the Stewardship Toolbox

Steps, tips and tools to help you plan, organize and sustain a community stewardship group.

stew•ard•ship

/stoo-erd-ship/

noun

Our collective responsibility to retain the quality and abundance of our land, air, water and biodiversity, and to manage this natural capital in a way that conserves all of its values, be they environmental, economic, social or cultural.

Land Stewardship Centre is a non-profit, charitable organization that enables people and organizations to become better stewards. Learn more at **www.landstewardship.org**.

We extend our appreciation for and dedicate this publication to all of the committed, grassroots stewardship groups and volunteers who contribute so much time, effort and knowledge to improving the environmental health of their communities.

Land Stewardship Centre

Disclaimer

The information in this publication is written with a focus on the legislation of and available resources within the Province of Alberta as of October 2014. For more information on local conditions and legislation in other jurisdictions, contact the appropriate agencies in your area. The intent of this document is to provide explanatory and interpretive information only. This material is not a replacement for regulatory documents and is not to be used or referenced as such. Land Stewardship Centre accepts no responsibility or liability for any loss or damage that any person or organization may sustain as a result of the information in, or anything done or omitted in reliance on, this document.

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Keeping it Simple

People often have the passion to take personal action on an environmental issue of concern to them but, more often than not, they are not sure how to get started and what to do.

Forming a community stewardship group is one way to harness individuals' passion and put collective action to work for the community and the environment to address an issue or solve a problem.

But starting a community stewardship group can be a daunting task. There are so many things you need to think about; so many things you need to do. Where do you start? There are so many resources out there; so much good advice. You're a volunteer who is passionate about a cause. How do you make sense of it all? From years of working with and supporting community stewardship groups, Land Stewardship Centre can offer some insight; a light to guide your path.

While there is a lot more detail you'll need to consider once you get underway, sometimes keeping it simple is the best approach to getting things off the ground. So, to help you, here are the 10 things you should do to get your community stewardship group started off on the right foot.

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Already have your stewardship group up and running? This guide can also help if you're looking to **refocus** on your vision, **reorganize** your group's activities or **reinvigorate** your membership.

Steps, Tips and Tools

The tips and tools included with these steps are only a small example of the resources available. You'll discover many more on your journey to growing and evolving your stewardship group. But for now, it's enough to get you pointed in the right direction and off to a great start.

How big is the problem or issue I'm trying to address and is there anyone else working on it?

The first step when you are considering setting up a community stewardship group is to find out if there are any groups already working in your area. Groups may not always be immediately visible; they may be going through a quiet period or not actively promoting themselves externally.

If there is already a group in your area working on the same issue, you can consider joining them. Starting a new group in the same area as an existing group makes sense if you have a different focus or vision than existing groups. You can then work with existing groups to ensure you are complementing each other's work to maximize your impact.

Assess: Determining the Need 1

<TOOLS>

www.StewardshipDirectory.com
Search this online directory to find other community stewardship groups, organizations, businesses and government agencies who are willing to share their experiences and lessons learned in stewardship and natural resource management. The Directory can be searched by geographic location, organization type or focus, or your own search terms. It can show you what groups are active in your area, what issues they focus on and what type of work they do.

Municipal Contacts
Check with the agriculture and/or environmental department of your local municipality to see if they are aware of any other stewardship groups working in the area:

- **RURAL – AAMDC**
  http://www.aamdc.com/about/members
  The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) is an independent association comprising Alberta's counties and municipal districts.
- **URBAN – AUMA**
  http://www.auma.ca/live/AUMA/Become+a+Member/Regular+Members
  The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) represents Alberta's urban municipalities including cities, towns, villages, summer villages, and specialized municipalities.

<TIPS>

- Find out if people in your community are aware of the issue you want to address.
- Talk to your neighbours and other community members to find out if they share your concerns and your vision.
- Gauge understanding and support for your vision. Decide if there is enough local support to warrant setting up a dedicated stewardship group and to support volunteer recruitment for the group.

Once you decide to move forward and establish a new stewardship group, you will need to develop and clearly define your group's purpose. Developing a statement of purpose for the group can help people focus on the aims of the group. Create a clear statement to describe what the group wants to do and what the expected benefits will be. At this stage it will help to outline some high level goals for the group, which will help clarify what the group hopes to achieve. Having a clear purpose will be very important for attracting volunteers and communicating with potential supporters.

Focus: Defining Your Purpose and Place

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<TOOLS>

River Basin Map of Alberta
http://www.environment.alberta.ca/apps/basins/default.aspx
Alberta is divided into seven major river basins or major river systems (also called 'watersheds'), namely the Peace, Athabasca, Hay, North Saskatchewan, South Saskatchewan, Beaver and Milk river basins.

Water for Life Partners: Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs)
http://www.waterforlife.alberta.ca/01261.html
Within Alberta there are currently eleven WPACs. This site includes information about and links to the WPAC websites.

Alberta Municipal Boundary Map
http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/mc_boundary_maps.cfm

<TIPS>

TO DEFINE YOUR GROUP'S PURPOSE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Why do you want to start a community stewardship group?
- What is the need that is not being addressed by someone else?
- What do you hope to accomplish?
- What kind of work will you do?

Draft a preliminary statement that defines what the group will do and what the expected benefits are.

Discuss, revise and set the final statement of purpose.

Defining the geographic boundaries of the area you want work in will also help focus the group. Try to keep the geographic scope in relation to the size of your group. A small volunteer group can be overwhelmed trying to work in a large area.

TO HELP DEFINE THE AREA YOUR GROUP WILL WORK IN, ASK YOURSELF:

- Will your group focus on a specific area of land, like a public land reserve or body of surface water?
- Is your group's focus urban or rural?
- Where do the majority of your volunteers live?
- What type of activities will your volunteers be interested in supporting?
- What are the boundaries of any existing groups doing work in the same area?
- Are there any legal or ecological boundaries, such as municipal boundaries, watersheds or sub-basins you need to consider?

Partnerships are an important source of support for community stewardship groups. Developing effective working relationships with local organizations and relevant government agencies can help you achieve your goals and objectives. Partners you should consider working with include local municipalities, the Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) in your area, provincial government representatives, local businesses and other stewardship organizations.

If your group is planning to undertake any projects on public land (municipal, provincial or federal) it is important to get in touch with the relevant agency and make sure the work you want to do is appropriate and allowed. You may also want to find out if any management plans have been developed for the area you want to work in. Municipal plans can include Municipal Development Plans, Area Structure Plans, and Neighbourhood Structure Plans. There may also be provincial or federal plans related to species at risk, forestry, grazing management or other issues that you may need to consider. Work with the appropriate agencies from the start, invite them to attend your meetings, keep them updated on your ideas and listen to their input.

Assemble: Seeking Out Local Partners 3

<TIPS>

IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Government:

- What local government departments are responsible for the area you want to work in?
  For example: Municipal planning and development departments are typically responsible for municipal and environmental reserves.
- What provincial or federal ministries are responsible for the area you want to work in?
  For example: Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development oversees public land management. This would include provincial forestry reserves, provincial grazing reserves and leased lands for things like recreation and resource extraction.
- Who is the appropriate key contact person?
- Is the agency willing to work with your group?

Other organizations, groups and individuals:

- Do you know of any local or regional stewardship groups that can provide support and advice? For example: Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs)
- Is there another community group in your area working on a similar issue or project?
- Do you know of any local "citizen stewards" – people already working in the area on their own?
- Are you aware of any research associations that may have data they are willing to share with your group?
- Are there businesses operating in the area than can support your efforts, or that specialize in stewardship-related work?
- Are you planning to connect with local land owners?

The keys to building and sustaining successful partnerships:

1. **Find** the right partner(s).
2. **Build** trust and be transparent.
3. **Communicate** regularly and be flexible.
4. Decide how you will **measure the success** of your partnership.
5. **Respond** to new ideas and growth opportunities.
6. **Be patient** – successful partnerships take time to establish.

<TOOLS>

Alberta Stewardship Network http://www.landstewardship.org/ASN/
The Alberta Stewardship Network (ASN) serves the needs of community-based stewardship groups. ASN can help you connect with other groups that you can learn from, find resources to help you start out and grow your group.

Building Community Partnerships: A Guide for Creating Effective Land and Water Stewardship
http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/aesa3354
Developed by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, this publication offers valuable information about how establish successful community groups that are vital to effective land and water stewardship.

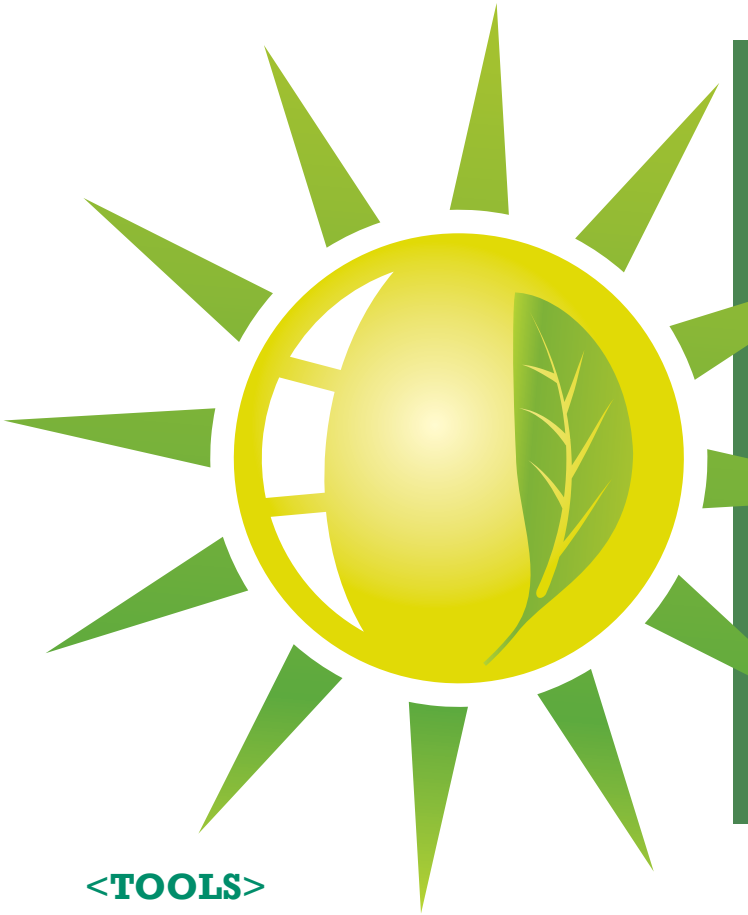
Stewardship Directory www.stewardshipdirectory.com
Search this online directory to find other community stewardship groups, organizations, businesses and government agencies willing to share their experiences and lessons learned in stewardship and natural resource management.

Working in Partnership
http://www.corridorconnector.org/region/sites/default/files/Working%20in%20Partnership,%20Recipes%20for%20Success.pdf
Made available by Alberta Culture, the partnership kit entitled "Working in Partnership – Recipes for Success" is available to assist organizations to partner effectively.

Building Corporate Relationships: A Toolkit for NonProfits
http://culture.alberta.ca/community-and-voluntary-services/resources-and-links/tools/pdf/AlbertaCulture-Toolkit.pdf
A resource that helps non-profits build relationships with corporate sector partners.

Community support is important for the long-term success of your stewardship group. To build trust and support, engage the community from the beginning. Talk with a wide range of people in your community; your neighbours, family and community leaders. Remember to give people your contact information so that if they have questions or are interested in your group they can follow up with you. When you discuss your group and proposed activities with members of the community, focus on sharing ideas. Not everyone will agree with your ideas but ask questions and share your view of the benefits of the proposed activities to the community. Ask people what they think about the issue you are addressing and establish common ground.

Engage: Building Community Support 4



<TIPS>

- Use social media; set up a Facebook page and Twitter account to start sharing your story.
- Share your story with your community newspaper.
- Consider holding a public meeting. A public meeting lets you discuss your ideas in an open, public forum and provides another opportunity to inform and engage local residents about the issue or problem you are trying to address.
- When planning your public meeting remember to:
  - Be inclusive
  - Create a safe, comfortable environment
  - Prepare for possible conflict
  - Be efficient
  - Record what happens
  - Communicate the outcomes of the meeting
  - Support and encourage group members
- If you have formed a working partnership with your local government agency, WPAC, or the Alberta Stewardship Network, they may be able to help you organize a public meeting.

<TOOLS>

Stewardship Directory www.stewardshipdirectory.com
It's a quick and easy way to get your stewardship organization or business noticed on the web. Simply register for a Stewardship Directory account. You will be notified when your account is confirmed, and once your account is confirmed you will be able to log in, create and manage your online profile.

Social Media for Non-Profits http://casefoundation.org/topic/social-media
Developed by the Case Foundation, this online resource compiles information, from the basics to more advanced tips, to help non-profits leverage social media as part of an effective communications strategy.

Conducting Effective Meetings http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/group-facilitation/main
An online resource provided by Community Tool Box, this website covers the basics of organizing and hosting a public meeting, with helpful tips and a comprehensive checklist.

At this stage you should have a dedicated handful of individuals committed to the group; that core of volunteers who are interested in getting your stewardship group up and running, and potential partners who can provide input and guidance to your group in its early stages.

From among the core individuals you can form a steering committee – the people who together will guide the initial development and direction of your new stewardship group until a more formal organizational structure can be set up.

From among the individuals on your steering committee you will need to determine who will take on various roles and responsibilities in the early stages of the group's development. A good place to start is deciding who will take on the leadership role. This person will be responsible for getting members together and guiding the initial activities of the group. The person you choose for the leadership role should be well-organized, able to facilitate discussion and build consensus, and delegate tasks to group members.

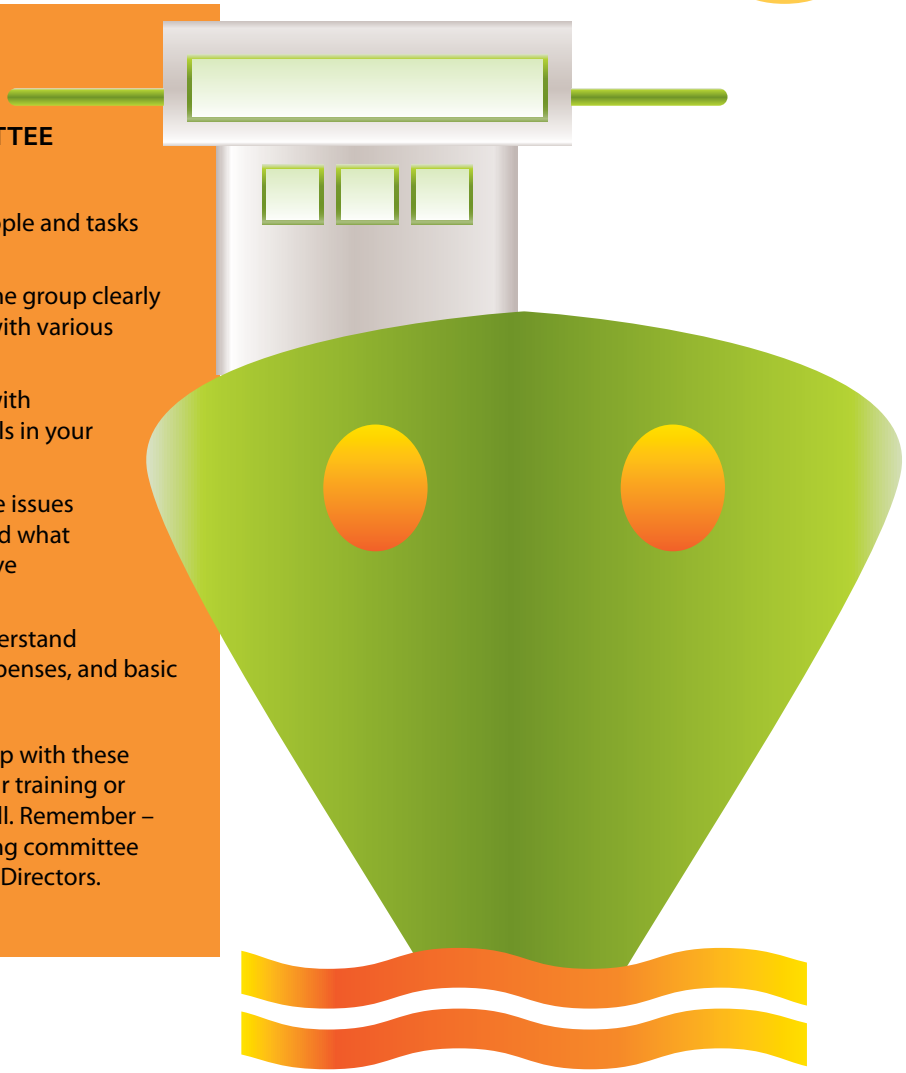
Launch: Steering the Ship 5

<TIPS>

THE PEOPLE ON YOUR STEERING COMMITTEE SHOULD HAVE:

- **Problem solving skills** – they can get people and tasks organized.
- **Communications skills** – they can help the group clearly articulate its purpose, goals and activities with various audiences.
- **Interpersonal skills** – they connect well with people and maintain contacts at many levels in your community.
- **Technical skills** – they are familiar with the issues the group wants to address, and understand what activities the group can engage to help solve the issues.
- **Financial management skills** – they understand budgeting, how to manage income and expenses, and basic financial reporting.

If you do not already have volunteers in your group with these skills, be sure to look for people who, through their training or experience, have the ability to do these things well. Remember – once you formalize your organization, your steering committee members could eventually become your Board of Directors.



<TOOLS>

Guide for Successful Groups

http://calgary-foundation.s3.amazonaws.com/mercury_assets/356/original.pdf?1350918115

There are many things to consider when establishing a volunteer group. This useful and comprehensive guide is published by The Calgary Foundation.

Once you have a steering committee and leadership in place, you can focus on formalizing what your group wants to achieve and how you will achieve it. This means you need to plan – and you should do it strategically. "Strategic planning" has many definitions, but generally involves a purposeful and deliberate approach to setting goals, determining what you'll do to achieve the goals, and then mobilizing the resources you'll need to take action. This is the foundation for your organization.

As a result of strategic planning, you will have a clearer idea of what your group is, what it does, and what challenges it faces. Planning strategically will also help your group to focus its attention on the crucial issues and challenges, and help the group's leaders decide what to do about those issues and challenges. As you go through this process, try to keep in mind how you will measure your success. If the outcomes of your group's activities are not easily measured, how will you communicate your achievements to funders, supporters and the wider community?

For a small start-up group the strategic planning process doesn't have to be scary or complicated. There are resources and people available for groups to get help with the planning process.

Plan: Setting the Foundation 6

SMART goals are:

- **Specific:** the goals should describe exactly what's expected, why it's important, who's involved, where it's going to happen and which attributes are important.
- **Measureable:** you should be able to measure progress toward reaching your goals. If a goal is not measurable it is not possible to know whether you are making progress and staying on track. By measuring your goals you can easily communicate your achievements to funders, supporters and the community at large.
- **Attainable:** your goals should be realistic and attainable. Keep in mind how you will accomplish the goals.
- **Relevant:** your goals should make sense for your group and what you want to achieve. Is your goal worthwhile and does it fit with your stated mission?
- **Time-related:** your goals should have a realistic timeframe for completion. A commitment to a deadline helps focus your efforts to complete your goals.

<TOOLS>

Alberta Culture
http://www.culture.alberta.ca/community-and-voluntary-services/programs-and-services/community-development/
Offering services tailored to community groups, non-profit organizations and volunteer teams, Alberta Culture's Community Development Facilitators can, among other things, help you with strategic planning efforts.

Community Tool Box: Developing Strategic and Action Plans http://ctb.ku.edu/en/developing-strategic-and-action-plans
This online resource provides guidance and tips to help develop a vision, mission, objectives, strategies and action plan.

Strategic plans don't have to be long or complex to be effective. At the least, make sure your strategic plan includes:

1. **A Mission Statement** – this is a brief expression of the group's purpose. It should answer the questions *"Why do we exist?"* and *"What, at the most basic level, do we do?"* Most simply put, your "mission" is what you do best every day.

2. **A Vision Statement** – Unlike the mission statement, a vision statement is for you and the other members of your group, not for your external partners or stakeholders. Ultimately, your "vision" is the core of your inspiration and motivation, and describes what the future looks like because you do that mission so exceedingly well.

3. **A Values Statement** – These are the basic principles on which your group is built. It answers the question *"What do we believe in?"*

4. **Goals and Objectives** - While the terms are often used interchangeably, goals are generally more comprehensive or far-reaching than objectives. Framed clearly, they answer the question *"What do we want to accomplish?"* Make sure your goals are 'SMART'.

5. **Strategies and Tactics** – Strategies consist of the general approach and tactics are the activities needed to achieve the group's goals and objectives. They answer the question *"How are we going to accomplish our work?"*

With a strategic plan in place you can now develop a work plan. A work plan outlines in more detail, over a given period of time (e.g. a year) what you intend to do, how you intend to do it, and by what date you intend to have it done. It helps you keep track of your activities and how you are progressing towards achieving your goals. You will then use your work plan to prepare a budget.

<TIPS>

WHEN DEVELOPING YOUR MISSION STATEMENT, ASK YOURSELF:

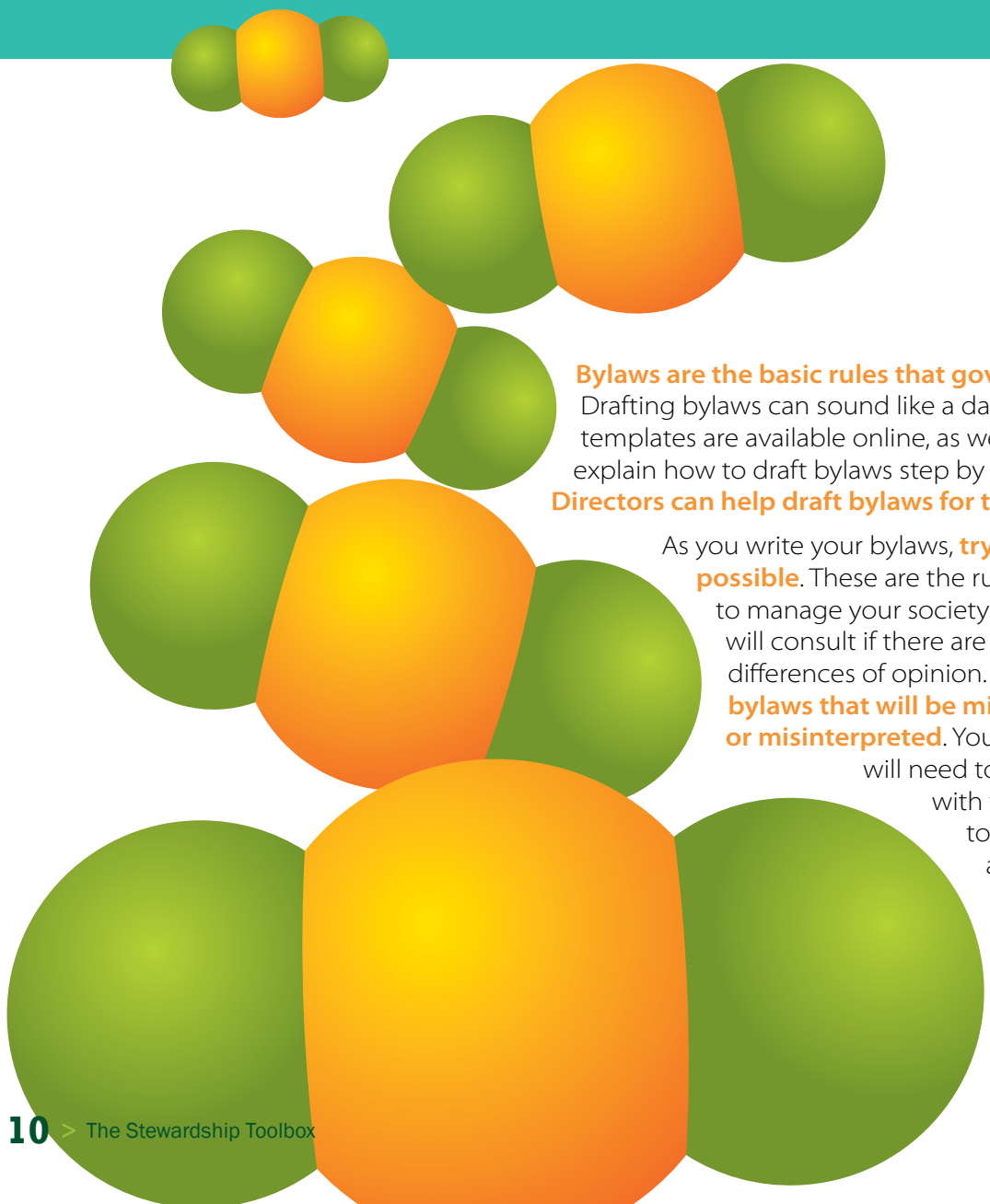
- **What do we do?**
- **What do we stand for?**
- **How will we do it?**
- **Whom do we do it for?**
- **What value are we providing?**

The formal structure of your organization should be based on its intended function or purpose. You can operate a community stewardship group without incorporating, but depending on the specific goals of your stewardship group, you may want to incorporate as a society or registered charity.

Benefits of incorporation include a formalized structure, limited liability for individual members and eligibility for funding or grants. However, there are costs associated with incorporation and time is required to meet the initial and ongoing requirements of incorporation. There are many resources online to guide you through the process of incorporation, if you choose that route. The Alberta Stewardship Network can also help you find appropriate resources for incorporation.

As you move toward formalizing your group's organization you will also need to establish a Board of Directors to oversee the activities of the group. The Board of Directors will usually have a minimum of three to five members and should include someone with management experience, someone with a network of local contacts and someone with experience attracting and training volunteers.

Organize: Establishing a Structure 7



Bylaws are the basic rules that govern your group. Drafting bylaws can sound like a daunting task but templates are available online, as well as guides that explain how to draft bylaws step by step. **The Board of Directors can help draft bylaws for the group**.

As you write your bylaws, **try to be as clear as possible**. These are the rules you will use to manage your society and which you will consult if there are any difficulties or differences of opinion. **You do not want bylaws that will be misunderstood or misinterpreted**. Your group's bylaws will need to be submitted with your application to incorporate as a society.

<TIPS>

WHEN ESTABLISHING A BOARD OF DIRECTORS, YOU WILL NEED TO CONSIDER:

- How will you select the Board members?
- What kind of skills and experience do you want your Board members to have?
- How will you describe the job and the responsibilities of the position?
- What kind of commitment will you ask for from Board members?
- How long will Directors be asked to serve on the Board?

<TOOLS>

Alberta Culture – Board Development Program
http://culture.alberta.ca/bdp/default.aspx
A complimentary service provided by Alberta Culture to assist not-for-profit boards with governance. The Resources section of the site includes access to information bulletins and workbooks on a variety of board-related issues, including Roles and Responsibilities of Not-for-Profit Boards, Financial Responsibilities of Not-for-Profit Boards, Drafting and Revising Bylaws, Committees, and much more.

How to Incorporate
http://www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca/674.cfm
Learn how to incorporate your group into a society or non-profit organization with information from Service Alberta.

Registering a Charity in Alberta
http://www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca/Charitable_Organizations.cfm
What you need to know and do to register a charitable organization in Alberta.

Sample By-Laws
https://corporationscanada.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cd-dgc.nsf/eng/cs04999.html
Industry Canada provides an example of bylaws for a not-for-profit corporation that you can use as a starting point when drafting your bylaws.

Drafting and Revising Bylaws for Not-for-profit Organizations in Alberta
http://www.muttart.org/sites/default/files/downloads/publications/drafting_revising.pdf
Developed by the Muttart Foundation, this guide provides an overview of the guidelines to consider when incorporating a society and drafting bylaws and incorporation documents for a society in Alberta.

After you have laid the strategic foundation for your group, review all the resources your group has or will need to help you get the work done. This includes money, time, physical facilities, equipment, supplies and volunteers.

As your group starts out, you will need an idea of what your initial start-up funding requirements will be. Do you need to rent a meeting space or can you meet more informally? Do you have any project expenses to pay right away or are you still in the planning phase? Do you have any paid staff? Preparing an accurate budget based on your work plan (the work you want to complete in a given time period) will help your group be realistic about the expenses you will incur and the resources you will need to support those expenses.

You will need to decide how you will raise funds. For example will you collect membership fees or solicit Board contributions; will you apply for grants from other agencies; will you approach partners for sponsorships or will you consider crowdsourcing?

To effectively manage the funds earmarked for your group's work, you may need to open a dedicated bank account for the group. Your Treasurer and finance committee will be in charge of handling the money and preparing budgets, but the rest of the group should be involved to provide oversight.

Accumulate: Gathering the Resources You'll Need 8

Preparing a budget based on the work you want to achieve in a given time period will help you be realistic about the resources you will need.

<TOOLS>

Volunteer Value Calculator http://volunteercalculator.imaginecanada.ca/eng/default.asp?tabsel=1
Offered by Imagine Canada, the Volunteer Value Calculator is an easy-to-use, online tool designed to help you calculate the economic value of the volunteers at your organization.

Financial Fitness: An Overview https://www.vancity.com/SharedContent/documents/pdfs/FFOverview2009_Fnl.pdf
Developed by Vancity, this handbook is a quick and useful overview of the elements required for a non-profit organization to be financially sustainable. Learn what you need to know about the qualities of a financially healthy non-profit organization, and how to ensure stable programming for your group to achieve its goals over time.

Writing a Successful Grant Proposal http://www.fcssaa.org/resources/guide-writing-proposals
This manual offers clear suggestions and examples to assist with the development of successful Letters of Intent and grant proposals aimed at a wide variety of funders.

Funding Sources http://www.landstewardship.org/funding-stewards/
The Alberta Stewardship Network provides a list of some key organizations committed to providing funding to grassroots stewardship in Alberta.

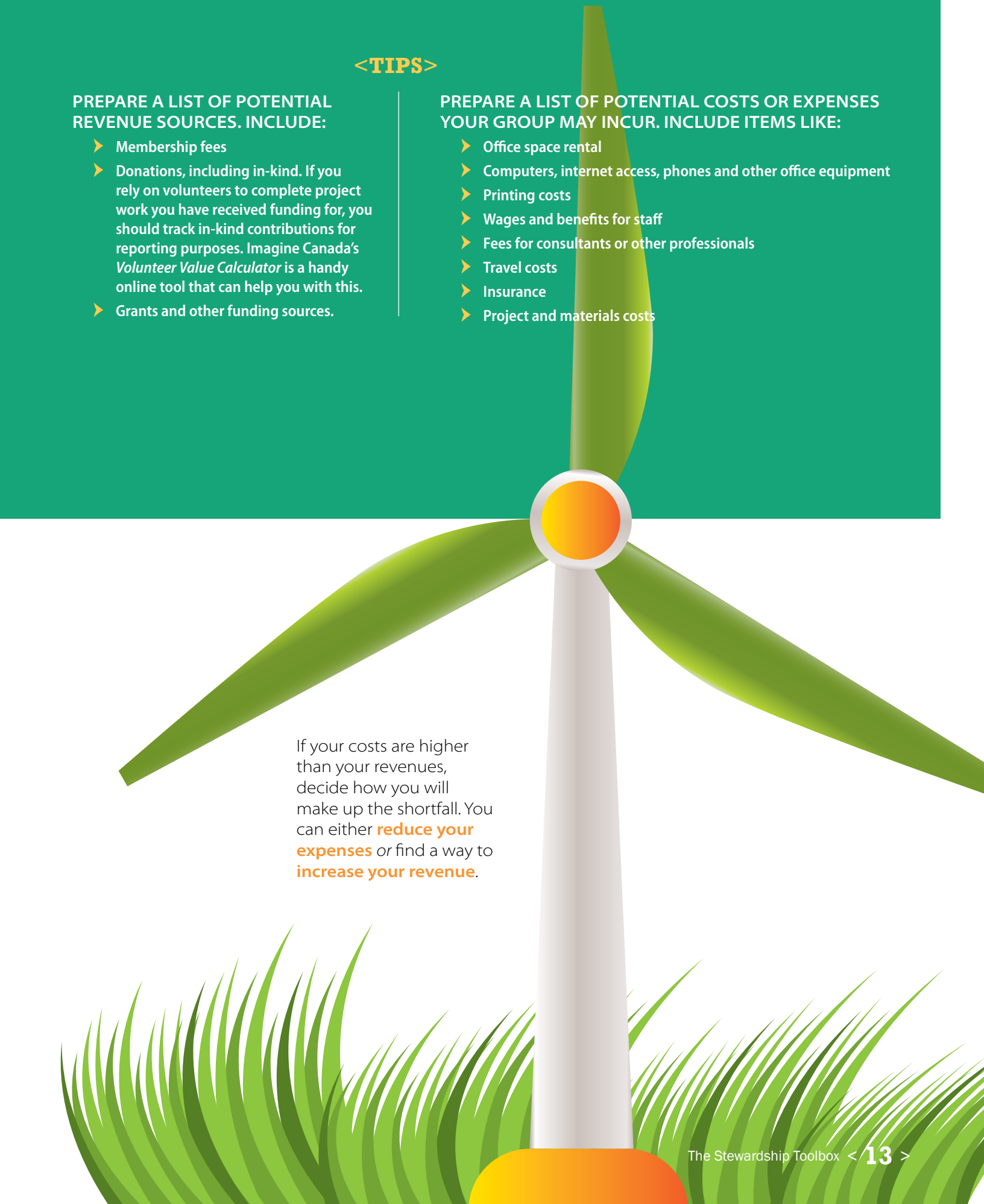
<TIPS>

PREPARE A LIST OF POTENTIAL REVENUE SOURCES. INCLUDE:

- Membership fees
- Donations, including in-kind. If you rely on volunteers to complete project work you have received funding for, you should track in-kind contributions for reporting purposes. Imagine Canada's *Volunteer Value Calculator* is a handy online tool that can help you with this.
- Grants and other funding sources.

PREPARE A LIST OF POTENTIAL COSTS OR EXPENSES YOUR GROUP MAY INCUR. INCLUDE ITEMS LIKE:

- Office space rental
- Computers, internet access, phones and other office equipment
- Printing costs
- Wages and benefits for staff
- Fees for consultants or other professionals
- Travel costs
- Insurance
- Project and materials costs



If your costs are higher than your revenues, decide how you will make up the shortfall. You can either **reduce your expenses** *or* find a way to **increase your revenue**.

Once you've formalized the structure of your group, you may find that committees are a good way to divide up the work that needs to be done. One committee you should set up is a finance committee, which will work with your Treasurer to provide oversight of your financial accounts. Otherwise, start with only essential committees and add others as your group grows and you see a need. Committees that may help your group get work done more effectively include specific Program or Project Committees and Communications, Training and Board Nominations committees. Each committee should have a chair and develop a schedule to meet project timeline goals.

Enable: Getting the Work Done 9

Even as you set up committees, keep in mind that you are working as a group, not individuals. Everyone has an interest in the group and everyone should feel able to contribute to discussions and decisions. A consensus process can help everyone express their viewpoint and help the group come to a decision that everyone can live with.

In the early stages of your group's existence, try to focus on a few simple short-term tasks or projects that have a good chance of success. This will help your group members learn how to work together and establish a strong foundation as you move on to more complex tasks. In your work plan, you will have set specific tasks with reasonable deadlines to ensure your group's goals are attainable. If you find you are getting bogged down, take another look at your goals and objectives and how you propose to achieve them, and revise them as you need to.

As you proceed, you may decide to hire a coordinator to help direct the group's activities and volunteers. A coordinator can help maintain contact with group members, arrange and oversee training for new volunteers, organize meetings, and act as the primary contact for the group. If you are just starting out as a stewardship group, most of these functions can be carried out by the membership. It is as the group grows, or as the activities you undertake become more complex, that a coordinator may provide additional value.

<TOOLS>

Primer for Directors of Not-For-Profit Corporations (Rights, Duties and Practices): Committees
https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cilp-pdci.nsf/eng/cl00695.html
Industry Canada provides an online overview of not-for-profit board committees' roles and responsibilities. It includes examples of types of committees and the functions they fulfill.

Community Tool Box: Developing an Action Plan
http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/develop-action-plans/main
This online resource provides a clear, step-by-step guide to creating an action or work plan.

<TIPS>

TO GET A SENSE OF THE TASKS YOUR GROUP NEEDS TO TAKE ON AND HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE WORK:

- Review the specific tasks the group needs to accomplish and establish timelines for completing each task.
- Decide who will be responsible for the completion of each specific task: the group leader(s), the group as a whole, a specific committee or an individual.
- Make sure tasks can be reasonably completed within your defined timelines, and that the workload is manageable for groups and individuals.
- Determine if there any special skills needed to complete the tasks. Do the individuals in your group have those skills or will you need to seek more volunteers that have the needed skills? Will you have to hire consultants or experts with the specific skills in order to complete the tasks?

As a volunteer-based stewardship group, supporting your volunteers is critical to your group's long term success. You will need to decide who will manage and provide direction to volunteers. Will it be the Board of Directors, a committee or an individual?

You will also need to figure out how you will attract volunteers to your group. If your group deals with specialized issues or activities that need specific training, you will need to set up a training program. A volunteer training manual that includes basic information about your group's vision, goals and activities can be a simple way to quickly bring new volunteers up to speed on your group.

As you continue to grow your group, you will need to ensure you keep volunteers engaged and motivated. Volunteer recognition is a powerful way to acknowledge the contributions of your volunteers and to show your appreciation for the work they do. Acknowledging volunteer contributions can be as simple as sending a letter of appreciation or something more formal – like hosting a volunteer recognition dinner.

Support: Taking Care of Your Volunteers 10

<TOOLS>

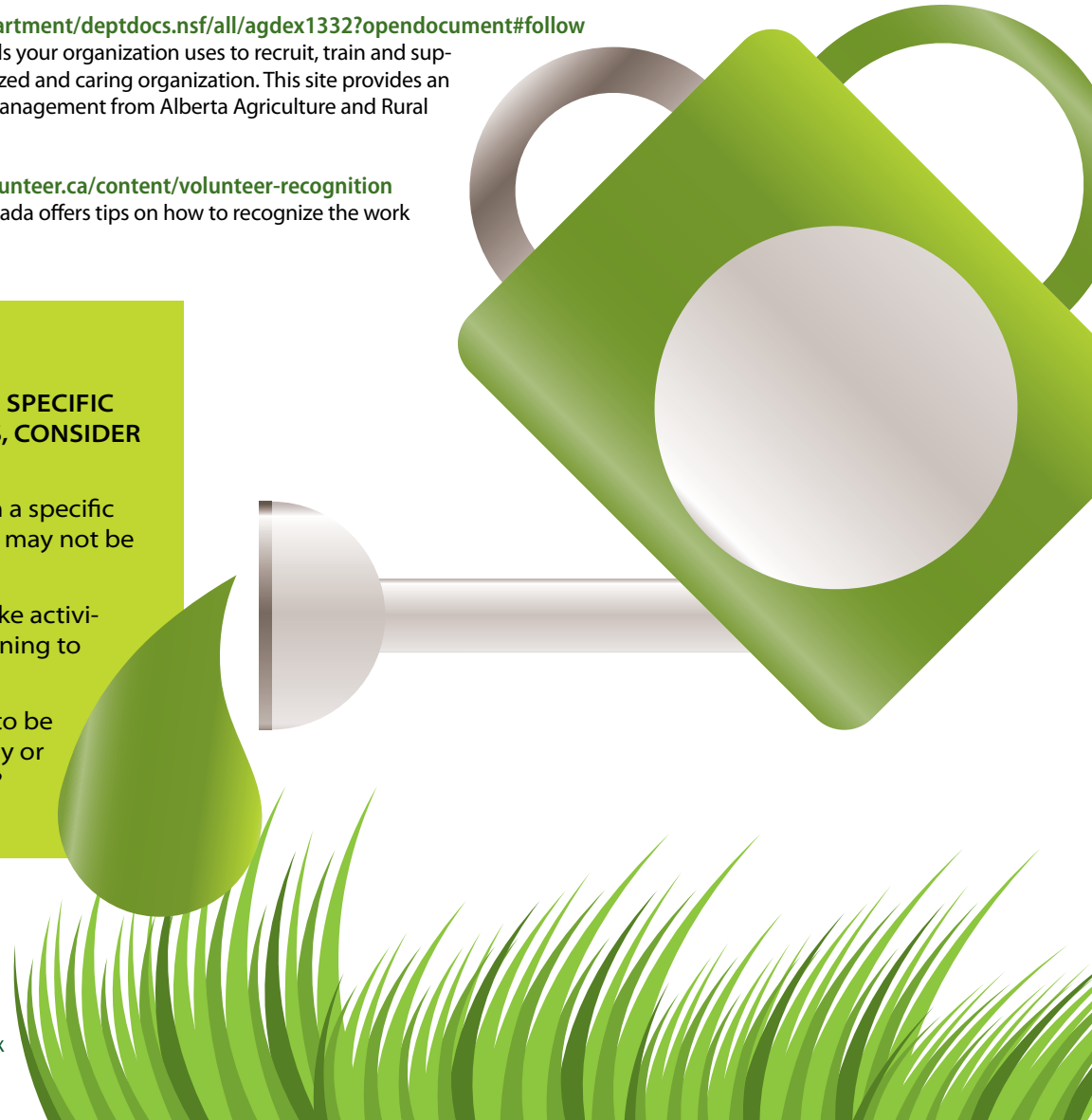
Working with Volunteers
http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex1332?opendocument#follow
It is critical to ensure that the methods your organization uses to recruit, train and support volunteers reflects a well-organized and caring organization. This site provides an introduction to effective volunteer management from Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development.

Volunteer Recognition http://volunteer.ca/content/volunteer-recognition
In this online resource, Volunteer Canada offers tips on how to recognize the work volunteers do.

<TIPS>

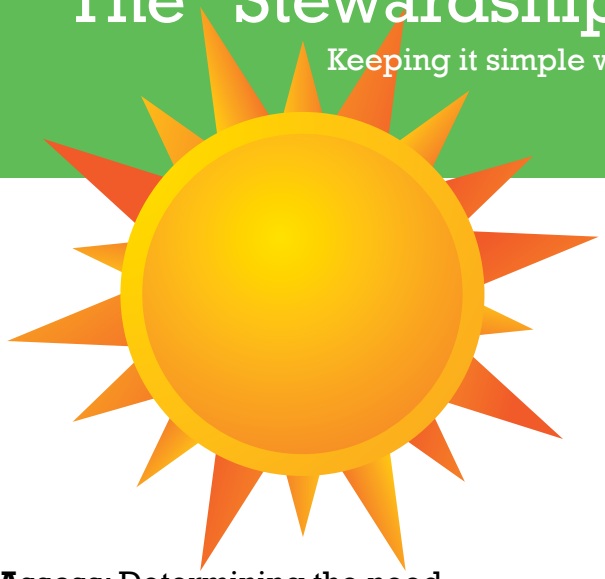
TO DETERMINE IF YOU NEED SPECIFIC TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Does your group focus on a specific issue that new volunteers may not be familiar with?
- Does your group undertake activities that need specific training to complete?
- Do new volunteers need to be brought up to date quickly or can they learn as they go?



The "Stewardship Starter" Checklist

Keeping it simple will help you get it right



1> **Assess:** Determining the need

- ◯ Search the Stewardship Directory
- ◯ Talk to neighbours and community members
- ◯ Decide if there is support for your idea

2> **Focus:** Defining your purpose and place

- ◯ Write a statement of purpose
- ◯ Define the geographic boundaries of the area your group will work in (e.g. Watershed or WPAC boundary; municipal boundary, etc.)

3> **Assemble:** Seeking out local partners

- ◯ Search the Stewardship Directory for potential local partners
- ◯ Find and engage with municipal, provincial and federal government contacts
- ◯ Contact local or regional stewardship groups
- ◯ Look for and contact research organizations
- ◯ Contact local businesses that may be willing to support your group

4> **Engage:** Building community support

- ◯ Set up a Facebook page for your group
- ◯ Start a Twitter account for your group
- ◯ Share your story with your community newspaper

5> **Launch:** Steering the ship

- ◯ Select a Steering Committee
- ◯ Decide on a group leader

6> **Plan:** Setting the foundation for your group

- ◯ Write a Mission Statement
- ◯ Develop a Vision Statement
- ◯ Develop a Values Statement
- ◯ Define at least one long-term SMART goal for your group
- ◯ Develop short-term objectives to achieve your goal(s)
- ◯ List the activities you need to complete to achieve your objectives

7> **Organize:** Establish a structure for your group

- ◯ Decide if your group will remain unincorporated, incorporate as a society or register as a charity
- ◯ Establish a Board of Directors
- ◯ Write your group's bylaws

8> **Accumulate:** Gathering the resources you'll need

- ◯ Prepare a list of potential revenue sources
- ◯ Prepare a list of estimated costs
- ◯ Open a bank account for the group
- ◯ Set up a Finance Committee and appoint a Treasurer

9> **Enable:** Getting the work done

- ◯ Decide how to split up the work your group needs to do
- ◯ Decide if committees are needed to help you complete your work
- ◯ Create a work plan for your group

10> **Support:** Taking care of your volunteers

- ◯ Develop a volunteer recruitment strategy
- ◯ Determine any specific volunteer training needs
- ◯ Create a plan to recognize volunteer effort and achievements

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