

# **St. George's Community Garden and Trail Committee**

## **2024 Annual Report**

January 15, 2025

The St. George's Community Garden & Trail committee is a volunteer organization made up of passionate individuals with the aim to create and maintain green spaces that can be enjoyed by everyone. We believe the more people experience nature, the more likely we are to care for it. We are focused on making a positive impact by beautifying our town, encouraging people to enjoy our scenic landscape, promoting physical activity, mental wellness and healthy living, and drawing visitors to our community.

The Sunset Trail is a beautiful 13km nature walk along our shoreline ridge. There is an abundance of bird life and wildflowers to complement the amazing ocean views. There are many memorial benches located along the trail providing an opportunity to rest and enjoy nature, and there are several picnic tables to be able to enjoy a picnic in the beautiful environment.

The Community Garden is located off Main Street behind the post office. The green space is bordered by perennial flower beds, fruit trees, shrubs and raised garden beds. Several picnic tables are available for public use. A large outdoor stage is positioned on the east side of the garden site. A parking lot is located on the west side of the garden site for both the garden and trail, as this is the location of the trail head.

This Community Garden and Sunset Trail have provided enjoyment to local residents for many years and is maintained by a small group of volunteers, with support from the Town of St. George's.

The St. George's Community Garden and Sunset Trail Committee relies on public financial support and passionate volunteers. This Annual Report has been produced to provide the following information:

- (A) the Committee's achievements for the year,
- (B) full financial activity and transparency, and
- (C) the Committee objectives for the upcoming year.

It is hoped this report will encourage more individuals to volunteer with the Committee and to more readily facilitate consideration of our requests for financial support.

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## A. 2024 in Review

2024 was a very active year for the Committee, achieving the following highlights:

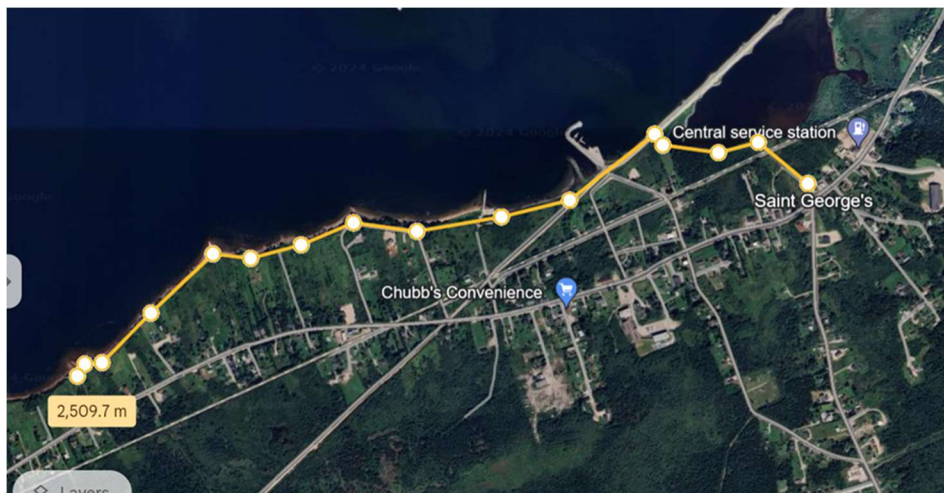
1. Sunset Trail Upgrade to Man O'War Brook
2. Improved the Garden Green Space
3. Community Garden Party
4. Community Earth Day Cleanup
5. Established a website
6. Green Depot Account

The following is a more detailed discussion of the 2024 highlights.

### 1. Sunset Trail Upgrade to Man O' War Brook

One of the key 2024 objectives was to improve the trail from the Trailhead to Man O' War Brook to make it an easily walkable section of trail and resolve some of the muddy trail sections which restricted accessibility. This section of trail has been successfully upgraded to provide a 5km out and back section of trail that is very accessible from multiple locations within the community. The trail has been upgraded with additional signage, and garbage bins have been installed in multiple locations to encourage participation in keeping nature clean and beautiful. This was made possible through financial support from the Western Wellness Coalition funding, available Committee funds, and the garbage bins were provided by the Town of St. George's. The trail upgrade material cost for signposts, signs, and piping was \$722.83, and all work was completed by volunteers.

#### **5km out and back Trail Section from Trailhead to Man O'War Brook**



## Sunset Trail Signage and Garbage Bins





A \$2,000 donation from the Bay St. George Kinsmen Association and available Committee funds covered the \$2,215.33 cost of materials to install the bridge. A bridge was installed over Man O'War Brook to provide safe access to the western end of the trail, and to support future extension of the Sunset Trail. All work was completed by volunteers.

### **Man O'War Brook Bridge**



Overall, these Trail upgrades resulted in increased usage of the Sunset Trail and strong Community interest in further upgrades.

## 2. Garden Green Space Improvements

This year the committee was able to engage young people in a more meaningful way through volunteer and employment opportunities. Students needing volunteer hours helped expand and improve the trail. The committee partnered with the Green Team (a youth summer employment program) through the NL Conservation Corp and St. George's Indian Band to share the cost of wages for the summer students. The Committee wage contribution totaled \$1000. The youth played a significant role in upgrading the garden site as well as organizing and promoting summer events.





Committee volunteers and summer students improved and expanded perennial beds, garden borders and pathways at the Community Garden with the addition of compost, gravel borders and plants. Volunteers built trellises which were placed on the south side of the stage. These will be used for climbing plants. The Conservation Corp of NL donated a stand up raised bed in recognition of the Committee's participation in the Green Team program.



A cement garage foundation was removed from the unoccupied lot adjacent to the Community Garden, and grass seed and shrubs were planted, starting the process of making the surrounding area more attractive. The addition of signage and a parking area at the Community Garden site further establishes the garden as the trailhead for the Sunset Trail.

Increased usage of the garden site as a picnic and outdoor meeting place was observed. The Community Garden site served as an outdoor play space for youth enrolled in the Recreation Department's summer program. On several occasions they participated in activities such as outdoor treasure hunts, picnics, strawberry harvest, rock painting and sign painting. Visitors to the area often stopped for a picnic and/or walked the Sunset Trail.

Raised garden beds were planted by Committee members and the harvest was shared with local residents and the St. George's Indian Band for distribution to local elders. Few community members, apart from committee members, used the raised beds. We hope that with increased promotion more community members will utilize the available beds.

Helping Hands donated two picnic tables and the Committee purchased two tables for a total of four new picnic tables at the garden site. There are now six picnic tables at the garden site to support events, and it has been agreed upon to relocate two of these picnic tables along the Sunset Trail for regular usage.

Fall flowering bulbs and garlic were planted this fall for 2025.

### 3. Community Garden Party.

A Community Garden Party was held in August which attracted approximately 100 people from St. George's and area, as well as visitors from Stephenville and Port au Port. The event included a morning hike, outdoor children's games, treasure hunt in the mini trail adjacent to the garden, traditional Mi'kmaq games, and live music.

The Garden and Trail Committee took a lead role in organizing this event and received significant community support. The Green Team and Museum summer students assisted with organizing and managing the numerous children's activities. Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network (NAWN) provided and facilitated traditional Mi'kmaq games. The local volunteer fire department was present to provide tours of the pumper truck and handed out prizes. Helping Hands provided funds for children's games. The Indian Band provided food and beverages. Volunteers provided BBQ's and did the cooking. Local musicians provided the sound system and technical support.







Local musicians volunteered to perform. All eight performers responded positively about the venue and event. Many audience members commented on how they appreciated having this outdoor venue to showcase so much local talent.



Overall, this event was positive, well received and a great community event. Many positive comments were shared through social media and directly to committee members such as:

- "It was a great afternoon...always great to see the community coming together! Great job community garden committee!"
- "The community garden has put on a great day! Nice crowd and a great day."
- "Thanks to all. Great to see everyone, we had a blast - especially the kids!"
- "It was fantastic. Thanks to everyone involved!"
- "Thank you to everyone who was involved! For me, it shows that our world is changing. We have all become so separated and now we once again are uniting! "

#### 4. Community Earth Day Cleanup

The St. George's Community Garden and Trail Committee promoted and organized a community clean up event on April 20-22 to support our objective of encouraging participation in keeping nature clean and beautiful. Residents were encouraged to pick up Earth Day packages at St. George's Post Office and participating businesses. Posters and social media posts promoted this event and linked it with National Earth Day promotional links. Participants were asked to post photos of their clean up on St. George's Community Garden and Trail Facebook page and names were drawn for participation prizes. We were very impressed by the level of participation and the amount of clean up completed in our community. The social media exposure was encouraging as was the support from the Town of St. George's and local businesses for our first Earth Day Clean up.

It cost the Committee \$45.00 for prizes for the Earth Day event.



## 5. Website

The Committee utilizes a Facebook page to communicate information in a timely manner, but a website was established to store information and provide more information on the Committee. It cost \$76.72 to acquire a Domain name for 3 years and a free template was used to create a basic web page. The web site was completed by volunteers.

Below is the address for the website.

<https://stgeorgesgardenandtrails.com/>

## 6. Green Depot Account

An account was established at the Green Depot in Stephenville, allowing people to drop off their recyclables to support Committee activities. People can advise staff they would like to



donate to the “St. George’s Community Garden and Trail Committee” or use phone number 293-6350 on the system to print off label for the recycles. This account was established approximately mid-year providing \$301.85 of funding for the Committee for 2024. It is targeted that this account will generate \$500-\$1000 of annual funding to support regular maintenance of the Community Garden and Sunset Trail.

## B. 2024 Financials

The following is a summary of Committee 2024 Financials, showing summary Income, Expenses and Balances.

<b>2,055.56</b>	<b>January 1, 2024 Opening Balance</b>
	<b><u>Income</u></b>
900.00	2024 Western Wellness Coalition Grant
500.00	Helping Hands Donation
2,000.00	Bay St. George Kinsmen Donation
170.00	Public Donations
0.00	Green Depot Recycles (withdrawals)
<b>3,570.00</b>	<b>Total income</b>
	<b><u>Expenses</u></b>
722.83	Trail Maintenance and Upgrades
826.15	Garden Maintenance and Upgrades
2,215.33	Man O'War Bridge
76.72	Website Cost
45.00	Earth Day event
0.00	Garden Party event
1,000.00	Summer Students
<b>4,886.03</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>
<b>739.53</b>	<b>December 31, 2024 Closing Balance</b>
301.85	Accounts Receivable (Green Depot)
	Trailhead sign commitments (\$500 from Western Wellness Coalition and \$500 from Helping Hands)
1,000.00	
<b>41.38</b>	<b>Uncommitted Balance</b>

The following is a detailed record of bank account transactions, along with bank account balances corresponding to Committee Meetings.

<b>Bank Account Transactions</b>			
<b>Credit</b>	<b>Debit</b>	<b>Balance</b>	<b>Description</b>
		<b>\$2,055.56</b>	<b>Jan 1/24 opening balance</b>
	\$45.00		Jan 12/24 Elderberry bushes expense
		<b>\$2,010.56</b>	<b>Mar 12/24 mtg balance</b>
\$900.00		\$2,910.56	Mar 25/24 Western Health Wellness Coalition Grant
		<b>\$2,910.56</b>	<b>April 9/24 mtg balance</b>
\$100.00		\$3,010.56	Billy Harview donation
	\$45.00	\$2,965.56	Earth Day expense (prizes)
\$500.00		\$3,465.56	Jun 19/24 mtg - Community Sign Donation from Helping Hands
	\$440.00	\$3,025.56	New picnic tables (4) expense
		<b>\$3,025.56</b>	<b>Jul 15/24 mtg balance</b>
\$30.00		\$3,055.56	Jul 16/24 Eva Praught Donation
	\$285.08	\$2,770.48	Jul17/24 Garden expenses
	\$76.72	\$2,693.76	Jul17/24 Website expense
	\$722.83	\$1,970.93	Aug 13/24 Trail Upgrade Expenses
	\$56.07	\$1,914.86	Aug 13/24 Garden Fertilizer
	\$1,000.00	\$914.86	Aug 13/24 Student Cost
\$40.00		\$954.86	Siobhan and Ernie Donation
		<b>\$954.86</b>	<b>October 29/24 mtg balance</b>
\$2,000.00		\$2,954.86	Bay St. George Kinsmen Donation
	\$2,215.33	\$739.53	Man O'War Bridge Expenses
		<b>\$739.53</b>	<b>December 31/24 balance</b>



## C. 2025 Look Ahead

The Committee is targeting a very active 2025, with the following objectives:

1. Committee Incorporation
2. Install a Trailhead Sign
3. Sunset Trail Upgrade to Barachois Brook
4. Highway & Community Signage
5. Garden Green Space Improvements
6. 2025 Community Earth Day Cleanup
7. Website Expansion
8. Community Outreach

### 1. Committee Incorporation

The Committee is investigating incorporating in order to be eligible for more significant grants and programs, and to be able to provide donation receipts. Many funding opportunities only provide a maximum of \$1,000 to unincorporated groups versus \$10,000 for incorporated groups.

### 2. Install a Trailhead Sign

A large 4'X8' sign is planned to be installed at the Trailhead to provide trail users with a high level visual of the Sunset Trail. \$500 has been provided by the Western Wellness Coalition and \$500 has been provided by Helping Hands for the purchase of materials for this sign. The sign surface will be a professional printed surface on a stable polymer material, which will be mounted on pressure treated plywood and 6"x6" pressure treated posts. The sign is planned to be installed early in the Spring of 2025.

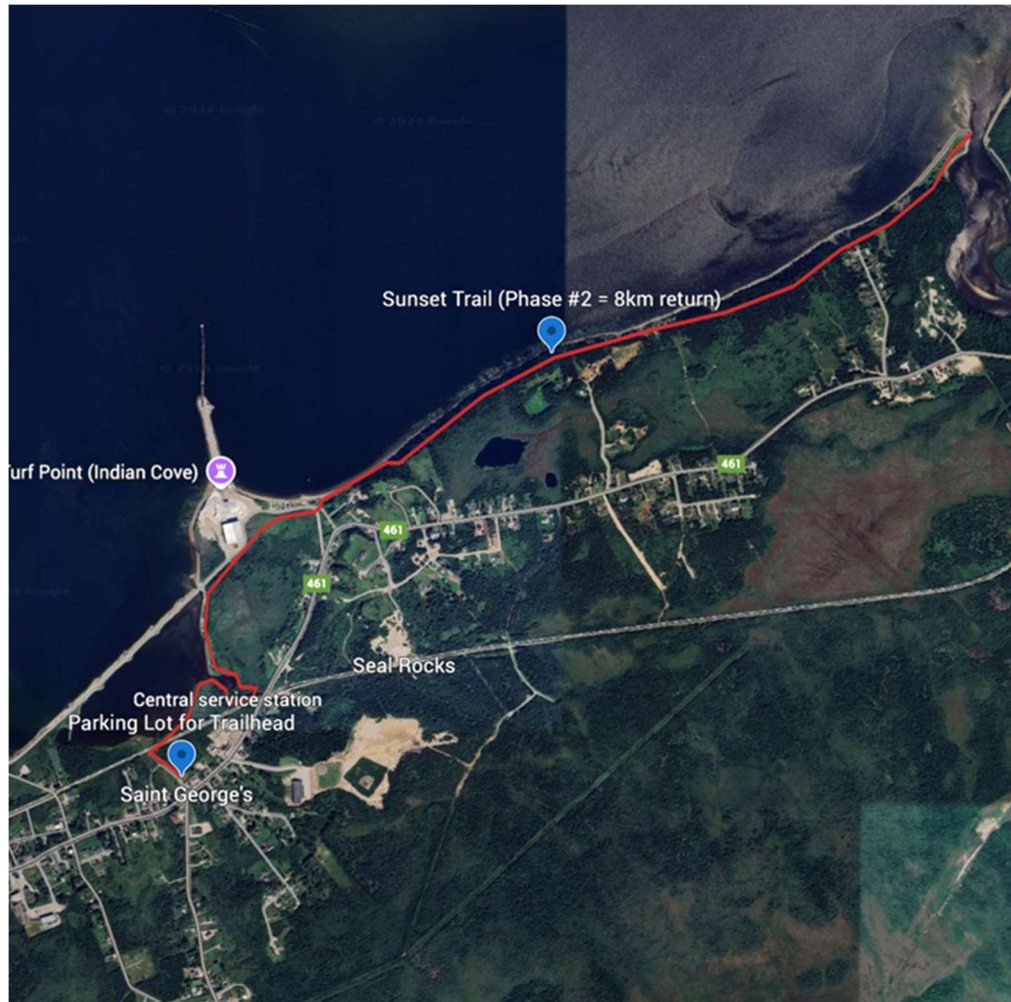
### 3. Sunset Trail Upgrade to Barachois Brook

The bridge over Molly Ann's Brook was destroyed by ice several years ago which resulted in restricted access to the Sunset Trail that runs to Barachois Brook. This also restricted access to smaller walking loops connected to the Sunset Trail, such as the Causeway Loop. The 2025 Plan is to replace this bridge with a similar design as installed over Man O' War Brook, however it will be a longer span and will require a more robust base design to prevent ice damage. A request has been completed with the Town of St. George's and submitted to ActiveNL for 2025 funding to replace this bridge and upgrade the trail to Barachois Brook. A total of \$13,228.26 was estimated to complete the 2025 planned work, with a maximum request of \$10,000 to ActiveNL. The Committee will need to source additional funding to achieve the plan.

The section of the Sunset Trail from the Trailhead to Barachois Brook is approximately 8km return, thus a significant section of Trail. There are several trail sections which will require boardwalks, in addition to the bridge over Molly Ann's Brook. The 2025 objective is to upgrade the trail with signage and garbage bins to the same standard as implemented from the Trailhead to Man O' War Brook in 2024.

Funding will determine how much of this Plan can be achieved in 2025.

#### **8km out and back Trail Section from Trailhead to Barachois Brook**



#### **4. Highway & Community Signage**

With the 2025 Plan to upgrade the Sunset Trail as noted above, this will provide an accessible and scenic 13km out and back hiking trail along the ocean, which we believe will attract visitors who are looking for an outdoor experience.

Under that vision, a plan has been developed to install large 4'x8' highly visual signs on the TransCanada Highway, on each side of the Steel Mountain Intersection, to attract visitors

into town. There would also be signs placed at the bottom of Steel Mountain Road, in town, which would direct visitors to local businesses and community attractions.

This project would highlight the Town of St. George's and support local service businesses. It is estimated this project will cost approximately \$6,000. The Committee has been working with the Town of St. George's to advance this project, and Council has voted to support this project as part of the 2025 budget.

A second stage of this project includes installing local attraction and service visuals (e.g., trail, marina, gas, food, banking, convenience store, pharmacy, etc.) underneath the highway signs to attract more people into town to utilize the available business services. Once the project is costed, local businesses will be approached to financially support this project, and the St. George's Community Garden and Trail Committee.

## 5. Garden Green Space Improvements

The Western Wellness Coalition agreed to grant the committee \$1000 to finance the building of a garden shed and purchase of garden tools. Bayview School staff have expressed interest in involving students in the construction of the shed.

The Garden Green Space is planned to be improved with the planting of shade trees, more raspberries and strawberries.

The Garden Committee would like to promote the 'grow a row' concept for local gardeners to encourage more people to utilize the garden. If there is no interest from the community in utilizing the raised beds, we would like to use the beds to grow root vegetables which can then be donated to the local Food Hub.

A key focus will be beautification of the adjacent lot in front of the community garden. The lot was used as a garage and gas station years ago and therefore cannot be used for gardening but it can be reclaimed as a green space. Beautification will require funds and labour.

## 6. 2025 Community Earth Day Cleanup

Continue to build on last year's success of engaging Community members to participate in cleaning up nature, through promoting and organizing a Community Earth Day event in April. This builds on the Committee culture of installing garbage bins along the Sunset Trail and maintaining them, as well as participating in other community organized clean up events.

## 7. Website Expansion

Many grant organizations request a website address in the application process. A new website was created in 2024 using a free, basic web page template. The Committee will



investigate the cost of expanding the existing website with a more robust template that will improve site navigation and enable us to upload documents, such as the trail map, annual reports, meeting minutes, and grant applications to provide full transparency.

## 8. Community Outreach

Improve community outreach through promotion of our group via the website, social media, a membership drive and increased communication with the Town of St. George's, St. George's Indian Band, Bayview School, Helping Hands, St. George's Recreation Committee and other local groups.