

**Township of Johnson**  
**REVISED Recreation Coordinator's Report**  
**To Council**

**Date: July 18, 2018 - REVISED**

**Public Information: Yes**  
**Confidential: No**

**Recommendations:**

1. That Council accepts the following Recreation Committee recommendation concerning Theme 4 "Power Off and Play" funds from the Healthy Kids Community Challenge North Channel (HKCC NC):
  - a. That the approximately \$9,000 that is allocated to our township under one of the Power Off and Play interventions be used to develop plans for a Natural Playground at the grounds of the old Johnson Tarbutt Public School site as per the Recreation Coordinators report (attached)
  - b. And, if the previous resolution is agreed to, that the Recreation Coordinator provide a budget for approval at the next Council Meeting in August.

**Information:**

Please see attached report, to be presented by Recreation Coordinator.

Respectfully Submitted by Patrick O'Gorman, Recreation Coordinator, on behalf of the Johnson Township Recreation Committee

## **Report to Council concerning Recreation Committee Recommendation to Support the Planning of a Natural Playground on the former Johnson Tarbutt School Grounds. July 18, 2018**

The Recreation Committee was presented with options by the Recreation Coordinator for a proposed playground for the Hamlet of Desbarats (as per Council Resolution 59, April 18, 2018). The Recreation Committee has passed a resolution to recommend to Council that the Recreation Coordinator work with Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds, a world leader in the design and construction of Natural Playgrounds, to develop plans for a Natural Playground on and around the existing knoll that lies between the soccer fields at the old Johnson-Tarbutt Schoolground site (**see map attached**). Considerations taken into account by the Recreation in making this recommendation:

- Requests made by local residents for a playground since the removal of the School playground equipment
- Ease, flexibility, and relative inexpensiveness of building and maintaining a Natural Playground. Manufacture playground equipment can cost anywhere from \$20,000 to \$70,000 (**see attached examples**). We can get a design for a Natural Playground for app. \$10,000, using the Healthy Kids Community Challenge funding, and lay the basic outlay of the Playground for comparatively little money, drawn from the Lagerholm recreation fund, and/or with volunteer and in-kind help. Additional costs would be for an official survey of the site and construction ready blueprints, cost to be determined.
- If Council has future plans to sever the property to create lots for sale along Margaret St., the natural playground will be a value-added selling point for families looking for a great place to live.
- Plans developed will lay out a blueprint for developing this site when funding or in-kind donations is available. The development can occur incrementally over several years. Funding may be available through programs from Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport each year to add additional elements to the Playground.
- Finally, the Knoll itself is a legacy play site for the community...one Recreation member's family have been playing on that knoll for 3 generations - it was always likely the most favoured play areas at the old Johnson Tarbutt school.

### **Background**

On June 6, 2018, the Recreation Coordinator, Patrick O'Gorman, and Administrative Assistant, Frieda Labelle, attended a cross-North Shore workshop and presentation about Natural Playgrounds through an initiative by the Healthy Kids Community Challenge North Channel (HKCC). The workshop was presented by Adam Bienenstock, founder and owner of the Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds, and a recognized world expert in their design and construction. The workshop included:

- Information about how Natural Playgrounds can be an important part of child development and how they support the large amount of evidence that interaction with nature is one of the most important aspects of this development
- Examples of Natural Playgrounds from around the world (**Please see attached examples**)
- A hands-on exercise in designing a natural playground by groups of workshop attendees within the parameters of good practices and safety considerations of Natural Playgrounds. The mock-ups were then critiqued and discussed
- Information about safety concerns and insurance issues surrounding Natural Playgrounds (essentially, there are none if the playground is set up properly, please see below "Safety Considerations").

**Please see Natural Playground one-pager for overview of the workshop**

For more information on Natural playgrounds, please see below – "**Why Natural Playgrounds**"

### **Proposal**

The Recreation Committee proposes the following steps:

1. That the Recreation Coordinator present a budget for the development of the Natural Playground for the next Council Meeting.

2. If the budget is approved, that the Recreation Coordinator work with Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds, or a local company if that is an option, to develop a plan for the Natural Playground using the \$9,000 from HKCC funding.
  - a. The cost of the design for the Natural Playground by Bienenstock is approximately \$10,000. This includes a site visit, preliminary designs and site plan, consultation, an artist-rendered video fly-through of the proposed design, and a PDF of Design. (There are several community on the North Shore developing Natural Playgrounds this summer, so we can coordinate the site visits at the same time to save money on this) Construction ready blueprints would be an extra cost, and could be tendered to a local landscape design company. The balance of funds for the Design Plans would come out of the Recreation Budget.
3. That site plan preparation and layout of the Natural Playground be carried out, with preliminary paths and fixtures, to a total of not more than \$10,000, funds to be drawn from the Erling Lagerholm fund.

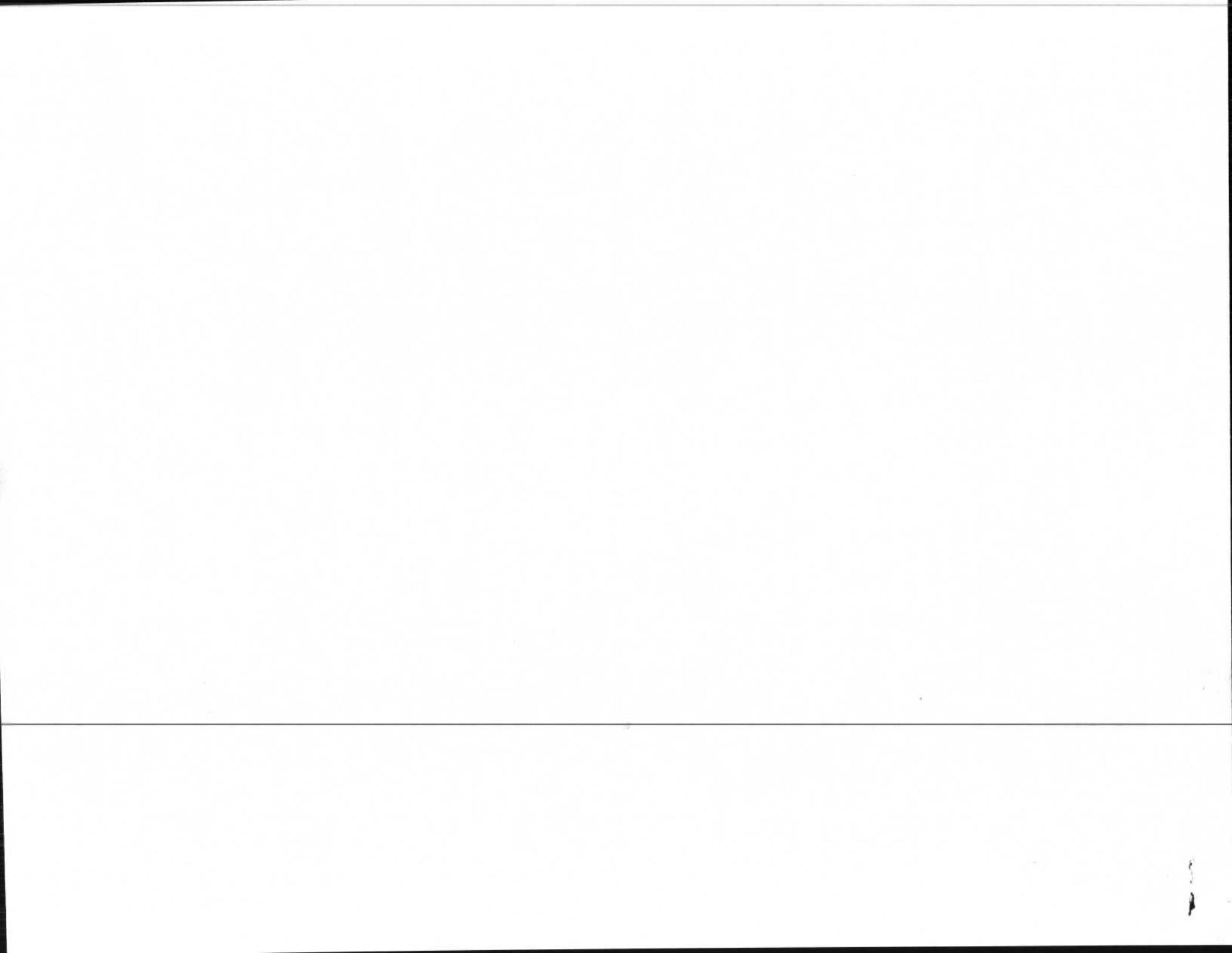
**Note:** the HKCC funds need to be spent by the end of September when the HKCC program draws to a close.

### **Why Natural Playgrounds**

- Natural playgrounds are becoming more popular, where the play equipment is created using largely natural materials (and often recycled ones too!) creating beautiful, exciting playgrounds that are fun and safe, and respect the environment too
- Factory made playground construction materials may sometimes contain potentially harmful substances which are not only destructive to the environment but also to children's health as well. Natural play areas which are full of plants, trees, logs, and trees stumps not only create a more stimulating environment, but are far better in terms of health and safety too.
- Research surrounding nature based playscapes has shown that they work better for children in many ways. In fact natural playgrounds have been shown to better stimulate children's imaginations, boost their energy levels, and actually increase the amount of time they want to spend in play by a significant amount over factory made playgrounds.
- Natural playgrounds also provide greater opportunities for children to engage in interactive play. As the environment is constantly changing, play becomes more interactive, there are fewer restrictions, more freedom to run around and explore and for children to truly immerse themselves in play. Static play equipment can only be used in a finite number of ways, and therefore children's activities can end up becoming repetitive if they visit the playground over and over again.
- Natural playgrounds are designed to be inviting and stimulating, not intimidating. Intertwining the surrounding landscape into the play area creates a unique and pleasant environment for children of all ages and abilities to play in.
- Natural playgrounds are innovative, exciting, and educational. There are so many elements which can be included in the playground to make it a wonderful place for children to grow and learn. Sand pits, hillslides, water features, plants, trees, boulders and even outdoor musical instruments can all be included making a magical, safe, environmentally friendly playground which both children and adults alike can enjoy for many years.

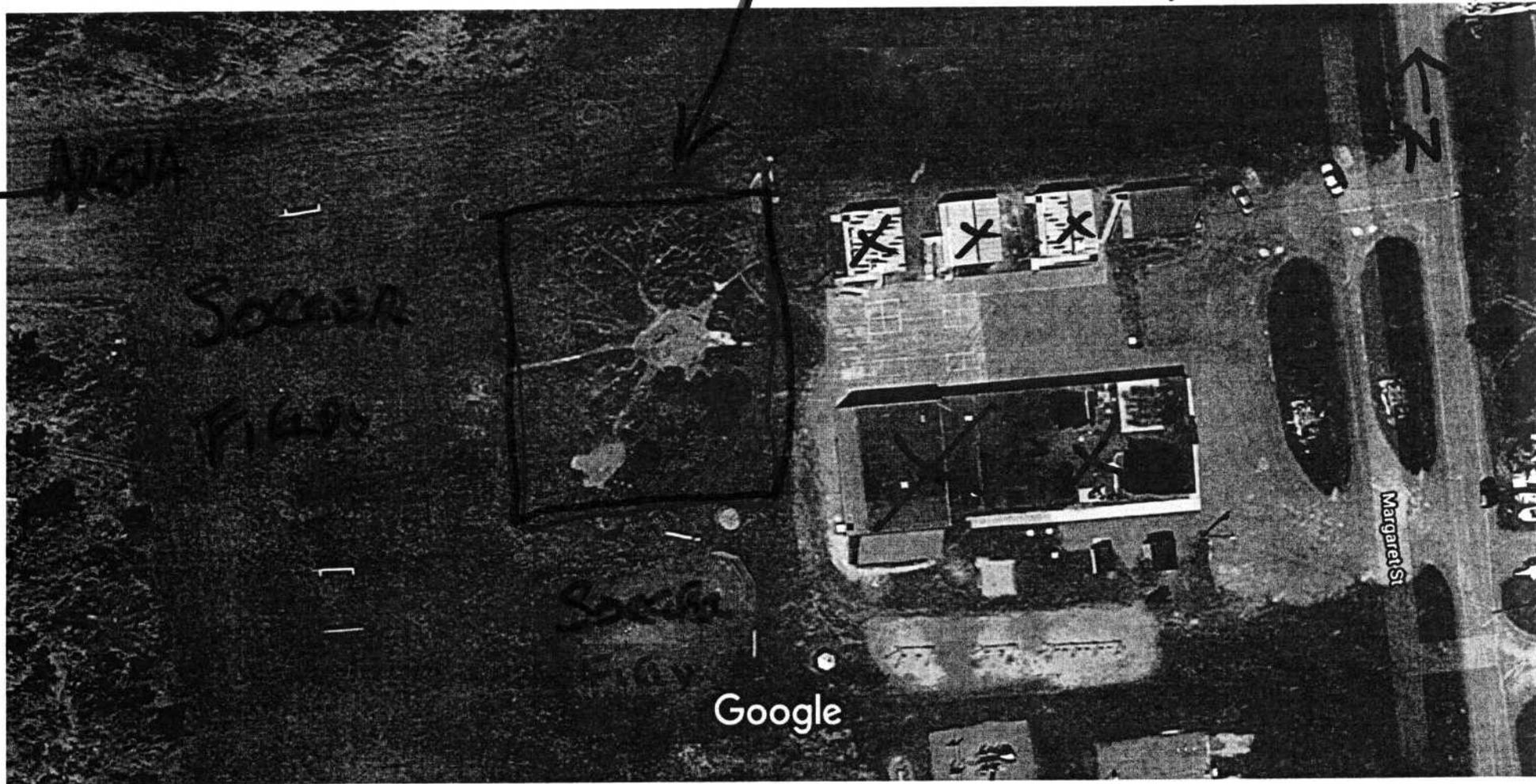
### **SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

Bienenstock designs playgrounds to meet CAN/CSA z614-07 and ASTM F 1487-07 standards. They use these standards as minimum guidelines for the safety of children. Interestingly, catastrophic injuries occur less frequently on natural features when compared to plastic post and platform playgrounds. Additionally, research has consistently shown that vandalism, aggressive behaviour and bullying rates are all reduced in direct proportion to the amount of tree canopy and access to nature that exist in a play space. Bienenstock also provides all of clients with Operations and Maintenance Manuals.



Google Maps

PROPOSED AREA FOR NATURAL PLAYGROUND



Imagery ©2018 Google, Map data ©2018 Google 20 m

200000

100000

200000

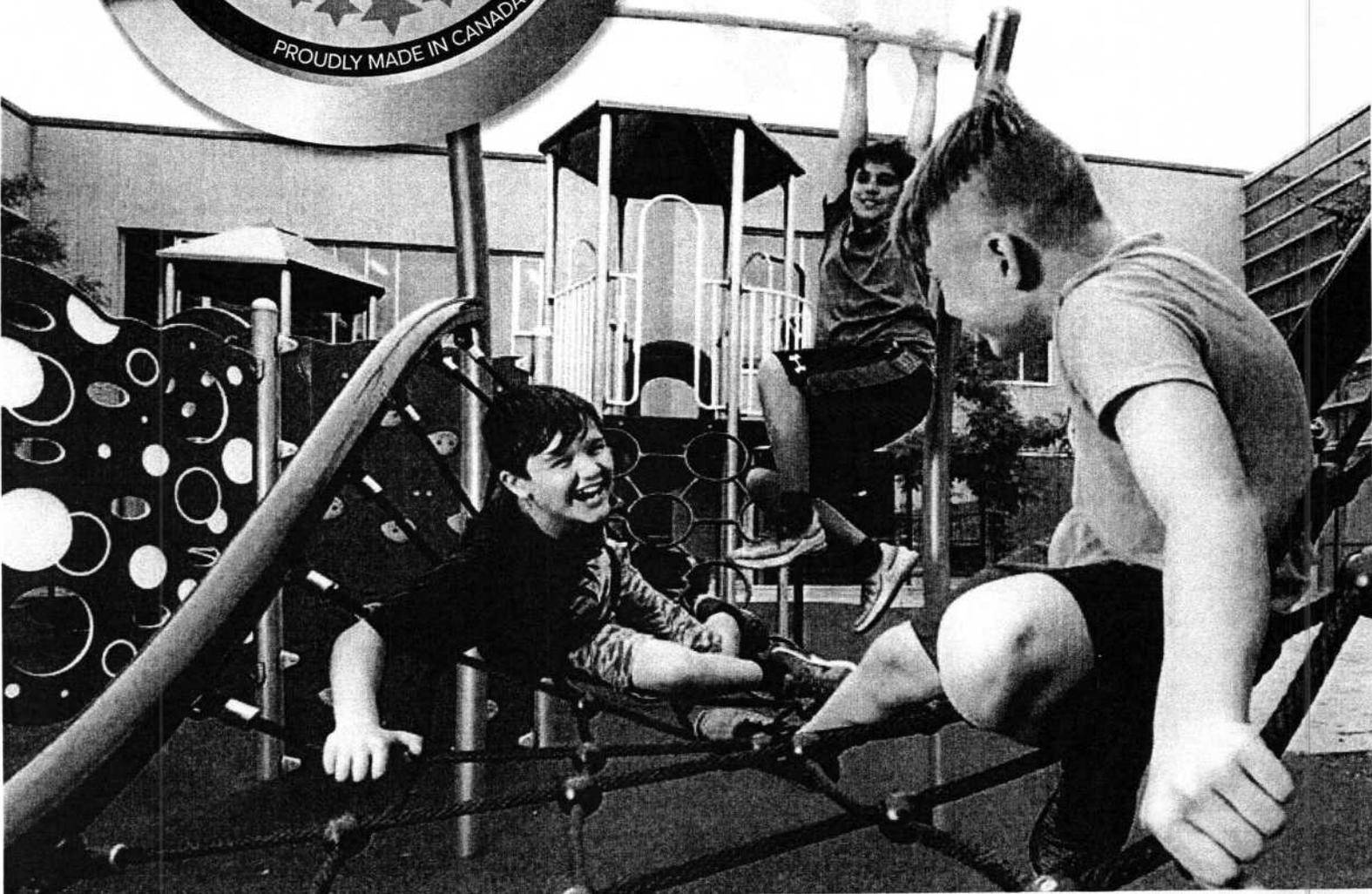
100000





Designs so popular we're putting them on sale... again!!

Don't miss out! Sale ends August 30, 2018.



### **Tucy Beaver**

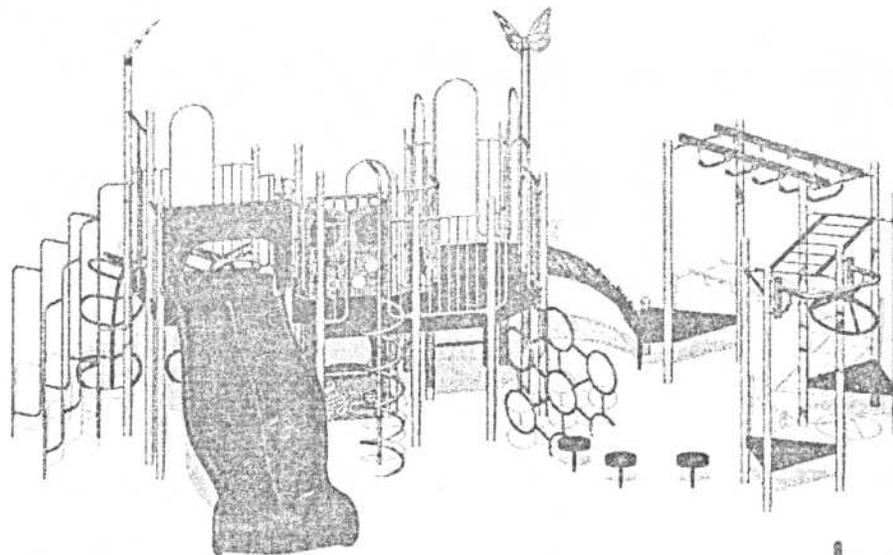
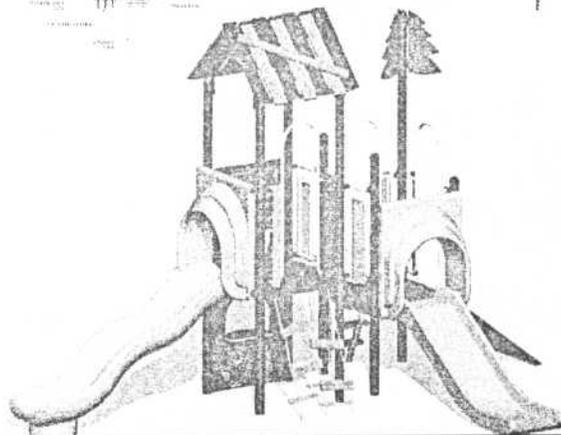
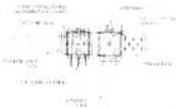
This nature-inspired design gives kids that fun, outdoorsy feeling and keeps the littlest beavers busy and happy.

**S16-02**

Recommended Ages: 2-5

Area Required: 9.9m x 7.7m (33' x 26')

**\$13,061**



### **Double Double**

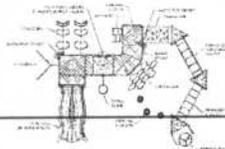
Order up double the fun with this vibrant design featuring all the favourite activities. Butterfly post-toppers add a whimsical touch.

**S16-05**

Recommended Ages: 5-12

Area Required: 12.4m x 10.0m (41' x 33')

**\$26,523**



### **Puddles & Ponds**

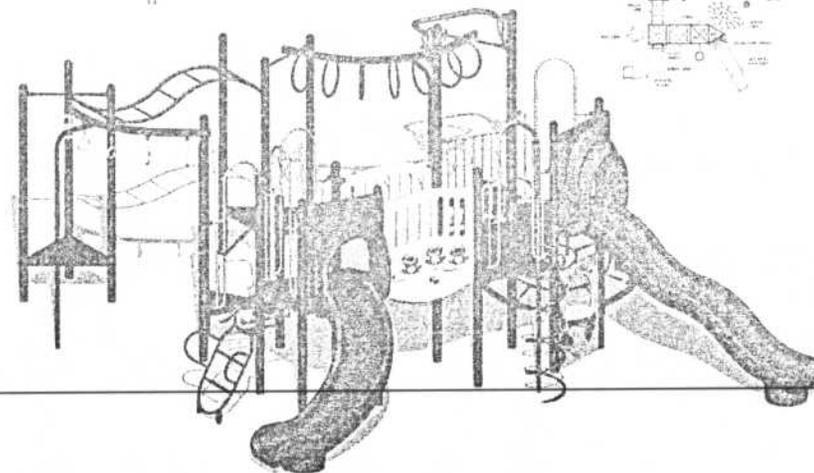
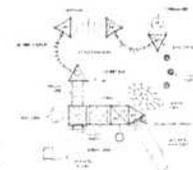
From the Froggy Bridge to the Wave Slide and the Ogoopogo, this fun-filled design is sure to make a big splash.

**S15-04**

Recommended Ages: 5-12

Area Required: 10.9m x 11.9m (36' x 39')

**\$23,903**



### ImpVenture

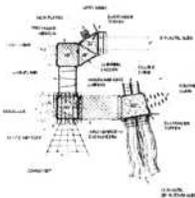
Adventure-seeking little imps of all ages will discover diverse climbing and sliding thrills on this woody structure.

**S17-04**

Recommended Ages: 2-12

Area Required: 10.5m x 10.1m (35' x 33')

**\$26,810**



### ImpPower

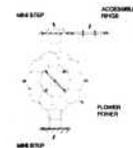
Provide the muscle-building brachiating action kids love. Accessible rings supply ground level play.

**S17-05**

Recommended Ages: 5-12

Area Required: 7.3m x 7.4m (24' x 25')

**\$4,122**



Enhance your playscape with freestanding nature-inspired elements.



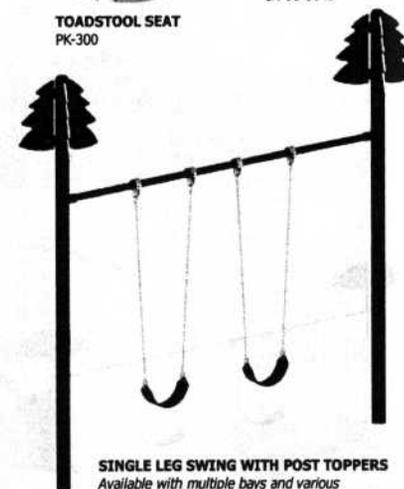
**LOG STEP**  
PH-111-12 (2 shown)



**CATERPILLAR**  
CN-30-5048



**TOADSTOOL SEAT**  
PK-300



**SINGLE LEG SWING WITH POST TOPPERS**  
Available with multiple bays and various seat packages.



### Blue Yonder

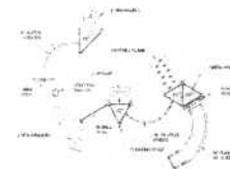
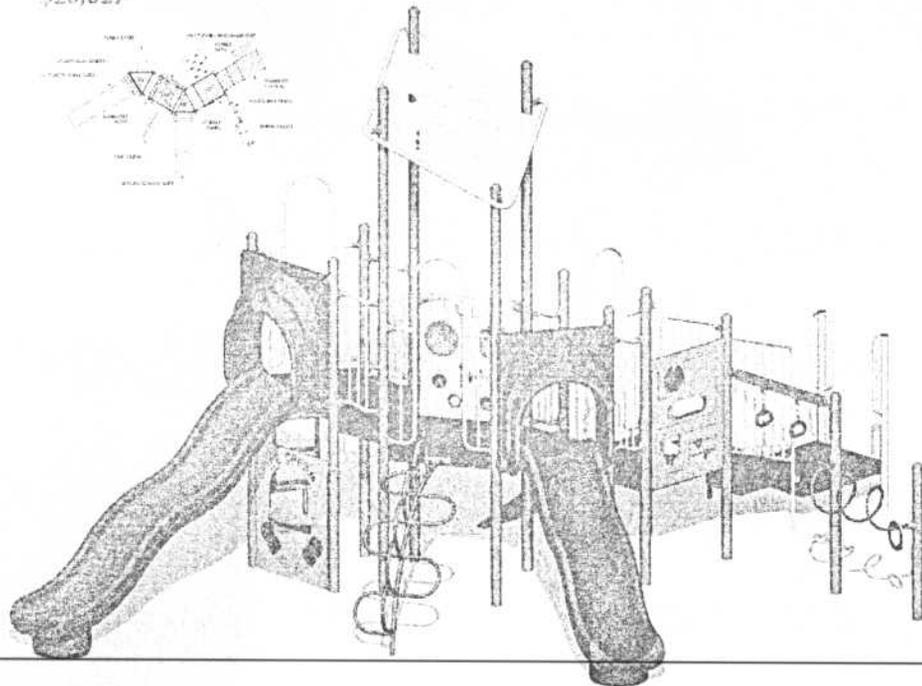
This sunny design will have kids running outside to play. Ground level activities and transfer station provide access to the fun for all ages and abilities.

**517-03**

Recommended Ages: 2-12

Area Required: 11.8m x 9.5m (39' x 32')

**\$20,027**



### Twisty Trails

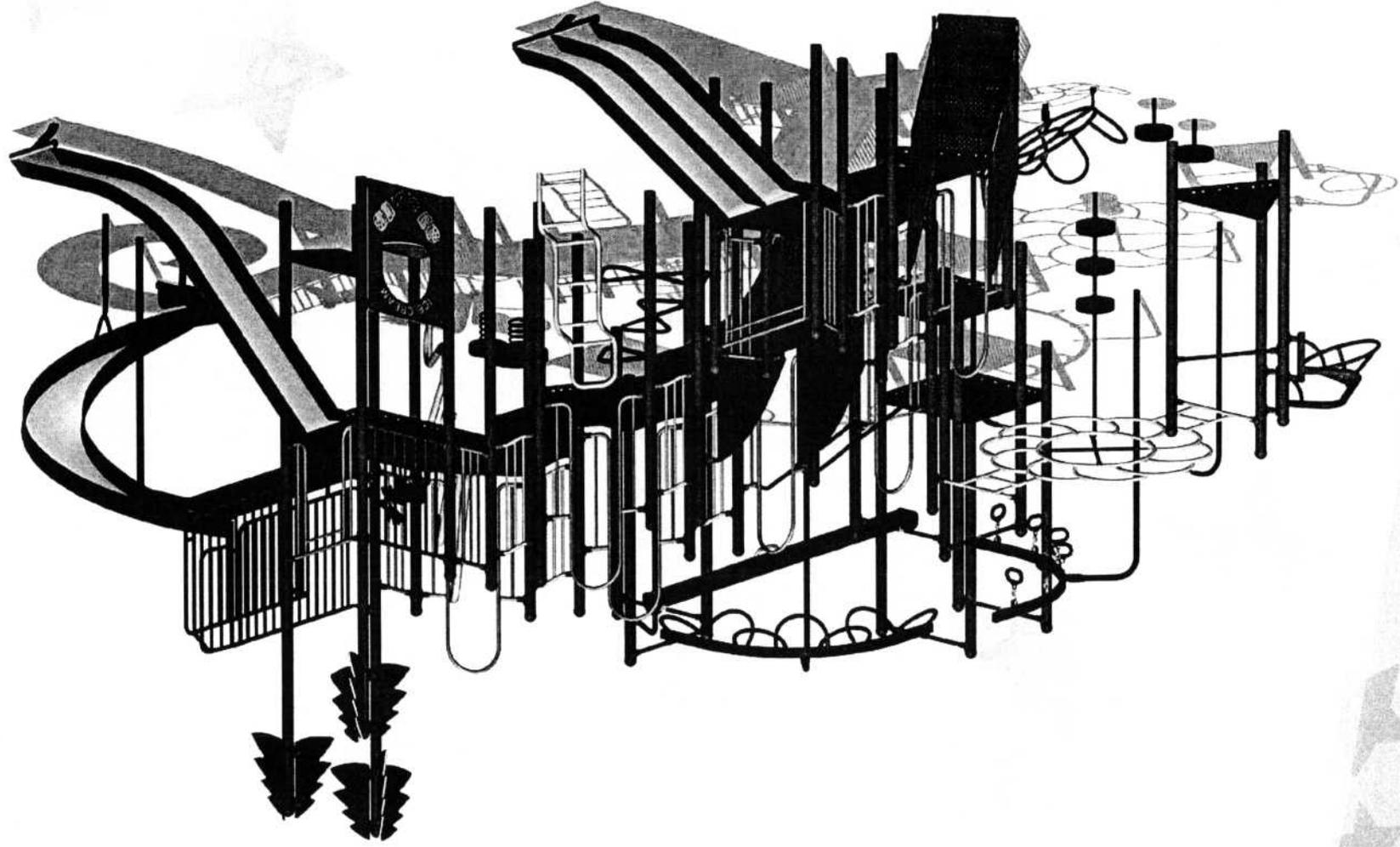
Abounding with surprising twists, turns, ups and downs, this compact and appealing design creates opportunities for free-flowing play.

**S14-07**

Recommended Ages: 5-12

Area Required: 10.4m x 11.6m (34' x 38')

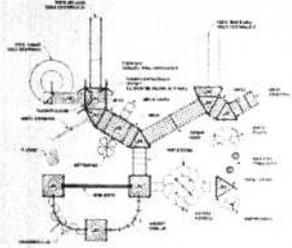
**\$18,438**



**Mighty Moose**  
 Delivering a powerful mix of upper body  
 fun, climbing action and sliding thrills,  
 this highly durable all-steel design is truly  
 mighty as a moose.

**S16-10**  
 Recommended Ages: 5-12  
 Area Required: 14.3m x 14.0m (47' x 46')

**\$44,455**



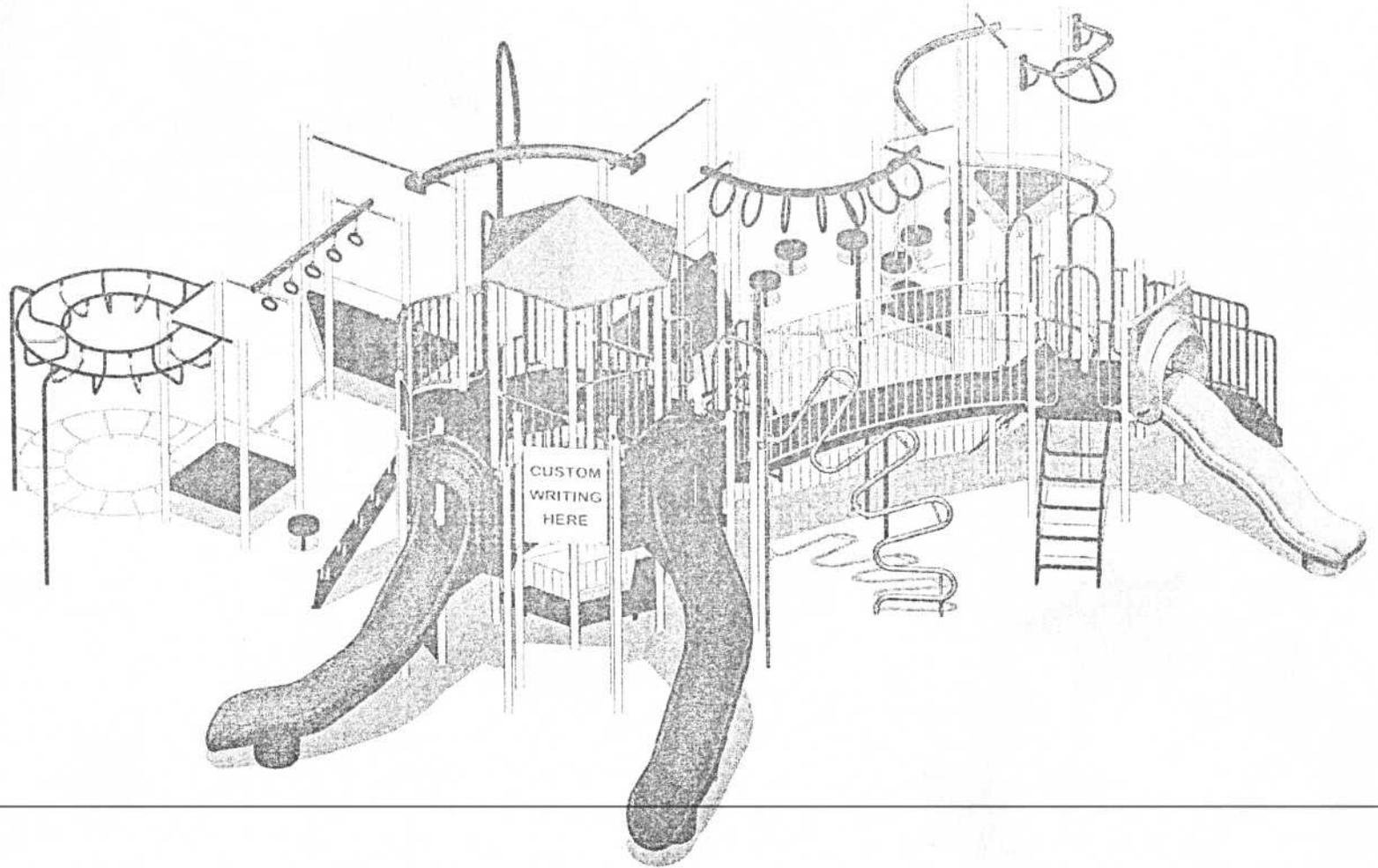
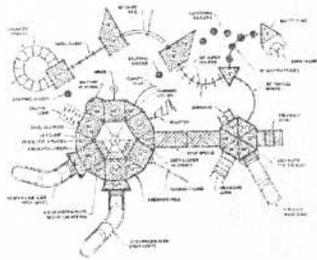
### Eh to Zed

From adventurous overheads to thrilling slides and challenging climbers, this action-packed structure has everything kids love, from A to Z!

**S16-11**

Recommended Ages: 5-12  
Area Required: 16.4m x 15.0m (54' x 49')

**\$60,583**

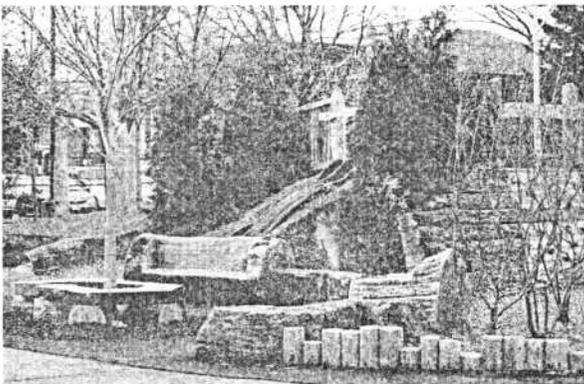


# WHY NATURAL PLAYGROUNDS?

bienenstock  
natural playgrounds

## OVERVIEW

What are natural playgrounds and why is contact with nature so important for children? Adam Bienenstock delivers an informative and irreverent keynote exploring the reasons for this new phenomenon in play. He will highlight how play has changed over time, why it is important to connect children to nature, and examples of natural playgrounds that engage children on a whole other level. Fortified with peer-reviewed research and real life examples from his own projects, Adam Bienenstock makes a compelling and entertaining case for why nature play is essential for child development, happiness and learning.



## DURATION & FORMAT

90 minutes - Keynote

## PRESENTERS

Adam Bienenstock, Jeff Lindstrom

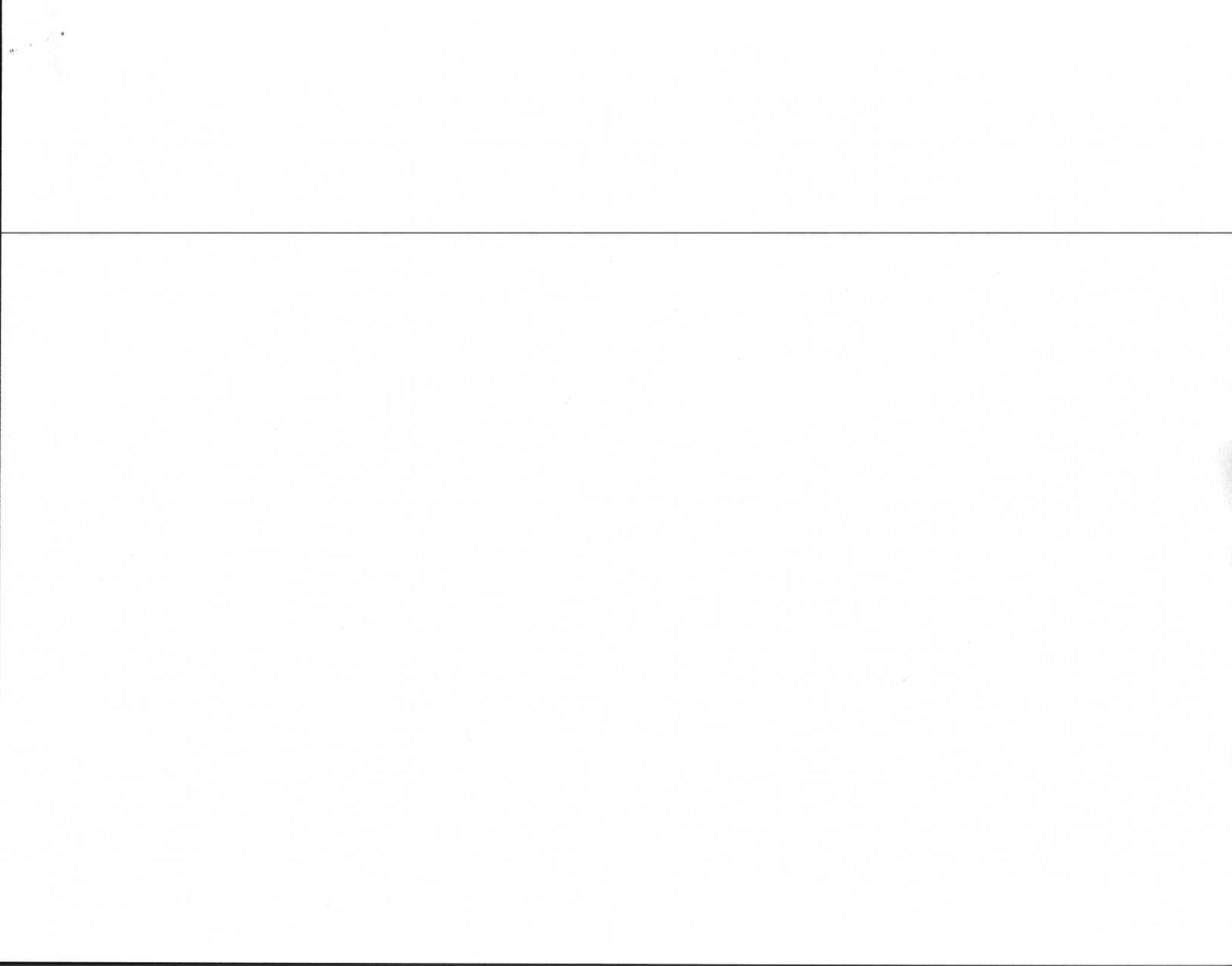
## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understanding the importance of connecting children with nature and how to use nature rich environments to provide a place of mastery for every child.
- Learning more about the developmental and health benefits of nature play.
- Identifying opportunities for unstructured, child led, and sensory rich play for your kids.
- Acquiring the tools to initiate nature-based projects and curriculum at your facility.

*"We're relentless, transformative, disruptive global leaders in natural playgrounds"*

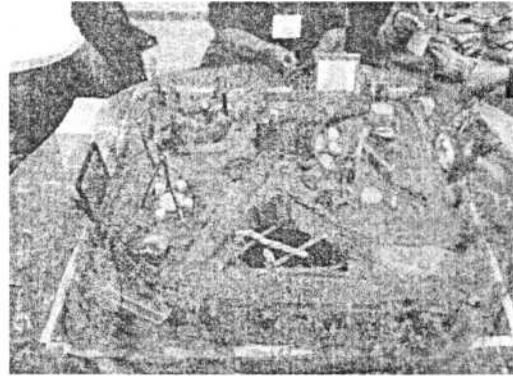
1-800-306-3319 | [naturalplaygrounds.ca](http://naturalplaygrounds.ca)

Copyright 2017



## Overview

'*Designing a Natural Playground*' will cover what a natural playground is, why it is important, the most relevant data and research, and some of the best examples of natural playgrounds from around the world. Most importantly the participants will be able to create their own natural playground designs, followed by participants presenting their models to the group with feedback from experts guiding them through the entire experiential process. We will start off the design by using 5 basic elements; changing topography, creating pathways, adding boulders, logs and large trees. Next, natural playground components will be included in their designs to create areas that include art/creative play, dramatic play, science concepts, and areas that enhance social skills and collaboration. To close out the session, the participants will join in a goal setting exercise.



## Duration & Format

Negotiable - Discussion, Hands-on, Group Work

## Presenter

Adam Bienenstock



## Learning Outcomes

1. Understanding the importance of connecting children with nature. Research will be discussed and the need for new models of playground designs.
2. Understanding the 5 basic elements to create their own natural playgrounds designs.
3. Adding natural features to their playgrounds while meeting playground inspection codes. Participants will understand that these natural features are open-ended and have multiple functions.
4. Setting goals on how to connect children to nature in their own playgrounds.

"We're relentless, transformative, disruptive global leaders in natural playgrounds"

1-800-306-3319 | [naturalplaygrounds.ca](http://naturalplaygrounds.ca)

Copyright 2017 ©

