



# SP0162 Final Report

Please answer the following questions and return the completed form to the [SPF Staff](#) via e-mail.

**Project Title:** Macdonald Showcase Permaculture Garden

**Final Report prepared by:** Chris Wrobel and Audrey Wagner

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**Actual Project Start Date:** 2/28/2017

**Actual Project End Date:** 2/28/2018

**1. Please summarize the project and its key accomplishments in 1-2 sentences.**

(400 characters maximum)

A showcase garden on permaculture was created that demonstrates a food production system that is water efficient, resilient, regenerative, biodiverse, requires minimal fertilization, and contains pest prevention inputs. Garden tours, a permaculture week, workshops and a website have generated greater awareness about permaculture on campus.

**2. Your team listed the following goal in your application:**

There will be greater awareness of permaculture at the Macdonald campus. This will lead adopting more permaculture techniques in landscape maintenance at the Macdonald Campus, as well as more teaching of it.

**Did your team achieve your project's goal? In your answer, please describe the impact your project had on McGill's structures, processes, and/or systems. Also, please specify how this positively transformed people's behaviors/perspectives/habits on McGill campus(es).**

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

A diverse array of students were surveyed on January 23rd in the Macdonald Stewart Building lobby. Altogether there were 96 respondents. Survey results (Appendix 1) demonstrated that a clear majority had heard the word "permaculture" before. While about forty percent were aware of the existence of the permaculture showcase garden, a quarter was familiar with its basic concepts, and about twenty percent felt confident about explaining permaculture to a friend. This is encouraging and a very good start. It took a few years for the University of Massachusetts permaculture gardens to achieve a ninety percent awareness about permaculture, even with their quarter of an acre garden in the middle of the campus. We feel that with upcoming events, workshops, projects for credit during the summer, further incorporation of the garden into coursework, etc., that awareness and understanding of the subject will increase.

Through conversations with the head landscaper at the Macdonald campus throughout the summer, there appears to be a greater effort by her to incorporate more sustainable aspects into the campus landscape. For example, she will create a new meditative flower bed next summer beside the John Abbott cafeteria that will have predominantly native species of flowers. This initiative, along with more tree planting in the future, spurred in part by our positive interactions, will help contribute to a more sustainable landscape on campus.

As far as increasing the teaching of the subject, discussions were undertaken with several professors about incorporating some of the permaculture concepts that the project entails into course work. Though much work still has to be done on this initiative, faculty members such as Dr. Carolyn Begg, Dr. Danielle Donnelly and David Wees have embraced the idea.

**3. Please describe the key successes and challenges of your project. (Minimum of two examples for each)**

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

One of the key successes of the project was simply the creation of a biodiverse, colorful garden from a quarter of acre of grass in the Farm Center. This garden is composed of food producing species, herbs that repel certain pest insects and others that attract beneficial ones, flowers that attract a multitude of pollinators, and a base made from recycled cardboard, wood chips sourced from a local contractor, and compost brought in from the Horticulture Center. This base enables the garden to be water efficient. Furthermore, with the incorporation of perennial plant species, trees and nutrient accumulating plants, the garden has minimal greenhouse gas emissions and sequesters carbon dioxide.

Another key success of the project was the relatively large turnout for the events organized for Permaculture Week, for the workshops and for the garden tours. However, one challenge facing the project was getting the Faculty to involve the project in teaching and research. Although this is a very slow process, we feel that this aspect is bound to be successful with time.

Another key project challenge was getting more sustainable practices incorporated into landscape development on campus. Even though more native species and trees are planted every year, there is still a large amount of inorganic fertilizer and irrigation water used for grass landscape aesthetic maintenance. This will take some time, but as awareness increases there will be more pressure on those in charge of the campus grounds to adopt more sustainable practices.

**4. What key points of advice or lessons learned would you give to other SPF teams either regarding your experience managing your project or the project itself?**

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

One key piece of advice is not to be too ambitious in changing University practices when it comes to sustainability. Large universities such as McGill act very slowly and carefully on these issues and it requires some patience and perseverance to alter policies, procedures and practices. Another piece of advice for future SPF teams is to make a realistic timeline to complete project tasks to incorporate possible delays such as weather, waiting times for key materials, etc. Finally, it is important to network with many people. This is because a project such as this one is much easier to accomplish when one has a wide array of contacts that can help you with different aspects of a project, whether it is sourcing project materials or seeking advice on various aspects of the project.

**5. What recommendations do you have for the future of this project to be continued and are there any opportunities for complementary projects? Who will take responsibility for the project's future and how can interested persons be in touch? The SPF team will also be in touch with this contact for updates on the project's progress in coming years, if ongoing.**

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

Currently there is a lot more space available for plants and shrubs. The goal is to increase the number of plant species, build several new structures such as bird houses and an insect hotel, construct a compost bin, and install an archway and a bench. We also wish to add a terraced design, a sustainable mushroom production system, and flat stones for a pathway. We would like to organize more tours, events and workshops that will generate greater awareness about permaculture and sustainable living.

There should be more students involved in the decision making of various aspects of the project. This would involve bringing in people from other departments on campus such as Bioresource Engineering, which would bring in different ideas and projects to the garden. Moreover, more clubs on campus should also be encouraged to get involved in the project. This could include doing joint projects and running joint events with the Permaculture Club.

Data collection (flowering times, yields, plant survival rates, etc.) should be done starting next summer. This will provide a record of the project for year to year comparisons and will help generate new ideas for research directions.

The people that will be responsible for the project's future include Audrey Wagner, Ella Martin, Sophie Theron and Dylan Davies.

6. **Would you or your project team member(s) be willing to serve as a mentor to SPF project teams? Please choose one. If yes, SPF Staff will contact you with more information.** (800 characters maximum)

Yes  No

7. **In your application, you listed the following sources of funding:** N/A

**Please confirm if you received this funding in the space below. In your response, please list the actual amount (in dollars) that you received. Note: If you received funding from a McGill Department or Unit, please attach a letter from its Financial/Budget Officer confirming the actual amount of support.**

(1,800 characters maximum)

8. **Did you purchase equipment or make an installation on campus?**  Yes  No

**If yes, please briefly describe how these items will be maintained and used in the future.**

(1,800 characters maximum)

We purchased some garden tools that are currently stored for the winter in a shed near the garden which is shared with MSEG. There is also a pergola that was built on the project site which has been secured and will be periodically inspected.

9. **The following Key Success Indicators were indicated in your project application and selected for tracking. Please indicate the actual results that you have achieved in the "Actual" column.**

Selected Key Success Indicators	Target	Actual
% of poll responses aware of the Permaculture Showcase Garden	75%	40%
# of attendees of Permaculture Showcase Garden tour	25	100
% increase in native species being used on downtown and Mac campuses	2%	2%

**If there is a significant difference in the target numbers and the actual numbers achieved, please explain. If you have any additional information to share about these success indicators, please also include it below.**

(1,800 characters maximum)

Forty percent of the respondents to the poll were aware of the Permaculture Showcase Garden. While our target was seventy five percent, this may have been too ambitious for the first year. The project is in a hidden corner of the campus, as opposed to the permaculture gardens at the University of Massachusetts which are located in strategic areas of the campus grounds and are supplying one of the student cafeterias with food. However we feel that a larger degree of awareness is achievable in a relatively short period of time because of the workshops, collaborations and projects planned for the next year.

There were more than one hundred attendees for tours of the garden site. Besides the ones that came during Permaculture Week, there were other people from organizations outside the campus that came, such as the Hope and Cope Wellness Cancer Center and the RUQDD.

By next year there will be an increase of two percent in the number of native species planted on the Macdonald campus with the creation of the aforementioned meditative garden beside the John Abbott cafeteria. We never got around to talking with Eric Champagne, who is in charge of the landscape on the downtown campus.

**10. Please report on your results for the standard SPF Key Success Indicators in the “Actual” column.**

Standard SPF Key Success Indicators	Actual #
# of volunteers directly or indirectly engaged in the project	>100
# of people (student, staff, or other) trained in the context of the project	30
\$ raised for project activities subsequent to SPF funding	\$3000
# of partnerships or collaborations developed between the project team and other McGill administrative units, student groups, community groups, other universities, and/or other groups/organizations.	9

**Regarding the last Key Success Indicator, please list the groups and/or organizations that you counted.**

(Unlimited characters; point form acceptable.)

The Macdonald Campus Library (Seed Saving Project), the Macdonald Wildlife Club, McGill World Wildlife Fund, McGill Wildlife Association, the Sierra Club of Canada, the Hope and Cope Wellness Center of the Jewish General Hospital (McGill affiliated), the Dietetics and Human Nutrition Undergraduate Society (DHNUS), the McGill Office of Sustainability (MOOS), and P3 Permaculture.

**If you have any additional information to share about the Standard SPF Key Success Indicators, please include it below.** (1,800 characters maximum)

It is at times hard to separate the success of the McGill Permaculture Club from the success of the SPF-funded Macdonald Permaculture Showcase Garden, since the club is constantly promoting the garden and both projects aim to ultimately promote permaculture in general. Thus, I, Audrey, believe it is worth mentioning that the McGill Permaculture club has attracted over 400 attendees to its events since its foundation in September 2016. Some of these attendees acted as volunteers when the event took the form of a workshop which benefitted the garden, and others can be said to have been trained, or at least educated, in permaculture theory and practice. Furthermore, the McGill Permaculture Club has partnered and collaborated with more organizations and groups than have been listed here, and many of these partnerships carry over to the garden project.

**11. Please indicate the McGill stakeholder groups that were involved with your project as a team member or collaborator/partner. Choose all that apply.**

Undergraduate  Postgraduate  Administrative Staff  Academic Staff  Alumni

**12. Please rate your project team’s overall satisfaction with the support provided by the SPF Staff. Choose only one response.**

Very Dissatisfied  Dissatisfied  Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied  Satisfied  Very Satisfied

**13. Please provide any feedback or recommendations regarding your team’s experience with the SPF.**

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

It is a huge task for many to write an application to the SPF. Besides filling in the forms, there is a lot of material to read and think about. It would be helpful if there was a person paid part time by the SPF to promote and help in the writing of projects. The original intention when the SPF was first created was to have such people (students) hired part time by the SPF to serve as SPF ambassadors. Maybe this idea should be revisited. This could help facilitate the creation of more projects on the Macdonald campus.

A large portion of the administrative work for the project, and a very large amount of time, is taken up by sending emails back and forth with the SPF concerning details of purchases. The fact that only the SPF can make payments and manage the funds of the project complicates the process greatly and also forces one to only buy items or services which can be bought online through a credit card (since the reimbursements take up to 6 months to be processed).

**14. If there is additional information you would like to share about your project, please use the field below.**

(Unlimited characters)

**Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank Paul Meldrum for believing in our project and providing us with the land and other resources to help us install the showcase garden. We would like to also thank Mike Bleho, director of the Horticulture Center, for the compost, its transportation, and the expertise that he provided us with throughout the summer. We are also grateful to the people that wrote letters of support for the project. These include David Wees, Dr. Carolyn Begg, Dr. Jim Fyles, Dr. Jan Adamowski and Paul Meldrum.

We would like to acknowledge the hard work and effort put forth by Ella Martin, summer garden coordinator. She helped design the garden beds, created and managed the project blog and website, helped lay the garden foundation and helped maintain the many different species in the garden. We are also in gratitude to P3 Permaculture and to some of the students from its Permaculture Design Certificate course last spring that came out in early May to help put together the initial design of the garden project. We would also like to thank the thirty plus volunteers that came out at different occasions during the summer to help install the project. Honorable mentions go out to Evan Buckiewicz who volunteered on several occasions, and to Mathieu Roberge, who positioned and guided the construction of the project's two swales, as well as provided the design and materials for the building of the pergola.

We would also like to thank all the work that the executives of the Permaculture Club at the Macdonald campus contributed toward a successful Permaculture Week at the campus during the last week of September. These people include Dylan Davies, Ella Martin, Sophie Theron, Catherine Fredette and Clementine Mattesco. Dylan Davies and Monica Revuelta Alberro, another graduate of the P3 Permaculture Certificate last spring, also came and helped administer the survey to measure permaculture awareness in January.

We are in deep gratitude to Susan Smith, coordinator of the Career and Planning Service at the Macdonald Campus. Through her efforts and the use of her car we were able to collect over 95% of the cardboard needed for the foundation of the project. On a number of occasions she also helped us to pick up and assemble the tools that we used throughout the summer, such as the wheelbarrow. She also let us use her backyard on campus to help harden off the over eight hundred plants that we used in the garden project.

I, Audrey Wagner, would like to officially thank Christopher Wrobel once again for his invaluable work and vision that made this whole project come to life. He is responsible for the bulk of the work involved for the project from beginning to end and has worked tirelessly to make this project a success. His passion, humility and good-heartedness kept him going strong through all phases of the project, all without any financial remuneration. Chris showed patience and positivity through the more challenging times of the project, which helped everyone involved get through. His insight, experience and intelligence were also invaluable to the garden's creation. Chris was entirely responsible for managing the budget, along with many other aspects of the project, and did so seamlessly. Chris is a great colleague to work with and it has been an absolute pleasure and honor to share this experience with him over the past year.

Finally, I, Chris Wrobel, would like to thank Audrey Wagner for accepting the challenge of becoming the project leader. She met it with enthusiasm and passion. She also contributed many well thought out ideas throughout the project that led to its success. And this past fall, as garden coordinator, she successfully organized a number of well attended workshops and events, as well as tending to a number of other responsibilities that her role required. She will continue to add new ideas and possibilities to the project to help it evolve to the next level as a platform for learning and change. She will do this with the focus, hard work and dedication that she applies to all the endeavours that she undertakes in her life.

**15. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of professional growth?**

**Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below.** (800 characters maximum)

- Yes  No  Prefer Not to Share

It has allowed members of our team to develop skills in budgeting, communicating with stakeholders, event planning, gardening, farming, natural building, leadership, teamwork, and project management.

**16. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of personal growth?**

**Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below.** (800 characters maximum)

- Yes  No  Prefer Not to Share

It has allowed members of our team to develop interpersonal skills, patience, compassion, responsibility, and passion.

**17. Which of the following skills or attributes has your team improved through involvement in your SPF project? Choose all that apply.**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Budgeting      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Networking                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Systems Thinking                          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teamwork                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving            | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology                                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Management         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Time Management                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listening                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking            | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Engagement     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify in the field below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiating               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Identification |  |

Other:

**18. Since starting your SPF project, has your team improved its knowledge of sustainability?**

**Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below.** (800 characters maximum)

- Yes  No  Prefer Not to Share

**19. (Optional) If applicable, please list the total number of team members voluntarily self-identifying as members of marginalized communities: 3**

**Please identify the represented communities below. (e.g. women, Indigenous people, people of colour, LGBTTQI, student parents, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities)**

(1,800 characters maximum)

Women, LGBTTQI

**Thank you for completing your Final Report!**

Please e-mail your report to the [SPF Staff](#) attaching any additional information that you would like to share about your project (e.g. other reports, research, documents, photos, etc.). Please note that this Final Report will be shared publicly on your SPF project's webpage.