

FRIENDS OF COEO NEWSLETTER

The Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario

www.coeo.org

Editor: Grant Linney
September 2, 2008



Please consider the environment before printing this newsletter.

PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING A COEO MEMBER

Yes, you will continue to receive the “Friends of COEO” newsletter free of charge, but please note that it does not include the four outdoor education job postings or the resource listings found in the September member’s version.

Here’s a few quick and stupendously convincing reasons why you should consider becoming a COEO member, both for yourself and for the OEE cause:

- You get a lot for your COEO membership, including our widely respected *Pathways (The Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education)*, a monthly electronic newsletter that includes all manner of OEE news, resources, P.D. opportunities and job postings, and the ability to attend a great annual fall conference.
- You provide COEO with the resources to actively promote the multiple, powerful and lasting benefits of OEE: e.g., the writing and publication of a landmark summary of the current research into the values of OEE, increased collaboration with a variety of other organizations, the production of other promotional materials, and a significantly increased profile for OEE through newspaper articles, interviews with media, and ongoing meetings with government officials. See the membership tab on our web site for further details.

If you need more information about how this all-volunteer organization does a lot for you and on your behalf, please browse our web site. The membership tab also provides a listing of the benefits of the different types of membership available as well as a downloadable membership form and the opportunity to pay for your membership by cheque or online through Paypal. You must register with Paypal in order to pay online. While you are not charged an extra fee or obliged to use any of their other services, a small portion of your payment does go to Paypal for offering this service. Paypal is used widely and considered secure.

The Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario
ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2008



Camp Kandalore is the host site for the Annual COEO Conference, this September 26-28, 2008.

Our conference program is posted on the COEO website. Invited guests include Aage Jensen (a visiting Norwegian Outdoor Educator), Claire Smerdon (talking about wilderness) and Catherine Mahler (representing the exciting ECO-schools movement in Ontario). We your Conference Committee, have many concurrent sessions planned with a balanced program for the wide range of interests under the outdoor education umbrella. These include a white pine ecology walk; sustainable energy for your centre; voyageur interpretation from war canoes; mind/body/spirit for outdoor education; "guerrilla" art projects; a northern 100-mile diet; creating tour packages; using concept maps/graphic schemes; a mock canoe trip – activities from put in to take out; and citizen science with citizen watch, to name a few.

A special feature at this year's conference to help achieve our theme – ***Bringing Us All Together*** – is the **Roundtable Initiative**. We hope that bringing together eco-tourism operators, integrated curriculum program teachers, outdoor education centre and camp

staff, school and college folks, among others, under the guidance of group facilitators, will be a highlight of the conference. For both the new and experienced outdoor educator ranks, this is an opportunity to interact within focus groups and collegial circles all too rare in our day-to-day environments. Another new addition is the **Graduate Student Research Poster Presentations on OEE**, in recognition of our ongoing need to provide ongoing and evidence-based research as to the multiple, concrete and powerful benefits of this unique approach to learning. We hope that these new initiatives will bring new energy to our conference as well as increasing our COEO membership at a time when OEE is needed more than every before.

Finally, all the usual COEO conference shenanigans will be present: a **silent and live auction**, evening **campfire sing song circles**, the president's **raffle**, active Friday evening meet and greet mingle sessions, free time by the lake with new or old friends, and the sometimes rambunctious COEO **AGM**. Truly a COEO conference you will not want to miss!

For more information go to: www.coeo.org/conference.htm

The web site describes **Car Pooling, Conference Bursaries, A Call for Student Research Poster Presentations on OEE, a Request for Auction Items** and a **Request for Conference Photographers**.

For information about Camp Kandalore, go to: www.kandalore.com/html/home.asp

TO REGISTER:

- ❖ Download the conference registration form from the web site and mail it, along with your cheque, to Pam Miller at the address indicated.
- ❖ While you can use a credit card to pay for your COEO membership through Paypal, you will need to pay for the conference via cheque.

COEO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's AGM will be held at Camp Kandalore on Sunday September 28, 2008 at 9:45 a.m. All 2008-09 COEO members are invited to attend.

ADDITIONAL COEO NEWS

ADVOCACY FOR OEE

As suggested in the previous newsletter, I am learning that advocacy is very time-consuming, that it's a slow and ongoing process. I am also convinced that COEO needs to be in this arena, and that we need to learn from the process and be prepared to see OEE in forms other than the traditional outdoor education centre. I don't think we have had a government as predisposed to hear our message since Bill Davis was Education Minister and Premier, so the timing is good this way. On the other hand, 55,000 manufacturing jobs were lost in July, and most of these were in Ontario (there is an economic downturn), and the teachers federations are making very militant sounds about their upcoming negotiations with the government this fall, and there really is only so much money to go around.

On August 11, I joined Anne Bell (the Senior Director of Conservation and Education at Ontario Nature) and Connie Russell (Lakehead professor, Canadian Journal of Environmental Education co-editor and COEO member) to represent the **Ontario Environmental Education Working Group (OEEWG)** in a one hour meeting with Education Minister Kathleen Wynne and her officials to discuss implementation of the Bondar Report. Positive signs from this meeting included the following:

- Minister Wynne is a kindred spirit. She had just returned from a six-day canoe trip on the Mattawa River. She has publicly expressed support for OEE on several occasions, both as a former Toronto DSB trustee and now as the provincial Education Minister.
- While the OEEWG group certainly supports OEE, their focus is on the implementation of the Bondar Report as a whole. Having said this, Ms. Wynne made it quite clear at the outset of the meeting that she was particularly keen on hearing our proposals for the provision of OEE.
- Wynne showed that she was quite aware of and sympathetic towards the issues.
- She was poised and fully engaged throughout, frequently adding her own comments and questions.
- No firm promises at this point, but very interested in some of our less expensive proposals, and committed to maintaining a longer term relationship with the OEEWG and COEO.

With post-meeting reflection, I realize that the one message I still need to convey to her is the importance of not closing any more outdoor centre, be they in Toronto, Ottawa, Waterloo, or anywhere else. They are currently bridgeheads from which we can rebuild and, regardless of new and compelling initiatives that bring OEE into local communities, the current field centres need to be retained, and innovative partnerships developed for the use of existing centres (and construction of additional ones) elsewhere (e.g., Conservation Authorities).

On August 12, COEO President Shane Kramer, Director-at-Large Jane Wadden and myself had a 90-minute meeting with four Ministry of Education officials. While their focus is also on the Bondar Report, they were particularly interested in our recommendations in terms of providing affordable and worthwhile outdoor experiences to power this new focus on environmental education. The MOE officials present were very attentive and interested in what we had to say. Once again, some ongoing collaboration will result, e.g., they will likely invite us to present at an upcoming symposium on environmental education (February 2009).

ADVOCACY FOR OEE

(Continued)

Later that same day, Shane, Jane and I met for 30 minutes with David Zimmer, a Liberal MPP with close ties to Kathleen Wynne. While this meeting was less substantive and productive, Mr. Zimmer claims to be sympathetic to our cause and willing to promote it with his colleagues. While Zimmer agreed that OEE may well provide additional powerful benefits in terms of its education for character, wellbeing and curriculum, he suggested that we focus mainly on environment since environmental education is getting so much attention these days. We shall, however, use Sussex Strategy (the consultants that COEO has hired) to further explore the notion of cross-ministry support, particularly with the Ministry of Health Promotion.

Finally, on Wednesday August 27, Shane joined the OEEWG group for its turn to provide input to Ministry of Education officials charged with implementation of the Bondar Report. To date, I have received no feedback on this meeting from the COEO perspective.

Unfortunately, this advocacy is not a one-shot or even one-month deal. The meetings, consultations and discussions need to continue.

HOW CAN "AFFORDABLE" OE EXPERIENCES BE CREATED?

This is the question that was posed to the OEEWG prior to its meeting with Minister Wynne, and here is what we came up with.

Answers to this question very much depend upon how "**affordable**" is defined. Given our current global environmental situation and given our current lack of a strong province-wide outdoor education component in support of environmental education, it is our position that we can't afford to do much less than the following recommendations.

1. Create a detailed sequencing of content and outdoor experiences across all elementary and secondary grades is a key step in providing a variety of experiences with different opportunities for affordability.
2. As a first step to providing outdoor experiences for primary grades, promote the use of school grounds and school ground naturalization as a means of effectively delivering outdoor environmental education on a regular, ongoing basis (e.g., through EcoSchools). To this end, the funding formula for schools should be revised to support green design and development of buildings and school grounds and to require a life cycle cost approach to budgeting (rationalizing higher upfront costs against lower long-term operating costs and the enhanced educational value of facilities).
3. As a subsequent step to the provision of outdoor experiences for primary grades, support and encourage the use of local natural areas with necessary existing infrastructure (buildings, washrooms, equipment) through partnerships with, for example, universities, municipal parks or churches. We need carefully vetted and monitored local neighbourhood sites as well as trained classroom teachers/board personnel who can knowledgeably run safe and worthwhile programs. A critical component to the success of these programs is the butterfly approach: the body of the butterfly is the actual outdoor experience. One wing is the preparation for this experience and the other wing is the follow-up. All three are needed for the butterfly to actually fly.

ADVOCACY FOR OEE

(Continued)

4. Encourage boards to make better use of existing facilities, for example, by converting buildings that are underused into outdoor environmental education centres (e.g. Warren Park Public school in the Toronto District School Board).
5. Promote partnerships and cost-sharing agreements between school boards and organizations that have an interest in providing outdoor environmental education, such as Conservation Authorities, naturalist clubs, provincial park and municipal park agencies (e.g., The York Region District School Board operates an outdoor education program at Sibbald's Point under an agreement with Ontario Parks, and the Board staffs this centre with both teachers and technicians, an effective combination that is also used by several other boards.)
6. Promote partnerships between teacher education facilities and existing outdoor education centres to provide student teachers with experience teaching outdoor environmental education.
7. Promote partnerships among school boards, teacher education facilities and organizations (e.g., Evergreen) that develop and deliver outdoor environmental education programs and materials for teachers.
8. Encourage schools to designate a prep teacher to deliver the outdoor curriculum and to in-service classroom teachers in the process.
9. Encourage school boards to hire an itinerant outdoor environmental education teacher to work with teachers and students throughout the board (e.g., Nature on Wheels in Hamilton). Boards could designate a school bus equipped with raincoats, boots and other equipment for this purpose (e.g., former East York and Scarborough Boards).
10. Encourage "bulk booking" and the development of "preferred rate" contracts between school boards and other providers of outdoor environmental education (e.g., the Frost Centre).
11. Work with school boards to address the issue of liability and deal with the rising cost of insurance and the associated overload of required paperwork.
12. The sequence of experiential programs that students are exposed to as part of their environmental education should evolve from the local schoolyard and neighbourhood parks to nearby natural features within their community and then on beyond their community to other distinct regions and biomes within their province. This sequencing should include the provision of one five-day residential outdoor education experience sometime between Grade 6 and 8. We feel that the Toronto District School Board's recent reduction from a 5 to a 2.5-day residential OE experience is more than a 50% cut. With this new regimen, children hardly have time to settle in before it is time to leave. A five-day experience enables the development of a powerful affect, sense of place, and learning progression that can have a formative and lasting impact.

UPCOMING P.D. OPPORTUNITIES

ADVENTUREWORKS!

Here are some upcoming opportunities this fall for high calibre OEE professional development. For more details, go to www.adventureworks.org or call 877-311-5683.

Course Name	Date	Location
Ropes Course & Climbing Wall		
Assistant Ropes Course Instructor	October 1-5	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster
Ropes Course Instructor	October 1-5	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster
Special Events		
“Teamwork & Teamplay” with Jim Cain	November 21	Norval Outdoor School, Norv
“Nuts & Bolts” with Jim Cain	November 22	Norval Outdoor School, Norv
Facilitation Training		
Facilitating Adventure Based Learning	October 6-7	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster

Annual Author Series with Jim Cain

Dr. Jim Cain is the author of five adventure-based teambuilding text: *Teamwork & Teamplay*, *The Book on Raccoon Circles*, *A Teachable Moment*, *Teambuilding Puzzles*, and *The Value of Connection – in the Workplace*.

Teamwork & Teamplay November 21, 2008

Workshop based on his best selling book and appropriate for all levels of experience. A wide variety of ground level, portable team activities that build valuable group life skills.

Nuts & Bolts November 22, 2008

A “make it and take it” workshop that introduces challenge & adventure activities as well as enabling each participant to create and take home their own kit of portable challenge gear.

OTHER NEWS

DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR OEE AQ COURSE NOW ON LINE

The new draft guidelines for the Teacher's Additional Qualification course in Outdoor Experiential Education are now posted on the Ontario College of Teachers web site: www.oct.ca/additional_qualifications/drafts/default.aspx?lang=en-CA

The writing team consisted of an OCT program officer plus the following members of COEO: Mary Breunig, Grant Linney, Pam Miller, and Connie Russell.

Residents of Ontario can provide feedback and suggestions for revision up until October 17, 2008.

CALL FOR PAPERS:

5TH WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CONGRESS

You are invited to submit an abstract to the 5th World Environmental Education Congress to be held at the Palais des Congrès in Montreal from May 10 to 14, 2009. The 5th World Congress will draw a large attendance, potentially becoming one of the field's most significant gatherings on environmental education. The mobilization of support behind the organization of this Congress is further evidence of the tremendous enthusiasm at play.

Your proposal must be submitted online. Thematic niches are:

1. Relationships between ecology and economy: the issue of sustainability
2. Questions of fairness in socio-ecological issues
3. Environmental health
4. Urban challenges
5. Ecologizing colleges and universities
6. School and community
7. Learning in society
8. Heritage interpretation
9. Indigenous knowledge and practices
10. Ethics, environmental thought, and worldviews
11. Art: imagination, creativity, and meaning
12. Ecological identity

More information about these themes can be found at:

http://www.5weec.uqam.ca/EN/presentation_themes.asp

Types of presentations are: oral presentation, poster presentation, roundtable presentation, workshop, NGO/NPO forum. Detailed instructions are available at the Congress site: <http://www.5weec.uqam.ca/APPEL/index.asp> under "Calls for Papers."

The submission deadline is September 30, 2008

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS:
THE FOUNDATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
www.fsdinternational.org

FSD currently partners with organizations in Argentina, Bolivia, Nicaragua, India, Kenya & Uganda working in the following development subjects: Microenterprise/Microfinance; Environment; Appropriate Technology; Women's Empowerment; Human Rights; Health; Youth & Education; Community Development.

Applications to intern or volunteer abroad this winter with a community-based organization in Africa, Asia or Latin America will be accepted through November 1, 2008
<http://www.fsdinternational.org/intlopps/programs/internships/applications1>

FSD partners with locally managed, locally founded organizations who represent the voice of their communities. Through building relationships and working side by side with community leaders on local issues, FSD supports collaborative solutions that offer the greatest chance for sustainable results. This approach stems from the understanding that communities must have a voice, invested interest, and ownership in the development of their land, economy, education, rights, and values. FSD encourages and activates local leadership, and facilitates the application of resources that produce change.

In 2007, over 300 volunteers and interns from all walks of life—from recent college grads to retired professionals—committed 125,000+ hours to support the work of FSD's more than 200 partner organizations around the world. To read testimonials from our current interns in the field, visit our blog:
<http://www.fsdinternational.org/intlopps/programs/blog>

CALL TO FIND OUT WHAT THE BUZZ IS ALL ABOUT:
JOIN THE ACROSS-CANADA POLLINATOR WATCH
<http://www.pollinationcanada.ca/>

Pollinator Watch is Canada's first national pollinator inventory. Scientists are appealing to farmers and volunteer observers to spend 10 minutes daily gathering information that will hopefully help them to save pollinator habitat.

With 70% of our food depending on pollinators, the loss of pollinating insects is a major problem. Pollinators are essential for over \$1.2 billion worth of Canadian food crops every year. Though these pollinators are essential for our food and natural environments, we know very little about the state of their health. Scientists believe insect pollinators are under pressure from loss of habitat, loss of food sources, disease, and pesticides.

Email Info@pollinationcanada.ca and ask for your observer kit.

REMINDER: THE GREAT CANADIAN SHORELINE CLEANUP

Created and run by the Vancouver Aquarium, the TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup is one of the largest direct action events in Canada, engaging tens of thousands of volunteers annually in every province and territory. This year's national cleanup of rivers and streams as well as lake and ocean shorelines will take place from September 20 to 28, 2008.

Cleanup supplies, instructions and educational materials are provided free of charge. For more information on this great way to engage your community in environmental stewardship or to register, please visit www.vanaqua.org/cleanup. You can also get in touch via email: shorelinecleanup@vanaqua.org or by phone: 1-877-427-2422

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 or resources sections.

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 will now be organized (but not restricted to) according to the following headings:

COEO News
Resources

Upcoming Events
Job Postings

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