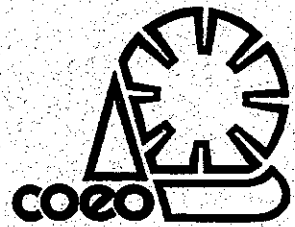


Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF
Volume 10, No. 1, March/April 1998

OUTDOOR EDUCATION



ISSN: 0840-8114

Pathways

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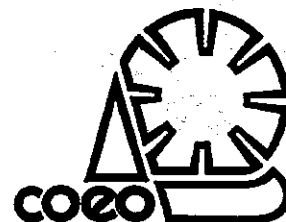
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Volume 10, No. 1, March/April 1998

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ISSN: 0840-8114



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Sketch Pad

Dave Knowler attended Humber College and Lakehead University. He learned about the boreal forest at Kingfisher Lake Outdoor Centre. He is presently an Outdoor Programme Specialist at Bolton Outdoor Education Centre. A self-taught artist, Dave primarily uses watercolours to capture the subtle shadings of local landscapes. Dave did the cover of this issue while teaching students how to sketch as a way of enriching their outdoor education experience. Dave is hoping to parlay this media exposure into a villa in the south of France.

Lots of books for discussion here.

These are challenging times for outdoor education in Ontario. As the effects of Bills 106, 136, and 160 become clearer, as the funds for education are re-distributed around the province — and many would argue, being diminished — outdoor education is in danger.

To stimulate discussion within COEO, I put forth the following incomplete list of possible criteria against which to measure outdoor education programmes:

- out-of-doors opportunities for every child in both urban and rural natural environments;
- opportunities at every grade level;
- at least one residential experience;
- activity-based experiential programmes with close staff supervision and high levels of safety;
- equity of access for every child no matter what their financial means;
- using the out-of-doors to teach what can we teach best out-of-doors (and conversely, what can we not effectively teach indoors);
- integrating curriculum in natural ways;
- achieving a balanced curriculum
- related specifically to the curriculum;
- meeting the specific needs of children;
- staff development - supporting classroom teachers in delivering a balanced curriculum, and encouraging their professional development;
- cost-effective delivery of outdoor education programmes;
- revenue generation possibilities.

There are lots of hooks for discussion here. As starters, is this just a rich-Toronto-board ideal? How does this play across the province? What can we teach most effectively out-of-doors? Who delivers this curriculum-based outdoor education? On what basis are we making these decisions? Who is making such decisions? How are they accountable? What do we spend our limited funds on? Should we be providing residential opportunities staffed by expert personnel? Should we reach as many students as possible using day centres, again with specialists? Should we focus on outdoor education in the schoolyard and community, maximizing the local connection, and also the

professional development of the classroom teacher? And what is the role of teachers compared to outdoor education technicians?

The outdoor education pond is shrinking — and friend may be turned against friend, colleague against colleague... In Toronto, one of the world's hotbeds of outdoor education, the whole outdoor education programme is in jeopardy, as funds are slashed and the freedom to define the 'classroom' is tightly 'sweatered'.

Yet there are optimistic signs. For example, read Lori Briscoe's heartening article about the establishment of a new outdoor education centre in Killarney. Read also the research results from Durham Forest, which demonstrate the positive effect of outdoor education experiences.

COEO is not a political organization, nor can it advocate political positions. But we do have the responsibility to raise issues and ask questions. So the series of articles about critical education that begins in this issue seeks relationships between outdoor education and broad issues of social concern.

As far as *Pathways* is concerned, several members of the Editorial Board are retiring after many years of service. *Pathways* is the voice of outdoor education in Ontario, and is really the only magazine representing outdoor education in all of Canada. We once again ask for volunteers who wish to work hard, to broaden their understanding of outdoor education, and to contribute to the furtherance of outdoor education. If you have a passion for teaching out-of-doors, and can contribute any of the following skills — a sense of good writing, or editorial experience, or technical experience with word-processing software, or an ability to network and convince others to submit articles and artwork, or an ability to work as a team — please contact one of the Editorial Board members to offer your services.

Mark Whitcombe

Outlook

What do you get when you mix Mother Nature at her finest with wonderfully warm COEO folks, really cool hands-on sessions, great music and the Frost Centre? An unparalleled opportunity to re-energize your passions and rejuvenate your spirit! Make Peace With Winter was a resounding success due to the enthusiastic efforts of Kathy MacDonald and the workshop planning committee. A huge thank you and tip of the toque from all the participants for a great gathering.

Your Board Members are busy revising the COEO brochure. We welcome your photographic submissions. COEO and the L.M. Frost Centre are co-sponsoring an Experience 98 position. The lucky student would work out of the Frost Centre, assisting in their programmes in addition to working on our annual conference, *Pathways*, and other COEO-related tasks. The Green Brick Road is once again putting out a poster for International Schoolgrounds Day. COEO is co-sponsoring this project and all members will receive one. Look for more great naturalization projects on the back. Bonnie has made positive contact with the Ontario College of Teachers. They would like to feature us as a grassroots organization helping teachers. Look for an article on COEO in the upcoming issue of *Professionally Speaking*.

Thanks to Norm Frost, we continue to be represented on the Ontario Teachers Federation curriculum forum. As a quick update, it was the spring of 1996 when the Ontario government announced its intentions to move to a four-year secondary school programme and to revise curriculum. Discussion documents were distributed to the public along with an invitation for feedback. University academics then prepared background papers for each discipline area. Then 24 Expert Panels decided the key directions to be taken. The Ministry of Education has now released its synopsis of the recommendations. The new OSSD calls for 18 compulsory and 12 elective credits. Environmental Science/Studies received little mention. However, outdoor experiential learning and field experience are recognized as important strategies for helping students achieve interdis-

ciplinary outcomes. What courses would we recommend for inclusion in Interdisciplinary Studies? Being a relatively new area, we could influence the content.

We received a positive response to our request for a member discount from a variety of businesses. First to respond was Hardwood Hills in Oro Station. They are a cross country ski and mountain bike centre with a pro shop, lessons, rentals and cafe. Near Parry Sound, White Squall Paddling Centre offers sea kayak and canoe sales and rentals, lessons, trips and two retail stores for accessories and camping gear. Based out of Toronto, Equinox Adventures is a paddling and climbing school offering courses in wilderness rescue, caving, rock climbing, whitewater rafting, kayaking, and canoeing. Wild Rock Outfitters in Peterborough and Minden provide kayaking, camping and climbing gear and clothing. Stonewood Adventures and Retreats, in Huntsville, offer dog-sledding and skiing in the winter and guided canoe trips in the summer as well as bed and breakfast year round. Look for our new partners' ads elsewhere in this issue. Show your COEO membership card for discounts ranging from 5 to 50%!

It's time to celebrate spring. Have a wonderful Earth Day.

*Yours on the trail,
Linda McKenzie, COEO President*

An unparalleled opportunity to re-energize your passions and rejuvenate your spirit

Dear Editor,

A Newcomer's Perspective on the 1998 Make Peace With Winter Conference:

What happens when seventy-five ambitious educators gather to celebrate the outdoors, friendship, and learning? Well, it's an incredible experience called "Make Peace With Winter". Recognizing a need to energize passions, this conference did exactly what it sought to do: it brought like-minded people together and created an atmosphere of vim and vitality. Creative workshops, a market-place showcasing the products and services offered by fellow participants, energetic evening activities, and a casual relaxed atmosphere made for an active and memorable event. At the end of an action-filled weekend, passions were truly energized.

This conference reunited old friends and introduced new. Fourteen student volunteers and other newcomers who participated in this conference were impressed by the energy of COEO members. Throughout the weekend, people of all ages and backgrounds mingled. On the dance floor, in the classroom, and on the ski trail new friendships were formed. Future memberships were guaranteed because of this weekend. Long-time COEO members compared the positive atmosphere of this weekend with the first winter conference held nearly two decades ago. The spirit of community that originated at the first conference was reborn during this "Make Peace With Winter" weekend.

Miracle of miracles — despite temperatures that reached the teens and sunshine that kept the icicles dripping — the snow held up. Many people took advantage of these ideal springlike conditions to snowshoe, ski, dogsled, improve winter camping skills, hike or make up for vitamin D deficiencies. Yes, we know you were napping in those lawn chairs.

The organization of "Make Peace with Winter" was extraordinary: paper bag candle lanterns lining the driveway; free massages for shoulder weary drivers; chocolate kisses on pillows; tickets for hugs; wake-up music; door prizes at every meal - so happy the Barry Manilow album found a new home!; an authentic Irish pub featuring "The Swinish Multitude"; numerous workshops and sessions led by enthusiastic, knowledgeable presenters; and a closing ceremony that truly touched the spirit.

On Sunday, all participants gathered around the fire pit that overlooks St. Nora Lake. Snow fell gently and wood smoke scented the air. Standing in a circle, connected by shared

experience, the closing ceremony was meaningful and sincere. As a group we energized ourselves, and hopefully will transfer that energy into our everyday lives.

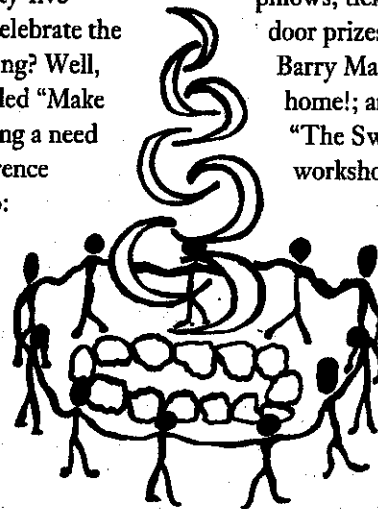
As people packed their cars and prepared to travel home, PED (Post Event Depression, a.k.a. After Party Blues) threatened to take over, but then Kathy Macdonald's words came to mind: "This is not an ending, but a beginning. Our paths will cross again."

Tara Smyth

Dear Editor

Just got the latest issue of *Pathways* — it looks to be a great one. A lot of the articles are things that I've been thinking about lately (being the 'blue sky' thinker that I am!)

Todd Barr



*Spirits Rising
Make Peace With Winter Closing Ceremony
February 1998*

Using Student Opinion to Evaluate the Fulfilment of the Durham Forest Outdoor and Environmental Education Centre

Programme Goals

KATHERINE M. BAIRD and PAUL F. J. EAGLES

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Draft 3: Friday, 12 September 1997

ABSTRACT: A survey of 299 grade 8 students tested the fulfilment of the goals of a school-operated outdoor and environmental education programme for grade 6 students. Of the 10 tested objectives, 8 were fulfilled. The students expressed strong positive opinions about virtually all aspects of the programme. The students indicated that the regular classroom activities were not well integrated with the outdoor programme. Even after 8 years of formal education, 76% of the students stated that the two-day environmental education programme in grade 6 was one of their most memorable educational experiences. The research showed that student participants in environmental education programmes are willing and quite capable of assessing the quality and relevance of such programmes and their components.

Introduction

School-based environmental and outdoor education at specialized centres caters to 385,000 students each year in Ontario (Richardson and Eagles, 1992). This massive effort is largely seen by teachers and students as being effective, however few systematic, independent reviews have been undertaken. For the planning of programmes and for political justification, it is important to undertake frequent programme evaluation (Theobald, 1979). One evaluative study found that the Toronto Board of Education's residential programme at the Boyne River Natural Science School was well-remembered

and appreciated by former students (Jones et al., 1994).

Many studies in environmental education focus on knowledge testing. Eagles and Muffitt (1990), Lisowski and Disinger (1991), Leeming, Dwyer, and Bracken (1995), and Milton, Cleveland and Bennett-Gates (1995) used knowledge and attitude testing to derive how well a programme or concept was learned. Lisowski and Disinger's study on changing environmental perceptions (1991) and Walter and Reisner's study on student opinions of agricultural issues (1992) used university students as subjects. The testing of student opinions on their environmental learning is infrequent, especially for students in primary and secondary school. Caro and Ewert (1995) measured the effect of acculturation on responses to a selected group of environmental issues. They used a Likert scale to rate how harmful an item was to the environment. Leeming, Dwyer, and Bracken (1995) measured children's environmental attitude and knowledge of children from grades 1 to 7, using a Likert scale. It is possible, but seldom done, to use Likert scale statements to test the opinion of primary school children about the effectiveness of their education programmes.

The Durham Forest Outdoor and Environmental Education Centre (Durham Forest) provides environmental learning opportunities for grade 6 students. It is the residential Centre run by The Durham Board of Education. One teacher and 3 university students within a co-operative work and study programme provide the on-site instruction. The Board also operates

The research showed that student participants in environmental education programmes are willing and quite capable of assessing the quality and relevance of such programmes and their components.

2 day-use centres. Durham Forest is located on 398 hectares of forest near the town of Uxbridge, Ontario, just east of Toronto. All grade 6 teachers in the board have the opportunity to utilize this unique learning experience. Students typically experience two and one half days of outdoor programmes at the Centre. The programme at Durham Forest is always full and some classes are unable to attend due to capacity constraints. The Durham Board of Education (1995) has approved a set of objectives for the environmental and outdoor education programme (Table 1). These objectives provide the basis for a programme evaluation based upon student opinions.

Table 1: Durham Forest Programme Goals

1. To help students develop an ecological conscience.
2. To develop an understanding of the interrelatedness and interdependence of living and non-living factors in the environment.
3. To provide students with the opportunity for personal and social growth through group work, sharing, decision-making, and accepting responsibility.
4. To facilitate and enrich the existing school curriculum.
5. To provide first-hand quality out-of-doors learning experiences.
6. To stimulate personal interest in the outdoors and a desire to use the outdoors safely, wisely and independently.
7. To provide experience and understanding which are necessary for the development of values and decision-making pertaining to environmental issues.
8. To promote and facilitate the use of outdoor and environmental education as a teaching technique.
9. To integrate many aspects of the school curriculum (art, science, language) etc., in a situation where they can be interrelated.
10. To provide opportunities to practice the skills of observation, investigative tech-

niques, and organization of data that characterize an inquiring mind.

11. To develop an understanding, appreciation, and respect of the environment, both in its natural state and as it had been altered by human activity.

Methods

A survey instrument was developed to test the programme objectives. Students were given statements, such as "I learned about the environment", and asked to reply on a 5 point Likert scale with the options: agree strongly, agree somewhat, do not remember, disagree somewhat and disagree strongly. Every fifth statement was expressed in the negative. The survey contained 47 questions.

Each programme objective was assessed by 2 or 3 statements. Objective 11 was not assessed because it overlapped other objectives.

Surveys were administered to 299 students in 12 grade 8 classrooms in 7 schools in the cities of Whitby, Oshawa, and Pickering, Ontario. The classrooms were randomly chosen. Surveys were completed in class during the week of June 5 to 9, 1995. Survey responses were placed by the students on optical read cards, for ease of data input.

Three responses were unusable, giving a useful population of 296 students. Answers for all 47 questions from all 296 students were usable. An objective was considered fulfilled if a majority of the students answered "agreed" or "strongly agreed" to the associated questions.

Results

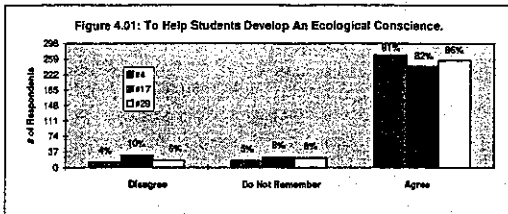
All of the 296 students had attended the Durham Forest residential programme with their grade 6 class. The gender of the population is close to an even split; 53% are male and 47% female. The majority of students, 75%, live in a city, with 22% in a small town, and 3% in the country. The maximum length of stay in the programme for a student is 2 nights and 98% stayed this length of time.

Objective 1: Ecological conscience

Durham Forest's first objective is "To help students develop an ecological conscience." The survey tested this declaration in 3 statements:

- 4. I learned about the environment.
- 17. I learned that I can make a difference to the environment.
- 29. I learned that humans can help the environment.

The vast majority of students believe that the Durham Forest programme helped them develop an environmental conscience (Figure 4.01). The students indicate that they not only learned about the environment, they learned they can make a difference.



Objective 2: Interrelatedness and Interdependence

Durham Forest's second mission statement is "To develop an understanding of the interrelatedness and interdependence of living and non-living factors in the environment." The survey tested this declaration in 3 statements:

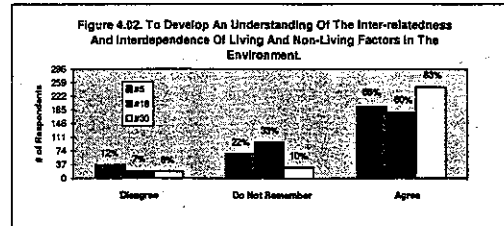
- 5. I learned that I am a part of nature.
- 18. I learned that everything in nature is inter-related.
- 30. I learned that all living things are not important.

The Durham Forest programme achieves objective 2 well, although there is room for improvement (Figure 4.02). The fact that 30% do not remember or disagree that everything in nature is inter-related shows a problem with the programme or with the survey question.

The term "inter-related" may be beyond the vocabulary of some grade eight students. A

better term might have been "connected".

Nevertheless, a significant majority of students believe that the Durham Forest programme helped them to understand the inter-relatedness of nature.



Objective 3: Personal and Social Growth

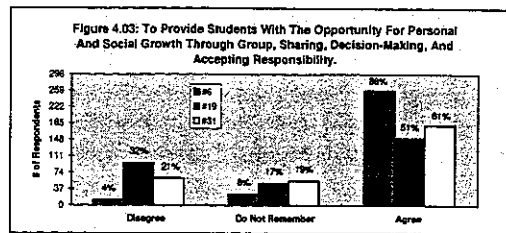
Durham Forest's third objective is "To provide students with the opportunity for personal and social growth through group work, sharing, decision-making, and accepting responsibility." The survey tested this declaration in 3 statements:

- 6. I accepted responsibilities.
- 19. I improved as a person.
- 31. I felt more self-confident after accomplishing a difficult activity (e.g. skiing, climbing Wall, finishing the orienteering course in the forest).

Objective 3 is fulfilled (Figure 4.03).

Statement #6 shows that most students are mature enough and sufficiently positive to accept responsibility during the programme. However, 34% of the respondents to statements #19 and #31 answered do not agree or do not remember. This may indicate some weakness in the programme for this objective. Statement #19 is a laudable, but quite ambitious goal, for a short programme. It is therefore quite positive that 51% of all students feel that they improved as a person due to a two and one half day programme. It is also positive that 61% of the country. The maximum length of stay in the programme for a student is 2 nights and 98% stayed this length of time.

students gained self-confidence after accomplishing programme challenges. A high 66% level of agreement for this objective shows that the Durham Forest programme gives students personal and social growth.

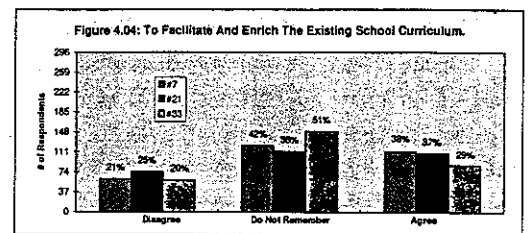


Objective 4: Enrich School Curriculum

Durham Forest's fourth objective is "To facilitate and enrich the existing school curriculum." The survey tested this declaration in 3 statements:

7. After the visit our class studied, in our classroom, the subjects taught at Durham Forest.
21. Durham Forest did not help me to understand concepts learned in our classroom at school.
33. Before our class trip, our class studied subjects, in our classroom, that were taught at Durham Forest.

Objective 4 is not fulfilled (Figure 4.04). The students reveal that there is insufficient integration between the regular classroom lessons and the specialized environmental education programme. Interestingly, Jones et al. (1994) also found a similar problem with the Boyne River programme of the Toronto Board of Education. The conclusion is that more classroom preparation and follow-up is needed. It is possible that students are less likely to remember the school curriculum as it is cumulative through their entire school experience, while highlights stick out. Students at the grade 6, 7 or 8 level may not see the connection between orienteering at Durham Forest and geography or physical education in the regular classroom, nor would they likely see initiative tasks and language skills as linked. This may account for the majority of students who do not remember the facilitation of existing school curriculum.

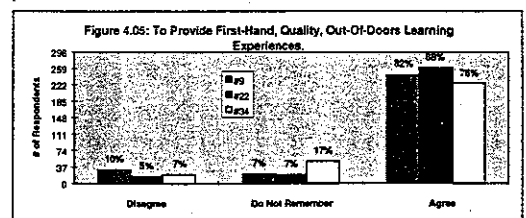


Objective 5: First-hand experience

Durham Forest's fifth objective is "To provide first-hand, quality, out-of-doors learning experiences." The survey tested this declaration in 3 statements:

9. I did not learn very much.
22. I did more activities outdoors than indoors.
34. I learned more things because I did them.

Objective 5 is fulfilled (Figure 4.05). With all 3 questions tabulated together, the average positive response rate is 82%. It is clear that these students reveal that participatory education is highly effective. Durham Forest has achieved this goal exceptionally well. The majority of students believe that Durham Forest provided a programme where they had the opportunity to gain first-hand, quality, out-of-doors learning experiences.



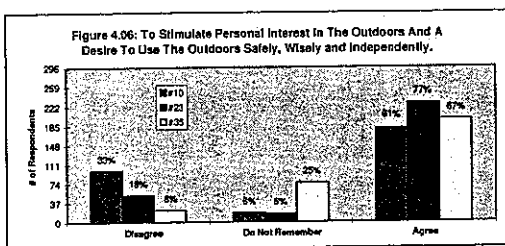
Objective 6: Personal Interest in the Outdoors

Durham Forest's sixth objective is "To stimulate personal interest in the outdoors and a desire to use the outdoors safely, wisely and independently." The survey tested this objective in 3 statements:

10. Since my stay at Durham Forest, I like to spend more time in the outdoors.

- 23. I now have more appreciation for nature.
- 35. I learned outdoor safety rules.

This goal is met, although some areas need improvement (Figure 4.06). A 77% positive response from the statement "I now have more appreciation for nature" is quite significant. This indicates that 228 students believe Durham Forest facilitated an improved personal appreciation for nature. Question #10 is quite a strong statement and having a positive response of 61% indicates that Durham Forest is providing a programme that sparks many student's interest in spending time outdoors. Of the participants, 180 students spent more time outdoors. Outdoor safety rules could be reinforced at Durham Forest. The fact that 25% do not remember indicates that more stress could be placed on safety education, to ensure each outing in the woods is well-prepared and safe. It is clear that a strong majority of students (68%), believe that the Durham Forest programme has created a longstanding personal interest in the outdoors. Long after childhood and school has been left behind, these people will still be spending time in the outdoors in an appreciative state of mind and in a safe manner.



Objective 7: Values and Decision-making

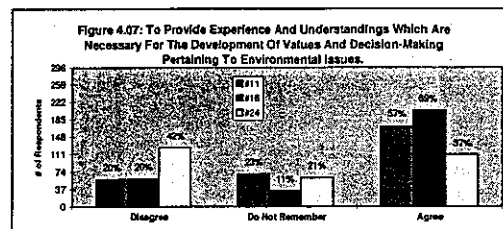
Durham Forest's seventh objective is "To provide experience and understandings which are necessary for the development of values and decision-making pertaining to environmental issues." The survey tested this declaration in 3 statements:

- 11. We were given the chance to make decisions for ourselves.
- 16. Since my visit, I now better understand environmental issues.

- 24. When I returned home, I got my family to become more environmentally friendly (even in one small way).

This objective 7 is met, but some improvement is needed (Figure 4.07). The fact that 55% agree that Durham Forest helps in the development of values and decision-making concerning environmental issues is positive. This objective requires much personal reflection and analysis. Question #24 is specific in nature and the fact that 110 (37%) students got their family to become more environmentally friendly is quite impressive. This was the only statement of the 3 which was answered with less than 50%, yet should not be considered a failure. Linking the family to a particular school programme is hard to achieve and Durham Forest obviously was able to succeed in making many connections.

The majority of students (55%) feel that the Durham Forest programme helped them understand environmental issues. A very impressive 37% of students were able to change their families' behaviour in an environmentally friendly manner. This is a strong test of programme effectiveness.



Objective 8: Environmental education as classroom technique

Durham Forest's eighth objective is "To promote and facilitate the use of outdoor and environmental education as a teaching technique." The survey tested this declaration in 3 statements:

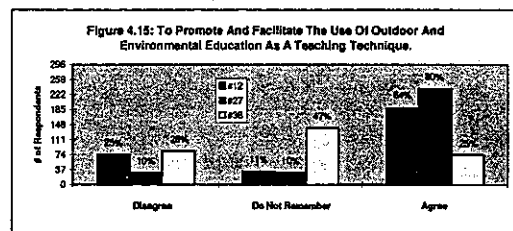
- 12. I learned more in a day at Durham Forest than in a day in a regular classroom.
- 27. I did not like the activities and teaching.
- 36. My classroom teachers use activities and teaching methods they learned at Durham

Forest.

Question #27 reveals that 80% of the students like the teaching and the activities at the Centre. A strong 64%, for question #12, feel that the learning effectiveness of a day at Durham Forest was higher than a regular day in the classroom. However, only 25% of students report that their classroom teachers used activities and teaching methods learned at Durham Forest (Question #36). These figures show that the students feel that the Durham Forest programme use effective teaching techniques. However, the students feel their classroom teachers do not utilize the Durham Forest learning techniques back in the classroom.

Many classroom teachers may not be taking advantage of the possibilities that exist after the outdoor experience takes place. Durham Forest distributes pamphlets on each programme as a pre-visit planner and a few programmes have post-visit planners. More stress needs to be placed on the completion of these activities before and after the experience. All too often, it is easy for classroom teachers to make Durham Forest a vacation-type field trip with few curriculum ties. Jones et. al. (1994) study of the Boyne River School revealed that "students see the Boyne visits as isolated events in most cases." A common problem appears to exist for both programmes.

Durham Forest's objective 8 is fulfilled. The students state that the programme's outdoor and environmental education teaching techniques are effective. However, the students reveal that classroom teachers seldom use the Durham Forest techniques in the classroom.



Objective 9: Integrate curriculum

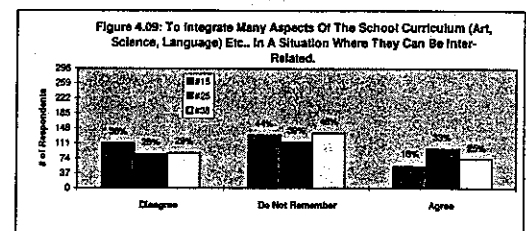
Durham Forest's ninth objective is "To integrate many aspects of the school curriculum (art, science, language) etc.. in a situation

where they can be inter-related." The survey tested this declaration in 3 statements:

- 15. I did not learn about art.
- 25. I learned about science.
- 38. I learned to use some language skills.

All 3 responses are negative (Figure 4.18). There is only a 25% positive response to the idea that much of the school curriculum is incorporated and inter-related to the Durham Forest programme. Students may not have been able to distinguish or recognize aspects of the curriculum since it is not delivered with the traditional idea of school subjects. However, if the student does not feel they have learned art or science then the Durham Forest staff need to be more overt in discussions and events that incorporate the curriculum.

Boyne River School's study also shows that many students did "not recall having many opportunities to develop math, art or writing skills" (Jones, 1993).



Objective 10: Observation, Investigation, Data Skills

Durham Forest's tenth objective is "To provide opportunities to practice the skills of observation, investigative techniques, and organization of data that characterize an inquiring mind." The survey tested this declaration in 3 statements:

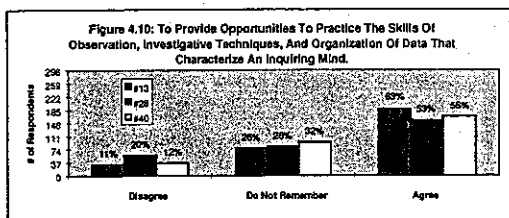
- 13. I learned to identify some tree species.
- 28. I learned how to read maps.
- 40. I did not learn how to make observations and keep records.

All 3 responses are positive (Table 4.10). All 3 statements are specific to activities that almost all students take part at Durham Forest. Question #13 relates to a programme called "Forest Quest", Question #28 relates to

"Orienteering Studies", and Question #40 relates to all programmes.

Durham Forest does an excellent job at facilitating an inquiring mind through the use of reading maps, hunting forest "treasures", and allowing each student to make their own decisions and ideas about many issues such as waste management. Improvements could be made, with more data collection incorporated into certain programme, such as simulation games. This could take the form of developing statistics on how the "Survival Game" concluded or developing tables and graphs on where certain species of trees are located.

The survey shows that the development of skills of observation, investigation and data organization was effectively done in the Durham Forest programme.



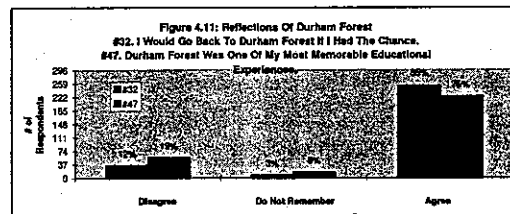
Overall Opinions of Durham Forest

Two statements examined the students' overall opinions on the programme:

32. I would go back to Durham Forest if I had the chance.
47. Durham Forest was one of my most memorable educational experiences.

Overall student opinions of the Durham Forest programme are very positive (Table 4.11).

Eighty-five percent would go back if they had the chance and 76% believe that Durham Forest was one of their most memorable educational experiences. These strong statements received an overwhelmingly positive response which indicates that Durham Forest is well-appreciated and highly regarded by the majority of students.



Discussion: Fulfilled Objectives

This study indicates that Durham Forest helps students develop an ecological conscience (Objective 1). Students develop an understanding of the inter-relatedness and interdependence of living and non-living factors in the environment (Objective 2). The opportunities for personal and social growth are grasped by the majority of students (Objective 3). Students strongly agree that Durham Forest provides first-hand, quality, out-of-doors learning experiences (Objective 5). Personal interest in the outdoors has been inspired at Durham Forest for many students, although practices to use the outdoors safely could be strengthened (Objective 6). Durham Forest is effective at the development of understandings necessary for developing values and decision-making that relate to environmental issues (Objective 7). The programme develops values, but more time on the post-activity component would provide more effectiveness. Students learn and practice "skills of observation, investigative techniques and organization of data that characterize an inquiring mind" at Durham Forest. A strong majority of students feel that the Durham Forest programmes were effective teaching approaches (Objective 8). A majority of students developed their skills at observation, investigation and data organization (Objective 10).

Discussion: Unfulfilled Objectives

The majority of students do not remember their classroom teacher using the outdoors and environmental education as a teaching element

The experiences provided at Durham are unique and inspire enthusiasm and energy for environmental studies.

in the regular classroom (Objective 8). Focusing on post-activities and programmes at the home school would further develop the promotion of outdoor and environmental education as a teaching technique. If Durham Forest wishes to keep this part of their objective, then more communication and involvement with classroom teachers is necessary. Many former students are unable to recall having their existing school curriculum enriched at Durham Forest (Objective 4). The integration of the school curriculum into the Durham Forest programme is an area that students see as weak (Objective 9). The Durham Board of Education needs to work on improving the curriculum relationships between the environmental education programme and the regular classroom.

Summary

The Durham Forest Outdoor and Environmental Education Centre programmes achieve most of their objectives, as seen through the eyes of their students. Eight of the 10 objectives are fulfilled. The programme should continue providing the same opportunities that currently exist for grade six student. The experiences provided at Durham are unique and inspire enthusiasm and energy for environmental studies. It is recommended that Durham Forest re-evaluate its role with the classroom teacher in regards to the integration and enrichment of the existing grade 6 curriculum.

Students at the grade 8 level, ages 13 and 14, are capable of providing cogent comment of the effectiveness of their education. The students in this study show a high degree of understanding of the concepts developed in their environmental education programme.

The Durham Board of Education and the teachers in the Durham Forest programme developed a highly effective and well appreciated programme. More evaluations of this type would assist many programmes in improving the effectiveness of the programme and in showing positive outcomes.

Environmental education is a non-mandated programme in Ontario schools, meaning there is no legal or policy requirement for its operation. This is a structural problem for environmental education, when in a time of budget reduction it has to compete with provincially-mandated programmes. The Durham Forest programme has been under

consideration for further budget cuts, but fortunately is still operating. This case study shows that all programmes, and especially those that have a political, legal or policy weakness, must show continuous and long-term effectiveness if they are to survive in a competitive education environment.

Fortunately the Durham Forest programme now has data showing widespread effectiveness and high levels of student appreciation.

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"Mud Between The Toes" — Outdoor Education in the Toronto District Board The Value of Out-of-doors Experience

- * I had the most fun a kid can have,
- * The food tasted great because of the happiness in it!
- * The best thing we did was when we went outside at night and played a game.
- * It was a good experience because we had to start doing things on our own.
- * This is one of the best things I've ever done — and it's all science!
- * So this is what it's like to walk in the woods. I'd only ever seen it on TV. I like this!
- * There should be schools like this everywhere! (a girl from a background of poverty)
- * In outdoor education, we explore the world around us. Then we take the outdoors in, by bringing our notes to the classroom. Outdoor education is important. Hearing what the object is like is fine, but it's when we smell it, feel it, taste it, then we actually understand. It's like when someone is telling you about chocolate. It's brown, it tastes sweet, and soft if you leave it out of the refrigerator too long. Then you actually see the chocolate, when you feel it, when you taste it, then you understand what it's like. That's what outdoor education is like. That's why it's so important to have it. I hope that outdoor education will continue to thrive forever!
- * I got to know people better than in other grades.
- * I like everything we did because they were challenging and fun.
- * Today I did so many things.
- * I don't want to go home.
- * It was wonderful when we saw frogs stick out their tongues and they caught their food like that.

- * Whenever I see all these animals in their own habitats, it makes me think of what a large world we really do live in.
- * (From a parent) With many thanks for all the thoughtful experiences you gave my child in enjoying and preserving our natural world.
- * (From a visiting teacher at a residential school) Our kids have never lived co-operatively together - and they did this week!
- * (Teacher to parents in post-trip letter) Thanks for trusting me with your children. I believe it was a very worthwhile experience for all of us. As we begin our study of pioneers, we'll use our outdoor education experiences to bring the material to life.

Outdoor Education in the Toronto District Board

Outdoor Education is "about" learning. Teachers and students involved in outdoor education programmes are engaged in learning experiences that are unique and cannot be duplicated within the walls of a classroom, no matter what the grade. The commonality is the direct experience in the out-of-doors.

Outdoor education schools are integral to the delivery of curriculum for students. The combination of our unique out-of-doors classrooms with the more traditional classrooms, and our practice of developing programmes jointly with our visiting teachers, maximizes the curricular impact of a students' experience in our schools.

Outdoor education learning is primarily for the full development of the child.

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We believe that:

- I. Outdoor education experiences are essential components of a learner's education that help build solid foundations for future learning.
- II. Opportunities for outdoor education experiences should be available to every learner in our large urban centre at every grade level.
- III. There must be equity of access to outdoor education programmes for all students.
- IV. All existing outdoor education schools must be maintained. All schools are operating at full capacity, each with waiting lists.
- V. Our outdoor education schools operate with a rich diversity of models which have developed over time to reflect the uniqueness of each site, and to conform with the structures of each board of education. These models should be retained initially, but must be examined with the intent of co-ordinating and adopting the best practices, capitalizing on unique features and opportunities.
- VI. Every adolescent learner must continue to have the opportunity to participate in an outdoor education learning experience at a residential outdoor education school as an integral part of school curriculum.
- VII. There is a need to have staff specifically assigned to the co-ordination and supervision of outdoor education in the new Board. The person should have a background in outdoor education. The person will work with a co-ordinating team to integrate visions and policies for outdoor education in the new Board.
- VIII. Teachers are the best deliverers of curriculum out-of-doors. The practice of teachers working with specialized support staff is effective in some situations and should continue if appropriate.

The Outdoor Education Experience

For over 50 years, Toronto area students have had firsthand out-of-doors learning experiences in a variety of natural environments including river valleys, glacial moraines, the Canadian Shield, and the Niagara Escarpment. These areas alone represent a precious learning resource where city children experience the natural world in ways not possible in urban surroundings. This is increasingly important with the urbanization of Metro and the resultant population growth and changing demographics, especially the growing levels of poverty and of New Canadians. 125,000 students each year have an outdoor education experience, either at an outdoor education day school, or at a residential outdoor education school.

Students have direct experiences with the environment when out-of-doors. Their experiences are not vicarious — not mediated through books or videos or computer screens. They learn through visceral contact with the environment — the *mud-between-the-toes* idea. The best way of learning about the environment is to be immersed in it.

Outdoor education learning is primarily for the full development of the child. The effect of direct experience out-of-doors is also to lay the groundwork for further learnings in environmental studies. Because of the out-of-doors experiences we provide, students have a greater self-confidence in their ability to look after themselves and their planet in a more sustainable manner.

Each outdoor education school is distinctive in terms of location, property, facilities and staffing arrangements. They are not the same, having become what they are in meeting the educational needs of their respective communities. These differences have created diversity, bringing a dynamic perspective to learning in the outdoors.

While there are differences, there are many similarities among these programmes of outdoor

education. Elementary school students from the Primary and the Junior Divisions participate in outdoor Day Programmes, either at their own school location or at an outdoor education school in a designated green belt area. Another similarity is that every student in either grade five, six, or seven receives one opportunity to attend a residential outdoor education experience, as mandated by each Board of Education.

On January 1, 1998, these Boards became the Toronto District School Board serving the SAME community of students, a community where 24% of students live in poverty and at least 34% of our students were born outside of Canada (*Responsive to Student Needs*, pp.2-4). A residential learning experience enables students who come to Toronto from across the globe to share their ethnicity in an authentic natural Canadian setting.

Equity already exists for students attending our schools in that ALL students during their elementary years of learning have the same opportunity to attend a residential learning experience that enables them to share their diversities in a positive and constructive way. These children need the space and time to understand the cultural richness as it is in Toronto in a way which is both respectful and meaningful. Our students share vital aspects of daily living with their peers: academic, social, recreation, and life skills. It is through this educational process that young people in Toronto will gain knowledge about themselves their peers and their province.

The Balanced Curriculum

Direct experience enables the learner to make connections by actively constructing knowledge through direct interaction with the elements. One can read about connections — in the out-of-doors learners live and are part of the connections. In the outdoor education experience, these connections can be seen, felt, smelled, tasted, and heard — reaching the whole student. Outdoor education seeks 'authentic' understanding in all aspects of knowledge. That

is, in out-of-doors settings, outdoor education is an active approach to understanding and to addressing problems in context.

Out-of-doors, learners learn how science works, how language is used to convey meaning, how mathematics is more than the manipulation of numbers, how history and geography and biology and drama and art and music — all apparently separate islands of knowledge — can be integrated for increased understanding of the world they live in. This is interdisciplinary learning at its best! Learners are often engaged in high level learning, beyond memorization, classification, and data collection. They are challenged to build new knowledge, to analyze, to synthesize, and to be creative. They draw on knowledge, skills, and values to meet real challenges and solve real problems. The interplay of their emotional reactions — the affective domain — is central to the success of outdoor education.

Outdoor education delivers balanced curriculum in a very direct and proven way, through an interdisciplinary approach. It is a vehicle for higher-level thinking that provides for learners being able to apply the skills learned in real-life contexts. The depth and breadth of the relationship between outdoor education and the formal curriculum has been well documented. It means an education that is concerned with what learners know and can do, how they interact with others and finally come to "be" in the world.

Many learners shine in our out-of-doors environment, as opposed to their performance in a traditional classroom setting. Learning in the reality of nature has a universal effect on all learners. All participants are put into a new experience where all students start on a level playing field. The effect is that the natural world allows pre-determined values to have lessened influence on expected learning outcomes. Often learning outcomes for participants are more positive and of a higher order on the taxonomy of learning skills.

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The Spectrum of Out-of-Doors Experience

In the various Boards, students have a range of experience, developing in intensity as they mature. They begin with short out-of-doors experiences in the early grades, perhaps in their own schoolyard and community. This may lead to half-day or full-day trips to outdoor education day schools with specialized staff and facilities. In the senior elementary grades, students have opportunities to have planned programmes of 3-5 days at residential outdoor education schools. Specialized and focused secondary-level programmes also use the unique facilities and staff of these various schools.

Outdoor education schools retain the possibilities at all levels to make direct out-of-door connections with the curriculum.

Outdoor education day schools and outreach programmes provide large numbers of primary students the initial curricular experiences in unique natural yet urban environments. Specialized outdoor teachers, experts in their field, make direct curricular connections with in-class subjects in a unique and meaningful way. These same outdoor education teachers are board-wide resources for classroom teachers working in their own schoolyards and local communities. Day schools provide the unique opportunity for parents to become involved with their child's outdoor education experience as voluntary supervisors. The day schools also provide accessibility for special needs groups to have curricular experiences in a safe and secure learning environment out-of-doors.

The residential outdoor education school is unique in that it provides the setting for the development of the 'whole' person. Daily living is presented in a positive atmosphere of accomplishment. Residential living is designed to foster a variety of learnings: academic, life skills, social, recreational, personal, and cultural. The learners' experiences involve the whole range of conditions, including the world at night, and in all weather. Learners live with, and appreciate their peers for what each brings to the learning

experience. These outcomes are achieved during classroom time, formal hikes and outdoor lessons, shared household responsibilities, social and cultural interchanges, and for a week sharing a living space with members of their class and their teacher and residential outdoor educators. Residential outdoor education schools provide the classroom for active participation and demonstration of sound environmental citizenship.

Toronto District School Board students have further out-of-doors experiences at centres beyond the jurisdiction of the present school boards. The biggest number of these students experience the programmes of the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority conservation field centres through the agreement between the MTRCA and most of the existing boards. These and other non-Board facilities, such as private camps and centres, provide specialized programmes beyond those provided 'in-house'.

The Value of The Experience for Students

In this time of accountability, it is important to know if and how, students value their experiences in our programmes. Each of our schools can provide hundreds, if not thousands, of letters from students (as well as parents and visiting teachers) expressing what the experiences meant to them. Samples of these letters are provided with this report.

There are also several important studies which deal directly with this issue. Roy Cumming, a teacher at one of our outdoor education schools, is writing his Master's thesis on "The Long-Term Effects on Students' Environmental Attitudes and Behaviours, as well as the Effects on Their Personal and Educational Development" as a result of their experience at an outdoor education school. While this paper is still in progress, the evidence is overwhelming in demonstrating how positive and how valued the out-of-doors experience is for the students who were surveyed. This is

Outdoor education schools retain the possibilities at all levels to make direct out-of-door connections with the curriculum.

especially significant since the students attended the school between 1973 and 1986, yet are reporting profound effects one and two decades later. Students retain more of what they learn in our experientially-based out-of-doors classrooms.

The other study is by Dr. Paul Eagles of the University of Waterloo. In it he assesses the scale of outdoor education offered by school boards across Ontario. This study is a follow-up of a 1990 report, a summary of which is attached to this document.

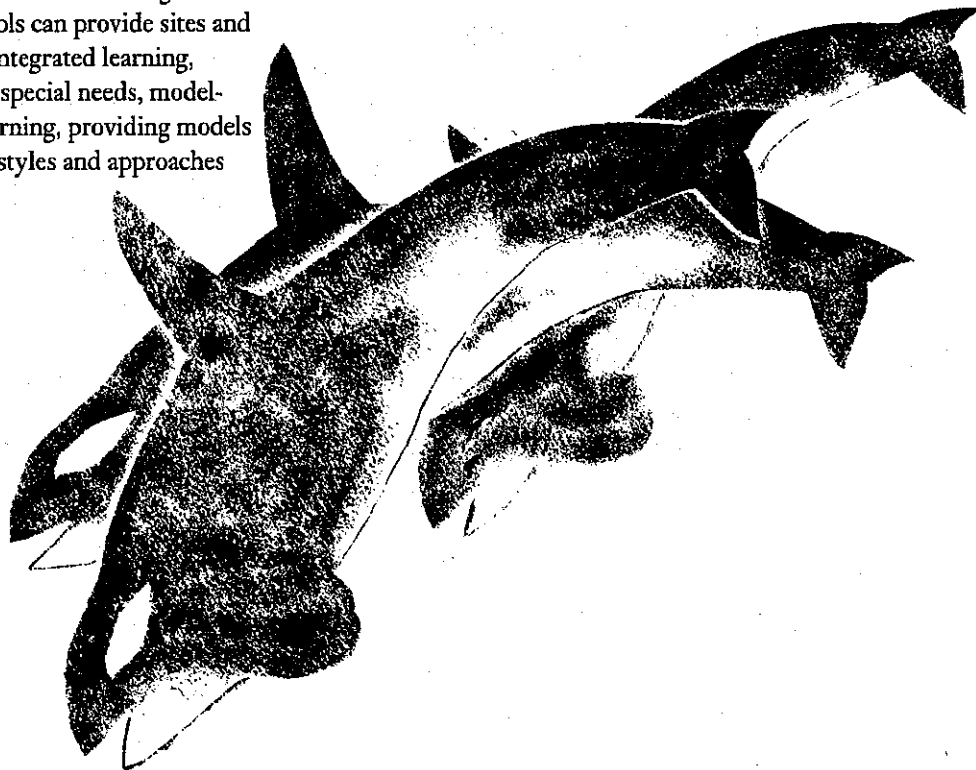
The Value of Learning Together

Learners and teachers live and learn together. Teachers are enriched by having the opportunity to be part of their learners' total life experience and the students see their adventure into learning as a partnership with their teacher. Teachers benefit from the outdoor learning setting as much as our younger learners. Professional development occurs for a teacher in that the experience gives the educator a unique occasion to both observe learning and to actually teach in a non-traditional setting. Outdoor education schools can provide sites and expertise in specialized integrated learning, becoming a resource for special needs, modeling interdisciplinary learning, providing models of learning for different styles and approaches and modalities.

In outdoor education, students are given the opportunity to learn and be part of what will be their future, to live and successfully participate in a society which welcomes practical learning and living experiences. Outdoor education programmes must continue to be valued and recognized as major contributors in bringing our young citizens into the 21st century.

Toronto District Outdoor Education Work Group

- Scarborough *Ken Andrews*
- NYBE *Bev Keith*
- Pine River / York *Gord Kingsmill*
- Etobicoke *Dave Moore*
- Boyne River / Toronto *Peter Stille*
- Sheldon Centre / EYBE *Mark Whitcombe*



EcoScope

Wetlands: are they dark, dank wastelands where swamp creatures live, black mud sucks at your feet, and mosquitoes swarm in clouds? Is the only good wetland one that is no longer wet? Not so, according to Ron Casier and his students at St. Joseph's High School in St. Thomas. Armed with EcoScope for Sustaining Wetlands, Ron and his students pulled on their rubber boots to investigate a wetland adjacent to their school. This simple beginning has resulted in a number of student-led naturalization projects and the introduction of Environmental Science into the curriculum at St. Joseph's. Ron is discussing an informal agreement with the City's Parks and Recreation Department to have the students at St. Joseph's monitor and maintain this important wetland.

Before describing how Ron applied EcoScope, a short description is in order. EcoScope for Sustaining Wetlands is an exciting and innovative, curriculum-based programme for students in Grades 10 to 12. It focuses on the wild and wonderful world of wetlands.

Why wetlands? Wetlands provide critical ecological functions and important human benefits and yet they are disappearing at an alarming rate!

EcoScope gives students the knowledge and skills to explore a wetland up close and personal. They:

- * map the wetland and its watershed,
- * check out land use in and around the wetland,
- * assess its ecological functions, flood attenuation, erosion control, and water quality improvement
- * examine its plants and animals,
- * determine its productivity and biodiversity,
- * analyze its water quality using biological indicators and chemistry.

They write a state of the wetland report:

- * describing its functions and values,
- * indicating which of these, if any, have deteriorated or are threatened, and,

- * for each change or threat, describing the causes, and also the consequences to the wetland, its watershed and the nearby communities.

Students develop and test solutions to the problems they identified — solutions that address ecological, economic and social realities. And they work with their community to tackle concrete conservation projects in the wetland!

St. Joseph's High School was built in 1994 as part of the St. Thomas-Elgin Recreation and Education Complex located on a former soya bean field. The sight of these stark and "unnatural" surroundings inspired Casier and his students to set out on a path of transformation, turning their landscape into a more natural, and beautiful, environment. At the center of this Complex and adjacent to St. Joseph's, the City Parks and Recreation Department had constructed a wetland as part of its storm water management strategy. As the students began to investigate the wetland they realized that the lack of a transition zone between the wetland and the sterile school lawn made for poor wildlife habitat. Challenged by the wetland designer, Catherine Spratley, the students embarked on several naturalization projects. Their research revealed that this area originally consisted of a variety of ecosystems, several of which the students have re-created on school property: a Great Lakes/St. Lawrence transitional mixed forest, a Carolinian deciduous forest and a Dutton remnant Tall Grass prairie, as well as the naturalization of the school yard itself. Students drew up plans, involved the community in several "work Saturdays", helped raise the funds, and were front-line players in carrying out this work.

They then turned their attention to the wetland that adjoined the three restored ecosystems. And that's when things really began to happen. Using EcoScope for Sustaining Wetlands, Casier and his students set about learning about their wetland. They checked out

water quality, identified the plants and animals found there, examined land use in and around the site and determined whether, and how well, the wetland attenuates floods and improves water quality.

What they discovered was that this local wetland acts as a "natural treatment center" for storm water runoff from the large subdivision that surrounds the school. Their wetland is, in fact, critical to protecting the quality of their local environment and the health of their community!

It was only a matter of time before the work of these students and their teacher captured the attention of others. An informal arrangement has developed between the City's Parks and Recreation Department and the school for its students to monitor and maintain the wetland over the long term. The students have been designing a cattail control programme, one that will maintain the storm water treatment function and at the same time, ensure a diversity of plant and animal life.

Casier and his students continue to monitor the wetland. They take regular readings and have come up with measures that will ensure that the wetland remains healthy and continues to provide its essential ecological functions. These young people are playing a significant role in sustaining the environmental health of the place where they live, their own home. They are truly "part of the solution".

Success breeds success: Casier and his students plan to develop a wetland forest to provide a natural transition between the "wet" and "dry". This would be located on City property, adjacent to the school.

"EcoScope provides students with the opportunity to develop community involvement and spirit in long-term projects. I like to stress stewardship and a caring for our environment for the next generation", says Casier.

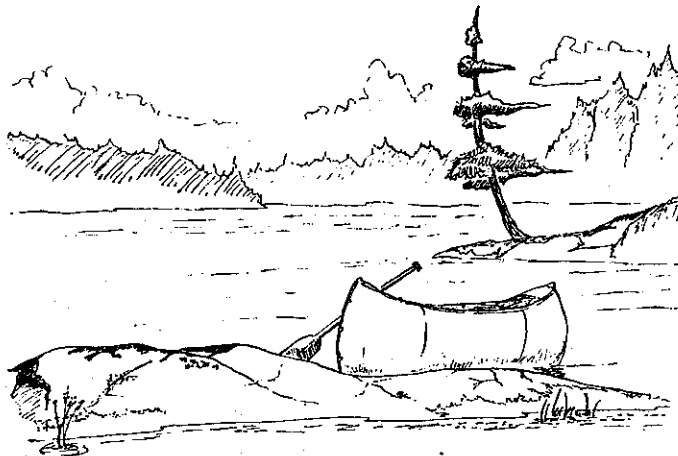
"Being involved in EcoScope and the naturalization projects has had a profound effect on my students. Several have gone on to environmental studies in post-secondary institutions".

It is this kind of experience that gives students a positive approach to education for a sustainable future. Young people are well aware that all is not well with the world's environment. And while they often hear how important it is to be environmentally responsible, there are relatively few opportunities for them to actually get out there and do something about it.

Casier notes that wetlands make wonderful learning laboratories and make education truly rewarding. The examination of wetlands offers students an opportunity to use both their heads and their hearts, to develop critical thinking, learning how to gather facts and use those facts to make decisions, while at the same time finding ways to make their world better.

EcoScope is a project of the Demeter Foundation, a registered charitable foundation dedicated to learning for a sustainable future. Their mandate is to provide education that will enable young people to take action on health and environment issues. A number of EcoScope workshops for teachers and outdoor educators are being offered this spring, summer and fall in locations across Ontario. If you would like to be notified of the EcoScope for Sustaining Wetlands workshop nearest you, contact:

Demeter Foundation,
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*Students develop
and test solutions to
the problems they
identified —
solutions that
address ecological,
economic and
social realities.*

Equity in Outdoor Education: Bringing Northern Ontario on "Board"

by Lori Briscoe

*To this day, it still amazes me.
You know, the smile that combines itself
with a blank expression
and a slight tilt of the head.
You've just mentioned that you work
in outdoor education.
Now you're listening to
summer camp stories.
In your mind, you're thinking:
"It's not quite like that."*

*Unfortunately,
equity in all aspects
of education is often
not a reality for
students who reside
in and north of the
Parry Sound area.*

Most outdoor education practitioners have more than likely found themselves in this situation, and probably more than once. Frustrating, when for the most part, we spend a great deal of time justifying the benefits of outdoor and experiential education, either to the provincial government or to a School Board. The letter-writing and number-crunching can end up reducing even the most resilient, environmental education lobbyists to tears.

I gained many of my experiences in southern Ontario, where I studied outdoor recreation, worked in the field and met many of my best friends. Ah, southern Ontario: where outdoor education was a part of most curricula, and there was access, access, access....I, along with many other outdoor education instructors, shared in a vision of experiential education programming, making for holistic learning opportunities for a predominantly southern Ontario audience.

We as practitioners are providing an "equity in education", where outdoor experiences complement in-class learning. Outdoor education is an avenue for more tangible learning experiences, where in-class concepts are applied 'in the field'. Experiential learning can help clarify ideas, help a participant become more actively involved in a new unit of study and can develop sociological relationships between other participants and educators.

Unfortunately, equity in all aspects of education is often not a reality for students who reside in and north of the Parry Sound area. Most northern Ontario residents can't enjoy the same experiences of which a student of a southern Ontario Board has.

Have perceptions of "life in the north" changed? — bitter cold climates and landscapes that resemble the moon; vignettes of a pioneer family becoming disoriented, lost in the middle of a blizzard (undoubtedly a woman will be giving birth); Voyagers ploughing along Hudson Bay fur trade routes with their bare hands...

Calling the north 'diverse' scarcely does the region justice. It's the area to which metropolitan Toronto escapes; it's where the northern lights will mystify you; it's where a visitor can digress into Precambrian history; it has insights into bilingual and aboriginal communities; it has 940,350 square kilometres of phenomenal lakes and landscape; it's every nature-lovers dream, and every recreationists playground.

When speaking of northern Ontario (defined as the region of Parry Sound and north) you are referring to a population of 850,000 people, or about 8 percent of the province. You are referring to 186 cities, towns, and communities. You are referring to 75 English and French School Boards. You are referring to over 184,000 students. And unfortunately, you are referring to a place that has limited access to outdoor education facilities and experiential education programmes. In short, northern Ontario School Boards, whether they are of urban, rural, or isolate setting, are forced to accept some of the tightest restraints on access to innovative technologies and outdoor education programmes.

As an employee of the Municipality of Rutherford-George Island, specifically the Town of Killarney, I am fortunate enough to be

part of the creation of an outdoor education network and experiential education facility for northern Ontario residents. Established in the summer of 1997, Phase I of the Killarney Experiential Education Project or "KEEP", brought together a number of dedicated individuals who were committed to preparing the foundations of an experiential education and Internet resource centre, operated by the town of Killarney, in co-operation with the Sudbury Catholic District School Board. This project, with a tentative completion date of September 1999, will set up the infrastructure needed to provide Primary-Junior to OAC level curricula within a residential wilderness setting.

The community of Killarney is rich in history and natural heritage. Killarney is considered a scenic favourite for summer tourists, who number approximately 90,000 during peak season. Located 100 kilometres south of Sudbury on the north-eastern shores of Georgian Bay, Killarney conducts itself as a diverse cultural and close-knit community. Students will have an 'experiential' opportunity to study unique Precambrian geology, geography, aboriginal history, and community studies. Killarney, with a population of just over 400, is an integral part of the implementation of the KEEP Project and future operation of the Centre.

Located 10 kilometres from the town of Killarney lies Killarney Provincial Park. This protected wilderness area, known for its quartzite ridges and turquoise-blue lakes encompasses over 48,000 hectares of wilderness forest. Geological processes such as glaciation and mountain-building have 'etched out' the landscape and shorelines of the park.

In keeping with its mandate, Killarney Provincial Park maintains education programmes and services, both to the public and visiting school groups. The Killarney Experiential Education Project is proud to have Killarney Provincial Park as one of its in-principle partners.

Presently, there are over 19,000 students within Sudbury Catholic Schools. An additional 19,000 students are enrolled in the Sudbury

Public School Board. The access of some 38,000 students within the Sudbury region alone to outdoor education programming is limited primarily because of simple geography. Transportation costs alone to southern Ontario natural science schools or field centres can run into hundreds, if not thousands of dollars per trip.

Establishing an experiential education centre within the town of Killarney would mean that both separate and public school boards within a 400- to 500-kilometre radius would have access to residential outdoor education programming. That translates to greater equity in education for over 138,000 northern Ontario students.

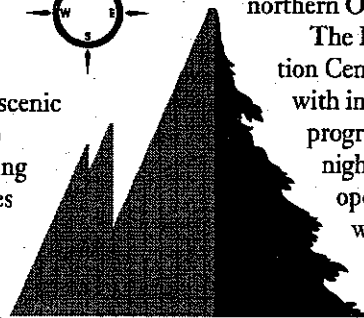
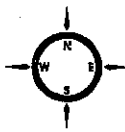
The Killarney Experiential Education Centre will provide educators with innovative and student-centred programming for a two-day, two-night visit. The Centre in part will operate out of St. Joseph School, where it will use classrooms not currently in use. The

Centre has a proposed capacity for 140 students a

week, and will operate Monday to Friday, throughout the regular school year.

Future developments may include the Centre operating on weekends, pending demand from special interest groups and corporations. This facility will include a challenge ropes course, Internet resource centre, and automated weather station, as part of its unique programme areas. In addition, the Centre will house two dormitories, a full kitchen and dining area, classrooms, and audiovisual equipment.

Advocacy, public awareness, and promotion are but some of the ways in which our vision of a northern Ontario outdoor education network will become reality. Let the crowd pass on their summer camp stories, because the "ball is really rolling".



The Killarney Experiential Education Project

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Shhhh! Movement afoot! — Listening to voices in the grassroots

by Jennie Barron

There is a movement afoot in the grassroots of our communities, and we outdoor educators can learn a lot by listening. Known as **environmental justice**, it is a new social movement for environmental change, led by those who bear an unfair burden of the environmental problems in our society: working-class people, new immigrants, farm-workers, First Nations, and communities of colour in general. This article looks at the links between the environmental justice movement and outdoor education — their common concerns, their need, and readiness for each other.

But first, what distinguishes environmental justice from the mainstream environmental movement?

In a nutshell, environmental justice includes social justice. Struggles for environmental justice are typically led by working-class women, often in inner cities or on reserves, who are motivated primarily by the desire to protect their children, and by the knowledge that environmental risks and degradation are closely linked to social problems like racism, poverty and colonialism. It has been shown that communities of colour, and the poor, tend to experience *disproportionate* exposure to soil contamination, hazardous waste exposure, mine tailings disposal, pesticide use, air pollution, fisheries depletion, poor-quality food, and unsustainable land-use patterns. Environmental justice therefore represents a response to a system in which the least powerful face the greatest environmental risks and degradation, while the most powerful are privileged with the cleanest live/work environments and the richest outdoor experiences.

One consequence of the movement for environmental justice has been an increased awareness of institutional racism in the mainstream environmental movement. After all, the mainstream environmental movement is a

largely homogenous, white, middle-class, even suburban affair. But why is this the case? Environmental justice activists are quick to dispel the damaging myth that people of colour (or the working class) do not care about the environment. Instead, they say it is a question of whether the environmental movement gives attention to minority needs and representation. The issue of pesticides provides a prime example insofar as it often gets framed as a “consumer” concern for safe food, and not also as a health concern for the farm-workers exposed to pesticides in growing that food.

Environmental justice means noticing whose voice sets the environmental agenda and whose priorities and actions are considered to indicate concern for the environment. Environmental concern and appreciation is expressed in many ways. If I found that my neighbourhood was being considered a “sacrifice zone” (already too polluted to be considered worthy of protection) — as some inner city neighbourhoods indeed are — I think it’s quite likely I wouldn’t join the Sierra Club. Instead, I’d be meeting with my neighbours on the street to figure out how to clean up the old paint factory site so our kids could play outdoors safely in the backyard.

In spite of all this, it would be misleading, divisive, and counter-productive to portray the environmental justice movement as reactionary. Its purpose is not to criticize what environmentalists do. Rather, it is to point out that social injustices express themselves *environmentally*, that the exploitation of humans and nature often go hand in hand. In doing so, the environmental justice movement pulls the mask off the myth that we are all “in the same boat” when it comes to the environment, and reveals instead that the green we see around us is related to the green we hold in our pockets.

Environmental justice activists challenge the idea that “real” nature can *only* be found in

In a nutshell, environmental justice includes social justice.

wilderness. That is not to say that they do not value wilderness, but that they question the priorities that give the most protection to those areas that privileged people visit. As an alternative, they propose a definition of 'environment' as "*the place you live, the place you work, the place you play*" — nature exists in these places too. This suggests a kind of outdoor education that would value not just distant, wild or recreational areas, but also the places where students spend most of their time. It would look not just at the ecological interactions in those places, but at their social and political contexts. In Toronto, the Multiracial Network for Environmental Justice (MNEJ) organizes community walking tours that take people around to sites of environmental significance in their neighbourhoods. These might include not only green spaces like parks and community food gardens but also health food stores, family-owned businesses, the library, literacy and employment services, grocers that specialize in ethnic foods, a bicycle club where volunteers can work-to-own a bike, a hardware store (which sells tools and materials to improve home insulation and lower heating bills), and industrial sites that are — or have been in the past — sources of soil contamination around which the community is organizing. Sustainability is understood to include human and ecological health, livelihood, transportation, cultural diversity.

Outdoor/environmental education is happening in places other than schools, outdoor centres, parks, and zoos, and is being led by people who don't consider themselves outdoor or environmental educators — for example, community development organizers, youth workers, unionists, cultural community leaders, and even the neighbour down the street. It is this particular aspect that may be of most interest to the outdoor education community. In the rest of this article, I want to show that the principles of environmental justice may not be such a new thing for outdoor educators, as a new emphasis on elements that already exist in some form in the outdoor education tradition: our humane orientation, our ecopolitical approach, and our appreciation of work as an

important human activity.

Before going any further, I should say that I am using the term 'outdoor education' (OE) to refer to the use of the outdoors to develop meaning, both for the existential value of outdoor experience and as part of a holistic, experiential, and sometimes socially critical educational practice. OE, in this definition, often overlaps with environmental ed (e.g., environmental science, natural history, Earth Ed), but its inclusion of outdoor recreation and adventure ed also (like environmental justice) broadens the definition of environment to include the social realm.

The first claim was that OE is a kind of humane education. Not only does it encourage kindness toward animals (which is what people usually think of when they hear the word 'humane'), it is more broadly about developing compassion, a sense of justice, and a respect for all living creatures. This is evident in the tendency for outdoor educators to work in two streams — the "eco" and the "ego". Where the "eco" stream tends to focus on the non-human environment and/or our relationships with it, the "ego" stream tends to focus on the development of physical and social skills, positive self-concepts, cooperative attitudes, and self-realization. For educators working primarily in the "eco" stream, outdoor ed might mean appreciation, protection or enrichment of the natural world. For educators working primarily in the "ego" stream, OE might mean appreciation of other people, and the protection/enrichment of our selves and the groups to which we belong. Most often, I would guess, outdoor educators work in both streams at the same time, and do so with the humane qualities of compassion, justice, and responsibility in mind. Environmental justice simply takes this idea further by suggesting that the two streams are actually synonymous; that we can't deal with one and neglect the other.

The second claim was that some of the traditions within OE already take an "ecopolitical" approach, which environmental justice simply makes more explicit. Australian educator Noel Gough describes education as

Outdoor/environmental education is happening in places other than schools, outdoor centres, parks, and zoos, and is being led by people who don't consider themselves outdoor or environmental educators

being ecopolitical when it is *ecological* - in the sense of being not only Earth-oriented but also holistic, with an emphasis on inter-relationships — and *political*, in the sense of being oriented toward practical action and “good works”. Ecopolitics in this sense is about taking action for change; it encourages not partisan loyalties but rather, a realization of community citizenship. While the term ‘ecopolitics’ does not describe *all* (or even most) activities that currently fall under the OE umbrella, it is, arguably, appropriate to an understanding of activities like schoolyard renaturalization, environmental monitoring, urban clean-up or alternative transportation campaigns, to name a few.

Environmental justice is ecopolitical in the sense that it looks at the big picture of society and the interrelationships that make it up: it recognizes that our social context (ie. race, gender, class, ethnicity, mobility, etc.) helps determine the places where we will live, work, and play, and consequently whether our experiences of the outdoors will tend to be ones that heal or harm. Environmental justice is also oriented toward action in ways that are obviously political — defending local soil, air, and water, demanding accountability by polluters and governments, and pushing for equitable distribution of environmental benefits and risks. The social justice questions that such politics generate are often the same questions that underlie ecological concerns for non-human nature: questions about land use/planning, growth, limits, equity, corporate power, government's role, communities' rights and responsibilities. While outdoor educators often see these as “sticky” topics, I believe that we can and should entertain ecopolitical questions as an extension of our commitment to the “eco” and the “ego”. That said, responsible pedagogy demands that we do so in the spirit of critical inquiry and exploration, and not as the teaching of dogma.

The third claim was that outdoor education is ready for the environmental justice message because certain threads of the OE tradition already recognize that work is as important as

play. Whether through outdoor travel, science, food production, craft, or ecological restoration, outdoor education often involves playing at things that were, or are, somebody else's real life's work. As Richard White writes, “the most intense moments of our play in nature come when it seems to matter as much as work” — ie. when we experience hunger, danger, strain, risk, pain. Canoe trips (often drawing on the voyageur tradition) offer an excellent example very familiar to COEO; play becomes sweaty, dirty, life-sustaining and vital. When we tell stories in the backcountry of “historic figures emblematically connected with nature...we make their work seem the equivalent of our play” (175). Our desire to mimic the work of others (often historical figures) and to engage playfully with the seriousness of that work shows how strongly we recognize — even subconsciously — the authenticity of work, its centrality in our lives, and its importance to our sense of self. Given this recognition, outdoor educators are in a good position to facilitate learning about the great variety of places and ways that people use the land not just for recreation but for livelihood, and not just in the rural past, but everywhere today.

Integrating the insights of the environmental justice movement into the practice of outdoor education would help us combine our appreciation of the extra-human world with our care for human communities in at least three ways:

1) by expanding our repertoire of suitable sites for outdoor education (which presumably already includes wetlands, forests, parks, wild spaces) to include “everyday” environments like schoolyards, beaches, suburbs, vacant lots, inner cities, golf courses and garbage dumps, as well as working environments like construction sites, lumber mills, harbours, and mines. *What role do these places play in our society and in shaping our connections to the land?*

2) by using ecopolitical analysis to look at the ways these everyday places are maintained — whether through pesticide use, technology, migrant labour, or corporate power, for example; and critically appraising the consequences

for all involved, human and non-human alike.

3) by urging us to dream *and take action* to realize our alternatives for these places, thereby bringing the magic of outdoor ed to the places where students experience nature most often, transforming places and people at the same time. Schoolyard naturalization is an example of active outdoor ed that has such transformative potential.

I believe that outdoor education and environmental justice can be mutually reinforcing and enriching. As outdoor educators, we can share with environmental justice activists our pedagogical insights, our knowledges of natural history, craft, and outdoor skills, and our sense of the wonder, wildness and bounty of the natural world. By also learning from the voices in the grassroots of environmental justice, we can re-affirm what we do well, and take steps to protect, celebrate, and live sustainably in *all* places (not just remote, pretty, and "pristine" ones). That is to say that the qualities of environmental and human health, diversity, and sustainability, which we value and protect in the places that are most "natural" — like wetlands and forests — are the same qualities we must strive for and teach about in the places we *all* must live, work, and play.

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Editor's note: *In the next few months we will continue the environmental justice theme in Pathways with write-ups of two educational activities: a collective, brainstorming-and-mapping activity, and a community simulation game. Both games were created by students at York University in the Masters in Environmental Studies Programme. Stay tuned!*



THINGS THAT MAKE YOU GO HMMMMM —

Women's *Voices in Experiential Education* edited by Karen Warren is a collection of twenty-five articles written by women expressing their views towards a variety of areas in the experiential education field. This publication exclusively features the voices of women because activities and contributions of women in the field of experiential education still remains under represented in literature (Yerkes, ix). It is extremely important that we hear these voices. Without passing on the knowledge one gains through experience, without this awareness, essential changes will not occur.

Warren divides the book into six main sections characterized by the types of voices expressed. These consist of questioning voices, professional voices, leading voices, caring voices, voices of resistance and courageous voices, respectively. Before each section, Warren briefly introduces the main theme of the section and the various perspectives of the authors. I will outline the main theme in each section and highlight a few articles that inspired me.

"Questioning Voices" focuses on critiquing the commonly held ideas and practices of experiential educators. Like anything in our lives, it is easy to replicate and pass on things taught to us without questioning their validity and usefulness. Heidi Mack questions the frequent use of 'imposed' metaphor used commonly by adventure educators. Transference of a participant's experience to her life would be more effective if she could 'derive' her own metaphor —how the activity related to her life in her own words. Explaining what an activity should represent takes away from women having control over their own experiences. We as adventure educators need to scrutinize the reasons behind how and why we do things.

"Professional Voices" looks at accrediting women's organizations and status within the Experiential Education field. Wilma Miranda and Rita Yerkes uncover and discuss the historical development and support of women's

roles in the camping movement from the early 1900's to the rise of feminist-based women's adventure programs in the 80's and 90's. Throughout this article, Miranda and Yerkes detail the establishment of women's professional groups within recreation and outdoor experiential education organizations. The importance of professionalism in experiential education is discussed and critiqued throughout this section.

"Leading Voices" focuses on how feminism has influenced outdoor facilitation and leadership styles. Generally speaking, feminist leaders (female and male) emphasis relationship building and connections that focus on the process of the experience and consensus decision making. This philosophy acknowledges the contributions that each participant can make towards the group and their outdoor experience while honouring the choices each person makes. Denise Mitten and Rosalind Dutton examine outdoor leadership considerations with women survivors of sexual abuse. One out of three women and one in seven men have experienced sexual violence in their lives (p. 131). The outdoors can 'trigger feelings of fear, invasion and a lack of control' by sexual abuse survivors. Yet Mitten and Dutton explain how an effective program can foster positive outdoor experiences. The participant can learn how to feel safe by setting limits and boundaries. The outdoors can offer healing and comforting qualities of nature and also enhance a new sense of empowerment for the participant. Feminist leadership models are the premises for many indispensable experiential programs.

"Caring Voices" examines just that — women who have supported outdoor organizations for years without recognition because they cared. These authors focus on what it means to care, ethically, socially and spiritually. Constance Russell and Anne Bell explore environmental education from an ecofeminist perspective. Russell and Bell question why subjective, emotionally induced arguments for caring for our environment are considered

secondary to objective, quantitative reasons for care. They challenge traditional teaching practices by examining the benefits of 'teaching in' versus 'teaching about' our environment. Combining facts with the emotional experience of being in the environment will have a greater impact on the participant (eg. multi-credit programs). Russell and Bell encourage the fostering of deep personal connections with non-human beings, a relationship neglected in mainstream education. Teachers and students must be active in their learning to develop a political ethic of care.

"Voices of Resistance" explores experiential education programs that confront difficult issues. Warren effectively states that 'not taking a stand on issues of oppression is really taking a stand for the status quo'. This section offers advice to facilitators and programmers to 'walk their talk' by addressing these important issues. Deb Jordan approaches the important issue of using gender free language in experiential education. Our social conditioning has a profound effect on our actions and language. As a facilitator, it is essential to be a gender-neutral role model. Jordan scrutinizes the generally accepted terms of hard and soft skills in adventure education. The images evoked by this term (and other gender-biased terms) is the main concern. Gender-biased terms breed exclusive or inferior feelings to many participants and reaffirm typical gender roles. By using gender-neutral language, facilitators recognize valuable contributions by everyone in the group. Only by speaking out and expressing our viewpoints can change occur.

"Courageous Voices" provides inspiring viewpoints of courageous women and girls in Experiential Education. Terry Porter discusses the 'Connecting with Courage' Outward Bound programme designed initially for twelve- and thirteen-year old girls as a means to deal positively with the intense pressures of conformity in this age group. This program also allows graduates to continue to actively be involved in future 'Connecting With Courage' programmes. Rogers defines courage as "to speak one's mind by telling one's heart" (p. 251). This definition shines new light on how we look

at courage and the importance of letting our voices be heard.

Women's Voices in Experiential Education is an inspiring, thought provoking collection of a variety of issues that focus mostly on adventure education practices in the experiential education field. These authors address delicate issues, raise valuable insights, and offer suggestions and alternative ways of implementing change. This is the first major publication of women's work in experiential education field compiled into one volume. It is essential that we continue to question and analyze commonly accepted views and practices within our field. It is even more important to actively voice these concerns and work collectively to implement progressive changes.

Written by Janine Reid

Warren, Karen (editor). (1996). *Women's Voices in Experiential Education*. Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

This is the first major publication of women's work in experiential education field compiled into one volume.



High School Action Day at York University's Faculty of Environmental Studies

by Cheryl Lousley

How do you motivate high school students to get interested and active in environmental issues?

We can start by listening to the ideas and stories of the sixty students who accepted the invitation of the Faculty of Environmental Studies (FES) at York University to attend a day-long conference on action and networking for secondary school environment clubs in February. Entitled the "High School Action Day", the event served the dual purpose of introducing students to the Faculty and its Bachelors of Environmental Studies (BES) programme of study and of offering some guidance, resources and ideas for clubs to green their high schools.

Undergraduate students who had been active in their high school environment clubs prompted this innovative step to initiate dialogue across the high school-university divide. With assistance from the administration, students and teaching faculty from the Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate programmes at FES participated in the organization and facilitation of the day, showing a commitment to community building rarely seen in academia.

Doctoral candidate Anne Bell set the tone for the day with a slide presentation on schoolyard naturalization projects. As a way to learn more about ecology and natural history and just to encourage classes and students to get outside more, the re-introduction of native plant species and the re-creation of natural habitat in schoolyards can be a valuable, on-going project for environmental education. While only three students said that they had previously been involved with any sort of naturalization project, ideas and proposals circulated in abundance by the end of the session. From creek restoration to arboretums, wetlands and community gardens, the students and their teachers brainstormed the possibilities with enthusiasm.

To ensure the enthusiasm would not stagnate in implementation, organizers followed the brainstorming by sharing resources for schoolyard naturalization. Connie Russell and I

gave a presentation on "green schools," moving the discussion from school grounds to curriculum and to democracy and environmental justice, then provided time for consideration of some obstacles the clubs might encounter in carrying out their ideas. Adapting an activity originally developed by popular educators at the Doris Marshall Institute in Toronto, we asked students to identify the "rocks" that might block their paths along their proposed streams. Several were identified, including apathetic peers, potential for vandalism, administrative reluctance, inadequate funding, need for on-going maintenance, and absence of land.

Several schools felt they could embark on large-scale projects, already having the support of administration, parents, and a group of teachers. The boys at Chaminade College School at Jane and Lawrence, for example, committed themselves to restoring the section of Black Creek that runs through their property. David Iogna is one of ten teachers from Biology, Environmental Science, English, Art, and Shop at Cardinal Newmann Catholic School in Scarborough garnering support and donations to plant an arboretum on their extensive grounds. Other students felt that they faced many challenges ahead and would aim to start small, perhaps trying to solicit the support of teachers who might be willing to incorporate environmental projects into their existing curricula. All were keen to see the outdoor classroom assume a larger role in their high school education.

Networking became the focus of the afternoon. Eleanor Dudar, Environmental Education Officer of the Toronto Board of Education, introduced the Board's Green Schools programme and encouraged the students and teachers alike to be in regular contact with her as a resource person. She also urged everyone in the room to lobby the Ministry of Education for an environmental emphasis in the new curriculum, placing the day's discussions in a broader policy context. Bachelor of Environmental Studies students

All were keen to see the outdoor classroom assume a larger role in their high school education.

Carla Rocha and Jason Bavington facilitated small group brainstorming and discussions on the development of linkages between students, teachers, and administration within schools, among clubs at different schools, and between schools and other community and environmental organizations. Two examples of community garden initiatives were presented to illustrate the process of implementation and emphasize the need to network and solicit support among a variety of groups and individuals. The facilitators closed by asking everyone to consider whether the group could meet again in a few months time to review their progress and share ideas, experiences, frustrations, and successes.

My informal canvassing of participants at break times revealed that the High School Action Day was considered quite useful and inspirational, the extra boost needed to spur the high school groups into action and an opportunity for the university crowd to test out different environmental education activities and listen to their audience. The exchange ensured the learning was a two-way process. Hopefully, the regrouping session will materialize to provide additional boosts of dialogue, resources and ideas as we all pursue our projects.

The Faculty of Environmental Studies initiative is an admirable first step towards spinning the web of connections that environmental education needs to endure and grow in our public schools and universities alike. In a climate of cutbacks and economic bottom lines, visions of environmental social change are fragile and threatened. Greater co-operation across the educational spectrum — horizontally across disciplines and vertically through levels of schooling — may be a key factor in keeping these visions alive and passing them along to new generations of students and teachers.

For more information on the Bachelors of Environmental Studies programme, please contact Joanne Nonnekes at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University. Phone: (416) 736-5252 Fax: (416) 736-5679 Email: envsinquire@orion.yorku.ca

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"Alice from A.C.E.R."

After three rings at 3665 Flamewood Drive in Mississauga, the answering machine clicks in, saying: "It's Alice from A.C.E.R." Former COEO president, Alice Casselman, is four years into retirement but she's busy as ever, and unabashedly plugging her latest ploy, the Association for Canadian Educational Resources, even while she's out doing something else.

Following a two-year stint of European travel and teaching at Darmstadt High School in Germany, Alice settled into science teaching in Ontario, first in St. Catharines, then with the Etobicoke Board of Education at Thistleton Collegiate, Westway High School, and, finally, as Head of Science at Etobicoke School of the Arts. Involved in extra-curricular activities, like clubs and training for students in technical theatre production, she always found time for the outdoors in her lessons and on weekends. Alice, for example, was one of the first volunteers to teach at weekend conservation schools being run by the Metropolitan Toronto

Regional Conservation Authority in the mid '60s at Albion Hills Conservation Area, which was pioneering work in Ontario outdoor education.

In the early '70s, as COEO was taking shape, she participated with Bob Pieh, founder of Queen's Outdoor & Experiential Education Programme, on an educational canoe adventure in Northwestern Ontario, called "Nomads North". Nomads North became the prototype for courses at the Canadian Outward Bound Wilderness School, which Pieh and colleagues were creating at the time. This connection led to roles for Alice as an Outward Bound instructor and founding director of C.O.B.W.S.

Nomads North also led Alice deeper into COEO. Dedicated to fostering professional leadership in the out-of-doors, one of the first really hot issues facing COEO was certification. Alice waded into the fray in 1976, becoming

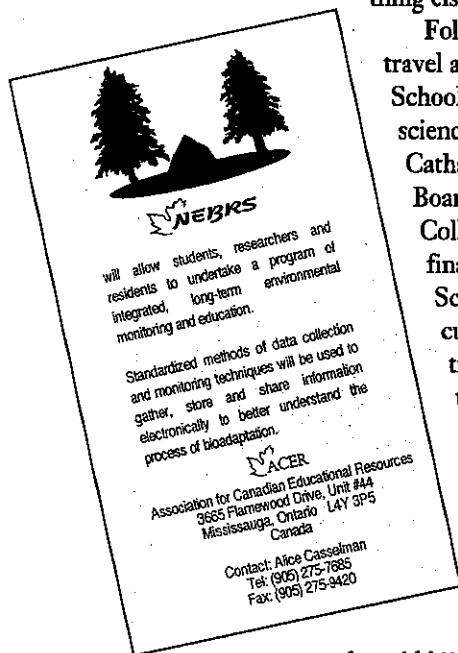
chair of The Task Force on Adventure Activities with members Lloyd Fraser, Don Harben, Don Hurst, Peter Jarvis, Jim Mark, John McRuer, Bob Rogers, Stan Talesnick, and Dorothy Walter. These deliberations led to the publication by COEO of the seminal book by Task Force member Bob Rogers, *Leading to Share, Sharing to Lead*, and were a major contribution to the growth and development of outdoor education in Ontario.

Continuing interest in COEO led to Alice's election as President in 1978/79, and to her participation as one of the first enrollees and eventual graduates of the COEO-sponsored Northern Illinois University Master's degree programme in Outdoor Education. It was at COEO's annual conference at Chaffey's Locks, during Alice's tenure as President, that Bob Pieh introduced me to Alice saying, "This is someone you need to know. If you ever need anything, call Alice."

After 35 years of classroom teaching, Alice retired in 1994, determined to work full time on A.C.E.R. and to continue her contribution to COEO. She organized 25th Anniversary celebrations at the Oshweken Conference and, for the last couple of years, in her role as A.C.E.R. president, has been working with colleagues at outdoor centres on the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve Study (or NEBRS project). "We're working hard to get real science into the hands of the kids," she says.

The pride of Cardinal, Ontario (daughter of the school principal and first cousin of labour spark plug Leah Casselman) Alice Casselman, is one of the stalwarts who have kept COEO going. Colleagues affectionately call her "a pot-boiler," and "a ball carrier". Says another, "Her heart and soul are dedicated to the kids' total education." New projects include making Canada known to new Canadians. About this she says, "New Canadians have an idea of what this country is about but they haven't got it in their bones yet. We have to help them touch the earth." At 61 years old, Alice still leads by example. Go Alice go!

Jim Raffan



Harmonious Helen Daniels

Hear a haunting recorder echo across a morning lake? Catch a sparkle of song across the campfire? Listen for her laugh — maybe you've just met Helen Daniels!

Helen has a way with harmony, in music and in life. Like most COEO members, she finds peace by spending time in nature. First drawn to the natural world through family adventures and Girl Guides, Helen spent her seventeenth and "pivotal" summer as a junior ranger in the wilds near Thunder Bay. These experiences took her from home in Kanata, Ontario to the Faculty of Environmental Studies at the University of Waterloo, where she says that she "hoped to learn the secrets to SAVE THE WORLD". Eventually, she landed at the Queen's Outdoor and Experiential Education Barn near Sydenham, where I met her, still singing, in 1995.

Through Waterloo's Co-op programme she has spent time at numerous outdoor centres. COEO members might recognize her from Norval Outdoor Centre (Upper Canada College's residential centre), Bark Lake, or the Bill Mason Centre, where she returned this year as a staff member. Co-workers and friends recall her contagious belly laugh and fondness for lighthearted pranks. (Ron Williamson reports a curious increase in staff shenanigans since Helen's arrival at the Bill Mason Centre in September.)

But colleagues are just as quick to note her obvious passion for her work, and especially her commitment to experiential education. Helen has been dedicated to experiential education and group processing since her time at Norval, where she realized that "until people are settled

with themselves, they cannot focus on the bigger picture of the Earth". Recently she has found a strong resonance with the work of Outward Bound, spending last summer on the trail as a staff member.

Another of Helen's passions is social justice, which she creatively incorporates into outdoor education. Believing that personal actions can make an important difference, one of her favourite sayings is, "What you do speaks so

loudly that I cannot hear what you are saying." Of particular interest to her are social justice issues around food production, and Helen takes choices in her own life seriously. She jokes that it has its drawbacks: no one likes to go shopping with her because she spends so much time reading labels!

And of course, there's still time for play! The winter trail has called to Helen this season, and not even those icy Eastern Ontario trails could keep her from enjoying new hobbies of telemark and skate skiing around the hills of

Dunrobin. Still, Helen is careful to keep a balance, and one of her recent goals is to slow her life down a bit by "thinking less and spending more time in silence".

Helen first joined COEO in 1993, and credits the desire to maintain and make contacts in the field for first drawing her into the organization. Since then, she's been interested in discussions offering a "critical analysis of outdoor education" and has been excited by the sharing of energy and resources between dedicated and creative folks in COEO. So watch — and especially listen — for Helen, as she lends a sure and dedicated voice to COEO!



Holly Bickerton

The People Have Spoken —

The 1998 Annual COEO conference, "The People's Choice", will be held at the Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre from September 25-27, 1998. Our vision is to plan an annual conference that truly reflects the needs and wants of COEO's membership. For the past several months, we have been calling for ideas and presenters. Our solicitation started with last year's annual conference, followed by a piece in the fall issue of *Pathways*. The ideas started rolling in by mail and fax. At "Make Peace With Winter" we posted the ideas we had received to date and asked participants to indicate which topics they were most interested in and to add to the list. So far we have received of almost 100 topic ideas — obviously, no lack of interest! So here is THE LIST (as much as we could fit into this column, at least). **Please note that the names in brackets are presenters who were suggested by others or who themselves volunteered — there's an incredible wealth of talent represented!**

- Political strategies for the survival of outdoor education programmes.
- Model Programmes in OE (Norm Frost, Bill Celhoffer, Alice Casselman)
- Integrated Programme "showcase"
- Algonquin Park canoe trip from a historical perspective.
- Pedal Your Way in the Outdoors: a cycling workshop (Stan Kozak)
- CANBIKE 2 certification (Stan Kozak)
- Connecting with Plants (Martha Webber, Clarke Birchard)
- Lapidary: cutting and polishing rocks (John Etches, Rick Keevil)
- Let's Talk Science: the new science curriculum (B. Schmidt, Nancy Armstrong)

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- Focus on Forests
- Skull and Skeleton identification workshop (Christine Hobberlin)
- Women, Metaphor and Meaning (Heidi Mack)
- Songs you can play the Guitar with 3-4 chords (Bob Henderson)
- Birding: fall migration (Ken Symington, Jamie Campbell, Ron Pittaway)
- Crafting Your Ecological Knowing: crafts and environmental perspectives (Z. MacEachren)
- Muir Trek (John Killup, Darren Seymour)
- How Much Wood could - : a primer on wood: properties, chopping, heating, etc
- Institute for Earth Education: an introduction (John Killup, Darren Seymour)
- Viewing Party: a silent trek to beautiful vista. (B. Horwood, J. Killup, D. Seymour)
- Seniors: An Underserved Population : a challenge for OE (B. Horwood)
- Sustainable Forestry practices (King Wright)
- The Trapping Issue (Hugh Doran, Dorcus Macleod)
- Beekeeping
- Folk Songs of Labour and Land (Andy Rush)
- Outdoor Adventure Travel information
- Canoe building in the Curriculum (John Burton, Karne Kozolanka, James Raffan)
- Cider-making (Jennie Barron)
- OE in Urban areas: Eco-Musée (Cheryl Lousley)
- Schoolyard Naturalization (Bonnie Anderson, Cam Collyer, D. Gibson, Anne Bell)
- Gardening in the Curriculum (Gail Simmons, High Park Alternative School)
- Environmental Justice Walking Tour (Sabina Nagpal)

- Collaborative Brainstorming activity for Environmental Ed. (H. Bickerton, A. MacDonald)
- Simulation Game: "Fortune telling": an Environmental Ed strategy (Jennie Barron)
- Virtual Nature: TV and OE (Jennie Barron)
- Women in OE (Heidi Mack, Julia Morch, Helen Daniels, Janine Reid, etc)
- Setup and Management of outdoor clubs
- Evening activities for Secondary Students.
- Mineral Exploration
- Tai Chi, Yoga, and Martial Arts as healing strategies.
- Outdoor Education Programmes at the College and University level.
- Kayak and Canoe Workshops delivered by certified ORCA instructor.
- Day tripping for Secondary students: backpacking; hiking; cross-country skiing.
- Sharing by COEO "elders" (Lloyd Fraser, Alice Casselman, Brent Dysart, etc)
- Stories of Initiations: Getting Outdoor Ed Started (COEO "elders")
- "What are they doing now -": long lost members of Outdoor Education
- Tracking workshop (Tom Brown)
- Astronomy workshop (Terry Dickinson, Martin Duncan, Leo Enright)
- Pioneer Life: splitting wood, candle making, tanning skins, etc (Walter Sepic)
- MAI and implication for the environment (Maude Barlow, Skid Crease)
- General hike with knowledgeable guide.
- Cross Cultural Outdoor Education strategies
- Story Telling
- State of Environmental Ed in Canada (Anne Bell, Connie Russell)
- Ecofeminism (Anne Bell, Connie Russell)
- Guided Hike with expert (Bill Andrews)
- *Pathways*: Making our Journal Work
- Story telling and Legends as they relate to OE practices (Joe Paquette)
- Future of COEO
- Global Positioning Systems Introduction (Rob Gorman, Bruce Petit)
- The Song My Paddle Sings (Linda Leckie)
- Putting the "E" (experiential) into OE (Linda Leckie)
- Curriculum integration ideas for OE
- The Canopy Trail (David Bishop)
- Virtual Space (participants build own conference or part of it when they arrive)
- Behind the Mask: the Secrets of Mask Making (Michelle Richardson)
- Fill your Backpocket with backpocket activities
- Canada Watch: environmental monitoring (Alice Casselman)
- Shovel, Tape, and Computer: high tech and low tech
- OE and computer technologies/internet (Cathy Beach)
- Networking session for entrepreneurial educators (Madelyn Webb)
- Planning Great Outdoor Education and Environmental Ed workshops
- Fly-fishing, Fly-tying, aquatic entomology
- Lessons from Vietnam (John Etches)

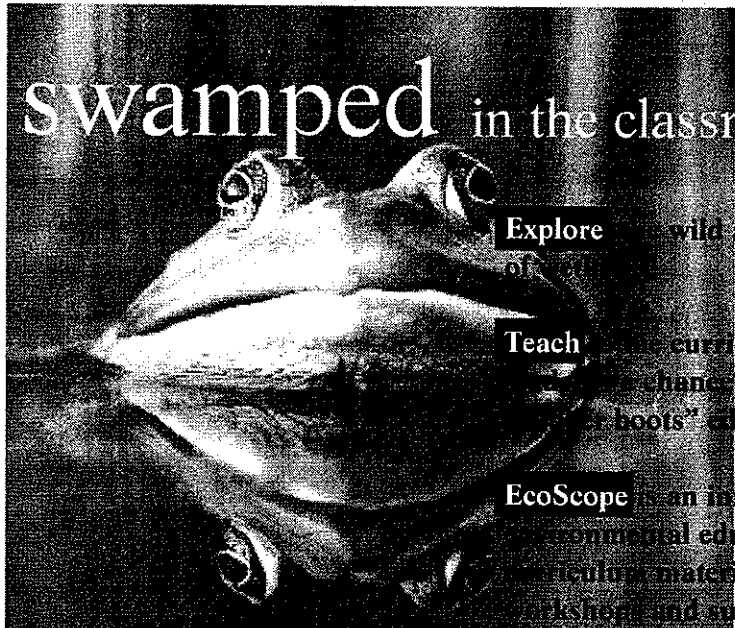
Wow! How are we going to do all of that on one weekend? You can help us make some decisions by highlighting your favourites and letting us know. The call for ideas, presenters and your input remains open until May 30. Forward your thoughts to John Etches or Barrie Martin by mail c/o Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre, R.R. #2, Minden, ON, K0M 2K0, telephone: (705) 766-2451; fax: (705) 766-9677; or email: martinb@gov.on.ca.

The excitement is building: the conference team is pumped. Look for registration information the next issue of *Pathways*. Look for the very special, very early-bird offer.

*You can help us
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May 1st, 1998 is International School Grounds Day (ISGD)

**an annual event established to celebrate the school grounds
as an exciting, though often unused, educational resource —
the Outdoor Classroom.**

Creative and beneficial school ground projects involving students, teachers, parents and whole communities are sprouting up all over North America and around the world. Initiated by Learning through Landscapes (UK) in 1995, this event is now celebrated in many different countries including Canada and the United States. Join with other school communities in celebrating and recognizing the school grounds as a vibrant place to play and learn.

Celebratory event ideas: Musical or Dramatic performances, Guest Speakers, Dedications, Tree, Shrub, and/or Flower plantings, Litter Clean-ups, Games, Refreshments, bake sales, and other fundraisers.

- #1. Register Your Event @ <http://isgd.gbr.org>
- #2. Or Call: 1-800-473-3638
- #3. **FREE** posters - (provides information about resources, organizations, event ideas and international examples.)

Forward name & address to:

The Green Brick Road
429 Danforth Ave., Box 408
Toronto ON M4K 1P1
FAX: (416) 537-7515
CALL: 1-800-473-3638
or (416) 421-9816
EMAIL: staff@gbr.org

We need words to displace duality and psychic numbing. We need words that open our spirit toward a “developing way of conceiving” linking our psyche with the earth. In each future issue we will select words from other languages that can help us express that which is poorly expressible (in English anyway). We can use these words as openers and closers, or share them along the trail in spontaneous moments. We can share them one per day over the time of a trip or residential stay. Ideally, these primal words can be incorporated directly into our daily speech and “expanding” reality. The point is that they are most appropriately used with the best translation possible. They are taken mainly from the out of print delightful book, *They Have a Word for it: A Lighthearted Lexicon of Untranslatable Words and Phrases* by Howard Rheingold. But please feel free to send in your own examples of words you use or should be using in your Outdoor Education practice.

“Finding a name for something is a way of conjuring its existence or making it possible for people to see a pattern where they didn’t see anything before. I gradually came to realize that the collective human world view is far larger than any of our individual languages lead us to believe.” Howard Rheingold

***hózh’q* (Navajo): The beauty of life, as seen and created by a person.**

[noun]

Quick — think about your wealth. You probably thought about your bank balance, stock portfolio, real estate, or other economic measures. If you were to ask the same question of a Navajo, you might discover that your informant’s reaction is to count the number of songs he or she knows, especially the self-created ones. Which of those answers is the more sophisticated? To the Navajo, *beauty is not only a way of looking at life, but is in itself a way to live.*

One clue to what we need to add to our worldview is the fact that the word *beauty*, to most people, is more likely to be associated with frailty and ornament than with power and substance. The worldview that sees a redwood

forest as a potential parking lot with lumber on it is founded on an illusory split between humans and the world in which we exist. In many societies, including our own, beauty is seen as a peripheral aspect of life, while the instrumental aspects of business, politics, and technology are seen as the central, “real” concerns of life. To the Navajo, however, who lived in an often hostile environment that required the most practical concerns, the creation and appreciation of beauty is strongly tied in with the economic, emotional, and intellectual well-being of the ordinary individual living his life.

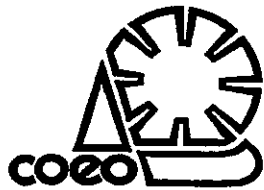
To the non-Navajo mind, beauty is a quality abstracted from the surfaces of things: We see beautiful apples or hear beautiful symphonies. To the Navajo, beauty is the entire gestalt of perceiver, apple, symphony, society, religion. In that way, *hózh’q* is simply the way the universe ought to be. But while the *tao* is the *tao* whether we see it or not, *hózh’q* is something that grows from within a human being and spreads outward to permeate the universe. In this passage from *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe*, Gary Witherspoon underlines the generative connotations:

In the Navajo world, where mind and matter, thought and expression are inseparably connected, the aesthetic experience — the creation of beauty — is simultaneously intellectual, emotional, moral, aesthetic, and biological. Navajo life and culture are based on a unity of experience, and the goal of Navajo life — the creation, maintenance, and restoration of *hózh’q* — expresses that unity of experience. *Hózh’q* expresses the intellectual concept of order, the emotional state of happiness, the moral notion of good, the biological condition of health and well-being, and the aesthetic dimensions of balance, harmony, and beauty.

Tell your friends about *hózh’q*, and when you hear people boasting about their salary or their new boat, tell them about how many new songs, paintings, poems, or flower arrangements you created last year. When they look at you as if you’ve gone daft, smile knowingly and explain that you’ve been practicing *hózh’q* in your daily life.

hózh’q is something that grows from within a human being and spreads outward to permeate the universe.

Adapted by Bob Henderson



Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario

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