

Students putting the green back into their schoolgrounds

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The learning environment at Reynolds Secondary School is about to get a whole lot greener.

Students from the Reynolds Green Group have joined with a team from Leadership Victoria to create a project that will revitalize the environmental allure of key areas of the schoolgrounds. Their main efforts will be the restoration of a Garry oak meadow at the front of the school and the transformation of an underutilized courtyard into a common area with attractive, natural features.



Grade 12 student Felicity Wilson said some of the preparation has already begun on the meadow by the school's main entrance, and the University of Victoria environmental-studies program has been assisting by providing plants.

CREDIT: Debra Brash, Times Colonist

Felicity Wilson, 17, Emily Dagg, 15 and Emily Campbell, 14, are all involved in the green spaces project at Reynolds Secondary.

"This whole area is going to be planted with camas and other native plants," she said, pointing across a knoll dotted with oaks. Another section of the rise will be cordoned off and fitted with benches.

"Students will be able to come out here and eat lunch or wait for a ride," Felicity said.

In the courtyard, plans call for asphalt and other material to be taken out, an existing fountain to be refurbished and gardens to be established.

Arising out of the changes will be a new school course in September -- environmental sustainability -- taught by teacher Heather Coey, who co-ordinates the Reynolds Green Group.

"The whole idea in the courtyard is to create a learning lab that integrates the environment with curricular areas," Coey said.

The entire project will cost close to \$100,000, but the Reynolds group is hoping to take advantage of the wide range of grants and funding opportunities available for environmental initiatives. The students and Leadership Victoria have already raised \$8,000 for the required architectural work.

The intention is for the finished product to be sustainable, Coey said, adding that the planning document prepared by Leadership Victoria could be passed along to other schools.

"It will be a school community maintained area," she said.