


GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Organization Requesting Grant: <i>(Please list parent/sponsor organizations in parenthesis)</i>	Whistler Naturalists
Name of the program (if applicable):	Fungus Among Us
Society Registration Number:	S40150
Organization Mailing Address:	Box 845 Whistler BC V0N 1B0
Contact Name & Title:	Kristina Swerhun and Bob Brett – Board members
Organization Phone Number:	
Organization Email Address:	whistlernaturalists@gmail.com
Organization Purpose or Mandate: <i>(Please provide this answer in one sentence.)</i>	To increase the knowledge of and appreciation for the natural world in the Whistler area through education and research.
Organization Category (choose between Environment, Social Service, Community Service, Recreation and Sports, Arts and Culture)	Environment

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

How many years has the organization existed?	25
How many active members/participants does the organization have in the current year? <i>(e.g. how many athletes have signed up for this year)</i>	Approximately 1,500 are participants at our events. Our active Facebook "Whistler Naturalists Community" has 1,824 members.
For sport organizations, how many youth (U18) participants are enrolled in your programs?	n/a
How many Whistler residents members does the organization have in the current year?	We do not ask if people are local to become a free member but can in the future if it's important to our funders. 48 of our 61 paying members live in Whistler, Pemberton or Squamish.
How many volunteers/executive/staff are required to administer the organization in the current year?	7 board members
Age range of participants in the organization:	1-99

Please list active website URLs and active social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.):	www.whistlernaturalists.ca https://www.facebook.com/groups/whistlernaturalists https://www.facebook.com/whistlernaturalists
What are the membership and participation requirements?	An interest in nature. We have two membership options: a) join the WNS mailing list for free b) join the WNS under the umbrella of BC Nature and additionally receive the BC Nature quarterly newsletter (\$20 individual/year; \$30 family/year).
<p>Does the organization have any outstanding debts or other means of funding from the RMOW? If yes, please state the amount and reason.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Please include any Value In Kind support that you receive from the RMOW (eg. reduced rent, utilities in RMOW buildings)</p>	No

GRANT INFORMATION

1. Purpose of Grant	<i>Explain in detail how the funding will be spent. Please refer to Council Policy A-7 Community Enrichment Program, available at www.whistler.ca/cep for funding criteria and eligibility. Please be as concise as possible using the space below.</i>
<p>This year marks the 22nd year of our annual Fungus Among Us event that promotes biodiversity research, nature education and stewardship. This is one of the few events in Whistler that works towards realizing Whistler’s vision of being a place where nature is protected.</p> <p>1) FUNGI PRESENTATIONS TO STUDENTS: Funding will go towards presentations on the wonders of fungi and mushrooms and their vital roles in maintaining our ecosystems to students in Whistler and Mount Currie. Nature education leads to appreciation, which leads to stewardship. From all the great feedback we've gotten from the public, students and teachers alike, we know our events have helped community members on their journey towards stewardship/restoring the natural environment.</p> <p>2) FUNGI EDUCATION FOR ALL RESIDENTS: Funding will support nature education for residents and visitors of all ages which is essential in inspiring stewardship of nature. Since we started Fungus Among Us, we have been at capacity or sold out every year at all our event that includes fungi talks, walks, cooking demonstration and a mushroom display. This shows how much an appetite there is for nature education in Whistler.</p> <p>3) DATA COLLECTION: Funding will go to collecting data about fungi in general and fungi species at risk. The conservation risks to fungi were first considered by the BC Conservation Data Centre in 2022. These assessments were conducted by frequent participants at our events, notably [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (also curator of the UBC Herbarium) as well as [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (frequent participants and authors of Mushrooms of BC).</p> <p>Of the 233 fungal species ranked as at-risk (Blue or Red list), 70 are on the Whistler list. As a result of 21 years of surveys by experts, Whistler is therefore far ahead of most jurisdictions in knowing which fungi species are at risk. One example of the usefulness of this information is Agarikon (<i>Fomitopsis officinalis</i>), a bracket fungus strongly associated with old Douglas-fir forests. Old forests at low elevations in Whistler that could support Agarikon have mostly been logged, but conserving this species is yet another reason to avoid further logging of old forests.</p>	

<p>2. Is This a New Program or Activity?</p>	<p><i>If yes, what are your targets and goals for this program/activity?</i></p>
<p>No</p>	

<p>3. Current Year Highlights and Community Benefits:</p>	<p><i>Detail the specifics of activities and community benefits your organization provides.</i></p>
<p>FUNGI PRESENTATIONS TO STUDENTS: The event includes presentations to Whistler schools and the Xelólacw Community School in Mount Currie. In 2023 we presented fungi talks and walks to 29 classes (more than 600 youth participants!). We were excited to include for the second time four classes from Xelólacw Community School in Mount Currie along with return visits to Spring Creek Community School, École La Passerelle and Myrtle Philip Community School. We also had available the Fungus Among Us Scavenger Hunt activity sheet and accompanying video we developed in 2020 so teachers could get students interested in fungi at other times as well. Although the scavenger hunt and video were designed for students K-7 we still make both available on our website for families. Mushroom Scavenger Hunt and Activity Sheet available at: www.whistlematuralists.ca/mushroom-savenger-hunt.</p> <p>FUNGI EDUCATION FOR ALL RESIDENTS: This event is an autumn highlight for many residents since mushroom hunting has become so popular. The positive feedback we get each year from participants and gurus alike is the main reason we run the festival. Our event includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHOTO CONTEST: Based on its success since we introduced it in 2020, we again will offer the 'Fantastic Fungi Foto Contest' to get people outside and focusing on mushrooms. • TALKS WITH GURUS: We plan for a collection of short talks about fungi biology, ecology, uses and conservation. Talks in 2023 included [redacted] on 'Fungi and Fire', [redacted] on 'Amazing Mushroom Morphology', [redacted] (both high school students!) on 'Fun with Fungi', and [redacted] on Cordyceps fungi, 'Zombie Apocalypse.' We were sold out in 2023 with 120 attendees to the talk. • WALK WITH GURUS: We take people on mushroom walks in small groups to have an opportunity to learn about the wonder of fungi from gurus and connect with our natural world and others who care about nature. 2024 will look similar to 2023 when we had 18 gurus who took out 10 groups of 20 people each to various locations. We were sold out in 2023 with 190 attendees to our walks. • COOKING WITH MUSHROOMS: This event has been hosted by [redacted] chef and GM of Milestones. Bruce is not only an amazing chef but also is an experienced wild mushroom picker. During the event, participants not only learn ways of preparing delicious mushroom dishes, but he also talks about proper etiquette of picking as well. This event is always the first to sell out since we have a maximum capacity of 40 people. This year we might switch things up a bit and be creative about involving more people in this highly sought-after event. • MUSHROOM DISPLAY: This is an event where labeled mushrooms collected on the walks are on display and gurus are on hand to answer any questions. This is the only event that is by donation and not ticketed. We do this for two main reasons: 1) Once tickets are sold out, this guarantees that anyone can still take part, and 2) it's an option to take part in the festival that all can afford. In 2023 we had close to the annual average of 180 species on display and an estimated 200 people attended. We expect 2024 to look very similar. 	

<p>4. Existing Funding and Grant Applications:</p>	<p>1. <i>List the specific grants, funding and fundraising planned, approved or pending for the existing year, and</i></p> <p>2. <i>Please also list rejected or non-approved funding (with reasons).</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resort Municipality of Whistler Community Enrichment Program: \$4,100 (pending) • Whistler Community Foundation Environmental Legacy Fund: \$5,100 (pending) • Earned: \$8,000 (pending) 	

GRANT INFORMATION (CONTINUED):

5. Grant Request Amounts and Financial Breakdown:			
<i>Please ensure numbers provided in this table coincide with the required financial documents you provide in your application</i>			
	Annual Operating Budget	Grant Requested	<i>Provide a brief description of the specific amount requested. (Ex: Products, services, staffing roles, advertising, etc.)</i>
Salaries/contracts:			
General operations:			
One-time project / program:	18,200	4,100	Youth engagement at schools, public fungi programs, data collection of fungal species
Physical assets:			
Rent (RMOW facilities):		N/A	
Rent (other facilities):			
Other:	71,500		In kind
Total	\$ 89,700	\$ 4,100	4.6 % <i>(Grant request ÷ Annual budget amount)</i>
Reminder: The grant amount requested cannot be more than 50% of the annual operating budget of the organization.			

6. Additional Information:	<i>Please list any additional information, details or explanations regarding your grant request that you would like to be considered by Council.</i>
	<p>Comments made in the survey we sent out after the event really speak of the value our event has in the community. When asked what the most important takeaway from the event, some replies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I wish more people could experience the joy of the natural world and astounding life forms around us.” • “I am now REALLY interested in mushrooms. This was my first exposure to wild mushrooms. It was a birthday gift from family.” • “Be more curious and observant when walking through the woods. There’s another lifetime of learning at our feet.” • “That we live in an amazing place with amazing people.” <p>When asked what they enjoyed most, some replies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It was so lovely to see the excitement, passion and interest in the natural world that surrounds us. And the knowledge of the speakers and walk leaders was very impressive. Everyone was very nice and positive. A great experience.” • “We enjoyed the supervised foraging with the gurus, it was really eye opening to learn how many fungi are in our backyard. The lunch was outstanding, being both delicious, entertaining and educational. Definitely looking forward to attending again next year.” • “Loved that the Friday night talks were a cornucopia of talks. Not too long and not too technical. Appreciated that the ecological focus on the walk. Many people wanted more foraging info. The ecological focus was a perfect fit for my interests.” • “We loved the talk with Gurus and would love more of them! also, the walk was great, I could do it all week!”

7. Attachments:	<i>Please indicate the attachments you are including with your Grant Application Form:</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • Financial Statement (audited preferred) or Organization Budget (Required) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • Proof (copy) of registered not-for-profit society status or registered charity status (Required) <input type="checkbox"/> • Other:	

COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

<p>8. Please list how your organization may improve Community Performance Indicators:</p>	<p><i>Please visit https://www.whistler.ca/municipal-gov/strategies-and-plans/strategic-plan/ to learn about the four priority areas of RMOW 2023-2026 Strategic Plan:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Housing</i> 2. <i>Climate Action</i> 3. <i>Community Engagement</i> 4. <i>Smart Tourism</i> <p><i>Please determine how your grant (or organization) can contribute to fulfilling any priorities described in the four areas listed above. Each priority has numerous specifications to choose from while describing how your grant (or organization) may help to improve Strategic Plan.</i></p>
<p><i>Example: This grant addresses the priority of “Community Engagement” because it strives to connect locals to each other. Specifically, this is because...</i></p>	
<p>PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT: Because people only care FOR what they first care ABOUT. Through nature educating we help people care ABOUT the environment and in turn those people are much more likely to become stewards. Because to make environmental management planning decisions that protect the environment, you need good data. All our programs have a research component where leading scientists in BC contribute. This unbiased data is invaluable when making environmental management planning decisions, e.g., (i) the protection of the Fitzsimmons Creek Delta; (ii) CCF logging plans and (iii) it has been incorporated conservation reports for the RMOW such as the bi-annual update of local Species and Ecosystems at Risk.</p> <p>ENRICHING COMMUNITY LIFE: Because our community loves to learn, through our programs and online resources we give the community access to learning opportunities. For example, our school program gives students an opportunity to learn from some of BC’s best biologists. Since we are completely volunteer run, we have diverse volunteer opportunities where volunteers feel a sense of belonging with likeminded people who love nature.</p> <p>ENHANCING THE RESORT EXPERIENCE: Our programs and online information give visitors the opportunity to participate in community events and/or explore on their own with a much deeper appreciation of the natural world in Whistler. This promotes a positive atmosphere for the visitor who will feel more connected to the community after participating.</p> <p>ENSURING ECONOMIC VIABILITY: The more the community learns about the natural environment in Whistler, the more we can collectively act as curators of this wonderful place to visitors that come here primarily for a natural experience. We know that people come and stay in Whistler to attend our annual Fungus Among Us Festival, which drives room nights. As natural history cultural opportunities increase, it will only have a positive effect on room nights and visitor satisfaction. Knowledge gained from our events can also contribute to ecotourism businesses that can improve their programming as a result.</p>	

SUPPORT FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

The RMOW is committed to working with the Lílwat People, known in their language as L'il'wat7úl and the Squamish People, known in their language as the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw to: create an enduring relationship; establish collaborative processes for Crown land planning; achieve mutual objectives; and enable participation in Whistler's resort economy.

9. How has your organization considered truth and reconciliation with the Indigenous Nations?

According to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee reconciliation is about “establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in this country.” For many years we tried to include presentations to Xetólacw Community School in Mount Currie to build a relationship with youth and educators from the Lílwat Nation. We finally achieved that goal with successful presentations to four classes both in 2022 and 2023. We're looking forward to being able to offer presentations again in 2024.

GRANT APPLICATION AUTHORIZATION:

Submitted by:	Kristina Swerhun
Phone number:	[REDACTED]
Email:	WhistlerNaturalists@gmail.com
Acknowledgement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • I confirm that the information provided in this CEP Grant Application Form is true;<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • I confirm that a representative is required to present this grant request at a future Council Meeting;<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • I confirm that if any amount is granted that the Grant Reporting Form is due by December 1 of this year;<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • I confirm that if any amount is granted, it will be used only for its intended purpose unless otherwise approved by Council.
Signature:	[REDACTED]

Funding decisions will be announced during a Regular Council Meeting in April 2024.

Please contact the Legislative Services Department at corporate@whistler.ca if you require any assistance.

Personal and third party information provided in this application form is collected under the authority of Section 26(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Should you have any questions regarding the collection, use and disclosure of this information please contact the Legislative and Privacy Coordinator at 604-935-8118 or at 4325 Blackcomb Way, Whistler.