

Knowing the Land Beneath Our Feet:

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The Logan Creek Integrity Project

Kwantlen Polytechnic University's (KPU) Langley Campus sits next to Logan Creek, one of the three tributaries to the upper Nicomekl River. The river is an important salmon bearing waterway with its headwaters in the Township of Langley, and flows through the City of Langley and Surrey before emptying into Boundary Bay near White Rock. The KPU Langley Campus is home to the School of Horticulture and the new Bachelor of Horticultural Science Urban Ecosystems degree program.

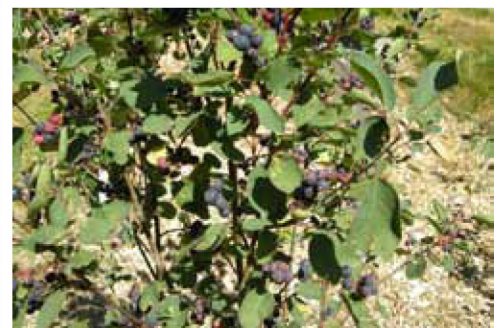
The KPU Langley Campus sits within the territory of the Kwantlen First Nation (KFN) to which the university derived its name. The KPU Langley site has a long history of settler colonisation beginning

during the Colony of British Columbia period (1858-1866) and continuing after the amalgamation in 1866 with the Colony of Vancouver Island to form British Columbia, before entering confederation with Canada

in 1871. Agricultural practices included draining native wet prairie, ditching, and planting pasture grasses and orchards. Remnants of the agricultural period remain today along with a house constructed in 1890 and occupied by the Robert Wark family who were related to John Wark of Victoria.

In 1846 John Wark was a Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company placed in charge of the HBC coastal trade including Fort Simpson, Fort Stikine, Fort Langley, and the Beaver paddle wheeler on the Fraser River. By 1853, Governor James Douglas appointed John Wark to the Legislative Council of Vancouver Island where he was often Acting-Governor when Douglas was away. The colonial decisions from this period included the disposition of 20-acre lots of land (claimed for the Crown in 1792) to settlers for £1 per acre, and the taking of territory from First Nations to do so.

From this brief historical narrative you can see that knowing something about the history of the land beneath our feet is ►





Together: Healing, Education and Reconciliation.” The theme aligned perfectly with the KPU direction for experiential learning across all academic disciplines to engage learners directly in the phenomena being studied. The Urban Ecosystems Program explored its role in healing and reconciliation and hatched the Logan Creek Integrity Project.

settler period, and re-indigenizing the site with native plant species. Rather than completely erase the existing site, we are weaving into the design a few remnant plants such as a giant black walnut to serve as reminders of the site’s colonial history.

A graduation research project in spring 2015 saw the design and installation of a 1500 m2 berry-picking patch featuring most of the edible berry shrubs used by Coast Salish peoples. With funding from CN Eco-connexions, work has begun this fall on the remaining 1.5 hectares of riparian fringe forest using the combined workforce of six different classes spread across diploma and degree programs. By the end of November 2015, it is anticipated that the site will include self-guided trails, new plantings, interpretive signs in English and Hun’qumi’num dialect, and a welcome invitation to all visitors to “pick the berries.” **SL**

Integrity refers to both cultural integrity and ecological integrity. The Logan Creek riparian area has lost fish and wildlife habitat and is starved of water inputs by paving, buildings, and the alteration of runoff. The long-term goal is that the restored and redesigned riparian forest will support a thriving, biodiverse salmon habitat and nourish native fruit-bearing and medicinal plants traditionally used by the Kwantlen First Nation. At its simplest level, we are de-colonizing the project site by removing non-native plant species from the

All images courtesy of Kathy Dunster.

essential before beginning any planning or design project on the KPU Langley campus. In the fall of 2013, the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada visited BC and KPU committed to find ways to increase awareness and acknowledge the injustices experienced by Aboriginal people. KPU chose a theme of “Weaving



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