

Steward of Spring Ridge Common Request for Proposals

Overview: Fernwood NRG is seeking proposals from qualified individuals or organizations to become the Steward of Spring Ridge Common, taking complete responsibility for site management including generating revenues that will offset the costs of managing the site while assisting Fernwood NRG to meet its food security objectives of increasing food access and demonstrating and promoting self-reliance.

Background: Fernwood NRG is a charitable organization serving the Fernwood neighbourhood in Victoria, BC (see www.fernwoodnrg.ca). Fernwood NRG has a strategic goal to increase food security through increasing food access and demonstrating and supporting self-reliance. Fernwood is home to the Spring Ridge Common, an established permaculture and food forestry site created and maintained by volunteers over the past 20 years. The site is owned by the School District of Greater Victoria, and has been leased to various organizations for use as a common garden. Since 2010, Fernwood NRG has held the lease and worked with a base of volunteers to maintain and improve the site. In 2015, Fernwood NRG began receiving an annual grant of \$3,000 from the City of Victoria to support volunteer coordination at the site. Currently, costs of maintaining the site are approximately \$5,000 per year for the lease, insurance, water, waste disposal, pest control etc. To date, Fernwood NRG has been bearing those costs with its own resources.

Clearly, \$3,000 is a modest sum which would only pay for organizing a small number of work parties. However, the site would benefit from more consistent stewardship, and as well, there are potentially other opportunities to work with the site and with Fernwood NRG to generate incremental revenues as well as community benefit. For this reason, Fernwood NRG is seeking proposals from experienced individuals and/or organizations who wish to partner with us to steward Spring Ridge Common and to assist Fernwood NRG in achieving our food security objectives.

Scope: Spring Ridge Common is roughly 20,000 square feet of permaculture garden. Its current design generates a significant need for seasonal maintenance in order to control the growth of grass and to maintain the trees and shrubs. In the past, inconsistent maintenance has attracted various problems and generated complaints from neighbours.

Although there are many food-bearing and medicinal plants on the site, the yield could be much higher with more active stewardship and thoughtful planning. Fernwood NRG has the ability to offer a variety of supports to the successful proponent to achieve desirable outcomes. The Common is located half a block from the Fernwood Community Centre which has multi-purpose space, some audio-visual equipment, chairs and tables, an equipped kitchen, washrooms, a modest amount of storage space for food and tools, a waste stream that includes cardboard and organics, a kitchen garden and a neighbourhood orchard on-site, etc. Fernwood NRG also has a bi-monthly neighbourhood newspaper delivered to all Fernwood residences and businesses with an existing column about the Common, a monthly email list with over 1500 recipients, a network of like-minded food security and community-based organizations, and various contact points through the Fernwood neighbourhood in which to promote events and activities. We also operate the Good Food Box, have an existing volunteer base, have the ability to offer registered courses, provide insurance coverage for volunteers, etc.

In the past, the Community Centre hosted the delivery of a Permaculture Design Certificate which used Spring Ridge Common as a demonstration site. The organizer brought in experts from around the region, and also hosted public lectures and workshops at the Community Centre that generated additional revenue. This is just one example of a partnership between Fernwood NRG and another organization that made use of both the Common site and the facilities of the Community Centre.

Goals: We are looking for creative responses from interested parties in order to:

1. Transform the Common into a safe, attractive, high-yielding and functional permaculture demonstration site and open neighbourhood gathering space,
2. Generate revenue for both Fernwood NRG and the proponent in order to offset the costs of maintaining and investing in the Common, and
3. Assist Fernwood NRG to meet our food security objectives.

Required qualifications:

1. Permaculture Design Certification or other horticultural training or certification,
2. Two or more years of experience working directly in a horticultural or agricultural setting,
3. Experience working in a community-based setting, including experience coordinating volunteers.

Desirable qualifications:

1. Adult education training or experience teaching seminars, courses, etc.
2. Community organizing and outreach experience,
3. Personal commitment to food security and self-reliance (growing, cooking, preserving, etc.),
4. Good communication skills (written and verbal),
5. Entrepreneurial spirit (and preferably some experience), and
6. Knowledge of the Fernwood neighbourhood.

Proposal Format: In no more than three pages, please provide a brief outline of how you or your organization propose to partner with Fernwood NRG to steward Spring Ridge Common. Proposals should include a reasonably detailed outline of how you propose to meet the goals outlined above including a timeline or calendar, and a budget. If you are proposing revenue generating activities, please outline your assumptions (e.g. number of events, price, attendance, etc.). Also, please attach a resume of no more than one page outlining how you meet the required and desirable qualifications above.

Assessment: Fernwood NRG's Board will strike a committee to assess all proposals. Proposals that are incomplete or do not meet the required qualifications will be rejected. Proposals meeting the required qualifications will be assessed 40% on the desired qualifications, and 60% on the quality of the proposal, the extent to which it meets the goals, and the likelihood of achieving a successful outcome.

Important Note: Fernwood NRG is limited to paying the successful proponent \$3,000 in 2016 in order to maintain (with the support of volunteers) the Common, with an option at Fernwood NRG's sole discretion to renew for further periods. An agreement to share incremental revenues and apportion costs will be negotiated with the successful proponent based on the proposal submitted and the successful execution of the agreed upon plan.

Submission: Please submit proposals to info@fernwoodnrg.ca no later than midnight January 10th, 2016. We plan to select a successful proponent no later than January 31st, 2016. Please contact info@fernwoodnrg.ca with questions or to organize a tour of the Common and Fernwood NRG's facilities.