

MEDIA RELEASE

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TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT WINS BCRPA FACILITY EXCELLENCE AWARD Gorge Park Pavilion Honoured with Award for Capital Projects over \$3M

Penticton, BC (May 2, 2024) -- BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) presented its **Facility Excellence Award** for capital projects over \$3 million today to the Township of Esquimalt for the Gorge Park Pavilion (www.bcrpa.bc.ca/membership/provincial-awards).

The award recognizes outstanding facility design that reflects community culture, is innovative in addressing community needs, is accessible to all patrons, serves as a community gathering hub, incorporates green design elements to reduce or eliminate negative impacts on the environment, and ultimately enhances the well-being of the community.

The inspiring 6,000 square foot Esquimalt Gorge Pavilion, built in Esquimalt's Gorge Park, marks the site of the area's first Japanese tea house destroyed nearly 80 years ago. Upon entering the expansive lobby, visitors are greeted by captivating artwork and interpretive displays honoring the legacies of early Japanese immigrants and chronicling the narrative of the site's original Teahouse.

The Pavillion is constructed primarily of local Vancouver Island timber and stone, incorporating innovative energy-saving features and green initiatives. It boasts 126 new high-efficiency solar panels capable of meeting 50% of the building's year-round power needs and powering electric vehicle plug-in stations. The facility operates without a gas connection, instead using heat pumps for heating and cooling.

Outdoor spaces are supported by gravel pathways leading to interconnected ponds and a Japanese-style garden. Indoor spaces offer a range of physical activity programming, fostering social inclusion, gathering, and connections for all ages and abilities from various cultural backgrounds.

"The Township of Esquimalt's Gorge Park Pavilion is a leading example of how to bring a thriving and sustainable community hub to life, one that supports healing, placemaking and community connection," said Katie Fenn, BCRPA CEO. "We are thrilled to present BCRPA's Facility Excellence Award to this outstanding project."

The Facility Excellence Award is one of six Provincial Awards of Excellence presented during BCRPA's annual Symposium conference held this year in Penticton. Each award is presented on behalf of more than 5,000 recreation and parks sector members from across BC working to enhance the physical and mental health, wellness, connectedness, and quality of life of their communities.

The City of Prince George also received an honourable mention for Canfor Leisure Pool.

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BACKGROUND

BCRPA: Inspiring and connecting professionals to build healthy and resilient communities through the power of recreation and parks.

The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA), a not-for-profit organization, plays a central role in leading the enrichment and improvement of the quality of life of British Columbians and their communities. We do this by championing the power of recreation and parks.

Ours is a story of creating community connectedness and individual well-being based on the knowledge and recognition that recreation and active living, as well as access to parks and the natural environment, have significant impacts on our physical and mental health.

Since 1958, the BCRPA has provided leadership, training and support, fostering the principles of accessibility and inclusiveness, to help its members meet provincial and local mental health and physical activity priorities that improve the quality of life of every British Columbian.

www.bcrpa.bc.ca/about-us/