

ARAS Community Greenhouse





Contact

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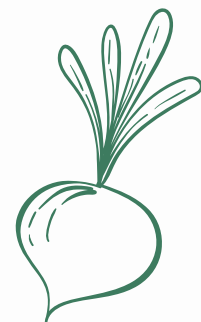
The Seed



ARAS trip to the FreshPal Farms year-round greenhouse in Olds, Alberta, in summer 2022.

In spring of 2022, the idea of a year-round greenhouse was raised at an ARAS board meeting.

The idea presented an opportunity for ARAS to reconnect with our role to encourage agriculture, and with a number of gardeners on the board, the idea of a community greenhouse began to blossom. The space will serve as a demonstration of passive solar design, a social gathering space, and a place for all to learn useful skills and produce and enjoy fresh food.



Strategic Plan

ARAS is pursuing the construction of a year-round, passive solar community greenhouse in Strathcona County.

VISION

Thriving, connected, food aware rural community.

MISSION

To animate a greenhouse hub where local residents and visitors connect, share knowledge about rural living and produce food.

VALUES

Empowerment

Stemming from an appreciation of Strathcona County's agricultural heritage, we will preserve local wisdom that enriches the rural living experience. We will provide continuous learning opportunities that empower rural and urban residents to gain knowledge of how to produce food in our climate.

Community Connection

We believe that community connection is a powerful quality of life indicator. Our project will be a local hub for a diversity of individuals and groups to thrive in an environment of mutual aid and support.

Environmental Stewardship

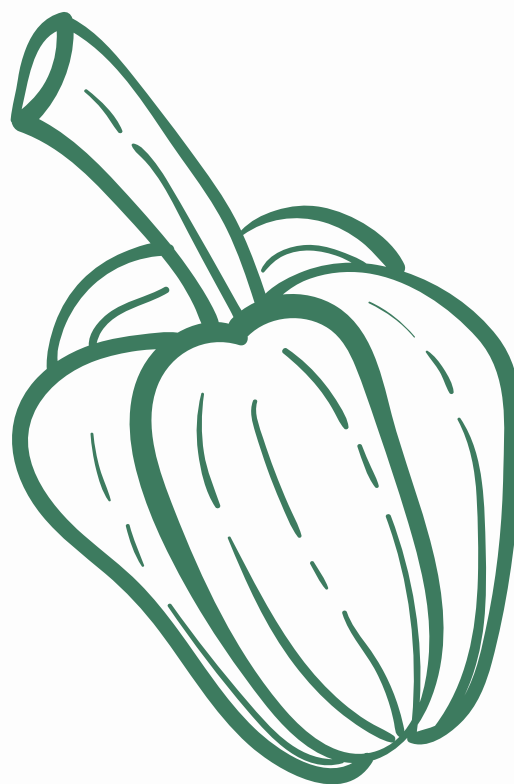
Our project will emphasize connection to place and a healthy relationship with our natural environment and food production. We will invite others to learn from our sustainable design, technologies and practices.



Governance

The greenhouse committee has been formed as a committee of ARAS, a not-for-profit agricultural society incorporated under the Agricultural Societies Act of Alberta and governed by a board of directors.

Many agricultural societies own and/or operate facilities/services in their communities. ARAS itself operates the Ardrossan Farmers' Market as a social enterprise. While Strathcona County supports and cooperates with ARAS on many endeavours, this initiative is being led by ARAS and is not in partnership with the County.



Funding & Revenue

Similar projects have been successful at securing seed funding and large capital grants, as well as sponsorships.

We are currently refining our project proposal and seeking applicable funding opportunities. Our intention is that operation of the community greenhouse will be financially self-sustaining, and a business plan to achieve this will be developed.

Inspiration

Community greenhouses have become a popular investment in communities in western Canada and beyond. Here are some examples of projects that may inspire the ARAS Community Greenhouse.

Cultivate Cochrane

<https://cultivatecochrane.com/projects>

Cultivate Cochrane's vision is a passive solar community greenhouse hub that will act as a social hub as well as provide access to fresh, local, quality food.



Rendering: U of C engineering students Logan Fischer, Brayden Russell, Michael Kuchel, and Daylan Morgan (2022)

Normandeau School (Red Deer)

<https://www.rdpd.ab.ca/normandeau/page/86970/come-grow-with-us>

1,200 sq ft building with 3-D printed panels, geothermal heat and solar powered heat distribution system for use by the K-8 school.

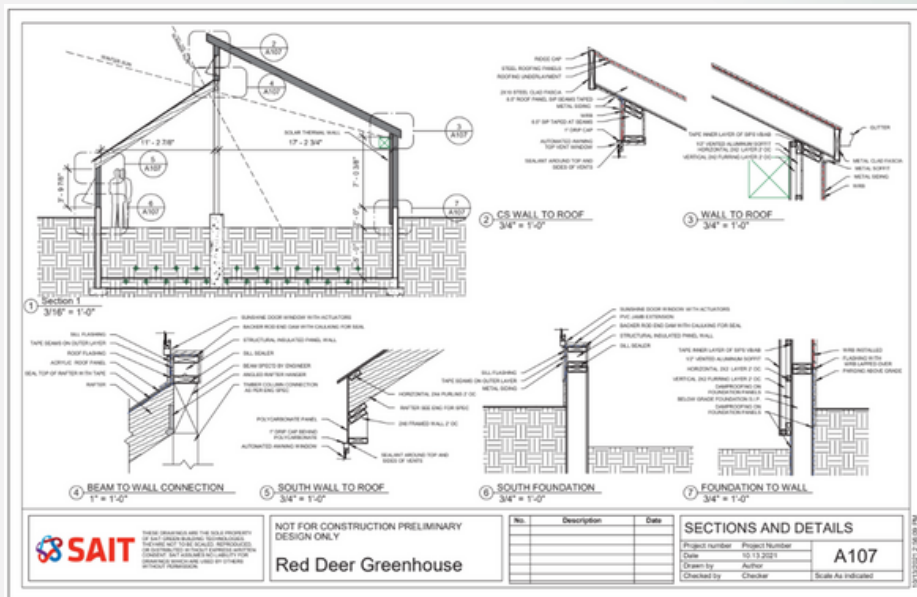




Photo: PatMorrow.com

The Groundswell Network in Invermere, BC

<http://groundswellnetwork.ca/community-greenhouse/>

A 40 x 60 ft insulated, solar-powered greenhouse with annualized geosolar heat storage system. 12-month growing since 2020 and membership of 100. Based on permaculture and regenerative agriculture principles. 18 raised community garden boxes, gathering space with a pond and wetlands, two perennial food forests, and a market garden. Hosts events and workshops throughout the year.

<https://www.greenhousecanada.com/community-greenhouse-thriving-in-the-b-c-interior/>

Revelstoke Community Greenhouse Feasibility Study

<http://www.revelstokelocalfood.com/s/Revelstoke-Community-Greenhouse-Feasibility-Study-Final3.pdf>

In July 2017, the Revelstoke Local Food Initiative commissioned a feasibility study to evaluate interest and viability of a greenhouse project in Revelstoke. The study found that

[t]he benefits of a greenhouse would provide innumerable opportunities to the community including increasing food security, creating jobs, economic diversification, and providing mentorship and education opportunities. The development of a greenhouse would build new partnerships and facilitate organizations to achieve their objectives.

Both a 4,000 sq ft community greenhouse and a 9,000 sq ft commercial greenhouse were evaluated and recommendations are provided for structure, inputs, crops, business structure, and funding.

FreshPal Farms

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_tnLIR0TN6WOHmPc1H_Nnw

FreshPal Farms is a private greenhouse operation in Olds, Alberta. It includes two 300 x 30 ft passive solar greenhouses with construction technology and materials from China.

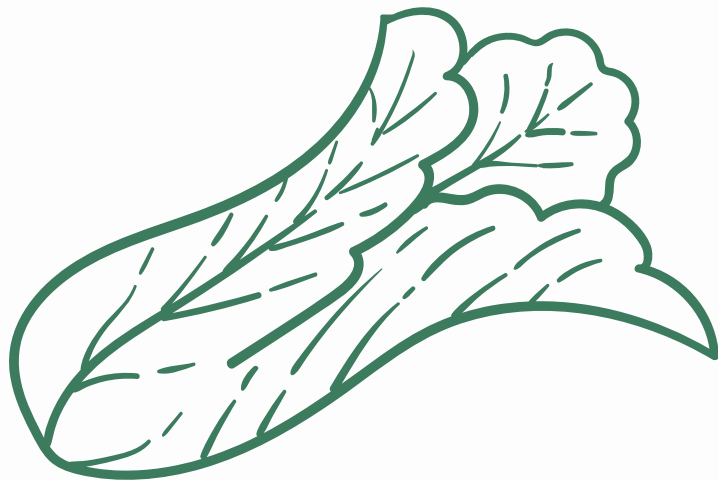
The first greenhouse was constructed in 2017 almost entirely by one couple. It uses a 1/2 metre-thick clay-filled north wall to absorb heat during sunlight hours and requires almost no additional energy inputs. The structure has a steel pipe frame with a double-layer polycover and a 1/3-inch-thick insulated blanket that covers the first layer during the night.

Crops include tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, spinach, corn, sunflowers, radish and cabbage.

Project Development

A master site plan will be developed as the project progresses. Elements of the site plan may include:

- a community greenhouse building (size TBD)
- classroom/meeting space
- a kitchen (for preserving, 4-H Foods meetings, etc.)
- storage for tools/equipment
- livestock for demonstration
- agricultural product stand
- outdoor community garden plots
- orchards



Breaking Ground

In May 2023, the greenhouse project community planted hundreds of potato plants in an area that will be used in the future for community plots. Equipment and potatoes were donated by community members.



Outreach

ARAS began spreading the word in 2023 about the community greenhouse vision.



*GROWING
COMMUNITY
TOGETHER*

The 76th Ardrossan Picnic and Parade, hosted by the Ardrossan Recreation and Agricultural Society, took place on Saturday, June 17.

August 20

Farm / Roadside Stand Tour | Participating in Open Farm Days 2023

Farm Type: Farmers Market Style Driving Tour

Region	Town
Central	Ardrossan



Community Greenhouse Project Stand

About ARAS

The Ardrossan Agricultural Society (ARAS) is a local, non-profit, volunteer-run organization based out of Ardrossan. We have served the community for 76 years.

ARAS is known for its annual Parade & Picnic, and also offers an annual scholarship, sponsors free skate at the ARC, and hosts and sponsors various events throughout the year.

ARAS works collaboratively with Strathcona County to operate the Memorial Hall, and holds a weekly summer farmers' market in the adjacent greenspace. The organization is closely tied to many other local community groups and won 'Outstanding Group' at the Strathcona County Awards of Excellence in 2022.



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