OZHAAWASHKWAA ANIMIKII-BINESHI
Aki Onji Kinimaagae' Inun

2023 Eco-Cultural Restoration Action Project

Healing the Land and People

This is a partnership between SOSD schools and Ozhaawashkwaa Animikii-Bineshi Aki Onji Kinimaagae' Inun. When students visit us, they witness the conservation and restoration of the tall-grass prairie over 35+ acres as well as the restoration of a wetland. They harvest Indigenous plant seeds, sow them, and transplant live plants into medicine gardens, model grasslands, and restored areas. These actions can continue when visitors leave.

We support students to restore the tall-grass prairie on their schoolyards. We aim to foster land-based learning and action at school to deepen our commitments and connections to the land, our shared histories, and to Indigenous worldviews of living together well.

Students will enhance biodiversity and soil health, re-create habits for pollinators and birds, grow and learn about medicines for school smudging, and learn from both Indigenous and western knowledge systems.

What is in a name?

The meaning of Eco-Cultural Restoration is "working to restore dynamic ecosystems and human cultures together as interconnected processes"[1]. This action project envisions community-based stewardship that repairs human damage to ecosystems alongside education and actions that shift our attitudes, values, and behaviours toward healthy relationships with ourselves and each other.

[1] Xaxli'p Community Forest. (2018). Healing the Land, Healing the Community: Eco-cultural Restoration. https://www.xcfc.ca/management-1

The Most Endangered Ecosystem

We live within the mashkode ,tall-grass prairie, which is the most endangered and least protected ecosystem globally. Resulting from radical changes in land use and perceived value brought by settler-colonial worldviews, this ecosystem has been reduced to less than 1 % of its former extent in less than 200 years.

The pressures facing the world's ecosystems such as colonization, increased consumption, and climate change simultaneously threaten Indigenous cultures, languages, and ways of life.

2021, RF Morrison School

Ozhaawashkwaa Animikii-Bineshi Aki Onji Kinimaagae' Inun

How this Project Works

What we do...

Ozhaawashkwaa Animikii-Bineshi Aki Onji Kinimaagae' Inun conserves a 5-acre fragment of the original tall-grass prairie, restores this ecosystem on 35 acres of former agricultural land, and has re-established a small wetland. Each year, students, educators, and community members harvest seeds from Indigenous plants in these areas. Then, they seed them into trays and grow these plants in the passive solar greenhouse for the purposes of:

- enhancing biodiversity on-site in the upland and wetland restoration areas as well as in the demonstration tall-grass prairie gardens and medicine gardens,
- re-establishing Indigenous plants on SOSD schoolyards, and
- distributing Indigenous plants to community members to further promote their ecological and cultural significances and to ignite community stewardship efforts that enhance biodiversity broadly, and facilitate connection to the land and each other.

What you do...

Schools who participate in the Eco-Cultural Restoration Action Project will:

- Be responsible for preparing their schoolyard growing site
- In June, receive a mixture of Indigenous flowers and grasses for students to plant in their schoolyard grassland restoration garden (free of charge)
- Plant, water, weed their restoration garden
- Interpret their restoration to support learning, teaching, and knowledge sharing
- Learn how and when to harvest medicines and seeds, store them, and share them
- Receive ecological and cultural resources to support inquiries and learning related to your restoration

Eligibility

For this project to be successful, applicants must demonstrate the following:

- Project must be Admin/Operations approved.
- Your site must be shovel ready (ready to plant). IE: the area is weed free and turf-free.
- Must have a plan in place for regular irrigation during year 1
- Must demonstrate commitment. These plants are perennial and will survive indefinitely with the right placement and care. Those without long-term commitment will not be eligible.
- Must describe a plan for how students and educators will plant, water, weed, and engage with the restoration.
- Must demonstrate student engagement and leadership in the undertaking and care of this project.

Ready to Apply?

Apply **HERE** by March 1, 2023. Plant deliver is planned for June 1-7, 2023.

Our Impact So Far...

Plants Propagated:

- 2020, we grew 2,340 Indigenous Plants. We delivered 510 plants to SOSD schools, and planted 1,800 plants on site.
- 2021, we grew 2,852 Indigenous Plants. We delivered 910 plants to SOSD schools, and planted 1,942 on site.
- 2022, we grew 3,555 Indigenous Plants. We delivered 1,004 plants to SOSD schools, 990 plants to community members to encourage contemplation of Canada Day, and planted 1,828 on site.

Plant diversity and enhancement, 2018-Present:

- Seeded 35-acres with 54 Indigenous plant species to re-store tall-grass prairie,
- Conserved 65 species of Indigenous Plants in a 5-acre Remnant Prairie while controlling invasive weeds,
- Established a 3,172m2 naturalized retention pond with 41 wetland and upland plant species, and enhanced biodiversity by in-filling pond vegetation with Indigenous plants grown on-site.

New bird activity on-site after restoration actions began:

- Brewers Blackbirds nested in colonies during 2020 and 2021 in the Tree Nursery
- Killdeer nests found at the pond, tree nursery, and throughout wood-mulched areas
- Goose nests found at the pond and remnant prairie
- Western Meadowlark nests found in remnant prairie
- Red-winged Blackbird nests found in remnant prairie and at the pond
- Barn Swallows become regular visitors in 2021 and 2022

New Inhabitants:

- Canadian Toads, Wood Frogs, and Leopard Frogs
- Monarch, Painted Lady, & Black Swallowtail Butterflies, eggs, caterpillars
- Leafy Spurge Beetles released on invasive Leafy Spurge Plants (2019), and sightings of Leafy Spurge Hawkmoth caterpillar. The beetles and caterpillars both eat Leafy Spurge.