



S.P.Y.

Sustainable Planning for Youth

Final Report

Submitted to
The Environmental Trust Fund

ETF Project No. 070261

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The Rural and Small Town Programme
Mount Alison University

November 2007



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Executive Summary

With funding from the New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund (ETF), the Rural and Small Town Programme (RSTP) organized and facilitated **SPY Camp: Sustainable Planning for Youth** during summer 2007. It was the first rural community planning day camp for youth in New Brunswick that we are aware of. Twenty-four 10 to 12 year old detectives explored and investigated their local community, land use planning, sustainable development, environmental issues, heritage and culture through a series of hands-on missions.

The project involved designing the camp program, advertising the camp to communities in south eastern New Brunswick, facilitation of the camps, evaluating them and creating a programme guide. Once funding approval from ETF was granted, RSTP began the process of planning for a 3-day summer camp programme in three communities scheduled for late July and early August. A call for letters of interest was sent out to 10 communities in south eastern New Brunswick. Only Cambridge-Narrows submitted a letter of interest – all other communities advised us that they were interested. However, the invitation to participate arrived too late to incorporate it into their summer programming. Thus, we organized two camps in Sackville (home to RSTP) and one in Cambridge-Narrows. Local people in both communities were partnered with in order to design camp programmes around local issues.

SPY Camp was organized and delivered in three sections: Community and Land Use Planning, Sustainable Development and the Environment, and Heritage and Culture. Each day began with a secret message from the mysterious Detective Dalton, which outlined a series of missions to be completed. Some of the missions campers participated in were:

- Investigating services and infrastructure in the local community
- Exploring land uses and zoning maps
- Investigating nature with the use of SPY scopes and magnifying glasses
- Taking on animals aliases to learn about habitat needs of wildlife
- Putting on disguises and becoming stakeholders at a community meeting
- Measuring ecological footprints
- Hunting for historical and cultural scavenger hunt items
- Exploring a house built in 1840 being turned into a museum
- Creating dream communities

We consider the first year of SPY Camp a great success. Due to its many positive outcomes, and great feedback from campers, parents and local partners, we hope to offer SPY Camp again next year. In conclusion, SPY Camp was a valuable experience not only for the youth in each community but also for those of us who work on community and environmental issues.

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Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge and thank the following organizations and individuals for helping to make SPY Camp a great success in its first year. The New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund and Mount Allison University provided financial support. Tracey Wade, Ron Corbett, David Bruce, and Zoe Finkel reviewed the initial programme outline. Lori Bickford, Dawn Bremner, Robena Weatherly, Alicia Steeves, and staff at the Boultenhouse Museum facilitated fantastic activities. Gwen Zwicker and Alexis Trebble provided administrative assistance. Rob Lyon created excellent t-shirts for the campers and camp leaders. Laura Dillman wrote wonderful press releases. School principals Diane Murray-Barker and Duane McLellan helped spread the word. Judi McLellan shared resources, books and ideas. And most importantly we want to thank the young spies who participated with great enthusiasm for community planning and sustainable development. They are the future and they are our inspiration.

1. Introduction

Today's youth are rarely given the chance to voice their opinions about the community in which they live, or express ideas about changes they would like to see in the future. However, youth are keen to have a say in the development of their communities and there is much that can be learned from them if they are given the chance to teach us. Furthermore, there is great need for students to enter the planning profession, but many do not know what it is to be a planner. There currently exist some urban planning programmes directed at youth such as the Canadian Institute of Planners' *A Kid's Guide to Building Great Communities*, however New Brunswick lacks accessible, locally-based rural and environmental planning programs for youth.

During the summer of 2007, the Rural and Small Town Programme (RSTP) addressed the above gap by organizing and facilitating SPY Camp: Sustainable Planning for Youth. It was the first rural community planning day camp for youth in New Brunswick that we are aware of. The Rural and Small Town Programme is a research and planning office at Mount Allison University that prepares people and organizations to adapt to change and to act on opportunities for developing sustainable rural communities and small towns. The Programme links research and action by generating and sharing new knowledge, developing self-help tools, and providing information and educational services which lead to innovative approaches and solutions.

With funding from the New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund and Mount Allison University, 10 to 12 year old detectives explored and investigated their local community, land use planning, sustainable development, environmental issues, heritage and culture through a series of missions.

The games and activities were hands-on and interactive. Group and team work was the focus as the campers learned personal responsibility for their communities and the planet, environmental action, and citizenship.



It is our hope that SPY camp will empower young participants to later become involved in their communities and take action to help their local environment.

The campers' awareness of

local issues and planning challenges increased as did their sense of personal responsibility and ability to make a difference. SPY camp opened the participants' eyes to the complexity and interconnectedness of their community as well as their local environment. We are hopeful that over a longer time period, a new generation of environmentally minded young people interested in the planning profession as a career

choice will emerge to address the social and environmental challenges faced in New Brunswick.

2. Objectives

The objectives for SPY Camp were:

- 1) The campers will have increased awareness about rural community issues including community planning, local environmental issues, sustainable land use planning, culture and heritage.
- 2) The campers will develop increased environmental awareness and sense of personal responsibility.
- 3) The campers will have new skills concerning rural planning and sustainable development.
- 4) A guide book will be developed listing activities and ideas for a rural youth planning programme, which could be used to run future day camps in an on-going fashion, or by multiple municipalities.

The above objectives of knowledge and skill acquisition were measured through group discussions, individual/personal expressions of the participants' new skills and knowledge through art, theatre, and personal action (such as commitment to an "environmental step"). Feedback on the success and popularity of the programme was obtained through evaluation forms from the campers, their parents and local municipal officials.

3. Methods

This project was led by Amanda Marlin, research associate and camp coordinator with RSTP. It also employed fourth year geography student Sarah Blake-Dickson as a camp leader. The experience offered Sarah, who is interested in community planning, a valuable leadership opportunity. The methodology for this project involved securing funding, designing the camp program, advertising the camp to communities in south eastern New Brunswick, facilitation of the camps, evaluating them and creating a programme guide.

Funding

Funding for this project was obtained from the New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund, Mount Allison University, and a private donation. In-kind donations were also made by local organizations and individuals who assisted with administrative tasks or facilitated camp activities. The majority of the funding, from the Environmental Trust

Fund, was received much later than expected, in mid June 2007. Due to the delayed funding announcement, it was decided that RSTP would offer a 3-day summer camp in three communities in south eastern New Brunswick in late July and early August.

Programme Design

With funding in place, research began into existing materials, programs and resources in order to design the camp programme. Ideas were adapted from the Canadian Institute of Planners' *A Kid's Guide to Building Great Communities*, as well as the *Junior Citizen Planner Program* by Michigan State University Extension, and other resources. We also designed and created our own original activities.



Nature investigation in Cambridge-Narrows!

To help make community planning exciting for children, the programme focused on a spy and detective theme. A mysterious Detective Dalton dropped off secret case files each morning filled with missions for the participants to complete. During the exciting, hands-on missions, participants discovered interesting facts about their community, land uses, environmental issues, and local culture and heritage through creating maps, conducting surveys, undercover work, and

other sneaky spy tactics! The full SPY Camp programme can be read in the *SPY Camp Sustainable Planning for Youth Programme Guide*. The outline for SPY Camp was:

Day 1 – Community and Land Use Planning (9am to 4pm)

- Pass a security clearance test to obtain SPY kits and t-shirts
- Decipher different kinds of secret messages
- Test knowledge of spy lingo and secret codes
- Explore the services and infrastructure of the community by filling in a survey in small groups
- Learn about land uses and zoning maps and explore the different land uses in the community
- Learn what kids like and dislike in the local community
- Make maps of the community, highlight the places in town that are important

Day 2 – Sustainable Development and the Environment (9am to 4pm)

- Decode a secret message about sustainable development from Detective Dalton
- Investigate nature with the use of scopes and magnifying glasses

- Create an art gallery in the forest
- Play games that teach habitat needs of wild animals and predator-prey relationships and strategies
- Take on the roles of stakeholders at a community meeting about a challenging sustainable development issue
- Measure ecological footprints and commit to take an environmental step

Day 3 – Heritage, Culture and Dreaming (9am to 4pm)

- Go on a historical and cultural scavenger hunt around the local community
- Explore an old house being converted into a museum. (Campers searched for clues about the family that lived there in the 1800s!)
- Plan, design and build dream communities incorporating things learned during camp
- Play a trivia game about SPY Camp
- Award certificates of completion
- Fill out evaluation forms

A detailed curriculum, including learning outcomes, was reviewed by Tracey Wade and Ron Corbett of the New Brunswick Planners Institute, Lori Bickford of the Tantramar Planning Commission, David Bruce, Director of the Rural and Small Town Programme, and Zoe Finkel, Coordinator of the Environmental Science Program at Mount Allison University for comments and feedback on planning and environment issues before implementation.



Piecing together history.

Community Involvement

A camp was planned for Sackville, NB. For the two other camps, a call for letters of interest was sent out. The call was mailed and e-mailed to 10 other communities in south eastern New Brunswick (Cambridge-Narrows, Port Elgin, Dorchester, Rexton, Salisbury, Peticodiac, Sussex, Sussex Corner, Hillsborough, and River-Side Albert.) See Appendix A for the letter, which was mailed Tuesday, June 12, 2007.

Cambridge-Narrows was the only community who answered our call for letters of interest. Other communities were interested and supportive of a rural community planning camp coming to their town, but the timing was too late to organize anything for the summer. Thus, we organized and facilitated one camp in Sackville (July 24-26), one in Cambridge-Narrows (July 31-August 2), and a second camp in Sackville (August 8-10). See sections 4, 5, and 6 for detailed descriptions of these camps. Participants were charged a \$10 registration fee which also helped to cover the costs of SPY t-shirts.

Evaluation and Feedback

At the end of each camp we sought feedback and evaluation from participants, their parents, and the municipal partners. We also reflected on our own experience in running the camps. These sources of information helped us to evaluate the success of the camps, and to determine how they could be improved in the future.

Programme Guide

After the completion of the camps, a complete guide to running SPY Camp called *SPY Camp: Sustainable Planning for Youth Programme Guide* was written. The guide is available in hard copy and on our website (www.mta.ca/rstp/). Other groups and rural communities across Canada may benefit from it and use it to develop a similar camp in their community.

Professional Development and the Final Report

Amanda Marlin attended a workshop called Facilitating Youth Groups to gain a deeper understanding of working with youth toward environmental goals and to assist in the development of the program guide and final report. The final report was written to summarize all activities related to SPY Camp and the development of the program guide.

4. Camp #1: Sackville, NB

The first camp was held in Sackville. Handouts were given to every grade 5 and 6 student at Marshview Middle School during the last week of classes before summer vacation to advertise the camp. Posters were put up at Marshview Middle School as well as Salem Elementary School and around town (see Appendix B for the handouts and posters). Marshview Middle School sent out a talk mail telephone message about the camp to all families with 10 to 12 year old children. A press release was also sent out about SPY Camp (see Appendix C).



In Sackville, 12 children registered for the camp. One person forgot so we had 11 campers joined us on Mount Allison University's campus from July 24th to 26th. The camp went well following the activities outlined in the programme guide. Lori Bickford from the Tantramar District Planning Commission facilitated a session on land use planning with the campers. She brought zoning maps and future land use maps of Sackville. She also let the

campers explore an interactive, GIS-based property map of Sackville. They were able to type in their name and their property became highlighted on the screen.

Campers got the chance to be detectives (and researchers) and interview each other about their likes and dislikes of Sackville. Many of the campers said they like the town parks and especially the Waterfowl Park, which has a series of boardwalks and trails through a wetland. Campers also like the downtown and that Sackville is quiet and small and has nice people. Some of the important challenges for Sackville, according to the campers, are littering, bullies, not enough stores (for food and clothing), and not enough equipment (jungle gyms, etc.) in the local playgrounds and parks.

Participants really enjoyed the games, scavenger hunt and especially the dream community activity, where they worked in small groups to design and build their own community. Students were given hand drawn base maps featuring old growth forests, rivers, lakes, wetlands, etc. It was up to them if they wanted to preserve these natural features or fill them in for development. All groups developed their communities sustainably. Two communities even featured wind turbines. Campers were overheard saying, "Stop that; let's get back to planning." "We'll put our single family houses here and our duplexes there." From this activity it was clear that participants understood the lessons about land uses, community design, and sustainable development. The finished communities were on display for the month of August at the Tantramar District Planning Commission in downtown Sackville. A second press release announced that the campers' work was on display (see Appendix C).

Some participants would like to see the camp be longer next year and offered to older youth. They also did not enjoy wearing their black SPY t-shirts in 30 degree weather. Nine out of the ten children who filled in an evaluation form said they would attend SPY Camp again next year.

5. Camp #2: Cambridge-Narrows, NB

In Cambridge-Narrows, we partnered with the local municipal office. They provided administrative assistance and sent out the poster in Appendix B as a door to door mail out. Nine campers joined us at the municipal building in Cambridge-Narrows from July 31st to August 2nd.

Robena Weatherly, a representative from the local watershed association and owner of the Robinson Trail facilitated a guided walk on her property through fields and old growth forests. She pointed out birds' nests, old trees, interesting plants and talked about the importance of old growth forests as special habitat for wildlife.

Dawn Bremner with the local historical society organized and facilitated a session on local history. She allowed the participants to gain access to an early 1800s house owned by the famous painter Anthony Flower. The house will be turned into a museum about his life. Dawn hid clues in the form of old photos, postcards, paintings and books

around the house for the campers to find. They were able to piece together the history of Anthony Flower's life by using their detective skills. They also got to see Anthony's original head stone, which was found while excavating the original property where the house was situated. The head stone was broken in four pieces and the campers put the pieces together and read the information on the stone. They learned the importance of conserving history.

Like in Sackville, campers asked each other about their likes and dislikes of Cambridge-Narrows and what they would like to see changed. Many of the campers said that they like Cambridge-Narrows because it is small and quiet, has good beaches for swimming and campgrounds that attract tourists. But they also consider their small village boring and would like to see a lot more youth and community activities such as SPY Camp, sports, dances, etc. They also see vandalism as a problem and there is a need to offer French Immersion at the local school. Some of the campers would like to see a playground and a library in their village, along with a museum about Cambridge-Narrow's early days developed in the house at the Pines Conservation Park.



Creating a dream community in Cambridge-Narrows

Campers enjoyed making their dream communities (which were put on display in the Municipal Building) and exploring Anthony Flower's house in particular. Some of the campers would like to see more games and spy work next year. It was 30 degrees during the camp and some of the participants did not enjoy all of the walking and hiking outdoors and having to wear a black SPY t-shirt in the extreme heat. Four out of the seven campers who completed evaluation forms said they would definitely participate in SPY Camp again, while the rest said probably.

6. Camp #3: Sackville, NB

Because no other communities were able to host SPY Camp, we decided to offer a second camp in Sackville, NB. We put up more posters around town and a press release was picked up by the local Tribune-Post Newspaper as well (see Appendix C). For this second camp, we had four children join us on campus at Mount Allison University from August 8th to 10th. The small number of participants may have been due to conflicting activities available in Sackville during the week SPY Camp was offered as well as challenges in advertising this second camp.

Due to the small number of participants, the camp program was altered. Campers went on a guided walk of the local Waterfowl Park, facilitated by Mount Allison student and

Town of Sackville summer Waterfowl Park guide Alicia Steeves. She explained the names and history of plants in the park, as well as the difference between native plants like fiddle heads and intrusive plants like purple loosestrife. She also provided information on different species of ducks and what they eat. Campers also visited the local Boultenhouse Museum which highlights Sackville's ship building history and Yorkshire settler life. Museum staff organized a video presentation and scavenger hunt as well.

Campers interviewed each other about their likes and dislikes of Sackville. Some of the campers like Sackville because it is small and peaceful and has good restaurants. Some of the issues that need to be addressed according to the campers are an increase in the number of parks and more equipment, more youth dances, and decreasing pollution (too much traffic and too much litter).



Nature investigation in Sackville

Campers enjoyed creating their dream communities, going on adventures, and getting mail from Detective Dalton. They too would like to see more games next year. All four campers would like to participate in SPY Camp again.

7. Conclusions

We consider the first year of SPY Camp a great success. We offered action-packed camps for 24 youth in two small town communities in south eastern New Brunswick. Campers had an excellent time, enjoyed the camps and learned valuable lessons about community issues. Some of the comments from the campers' and parents' evaluations forms were:

"I liked that we would get Detective Dalton's mail every morning."
– SPY Camper

"I liked pretty much everything. Hope SPY Camp comes back [to town] next year."
– SPY Camper

"My favourite part was the adventures."
– SPY Camper

"It was an amazing opportunity! Thank you!"
– Parent

Parents were very supportive of the camps and really liked that the camps were not only fun but more importantly educational. Some parents also commented that they were very well organized and were very pleased that the ETF covered so much of the costs.

There are many important outcomes of SPY Camp. From the experience in Sackville, the Tantramar District Planning Commission would like to find ways of including local youth in the planning process and in particular the process to revise the current municipal plan. The value and importance of including today's youth in community

planning and taking their opinions into consideration for the town's future direction have become clear to the Planning Commission. Furthermore, SPY Camp has created positive linkages between the local community of Sackville and Mount Allison University. Residents learned more about the types of research and activities that take place at Mount Allison and in particular of the work of the Rural and Small Town Programme in community development.



In Cambridge-Narrows, SPY Camp was a wonderful opportunity for local youth to get involved and learn about their community. The tiny community of less than 700 full time residents rarely gets the chance to offer youth programmes, let alone programs designed to teach youth about local community issues. The Village of Cambridge-Narrows as well as the campers hope that SPY Camp will return to their community next year.

SPY Camp was offered as a pilot project. Due to its success and the positive feedback from campers, parents and local partners, we hope to offer SPY Camp again next year.

Some of our best practices include:

- Partnering with local people for the facilitation of certain community-specific activities.
- Using a spy theme to create excitement and intrigue surrounding community and environmental issues.
- Incorporating healthy snacks.
- Offering a diversity of activities – reading, acting, drawing, running, etc. – on a diversity of topics such as history, culture, wildlife, land use, and more. There was something that each child was good at and enjoyed.

- Focusing on hands-on activities. Participants learned more and remained engaged by pretending to be animals, by exploring old houses, by examining plants in a wetland, and by creating a whole dream community.
- Creating dream communities helped to bring all of the lessons learned into focus and the participants actively applied all the things they had learned. The communities were an effective method for testing concepts without the participants even realizing because it was so much fun.

Some improvements and suggestions we plan to implement if we are able to obtain funding to offer SPY Camp again would be:

- Explore faster methods of obtaining community interest to host SPY Camp.
- A longer camp, perhaps four days instead of three.
- The programme contents would be changed to explore other areas of community issues and environmental education. Campers mentioned that they would participate again if the content was new.
- Create a more sustainable camp (buy more reusable cutlery, dishes, glasses, make sure all materials are printed on either recycled paper or non-tree paper, etc.).
- Bring in the local mayor, economic development officer, environment officer, etc. from the municipality to talk to the campers about more local issues.
- Create more role playing and fast paced games that teach lessons about community and environmental issues. The games and hands-on learning activities were enjoyed the most by the campers.
- Consider a different colour for the t-shirts and find a local company that sells organic cotton.
- Timing is an important issue for municipalities in terms of considering an invitation to participate as a host community. In future years invitations must be sent no later than early April so that SPY Camp can be considered in the context of overall summer programming, and to allow for sufficient time to advertise and promote in the local community.
- Partnerships are key for the success of the SPY Camp. Having an active role for local planners, historians, ecologists, and others is critical to the validity and relevance of the content and ensures local content.

In conclusion, SPY Camp was a valuable experience not only for the youth in each community but also those of us who work on community and environmental issues. SPY Camp offered youth an opportunity to learn about their communities in an exciting fashion, but it also reminded those in the profession of the importance of including youth in community activities. Youth who feel a part of their community go on to become contributing and active adults in municipal and environmental issues.

Bibliography

The following resources were used to design some of the activities and games in SPY Camp:

Canadian Institute of Planners. 2000. *A Kid's Guide to Building Great Communities*. <http://www.cip-icu.ca/English/aboutplan/youth.htm>

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Michigan State University Extension. No date. *This Land is Your Land – United Growth for Kent County*. <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/cplanner/jcp/jcp.htm>

Search Institute. 2000. *Get Things Going! 50 Asset Building Activities*.

Western Regional Environmental Education Public Council. 1985. *Project Wild: Elementary Activity Guide*. Ottawa: Canadian Wildlife Federation.

Owl Magazine. No date. Are you Clean and Green? Or Does Your Environment Act Need Some Sprucing up? On-line Survey. www.owlkids.com

Appendix A: Call for Letters of Interest

Tuesday, June 12th, 2007

[Community name and address]

Hello!

RE: Request for Letters of Interest: S.P.Y. Camp – Sustainable Planning for Youth

This summer Mount Allison University's Rural and Small Town Programme is offering a new and exciting day camp programme on rural community issues and sustainable development for 10 to 12 year olds. We are looking to bring the camp to two communities in New Brunswick during the first two weeks of August 2007.

The three day camp will incorporate a spy theme in an entertaining and fast-paced day camp setting. Twelve campers will participate in a series of exciting, hands-on missions. They will discover interesting facts about their community, and explore land uses, environmental issues, and local culture and heritage through creating maps, conducting surveys, undercover work, and other sneaky spy tactics! The cost to participants is only \$10.

We invite you to submit a letter of interest (via mail, e-mail or fax) to be received by June 27th, 2007 if you would like us to run a camp in your community this summer. Please include in your letter the following information:

1. Why you feel children in your community would benefit from this summer camp.
2. Examples of local community/environment planning and development issues.
3. How you will advertise the camp and reach 10 to 12 year olds in your community (we can provide flyers, see attached draft).
4. Identify a suitable location for us to run the camp (a large room close to an outdoor grassy space is needed).
5. Identify a municipal employee (or a local planner) with whom we can work/consult with to tailor the camp to local issues, and who can also participate in a portion of the camp program.
6. List any other community resources we might be able to incorporate into the camp such as tours of a local museum, or a chat with a local historian or naturalist.
7. Identify who will be the community contact person for the camp (the person who will help us with the logistics, local advertising and registration of campers).

If your letter of interest is selected, we will plan, organize and run the camp in your community. We will notify you by July 4th, 2007 of our selections. We recognize that this invitation is reaching you on relatively short notice, but we only just received confirmation of the funding for this programme from the New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund. We hope you will consider this exciting and unique opportunity for your community.

Sincerely,

Amanda Marlin
Research Associate and Camp Organizer

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Appendix B: Handouts and Posters

S.P.Y. Camp

SUSTAINABLE PLANNING FOR YOUTH



Are you 10 to 12 years old? Curious about your town? Do you have a knack for detective work and keen spy skills? Then come and join us for a day camp 9am to 4pm on [date] at the [location]!! During a series of exciting, hands-on missions, you'll discover interesting facts about your town, land uses, environmental issues, and local culture and heritage through creating maps, conducting surveys, undercover work, and other sneaky spy tactics!



DAY 1 – Community Planning

- Explore your community
- Spy on a real life planner
- Investigate what kids like and dislike about your town



Day 2 – The Environment

- Nature investigation
- Animal spy games
- Explore sustainable development



Day 3 – Culture and Heritage

- Investigate local history
- Hunt for heritage
- Plan your dream community

And lots more!!

Total cost is \$10 and includes: a t-shirt, SPY kit, snacks, and a SPY Camp certificate. If you are interested in this entertaining and fast-paced summer day camp, get your parents to register you by calling [name] at [telephone number] before [date]. Spaces are limited so register right away. Bring your picnic lunch and some sun block – we'll be outside! SPY Camp is brought to you by:



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S.P.Y. Camp

SUSTAINABLE PLANNING FOR YOUTH

For 10 to 12 year olds

[Date] to [Date], 2007

Registration deadline [Date]

9am to 4pm daily

[Location]

[Address]



Hands-on missions!

Learn about community issues!

Investigate interesting facts
about your town, land uses,
environmental issues, and local
culture and heritage!

Total cost is \$10 and includes a SPY kit, snacks, and a SPY Camp Certificate. Register by calling [name] at [telephone number]. Spaces are limited so register right away. Bring your picnic lunch, rain coat and some sun block – we'll be outside! SPY Camp is brought to you by:



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Appendix C: Press Releases

I S.P.Y. with my little eye...

Jul 05, 2007

Mount Allison offers youth day camps focusing on sustainable planning in Sackville, Cambridge-Narrows

SACKVILLE, NB — Some young New Brunswickers will be donning their detective hats this summer.



Mount Allison University is hosting S.P.Y. (Sustainable Planning for Youth) Camps, July 24-26 and August 8-10 in Sackville as well as a camp in Cambridge-Narrows, July 31- August 2. Organized by the University's Rural and Small Town Programme (RSTP), the day camp, for youth ages 10-12 will offer fun, hands-on activities focusing on community planning, environmental appreciation and sustainable living, and the dynamic heritage and culture of their local community.

S.P.Y. Camp co-ordinator and RSTP research associate Amanda Marlin says, "S.P.Y. camp will allow youth to learn more about their community, environmental awareness, and the planning profession. We hope to influence a new generation of planners and concerned citizens, while providing a fun, hands-on learning environment." Fourth-year geography student Sarah Blake-Dickson will also be organizing the camp, allowing young campers to catch a glimpse of community planning and sustainable development studies. In Sackville campers will enjoy presentations and on-site activities with special guests such as planner Lori Bickford with the Tantramar Planning Commission.

The three-day camp is for young campers who are curious about their town and local issues and who have a knack for detective work. For the Sackville camps, campers will meet in the historic Hammond Lounge, Mount Allison University campus each day and set out for adventures on campus and in Sackville. During a series of exciting, hands-on missions, campers will explore their town, investigate community issues, assume animal aliases, investigate nature, explore the meaning of sustainable development, go on a historical/cultural scavenger hunt, and have a chance to design and develop their dream community. Campers will conduct surveys and interviews, make maps, go undercover, and use other sneaky spy tactics.

The cost of the camp is \$10 and includes a S.P.Y. kit, snacks, and camp certificate. Campers are asked to bring a picnic lunch and sunblock for outside activities. The S.P.Y. camps are supported by the Rural and Small Programme, Mount Allison University, and the New Brunswick Environment Trust Fund.

For further information or to register for any of the S.P.Y. camps, please contact Amanda Marlin (amarlin@mta.ca) 364-2394.

Photo caption: S.P.Y. Camp organizers Amanda Marlin and Sarah Blake-Dickson with some if the items for the spy kits.

SPY Camps get NB youth excited about community planning!

August 9, 2007

SACKVILLE, NB – This summer Mount Allison University's Rural and Small Town Programme offered the first-ever rural community planning camps for kids in New Brunswick and they were a smashing success!

With funding from the New Brunswick Government's Environmental Trust Fund, two SPY (Sustainable Planning for Youth) Camps were offered in Sackville and in Cambridge-Narrows. During the camps the young spies went on a series of top-secret missions requested by a mysterious Detective Dalton. Campers investigated land use planning, discovered the meaning of sustainable development through secret messages and games, spied on nature and wildlife, took their ecological footprints, and investigated unique local heritage and culture. The final mission of SPY Camp saw campers plan and design their dream communities in small groups incorporating things they had learned throughout camp.

Several excellent and unique communities were created and can be seen in the windows of the Tantramar Planning Commission in Sackville and in the Municipal Building in Cambridge-Narrows. SPY Camp co-ordinator and RSTP research associate, Amanda Marlin, says "Today's youth are rarely given the chance to voice their opinions about the town that they live in, and express ideas about changes they'd like to see in the future. So SPY Camp has been a great experience not only for the kids but also for those of us who work on community issues." Camp leader and fourth-year geography student, Sarah Blake-Dickson, goes on to say, "Youth are keen to have a say in the development of their communities."



Photo caption: Participants in the SPY Camps, offered by Mount Allison University's Rural and Small Town Programme, display community plans they developed as part of the program.