

PROJECT TITLE: SP0217 MAC REGENERATIVE FOOD HUB

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

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Actual Project Start Date 2019-06-09

Actual Project End Date 2019-10-31

Questions

1. Please summarize the project and its key accomplishments to date. In your answer, consider the impact your project has had so far on McGill's campus(es).
(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

The Mac Regenerative Food Hub (MRFH) is an umbrella organization that regroups different projects and clubs around Mac campus of McGill University and/or in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue that revolve around regenerative food and agriculture. All partner projects share the desire to push for a better food system around our campus. Through MRFH, connections between like-minded clubs and groups of students/volunteers on and off-campus were magnified and enriched. For example, the McGill Permaculture Club is now in communication with CRC de l'Ouest-de-l'Île which has allowed many volunteers to become aware of the many permaculture gardens in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue. This same club is also in communication with another partner project, Out of the Garden Project, in order to reduce food waste from the permaculture garden on campus.

The garden volunteer sessions facilitated by the garden coordinators allowed many people to deepen their theoretical and hands-on knowledge of permaculture. Furthermore, with MRFH week and social media such as the Facebook page and the website, students of Mac Campus were able to be more aware of what is available to them in terms of initiatives and events related to food systems and sustainability.

The building of the Outdoor Classroom was very successful and positively impacted the Mac community during its planning phase, its construction up until the end product. Mac students in Bioresource Engineering designed the structure and greatly contributed to the building, along with a few volunteers. It allowed many volunteers and friends to develop their building skills, to work in teams, and to learn how to take directions from a project leader.

We are still currently reaching out to professors and clubs on campus to inform them of the Outdoor Classroom. This space is available to all for lectures, laboratories, guest speakers, shows, etc. Many professors have expressed interest in teaching outside in the garden. As professors and students will use the outdoor classroom, we will have increased the campus' link to nature, which we believe is beneficial for Mac campus' image as well as for students' wellbeing.

2. 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 main successes is related to our networking efforts. Through the MRFH we were able to strengthen ties between many different clubs and projects on and off campus that all have a common goal. We increased communication between them thus reinforcing mutual aid and a sense of community between like-minded students and people. We were able to put our ideas together and help each other out to achieve our common goals. Our level of efficiency has benefited from being aware of each other's needs and in contact with others. However, it will be a challenge to keep this level of interconnectedness thriving since, for the moment, it requires a network coordinator to facilitate communications for the Hub. If no student is interested in taking over this position in the following year, it will be harder to ensure the project's viability.

Another issue that most of the partner projects are facing a lack of funding and possibilities to pay for summer employees. This is an issue that has been ongoing for years in many student-run projects that are too ambitious for

the resources they have, and we don't think it will be resolved by this project in such a short amount of time. Working on this project has given us better insight on this problem, its causes and consequences, and has showed us that many projects were in the same situation. This has been used to strengthen the links between partners facing the same issue.

A key success of the project was the many people who visited the garden for a tour or a workshop. This number exceeded 100 participants. A large tour given to students and teachers from Dawson and Vanier colleges as well as a workshop given in collaboration with Naughty Nettle Medicinals brought many first-time visitors to the garden.

It was challenging to recruit and maintain volunteers during the summer (July and August) since these were usually students and were therefore not on campus during this time. As well, since reaching out to community organizations/residents only began with the start of SPF funding in June, this wasn't early enough to find volunteers from the surrounding communities. The lack of volunteers made the problem of the Japanese beetle pest worse since there weren't enough volunteers to help control the pest damage when it peaked in mid-summer. Therefore, the damage was significant this year, and could potentially continue into next year if the larvae wasn't killed by the application of nematodes in September.

3. 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)

Focus on your objectives, don't be carried away from your purpose by accessory tasks; but know how to realistically re-evaluate your objectives and correct your path during the project. For example, one must make sure to not put too much focus on garden tasks and not enough on permanent structures such as the website, a newsletter, and partners meetings. Other suggestions include being realistic about what is needed, having more people thinking about and aware of the budget, and being more critical. Asking external opinions is a good to take a step back from your project and include other brains in the equation, which reduces the chances of errors being made.

4. 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)

Due to the nature of the network, which includes different gardens, the continued survival of the project will depend on long-term engagement from community members (especially during the summer) in addition to students. These connections must be created and maintained throughout the year so that individuals are keen to participate when it is needed most in the summer. Likewise, connections with community organizations and schools must be fostered during the school year. Complimentary projects such as internships and workshops should be continued and developed with these organizations, individual community members, or students who are available during the summer months.

An email address used to communicate between the different partners and members is available: info.mrfoodhub@gmail.com. A Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/macregenerativefoodhub/> and a website <https://infomrfoodhub.wixsite.com/mrfh> were also created. These can be used to communicate with the MRFH team, since the person in charge at the moment might not always be there in the future - this email address will be common to all future members of the MRFH team. Stéfanie Larose and the McGill Permaculture Club are mostly in charge of administering the network for the moment. At least one person must remain in charge of coordinating the partners and calling the meetings, as well as maintaining the website and checking the MRFH email regularly.

The partner organizations of the MFRH should continue to attend regular partner meetings, prompted by a

coordinator, and it is through these regular meetings that the network will continue. Communications and marketing is crucial for the MRFH to maintain visibility and its usefulness in uniting these different initiatives and being Mac's "one-stop-shop" for everything regenerative food systems. A recommendation for the future would be to clarify and roll out the details of the MRFH membership, something that has been discussed extensively with the MRFH partners, but not finalized yet.

Furthermore, there is a big potential to link up with the new McGill Food Coalition, who have a very similar vision.

5. 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

6. In your application, you listed the following sources of funding:

Student Experience Enhancement Fund (2018), \$1,200; SSMU Environment Fund, \$3,000; MCSS, \$200

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)

We had the SEEF fund and MCSS money previously, however, we did not receive the SSMU Environment Fund amount. This is why we amended our budget at the beginning of the project, as we did not receive the SSMU funding like we expected to.

7. 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)

The Outdoor Classroom is one of the most ambitious projects the Mac students have undertaken since the creation of the Macdonald Permaculture Showcase Garden. With around \$1000 worth of material (lumber, screws, oil, etc.) a structure capable of holding 50 people was built. This was also an opportunity for members of the executive team to get hands on experience on how to manage untrained labor and volunteers.

Little maintenance will be needed for this structure. The people taking care of the Mac Permaculture Showcase Garden will have to make sure there is no overgrowth of vegetation underneath the benches as to not clog the ditch, which is a task that can easily be integrated with other garden tasks.

Because the garden has an organic mindset, it has renounced the use of synthetic chemicals and preservatives for the wood. This natural lumber is going to be treated with linseed oil and turpentine, natural replacers of their synthetic counterparts. These agents will be applied every third year as traditional knowledge deems fit. Because the Classroom was designed by engineers who wanted to make it very safe, its theoretical load limit is above the 50 people practical bench space.

Discussion with teachers and teacher auxiliaries are underway to permit this structure to be the learning experience facilitator it was destined to become.

8. 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 workshop participants	20	25
# of garden tour participants	30	128
# of ASR projects, courses or internships completed by students in the garden	5	6

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)

The garden tours attracted a lot of people during the first half of the summer; in August, the number of tours given and volunteers slowed down. This may be explained by the fact that a lot of people are on vacation during that time. Also, we might have reached the end of our pool of contacts, and it was harder to get new people to come to the garden in this isolated time that is the month of August. Nevertheless, the number of workshops and tours participants is far above our expectations, which demonstrate a strong interest from the community for the project we are proposing. John Abbott College students and profs showed interest in coming to the garden to volunteer in the future. The MRFH team was present at Macdonald Homecoming and had many contacts with alumni. We had great feedback from the people we talked to about our project. We were supposed to give tours of the MPSG to the alumni in the afternoon but a heavy rain unfortunately prevented this from happening.

9. Please report on your progress with 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	153
# of people (student, staff, or other) trained in the context of the project	12
\$ raised for project activities subsequent to SPF funding	0
# of tons of GHG emissions reduced by your project	NA
# 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.	11

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

(Unlimited characters; point form acceptable.)

Mac Student Run Ecological Gardens (MSEG)
 Mac Permaculture Showcase Garden (MPSG) and McGill Permaculture Club
 Fruit Tree Bike Path
 Senneville Food Forest
 McGill Bee Club (formerly McGill Apicultural Association)
 Gardenvale Permaculture Gardens
 Out of the Garden Project
 Happy Belly
 Buy Your Own Bulk
 Microbiome Project
 Harpell Permaculture Garden

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

GHG emissions, water saved and food waste avoided were not measured during this project. These indicators are complex to measure given the multiple partners that make our network and the diversity of initiatives it encompasses (from gardens to cooking clubs to beekeeping club). However, our team is very motivated to learn about these indicators in the future and would like to make it the topic of student applied research of internship. This would combine the benefits of student applied research, that help students grow and get real-life experience in the field; and the benefits of data collection and analysis about indicators of sustainability and regeneration. We wish to measure not only how many tons of GHG were not released but how many were permanently fixed in the soil; how much food was diverted from landfills; how much money, packaging and resources students have saved by eating within the network; how much water was naturally stored by the gardens instead of coming from artificial sources; etc. The complexity of these indicators provides a great topic for students to work on.

10. 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

11. 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

12. Please provide any feedback or recommendations regarding your team's experience with the SPF
(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

The delay for reimbursement of purchases, that cannot be anticipated through SPF is very long. Moreover, some purchases could not be planned in advance since they arose from unexpected needs. For example, the Japanese beetles infestation could not be foreseen, thus no budget was planned for it. When we realized we needed to order pheromone traps or nematodes to control this pest insect, it was hard to move the budget to a category that was not planned at the beginning of the project. We understand the reasons why the budget is so well supervised and see that official budget amendments are available to us, but we would like to have been more independent financially. We feel that it is unrealistic for our budget to be inflexible and not adaptable to new circumstances.

13. If there is additional information you would like to share about your project, please use the field below.
(Unlimited characters)

14. 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

This project has helped our members develop important communication skills needed to successfully lead a team to a milestone. For example, when the Outdoor Classroom building workshops were given, it was aimed towards specific learning outcomes. For example, it was planned to build at least one bench in one day. In truth, with unskilled workers - who are willing to learn - this was not achievable. Furthermore, the foreman was also supposed to be the teacher. Making sure the bench was built right while also having interesting learning experiences for the participants was achieved by making the milestone more realistic. This created a perfect learning experience of woodworking for the participants, but also an experience of teaching woodworking for the teacher.

Others of us have gained professional confidence and experience through organizing and facilitating stakeholder meetings and attending outsider consulting meetings, as well as networking extensively in the community.

15. 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

Working with people from different backgrounds who are interested in making resilient agroecosystems is very enlightening.

Having a conversation on actual strategies to achieve specific goals can make you have new point of views. For example, tackling the problem of Japanese beetles helped us imagine possibilities of solving the problem through garden design and biocontrol methods. It is these types of interactions that really makes you wonder what other possibilities you missed before by not sharing your ideas with people from different backgrounds. Being involved in such a new experience with a new team of people certainly helped each team member grow and learn.

16. 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 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 checked="" 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 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiating | <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Identification | the field below) |

Other:

17. 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

Yes, especially social and financial sustainability. We identified a lack of sustainable and continuous financial resources for student-run initiatives at McGill and saw that this was a problem that several groups are experiencing. This lack of financial sustainability, in having projects funded for just a few month's time like this one, instead of 3 years for example, negatively impacts the potential environmental sustainability that could be achieved at McGill. Social and biological processes take long periods of time, and 6 months is too short of a time to make substantial change in most cases.

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

Please identify the represented communities below. (e.g. women, Indigenous people, people of colour, LGBTTTQI, student parents, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities)
(1,800 characters maximum)

3: Women, immigrants, members of the LGBTQ community.

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.