

# **NEWS RELEASE**



## **For Immediate Release**

### **TOWNSHIP OF LANGLEY WINS TWO AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE FROM BCRPA**

*Township of Langley Urban Gardens honoured with Environmental Leadership Award, and Willoughby Community Park honoured with Parks and Open Spaces Award.*

**Richmond, BC (Friday, May 13, 2011)** – The Township of Langley has won two provincial Awards of Excellence from the BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA). The Environmental Leadership Award has been presented for the Township of Langley Urban Gardens, and Willoughby Community Park has been presented a Parks and Open Spaces Award.

The Township of Langley is dedicated to protecting natural resources for the future and has produced community, rural neighbourhood and heritage plans and strategies that incorporate environmental, economic and social principles. The Langley Demonstration Garden is an active demonstration of waste reduction through composting, water-wise gardening, pesticide reduction, backyard habitats and sustainable home and garden practices. It offers workshops that inspire residents to adopt sustainability practices in their homes and gardens and a popular summer Eco-Explorer day camp programs for children. The Community Garden projects promote local food procurement and food self-reliance and allow residents to grow food that is affordable, organic and grown close to home.

“These garden projects raise awareness and foster appreciation of the natural environment, while inspiring sustainability practices in the homes and gardens of Langley residents and others,” states BCRPA Chief Executive Officer Suzanne Allard Strutt. “The Township of Langley has done more than just declare its dedication to protecting natural resources; it has illustrated its dedication through the Langley Demonstration Garden and Community Garden projects.”

That dedication is further illustrated in the development of Willoughby Community Park. To develop a space that was planned, designed, built and programmed with the best interest of all park users in mind, the Township first had to solve the issues of the park’s proximity to the Latimer Creek watershed and how to handle water runoff. Rather than just creating the usual detention pond within the park, the Township went a step further to develop a landscape guideline for the pond utilizing native trees and shrubs. This has not only increased the visual appeal of the park but also brought wildlife habitation back to the area. Rain gardens featuring native plants were created in the park plaza area and storm-water bioswales were incorporated into the parking lot designs. Both storm-water strategies recharge groundwater and slow down storm-water discharge from storm events.

“Willoughby Community Park offers something for everyone with its playgrounds, picnic areas, sports venues, amphitheatre and spray park, and makes a concerted effort to incorporate the area’s natural elements and protect the surrounding environment,” Strutt states. “The innovation, creativity and forethought in design of Willoughby Community Park provides an excellent model for other parks in the province.”

The Environmental Leadership Award recognizes practices and policies by a community organization or agency which exemplifies a leading role in contributing to the environmental health of a community. The Parks and Open Spaces Award recognizes excellence in the concept, design and development of parks and open spaces. The space demonstrates outstanding and/or innovative aspects which have or could have significant impact in the Recreation & Parks field. These awards are two of several awards presented at BCRPA’s Symposium today. The conference brings together members of the parks, recreation, physical activity and culture sector from around BC, including elected officials, volunteers, members of the business community and others. Richmond is the host community of this year’s event.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association is a not for profit organization dedicated to building and sustaining active healthy lifestyles and communities in BC. Established in 1958, the Association is a central resource agency for members and stakeholders of the parks, recreation, physical activity and culture sector, providing leadership, training and support to help meet national, provincial and local priorities. Through a diverse network of partners and extensive programs and services, BCRPA actively advocates accessibility and inclusiveness to recreation and physical activity.

-30-

**For more information:**

Holly-Anne Burrows  
Communications Manager, BCRPA  
604-629-0965 ext 233  
[hburrows@bcrpa.bc.ca](mailto:hburrows@bcrpa.bc.ca)