

CAMPUS COMMUNITY



Taking the pond by storm

The retention pond on the east side of UBC's Okanagan campus does a lot more than just hold water.

The man-made pond acts as a filtration system for storm water, preventing harmful materials from entering Okanagan Lake.

Roger Bizzotto, director of Facilities Management, says the pond was dug in the early 1990s with the purpose of collecting run-off storm water from the campus, rather than have it go into the City of Kelowna storm system which flows into the lake.

"It's considered a very sustainable practice," says Bizzotto. "We're not relying on the city storm water system and adding to their load."

Storm water containing salt, sediment and any other materials that are on the road, sidewalks and even the lawns of the campus first flows into a smaller pond, called a forebay, and are filtered out as the water enters the larger pond that is home to a variety of plants, insects and a few ducks in the summer.

"The reeds help to remove the heavy metals and impurities from the water. It's a self-cleaning process," says Bizzotto, adding the pond water then evaporates, continuing the cycle.

The forebay also acts as part of a trail system around the Engineering, Management and Education building. A planned project, called The Gathering on the east-west promenade, will extend the trail system.

Because there is no regular inflow and outflow of water, a plan was needed to keep the water from stagnating and developing an aroma.

To keep the water fresh, five to six bales of barley straw are spread out over the winter ice. When the ice melts, the straw sinks into the pond creating natural aeration.



Students see value in U-Pass Program

A Universal Bus Pass (U-Pass) Program was instated at UBC's Okanagan campus in 2007, in partnership with the UBC Students' Union Okanagan, BC Transit, the City of Kelowna and the Regional District of Central Okanagan. The U-Pass provides student holders a low-cost, sustainable transportation option: the transit service provided by Kelowna Regional Transit.

Aligned with a general fare increase proposed by the Kelowna Regional Transit partners, a student referendum was held in 2011 to determine student support for a \$10 increase in the price of a U-Pass per semester per student. The students spoke loud and clear with 89 per cent of the voting students giving the green light to raise the bus pass from \$50 to \$60 per term, which is the same cost as a single-month adult pass.

The Senior Executive remains committed to a 10 per cent subsidy of the student U-Pass fees and the provision of the Transportation Hardship Fund in accordance with the agreement.



Green on top

Green roofs have been installed in three new buildings on campus: the Engineering, Management and Education building, Health Sciences Centre and the Purcell residence. Green roofs help keep the buildings cool in the summer and warm in the winter by providing a layer of soil and plants.

Because of the insulating properties the green roofs provide, less energy is needed in the summer and winter. It is another, low-maintenance way UBC's Okanagan campus is reducing its carbon footprint on the planet.

UBC's Okanagan campus is also conducting research to determine what construction waste can be used to make the beds for the green roofs. Once viable materials are found, they can be used to make a green roof rather than go in the local landfill.

The study has worldwide potential for any construction project where a green roof might be applicable.

For an in-depth story on green roofs, go to news.ok.ubc.ca/2011/07/07/making-green-roofs-greener

Fair Trade Fair

The inaugural Fair Trade Fair was held at UBC's Okanagan campus last year and another is being planned for this year.

"The idea was to bring awareness to the social and the environmental issues regarding fair trade," says Kamilla Bahbahani, equity advisor at UBC's Okanagan campus. The fair was held in November when people are looking for holiday gift ideas of something to celebrate the end of the semester.

Bahbahani says the idea behind the fair trade movement is to "allow workers to be paid a decent wage for the work they perform."

Groups such as 10,000 Villages are at the forefront of the movement, but the campus fair is also playing a significant role in raising awareness of the issue.

Sowing seeds

A plot of land near the University of British Columbia's Okanagan campus is doing a lot more than just growing plants.

The acre of donated land is the site of the UBC Organic Garden and Research Initiative (OGRI), but growing 100 per cent pesticide-free produce (based on organic principles) is only one of the benefits the soil is bringing to the campus and the community.

A portion of the fresh food is given to the Kelowna Community Food Bank and Kelowna Gospel Mission with the remainder being sold at the Kelowna Farmer's Market.

The project also aims to provide support and information to other groups that want to integrate environmental sustainability, social engagement and research into an organic garden and research initiative.

For more information, go to www.preservationfarm.net.

