

Terms of Reference

(as of September 22, 2021)

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.” Chinese proverb

The TRU Sustainability Office’s new **TRU Campus Tree Program** is designed to allow members of the TRU community to actively get involved in helping maintain one of the planet’s most vital sustainability attributes: thriving and healthy trees and forests. Members of the TRU community are encouraged to volunteer in the 1-year pilot, whose three over-all goals are planting, care and preservation of trees on the TRU campus. The office is working with members from the TRU Grounds and Horticulture Departments who will supervise all program activities, as well as other members of the TRU community who are helping to ensure the success of the program.

The program launched on September 22, 2021—the 10th anniversary of National Tree Day—with an opening ceremony in front of the new Chappell Family Building for Nursing and Population Health building on the TRU Kamloops campus. Ten Celebration Maples were planted.

Program Goals

Besides the three main goals of tree planting, care and preservation, other goals for this year’s pilot program—which correspond with TRU’s 51st anniversary (1970-2021)—are:

1. Plant 51 ‘big’ trees* within the main areas of the Kamloops campus (*‘big’ is roughly defined as those trees standing between 6 and 12 feet tall).
2. Plant a new ‘forest’ with 51 saplings in a natural area of the campus using simple drip irrigation.
3. Attract between 50 and 100 volunteers to join the program.
4. Record all activities on Tree Works in order to capture relevant data about the pilot.
5. Write a year-end report about the pilot. Besides having a record of the pilot, the report will be presented at a follow-up webinar in the summer of 2022 hosted by the [Canadian College and University Environmental Network](#) (CCUEN). TRU presented in June 2021 about the concept for this pilot program and was asked to present again during a follow-up webinar.
6. Using lessons learned during the 1-year pilot program, create a template for a ‘Canadian Campus Tree Program’ that other Canadian universities and colleges could consult if they wanted to start a similar program on their campuses.
7. Consult with members of local First Nations about trees of cultural significance on campus, i.e. trees that are original to the campus site, in order to learn about their importance.



TRU staff planting an apple tree on campus in 2017.

8. Pursue possible partnership opportunities with the City of Kamloops in order to plant trees around Kamloops, and/or expand the program terms of reference to include a formal association with the City.

Rationale for the Program

- Planet Earth is in vital need of having more trees planted in the ground. ([link](#))
- The Canadian federal government has a goal of planting 2 billion trees by 2030, and TRU can help with this ([link](#)).
- Trees are beneficial for so many reasons: carbon sequestration; oxygen production; prevention of soil erosion; assisting with biodiversity; increasing wildlife habitat; health and wellness benefits for generations... to name just a few benefits. ([link](#)).

There are many people who feel a profound connection with trees for these and other reasons. This program will benefit from that connection since the success of the program counts on TRU volunteer community members making an active and multi-year commitment to participate. Besides the benefits mentioned, there will also likely be academic and research opportunities available.



TRU students and staff planting a Frazer Fir in April 2015.

Program Structure

There are three parts to the program:

- 1) Tree Planting
- 2) Tree Care
- 3) Tree Preservation

In cooperation with TRU Grounds/Horticulture departments, TRU students, staff, faculty, alumni and/or friends of TRU will form volunteer teams of three people to help plant a tree(s) on the campus. There might be opportunities for team members to also help with the care of the tree and/or the care of the existing 1800+ campus trees to help with their preservation and protection. All activities will be supervised by trained Grounds/Horticulture personnel or contractors. The care for the tree(s) by volunteers could last between 1 and 3 years depending on the type of tree, and the type of irrigation in place close to it. There will be an ongoing commitment to tree care and health. Working with the Grounds/Horticulture crews will ensure that the appropriate trees are planted in the appropriate locations.

Volunteer team members will have opportunities to learn how to plant, care and/or help preserve trees, as well as how to identify existing trees of significance on campus that are protected. Furthermore, there may be opportunities for consultation with members of First Nations about trees of cultural significance on campus, i.e. trees that are original to the campus site.

The rationale for having teams of three people is to ensure that if one or two of those team-mates leave the institution, then there is still at least one person who has committed to caring for the tree(s).

The goals and structure of this program will be factored into TRU's existing tree-based programs and policies, along with [TRU's Master Plan](#), and [campus design guidelines](#). The TRU Landscape Advisory Committee will also be consulted about this program when necessary. Considering these and other factors will help ensure the long-term preservation of all trees so they are not planted in areas that will be developed at a later time.

Possible benefits to volunteers in the program:

- Seeing their tree mature over time
- Learning from TRU Grounds/Horticulture personnel about tree planting, care and preservation;
- Receiving a program certificate of completion;
- Receiving a 'Team Tree TRU' ball cap
- Contributing to TRU's environmental legacy

Covid-19

All Covid-19 safety protocols will need to be considered during every stage of the program.

Data Collection

A spreadsheet (using the software 'Tree Works') will be used to help manage the program. Key data that will be inputted into the spreadsheet including the following:

- Regarding the volunteer team: name of team-members; name of team; student numbers (if applicable); cell numbers; emails; who else is on the team; date the team started.
- Regarding planting the tree: type of tree; date planted; who planted it; size when planted; where planted (location with GPS coordinates); staff member in charge of planting.
- Regarding care of the tree: who is involved; date of care; amount of water and/or fertilizer; other care issues (pruning, etc.); growth statistics at milestone dates (height and girth); other notable issues.
- Using a custom TRU 'tree care app' will also be used (the app is under development).

Tree Planting & Tree Care

Planting trees in irrigated areas of the campus means that regular hand watering may not be needed as much or at all. In general, adding new trees to existing groves of trees can help ensure the tree has a better survival rate because of the proven fact that groups of trees can form their own mini ecosystems, making the grove more resilient to various stressors like drought. When planting in wild areas, then planting trees in coolies, ditches and near riparian zones—where there is already some water—will benefit the tree's chance of survival.



TRU students and staff planting a willow in 2019.

Program Development

During the 1-year pilot, the program coordinator will seek input from TRU community members as the program is being developed. This will be in the form of focus groups, town-halls, and/or surveys. Key considerations when planning the long-term structure of the program include ensuring proper long-term funding commitments for tree and landscape programs, and to create a policy regarding the need to do a development assessment (either private or by the institution) as part of Development Permit Applications; which should include a full arboriculture assessment of the existing landscape.



TRU students and staff planting a larch in 2016.

Other Possible Partnerships

The program coordinator will pursue other possible partnerships, in particular with the City of Kamloops and other parties outside of TRU like regional, provincial, and federal governments; nonprofits (like Tree Canada and Evergreen); and the private sector.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you would like to volunteer for the program, please email sustain@tru.ca, and put in the Subject line, 'Volunteer Tree Program'

Questions About the Program

Please direct any questions about the pilot to the program coordinator, James Gordon, who is the Manager of Sustainability Programs in the TRU Sustainability Office

(jgordon@tru.ca; 250-572-2740).



TRU students, staff and faculty members planting a White Spruce in April 2015.

“Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.”

Martin Luther (1483-1546)