

## Festival Goes Off-the-Grid

Eagle Ridge to Host Youth Environmental Summit, Concert

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Part youth summit and part environmental party, Greater Victoria students will flood into Langford for an “off the grid” sustainability conference and music festival in April.

High school students from across Greater Victoria will have a chance to showcase ideas on environmental challenges and sustainable living, while hearing from the big guns in climate science, such as the University of Victoria’s Andrew Weaver.

The latter half of the event is slated for emerging local bands, slam poets and youth artists.

“We want young talent to perform and mix in the environmental message — using music as the medium,” said Judy Fainstein, the event organizer and founder of YesBC, a youth environmental leadership program. “The whole idea of doing this festival is thinking about what is relevant to youth.”

Fainstein plans to bus in about 200 leadership students from three school districts for morning sustainability seminars and workshops at Eagle Ridge arena in Langford on April 21, one day before Earth Day. Students will have a chance to talk about the successes and lessons behind environmental projects, such as Belmont’s recent rollout of its school-wide recycling program.

Coined as a celebration of “youth power,” Cindy Moyer with Climate Action West Shore, a partner in the project, said the summit and festival is a prime chance for leadership students to network and share ideas on environmental innovations.

“Kids need a platform to express themselves and talk about the world they are creating. Many of these kids are leaders now and we need to support them,” Moyer said. “This will introduce students to options out there.”

The “off the grid” aspect of the Off the Grid Music and art Festival comes from Saanich-based Energy Alternatives, which is powering the entertainment stage with a mobile, solar-powered power station.

“The idea is to produce this off the grid,” Fainstein said. “I like the idea of going off the grid with the music. It sends a powerful message.”

Energy Alternatives plans to truck in a shipping container equipped with solar panels and battery banks, and that doubles as a demonstration unit. Typically mobile power units are used in remote work camps and isolated communities.

“The unit can go for a couple of days. Music doesn’t use that much power,” said Kevin Pegg, president of Energy Alternatives. “There will be a full demo. People will get to see how it all works.”

The Off the Grid festival on April 21 is calling for musicians, performers and artists. E-mail [info@offthegridfestival.ca](mailto:info@offthegridfestival.ca) or call 250-478-1130 for more information on participating. See [www.offthegridfestival.ca](http://www.offthegridfestival.ca) for more information on the event.

Students are encouraged to fill out a survey regarding the festival. Find the link on the festival website.