



SPRING 2026

FROM THE PARK BENCH

Spring has arrived in Charlottetown and the city is coming alive. We embrace brighter days, busier bike paths, and that refreshing pull to get outside, move, and feel the season.

In this From the Park Bench edition, we're rolling into spring with the Charlottetown Bike Bus, a new inspirational and educational helmet video, Earth Day, and peek into the hidden life stirring at Deadman's Pond.

You will also find fresh planting inspiration from our team, plus a lineup of spring events worth stepping out for. It's all about movement, growth, and connecting with the city.

Spring is here, be a part of it.



Click subscribe to receive future newsletters sent directly to your inbox!

WHAT'S INSIDE

Pg. 1 | Charlottetown Bike Bus

Pg. 2 | Helmet On, Wheels Rolling:
A Story That Stays With You

Pg. 4 | Earth Day

Pg. 5 | A Hidden World Wakes Up at
Deadman's Pond!

Pg. 7 | Staff Pick for Planting!

Pg. 8 | Events



CHARLOTTETOWN

Sustainability in the City

Charlottetown Bike Bus

Charlottetown students are hitting the road this spring with the Bike Bus! City staff have been out supporting several student training sessions, helping adult volunteers and students get ready for a successful season.

At the start of each cycling season, staff work with participating schools to host a dedicated Bike Bus prep day. Students receive free bike tune-ups, helmet fittings, bells, and hands-on riding instruction. By the time of their first Bike Bus ride, each participant is properly equipped, along with the skills and confidence needed for a fun and safe group experience.

Cycling to school offers a positive start to the day, encouraging daily physical activity, building independence, and supporting improved focus in the classroom. Riding together in a supervised group enhances safety and road awareness, while also saving families time and fuel. With fewer cars on the road, traffic congestion during school drop-off and pick-up is reduced, benefiting the entire community. Just as importantly, the Bike Bus helps foster friendships and strengthen school connections.

If you're interested in starting a Bike Bus at your school, whether you're a school staff member or a member of the school community, you can email sustainability@charlottetown.ca. To learn more about the Charlottetown Bike Bus visit Charlottetown.ca/BikeBus.



Sustainability in the City

Helmet On, Wheels Rolling: A Story That Stays With You

Behind every Bike Bus ride this season is a powerful message, one that goes far beyond the joy of cycling together. It's about safety, resilience, and the simple choice that can change everything: wearing a helmet.

As part of Charlottetown's Bike Bus program, students have the opportunity to meet Kenneth Murnaghan of Injury Free PEI. Kenneth's story leaves a lasting impression: when he was a child, a bike ride took a sudden turn when he hit a maintenance hole cover without a helmet. The result was a severe brain injury that has shaped his life ever since.

Kenneth shares his experience with students in a way that is honest, impactful, and deeply human. His message is clear: helmets matter. That's why every Bike Bus participant is required to wear one, and why proper helmet fit is a key part of student training.



Sustainability in the City

Continued...

Through Injury Free PEI, Kenneth now works to ensure that all children, regardless of income, have access to properly fitting helmets. And if you spot him around town in the summer, you might even see him rewarding young riders who are wearing their helmets with vouchers for free ice cream cones, a sweet reminder that safety can be celebrated, too.

This year, with support from the Government of PEI, the City has partnered with Kenneth to bring his story to an even wider audience. A short film sharing his story, his message, and his resilience will be released during Bike Week in June 2026.

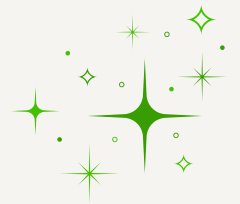
Stay Tuned...



As our Bike Bus riders roll through the streets each week, helmets on and confidence growing, they carry Kenneth's message with them, knowing that simple and safe choices can have a lifelong impact.



Our Environment



Every Day is Earth Day at the Charlottetown Library Learning Centre

This April, the Charlottetown Library Learning Centre teamed up with the City's Environment and Sustainability (E&S) Department to bring a fresh, eco-focused experience to the community.

From the moment visitors stepped inside, they were welcomed by vibrant, rotating book displays curated by E&S staff. Featuring more than 50 handpicked titles from the library's extensive collection, the selections explored everything from cycling and conservation to wildlife and ecosystems, think birds, bikes, zebras, and even zooplankton. Each recommendation offered a glimpse into the environmental work happening locally, as well as the stories around the world that inspire it. But this initiative went beyond books. It created meaningful opportunities for connection between the E&S team and the community they serve.

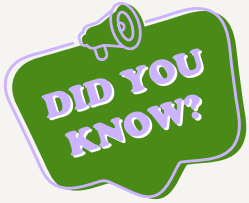
"Community engagement was certainly encouraging," says Taylor Dall, Environmental Project Coordinator with E&S. "I think a part of that is credit to a genuine curiosity, both scientific and interpersonal, about the work we do and why we do it. We're actively pursuing more opportunities for collaboration with the library, and I hope the public finds those equally appealing."

With curiosity sparked and conversations started, this partnership is just the beginning. Stay tuned, because at the library, every day is **Earth Day**.



Spotlight on Nature

A Hidden World Wakes Up at Deadman's Pond



If you've ever taken a quiet walk through Victoria Park in early spring, especially on a damp, drizzly evening, you might have felt like something subtle but special was happening around you. You wouldn't be wrong.



Down by Deadman's Pond, just off the main paths, there's a small seasonal event that most people walk right past without ever noticing. Beneath the leaves, under old logs, and along the soft forest floor, the spotted salamander makes its quiet return.



These black-and-yellow amphibians spend most of the year hidden underground. But as soon as the frost gives way and the rains begin, they emerge and head for the pond to breed. It's not loud or flashy, but if you know where to look, you might find dozens gathered together, tucked beneath logs like a secret community.



Spotlight on Nature

Continued...

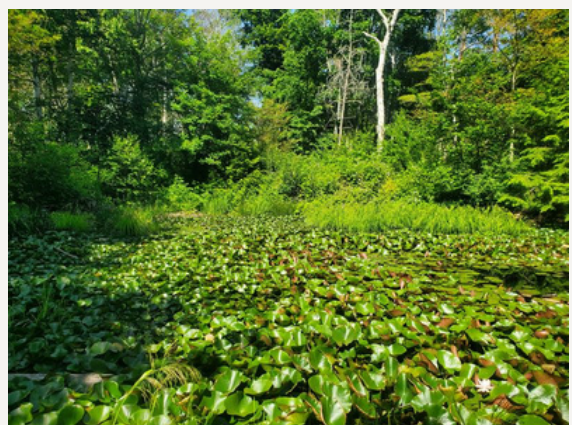
Amphibians are part of a much bigger picture, too. The park's wooded areas are home to other small, often overlooked species like the blue-spotted salamander, along with frogs that start calling as spring settles in. It's a reminder that even in a well-loved city park, there's a whole ecosystem quietly doing its thing.

What's encouraging is that this isn't just happening by chance. There's been a lot of effort put into keeping these habitats healthy, like leaving or placing logs on the forest floor to give amphibians safe places to live. It's simple, but it matters.

If you find yourself exploring Victoria Park this spring, it's worth taking a slower pace. Look closely, but not too closely. Turning over logs or letting pets roam through these spots can do more harm than you might think, and salamanders themselves have their own defenses, including mild toxins.

Mostly, it's about appreciating what's there without interrupting it.

Victoria Park is known for its ocean views and open spaces, but this quieter side, the one unfolding underfoot each spring, is just as much a part of what makes it special.



Spotlight on Nature

Staff Pick for Planting!



Plant Pick: Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*)

Team Member: Kristen Gore

Position: Acting Climate Action Officer

Wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*) blooms in the spring. Its dainty, white, five-petaled flowers with bright yellow centres serve as an important early source of nectar for local pollinators.

By June and July, tiny red berries appear, attracting birds and small mammals looking for a quick snack. These small strawberries are also a delicious treat for humans. While much tinier than the cultivated strawberries found in grocery stores, they are very sweet and can be enjoyed fresh or made into delightful desserts or wild strawberry jam.

Wild strawberries grow in fields and along forest edges, thriving in full sun to partial shade, and can be found throughout North America. They are quite resilient, tolerating salt, drought, and light foot-traffic, making them well suited to most urban yards. As a low-growing groundcover, wild strawberry spreads quickly via runners and is drought-tolerant, remaining green throughout the growing season.



Events

Fix-It Fair | May 23, 2026

The City of Charlottetown and the Charlottetown Learning Library Centre invite you to join us at the Fix-it Fair. Talented volunteer Fixers will be on hand to assist in the free repair of various household items. Fixers will share their knowledge so you can learn to perform similar repairs at home. Participants may bring in one item per person, such as a small appliance or item of clothing.

While waiting for your item to be repaired, meet local organizations at the Community Resource Hub to learn about services and community groups available to Charlottetown residents. Charlottetown.ca/FixItFair 



Date: May 23, 2026



Time: 10:00 AM - 02:00 PM



Location: Charlottetown Library, Rotary Auditorium

Events

Designing Living Landscapes | May 24, 2026



Join City staff in this workshop-style event to encourage and guide residents in planting pesticide-free gardens of native and resilient species. Hear from an expert horticulturalist, and learn gardening and planting tips tailored specifically for your own yard.

Pre-registration is required as space is limited.

Stay tuned to City social media for more details and updates as they become available!



Gardening In Small Spaces | May 30, 2026

Stay tuned for City of Charlottetown communications on an upcoming Gardening in Small Spaces workshop. Learn simple urban gardening tips perfect for balconies, patios or sunny windows. Participants will have the opportunity to take home a microgreens growing kit and a veggie and herb planter.

This drop-in, hands-on event is open to all ages, but supplies are limited and available on a first come, first serve basis.

Join us for a fun afternoon of hands-on gardening and start growing your own fresh food at home!



Date: May 30, 2026



Time: 01:00 PM - 04:00 PM



Location: Victoria Park Cultural Pavillion, Charlottetown

Events

Lady's Slipper Hike

Shake off the spring and step into early summer with us at the Winter River Trail this June for the Lady's Slipper Hike!

Join a guided walk hosted in partnership by the Winter River–Tracadie Bay Watershed Association and the City of Charlottetown, and experience one of nature's most beautiful seasonal displays. The trail comes alive this time of year with delicate Lady's Slipper orchids in bloom, an unforgettable sight you won't want to miss.

Along the way, enjoy fresh air, friendly conversation, and light refreshments as you connect with fellow community members in a relaxed, welcoming setting.

Rain or shine, the trail is calling, come be part of this special seasonal moment!



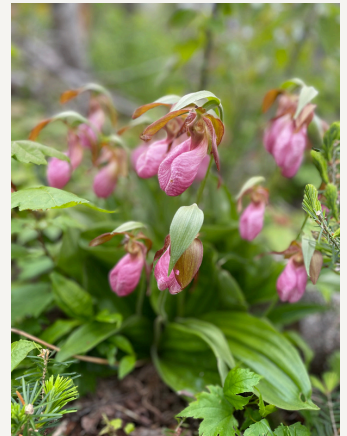
Date: Saturday in June TBD | timed with peak bloom, stay tuned to City of Charlottetown social media for the announcement!)



Time: 10:00 AM



Location: Trail parking lot (E Suffolk Rd Extension)



Events

Bike Week | June 8 - 14, 2026

Bike Week is just around the corner, time to get those wheels turning!

The City is teaming up with local cycling organizations, businesses, and neighbouring municipalities to bring you a full week of fun, interactive events celebrating all things biking. Whether you're a seasoned rider or just getting started, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

From group rides to community activities, Bike Week is all about promoting cycling as a healthy, sustainable, and accessible way to get around, while celebrating the strides being made toward more bike-friendly communities. Riders of all ages and skill levels are encouraged to join in, connect with others, and experience the joy of cycling.

Stay tuned to City social media channels for the full event schedule as it rolls out. You won't want to miss a thing!



Events

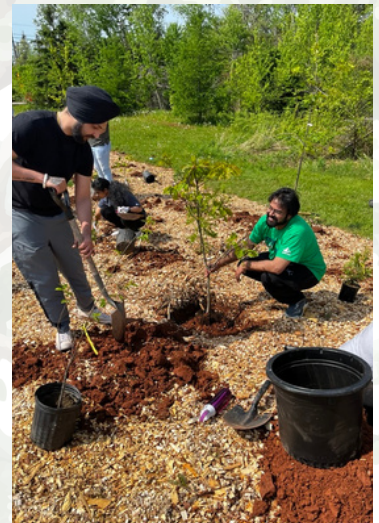
Business Tree Planting Challenge | June 17, 2026

Give your business a simple, meaningful way to go green with the annual Business Tree Challenge! 🌳

The City is inviting local businesses to offset their organization's paper use by taking part in this impactful program. Just one tree can offset more than 8,000 sheets of paper, while helping restore and strengthen Charlottetown's urban tree canopy. It's an easy step with lasting benefits for our environment and community.

This year's trees will take root in Windsor Park, contributing to a greener, healthier city for everyone.

Join the challenge and make your impact grow! For more information, contact sustainability@charlottetown.ca.



Date: June 17, 2026



Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM



Location: Essex Crescent, Windsor Park, Charlottetown

Events

River Ridge Park | June 20, 2026



Foundation

River Ridge Park is growing!

An exciting naturalization project is underway, and you're invited to be part of it. Join the City as we plant more than 200 trees and shrubs, establishing two mini forest areas that will enhance the park for years to come. This free, hands-on community event is open to everyone, no registration required. Come get your hands in the soil, connect with neighbours, and play a role in creating a greener, more vibrant space for all to enjoy.

This initiative is made possible through the generous support of Green Communities Canada. Let's grow something great together!



Date: June 20, 2026



Time: 10:00 AM - 01:00 PM



Location: River Ridge Park (main entrance between 78 and 82 River Ridge Drive)

Events

Local Food Discovery Week | June 20 – 28, 2026

The City of Charlottetown's Food Council Advisory Board is organizing the first, Local Food Discovery Week this June. This will be a passport-style event where participants are encouraged to discover local food available in Charlottetown.

Participants will receive a stamp on their passport for each participating business they visit and will be entered in a draw to win a variety of prizes. The goal of this initiative is to spark curiosity and conversation around local food, while further promoting the vibrant food system in Charlottetown.

Keep an eye on City social media for further information.

