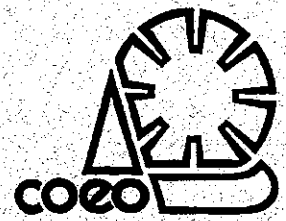


Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Conference 2003, 15(5)



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If you are interested in being a guest editor of an issue of *Pathways*, please request a copy of our guidelines for guest editors from Randee Holmes, Managing Editor.

If you have any questions regarding *Pathways*, please direct them to the *Pathways* Editorial Board Chair, Bob Henderson. If you'd like more information about COEO and joining the organization, please refer to the inside back cover of this issue or contact a Board of Directors member.

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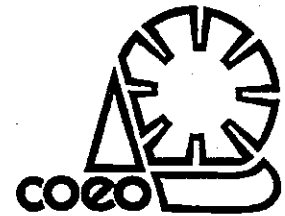
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Pathways is published five times a year for the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO) and distributed to COEO members. Membership fees include a subscription to *Pathways*, as well as admittance to workshops, courses and conferences. A membership application form is included on the inside back cover of this issue of *Pathways*.

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ISSN: 0840-8114
Pathways is printed on recycled paper.

Pathways continues a long tradition of COEO conference reporting. It is always exciting to hear post-conference comments and reports on specific sessions, whether you attended or not. Certainly the "Through the Looking Glass" theme was a constant throughout the conference, captured here in Bert Horwood's report. Barb Weeden also had a strong presence at the conference, filling the space with activity, good cheer and ideas for group development. By all reports the Gathering at Paradise Lake, St. Clements, was a grand success. We hope you'll enjoy this conference report and our usual array of *Pathways* columns. Take particular note of the Gathering introductory remarks for the COEO conference in 2004. Also, we are offering examples of Josh Gordon's "Finish the Picture" for teachers of younger students. Let us know if you would like more of this sort of worksheet content.

Zabe MacEachren, a member of the *Pathways* editorial board, will be the guest editor for the January/February 2004 issue. This issue will focus on the role of craft in outdoor education. Contact Zabe if you would like to contribute text or art.

If you have other suggestions for themes, articles or columns, please contact us. We would like to have an overall focus on outdoor education survival strategies for our 2004 issues. Please consider a submission along these lines. A page in *Pathways* fits an average of 650 words, and many of us have survival strategies that would fill *Pathways*' 36 pages. By the by, *Pathways* begins its 15th year in 2004!

Bob Henderson and Heather Bates

COEO Board of Directors' Meetings 2003-2004

Date	Major Topic	Host/Location
Sat. Jan. 17, 2004 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Reports and check-in re. action plan	Grant Linney, Norval Outdoor School, Georgetown
Tues. Mar. 2, 2004 7:30 p.m.	Reports and check-in re. action plan	Teleconference (one hour)
Sat. Apr. 17, 2004 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Progress re. action plan Other business as needed	TBA
Sat. May 15, 2004 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Progress re. action plan Other business as needed	TBA
Sat. Sept. 18, 2004 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.	Budget meeting	Deana Grieg (Treasurer) Warton

Sketch Pad

Art for this issue of *Pathways* is generously provided by Chris Hierlihy (cover and pages 13 and 27) and Steve Tourney (pages 5, 16 and 18).

A Promising Action Plan for COEO

On Saturday, November 15, 2003, at the Upper Canada College Norval Outdoor School near Georgetown, the 2003-04 COEO Board of Directors convened for its first meeting of the year. In addition to all 14 board members, five other interested COEO members were present: Sarah Berti, Kate Humphrys, Trish Jamieson, Paul Strome and Mark Whitcombe. From 9:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M., this group worked hard to brainstorm, discuss, prioritize and begin to flesh out the details of a COEO action plan for the next 10 months and beyond. This passionate and talented group of COEO members believes that outdoor education is an essential and integral part of any education to ensure a meaningful and truly sustainable future. These members need your help in carrying out the following plans:

Conference 2004 planning committee

Contact Bob Henderson
(bhender@mcmaster.ca)
Jason Evanson, Jim Gear, Linda Mackenzie, Tal Schacham
Date: September 24-26, 2004
Location: Tim Horton Onondaga Farms
(near Cambridge)

Conference 2005 planning committee

Contact Mary Gyemi-Schulze
(Mary.Gyemi-Schulze@tdsb.on.ca)
Glen Hester, Patti Huber, Shane Kramer
(To be a joint conference with EECOM, a national environmental education organization.)

Long-range planning

Contact Jacob Rodenburg
(jrodenburg@campkawartha.ca)
Sarah Berti
(For example, a COEO vision and mission statement that includes an active environmental ethic as a core value.)

Networking

Contact Kate Humphrys
(khumphrys@ucc.on.ca)
Gail Kuder to work on an update of outdoor education sites and programs in the northern region.
(For example, developing a COEO package for faculties of education and post-secondary outdoor programs.)

Provincial government relations

Contact Doug Jacques (jdougduck@aol.com)
Steve McElroy, Mark Whitcombe, Ron Williamson
(For example, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Natural Resources)

Regional workshops and events

Contact Patti Huber
(patricia.huber@wcdsb.edu.on.ca)
Ron Casier, Tara Mae Hillyer, Shane Kramer, Walt Sepic, Paul Strome
(For example, dogsledding, co-op and back-pocket games)

Web site development

Contact Tal Schacham
(tal_schachman@yahoo.ca)
(For example, public and members-only sites; downloadable lesson plans for classroom teachers; a notice board; membership information-sharing; outdoor education job postings.)

The ultimate success of these projects will depend upon other COEO members coming forward to assist. If you would like to volunteer or want further information, please get in touch with me or with the contact person identified above. If not you, who? If not now, when?

Grant Linney

The Gathering . . . COEO Conference 2003: "Through a Looking Glass"

by Clare Magee

The very cold, very rainy weather was balanced by warm hearts and bright minds at the Kitchener-Waterloo YMCA Outdoor Centre, Paradise Lake. There were 61 full-weekend participants. Part-time registrants brought the total attendance to over 100. Good attendance meant financial goals were met. Conference organizers were pleased with the number of Queen's University education students who took advantage of the purposefully inexpensive student rate.

The Friday evening had fun group mixer activities, a session on owl calling and owl ecology and a square dance. Saturday and Sunday's concurrent sessions actualized several conference sub-themes. Environmental sustainability was addressed via tours of the sustainable facility examples in which we were living, a tour of successful schoolyard naturalization projects, water-related teaching in this United Nations International Year of Freshwater and bicycles for personal life and for teaching. Personal growth blended with professional growth occurred in upbeat sessions on drumming, arts and crafts, life-changing canoe trips, plants, amphibians, a visit to the Waterloo farmers' market and a wonderful Mennonite family, sessions on group development and personal development, and more. Recognition and thanks is extended to all session contributors for their preparation time and personal energy and effectiveness in contributing to the overall conference success.

The main conference theme was "Through the Looking Glass," a self-examination of Ontario outdoor education. There were 25 people at the initial idea-creating session

facilitated by Bert Horwood. The quest was to express more effective methods and models of outdoor education. The partially refined ideas were used as a starting point for a following plenary discussion session. The discussion was both divergent and convergent and always spirited. A group of 14 met on Sunday morning to continue the "looking glass" quest for change and improvement. There was recognition by many of the need to change both outdoor education and COEO as an organization.

It was a "feel good" conference right from the start of Friday evening. This feeling was enhanced on Saturday evening. The banquet and campfire program celebrated our connections to the COEO "elders" who were present, recognized the weave of Queen's University and Seneca College graduates in the fabric of COEO and acknowledged Bonnie Anderson and Frank Glew, each receiving a Governor General's Award for environmental education. The short auction of outdoor education items was entertaining and educational. The campfire left us singing (and feeling) "I'm a better soul for the knowing of you." With Sunday's closure announcements of a full slate of COEO executive and board members in place and a 2004 conference location at the Tim Horton's farm-based outdoor centre near Cambridge came a "feel good" sense of organizational continuity.

The committee members who crafted this very successful conference are to be congratulated. They are Mary Gyemi-Schulze, Patti Huber, Kathleen McFayden, Clare Magee, Tal Schacham and Tina Packer.

Reflections from a New COEO Member and First-time Participant at the Annual Conference

by Heather Bates

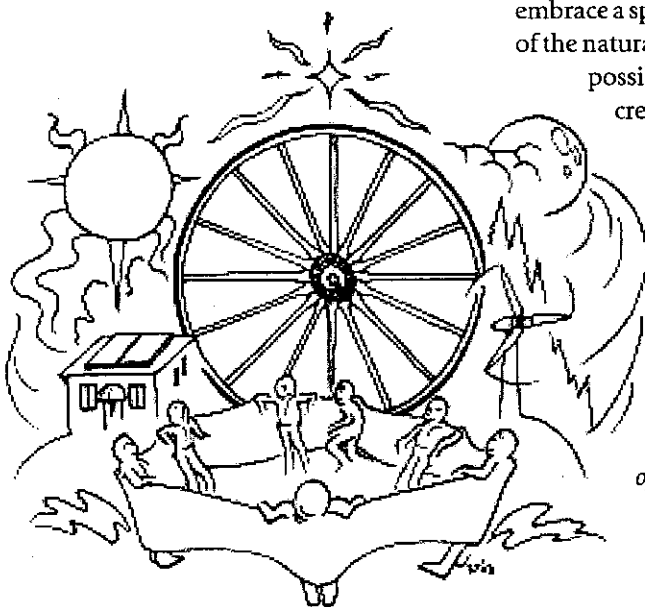
Friday evening and dusk falls on Paradise Lake. From the windows of the dining hall a steady stream of headlights can be seen rolling over the grass field before fading to dark. Minutes later, drivers and passengers burst through the doors of the hall, shake off the inclement weather and smile brightly at the warmth of the room. Familiar faces are spotted, handshakes and hugs are exchanged and cheerful chatter fills the air. A feeling of "good to be back" is apparent, or, for first-time attendees like me, a feeling of "good to be here." The annual COEO conference begins. Over the next two days, an inspiring exchange of knowledge, skills, ideas and experience takes place. And a great deal of fun is had. Outdoor education is examined "Through the Looking Glass," with change and adaptation at the forefront of discussion. Talented and knowledgeable professionals share their expertise and enthusiasm. Crafts are created. Songs are sung. Frisbees are thrown.

Stories are told. A concentrated cocktail of life, learning and growth is consumed.

Sunday morning and the sun rises on Paradise Lake. Happy, sleepy, drizzle-kissed faces arrive for breakfast. The Annual General Meeting comes to order. One executive steps down (contributions are celebrated), and a new executive steps up (commitment and enthusiasm are welcomed). We reflect on personal and professional growth and look forward with hope to the year ahead. We join in one last round of enlightening workshops, in a meal and in song before parting ways.

We are educators. We believe in the outdoors as an exceptional medium for learning and growth. We are passionate about our field and dedicated to nurturing young minds. Our roots grow down. The COEO conference provides us with an opportunity to immerse ourselves in the company of like-minded, though all delightfully unique individuals; to embrace a spirit of learning and appreciation of the natural world; and to revel in a sense of possibility. An annual rejuvenation of creativity and passion, a chance to rekindle old friendships and spark new ones, an opportunity to delight in the outdoors — the annual COEO conference is a truly inspiring experience.

Heather Bates is Camp Director at Tim Horton Onondaga Farms and a firm believer in the spirit of outdoor education.



Plunging into the COEO Waters

by Nils Vikander

In an increasingly acronymic world, how does COEO fare? Well, I thought, it is just so nice. Say it, and your face expresses a smile sandwiched by two kisses. What could be better than that?! Not at all like KGB, for example, I ruminate as I roll toward the yearly celebration of Ontario's outdoor educators. Is COEO as wonderful as my face makes it out to be? I try adding a sound, and out flows a longing birdcall. How fitting. Was this conscious, or did it merely happen this way?, I speculate as rain and darkness fall.

I follow uncertain taillights and find myself in Paradise (quite surprisingly actually, since as a neophyte my navigation skills are suspect). Paradise appears a dark place, but I relish the challenges of night orienteering and find my way to the inviting glow of outdoor fellowship. Despite my lateness, food is amply served and registration is quick and friendly. Groups — nay droves — of people are animatedly passionate. They thrive in each other's company. Yes, the sounds and sights of COEO are no accident. And so it goes and flows in our days together. The inclusiveness of this grouping of distinctive individuals is a great strength and should be gently cultivated, like a flower. I know nobody here, the best of all possible situations — a door to knowing the unknown. And I was included.

But, how was it really? I mean, the concrete nitty-gritty? The diversity was exceptional. It mirrored the sometimes painful existential self-examination undertaken. Yes, this was the very theme of the Gathering. The wisdom of Bert Horwood guided us in the process. Much was accomplished, but much remains to be done. I would like to see an individualized component as a point of departure prior to group work on such a critical issue; this is my experience from Scandinavia, where it works exceptionally well. The diversity expressed in the "Through the Looking Glass" process is

both a strength and a burden, but I have a nagging feeling that a clearer profile of COEO might sharpen its impact on society by better being able to cut through the "noise" of the modern marketplace (for that is what we have become, is it not?).

Ah, the agonies of freedom of choice! As for all participants, I could only sample the conference program. But I was surely pleased. Callum McKee's guiding of the Centre's structures was an exercise in virtuosity. Even sophisticated questions on detail never disturbed this encyclopedia of a man! As one who has committed much psychology in his day, I confess approaching Jessie Steinberg's Personal Development session with some skepticism. This, however, vaporized as she led us through a deeply emotional journey into self and others. Surely this was a window to better lead those we work with into an immersion in nature?

Other reflections? The food was wonderful, abundant and close to nature. And that diploma: the most soothingly captivating I have seen in decades of conferencing. Of course, a photo contest/exhibition should be held on an occasion like this, and it was. The vistas it opened were an inspiration. The auction was a special chapter: wildly entertaining, but also with an appropriate serious undertone. It was remarkable to see that spirited competition could harmonize so well with good nature and camaraderie. I left with a kaleidoscope of vivid memories, and with the conviction that COEO has an important place in society. I hope to contribute to its future as one of key importance also in the eyes of a population whose well-being can only be assured through a deeper measure of nature in everyday life.

Nils Vikander works in the Department of Physical Education and Kinesiology at Brock University.

More Conference Reflections

by Kate Humphrys

This October I found myself at my third COEO conference, "Through the Looking Glass." Over the year prior to the conference I had begun to realize the sorts of challenges that COEO and outdoor education in general currently face. Just over a year of teaching had opened my eyes to all the little things that make outdoor education so valuable, as well as to some of the challenges in providing such outdoor experiences to all of Ontario's youth. I was excited to see what the conference would hold, and what sorts of ideas would be generated from such a passionate group that could help "mutate" the face of outdoor education.

I was not disappointed. The conference was bursting with ideas, and the plenary session on Saturday afternoon brought to light many exciting, and challenging points. I was so encouraged that I chose to attend the Sunday morning follow-up session, hoping that some of the ideas that were generated could be organized into a plan for action. This session took the form of an "open space technology" meeting; this format allowed everyone to discuss their areas of passion in small groups. Topics addressed included forming new relationships with the provincial government, COEO's name and organizational goals, methods of connecting with the classroom teacher, and how to invite more members into the COEO community. Throughout the discussion, I discovered many other beginning educators who had been strongly influenced by COEO. I began to wonder how COEO could further promote outdoor education to beginning professionals — those currently teaching in classrooms, or outdoor settings, as well as those in various post-secondary programs.

I believe that COEO has the potential to provide increased support and inspiration to beginning educators. COEO could become a

more active network where the wisdom of long-time members and opportunities to meet other beginning educators in the field lend support in an era of increased strife. A greater number of new teachers in COEO's membership would also mean that COEO (and outdoor education in general) would benefit from the energy and efforts of this enthusiastic group of individuals.

So how do we encourage such involvement? I don't claim to have the absolute answer, but I do have two suggestions:

First, COEO needs to make a more deliberate attempt to increase its visibility and accessibility to new teachers and students completing Education or other degrees in the field. Most beginning educators at the 2003 conference indicated to me that they were introduced to COEO by a colleague or professor. Clearly such personal references will always form the cornerstones of COEO's membership. However, personal references must be further supplemented with other initiatives like increased liaison with post-secondary institutions. COEO already has excellent relationships with several outdoor-based programs, but there exist many other schools and programs that are not as well represented at conferences or other COEO events. Simply increasing the information we provide to students and schools about such events, and ensuring that the Web site is kept current would help make COEO more visible to beginning educators. Also, it would be nice to see COEO co-ordinate more local workshop-style sessions, which would attract classroom teachers of all levels of experience, as well as students who are looking to see what COEO is all about before attending a full conference.

continued on page 31

Through The Looking Glass: A Think Tank Report

by Bert Horwood

The room had five groups, each huddled around flip chart paper. A sixth group had moved out of the room into the adjacent passageway. The talk was eager and impassioned. At intervals the leader of this event, billed as a "think tank," announced that it was time to reconfigure the groups. Slowly two or three people would leave their group and move to the next one. Others stayed behind. As each new group formed, those who stayed behind described the work that had been already done to develop an evolutionary scenario for radically changed "outdoor education." After two hours, six divergent sets of thoughts from 27 people were ready to be presented to the large (80-90 people) plenary session that followed.

I had the duty and pleasure of being task master (tank driver?) for this workshop. We began with a set of assumptions and metaphors and ended with a set of ideas which, if nothing else, proved to be highly stimulating to the rest of the conference. The workshop opened the way for participants to express what many had been thinking but had not yet heard clearly stated. We named our fears and our dreams.

In this summary I'll briefly outline the working assumptions (which at least one person called "harsh") and the operational metaphor that guided the workshop. I'll also summarize some of the suggestions, including comments from the plenary session. It will be impossible to include all of the imaginative and deep ideas that surfaced — they are too many and too complex — but they are in the minds of the participants and are now let loose in the world for selective processes to work on.

The evolution of outdoor education was a guiding metaphor once we had gone "through the looking glass" and accepted that the field is now distorted and uncertain, much like the images in curved mirrors. The process of evolution is trial and success. Success is determined by the survival of novel changes, variations or mutations. The intent of the think tank was to explore what mutations in outdoor education might look like in the hopes that they could, one day, be tested and tried.

In preparing the workshop I made important assumptions. One was that teaching concepts and knowledge about how the biosphere works do not motivate people to live responsibly. I claimed that people act from how they feel, not from what they know. The wellspring of action is emotion, not knowledge. Kahlil Gibran, in *The Prophet*, said that emotion is our sail and knowledge is our rudder. For education to influence choices people make about the Earth, their emotions must be touched. We must give them sails as well as rudders.

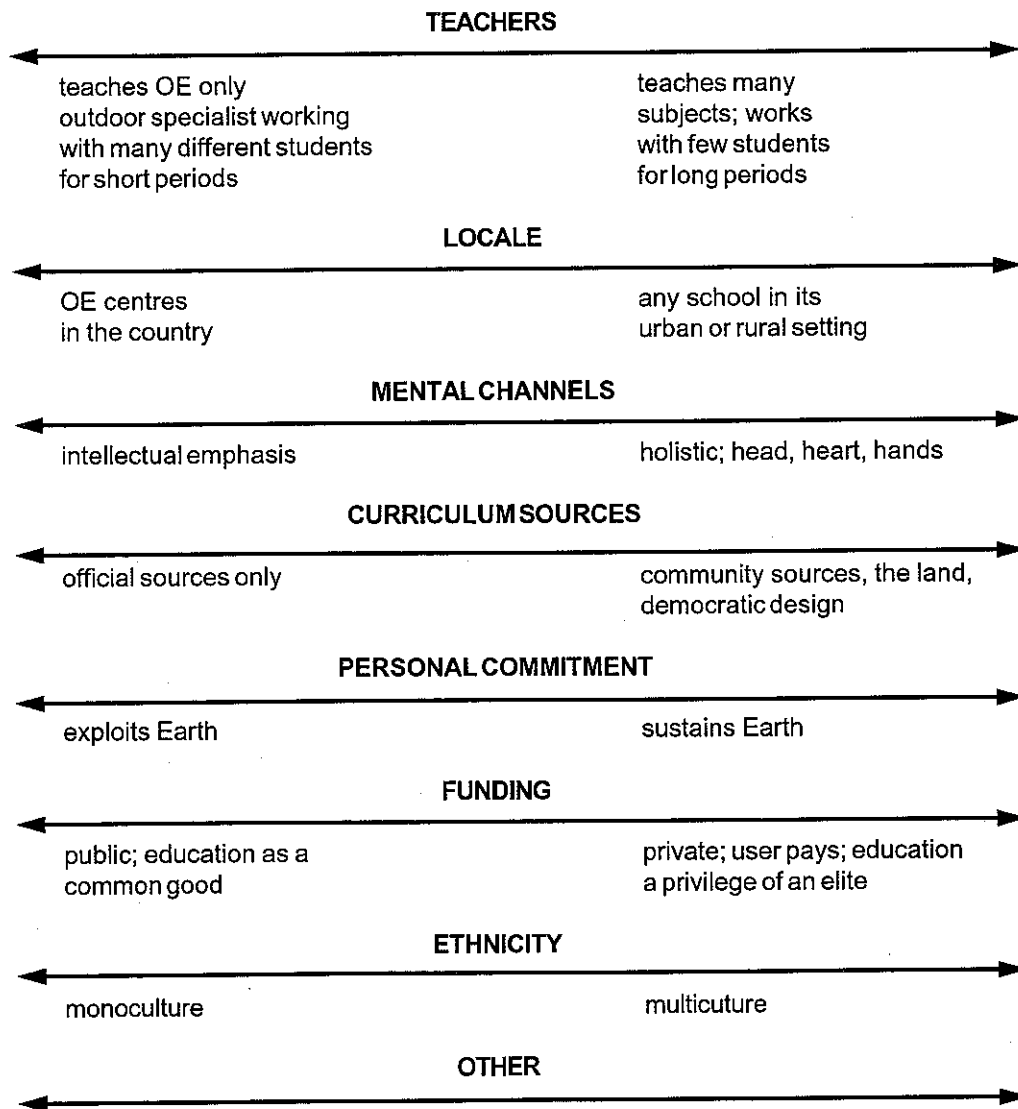
I also assumed that the weight of evidence points to the failure of outdoor education as we know it to make a difference in how people act toward the environment. The many hundreds of thousands of Ontario students taught in various outdoor education programs over the past 40 years, now grown to maturity, not only do not make lifestyle choices to favour the Earth, they also do not care enough about their outdoor education experiences to retain many of the centres in which they were taught. What we have tried has failed. It makes sense, then, to try something else — several somethings else.

Not everyone accepts the evaluation just stated. We did not discuss it (that's a topic for another workshop, maybe), but I did insist that it be accepted as the basis for our think tank because, if what we have been doing is making a difference and our graduates are making Earth-friendly choices, it would be crazy to look for changes.

To imagine new educational forms, to encourage teaching beyond our edges (Bob Henderson, *Pathways* 15:3, 2003), I chose a set of factors that are influential in shaping what we call outdoor education (see Figure 1). I pictured each factor as a channel along which extreme differences could be placed. These look like polarities, but, in order to

Figure 1: A Set of Channels that Influence Outdoor Education

The axes are drawn beyond the labelled poles to encourage readers to think beyond their normal limits. What would our practice and programs look like if located at one or more of these extremes?



move to and beyond the edges of each channel, I drew the arrows to extend beyond the descriptive text. The challenge for participants was to picture how taking an extreme position on one or more channels would change how outdoor education would be practised.

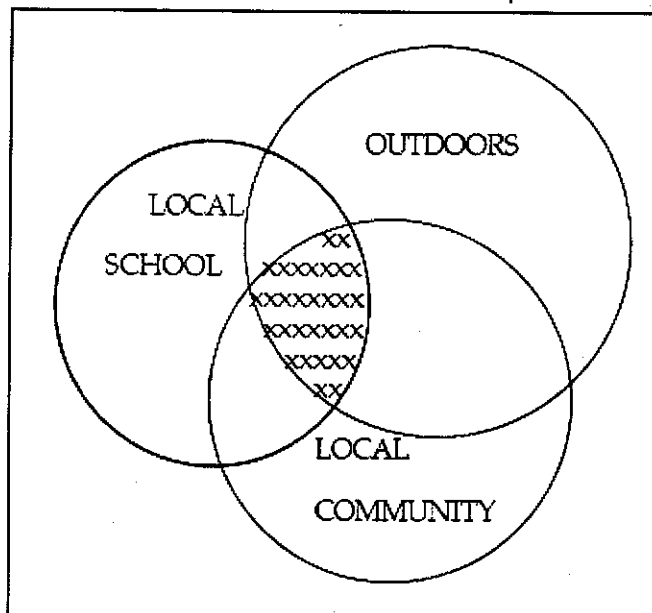
The participants set to work to invent imaginary scenarios of how education would look when thinking had gone beyond these normal limits. That is what the groups described above were struggling to do. After about an hour and three quarters of group work, having grappled with complex issues through impassioned talk, participants were ready to share with one another.

It is impossible to describe the richness and diversity of the outcome of the think tank. It is enough that it was highly stimulating and supported a great deal of further conversation and searching. We were ready to consider change. I'll describe a few highlights and also include some of the reactions of the larger

audience to the short reports from the think tank. Offering these descriptions is dangerous, because what I leave out may be of great importance. My goal here is to give readers who were not there a sample of the flavours and tones of the event.

Several scenarios emphasized education in the early years; making wise environmental choices must be part of every young child's experience. Other images were centred in secondary school and still others spilled over into the larger community, including the corporate world. One person said that every MBA program should express environmental values. This idea was promoted in connection with the "triple bottom line," which shareholders should insist their companies use. The triple bottom line describes the company's success financially, socially and environmentally. Some scenarios proposed alliances ranging from corporate and government partners to community coalitions of service clubs, schools and churches, for example (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: A diagram using a proposed interlapping of social structures to show a desirable situation for innovative education. The x's mark the spot.



Several people insisted that, whatever target groups are chosen, change must begin in our own backyards. People recognized that we cannot expect others to reduce their ecological footprints unless we show the way ourselves. Others said that retrofitting schools and greening schoolyards with broad community engagement were vital first steps. One group presented an image of the best education happening at the nexus of three interconnecting circles.

The think tank groups tended to emphasize coherence of content and values in the educational scenarios they developed. Hit-and-miss education was absent. So was occasional, casual instruction in Earth care. Some groups started with general principles and moved to practical considerations; others worked in the opposite direction, demonstrating that theory and practice have a functional dialogue, and that neither necessarily precedes the other.

Two ideas particularly appealed to me. One involved play with the letters ILC, which originally stood for "intentional learning community," as a name for a scenario. People played variations on the letter "i," naming learning communities that were inspirational, inventional and integrated. These serve as provocative organizers for a transformed and renamed outdoor education.

The other idea that appealed to me passed largely unnoticed. It's not new, but its application was. The idea is that a rite of passage is an excellent organizing ideal for a society that requires certain behaviours from its members. An example of a social and legal rite of passage in our society is the driver's license. Suppose that no one could get any government certificate (for example, a social insurance number, passport, health card, inclusion on a voter's list) until one had proven one's competence as an Earth-friendly consumer.

The more outrageous ideas provoked one participant in the plenary session (no doubt expressing the feeling of others) to dismiss them as "too idealistic and not realistic." Absolutely true. The means of evolution is idealism. If dinosaurs could think how they might change, they could hardly find small feathered birds to be a very realistic direction to go. I keep thinking of Ursula Franklin's wise statement that it's time for idealism to thrive. As she puts it, look at all the trouble the practical realists have got us into.

The plenary session also heard that some of the think tank ideas were already in practice, although not necessarily widely spread. This is as it should be in an evolving field. Change is in the wind. Individuals make and seize opportunities for innovative practice. At this stage in the history of outdoor education it would be good for a thousand variations and innovations to bloom. They are the stuff out of which evolution will proceed. The strange uncomfortable images of the looking glass world will become clear and real.

Reading at the Edges

Bateson, G. (1979). *Mind and Nature, A Necessary Unity*. New York: E.P. Dutton.
(For the ultimate challenge in being part of the world.)

Lieberman, Hoody. Environment as an Integrating Concept. In: Williams, B. (1996). *Closing the Achievement Gap* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
(For getting beyond the limits of the term "outdoor education.")

Coperthwaite, W. (2003). *A Handmade Life: In Search of Simplicity*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green.
(For democratic design and great ideas on education that promote life now and later.)

McIntosh, A. (2001). *Soil and Soul: People versus Corporate Power*. London: Arum Press.
(For ideas on recovering right relations with the Earth.)

Devereux, P. (1996). *Revisioning the Earth: A Guide to Opening the Healing Channels between Mind and Nature*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
(For tilting your world view and reconnecting with place.)

Bert Horwood is a retired teacher who doesn't have sense enough to quit.

Making the Group Experience Whole!

by Barb Weeden (COEO Conference 2003 — session leader)

At the recent COEO Conference, I facilitated a two hour session on group development. For some, the concept of building a community with their class or staff team was new and for others it was a chance to reinforce "the good" they were doing! We played some names games, cooperative games, trust activities, initiative tasks and experimented with some new debriefing tools. It was evident that new games and ideas were needed and appreciated so I thought I'd share my session with the COEO community.

As a Manager of an Outdoor Centre and Director of an Outdoor Adventure Day Camp, I have the pleasure of building staff teams each year. I believe it is essential to make the time to create a community no matter what the size, age or ability you are working with. I believe that my commitment to staff in development has enabled me to retain 70 per cent of my staff each year, with up to 12 seasonal staff and over 80 staff members in the summer.

I believe that helping people get to know each other before getting down to business is the key ingredient in successful group development. There is a natural progression or "experiential learning cycle" that can truly help you make a difference! For me, it all starts with having fun...being silly, breaking down the barriers that might exist and then discovering the similarities and differences amongst the group members. It seems like common sense but I am discovering that lots of leaders are skipping this key component.

Working through a trust progression and then discussing acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours to create your group norms will help build a stronger sense of belonging. Then you will want to work through a series of problem solving tasks to challenge the group process. It is crucial to recognize what each individual brings to the team and how those qualities affect the dynamics of the group. By committing to community development you ultimately have the ability to make people feel better about themselves! Individuals are more motivated and committed when they know you really care about them! Celebrate small successes and show them they are appreciated.

Following is a potpourri of group development games and activities:

Name Games

- Name and Action — Have group repeat each persons name and their action.
- Make a Circle — From A to Z by first names.
- Pass a Hoop — Join hands, put a hoop between one set and pass hoop around circle. Each person must continue talking about themselves until they've passed hoop to next person.
- Wanted Posters — Using instamatic camera, take every group member's picture. Tape on poster they have already filled out answers to (i.e. Hometown, last seen____, last wearing____, wanted for____ and post them around the room).
- Dog Tags/Billboards — Have a number of questions for people to answer. Hang around their necks or post them (i.e. name, place of birth, number of siblings, etc.).
- Group Posters — Painted hands or collages cutting out pictures and/or words to best describe themselves.

Similarities and Differences

- Four Corners — In each corner have a different picture hanging. Have individuals go to picture which they connect with. In small groups talk about what had drawn them there.
- Four Quadrants — Four people around flip chart paper. Put names in each corner. Have them try to find their similarities (which they write in the middle of the paper) and they write their own differences by their name.
- Quadrant cards — Using small recipe card have participants split card into quadrants. In one quad write their favourite movie, coolest thing they did this summer, favourite possession, one place they'd like to travel, etc. Mingle and share your card with other people.
- Lifelines — Using natural objects on the ground, find some to best represent major happenings in your life from birth to now. Make a line on the ground. Share with another person.

Cooperative Fun

Try lots of new games — leave out competition and include everyone all the time.

- **Chuck the chicken** — Split your group into two teams. Group A "chucks the chicken" as far as they can, then makes a circle and designates one person to run around counting the number of times before they other group yells "chuck the chicken." Meanwhile, once group A has chucked the chicken, group B runs to retrieve it. The first person to pick it up starts a line, then the chicken gets passed over and under the entire group. When the chicken reaches the end of the line, group B yells "chuck the chicken" and the last person throws it as far as they can. Now team A must retrieve chicken, form a line, etc. while team B is making a circle and having someone run around it counting the number of times around! It's a riot!
- **Snap Tag** — Partner up, get the rhythm going snapping your fingers "snap, snap," now take a giant step in slow motion. Every time you snap, you step. Set your boundaries, split the partners up and now play partner snap tag. Once you touch your partner, they do a 360 degree turn and then they try to touch you back. Moving only on the beat and in slow motion!

Trust (start with partners, progress to small groups)

- **Mirror Image** — Partners mirror each others movements.
- **Toe-to-Toe** — Hold hands, sit down/stand back up (graduate to 4s, 6s, 8s, etc.).
- **Back-to-Back** (graduate to 4s, 6s, 8s, etc.).
- **Human Spring** — Leaning in towards partner, slowly moving back.
- **Partner Trust Lean**
- **Partner Challenge Walk or Mine Field** — One person blindfolded.
- **Wind in the Willow** — One person gently passed around centre of small group circle with eyes closed.
- **Raccoon Circles** — Trust lean, sit/stand, yurt circle.

Problem Solve

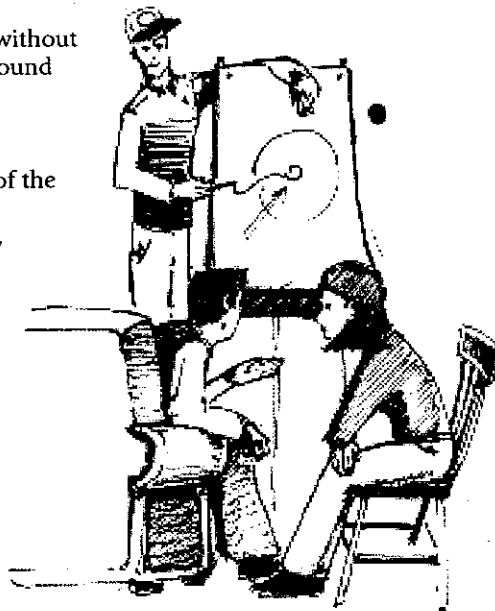
Try some initiative tasks to challenge the group and get them working together as a team.

- **Tarp Flip Over/Magic Carpet** — Have entire group stand on a magic carpet. Must flip magic carpet over to go other direction, and have whole group

standing on other side without anyone touching the ground around them.

Closing the Experience

- **Castles** — In each part of the castle write a different memory (i.e., new skill, new friend, etc.).
- **Whiffs** — Create an environmental mocktail and celebrate with a cheers (i.e., pina-colada).
- **Give away bracelets, beads or pouches** — Have each staff person present to someone else.
- **Warm Fuzzy Folders** — Have group create folder and then each member can submit a nice note.
- **Closing ceremony with slide show or video** reflecting the experience.



Debriefing Tools

It is important to talk about the process. Often it is difficult to get individuals to talk and express their feelings. Here are some new ways of debriefing an experience which I have found to be effective.

- **Feelings Cards** — Lay out a number of words or coloured pictures, which are on cards and laminated, on the floor or ground. Words can be — scared, frustrated, relieved, happy, successful, etc. Pictures can be anything. Have individuals pick up a card that best represents how they are feeling and then have them hand it back to you. Mix the cards up and lay them back on the floor for people to look at. Talk about the different feelings people have expressed
- **Cube Toss** — A cube is tossed into the circle and a different question is written on each side. Let participants respond to the various questions that arise.

Barb Weeden is the Manager of the Outdoor Centre and Director of the King Day Camp at Seneca College in King City, Ontario. Barb facilitates group development programs for elementary and secondary school students as well as various academic and corporate groups.

YMCA Outdoor Centre

The YMCA Outdoor Centre is a dynamic learning and reaction centre for children and youth of all ages — learning made fun while exploring environmental values and demonstrating new possibilities.

The Site

The YMCA Outdoor Centre is located at Paradise Lake in St. Clements, just 15 minutes from Kitchener-Waterloo. The site comprises 77 sprawling acres of land — a wonderful natural setting for education, exploration and adventure; grassy meadows for sports and land games; hiking trails throughout the forest; wetland ponds; a pine plantation; a natural amphitheatre for campfires; and a boardwalk along the lakeshore. The intent of the YMCA Outdoor Centre is to create a centre where the whole site — buildings and surroundings — explores environmental values without compromising convenience or comfort.

The Solarium

Unique in design, construction and function, the solarium has greenhouse walls that reach toward the sky to fill the building with passive solar heat in the winter. An innovative ventilator design draws cooler air from the Earth to keep the building fresh in the summer. The greenhouse is also home to a "Living Machine" — a natural ecosystem that cleans waste water from the washrooms with the help of living organisms (plants, fish and bacteria).

The Burrows

Dug into the north side of the hill, surrounded by earth, the Burrows comes by its name honestly. Visitors who stay in this residence benefit from a natural form of climate control as the Earth effortlessly keeps the unit cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. The Burrows has a large common area where visitors enjoy the view of a marsh rich with wildlife while being warmed by the radiant heat of a masonry fireplace.

Environmental Education Programs

At the YMCA Outdoor Centre, environmental education is part of the living experience.

Students see new technology in action as they live, play and work in buildings that display alternate means of construction, waste management and heating. During their stay at the YMCA Outdoor Centre, students realize how much in terms of energy and materials we consume and that decreasing consumption doesn't have to compromise comfort.

Activities take place in numerous natural areas of the site, including a Class 1 wetland, a large wooded forest, sprawling meadows and a lakeshore boardwalk.

Earthkeepers

We also offer Earthkeepers, a program for Grade 4 to 6 students, which teaches basic ecological concepts and encourages participants to examine their personal relationship with the Earth.

Leadership and Communication Programs

YMCA Outdoor Centre leadership and communication programs explore how groups develop and interact. During their stay, students practise decision-making and communication skills and investigate the various roles taken by members of a group.

The program can be designed for any grade level and includes co-operative games, initiative tasks, low and high ropes course elements and activities on the climbing wall. In addition, students can take a leadership role by helping to plan evening programs.

Outdoor Recreation

The YMCA Outdoor Centre offers a wide variety of outdoor recreation programs. Depending on your learning goals and the interests of your students, our staff can provide structured instruction or more casual recreation periods.

YMCA Outdoor Centre

3738 Hessen Strasse, RR#1
St. Clements, Ontario N0B 2M0
Telephone: 519-699-5100
Fax: 519-699-5160
E-mail: kw_camps@ymca.ca

Programs and Web Links (where available)

Last updated September 29, 2003

Compiled by Mike Elrick and Patti Huber

Ontario

- Bronte Creek Project, Halton District School Board (Hamilton) www.brontecreekproject.org
- Outdoor Environmental Education Package, A.Y. Jackson S.S. (Kanata)
- Adventure, Banting Memorial Secondary School (Alliston)
- Geostudies, Barrie North Collegiate (Barrie) www.earthadrenalin.com/geostudies.htm
- Environmental Studies Project, Carlton Place High School (Carlton Place)
- Community Environmental Leadership Program (CELP)
 - Centennial High School (Guelph)
 - Paris District High School (Paris) www.edu.uwo.ca/technology/comprehensive.pdf
 - Dunnville Secondary School (Dunnville)
- Environmental Studies Program, Grey Highlands Secondary School (Flesherton)
- Natural Bridges, Hastings and Prince Edward School Board Education Centre (Belleville) www.hpedsb.on.ca/ec/est/sec/courses/bridges/program.html
 - Ecobound, Bayside Secondary School
 - Lifelines, Centennial Secondary School
 - Environmental Training and Partnerships, Centre Hastings High School
 - Environmental Leadership Program, Halliburton Highland High School
 - Natural Connections, Moira Secondary School
 - Leadership in Ecotourism, North Addington Education Centre
 - REAL, LIFE, Prince Edward Collegiate Institute
 - Environmental Technology, Quinte Secondary School
 - Outer Limits, Trenton High School
 - Northern Outdoor Studies, North Hastings High School (Bancroft)
- Outdoor Education Program, Kenjegin Teg Educational Institute ('Chigeeng)
- Geoventure; Roots to Routes, Moira Secondary School (Belleville) www.hpedsb.on.ca/ec/school_profiles/moira_profile_sep03.pdf
- Windsong, Opeongo High School (Douglas)

- TAMARACK, Deep River Secondary School (Deep River) www.tamarackprogram.com/infocentre/infocentre.htm
- Beyond the Walls, Resurrection Catholic Secondary School (Kitchener)
- Enviroworks, Limestone District School Board (Kingston) www.caledoninst.org/9415942x.htm
- Terra, Timiskaming Secondary School (Cobalt)
- Integrated Semester Program, Outward Bound Canada, Private School (Burk's Falls) www.outwardbound.ca/results.asp?Course RID=37

Saskatchewan

- Outdoor School, Marion Graham Collegiate (Saskatoon)
- TREK School, Balfour Secondary School (Regina)
- Adventures in Learning and Leadership, Riffel High School (Regina) all.webrefs.com
- Outdoor School, Carlton Comprehensive High School (Prince Albert)

British Columbia

- Earthquest, Vernon School District www.earthquest.ca
- Trek Programme, Vancouver School Board www.vsb.bc.ca/programs/apfe/dlestrekw.htm
- Environmental Awareness Program (EAP), Mount Baker Secondary School (Cranbrook) www.mbakerm.com/newsletters/0301.pdf

Yukon

- Experiential Science, Wood Street (Whitehorse) www.taiga.net/yourYukon/coll 16.html
- Achievement, Challenge, Environment, Service (ACES), Wood Street School (Whitehorse) www.yesnet.yk.ca/schools/woodst/aces/aces_application.pdf

Mike Elrick and Patti Huber led a Friday afternoon pre-conference workshop on integrated curriculum programs.

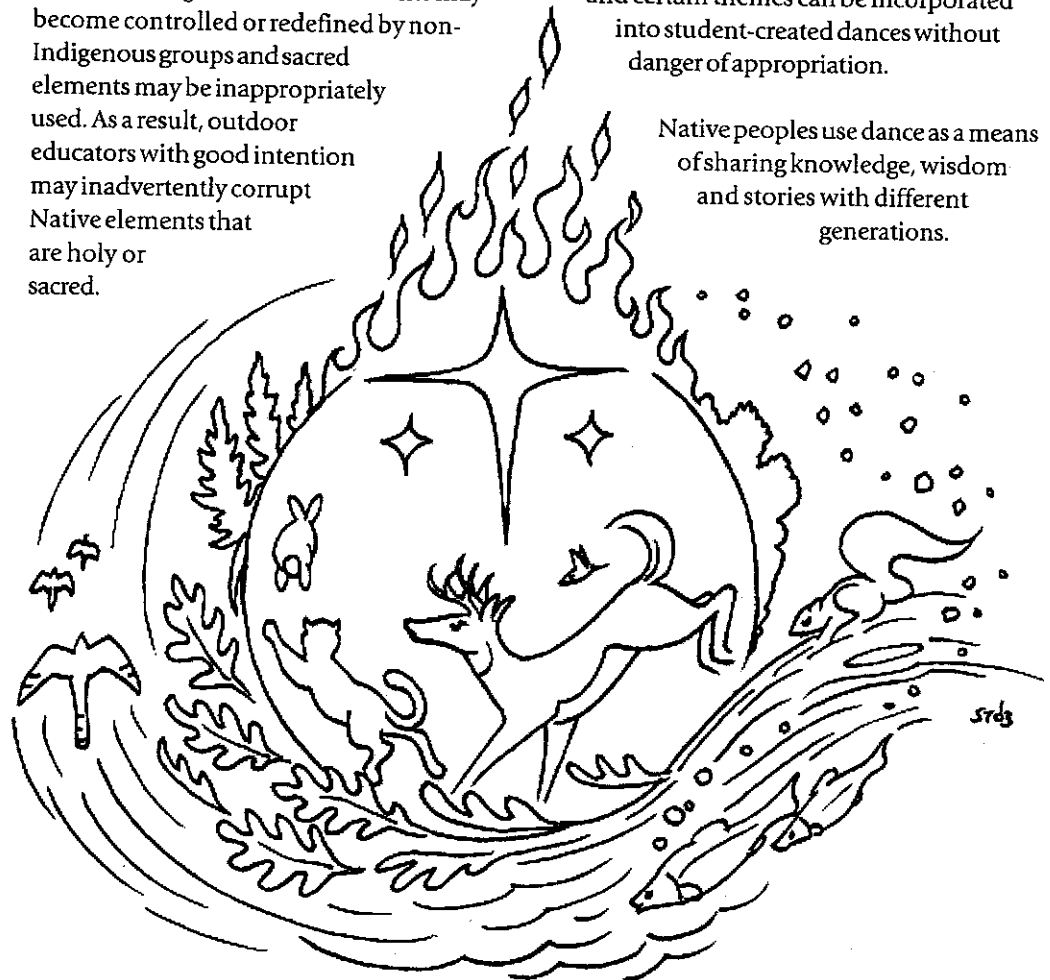
Earth Dances: An Educational Activity Based on Native Dance

by Anne-Marie Cayer

Emphasizing the importance of human-Earth connections and sharing ideas about the history of Earth processes are common goals of outdoor educators. The artwork, mythology and dances of Native Canadian communities reflect these concepts uniquely and beautifully. It is no surprise then that outdoor educators have a long history of adopting Native Canadian cultural elements into their programs. Unfortunately, when elements are appropriated from Native cultures without sanction, their ideas and practices are subject to certain dangers. Cultural elements may become controlled or redefined by non-Indigenous groups and sacred elements may be inappropriately used. As a result, outdoor educators with good intention may inadvertently corrupt Native elements that are holy or sacred.

Native dances are an important aspect of most Native Canadians' history and community. Since these dances are often based on the ideas of human-Earth connections and Earth cycles, they are interesting and appealing for outdoor educators to use in their programs. However, since the teaching of Native dances by non-Natives may lead to appropriation issues, non-Native outdoor educators would be better off creating their own rituals or sacred practices. The history and significance of Native dances can be taught to students and certain themes can be incorporated into student-created dances without danger of appropriation.

Native peoples use dance as a means of sharing knowledge, wisdom and stories with different generations.



Dances are commonly performed during social gatherings or in particular ceremonial events. They are typically performed within a circle of observers or other performers. The circle is an important aspect of the performance, as it recognizes the equality among its members and a sharing of all the good and bad energy that each member brings. It also symbolizes a coming together of all Earthly and eternal forms that contribute to the shared cycle of life.

Typically, each dance event is initiated with an opening prayer, in which all those who are present can join. The prayer can be spoken or it can be a series of shared movements to music or song. It is a time for dancers and observers to open their minds and bodies to the lessons that can be revealed in dance and song. Native dances are usually danced to drum beats, voice and flutes. The rhythm of the songs symbolizes the universal rhythm of all life and it is a force that brings all life forms together.

Outdoor educators can teach students about the symbolism and significance of various aspects of Native dance as a model of human-Earth ritual. Students can then be encouraged to celebrate the art of dance and our interdependency with the Earth by participating in an Earth Dance activity. In small groups, students can be instructed to pick one or more animals, elements or earthly symbols that they value; they might be, for example, the bear, the fox, the sun, the wind. Students can then invent their own movements, sounds and group formations to symbolize whatever aspect of the Earth they wish to portray. Alternatively, the group may choose to retell a particular story or event with actions they create. After the

movements have been created, the groups can come together to form a large circle and share their movements with everyone. As each group demonstrates their movement(s), an ordered sequence of each group's actions will emerge and this sequence will become a shared group dance.

Once the students have had a chance to see all the movements in order, the entire dance can be performed as a group. Using recorded music, a drummer, or sounds created by the students, the dance can be performed several times consecutively so that the students feel comfortable with the movement pattern. Variations in speed and movement dynamics can add interest to the activity. Ideally, the dance should be performed continuously for several minutes to allow students to feel how the motions can become trance-like and meditative.

Leading students to create their own Earth Dance is a way for outdoor educators to appropriately teach about Native dance and incorporate some of the important characteristics of Native dance into an activity. The activity can be adapted for different group sizes, student ages, environments or time restrictions. It is a great way to celebrate the human-Earth connection and bring art to the outdoors.

Anne-Marie Cayer has studied outdoor recreation and enjoys planning hiking and biking pursuits. She has trained in ballet, jazz and contemporary dance for nearly 20 years. Learning about Native dance has enabled her to combine her interests in dance with her involvement in outdoor recreation.

Getting Goosed!: Activities to Appreciate a Special Canadian Bird

by Marlène Walsh

Introduction

I love Canada geese! They are everywhere: close at hand, easy to observe and hang out year-round in Southern Ontario. What a great teaching opportunity!

I get excited every time I drive by a golf course, a park or a farm field. If a national bird were to be proclaimed, I think the Canada goose should be it. But I was shocked to learn that not everyone shares my enthusiasm: I hear comments such as, "What a nuisance they are on the fairway," "Oooh, gross, goose droppings," and "They are vicious creatures." What does the future hold for these majestic birds with those attitudes? I think it is important that our society better understand the finer points of the Canada goose, its ecology and its management — including wetland conservation. To that end, here are two activities that will help you foster an appreciation of this very special bird.

Activity 1: Migration Headache

(Adapted from *Project WILD Activity Guide*)

Object

For the birds (students) to find suitable habitat at both the nesting and wintering ground and survive their migration.

Materials

Hula Hoops or Rubbermaid lids: one for every two students.

Procedure

1. Set up the playing area as outlined in the diagram below. The playing field should be 20 m x 15 m. Place the hoops or lids in the nesting and wintering habitat to represent wetlands. Start the game with one lid per four students at each end. Use pylons to create boundaries.
2. Explain to the students that they are birds (and so should act accordingly), and that they will migrate between the two areas at your signal. Tell them that the lids represent

"wetlands," and that each wetland provides suitable habitat for four water birds.

3. Explain that at the end of each journey the students must have one foot on a lid in order to survive (remember that each lid can support only four birds). If they have not found suitable habitat, they "die."
4. Explain to the students that many factors will limit the survival of populations of migrating birds, but that the primary threat to the survival of migratory water birds is the disappearance and degradation of their nesting and wintering wetlands.

Factors limiting survival

Wetland drainage
Drought

Pollution/contamination
Urban expansion

Conversion to farmland

Factors favouring survival

High rainfall

Restoration of habitat

Human action

5. Begin the activity with wetland space for each bird (student). Before each subsequent migration, stop the students and add or remove wetlands depending on the factors you choose to affect the state of the wetlands (e.g., a large wetland area being drained for agricultural purposes).
6. Explain that when students "die" (i.e., they do not get a space on a wetland), they become a migration threat. Brainstorm with the students various factors that might threaten migration: hunters, weather, predators, hydro lines etc. When the students become a "threat," they pick a spot in the migration field and can tag birds as they "fly" by. The "threats" must have one foot planted; they can only pivot as they try to tag the birds. If a bird is tagged by a "threat," it too becomes a "threat."
7. Start with all birds in the nesting habitat and begin the first migration.



Activity 2: Lessons from Geese

(Including information and activities from *The Resource Kit: Lesson Plans* and Milton Olson/Angeles Arrien)

Object

For students to better appreciate the Canada goose by discussing how some of its behaviours can teach us about leadership and community involvement.

Materials

Fact 1 — As each goose flaps its wings it creates an “uplift” for the birds that follow. By flying in a “V” formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

Lesson — People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are travelling on the thrust of one another.

Fact 2 — When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

Lesson — If we have as much sense as a goose, we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

Fact 3 — When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

Lesson — It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people depend on each other’s skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents or resources.

Fact 4 — The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Lesson — We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement, the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one’s heart or core values and encourage the heart and core of others) is the quality of honking we seek.

Fact 5 — When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.

Lesson — If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times, as well as when we are strong.

Procedure

1. Familiarize the students with the information in “Lessons from Geese” using your preferred method.
2. Lead a discussion with the students on how some Canada goose behaviours can teach us about leadership and community involvement.
3. In the schoolyard or gym, have the students arrange themselves into the V formation of a flock and “fly” around, maintaining the formation using only goose calls for communication. Have students role-play some of the goose behaviours described in the text above: for example, two geese following an injured one to the ground.
4. Use this activity to lead into other leadership topics and team-building activities, if that tickles your fancy.

Conclusion

These activities are two of many that interpret the ecology and management of Canada geese. See the following Web sites and resources for more information and activities. Meanwhile, look up to the skies and enjoy the flocks of Canada geese as they migrate to the south.

References

- Migration Headache. (2002). *Project WILD Activity Guide*. Council for Environmental Education. 237–241.
- The Resource Kit: Lesson Plans*. (1987). Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 13–6, 13–7.

More Information

- Canadian Wildlife Services — www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/hww-fap/order/order_e.cfm
- Ducks Unlimited Canada — www.ducks.ca/ohmic/english/special/gcngese.html
- Canadian Wildlife Federation — www.wildededucation.org.

Interested in training and certification in one of our WILD education programs? Join us for a lively, informative workshop and receive your *Project WILD Activity Guide*.

Marlene Walsh is an outdoor educator currently working at the Leslie M. Frost Natural Resources Centre as part of the Haliburton Highlands Outdoor Centres Internship Program.

Trent University: Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Native Studies

by Susan Wurtele

For over 20 years, the Frost Centre has provided a home for faculty, graduate students and research associates who share an interest in Canadian Studies and Native Studies. The centre, named in honour of Trent University's first chancellor, Leslie M. Frost, has expanded steadily from its beginnings in 1982 to its current comprehensive offerings, which include a research centre, an MA program in Canadian Studies and Native Studies and a PhD program in Canadian Studies, offered jointly with Carleton University. By bringing together faculty from across the university, the Frost Centre promotes and sustains postgraduate interdisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences related to Canadian Studies and Native Studies. Faculty from discipline-based and interdisciplinary programs, including Women's Studies, Politics, Native Studies, Environmental Resource Studies, English, Canadian Studies, History, Geography, Sociology and Cultural Studies, come together to advance the study of Canada.

In September of 2001, the Frost Centre, in conjunction with Carleton University, welcomed its inaugural PhD class. This PhD program represents the first fully integrated Canadian Studies doctorate to be offered in the country. Students work within one or more of the program's core themes: Culture, Literature and the Arts; Environment and Heritage; Policy, Economy and Society; Identities; and Women's Studies. This year's doctoral class is pursuing an impressive range of topics, including ecology and story; workers, retirement and the labour movement; art and technology; interpretation and ecological integrity in Canadian National Parks; and constructions of Canadian citizenship identity in history and literature. At the Master's level our students reflect a similarly diverse program, with research topics including traditional knowledge in Nunavut, the domestic policy implications of NAFTA and George Bernard Shaw's plays in Canada.

*Susan Wurtele, PhD
Acting Director, Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Native Studies*

Special Frost Centre Activities and Associations

The Trent University--Fleming College Trail Studies Unit

The Trail Studies Unit, established in 1992, recognizes the historic and current significance of trails and the need for studies relating to them. The unit provides a resource centre, conducts research, and offers courses, conferences and publications on trails. The resource centre, recognized by the Canadian Rails to Greenways network and the Ontario Trails Council, has an expanding collection

of over 1,000 documents on trails. Faculty and graduate students of the Frost Centre regularly contribute to the endeavours of the Trail Studies Unit.

Northern Studies

The Frost Centre serves as a focus for northern studies at Trent through its Visiting Chair in Northern Studies, its Northern Studies Committee and its administration of Northern Scientific Training grants.

Trent University Frost Report: Examples of Recent Master's Thesis Work, 2003

Back to the Basics: Student Achievement and Schoolyard Naturalization

by Michelle Simone

This thesis explores the relationship between student achievement and schoolyard naturalization in public elementary schools in a small Ontario city. It seeks to establish whether there is a relationship between student achievement as measured by scores on provincial standardized tests and the presence of natural areas in the schoolyard. Unlike previous research in this area, this thesis also examines whether the relationship remains when socio-economic background is controlled. The research reveals a positive relationship between schoolyard naturalization and student achievement, especially for Grade 3 students, and strong relationships between the socio-economic background of the school catchment area and both student achievement and schoolyard naturalization. The relationship between student achievement and schoolyard naturalization persists when socio-economic background is controlled, and there is an interaction: schoolyard naturalization appears to have a stronger effect on achievement for students from poorer neighbourhoods than for students from wealthier neighbourhoods. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings and suggestions for future research are developed.

Contemporary Indigenous Literatures: Oral Traditions

by Amy Chamberlin

Over the past 30 years, the field of studies in Native literature has grown significantly. Yet long before this renaissance, indigenous peoples were relying on print and other forms of literacy to transmit culture and knowledge. This thesis is about storytelling; it is about oral traditions that emerge in print, in general, and about indigenous story writing in particular. To argue that the two traditions, oral and print, are not exclusive but blend and influence one another, raises several questions: How are oral traditions embedded in print form? How do print languages re-create the relationships between and context for the storytellers and listeners? Further, to approach First Nations literatures respectfully also elicits critical questions: Which methodologies will be used to guide an analysis of indigenous literature? Is it possible for literary criticism to incorporate indigenous principles without re-colonizing the literature?

Many contemporary indigenous writers argue that through writing, oral traditions are evoked. It is this juxtaposition between oral and print traditions that this thesis emerges. By exploring both western and indigenous ideas about oral and print culture, I argue that it is possible to move beyond a space made disparate by difference, to a decolonized space where new relations may be envisioned.



Become a Friend of Lasting Outdoor Education!

by FLOE Staff

As this is being written in November 2003, the new provincial Liberal government is taking over, and as they do, outdoor/environmental education remains a critically endangered species in the province. Due to cuts in education funding in Ontario by the previous Conservative government, the two outdoor education centres owned by the Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) will no longer be assured financial support after the 2003–2004 school year.

Although this date has been pushed back numerous times, both the Bill Mason and MacSkimming outdoor education centres have repeatedly been slated for closure. It is time for a change — to ensure lasting outdoor education in the Ottawa area and across the province.

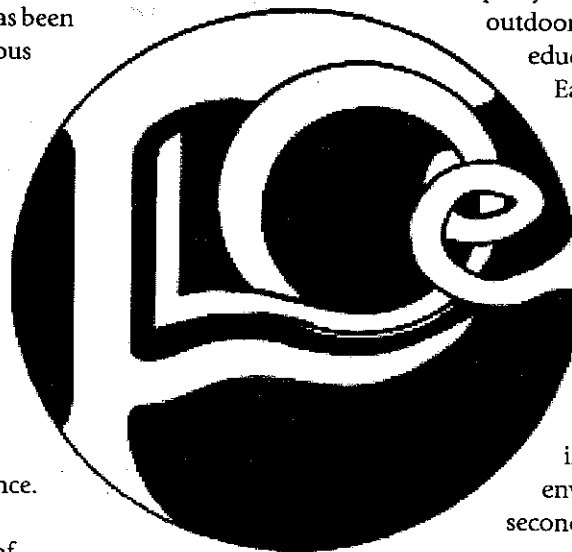
In 2002 a task force of approximately 25 people was set up within the OCDSB to recommend strategies for ensuring the centres would remain open and receive adequate funding. A small group of task force members have since banded together to create an organization to work in partnership with — but independently from — the school board. That group is Friends of Lasting Outdoor Education (FLOE).

FLOE is a small, nonprofit organization, incorporated in February of 2003 and based in Ottawa. It is devoted to saving the two outdoor education centres in the area and to promoting outdoor/environmental education

in all of its forms. FLOE is a dynamic grassroots group whose board of directors bring varying perspectives to the table: a former lawyer for the OCDSB committed to charitable endeavours, a school board trustee, a long-time outdoor enthusiast and educator, an environmental/development consultant and an author. FLOE also has a growing contingent of student volunteers from the elementary and secondary school levels who

are equally committed to saving outdoor and environmental education in Ottawa.

Each one feels passionately that outdoor and environmental education is integral to educating the whole child and believes the experiences students can gain in the natural environment are second to none.



After months of work by FLOE and others, we obtained a Human Resources Development Canada grant that enabled us to conduct a six-month search for funding to support the outdoor education centres. The hard fact is that grant applications were not successful. Stop-gap grants do not seem to be a sustainable way to fund outdoor education over the long term.

In recent months, FLOE has been involved in planning a study to research the way forward for outdoor education in the Ottawa area. Partners in the study include the OCDSB, the City of Ottawa, the YM-YWCA,

local conservation authorities and FLOE. The strengths of the steering committee of this comprehensive study are numerous, and members hope to be able to provide a concise report on how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the outdoor education centres in Ottawa, and how best to deliver outdoor/environmental education to all students in the region.

While FLOE's main focus is on raising funds for both the Bill Mason and MacSkimming outdoor education centres, it has become increasingly apparent that the long-term objective must be to campaign for outdoor/environmental education as part of the core funding formula in the provincial education budget. To this end, FLOE is working to build relationships with other groups. We have already received positive feedback from the Liberals, which could prove to be a move in the right direction. In April 2003, in a letter to a FLOE supporter, Dalton McGuinty wrote that he was concerned about the implications of the closure of the outdoor education centres in Ottawa and stated, "Rest assured I will continue to advocate to keep these centres open for all our students."

In Judith Boss's 1999 digest, *Outdoor Education and the Development of Civic Responsibility*, Boss argued, "For students to grow into fully participating citizens, they need to find their place in this web of community life, and understand both the benefits and responsibilities of being part of it. Outdoor education and experiential learning can develop such understandings in students, and set them on a path of strong participation and civic responsibility." The Liberals' *Excellence for All* education plan echoes this initiative, advocating "character



education ... [to] develop good, well rounded citizens."

FLOE is asking other groups and individuals to join us in the campaign to ensure that funds are specifically assigned for curriculum-based outdoor and environmental education experiences as a distinct part of the provincial education funding formula. Become a Friend of Lasting Outdoor Education. We encourage you to write to Premier Dalton McGuinty (dalton_mcguinty@ontarioliberal.com) and Minister of Education Gerard Kennedy (gerard_kennedy@ontarioliberal.com) to ask them to develop an education policy that recognizes, values, supports and funds outdoor/environmental education centres in Ontario.

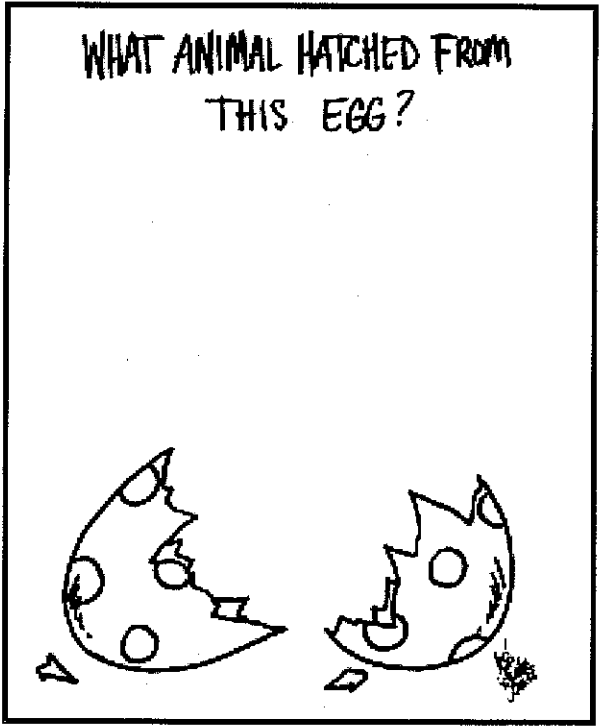
Outdoor/environmental education: Enabling people to know, understand and love the natural world and their place in it.

For more information, contact Socorro Kelly at socorro.kelly@sympatico.ca or write to Friends of Lasting Outdoor Education, P.O. Box 42010, RPO St. Laurent, Ottawa, Ontario, K1K4L8.

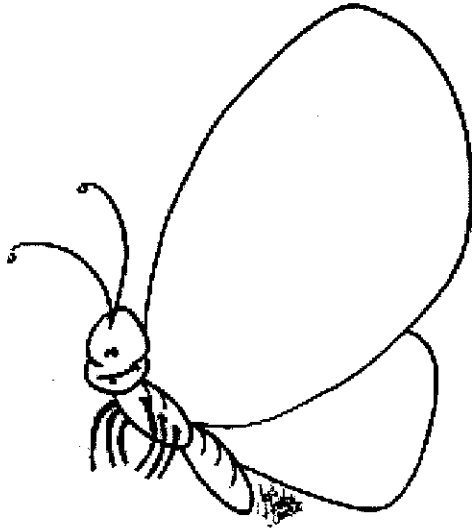
Finish the Picture

by Josh Gordon

Editor's Note: Josh Gordon has provided cartoon images for several issues of *Pathways*. Here we have used specific outdoor education-connected "fill in the blanks" from his recently published *Josh Gordon's Finish the Picture*. Contact Josh if you would like the complete collection.



DECORATE THIS BUTTERFLY'S WINGS



WHAT IS THIS BOY RUNNING FROM?
(HINT: THINK BIG!)



- THIS BOY IS FREEZING!
DRAW HIM A WARM FIRE



Drawing has always captured Josh Gordon's interest and as a child he spent many hours doodling. Since then, Josh has developed over fifty unique characters. He is a 16-year-old grade 12 student at Barton Secondary School in Hamilton where he continues to take various art courses. Some of Josh's artistic projects include promotional material for a private school, children's colouring books, seasonal greeting cards and illustrations for an international magazine. Josh's goal is to continue creating "fun stuff" that helps children to discover their imagination. Josh can be contacted at joshgordon@primus.ca.

A Review of *Teaching in the Field: Working with Students in the Outdoor Classroom*

(Edited by Hal Kimmel, University of Utah Press, 2003)

by Allison Carrier

Finally, a book I couldn't wait to put down and do something about! It's been a while since I have read such an inspired collection of articles from a group of educators genuinely dedicated to making their craft (and the theory behind it) seem not only practical, but also "do-able." An engaging read from start to finish, *Teaching in the Field* is not only valuable for those interested in outdoor education (OE), but also opens up possibilities for educators who wish to include OE experiences as part of their teaching practice, regardless of their particular curriculum focus. The second chapter is put together with a teacher audience in mind. Its practical appeal and uncomplicated presentation of concrete ideas and theoretical perspectives is passionate and engaging. Perhaps most important, it is meant for the classroom teacher.

Grounded in multiple perspectives, *Teaching in the Field* boasts a marvellous collection of ideas, anecdotes and activities from an inspired group of educators/storytellers whose professional expertise and experiences flower with passion and light up their readers with new ideas, insights and opportunities for making the outdoor learning experience meaningful. This collection is not simply about taking the classroom outdoors, it's about the outdoor classroom — a classroom that is not the sole possession of a few enviro-crazed teachers, but one that includes more than one type of approach to educating students from within and across a number of curriculum areas.

That said, Chapter 2 begins with an article by Katherine R. Chandler, "Can't See the Forest or the Trees: Finding Focus," which unpacks the dilemma of finding focus in the outdoor

classroom. Through the use of purposeful learning activities such as drawing techniques, the creation of "tree shrines" and focused/intentional walking, Chandler has found success in alleviating this problem. By guiding students through intentional learning experiences, she has found a way to curb the distractions of being outdoors and encourage greater focus among her students. In addition to teaching techniques, this article contains great drawings and examples of students' work.

In the following two articles, particular attention is paid to the creative writing and language arts curriculum, although the pedagogical approaches put forth are readily transferable to other programs and curriculum focuses. "Writing from the Watershed" by Laird Christensen uses plenty of examples of student work. As an educator interested in service learning, action education and environmental education, Christensen has created a course that has students "grow familiar with their own bioregion" by (re)visiting their local landscapes/community and gathering relevant stories for publication. In this particular article, the stories collected were meant to describe the life of the local watershed, now badly polluted. By having his students gather their own stories, his hope is to build critical dispositions within his students, encouraging rather than imposing certain predispositions toward environmental consciousness.

Christensen's article is followed by a piece by Terry Gifford, who also suggests some "how tos" when it comes to encouraging an eco-critical spirit in students. In his article "Teaching Environmental Values through Creative Writing with School Children,"

Gifford describes specific techniques for engaging students using different modes of writing (and later, debate) in relation to environmental issues. Through immersion and introspection, students are encouraged to act based on the values they learn during the process of creative writing.

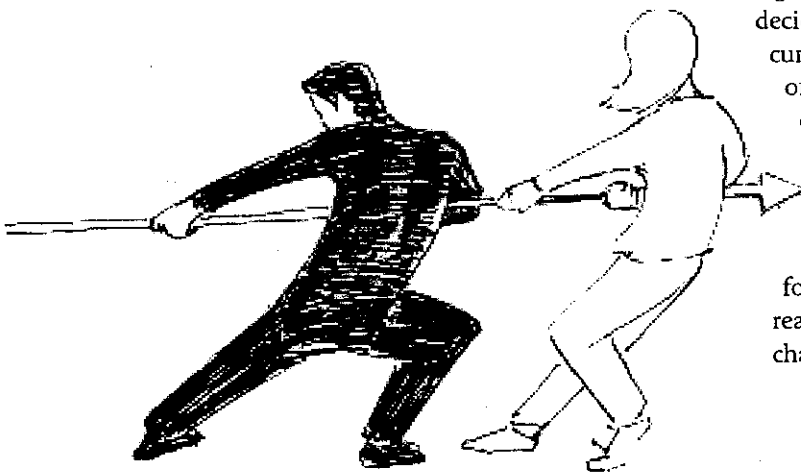
Stepping back from a specific focus on literature and processes of critical-creative writing, Bob Henderson and Liz Newbery have co-written "Going Out as a Way In," which describes the process of transformative learning in the urban outdoor classroom. Illustrated by many powerful examples of student writing, this article describes the learning goals and several outcomes of what the authors describe as the "near nature" field trip, a type of field trip where students "adventure" into the heart of the local urban centre. In a style reminiscent of a scavenger hunt, students are asked to "help out," ask questions, uncover stories and discover their urban surroundings and the people who live there. In doing so over the course of a day, many students end up learning about themselves. The goal of this urban adventure is to form a bond with the community, evoke advocacy and "cultivate critical thinking" by "disorienting students and [our] conventional notions of schooling, culture and self in terms that are more meaningful, just and sustainable." By immersion in experience, students may gain a

"recognition of privilege" and as a result "[learn] how to better dwell with [themselves], each other, and the earth."

Returning to earlier themes, "On the Path, Off the Trail: Teaching Nature Writing as the Practice of the Wild" by author and poet Fred Taylor describes his teaching practice as a "way of walking off the trail, leaving behind that which we know, to move into the unknown." In that unknown territory, Taylor distinguishes four disciplines or practices of writing that help him "venture out into the wild" with his students. These are "attentiveness, freedom to explore, receptivity and an openness to sharing," all of which he considers to be central to teaching creative writing. His article is loaded with positive examples of student work and includes a detailed description of how he encourages his students to discover these four paths.

The final article in this chapter also illustrates the desire to carve a new path when teaching students in the outdoor classroom. In "Road Trip: Self-Directed Field Work as a Learning Journey," Andrew Wingfield, a university professor, asks his students to "depart from familiar places, and old routines" by seeing the "road trip" as a chance to discover "liberation, new sights, new people and new experiences." His first-year composition class is given the task of going on an independent road trip as the basis of their major writing assignment. He describes

deciding on this particular curriculum design as a result of his experiences as an educator who "recogniz[ed] when things weren't working," and he reveals how he moved forward using that realization as a platform for changing his pedagogical





approach. Wingfield's assignment: take a "field trip" and write about it. It seems simple, but for Wingfield the learning outcomes have been amazing. By getting his students outside of the classroom and on the road, he has been able to help them generate concrete experiences in which learning is something they choose to do, not something that is imposed. By incorporating choice into the curriculum, Wingfield provides students with the opportunity to create meaningful connections with the world beyond the classroom and encourages them to take ownership of their learning. Wingfield suggests that the field trip promotes life-long learning in students by instilling a spirit of independence and encouraging the freedom to choose the paths that that learning may take.

From establishing focus in the outdoor classroom to structured engagement, from eco-critical practice to connecting with one's eco-psyche, this chapter flows beautifully from start to finish. Articles are focused and practical, while simultaneously grounded in theory. By making the outdoors the centerpiece of learning rather than a backdrop for the outdoor classroom, the featured authors share in uncovering an important lesson — one that

encourages educators to go beyond getting students outside, and beyond looking for that magical pedagogical shift that is assumed to take place with a simple change of scenery. This is no doubt an important lesson to learn when taking students out of doors and "into the field," and it is the kind of advice one would wish to hear before ever heading out of their classroom. With the latter in mind, *Teaching in the Field* is an excellent read, not only for those interested in affirming their own ideals and practices and/or for those who are interested in snagging some new ideas for their pedagogical knapsacks, but also for those interested in discovering a place to begin. Stories, handy tips, teaching techniques and a theoretical backdrop appear in each article, making theory practical and the practical meaningful as authors share their successes and failures in the field and in the classroom. It is an inspiring compilation and an engaging read. Both purposeful and practical, this treasury of tips and tales from the field — for the field — comes entirely recommended.

Allison Carrier is a graduate student at OISE Toronto and a new member of the Pathways Editorial Board.

Alpine Tower

by Lisa Caines

For an opportunity to improve confidence, trust, support and co-operation among your staff or team members, go to McMaster University and look up — way up. You'll see a 50-foot climbing structure complete with ladders, ropes and harnesses. It presents the challenges of rock-climbing and high-ropes course elements, and is designed to help groups set goals and solve problems.

Construction of McMaster's Alpine Tower — the first outdoor high-challenge leadership course of its kind in Canada — was completed last month on the northwest corner of the "10-acre" playing field at McMaster University in Hamilton. It officially opened for business in November 2003 with a grand opening ceremony and open climb.

"The Alpine Tower is a unique recreation and team-building tool, and it's exciting that McMaster has been the first location in Canada to move it across the border," says Jeff Sephton, operations co-ordinator of the Department of Athletics and Recreation's Achieving Leadership Through Integrating Teamwork, Unity, Dedication and Empowerment (ALTTITUDE) program.

With similar structures located in hundreds of locations throughout the United States, the tower uses the concept of "adventure learning," an industry Sephton says is still relatively young in Canada.

While the tower has the capability of providing the most demanding of physical challenges, participants can choose their level of difficulty. A wheelchair ramp that provides entry to the tower's base allows universal access for participants of all levels of fitness and mobility.

A total of 14 full- and part-time highly trained students will be certified to run the tower, which will host groups of various sizes for two- to eight-hour sessions.

"Our first priority is McMaster students, but other campus groups, youth groups and teams within the community are certainly welcome to book sessions on the tower," says Wayne Terryberry, who works in the Department of Athletics and Recreation.

The tower will be open year-round, and prices vary based on time and group requirements. Contact Wayne Terryberry, Department of Athletics and Recreation, McMaster University, at 905-525-9140 x23879.

Calling All COEO Members

If you would like to be part of an active COEO e-mail list, please send your current e-mail address to Grant Linney (glinney1@cogeco.ca) by January 10, 2004.

This list will be shared with all COEO members, but is intended for internal use only. Users are asked not to give this list to others outside the organization. COEO will also use it to send news of upcoming events and projects.

Another Environmental Connection: Join the Listserv of Environmental Education Ontario (EEON)

Take a small step to strengthen environmental and outdoor education in Ontario. Please join the EEON listserv. To do this, simply send a message to majordomo@icomm.ca with the following command in the body of your e-mail message: "subscribe eeonlist." Then consider encouraging one or two other Ontarians to do the same.

Why is this important?

When we created EEON more than three years ago, our overall goal was to strengthen environmental and outdoor education in Ontario. During this time, the EEON listserv has helped to improve province-wide communication among environmental/outdoor educators — both those who work in formal education and those who work in non-formal settings. Through the listserv, educators have learned about new learning resources, conferences and programs, while also participating in important discussions.

At present, there are about 200 educators on the list. In comparison, the "GEOEC"

list in Alberta has almost 1000 participants, in a province with only a fifth of the population of Ontario. The more Ontario educators who join the list, the more effective we will all be in our networking efforts. This is one of those instances in which bigger really is better!

Is it easy to "unsubscribe"?

Yes. If you are leaving Ontario or for any reason no longer want to receive the handful of messages that are typically distributed by the EEON listserv each week, send another message to majordomo@icomm.ca with the following command in the body of your e-mail message: "unsubscribe eeonlist."

When you join the EEON listserv, you will receive full instructions about how to post messages to the list and how to respond to those posted by others. We hope you will join the EEON list today!

*Tim Grant, EEON Board Member
(www.eeon.org); Co-editor, Green Teacher Magazine.*

Want to Combine Outdoor Education and Environmental Activism?

Bob Henderson is looking for COEO members who will join him in liaison work with organizations such as the Wilderness Canoe Association (WCA), the Wildlands League and various Friends groups. The intent is to work together when environmental issues arise. For example, the WCA played an important role in reversing the decision to allow all-terrain vehicles in the Kawartha Highlands, thereby benefiting school groups and other recreational users of these lands. Bob already receives much of the needed information and knows many of the players. Contact bhender@mcmaster.ca.

Teachers — The Search Is On!



The Canadian Ecology Centre
Centre écologique du Canada

A Great Professional Development Opportunity for Teachers — Learn all about forestry and the forest industry during the 4th Annual Canadian Lumbermen's Association — Eastern Canadian Teachers' Tour — August 18th to 21st, 2004 at the Canadian Ecology Centre. Un deuxième Tour en Français, pour Enseignants, sera offert le 25 au 28 août, 2004. Pour des renseignements et un application, visitez/visit: www.canadianecology.ca for application information.

Four days of professional development — Free!

Please Contact:

John Pineau, Technology Transfer Coordinator
Canadian Ecology Centre Forestry Research Partnership
john@canadianecology.ca, phone: 705-744-1715 x585, fax: 705-744-1716
P.O. Box 430, Hwy. 17 West, Mattawa, ON P0H 1V0
www.canadianecology.ca; <http://forestresearch.canadianecology.ca>
Our GPS Coordinates:
WGS 84/Zone 17T
E0663576 N 5129113

More Conference Reflections continued from page 7

Second, COEO needs to actively address the financial needs of beginning educators. The discounted costs for students are excellent, but what about the first-year teacher, unsupported by a school board and struggling to pay back debts and get established? Is there not a creative way that COEO could address the needs of this population? I am not suggesting that COEO needs to further lower conference costs; there are definite fixed costs in running such an event, and it is important that the conferences remain of the highest quality possible. However, COEO must encourage new educators to attend the annual conference if they wish to keep them involved. Perhaps COEO could develop a conference scholarship, similar to that of the Association for Experiential Education and other organizations, sponsoring individual members who otherwise might not be able to attend. Such awards could be based on a variety of

things, including financial need, past contributions to COEO, and potential to further contribute to COEO or outdoor education in general.

As COEO looks to "mutate" the face of outdoor education in Ontario, it seems a logical time for us to consider looking in the mirror and mutating COEO a little too. To thrive as a relevant force for the promotion of diverse outdoor educational experiences, COEO needs to look to the future and make the changes required to draw more students and beginning educators into our membership.

Kate Humphrys is a second-year teacher at the Norval Outdoor School and a big fan of the ultimate Frisbee games at COEO conferences.

On-line Resources

Green Learning On-Line Alberta

This fall the Pembina Institute, with support from the Government of Alberta and Canadian corporations, will offer Green Learning Online Alberta. This Web-based educational program includes materials and learning activities about climate change, energy efficiency and green/renewable energy. Visit www.pembina.org.

Conservation in Practice

This magazine of science, practice and policy presents cutting-edge research from every field of conservation. It's a sophisticated yet readable resource for educators, conservation managers, policy makers and others. Visit www.conbio.org/inpractice.

The Electronic Naturalist

This free site of weekly material (30 weeks during the school year) provides information on animals and plants and has art work and text, interdisciplinary activities, two reading levels and access to a professional naturalist via e-mail. Visit www.enaturalist.org.

Children, Youth and Environments

Children, Youth and Environments (CYE) is a refereed journal and multidisciplinary international network dedicated to improving the lives of young people. The

journal targets researchers, policy makers and professionals and is guided by a distinguished editorial advisory board. Submissions can be on a broad range of topics and use different approaches, including empirical research, theoretical and historical studies, critical literature reviews, design analyses, post-occupancy evaluations, policy studies and program assessments. Submission deadline for the next issue: January 31, 2004. *CYE* is freely available in full text on-line at cye.colorado.edu.CYE.

Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment

The Ecological Society of America has begun publishing a new monthly journal of peer-reviewed articles on all aspects of ecology, the environment and related disciplines, as well as short, high-impact research communications of broad disciplinary appeal. Occasional "Forums" will debate multiple views of relevant, timely issues. The journal also intends to provide important scientific information to policy makers, resource managers and other decision makers. Submission guidelines are available on-line at www.frontiersin ecology.org/general.html.

Thanks to EECOM News August 2003 for these items. See www.eecom.org.

Dogsledding Adventure Weekends with Chocpaw Expeditions, South River

1. Friday, February 20, 2004, 7:00 P.M., to Sunday, February 22, 5:00 P.M.
 2. Friday, March 5, 2004, 7:00 P.M., to Sunday, March 7, 5:00 P.M.
- Maximum of 10 participants per weekend. Cost is \$288.44 per person from South River. For further information, contact COEO member Paul Strome.
Home: 905-878-2814, Work: 905-279-0575 x583, E-mail: paul.strome@peelsb.com

FYI Winter 2004

by David Arthur

OSEE Conference 2004

OSEE's annual conference will be held April 30-May 2, 2004 at the Frost Campus of Sir Sanford Fleming College in Lindsay. The theme will be *Environmental Education: Expanding the Community*. As this is the first time we will travel to Fleming College in Lindsay for the annual OSEE conference, we would like to make this an extra special invitation. The many conference activities planned will offer a wide variety of opportunities to learn, to network, and to share. The conference will offer help, ideas, and materials to teach the new elementary and secondary curriculum, and will provide inspiration and help for you to maintain a focus on environmental education and environmental practices in your school. Whether you are new to the education field or are a seasoned teacher, we look forward to meeting you and sharing experiences. Plan to attend and enjoy the energy of being together. We also welcome your participation in planning. If you would like to volunteer in any way please contact jill.johnson@osee.org.

EEON Strategic Plan Released!

The Vision: "An Ontario where all members of the population are environmentally literate, and their behaviour reflects a commitment to a healthy, sustainable environment for future generations." Environmental Education Ontario's Strategic Plan for Environmental and Sustainability Education in Ontario *Greening the Way Ontario Learns* was released in November. The plan is available in Summary and Full Versions in hard copy, CD, and online at www.eeon.org. EEON has begun the next step, promotion and implementation, by arranging meetings, information sessions and workshops with government ministries and policy advisors, teacher organizations, boards, community groups and others. We hope all OSEE members will become familiar with the plan and will champion it, not just in the formal education sector, but for all of the 17 audience groups with whom they are involved.

Education a Priority for FON

The Federation of Ontario Naturalists has identified education as one of six priority areas for the organization's agenda. They are hoping to have funding to hire an education staff person whose role will be to lobby for environmental/outdoor/nature education. The FON will be encouraging the new government to restore EE and OE in Ontario. The FON had recently reduced their curriculum resource development due to financial constraints. Resources such as their *Wildlife in Jeopardy* education kit were developed with the help of teachers and co-related with the new Science and Geography curriculum.

Environment Canada Update

The Framework for Environmental Learning and Sustainability in Canada is celebrating its first year of existence! The Framework was released in September 2002 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. An annual report is being prepared for 2002-2003, which will highlight some of the many achievements made by the different supporters of the Framework who submitted an Action plan. The report will be available shortly on the Environmental Learning and Sustainability Web site www.ec.gc.ca/education. The Environment Canada Environmental Learning and Sustainability Web site has been updated. It now includes a Links section to support environmental educators by providing links to useful tools and resources. It also includes a Snapshots section, which highlights the different elements of the site, and a Networking section for all Canadian educators that want to keep in touch.

Ontario Climate Change Education Project Gets Federal Funding

Eight Ontario school boards and York University, in partnership with other organizations, were awarded a CCAF grant to produce climate change resources and in-service training. Using Toronto District School Board's EcoSchools as a model, the project is

producing elementary and secondary materials for classroom teachers, comprehensive guides to reduce energy use and minimize waste production in the school as well as multimedia productions which will provide solid background information about climate change for teachers and secondary students. Documents that address designing school grounds for shade and energy conservation, holding an EcoFestival and how to set up a school environment team are also being produced. Materials will be ready for release in March 2004. Teacher training will take place in the New Year in Sudbury, Ottawa and Toronto. For more information, contact Eleanor.Dudar@tdsb.on.ca.

Suzuki Challenge

The Suzuki Foundation has created a challenge for young students that provides ten actions they can do to help the environment. They include learning more about the environment and becoming informed citizens who use the democratic system to direct needed change. Visit www.davidsuzuki.org/WOL/Challenge.

Earthroots' Wolves Ontario! Project

Myths, childhood stories and movies have represented the wolf as a beast that should be hated and feared; a reputation that has contributed to the wolf's extinction in many parts of the world. Since the arts played a role in creating the myth of the Big Bad Wolf, Earthroots sees the importance of using the arts to reverse this message and teach people about the important role wolves play in the ecosystem. Visiting schools across Ontario, Earthroots uses theatre, literature and mask-making workshops to teach students about wolves — an animal that is still being managed like a Big Bad Villain by the Ontario government! As part of this project Earthroots has created a Story Writing Contest. Youth are encouraged to write new stories about wolves to dispel the many "Big Bad Wolf" myths and educate people about the important role wolves play in a healthy ecosystem. The deadline for submissions is Monday, December 15th, 2003. For more information visit www.wolvesontario.org or call Melissa Tkachyk at 416-599-0152 x 12.

Mixing It Up

A lively collection of teacher-tested ways to blend science with math, language and the arts in K-6 classes. Each article, from NSTA's elementary school member journal, *Science & Children*, is categorized by grade level and by the National Science Education Standards it addresses. <http://store.nsta.org/searchBasic.asp?searchTerm=Mixing+It+Up>.

Gardening For A Sustainable Future

The National Gardening Association links to classroom stories, articles, web sites, and other resources to help students investigate garden ecosystems and sustainable growing practices. This includes exploring the living and nonliving parts of soil, decomposers' abilities to turn once-living materials into a rich nutrient source, and "benign" pest- and weed-control strategies. www.kidsgardening.com/themes/organic1.asp

Better Times Ahead?

We have a new government! Heigh-ho, the witch is dead! Gerrard Kennedy has said the first task is to restore trust within the education community. Will environmental and outdoor education receive improved recognition, commitment and funding? The new government will be deluged with representations from many interests and they have a huge financial deficit. It would seem appropriate and necessary for all environmental and outdoor educators and their organizations to lobby for improvements with both a clear stated vision and a well thought out plan of doable steps to realize that vision.

Visit an Office of Environmental Education

In the United States teacher associations like OSEE exist in almost all states. In addition, 24 states have strategic plans for EE, 19 have a government-funded Office of EE, and 30 have an EE Advisory Board. Many states have legislation that supports and mandates EE. If you want to see what an Office of EE offers, visit www.ee.enr.state.nc.us. North Carolina also has an EE Certification Program that is being used a model in many other states.

Looking Ahead: Tim Horton Onondaga Farms to Host 2004 Conference

by Heather Bates

Tim Horton Onondaga Farms, located in Brant County just outside of Cambridge, is the destination for the 2004 COEO conference. Opened in June 2002, Onondaga Farms is the most recent addition to the Tim Horton Children's Foundation camps. Like the other five Children's Foundation camps, the farm provides residential summer camping experiences for economically disadvantaged children and youth. Unique within the Tim Horton Children's Foundation, Onondaga Farms operates from September to May as an outdoor experiential education centre serving local schools and organizations, and it is also home to the Tim Horton Children's Foundation head office.

Tim Horton Onondaga Farms is situated on 400 acres of rolling fields, forests and wetlands and continues to operate as a working farm. The name Onondaga means "people of the hill" — a fitting name, as the property features the highest point in Brant County. Trail networks, recreational and learning ponds, barns, market vegetable gardens, greenhouses, playing fields, an orienteering course and a pool are the outdoor settings of daylight activity at Onondaga Farms. The Eco-Centre, featuring a living lab, a creative arts studio, computer and audio-visual labs, a library, an atrium and a state-of-the-art observatory, is used in both daytime and evening programs. Other sites for evening activity include campfire hollows, the barn loft and moonlit trails.



Overnight visitors to Onondaga Farms reside in modern brick-and-pine two-storey bunkhouses. Each room in a bunkhouse is equipped with two bunk beds and an adjoining washroom. Common rooms with working fireplaces serve as gathering places in the day or evening. The Molly Henderson House dining hall is the site for all meals at Onondaga Farms, while the loft of this building provides space for meetings or relaxation.

Excitement is already building at Onondaga Farms in anticipation of hosting the 2004 COEO conference. The property is constantly developing, with new additions to programs and facilities. See you there next October!

Heather Bates is Camp Director at Tim Horton Onondaga Farms.

Coming Full Circle

by Simon Beames

Well, I'm getting there. After two-and-a-bit years of full-time work on a PhD in outdoor education, I am nearing completion. Though my self-esteem, bank account and probably my marriage have all suffered, for the first time I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. I've realized that since I started this program I've had very little contact with "the field," as in working with young people in outdoor programs. I miss this frontline contact and long to come full circle and spend a few weeks in the field to see if I've still "got it" and can facilitate a fun and inspirational outdoor experience for teenagers.

More importantly, I wonder if graduate school will have made me a better instructor. I fear that doing a research degree has turned me into a skeptic. The adventure enthusiast who used to spout off to parents, kids and administrators about the power of outdoor education now uses language that is carefully considered. I shake my head when I re-read stuff I have recently written, such as, "Studies have indicated that certain people who take part in outdoor adventurous programs may experience some forms of interpersonal growth." I no longer believe that all messed-up teenagers can be "fixed" by a wilderness program or that people are somehow incomplete if they haven't done an Outward Bound course.

My further studies have enabled me to see outdoor education on more levels than I did

before, and I am curious to find out if this knowledge will help me when I put on my instructor hat. Whereas I used to think that "young person plus outdoor experience equals personal growth," I now look beyond this, considering the power relationships between instructor and young person. My advisors urge me to examine outdoor education as social control — producing leaders and team members who will preserve society's status quo. I'm also wary of hidden agendas lurking behind organizations — do they really exist to help young people, or is it all a front to push their political ideologies? Though I'm glad I now consider these issues, I also want to ensure they do not detract from the magic and discovery that I will try to foster in my programs.

So back to the field I go. By getting lost in the woods with a bunch of teenagers I hope to see if, coming full circle to my roots in outdoor education, the theory I have engaged in will inform my practice. Though it feels odd to be sitting in front of a computer screen daydreaming about canoe-tripping with teenagers, it does give me something to look forward to as I sip my tea on a dark, rainy afternoon in London.

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