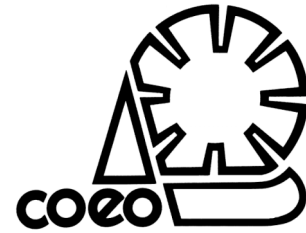


FRIENDS of COEO NEWSLETTER

The Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario

www.coeo.org

Editor: Grant Linney
March 2, 2009



Please consider the environment before printing this newsletter.

ON MINISTRY OF ED EE SYMPOSIUM A MIXED SUCCESS

More than 600 educators attended last week's two-day Environmental Education Symposium in Toronto. In addition to opening and closing presentations by Roberta Bondar and Kathleen Wynne respectively, this gathering offered 70 plus sessions on all manner of topics relating to EE, including several that focussed on getting our students outdoors. The Ministry of Education also used the occasion to launch its ***Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow*** Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools. I could not find it, but this publication is also supposed to be available on the Ministry's website at: www.edu.gov.on.ca As a long-time advocate for outdoor and environmental education, here's my personal view of what went well and where there's still plenty of room for improvement:

The Good News

- This initiative is part of a growing and now impressive list of environmentally-focussed achievements by the Ontario Liberals. Other examples include legislation concerning greenbelt protection, boreal forest protection, clean water, climate change, and our provincial parks.
- As Education ADM Grant Clark pointed out, this commitment to integrate environmental education across all grade levels and into all content areas is huge, and it has the potential to have a very significant impact.
- As Roberta Bondar pointed out, this commitment also has great promise in terms of its potential ripple effect into Ontario families and society as a whole.
- The Ministry wants students *"to participate actively in practising and promoting environmental stewardship, both in the school and in the community.* This focus on the local community is to be highly commended.
- All resources and "handouts" for this Symposium were provided electronically. The Ministry hopes to make the Symposium resources available online to all Ontario educators, and it will continue to use this means to effectively share information, ideas and resources.
- Ministry of Education officials are to be congratulated for an exhaustive consultation process with all manner of education stakeholders prior to the creation of this policy framework.
- The Ministry acknowledges that there is ongoing consultation and more work to be done.

- My major concern is that the newly published Policy Framework consistently equates environmental education with “*environmental issues*” and with what it describes as “*environmental problems and solutions*.” In other words, this document fails to acknowledge that children must first have repeated, hands-on and positive educational experiences in local natural environments in order to develop the fundamental and lasting personal connections that will power their desire to become informed and active stewards of our planet. How on earth did the authors miss this point? Don't they understand that, in order to perceive an “environmental issue” as an issue of personal importance, our students must first feel this personal connection?
- The environmental education policy framework makes fleeting, inconsistent and peripheral reference to affect ... perhaps its authors are still suffering adverse effects from the Mike Harris “Common Sense Revolution”? While Roberta Bondar referred in her keynote presentation to the necessity of “Head, Heart, and Will,” this document prefers to speak of knowledge, skills, and the more neutral term “perspectives.” Hope is raised when it quotes from a Ministry document on character development, “*to think critically, feel deeply and act wisely*” and again in the Appendix where it refers to “*knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed through EE,*” but these few references are lost within the rest of the text.
- The document similarly makes fleeting and peripheral reference to outdoor education, as if it is a non-essential part of EE. In the few cases where it is mentioned, reference is only made to the confines of the schoolyard (presumably because it is considered safe and known) where, even if some naturalization has taken place, it is highly unlikely that this will bear much semblance to what natural systems have to offer our children. There is no mention of public lands within walking distance of the school that would likely have much more to offer in terms of understanding the fascinating diversity and complexity of a natural ecosystem. The one solace I have in this regard is that another Ministry document entitled “*Standards for Environmental Education in the Curriculum*” (2008), acknowledges the need to “*explore and appreciate the outdoors*” in order to develop a requisite “*sense of connection*” and “*sense of place.*” Similar statements must find their way into this policy framework ... and not pretend that this appreciation can be achieved simply by spending more time in one's schoolyard. This writer acknowledges that, in her closing address to the EE Symposium delegates, Education Minister Kathleen Wynne made reference, as she frequently does, to the value of outdoor education experiences. This is great, and I take Ms. Wynne to be very sincere about this. However, talk is cheap. A document as important as a policy framework needs to put such statements in writing.
- In its section on Vision, this document claims “*The future of environmental solutions ultimately rests with students.*” Such statements scare the bajeebers out of me because they carry, to my nose at least, the distinct and immoral whiff of downloading the problems of the planet onto our students.
It's as if we're saying, “*We can't do anything about this. It's now up to you kids to save us.*”
We cannot do this, because it is unfair to our children.
We cannot do this, because there is, quite simply, no time left to “pass the buck.”
If we are serious about environmental education, then we must, perhaps above all other things, lead by example.
We must go into the natural outdoors and revel in the wonder of all that it has to offer us.
We must demonstrate our own continuous and enthusiastic commitment to protecting natural systems and significantly reducing our footprint on this beleaguered and imperilled planet.

UPCOMING P.D. OPPORTUNITIES: **COEO ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS**

ADVENTUREWORKS!

www.adventureworks.org

877-311-5683

Course Name	Date	Location
Special Events		
Author's Series <i>Jennifer Stanchfield</i>	November 13, 2009	Norval Outdoor School, Norval ON
Author's Series <i>Jennifer Stanchfield</i>	November 14, 2009	Norval Outdoor School, Norval ON
Ropes Course Leadership Symposium Program Leadership	March 27, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Facilitating Adventure-Based Learning Ropes Course Certification	Oct. 19 & 20, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Low Ropes Facilitator (Level One)	April 1-2 May 6-7 June 3-4 Sept 30-Oct 1, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Assistant High Ropes Instructor (Level One)	April 1-5 May 6-10 June 3-7 Sept 30-Oct 4, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Climbing Wall Facilitator (Level One)	June 19-21, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Climbing Wall Supervisor (Level Two)	March 23-25, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Ropes Course Instructor (Level Two)	April 1-5 May 6-10 June 3-7 Sept 30-Oct 4, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Re-certification (Levels One & Two)	April 5 May 10 June 7 October 4, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON

For more information please check out our website, or to register for any upcoming training courses, please contact maja@adventureworks.org

UPCOMING P.D. OPPORTUNITIES (continued) **From Our COEO ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS**

WYE MARSH WINTER PROGRAMS

Full Moon Ski at Wye Marsh

The Wye Marsh invites you to celebrate each full moon with a very special late night guided ski. Come out, meet new friends and enjoy a peaceful guided ski on our groomed trails while watching the stars and admiring the Marsh by the light of the full moon! Please note: pre-registration is required.

Dates: Saturday, March 7, 2009 **Time:** 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Cost: \$5 for members and \$8 for non-members

Contact: Reservations at (705) 526-7809 Ext. 207 or email:
reservations@wyemarsh.com

March Break Day Camp

Back by popular demand! Wye Marsh is offering a week-long day camp program filled with interactive, cooperative games, meet the creatures live animal shows, and daily themes including Winter Wildlife Survival, Animal Tracker, Chickadee Chatter and more. Each day your children, together with our experienced naturalists, will enjoy outdoor activities such as snowshoeing or GPS navigation & orienteering or cross country-skiing, plus an assortment of games where they challenge their memories, endurance and recognition skills. They won't get bored after 15 minutes and they will have an experience to remember for years.

Pre-registration is required. Book now as space is limited.

Date: Monday, March 16 - Friday, March 20, 2009

Full Cost: Full Week: Members: \$110.00; Non-Members: \$125.00 per child

Day Rate: Members: \$25.00; Non-Members: \$30.00 per child

Time: 9:00am – 4:00pm

Contact: 705-526-7809 or email: camp@wyemarsh.com

March Break Family Fun

Wye Marsh is getting ready to share the fun of March Break with the entire family! Each day you can participate in enjoyable winter activities including: Cross Country Skiing* (free lessons at 11:00am each day!) Guided Nature Walks or Snowshoe*, *Meet the Creatures* Daily Live Animal Demonstrations, Daily Winter Wonders Activity: Monday, Wednesday & Friday Animal Tracking; Tuesday & Thursday Snowflake Identification. *Plus...*On the weekends join us for Winter Snowshoe Ecotours**, Terrific Turtles & Slithery Snakes Show(Saturday afternoon at 1pm), Birds of Prey Show (Sunday afternoon at 1pm).

Equipment rental available both for adults & kids cross country packages and snowshoes.

This program is weather-dependent. ** Pre-registration required Wednesday prior to event.

For further details contact us at 705.526.7809 or email info@wyemarsh.com and visit our website at www.wyemarsh.com

UPCOMING P.D. OPPORTUNITIES (continued) **From Our COEO ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS**

WYE MARSH WINTER PROGRAMS (continued)

Winter Wonders Weekend Programs

Snowy Saturdays and Frosty Sundays are the themes for the winter months. The snow changes the landscape of Wye Marsh as well as wildlife activity offering a different way of seeing how the inhabitants of Wye Marsh change their survival techniques. Wet & Scaly shows are still available on Saturday afternoons as well as Birds of Prey on Sunday. Don't be afraid of the cold! Come for an enjoyable cross-country ski along more than 20km of track-set trails, or go snowshoeing. Warm up after your outdoor activity with a cup of hot chocolate by the fire place inside the Interpretive Centre. The more you experience the wonders of winter, the more you'll look forward to each new snowfall, even as we come closer to the end of the season. Rental equipment is available for both adults and kids.

YOURS OUTDOORS www.yoursoutdoors.ca

Barrie Martin, a long time COEO stalwart, is the creative "experience broker" for:

March 13-15: **Make Peace with Winter** (*hmm, I think we've heard this phrase before!*)

Try a little winter. Embrace the winter wonders of the Haliburton Highlands with a sampler of unique, fun, and active experiences. This package features snowshoeing and dogsledding. Join us for some seasonal fun, push your comfort zone a wee bit and bask in the warmth of some much needed exercise and hospitality with this great mid winter getaway. Special price of \$350/person includes guided snowshoe and dogsledding adventures, two nights accommodation, two breakfasts, one dinner, two lunches, and equipment. Additional 10% discount if you book a package by March 6. For itinerary, go to http://www.yoursoutdoors.ca/itineraries/make_peace_%20itinerary_%20df.pdf

March 17-19: **Some Like It Hot**

Put a little sizzle in your life. Join us in the Haliburton Highlands and warm up to the art in you with an introduction to glassblowing and blacksmithing. You will learn the fundamentals of these crafts and create your own piece of art. Throw in some spicy cuisine; beats of the world drum, art appreciation, and some outdoor activity and you have a very hot arts adventure. Special price of \$450/person includes three days of workshops and programming, two nights accommodation, two breakfasts, one dinner, two lunches. Additional 10% discount if you book a pkg. by March 6. For rates & more info, www.yoursoutdoors.ca/packageinfo.php?id=8

The above packages are also available without accommodation should you want to stay elsewhere. Please pass along to colleagues, friends, and family. To make a booking please contact Barrie at 705-754-3436 or info@yoursoutdoors.ca

OTHER P.D. OPPORTUNITIES

OSEE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

May 7 to 9, 2009

The Ontario Society for Environmental Education holds its annual conference at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology in Oshawa.

This year's theme is "*It's Elemental – Shaping Our World*," and it will provide lots of ideas for implementing the Ontario government's plans to integrate environmental education across the curriculum. Guest speakers will include Elizabeth May, Dave Philips (Environment Canada) and Mike Beedell. For more information, go to www.osee.org.

PARKS & REC ONT. EDUCATIONAL FORUM

March 29 - April 1, 2009

(Thanks to COEO Board member Kate Humphrys for forwarding this item.)

The Parks and Recreation Ontario Educational Forum and Trade Show is happening in Niagara Falls, ON, from March 29 - April 1, 2009. Look for special program streams for Community Development staff, Emerging Leaders, Students and for special interest sessions for Directors, Management Staff and Elected Officials. In addition, there are sessions on youth development including Engaging Youth in Advocacy, Tackling Obesity, 101 Things You Need to Know if You Work With Youth, Engaging Youth Through the Art of Skateboarding, Maximizing the Developmental Asset Approach, and Youth Centre des Jeunes Canada.

Click on the following link for a high-resolution copy of the program brochure (takes longer to download but has a sharper image) www.prontario.org/forum/PROForum2009web.pdf

Click on the following link for a low-resolution copy of the program brochure:

www.prontario.org/forum/PROForum2009low.pdf

SUSTAINABLE LIVING SYMPOSIUM

March 28-29, 2009

Loyalist College, Belleville

For full program details & to register,

go to <http://www.quintesustainability.ca/> or call 613-968-3434

This is the fourth annual *Living Today for Tomorrow* conference.

Local, affordable, and do-able lifestyle solutions for right now will be demonstrated and discussed at the 4th Annual Sustainable Living Symposium. Living within our environmental and economic means has become even more important during this time of climate change and economic turmoil. Local experts will show you how to implement earth-friendly and cost-effective solutions such as urban food gardens, environmentally friendly cleaning products, renewable energy and more. Saturday features all day sessions and exhibits. Sunday is for a green homes bus tour in Prince Edward County.

Pre-registration required. Cost for weekend is \$50 (\$40 for students), Saturday only: \$40 (\$30 for students), and Sunday only: \$15.

UPCOMING EVENTS & SUPPORTING RESOURCES

EARTH HOUR

Saturday March 28, 2009 8:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Earth Hour is a global lights-out phenomenon that will bring together millions of people from around the world to show support for action on climate change. This symbolic event demonstrates to governments around the world that we want action on climate change now.

Hundreds of cities in more than 70 countries have already pledged their support for Earth Hour, including Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. In 2008, millions of people in more than 35 countries participated. For this year, the number of countries participating has already more than doubled, putting Earth Hour 2009 well on the way to meeting the World Wildlife Fund's global goal of **one billion participants!** (*In this writer's humble opinion, the WWF is one of the world's premiere environmental organizations.*)

The 2009 Earth Hour will also provide a global call to action for leaders who will meet in Copenhagen next December with the intention of striking a new deal on climate change. Kyoto expires in 2012 and, even for those countries that have actually adhered to this accord, it is absolutely imperative that next steps are put in place.

Come on, folks! Add your voice, as well as your finger on the light switch. Make sure to be a part of this timely, empowering and momentous event. And, get your friends, family, colleagues and students onside too! To sign up, and for more information (including educational materials), go to: <http://wwf.ca/earthhour/>

EARTH DAY <http://www.ecokids.ca/> Wednesday April 22, 2009

Earth Day Canada's **ECOKIDS** is an award-winning national program providing online top-notch environmental education resources for K-8 teachers and students.

The highly usable and useful teacher's section includes the following:

- K – 8 lesson plans that link to the Ontario Elementary Science and Technology curriculum, incorporating the 2008 "Environmental Education Scope and Sequence of Expectations" resource guide.
- Environmental-focussed lesson plans specifically for ESL teachers and based on the Ontario curriculum document, *English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development Resource Guide*. Developed for Grades 1 – 6, Stages 1 – 4.
- Printable materials for student activities
- Information on a national contest called the **Great Ecokids Challenge**
- Free stuff including posters, stickers and an eco-calendar.

ACTION ITEM

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROPOSES ELIMINATION OF NAVIGABLE WATERS PROTECTION ACT

COEO Membership Secretary sends us the following message from Becky Mason, daughter of Bill Mason and paddler extraordinaire in her own right. **Please respond to this request.**

The federal government is saying they are about to eliminate the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA). Not only will this affect our right to recreational travel on Canadian waterways but it also has the potential to reverse the effectiveness of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. For more info on the NWPA, go to: <http://www.ispeakforcanadianrivers.ca>

Letters need to be sent in now because the timing of the government's announcements in the media in mid January was not coincidental. The Federal Government is meeting with municipalities and with the provinces to sell them this idea of gutting the NWPA under the pretext of saving the economy. If all levels of government unwittingly jump on board it will be very difficult to rally opposition to it. Most Canadians will be affected by the elimination of the NWPA and this is the federal government's response to requests that more consultation should be held: **"no time for public consultation because rescuing the economy is so important."**

We need to talk and write to our politicians: municipal, provincial and federal and strongly urge them to resist what the Harper government is pushing in terms of gutting environmental legislation under the guise of rescuing the economy. I have a well organized website and I suggest you go there to write your letter because all the current contact and information about this is there. Please go to: <http://www.redcanoes.ca/becky/canoe/environmental.html>

Editor's Note: Having just checked Becky Mason's "red canoes" website, it is apparent that we need to act quickly and with as many voices as possible. This proposed move is indeed a part of Bill C-10, the federal government's Budget Implementation Act, currently before Parliament.

ABOUT THIS FRIENDS of COEO ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

For consistency, the COEO electronic newsletter is now published on the first of each month. Friends of COEO can receive this newsletter free of charge however, as non-members, they will not receive the outdoor education job postings and sometimes parts of the Resources sections. The newsletter will also arrive a few days later.

Anyone having an item of interest to outdoor & experiential educators and desiring publication in this newsletter needs it to submit to the editor at least two days before the publication date.

The newsletter is generally organized according to the following headings:

COEO News

Other OEE News

P.D. Opportunities

Resources

If your organization wishes to post information (e.g., job postings, notice of upcoming events), it needs to be an organizational member of COEO.