



5.1 Definitions

What is Rewilding a City?

George Monbiot, author of *Feral: Rewilding the Land, the Sea and Human Life* offers an apt description of what rewilding might mean in

Vancouver. “Rewilding, to me, is about resisting the urge to control nature and allowing it to find its own way. It involves reintroducing absent plants and animals (and in a few cases culling exotic species which cannot be contained by native wildlife), pulling down the fences, blocking the drainage ditches, but otherwise stepping back.

“Vancouver is known for its natural surroundings. Between the city’s proximity to mountains, the rainforest, the oceans and all those natural habitats, we’re about as close to nature as an urban centre can be. But a new exhibit at the Museum of Vancouver challenges some of our perceptions about that connection. By looking at the city’s history through a non-human historical lens, *Rewilding Vancouver* asks just how much European settlement has changed the area, what we’ve lost and what we’ve gained – and what the future might hold.”

(<http://www.insidevancouver.ca/2014/02/26/rewilding-vancouver/>)



1 FOREWORD

By J.B. Mackinnon

Author of *The Once and Future World* and co-author of the *100-Mile Diet*

If the past century witnessed the golden age of conservation, the coming hundred years will mark the age of rewilding. No longer will we settle for saving the last wild spaces or species from extinction. Instead, we will work to bring nature back to exuberant life, everywhere. Inspired by the incredible ecological abundance of the past, and looking to a future in which culture and nature must once again be interwoven in order for each to survive, we will rewild our world.

Examples already abound, not only in wilderness areas but in “humanized” environments. In Seoul, South Korea, a river flows where cars once raced along a freeway. In London and New York, fish spawn again in urban waterways after decades of absence. In Banff National Park, bears, wolves and other animals use landscaped overpasses to cross the Trans-Canada Highway. A new relationship with nature is emerging that uses human ingenuity to permit a profound re-engagement with the living earth.

Vancouver has every reason to be a world leader in this groundshift. As a global city, Vancouver’s most extraordinary quality is its enduring connection to the living world. Vancouverites deeply value their mountains, ocean and the Fraser River. Within city limits it is possible to see sights—immense flocks of snow geese, prowling coyotes, pods of porpoises—that are the equal of the wildest parts of many nations. We live in perhaps the only big city on earth in which a wild-living creature—salmon—is a part of our identity, as it has been since the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations first cared for these lands and waters.

It is of paramount importance that we recognize, celebrate and build upon this unique heritage. Researchers have proved that access to nature is not only good for our physical, mental and spiritual health, it is essential to it. Our global society, too, still depends for its existence on a healthy planetary ecosystem. We must care for the natural world. Yet we will do so only if nature remains meaningful, valuable and visible to us—a challenge in an increasingly urban and virtual world. In Vancouver we have the opportunity to become not only the greenest but also the most ecologically literate city on earth: a model for the world.

Yes, Vancouver has suffered de-wilding. We have buried nearly all of our former salmon streams; driven species like the yellow-billed cuckoo, western bumble bee and spotted skunk to local extinction; and cut down forests that were taller than any still standing in Canada today. As this important report makes clear, we have done too little, too late to protect the wild qualities of our landscape and our selves.

Yet in these pages there is cause for optimism. This city can do more than offer more access to nature; it can also give nature more access to the city. This is the right place; this is the right time. By rewilding Vancouver, we will create a city that is not only more resilient, but also more exciting, more fascinating, more magical to live in—wilder in every sense of the word.

vi REWILDING VANCOUVER | Environmental Education & Stewardship Action Plan

Vancouver has a rich history of environmental protection, education and stewardship. These are the traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations who have cared for the land and sea for many generations. Vancouver is the birthplace of many of Canada's longest standing and respected environmental non-profit organisations including the Society Promoting Environmental Conservation, David Suzuki Foundation, Stanley Park Ecology Society, Nature Vancouver, Green Club, Vancouver Natural History Society, Greenpeace and Environmental Youth Alliance all founded more than 20 years ago. Each week people with long histories in Vancouver interact with those that are new to the city, and the importance of cultural traditions, histories and understandings of nature in this context are diverse, complex, and fascinating.

As the city becomes increasingly urban, the importance of access to nature for health and wellbeing becomes more and more important. Research tells us that people in cities are increasingly affected by "nature deficit disorder," with symptoms including reduced ability to concentrate, problems with heart and lung health, mental health challenges and others, and that some of the most vulnerable people in our communities are those that are most deeply affected.^{5,6}

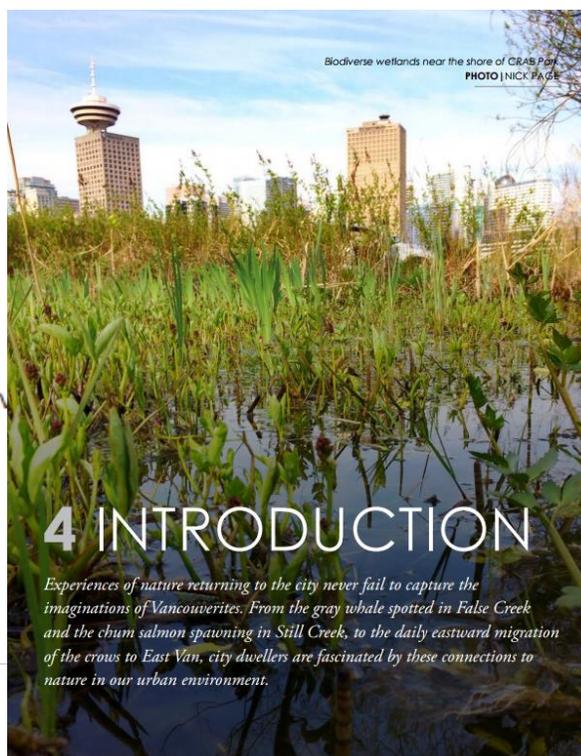
Some are beginning to imagine what a rewilded city might look like, and to help us to remember our ecological history and the other creatures that once

called this place home.^{7,8} Though it is challenging to imagine peacefully reintegrating black bears into the heart of the city, it is possible to imagine a city flooded with bird song, frog calls, big trees, and salmon swimming in our rediscovered streams. It is possible to imagine a city where everyone can have rich and meaningful experiences in nature as a part of their everyday lives. It is possible to transition our conversations about sustaining and protecting what exists, to dialogue about people and nature flourishing together.

This action plan is one chapter in a larger story. The City and Park Board are working on plans and projects that sustain and grow the urban forest, increase and enhance biodiversity, and support thriving bird life. These are more technical pieces focused on the ecological structures needed to rewild the city, and the policies, plans and practices that are needed to support this work. This Environmental Education and Stewardship Action Plan is the people-focused chapter in the story. It recognises the untapped potential of parks and community centres to encourage and enable people to more fully relate and connect to the natural world. Its aim is to identify inspiring and effective actions that leverage the unique assets of the Park Board and also widely involve Vancouverites in rewilding ourselves, and becoming more engaged with nature in the city.

5 Louv, Richard. *The Nature Principle*. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill N.C. 2011.

6 A.F. Taylor, Kuo, F.E. Is contact with nature important for healthy child development? State of the evidence. *Children and Their Environments*, pp 124-140. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK. 2006.



4 INTRODUCTION

Experiences of nature returning to the city never fail to capture the imaginations of Vancouverites. From the gray whale spotted in False Creek and the chum salmon spawning in Still Creek, to the daily eastward migration of the crows to East Van, city dwellers are fascinated by these connections to nature in our urban environment.

1. What does it mean to **RE-WILD** a city? (1)

2. How to cities **destroy** natural habits? (3)

3. What kind of **plans** are the Vancouver City and Park Board working on? (1)

4. In your own words, how might we bring **nature** back to Vancouver? Give examples of what can actually be done to make the city greener. (3 examples)

5. Do you think it is a **positive** thing to re-wild a city? Why or why not? (2)

Total: ____/10

Re-Wilding a City Photoshop Project

Concept: Using Photoshop, you will create an image of an urban place in Vancouver that has been rewilded.

*Make sure to use a photograph of an area in Vancouver that **YOU** took.*

1. Open your photograph of Vancouver in **Photoshop**.
2. Search on **Google** for images of grass, greenery, flowers, trees, animals, water, rivers, etc. and save each image as a JPEG.
3. Working in **LAYERS**, use the *magnetic lasso* and the *clone stamp* to help transfer the images onto your image of Vancouver.
4. Use the *blur tool* to help merge the images seamlessly.
5. The *paint brush* and *eye dropper* tools are also helpful to match colours.
6. *Dodge* and *burn* can help lighten and darken areas of the image to match for highlight and contrast.
7. Be **THOUGHTFUL** about placement, location and composition. **DO NOT** just throw a bunch of animals onto the background.

Tools that you will use in Photoshop:

- Layers
- Clone Stamp
- Blur Tool
- Free Transform
- Eye Dropper for colour matching
- Paint Brush
- Magnetic Lasso
- Dodge Tool
- Burn Tool

