildings)
- Metro Vancouver Repair Cafe
- Textile Lab for Circularity

HIGHLIGHTS

- Master Recycler graduation
- MURB Group (Multi-Unit Residential Buildings) is very close to completing a manual
- Metro Vancouver Repair Cafe has started in-person repair cafes after covid
- Textile Lab for Circularity
- Thriving monthly Zero-Waste Committee meetings



Master Recycler



The Master Recycler program is a free, eight-week course in which participants learn what happens to their waste after it leaves their homes. Training is followed by a 30-hour outreach component when Master Recyclers bring their knowledge to their own communities and engage others in zero waste initiatives. So far, Master Recyclers have volunteered over two thousand out-reach hours in the community!

Royal City Recycling Champions

The Master Recyclers hosted their first mini-series in New Westminster to bring localized waste reduction education to the city.

Master Recycler Conference

Master Recycler's third annual conference hosted many waste reduction enthusiasts in 2022. The conference celebrated the thriving zero-waste movement in Vancouver and included presentations from a variety of speakers.

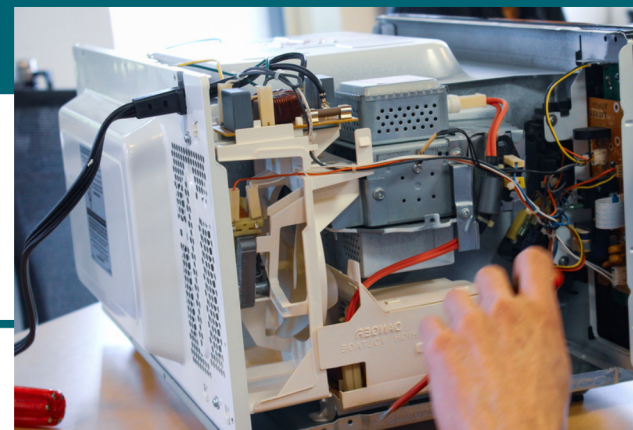


Multi Unit Residential Building MURB

The Multi Unit Residential Building (MURB) subgroup aims to identify and provide practical advice on improving waste-sorting, recycling, and disposal in MURB buildings. The MURB subgroup is very close to finishing and releasing a handbook to guide residents to improve the waste rooms in their buildings.

Metro Van Repair Cafes

MVRC joined the Zero-Waste Team and SPEC and started doing physical repair events after close to 2 years of online events.



Textile Lab for Circularity



The Textile Lab for Circularity had a dynamic year! Securing \$50,000 in funds and bringing on an Operations Manager increased team capacity last Fall. Soon after, we launched our workshop series Building Your Circular Strategy, and successfully trained 9 organizations. Earlier this year, we developed and launched registration for our upcoming research project Roadmap to Textile Recycling in Western Canada, bringing 10 organizations on board. Through our programs and ongoing outreach, we facilitated over 25 industry connections and grew our social following by nearly 1000. We published 8 blog posts, 2 open-source resources and 1 sizzle reel video.

9

Organizations trained
through **Building Your
Circular Strategy**
Workshop Series

\$50,000

Of funds secured to
increase team capacity

10

Organizations to
participate in
upcoming research
Project

HIGHLIGHTS:

- 9 businesses trained through our Building Your Circular Strategy Workshops
- 25+ B2B connections made connecting the dots between circular initiatives
- 10 organizations onboarded to our Roadmap Research project
- 1 new teammate onboarded
- \$50,000 fundraised
- 1000 new social media followers
- 8 blog posts published
- 1 sizzle reel video published



Food Team

Leadership: Art Bomke & Sharlene Singh

PURPOSE:

SPEC's Food Team envisions a new food culture in Metro Vancouver in which food that is sustainably and justly produced is attainable for all through means that conserve biodiversity and ecological functions on farmlands, reduce food waste, strengthen and revitalize Indigenous food systems, and support community climate action and resilience. We advocate for progressive policies and practices while influencing individual actions through awareness and education.

PROJECTS

- School Gardens Program
- Farmland Ecosystem Services
- Farm-to-Plate Marketplace

HIGHLIGHTS

- Westside Community Market: First market since the pandemic started
- SGP Supported 25 educators through the Rooted in Place Workshop and provided five garden assessments this spring to new schools
- Ecosystem Services created three educational videos about land stewardship



School Gardens Program

PURPOSE:

The School Gardens Program strives to connect school-aged children and youth to their food, classmates, nature and their community. These living classrooms help students reconnect with the natural world by exploring biodiversity, plant life, biological cycles and food literacy. Gardening improves mental, physical and emotional well-being, patience, teamwork, and learning to make healthier food choices.

FIVE SCHOOLS:

BRITANNIA ELEMENTARY

ECOLE DES COLIBRIS

THUNDERBIRD ELEMENTARY

GENERAL BROCK

LORD SELKIRK ELEMENTARY

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Garden Camp programs for both spring and summer at Riley Park Community Garden
- 790 students served 187 lessons
- 42 raised garden beds planted
- 9 volunteers contributing 193.6 hours
- Program Assistant via Canada Summer Jobs from May to August
- Workshops/events included Teacher Training with Rooted in Place for 25 teachers and 5 Garden site assessments.



School Gardens Program

TESTIMONIAL

"I have been thoroughly impressed with the garden workshops my class has participated in this spring, including the lesson planning, hands-on learning, student engagement, and the passionate and knowledgeable educators who have led the School Gardens Program. Not only were the students able to participate in preparing and introducing new seeds into the school's garden beds, but our students were then also connected to the nearby community garden to engage with tangible learning opportunities each week. We explored everything from pollinators to insects, Indigenous medicinal plants, symbiotic relationships in the garden, and much more. The school garden's program facilitator had age-appropriate learning materials to enhance every one of their lessons."

Hannah Gilkoff Gr. 4 / 5 Teacher, Britannia Elementary

FUNDING AND PROJECT SUPPORT

BC Community Gaming Grant, Vancity Community Fund, Watson Gloves, West Coast Seeds, Vancouver Master Gardeners Association of BC, and Parent Advisory Councils.

With gratitude to the Green Team at Riley Park Community Garden and Little Mountain Neighbourhood House (LMNH) for the use of Riley Park Community Garden for the Ecological Literacy Project with General Brock Elementary.



Farmland Ecosystem Services

PURPOSE:

The Farmland Ecosystem Services Project works with small-scale farmers in Metro Vancouver to increase ecosystem services provided on local farmlands. This benefits our regional environment and helps farmers in our communities build resilience to challenges like climate change.

GOAL:

Our goals are to strengthen our extension services for farmers, develop parallel programming for urban gardens/green spaces, and to build public awareness of “nature’s benefits” to enhance ecosystem services and resiliency on farmland and within urban environments.

HIGHLIGHTS:

43

Farmers empowered
through the SPEC
Small Farms
Sessions

3

“Nature’s Benefits”
educational videos
about land
stewardship
produced

FUNDING AND PROJECT SUPPORT

Endswell Foundation, Vancouver Foundation, UBC Partnership Recognition Fund, Canadian Agricultural Partnership

TESTIMONIAL

“This is my first SPEC workshop and I am DELIGHTED to discover you. I was pleased by the low entry cost (a consideration for me) and the professional presentation. I look forward to seeing new topics. Thank you.”

- Farmer, Small Farms Sessions participant

“You folks are continually one of the best resources & supporters of small-scale farming in our area. I regularly share your organization & praises for the work you've done & continue to do - Thank you so much for all you've invested in the farming community!”

- Participating Farmer





Farm-to-Plate Marketplace

PURPOSE:

Farm-to-Plate Marketplace (F2PM) acts as a pay-what-you-can virtual farmers market. Farm to Plate Marketplace (F2PM) connects communities with Lower Mainland food producers to support local food businesses while choosing to “buy local” more affordable and accessible. We offer food at cost, and customers can access a “no questions asked” \$10 subsidy for each order, pay the asking price, or add a donation to support the program.

\$12,669.96

Subsidies provided

\$39,582.82

Paid to local vendors
and farmers

\$3,336.52

Excess food purchased
and distributed for free

PARTNERS:

Jewish Family Services
Little Mountain
Neighbourhood House
Kitsilano Neighbourhood
House

FARMERS AND VENDORS:

Acorn Market
Coligny Creek Egg Co.
Fife Bakery
Jive Honey
Local Harvest
Local Harvest Bakery
Mandair Farms

North Arm Farms
Pippsis Heart Happy
Kitchen
Richmond GAIA Farm
Syrian Gourmet
Juntos
Tayybeh
The Microgreenery



Energy & Transportation Team

Leadership: Chris Gooderam

PURPOSE:

SPEC's Energy & Transportation Team works to educate individuals, businesses, communities, and children about renewable energy, energy conservation and sustainable modes of transportation.

We also advocate at a municipal and provincial level for energy and transportation policies that move us toward energy conservation, responsible energy production and a healthy and just urban environment.

PROGRAMS

- tREX Experience
- Climate Action Workshops (CAWS)
- Right to Dry Campaign

HIGHLIGHTS

- New Indigenous-Led Curriculum Development in CAWS
- Promoted citizens' right to sustainable solutions with the Right to Dry Interview with CBC
- Represented SPEC at the CAPE-BC Healthy Climate Solutions Fair



Climate Action Workshops (CAWs)



CAWS aims to bridge the gap in education and empower students from grades 3 to 7 about the science of climate change, sustainable food systems, renewable energy through solutions through hands on activities, story telling and discussions.

The workshops aim to raise a stronger understanding of environmental issues such as the climate emergency and its disproportionate effect on marginalized and racialized communities, while empowering youth to understand and take part in solutions.

The focus this year was building a new curriculum led by Indigenous knowledge and perspectives to begin workshops in 2023.

Right to Dry Campaign

WHY RIGHT TO DRY?

Using a clothesline over a dryer is a sustainable and economical way to dry clothing. However, many Metro Vancouverites are denied the choice due to strata regulations. With an estimated 9% of residential electricity consumption coming from drying clothes, giving citizens the right to dry can have

If just half of condo and apartment owners in B.C. line-dried their clothes for even one quarter of the year it would result in savings of 60 million kilowatt hours every year. That is over 1 million kg of CO₂e GHG emissions per year!

In 2022, SPEC went on air with CBC to discuss Metro Vancouverite's Right to Dry. Listen to the interview at <https://tinyurl.com/ycyva8ez>



SPEC Elders Circle

Leadership: Carole Christopher

PURPOSE:

The Elders Circle works to empower elders to create and share a legacy and claim a meaningful role in society. With thoughtful reflection and a deep sense of self-understanding, elders are able to share their legacy with others.

The program offers a space and process that encourages deep reflection, personal connection, and intimate discussion to foster the emergence and sharing of this wisdom.

PROGRAMS

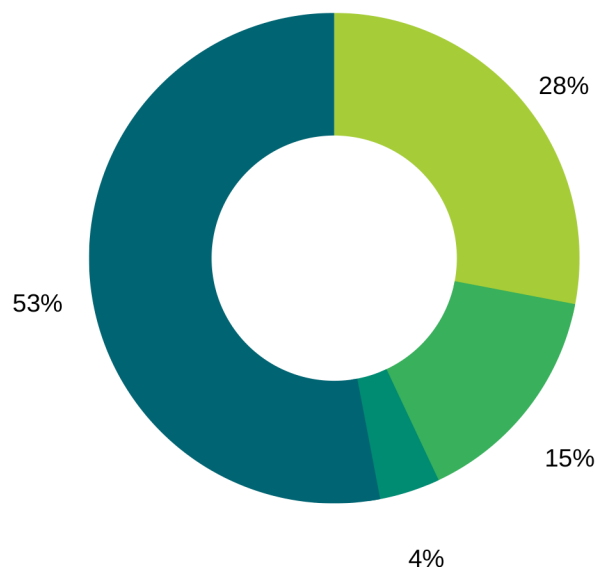
- Claiming our Role as Elders (CORE)
- Legacy-making for Organizational Guiding Elders
- Claiming Our Role as Elders Book

HIGHLIGHTS

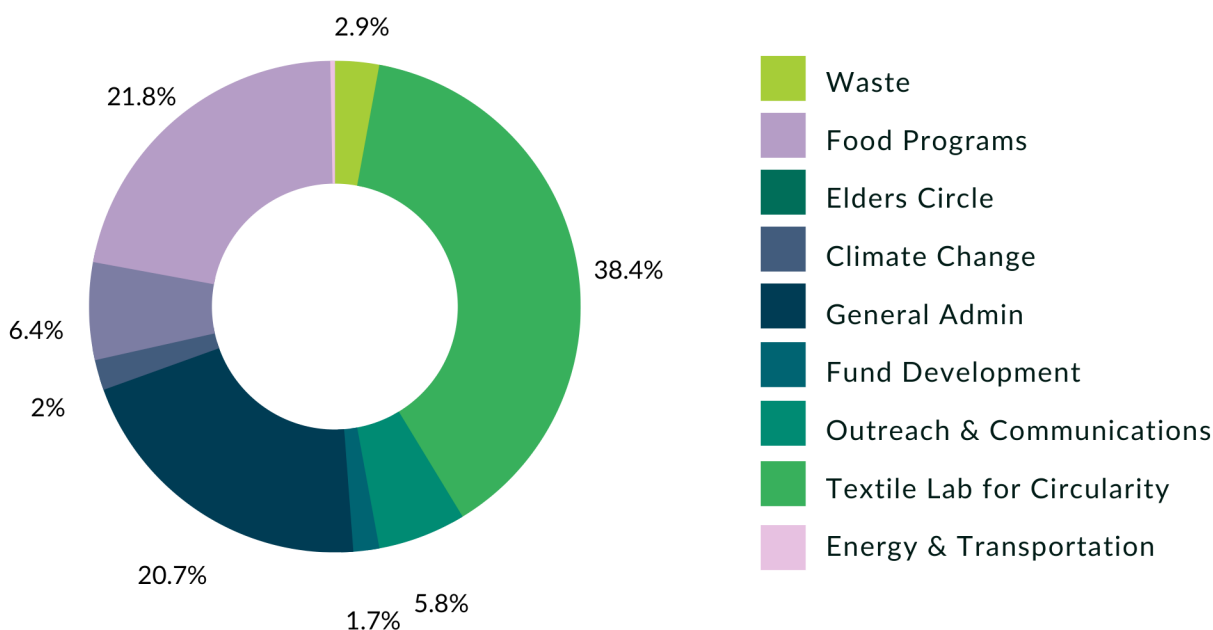
- 44 elders trained through Claiming our Role as Elder
- Over 40 organizations interviewed for Legacy-making for Organizational Guiding Elders research project
- Elders Communicating Climate pilot module



SPEC FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



Total Revenue for 2022: \$385,388



Total Expenditures for 2022: \$408,803



VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

Volunteers play an important role in all our accomplishments and we are eager to connect with people who are motivated to make a positive impact on our urban environment.

To get started, you can meet up with others at one of our committee meetings, volunteer to help out an outreach event, or come to the office to share some of your admin, fundraising or communications skills.



LEARN

SPEC workshops, activities and events are designed to connect and inform motivated individuals, families, groups and businesses.

Our goal is to inspire and to provide useful tools for exploring newer and deeper ways of sustainable urban living and action for change.

Information and calendar listings can always be found at spec.bc.ca

GET INVOLVED



DONATE

Individual donations make our activities possible and are the most sustainable way to fund our work, as they make us less vulnerable to the fluctuating availability of government and foundation grants. Please remember, no donation is too small, and all donations above \$10 receive a tax receipt.



DONATIONS

WAYS TO GIVE:



Donations can be made
through our website:

www.spec.bc.ca/donate

Via credit Card



Payable to "SPEC"

Mail to the office:

2305 West 7th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6K 1Y4

CONTACT US



2305 West 7th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6K 1Y4



admin@spec.bc.ca



604-736-7732

