

## Request for Proposals (RFP) to establish a community Forest and Nature School at Kemptville Campus

August 8, 2024



### Overview

[Forest and Nature Schools](#) are a growing movement across Canada and around the world. Operating from a common set of principles, Forest and Nature Schools connect children to their natural environments through outdoor play. Spending time in the same places throughout the seasons allows children to build a relationship with their local ecosystem. Forest and Nature Schools also engage children in self-directed play and inquiry-based learning, building their creativity, problem-solving, observation and teamwork skills.

With hundreds of acres of natural space including forest, wetlands, farm fields, trails, a working sugarbush and more, Kemptville Campus is the perfect setting for Forest and Nature School. We are fortunate to host several successful Forest and Nature School programs on campus already. École publique Rivière Rideau offers a [Forest and Nature School program](#) where each class spends half a day in nature per week. The North Grenville Learning Centre has integrated Forest and Nature School principles and elements into [programs](#) at both of their campus locations (Centre éducatif Rivière Rideau for French programs, and the Leahurst building for English), and are continuously training staff to become Certified Forest and Nature School Practitioners. Feedback from educators, students and parents to these programs is consistently positive, with waiting lists for more families to participate. However, it is only accessible to children enrolled at these schools/daycare centres.

Kemptville Campus is poised to build on this foundation and expand Forest and Nature School programming to the broader North Grenville community. This Request for Proposals (RFP) is seeking a Certified Forest and Nature School Practitioner or organization to launch and operate their own business on campus.

### **Envisioning a Forest and Nature School at Kemptville Campus**

Campus staff have consulted with Forest and Nature School educators at Riviere Rideau and North Grenville Learning Centre. Both organizations are supportive of the Campus offering complementary Forest and Nature School programs as proposed in this RFP. A new Forest and Nature School provider would also benefit from the years of work already done by Riviere Rideau, NGLC and Campus staff, including site risk assessments and risk management plans, policy handbooks, insurance procedures and more.



Programming details will be determined in collaboration with the selected Forest and Nature School Practitioner/organization, but we envision some or all of the following options being offered:

- Pre-school sessions – typically during weekdays, parents participating with their children
- School-aged sessions – could include after school/weekend programming for public school students, as well as weekday programs for homeschool children
- School group programs – local schools would have the opportunity to bring classes to the Forest and Nature School for facilitated learning, either as a one-day workshop or on a regular basis.
- One-off workshops and play days: Seasonal, themed events open to the community, such as walks, harvest days, special skill building workshops.
- Day camps could be offered over summer holidays and March break.
- Offering French and English program options would be a strong asset. Campus is open to offering programs in one language only to start, but hope to expand to offer both over time.

Additional opportunities for expansion over the longer term could include hosting training sessions for Forest and Nature School educators, delivering outdoor education programs for adult learners, ecotourism offerings and more.

## Logistics



The new Forest and Nature School operator would be expected to run their own enterprise (for profit or nonprofit), provide their own insurance for all activities, and sign an agreement with Kemptville Campus. The agreement would cover land/building access and rent, as well as the respective roles of the tenant and Campus in providing Forest and Nature School programs.

While we are open to various locations on campus, we envision that Forest and Nature School programming would most likely take place in and around the Agroforestry Centre on Bedell Road, at the southern edge of campus. The Agroforestry Centre offers a large indoor classroom, a small kitchen, washrooms, parking, picnic tables, and access to several maintained trails. (Internet access is planned for spring 2025.) The Centre is set at the edge of the Peter Wensink Maple Forest, which is managed by Kemptville Campus and certified by the Forest Stewardship Council as being responsibly managed. A working sugarbush operates in the Maple Forest, and during maple season visitors can see sap collection and processing in action.

Rental rates will be negotiated based on the specific needs of the Forest and Nature School operator. Kemptville Campus offers affordable rental rates for start-ups and nonprofit groups.

The Forest and Nature School would benefit from existing campus shared services provided to all tenants, including landscaping, snow removal, trails maintenance, security, marketing and communications.

## Next Steps



Interested applicants should submit a short proposal (2-5pgs) outlining your vision for a Forest and Nature School at Kemptville Campus, including the following elements:

- Your resume
- Why you are a good fit with this opportunity
- What programs you intend to offer, at what times of year
- How much/what type of indoor and outdoor space you require access to
- Your proposed timeline to launch programming
- What supports/collaboration you would expect from Kemptville Campus
- any other relevant details.

Please note that certification as a [Forest and Nature School Practitioner](#) with the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada is considered a strong asset, but other combinations of education and experience will be considered.

Proposals should be submitted to Leela Ramachandran, Program Manager at [Lramachandran@kemptvillecampus.ca](mailto:Lramachandran@kemptvillecampus.ca). We encourage you to reach out before submitting a proposal if you have questions, wish to discuss ideas or visit the site.

Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis until a successful applicant is selected, ideally in Fall 2024. The Campus will work with the applicant to develop an agreement, aiming to launch programming in 2025.