

## NEWS RELEASE

Distributed October 22, 2024

### **City of Nanaimo reveals sci-fi inspired sculptures in Colliery Dam Park**

*Robert Turriff's temporary public art project, "The ReWilders," was designed collaboratively with Nanaimo youth*

#### **Summary**

The City of Nanaimo invites the public to discover The ReWilders, a newly installed Temporary Public Art Program project by artist Robert Turriff. Located in Colliery Dam Park, tucked into the greenery where invasive ivy grows, the two dynamic sculptures symbolize 'rewilding,' the practice of restoring natural habitats. Depicted in the act of removing invasive species and planting native plants, they represent the importance of land stewardship.

The ReWilders are imaginative, sci-fi inspired creatures designed by youth from the Nanaimo community in a collaborative public engagement workshop led by artist Robert Turriff. Eleven youth participated in the free workshop where they created unique, small-scale designs inspired by themes of ecology and plant life. The resulting creatures (Chopper and Jeremy) were chosen by participating youth for large-scale fabrication by the artist. Winter Stewart is the young artist that designed the Jeremy model, and Aidan Araujo-Djilas designed Chopper. The collaborative effort undertaken by the artist in the development of the artwork, represents an intentional process of fostering dialogue, facilitating community involvement and encouraging active engagement and participation by Nanaimo's youth in the City's cultural landscape.

The ReWilders have been deliberately installed in Colliery Dam Park where the City of Nanaimo and community volunteers are actively involved in removing invasive species and restoring natural habitats. This artwork underscores the significance of native ecosystems which support local wildlife, boost climate resilience and endure environmental challenges like drought and climate change.

Robert Turriff grew up in North Vancouver; that's where his fascination with plants and forests began. Now he creates welded sculptures that blend native plants and community engagement, aiming to reconnect people with nature. His work addresses environmental issues like climate change and pollution with a focus on fostering a sense of community ownership through collaboration, particularly with youth.

A free public unveiling of the artwork will take place from 2-4 pm on Saturday, Oct 26 at the site of the sculptures in Colliery Dam Park, just south of the Wakesiah Avenue parking lot. The unveiling will include activities for children of all ages including a 'creature-building' activity station and an opportunity to meet the artist. The ReWilders will be on display through 2029. Additional information on the project, including interactive animations and more on the artist's process, can be found on [the City's website](#).

**Strategic Link:** The Temporary Public Art Program aligns with the goals of the City of Nanaimo's City Plan by facilitating public art that is accessible and freely available to everyone throughout the community to experience and enjoy, as well as incorporating public art into trails and unexpected places.

## Key Points

- The City of Nanaimo invites the public to discover The ReWilders, a newly installed Temporary Public Art Program project by artist Robert Turriff. The project will be on display through 2029.
- Located in Colliery Dam Park, tucked into the greenery where invasive ivy grows, the two dynamic sculptures symbolize 'rewilding,' the practice of restoring natural habitats.
- The ReWilders are imaginative, sci-fi inspired creatures designed by youth from the Nanaimo community in a collaborative public engagement workshop led by artist Robert Turriff.
- A free public unveiling of the artwork will take place from 2-4 pm on Saturday, Oct 26 at the site of the sculptures in Colliery Dam Park, just south of the Wakesiah Avenue parking lot. The unveiling will include activities for children of all ages, including a 'creature-building' activity station and an opportunity to meet the artist.

## Quotes

"This wonderful new addition to our public art program reflects not only the vision and ingenuity of the artist responsible, but the imaginative spirit of our city's talented young people! As you encounter these sculptures along one of the City's accessible trails, I encourage you to stop a moment to appreciate this special collaboration between artist and community."

Leonard Krog  
Mayor  
City of Nanaimo

"ReWilders was an amazing opportunity to collaborate with youth and witness the creativity that lives in all of us. I hope this project inspires the community to embrace creativity in their own lives."

Robert Turriff  
Artist

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View the online edition for more information -

<https://www.nanaimo.ca/NewsReleases/NR241022CityOfNanaimoRevealsSciFiInspiredSculpturesInCollieryDamPark.html>