

Community

FOOD CULTIVATION

Creek pavilion project moves to garden stage

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Staff Writer

After approximately a year of design work, sourcing materials and construction, the Roberts Creek pavilion is nearly complete – all that’s left to do is the living roof. “People have been really excited... It’s fun to have construction happening in the hub of the town,” said Sheila Wilson, Roberts Creek Community School coordinator, who is coordinating the project. Cody Chancellor is overseeing the design and construction of the pavilion.

The pavilion is located on School District No. 46 (SD46) property next to Roberts Creek Elementary School, across the road from the village hub. The lot was unused and blanketed with invasive weeds before construction began.

The end goal is to create a shared use space for the Roberts Creek community and the elementary school, where people can gather and learn about food cultivation and sustainability.

With pavilion construction approaching completion, plans are underway to launch into the next phase of the project – grading the site, installing trenches, laying water lines and other site preparations for a circular patio area and learning space and garden. Houston Landscapes is providing the granite and machine work for the patio construction, which will begin in February.

Builders will also construct two garden sheds flanking the entrance from the schoolyard, starting in March.



Larry Popowich, Linden Gook, Brett McDowell and Cody Chancellor at work on the pavilion in the summer.

DANA WILSON PHOTO



SOPHIE WOODROOFFE PHOTO

The pavilion in Roberts Creek has taken about a year to complete. All that’s left to do is the living roof.

The garden will include a combination of fruit trees and edible indigenous plants. “We have a detailed planting map, but it’s not written in stone,” Wilson said. They plan to incorporate basic permaculture features into the garden as well as traditional forms of garden landscaping. “[We] definitely want to provide space for people to learn how to cultivate food. That’s primary,” Wilson said.

Roberts Creek Community School Society is spearheading the project, and it’s largely financially supported by the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation, SD46 and the Sunshine Coast Regional District. Volunteers, local business sponsors and other smaller funders have also been supporting the project, including Larry Popowich of Periplum Garden Construction & Design, who Wilson said has been “integral.”

“Projects like this are really done on the backs of local businesses. They are gener-

ous, so generous,” Wilson said.

The starting budget for the project was \$10,000. The pavilion ended up costing \$13,000, and with donations and volunteer labour, Wilson estimates the value of the pavilion to be closer to \$40,000. Since securing initial funding, the project has grown its budget to \$38,000, including for the pavilion.

The next phase is slated to begin next month, but there is no firm timeline for completion given the project’s dependence on volunteers and donated materials. “When you’re counting on volunteers, you take whatever they are offering up. Sometimes things take a little longer,” Wilson said.

The project is still seeking volunteers to help with garden shed construction and to install raised beds for the garden. The project is also seeking wood chips, soil and mulch for paths and garden beds.

Those interested in volunteering can contact Wilson at rccs@dcnnet.com.

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