

Connections

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Photos: P L Knowlton Cockett

Grade 2 and 3 students prepare a Sun Circle planter for rough fescue plugs—October 20, 2010.

The journal of the Global,
Environmental & Outdoor
Education Council



To promote involvement in
quality environmental and
outdoor education

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Editorial

What GEOEC Does

GEOEC is an interdisciplinary council of passionate educators committed to environmental, global, and outdoor education initiatives. Specifically, we provide quality PD to teachers through workshops and conferences. We offer a workshop on global citizenship in partnership with the Canadian Teachers' Federation, titled, "Change the World." It explores the concepts of democracy, environment, peace and solidarity. The annual GEOEC conference links experts in the field to Alberta educators and gives teachers the opportunity to build relationships and share experiences. Past conference themes have been "Many Streams, One River" and "Trails to Sustainability." We create globally and environmentally aware citizens that live today and will be leaders tomorrow.

Please remember to renew your complimentary specialist council membership. To renew online, go to the ATA website, www.teachers.ab.ca, and click on For Members, Professional Development, Specialist Councils and Specialist Council Memberships.

A Message from the Editor

Hi, folks!

Welcome to our issue on classroom and community projects. This fall I attended two notable sessions that fit into the community projects theme, and I am excited to say that there is a lot going on in the Edmonton community. First, the University of Alberta's Office of Sustainability put on a Sustainability Awareness Week. On the campus sustainability tour, we visited campus recycling and composting sites, and learned that the University is home to a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold Standard building—Triffo Hall. The building was retrofitted to use a cistern to collect rainwater for toilet flushing; it also includes waterless urinals, passive solar heating and architecture that allows 87 per cent of the building to be lit by daylight. For more information on how the U of A is addressing campus sustainability issues and to take a virtual tour of the campus, visit www.sustainability.ualberta.ca. Also, look in this issue for the submissions by the University of Alberta's Office of Sustainability and the Environmental Coordination Office of Students.



Editor Lara Fenton

I also attended the City of Edmonton's master composter conference, "Inspire 2010." In the city's master composter program, volunteers learn about environmental stewardship in Edmonton, including the history of waste management, home composting, household hazardous waste, vermicomposting and residential recycling. At the conference, we took refresher aerobic and anaerobic composting courses, learned how to reuse common materials and make crafts, and got an update on new city waste management techniques. Currently, Edmonton is home to one of the most progressive waste management systems in North America. About 60 per cent of residential waste is diverted from the landfill by recycling and composting. The introduction of the new integrated processing and transfer facility (IPTF), where noncomposting materials are converted to ethanol and methanol, will further reduce the landfill impact and will divert 90 per cent of residential waste. For more information, visit the city's website at www.edmonton.ca. Teachers in Edmonton who are interested in hosting a presentation on composting can check out the contact information on our Cool Websites page.

This issue features several submissions that address our theme directly, including Polly Knowlton Cockett's Whispering Signs project, in Calgary, and Chris Goudreau's Great Canadian Cleanup. Robyn Zink challenges us to think about where the learning occurs for students in our outdoor sessions. Liz Halpenny introduces the concept of place-based education, which claims to move us beyond what traditional environment education offers. By focusing on the local built and natural environments, students gain compassion and empathy as they care for their local communities; this is evidenced in the submissions from Polly and Chris.

Enjoy this issue. I hope to see you at our upcoming conference, "Celebrating Community Voices: Building Momentum in Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education," at the Goldeye Centre, in Nordegg, Alberta. Make sure you mark May 12–15, 2011, in your calendar. Check out our website to register and read about past conferences.

Cheers!

Lara Fenton

Schedule for Submissions

Connections seeks articles on the following topic:

Theme: Food

Deadline for submissions: May 24, 2011

Food is the topic for our next issue. We encourage submissions from sustainability and social justice angles on the many topical aspects of food, such as local eating, the slow food movement and the production of organic food, as well as submissions that challenge or problematize these concepts from a social justice perspective—for example, food security. We are particularly interested in articles that use classroom curriculum and school-based projects to illustrate these themes and that place student participation as a central focus.

How to Make a Submission

Sending submissions by e-mail is ideal, but you may also submit articles, artwork and photographs by regular mail (on disk or hard copy). Please include a short biography and your mailing address. You must receive parental permission to print student work or photographs of children (see the form at the end of this issue). Send submissions to Lara Fenton, 5615 105 Street, Edmonton, AB, T6G 2N2, or lfenton@ualberta.ca.

GEOEC Business and News

Join the GEOEC Executive and Make a Difference

All positions except past president and president are open for election annually. If you are interested in seeking one of these positions, please contact Past President Rita Poruchny at rporuchny@cbe.ab.ca.

Elections will be held at the annual general meeting (AGM) during the 2011 conference. The PEC liaison and ATA executive staff advisor positions are appointed by the ATA's Provincial Executive Council.

Past President (position not available)

- Act as advisor to the president and the executive board in general.
- Ensure that the executive operate in accordance with the constitution.
- Act as keeper of the historical records as the council historian.

- Solicit nominations from membership for each of the table officer positions.
- Coordinate the GEOEC's recognition of individuals and organizations, and solicit recommendations and nominations for awards at least two months prior to AGM.
- Report annually and maintain a registry of awards presented by the GEOEC.

President (position not available)

- Maintain liaison with ATA personnel, PEC representative and executive staff officer assigned to the GEOEC.
- Call, set agenda for and chair all meetings of the table officers and executive board.
- Arrange for the old and new executive board to meet near the end of term of office to pass on information and receive files.

- Submit an annual written report about GEOEC activities to the ATA.
- Attend annual seminar for presidents of specialist councils.
- Submit written reports at executive meetings as required.
- Keep executive informed of developments.

President-Elect

- Assist the president as required and act in the absence of the president.
- Maintain liaison with committee chairs and report to table officers.
- Become president on July 1, 2013.

Secretary

- Take minutes of all table officer and executive board meetings.
- Send minutes and action plans to executive, ATA executive staff advisor, PEC representative and GEOEC community liaisons.

- Have copies of previous year's AGM minutes available at the current AGM.
- Handle correspondence and communication in conjunction with president.

Treasurer

- Take charge of all money received and/or collected by the council, and disburse funds as authorized by the table officers.
- Keep accurate record of the financial affairs of the council for both the account held at Barnett House and the current account.
- Provide a statement of account to each meeting of the table officers.
- Have books ready for audit by Barnett House at the end of each fiscal year (June 30).
- Attend annual seminar for treasurers of specialist councils.
- Present audited financial statement to the AGM.
- Provide consultative services to the conference director.

Professional Development

- Assess needs, make recommendations and provide inservice opportunities to GEOEC members in addition to annual conference.
- Establish, maintain and recommend a list of resource people.
- Submit a report of PD activities to the AGM.

Public Relations/ Membership

- Deal with issues relating to the image of the GEOEC and environmental education focusing specifically on outside groups.
- Actively promote membership among interested members of the public.
- Work with the conference committee to ensure that they have an up-to-date membership list and that the conference is promoted to nonmembers.
- Coordinate the development, interpretation and implementation of public relations policies.
- Submit a report on PR/ membership activities to the AGM.

Publications

- Coordinate and act as editor for any publications that pertain to the goals and objectives of the GEOEC.
- Attend the annual seminar for specialist council editors.
- Submit a report of publications activities to the AGM.

Conference Director (2012)

- In consultation with the table officers, plan and carry out an annual conference program that is to be outlined in the fall and published at least two months prior to the conference.

- Keep a conference file. Pass this file on to the conference director-elect.
- Attend annual seminar for conference directors of specialist councils.
- Submit an audited financial statement to the table officers within two months following the conference. Present this statement to the executive board at the first fall meeting.
- Submit all financial records to Barnett House on or before June 30 for auditing.

Conference Director-Elect (2013)

- Serve as a member of the conference steering committee in preparation for the following year.
 - Assist the conference director as required.
- Note: It is not essential that this person attend executive meetings.

Community Liaison (two positions)

- This is a nonvoting appointed position, created to facilitate sharing of experience and knowledge between community (nonformal) and school-based (formal) educators. It acknowledges the significant contribution of nonformal educators to global, environmental and outdoor education.

Call for Award Nominations

At its annual conference, the Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education Council of the ATA honours those people who have contributed to global, environmental and outdoor education. As a member of the council you have the opportunity to nominate a deserving person for recognition. There are three categories of award:

- **Appreciation of Service Award**

The Appreciation of Service Award is presented to member and nonmember individuals and organizations in acknowledgement of service contributing to the professional growth of GEOEC members.

Considerations include service, events, hosts, materials, sponsors, affiliate organizations and departments that have been

of significant benefit to the council.

- **Award of Merit**

The Award of Merit is presented to member and nonmember individuals and organizations in recognition of exemplary teaching, leadership or service in the field of global, environmental and outdoor education.

Considerations include teaching, leadership or service representing a significant commitment of effort and time; effective influence on the development of global, environmental and outdoor education in a region, province or nation; contribution to the awareness and understanding of an environmental ethic; or extension of teaching practice, research, legislation or funding in

global, environmental and outdoor education.

- **Distinguished Fellow Award**

The Distinguished Fellow Award is presented to a member in acknowledgement of outstanding achievement and distinguished service in the field of global, environmental and outdoor education. Considerations include years of service, significance of achievements, effect of leadership and commitment to the Council's development and operations.

How to Nominate

Please contact GEOEC past president Rita Poruchny at reporuchny@cbe.ab.ca, prior to February 28, 2011.

Articles and Features

Place-Based Education: Starting from Our Own Communities

Elizabeth Halpenny

I believe that we cannot know a global world. ... I cannot know how to care for both my place and the rainforests of Brazil. In the forced articulation of compassion for all communities, responsibility and reciprocity with my own place is lost.

—Giesbrecht

This article begins with a reflection from Sheila Giesbrecht, a professor in the University of Winnipeg's Faculty of Education. Her observations about the importance of place-based education and its role in fostering the development of empathic, participatory, aware students and educators are rooted, in part, in lessons learned from a place-based education course at the University of Winnipeg. During this course, students were encouraged to explore Winnipeg's inner city in order to become more aware of its community and landscape. One task involved the collection of "found objects." These objects included a flower, a bottle cap and a cigarette

package; they revealed historical, cultural, economic and ecological elements that weave together to form inner-city Winnipeg. The task led students to consider their role in this tapestry and eventually to ask larger questions, such as "Could the university start a program to assist the homeless located there?" and "How could the community address garbage issues?"

This Canadian-based example of place-based education illustrates the powerful impact that studying local environments can have on students and educators. Place-based education is the process of "using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, math, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum" (FFEC 2009). It is characterized by a number of attributes, including (a) partnerships between schools and community that enable students and educators to connect to the local, real world, (b) a multi-disciplinary approach (eg, natural science, social science

and humanities), (c) exploration of the various elements of a place, including its cultural, social, environmental, political and historic characteristics, and (d) experiential—facilitated by a hands-on participatory action component, also known as *service learning* (FFEC 2009; Sobel 2005; Woodhouse and Knapp 2000). Place-based education enables students to examine what Thomashow (1995) titles "ecological identity" by considering four questions: What do I know about the place where I live? Where do things come from? How do I connect to the earth? What is my purpose as a human being?

Sobel (2005) claims that place-based education moves beyond environmental education, which in recent decades has slipped into a focus on natural science studies (eg, taxonomy and nutrient cycles) and catastrophe education (eg, ozone depletion and rain forest destruction). Instead, a "pedagogy of place" emphasizes the localized interconnection of school,

community, and environments based in rural, urban or suburban contexts and focuses on the principles of sustainability and the role of students and educators in this process (Annenberg Rural Challenge Research and Evaluation Program 1999).

Place-based education is best illustrated through examples. In Oregon, math students conducted tree stump counts over a four-year period and entered their findings into the state's forestry management mapping and data program as part of efforts to revitalize animal habitat after logging took place (Loveland 2003). In Nebraska, students in an entrepreneurship class implemented their business management lessons by running a local theatre (Loveland 2003). To facilitate place-based education, training of educators must also occur. In Vermont, A Forest for Every Classroom (FFEC) is a year-long professional development program for educators, aimed at "providing the inspiration, knowledge and skills required to transform standards-based classroom teaching into effective and exiting place-based education" (FFEC 2009). The Alberta Ingenuity Summer Institute in Biology Education, a partnership between the universities of Alberta and Calgary, supplies a week-long place-based workshop for Alberta elementary and secondary school biology and ecology educators. The institute uses the Rocky Mountains context to "take an integrative approach to pedagogy of the biology curriculum by looking at the relationship between primary

scientific research and classroom practice" (Biogeoscience Institute 2010). Evaluative research of this program over a two-year period, which included in-class and post-Institute focus groups and interviews, examined how learning within a nonlocal but highly immersive context affected participants' ecological identity and educators' awareness of the places in which they live and teach and their incorporation of local examples into their classrooms (Barker, Mappin and Halpenny 2009).

Benefits of this approach to education are slowly being assessed. For example, a study of 40 schools across the US found that using the environment as an integrating context in school curricula positively affected student learning outcomes across the curriculum, not just in the natural sciences (Lieberman and Hoody 1998). In addition to higher test scores, place-based education fosters civic activity, increased social capital and economic vitality as well as the tangible outcomes of student-led projects (Powers 2004; Place-Based Education Evaluative Collaborative [PEEC] 2010). An example of the latter is the 180-kilometre reclamation walking trail plan created by students in the University of Alberta's Faculty of Agricultural, Life, and Environmental Sciences; the trail is designed to stabilize the eroding slopes of the North Saskatchewan River Valley near the town of Devon (Betkowski 2009).

Challenges to place-based education include a pervasive traditional goal of education;

namely, the preparation of students "to work and function in a highly technological and consumer-oriented society ..." In contrast, place-based education seeks to prepare students to "live and work to sustain the cultural and ecological integrity of the places they inhabit" (Woodhouse and Knapp 2000). It provides an alternative to the learn-to-earn—and consume—model (Woodhouse and Knapp 2000). Proponents of place-based education would suggest that a localism approach to curriculum delivery achieves broader, more sustainable outcomes by providing students with the knowledge and desire to engage in democratic processes, civic action and ecologically responsible ways of living.

Another challenge related to the teaching of locally based curriculum is the need for students to learn standardized curriculums, which in turn enables them to pass the standardized tests that have become increasingly prevalent (Jennings, Swidler and Koliba 2005). In Vermont, efforts were made to address this by integrating place-based standards into the state's curriculum frameworks. Jennings and her colleagues suggest that state/provincial standards and place-based curriculums are not incompatible, but are, in fact, complementary.

As students explore the places that are important to them—the places where they live, they begin to understand that their learning is relevant and that they are connected to their world. This is place-based education's greatest benefit: exciting students and engaging them in

active, personal learning, which in increases their interest in the human–ecological community and expands their potential as civic-minded, ecologically aware, empathetic people.

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Websites to Visit

- Centre for Place-Based Education—www.antiochne.edu/anei/cpbe
- A Forest for Every Classroom at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Site—www.nps.gov/mabi/forteachers/forest-for-every-classroom.htm
- Place-Based Education Evaluation Cooperative—www.peecworks.org/index
- Place-Based Landscape Analysis and Community Education—www.uvm.edu/place/about

Editor's note: these websites were accessed on December 13, 2010.

Elizabeth Halpenny, PhD, teaches and conducts research in the areas of tourism, protected area management and marketing. She also studies factors that promote environmental stewardship and people's relationships with natural areas. She is based at the University of Alberta in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation.

Place Value: Ecological Education in Northwest Calgary

Polly Knowlton Cockett

I have discovered that in Whispering Woods there are lots of trees. I know this because I went for a walk there.

—Nandini, in *Stories of Community*, p 124

Right Here in Brentwood

“This is fun!” chirps a Grade 3 student while gleefully turning over

the soil and pulling out weeds by their roots in the Sun Circle gardens at Dr E W Coffin School, in Brentwood, a suburban community in northwest Calgary. On a glorious

blue-skied morning, October 20, 2010, small groups of Grade 2 and 3 students, pulled from their classroom to work with volunteers for 20-minute sessions, prepared a



planter for rough fescue plugs donated by the city parks department. These plugs of our provincial native grass will be nursed through the winter and transplanted into the nearby Centennial Natureground grassland reclamation area in the spring. On the same day, more than 100 Grade 7 students from nearby Simon Fraser School walked through the neighbourhood with their picnic lunches, accompanied by teachers and parent volunteers, and crossed Whispering Grasses Walkway to Nose Hill Park to help City of Calgary Parks plant thousands of fescue plugs as part of a prairie restoration project.

Three weeks earlier, Grade 6 students from Dr Coffin led a tour of Whispering Signs for visiting students, parents and teachers from Olympic Team Sports School's outdoor education program. The student guides were well prepared, having participated in the creation and celebration of the signs over several years and having recently taken part in mentoring sessions by community volunteers. During the tour of the signs, gardens, and prairie and aspen parkland spaces, on-the-spot research was conducted using an iPhone in response to the questions that arose. In particular, when observing the mounds made by resident northern pocket gophers, a student asked, "What do they look like?" Lo and behold, after seeing a web photo, the students soon actually saw a real gopher tentatively poking its head out of its mound! After the tour, with its

Students' Learning

- Stewardship of nature
- Interconnectedness of ecosystems
- Native species of plant and animals
- Attention to detail in work and in nature
- Predator/Prey relationships
- Community development
- Invasive species
- Classification vocabulary (plant, animal, carnivore, herbivore, etc.)
- Connection between people and nature
- Dictionary skills
- Parts of speech
- Vocabulary development
- Alliteration
- Rich language
- Language structure
- Drawing skills
- Patterns in nature and visual patterns
- Computer skills
- Research skills
- Structure of nonfiction books
- Ability to identify important information in nonfiction text



many provocative conversations, the afternoon was rounded out with a rollicking game of camouflage in Whispering Woods.

These recent autumnal adventures are just a few of the outcomes of more than two decades of building school and community connections in Brentwood's outdoor spaces. Many of this residential community's schools—Brentwood, École St Luke, Captain John Palliser, Simon Fraser, and Dr E W Coffin—have schoolyard naturalizations and/or gardens, each different from the other. Students from the Biology 20 and 30 classes at Sir Winston Churchill High School (also local) use Nose Hill Park for ecosystem and biodiversity studies. A cooperative community garden has just been established. Young people have painted anti-graffiti

murals on strip mall walls at busy intersections. Teams of volunteers and corporate partners have erected playgrounds. The local public library has hosted meetings and partnered for events. Jane's Walks [inspired by the resident-centred urban design philosophies of Jane Jacobs] have been led to promote walkable and sustainable neighbourhoods. Grassroots Northland Farmers' Market was established with proceeds supporting environmental education initiatives. Students have named a bridge and a park. Trees have been planted; outdoor ice rinks—free and accessible to all—have been maintained. Community celebrations, often supported by in-kind donations from local businesses, have been held with neighbours, new friends and passersby.

Calgary's Very First Earth II School

Amid all of this, in June 2010, Dr E W Coffin School became Calgary's first Earth II School. Since 1992, the students have completed more than 2,000 environmental initiatives with the SEEDS Foundation's GREEN Schools Canada program, which "encourages students to be environmentally responsible and to take personal action at school and with their families. Classes undertake projects to communicate about or to enhance the

environment" (GREEN Schools Canada, nd). See www.seedsfoundation.ca for lots of great ideas for home, work or school.

On June 8, 2010, in association with World Environment Day and National Environment Week, the students at Dr Coffin quietly celebrated their green achievements by writing eco-messages to each other during class. Parents baked cupcakes with green icing, and put the messages attached to toothpicks into the cakes, which were handed out by Grade 3 Environment Club students at recess. Each message went to someone in another class.

There was also a class activity, in which the students took their messages home to their families for follow-up conversations. What a great way to thoughtfully share with each other and their families some of the meaningful environmental concepts being addressed at the school! Many thanks go out to the parents and teachers on the Environment Committee for promoting such active recognition among the students.

Whether through art, poetry, science, literature, social studies or games, and whether inside or outside the school or on field trips,





Dr Coffin students have been exposed to a broad array of environmental concepts and activities. Through the Sun Circle gardens, revitalizing an asphalt expanse left when the original school burnt down; the Millennium Playground's environmentally harmonized colours; the Centennial Natureground's reclaimed grassland and biofiltration basins; the sandstone Prairie Amphitheatre outdoor classroom accessible to the public; the 40th anniversary mural on the original school's foundation walls; sending students and projects to the Mayor's Environment Expo;

and the creation of the 34 Whispering Signs interpretive panels, Dr Coffin students and the wider community have transformed the outdoor spaces in Brentwood Heights for all to enjoy.

Moreover, local students and community members participated in the naming of the 2005 pedestrian overpass over John Laurie Boulevard to Nose Hill Park. The name chosen, Whispering Grasses Walkway, was suggested by a Grade 6 girl from Dr Coffin School and officially approved by Calgary City Council, exactly 10 years after a Dr Coffin student named Whispering Woods

Natural Area Park, the local prairie/parkland remnant adjacent to the school. Dr Coffin School also hosted the first Schoolground Naturalization ThinkTank in 2005, now an annual collaborative event between the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Zoo. As well, community members and students have been vigilant for 15 years in providing stewardship in Whispering Woods through the city's Adopt-a-Park program: picking up litter, pulling weeds, monitoring vandalism and invasive plants, and noting local and migrant wildlife activity. Summer 2010 saw



“Whispering Signs: Ecological Encounters in an Urban Prairie” was considered for an Emerald Award in 2010. Here is the abstract for the project’s nomination:

Prairie conservation, biodiversity, invasive species, geomorphology, and native landscaping are but a few of the natural and cultural history concepts touched upon by this unique set of thirty-four interpretive panels in a suburban grassland and aspen parkland setting in northwest Calgary. Working collaboratively over several years, local students, teachers, parents, community and municipal members produced the compelling and original art, poetry, and text. Detailed GPS data situates each sign, and this generative project is supported by a website: www.natureground.org.

An overarching ecophilosophy informed the place-based and curriculum-connected ecological pedagogy used in this grassroots public education initiative. The cumulative sign content addresses an extensive cross section of interrelated concepts from the biosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, geosphere, and sociosphere. Thus, the Whispering Signs speak closely to the complexities of our ecological context and our place in the web of existence, especially at the precious and precarious interfaces of our natural and built environments.

Polly Knowlton Cockett was the project manager throughout the four years of development, although it actually started as an idea in 1995 when the school community adopted Whispering Woods and wanted a sign to show the new name. You are strongly encouraged to visit www.natureground.org for additional information. There you will find newsletter articles, photos, teacher resources and videos from our grand opening, in 2008, which help tell the story of the signs. For all the projects at the school and in the community, we started small, and built relationships and connections with each other and the wider community as we went along. Be sure to celebrate all the little successes along the way and have fun through all the challenges. It’s all about inquiry and the learning process!

10 organized community weeding bees, most followed by potluck gatherings. And the people come from all over Calgary. Hooray for intercommunity friends! We tackled a host of annual and perennial weeds, all the while enjoying the amazing blossoms of the wild prairie throughout July and August.

To honour some of these projects, the Friends of Dr E W Coffin Society has published a community history book, created posters of Whispering Signs and launched a website, www.natureground.org. Here you will find much more about Whispering Signs, a unique set of panels with original art, poetry, and text by students and local residents that celebrate our socioecological context amidst our biological diversity, all embedded in an urban prairie where we live, work, attend school and play.

Useful Sources of Further Information

- Alberta Emerald Foundation—www.emerald.foundation.ca. Each year, the Alberta Emerald Foundation presents Emerald Awards in recognition of excellence in environmental initiatives. There will soon be a list of past projects available on the website—check out www.emerald.foundation.ca/green-stories for stories from Dr E W Coffin School.
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Polly Knowlton Cockett is a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary. She is also a teacher with the Calgary Board of Education, and holds master's degrees in both science education and geology. For more than a decade, she has voluntarily managed several award-winning school and community outdoor environmental projects in Brentwood, in northwest Calgary. Her research on understanding sense of place is a multiperspective investigation with participants in these same projects.

What Can We Do? The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup

Chris Goudreau

I recently attended GEOEC Conference 2010, in Canmore. What a banquet of inspiration and expertise! When a teacher walks away from this kind of conference and returns to the classroom, the inevitable “What now?” and “What can we do?” become overwhelming.

Sometimes it is a matter of just one small project that motivates and inspires students to be more aware. For example, my Grade 5 students and I have done the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup. What a great project to take care of our waterways! The project is carried out in communities all over Canada and is affiliated with the Vancouver

Aquarium. For more information, go to <http://shorelinecleanup.ca>.

I signed on to be the coordinator for the Leduc area, but you and your students can just sign on to be participants. The public were invited to join us, and we did have others with us that day. I chose a day convenient to my schedule, and my administrator got on board and provided a bus to Telford Lake. [Telford Lake, adjacent to Leduc, Alberta, is a natural lake approximately three kilometres long and 85 hectares in area. It provides terrestrial, riparian and aquatic habitat and is used for recreational purposes as well.]

We cleaned up Telford Lake’s shoreline. Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup supplied gloves, data cards and supplementary resources to use in class. We recorded the data and submitted it to the organizers. We concluded that there were far too many plastic bags and cigarette butts; the project sends you the national results—and across Canada, the number-one found item was cigarette butts, which leak toxic chemicals into our waterways through runoff. My students were upset. They wrote a letter to city council, suggesting the need for permanent ashtrays to help our lake.



The domino effect has happened. My students brought an understanding into our classroom that they knew they had to protect Telford Lake. I know I have let loose on the world a group of lobbyists who will stand up for what is right. A teacher can ask for no more than that students begin to ask the right questions and have strong, informed opinions. My students put their words into action.

Telford Lake continues to host local, national and world events; for example, it was the rowing venue for the World Masters Games in 2005 and the Western Canada Summer Games in 2007. In 2008, there were two dragon boat regattas held there. The City of Leduc has developed a Telford Lake Master Plan.

The 2010 Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup was held on September 18 to 26. The link to



our project is www.nd.starcatholic.ab.ca/Chris.Goudreau/project.htm. Participation in next year's event is as simple as going to the website, finding your community, locating a cleanup site and joining—it can all

be set up online. Cleaning up the world really does just start in our own backyard!

Chris Goudreau teaches Grade 5 at Notre Dame School in Leduc, Alberta.



Live Dangerously: 10 Easy Steps

Shannon Hayes

Hayes, S. (2010, June 07). Live Dangerously: 10 Easy Steps. Retrieved December 6, 2010, from *YES! Magazine* website: www.yesmagazine.org/blogs/shannon-hayes/live-dangerously-10-easy-steps. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons License. Minor amendments have been made to conform to ATA style.

When Shannon Hayes made a list of easy steps for becoming a radical homemaker, she didn't realize just how revolutionary they were.

When I first released *Radical Homemakers: Reclaiming Domesticity from a Consumer Culture*, I was advised to make a list of “easy steps for becoming a radical homemaker” as part of my publicity outreach materials. My shoulders slumped at the very thought: three years of research about the social, economic and ecological significance of homemaking, and I had to reduce it to 10 easy tips? I didn't see a to-do list as a viable route to a dramatic shift in thinking, beliefs and behaviours. But since the objective of such a list was smoother discussion and communication of Radical Homemaking ideas with the public, I did it.

I came up with the simplest things I could imagine—like committing to hanging laundry out to dry, dedicating a portion of the lawn to a vegetable garden, making

an effort to get to know neighbours to enable greater cooperation and reduce resource consumption. I would perfunctorily refer to these ideas when radio dialogues flagged, when interviews seemed to be getting off track or to distract myself when an occasional wave of personal sarcasm (I do have them on occasion) threatened to jeopardize an otherwise polite discourse about the book. After about 40 media interviews, I was pretty good at rattling them off, and I began to see their power and significance beyond helping me to be polite.



Photo by Chiot's Run

Take hanging out the laundry as an example. At the outset, it is deceptively simple: it saves money and resources, and it's easy. As I spoke about line-drying laundry more, however, the suggestion took on more meaning. Of course everyone would like to hang out the

laundry. But many people don't do it. They're too busy. Thus, the commitment to hanging out the laundry represents a commitment to slowing down—it means starting to align one's daily household activity with the rhythms of nature. In my mind, hanging out the laundry moved from being a simple chore to being an act of meditation and reflection on a deeper, more profound commitment that a person wanted to make. Thus, draping shirts and socks on a clothesline wasn't just about getting a chore done; it represented the new, sane world so many of us are working to create. Every time a person sticks a clothespin on a pair of undies, he or she is saying, “I want a better world. And I'm willing to do what it takes.” Laundry may be a simple first step, but it ultimately leads to something bigger.

Laundry became the central theme of a talk I gave recently in an affluent community, where golf-course-quality lawns are ready at a moment's notice as the backdrop for the season's latest fad: large-screen outdoor television sets. I was speaking at a community ecofestival, where volunteers were teaching residents about the importance of composting, solar panels, buying locally and changing light bulbs. In my session, I talked about the power of living by one's values, the

misery of excessive consumption, the importance of social change, the deep fulfillment and happiness that result from living with less and having more.

To help me drive my point home, my husband, Bob, armed me with a seemingly endless collection of images of fellow radical homemakers' lives: pictures of happy kids showing off their homemade toys, families gathering for feasts, piles of tomatoes on a kitchen counter following an early fall harvest, a sink full of grapes ready for juicing, friends in their backyard gardens, smiling bike riders. At the end of my talk, I was presented with a single question from a man wearing an expensive watch: "Americans fall on a spectrum with money," he explained, holding his hands about a foot apart from each other. "Most of the people you're talking about fall on this end," he said, waving one hand. "And what you're talking about may work for them. But what about those of us on this end?" With that, he waved his other hand. "What are we supposed to do to be able to live like that?"

There were a number of snarky remarks on the end of my tongue. But this man's eyes were earnest. Perhaps he saw something in those slides that his affluence could not buy. Nevertheless, my sarcasm propensity meter was no longer registering on the dial. It was time to switch to the safety zone and draw from my 10 easy tips: "Grow some vegetables in your backyard. Try learning how to can," I chirped at him. Once I regained my bearings, I talked about changing the world by moving toward what we

love, not running away from what we fear. I talked about the power of small changes to result in a deep personal shift. I suggested he hang out the laundry.

There were no further questions. People politely thanked me for my time and left the room. One other man, who sat in the back corner, lingered. A long-time activist, he expressed his despair at the lifestyles of his neighbours. The social pressure to have a perfect lawn is huge, he explained. For years, he'd been doing programs to encourage residents to allow parts of their lawn to go wild for habitat—an even simpler step than gardening. The majority of his efforts were unsuccessful. There was too much shame. "It's so much easier for you," he lamented. "You *can* hang out the laundry." I gave him a quizzical look. He went on to explain local zoning codes. By law, people in his community weren't allowed to hang clothes outside. It was trashy. It would diminish property values.



Photo by Chiot's Run

But what about home values? I felt deeply sad for his neighbours. They'd devoted their life energy in pursuit of the material affluence required to live in this particular community. At the same time, the number of people in attendance at this ecofestival suggested they truly wanted to play a role in healing the planet. Ironically, the very laws of their community—both social and written—compelled them to turn their backs on their personal values. Henry David Thoreau's observations about the imprisonment of wealth were spot on: "The opportunities for living are diminished in proportion as what are called the 'means' are increased," he wrote. That day, I saw people who cared about the Earth, who wanted a better world. But their power to act according to these concerns was limited to their purchases alone—to buying solar panels, buy-local campaigns, buying new light bulbs. They could try to buy some of their beliefs. But they couldn't live them.

I suppose that is the deepest wealth in the radical homemaking lifestyle. By needing less, we are free to live our beliefs. To us, this seems ordinary. To someone else, a values-driven lifestyle might seem an extraordinary act of bravery.

We need that bravery. Now. Worrying about our planet while adhering to local zoning codes or social norms forbidding ecologically sensible behaviour is a recipe for disaster. Such laws require citizens to commit an ecological injustice by using a disproportionate share of our Earth's resources. They scream out for civil disobedience. As Thoreau reminds us, "... break the

law. Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine." Go on and live dangerously. Hang out the wash.

For those who might be curious:

10 Easy Steps for Becoming a Radical Homemaker

- Commit to hanging your laundry out to dry.
- Dedicate a portion of your lawn to a vegetable garden.
- Get to know your neighbours. Cooperate to save money and resources.
- Go to your local farmers' market each week *before* you head to the grocery store.
- Do some spring cleaning to identify everything in your home that you absolutely *don't* need. Donate to help others save money and resources.
- Make a commitment to start carrying your own reusable bags

and use them on all your shopping trips.

- Choose one local food item to learn how to preserve for yourself for the winter.
- Get your family to spend more evenings at home, preferably with the TV off.
- Cook for your family.
- Focus on enjoying what you have and who are with. Stop fixating on what you think you may need, or how things could be better "if only."

Interested?

- Read more from Shannon Hayes's blog (www.yesmagazine.org/blogs/shannon-hayes/shannon-hayes) about the life of a radical homemaker.
 - On Facing Judgment: Live radically, and you'll inevitably face the judgment of others;

loving unconditionally is the antidote www.yesmagazine.org/blogs/shannon-hayes/on-facing-judgment).

- The Work Ahead: Building a better world is hard work. It's time we embrace dirty hands (www.yesmagazine.org/blogs/shannon-hayes/the-work-ahead).



Shannon Hayes wrote this article for YES! Magazine, a national, nonprofit media organization that fuses powerful ideas with practical actions. Hayes

is the author of Radical Homemakers: Reclaiming Domesticity from a Consumer Culture, The Grassfed Gourmet and The Farmer and the Grill. She is the host of grassfedcooking.com and radicalhomemakers.com. Hayes works with her family on Sap Bush Hollow Farm, in upstate New York.

Learning in Outdoor Education

Some Reflections on What Is Important to Students in Outdoor Education and How Research Can Change What We Notice About Our Practice

Robyn Zink

A great deal of the research in outdoor education has focused on what students learn and how long that learning might last. Increasingly, attention has turned to trying to understand what aspects of an outdoor experience might facilitate learning and how. Even a cursory glance at some of the outdoor education journals, such as *Journal of Experiential Education*, *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, and the *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education*, to name a few, shows a rich and wide array of research about learning in outdoor education. How and where learning happens in outdoor education are questions I have become much more interested in since I started to research in this area.

I worked for a number of years as an outdoor educator with various organizations in New Zealand, working with students from elementary through to adult. The primary focus of many of the programs was personal and social development, and most were multiday courses involving a mix of outdoor activities. At the time, I thought that the activities facilitated the important learning, and the bits

between the activities, like free time, getting ready and sitting around the campfire, were the dots that joined the activities together. This is not to say that I didn't see those bits as important, but I thought that the activities were the main catalyst for most of the learning.

After a while I became more and more troubled by the gaps between the rhetoric and theory of outdoor education and my experiences. Doing challenging things in the outdoors didn't always lead to people feeling more confident or better about themselves. Often, challenging activities seemed to have the opposite effect. Nor did working together in a group to solve so-called "real" problems necessarily build cohesion and trust. It could as easily lead to scapegoating certain group members. In the late 1990s I decided to go back to university and do a master's in recreation and leisure studies to unpick this rhetoric-practice gap a little. This, of course, only led to lots more questions about outdoor education rather than finding any answers, which motivated me to undertake doctoral studies.

My PhD research looked at the question of what work outdoor education does rather than "Does outdoor education work?" (Zink 2010). That is, what is it possible to learn and how have contemporary practices come to be seen as coherent, normal things to do in outdoor education? As part of this research, I followed the outdoor education program of one secondary school in New Zealand for a year. In years 8, 9 and 10 (students of 12 to 15 years of age), all students went on four- or five-day camps. In years 11, 12 and 13 (16 to 18 years) outdoor education is a component of health and physical education and is, therefore, an elective subject. In each year, students went on five- to seven-day camps. I observed and participated in the camps and interviewed a number of students after each camp.

One of the things that quickly became obvious was that the times between the various activities were *not* just a series of dots connecting the activities. When the students talked about what was important to them in the interviews after the camps, it was clear that the activities

were actually the dots that connected the spaces between the activities. The activities did feature in their talk about the camps, but when I asked the students what they thought would remain with them, it was largely those in-between moments—the games they played down at the beach after dinner, the discussions they had in the tents or bunk rooms, and the practical jokes they played on each other and on the staff. When I asked them why these moments were important one student captured the general sentiment of many when she replied that “This is when you make friends, and they will be your friends for life.”

One of my questions about learning in outdoor education is whether in our (justifiable and understandable) enthusiasm to prove that what we do as educators causes learning, we have overemphasized the role of activities in our practice, theorizing and research, and missed those moments that foster connections between students. While students often can't articulate what these moments mean, beyond that they are what make the camps fun, I have become more curious about how these in-between moments work. They may not directly create the sorts of learning outcomes we have primarily focused on in our research, such as self-efficiency, communication, leadership, problem solving skills and environmental awareness, but those in-between spaces could hold the potential to forge connections between students and between students and staff. I would suggest that the environments in which outdoor education occurs

are tied into the potential for forging connections. Students often characterize the outdoors as being very different from their everyday lives, and this allows different sorts of interactions to occur and different sorts of connections to be made from those made at school, for example.

This is not to say that all that happens in those in-between spaces promotes positive connections. I'm sure many of us who have worked with groups in the outdoors have occasionally felt as though we had walked into a scene from *Lord of the Flies*,¹ where relationships between students reaffirm divisions rather than foster connections. Or of seeing how being in the outdoors can evoke survivor-type responses from students—the environment is seen as dangerous and something to be conquered. The possibility that connections can be either affirming or negative suggests that this in-between space deserves attention. By this I am not recommending that these in-between moments become a structured part of a program, or that they become a target for debriefing and reflection. However, I think that, as outdoor educators, we need to take more heed of what *students* think are the important aspects of outdoor education so that we can begin to understand the relationships at work and how those relationships might, or might not, foster our capacities to connect with others and with the environments we are moving and living in.

I might not have noticed these in-between moments if I had not had the opportunity to step into the role of researcher and experience

outdoor education in a very different way. Even though I had thought I was a reasonably observant and reflective educator, I was surprised at the sorts of things I noticed as a researcher that had not registered when I was working with groups. It was only recently, when I began to read some social theories about affect, which is the capacity to connect with others, both human and nonhuman, that I was able to make some sense of how these in-between moments might facilitate relationships and learning in outdoor education (Albrecht-Crane and Slack 2003). One of the things that theory helps us do is to ask different questions about what we do and how we do it, and to notice things that might previously have seemed unimportant or invisible.

There is no doubt that the outdoors is a complex learning space, and we still have only vague understandings of how learning occurs here. Can it be a space where we learn more than specific skills such as paddling a canoe, working as a team or environmental interpretation? While all of these aspects of outdoor education are important, I am beginning to wonder if one of the most meaningful contributions that outdoor educators can make is to foster positive connections between people, and between people and the outdoor environments in which we work and learn. If one of the aims of education is to develop conscious global citizens, then fostering our capacity to connect with others, human and nonhuman, is a significant contribution that outdoor education can make to that end.

Endnotes

1. *Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding (1954), tells the fictitious story of a group of British schoolboys stuck on a deserted island. Under their efforts to organize and govern themselves, the group quickly disintegrates into oppositional factions. The tension between the two factions leads to the murder of two of the boys. The timely arrival of a British warship averts any more murders.

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Robyn Zink has worked in New Zealand and Australia as an outdoor educator and researcher. She is coming to the end of a one-year research fellowship funded by the Government of Canada and based at the University of Alberta. This has given her a chance to read a lot more social theory and think about outdoor education in new and different ways. It has also given her a chance to experience a Canadian winter, which has been fantastic.

University of Alberta Builds Toward a Sustainable Future

Sarah Hoyles

The University of Alberta started implementing sustainable practices as far back as 1975 with a recycling program. Fast-forward to 2010 and we see solar-powered parking ticket dispensers, composting of organics in cafeterias across campus, an award-winning community garden, sustainability-focused courses and a car sharing program, as well as the construction of Triffo Hall, a LEED Gold Standard building—the U of A's achievements in sustainability continue to grow every year.

Building on the success of the recycling program, the U of A installed two large-scale compactors north of the Students Union Building (SUB) in the summer of 2009. Thanks to this equipment, large amounts of waste and recyclables are compressed and stored before pickup is needed. Waste that used to be picked up daily needs to be collected only once every three weeks. Paper and cardboard, which were picked up two to three times a day during busy periods, are now picked up once a week. This means less fuel used for the collection of the University of Alberta's refuse, lowering the university's carbon footprint.

Because of the accomplishments of the SUB's compactors in

reducing the university's carbon footprint and better utilizing resources, the U of A has established two ministations. The first will be at the Centennial Centre for Interdisciplinary Science Building (CCIS) and the second at Edmonton Clinic North (ECN). Both are scheduled to open in 2011.

Some garbage bins on North Campus are more than meets the eye. The specially designed receptacles are almost 10 feet deep—four-plus feet above ground and five feet below the surface. This design makes the garbage or recyclable items self-compact due to the depth of the containers. Not only does the refuse compact itself, but the larger capacity of the containers requires fewer pickups, which creates a positive ripple effect. Fewer bags and less energy are used by maintenance vehicles, which leads to more efficient use of staff time.

With more than 30,000 students descending on U of A's Edmonton-based campuses, the university has found creative and sustainable solutions to help make travel safe and environmentally friendly. All students attending at least one class on one of the four Edmonton campuses became eligible for the Universal Transit Pass (U-Pass) in September 2007. The pass gives

students unlimited access to regular Edmonton, St Albert and Strathcona County transit services during the fall and winter academic terms. Paid for by a low mandatory fee that students pay each term, at significant savings compared to the cost of monthly transit passes, the U-Pass is an ongoing promotion of more sustainable modes of transportation.

All University of Alberta employees have a similar transit pass with their staff identification tag: the ONEcard. Staff and faculty can use their card to travel any time, seven days a week, at no charge on the LRT between Health Sciences and Churchill Square stations. The program helps make it easy to travel for university business.

When it comes to driving on campus, the university's vehicle fleet is getting greener. In 2008, four hybrid sedans were purchased to replace less efficient fleet vehicles. Building and Grounds Services also replaced six of its gas-powered maintenance vehicles with electric utility vehicles. In 2009, four hybrid delivery vans were purchased, along with two hybrid medium-duty delivery trucks. A shuttle van for trades groups is now used to move workers around campus, minimizing the need for individual vehicles.

With an ever-growing focus on sustainability, the University of Alberta opened its Office of Sustainability (OS) in the fall of 2009. The agency has the sole purpose of informing and inspiring students, staff and faculty to adopt sustainable practices. The office focuses on integrating sustainability into teaching, research, operations and the outreach services needed to support them. To foster this integration, the office is structured in three strands: outreach and engagement, academic teaching and research, and facilities, operations and services.

One major outreach and engagement initiative that the office facilitates is Sustainability Awareness Week. In 2010, this week-long celebration delivered more than 60 events with help from more than 30 student groups and campus organizations. The aim of the week is to help the campus community become more aware of sustainability issues, learn more about campus sustainability and develop sustainability skills of their own. The Office doesn't just plan events—it also operates as a bridging organization, helping campus

community members deliver projects and connect to information, experts, tools and funding options.

Also working on sustainability on campus and in collaboration with the Office of Sustainability is a student group called Environmental Coordination Office of Students (ECOS). It lends bikes to people who don't own one, from the ECOS bike library on North Campus. The bike library offers bikes free of charge to university community members during the nonwinter months for a refundable \$40 deposit. This is important, because the University of Alberta campuses are designed primarily for bicycle and pedestrian traffic. ECOS also provides students and staff with the opportunity to borrow plates from the reusable dish program for their events and over lunch hour. The two organizations, ECOS and OS, also collaborate regarding volunteers. Starting in the fall of 2010, campus sustainability volunteers help in the organizations' offices and help deliver engagement and outreach initiatives, including Buy Nothing Day and the upcoming Campus Sustainability Summit.

New within the last few months is a sustainable place to call home for University of Alberta graduate students. The graduate student residence buildings in East Campus Village, on the corner of 110 Street and 87 Avenue, boast several green features, including on-site bicycle storage; dual flush/low flow toilets and low flow faucets to limit water use; recycling bins for beverage containers, plastic, glass/light metals, paper and cardboard, and—a new addition—a bin for organics; water-efficient landscaping with no irrigation; high-efficiency heat recovery ventilators (heat exchangers that transform heat between building exhaust air and incoming air); and low-energy elevators.

For more information on the University's progress in sustainability, please go to www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/sustainability, select Tips and Publications from the menu on the left, click on Publications and choose *Sustainability Measures and Initiatives: Greening the Campus*.

Sarah Hoyles is program lead for social marketing and communications, Office of Sustainability, University of Alberta.

How to Clean Green

Brent Buechler and Carol Ly

Getting the dirt on getting clean is why the Environmental Coordination Office of Students (ECOS) and the Office of Sustainability at the University of Alberta are presenting the How to Clean Green workshop. ECOS is the Students' Union Sustainability Office; it provides students, staff and faculty with tangible ways to live more sustainably. The university's Office of Sustainability informs and

inspires campus members to adopt sustainable practices. The How to Clean Green workshop is part of a Living Green Workshop series and one of many initiatives ECOS develops for the campus community.

These workshop series were created to show how easy it is to live sustainably and to help people live more sustainably in their everyday activities. The Living Green Workshops are about an hour long,

including time for learning, discussion and activities. The best part is that all these workshops are free, thanks to funding from the Office of Sustainability.

The How to Clean Green workshop shows the importance of using green cleaning solutions. It teaches people how to check for hazardous product labelling to identify common cleaning products that may harm their health and the



ECOS staff after the presentation

environment. It also warns, however, that manufacturers of cleaning products are not required to list what is in their cleaners, including potentially harmful chemicals.

In addition to providing information on the effects of common commercial cleaners, the workshop arms participants with solutions by providing a list of environmentally friendly cleaning brands currently on the market. These alternative brands can be found in most stores, even in the same aisles as other cleaning products.

Also during the workshop, participants make their own excellent, multipurpose cleaning solution. As follow-up to the

workshop, ECOS e-mails simple recipes for homemade cleaning solutions made from common household ingredients that have interesting cleaning properties—for example, cleaning tarnished copper with ketchup!

Here is the recipe for the multipurpose cleaner from the workshop:

- 1/8 cup white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon borax
- 1 3/4 cups hot water
- 10 drops of essential oils (lavender or lemon is excellent)
- 1/8 cup liquid Castile soap (add last)

In the future, ECOS and the Office of Sustainability will also be offering a workshop on how to plan

more sustainable vacations and another workshop on how to plan green get-togethers.

Brent Buechler is associate director of the Environmental Coordination Office of Students (ECOS). He is a second-year student studying environmental and conservation sciences.

Carol Ly is project manager of the Living Green Workshops for ECOS. She is a third-year student studying general sciences.

ECOS is the Students' Union sustainability office; it runs seven projects throughout the year. Projects range from an organic community garden to e-waste recycling of batteries, old cell phones and inkjet cartridges. This year, approximately 140 volunteers help run its projects.



Attendees of the workshop making their own green cleaner

Kaleidoscope Video Challenge

Alberta Council for Global Cooperation to Host Online Youth Video Contest

Hans Olson

The Kaleidoscope Real World Video Challenge is a call-out to youth across Canada to raise their voices on global issues.

Kaleidoscope is an online forum for youth to reach their peers, communities and leaders by creating videos less than five minutes in length that highlight why they think active global citizenship is important and what makes them global citizens.

“This is an opportunity for youth who care about our world to share their ideas on a national stage,” said Rose Yewchuk, Kaleidoscope National Coordinator.

“This is a really great contest. It opened my eyes about global issues and because I made a film that I shared with friends and family, it opened their eyes too. It was a great way to get involved and spread the word about what is going on around

the world,” one participant from the 2008 Kaleidoscope contest commented.

“We learn how to work together, to write scripts, act, edit, film, record music and much more. Overall it was a good experience, even if it became highly stressful at times!” said another.

Many schools and community groups across Canada are using the initiative as a way to engage youth with global issues in a creative way. All styles and genres of videos are welcome—from documentary to animation, music video to spoken word.

The contest will be open until **March 31, 2011**. The first-place winners in each age category (ages 13 and under and 14–18) will receive a video camera or equivalent cash prize up to \$500. A selection of winners will go to Ottawa in

September 2011 to present their videos at the Kaleidoscope National Gala and Youth Conference.

Visit www.videochallenge.ca or www.defivideo.ca for contest guidelines, videos and other resources, or contact Hans Olson (780-988-0200 or hans@acgc.ca) for information about Kaleidoscope presentations and video production workshops.

Kaleidoscope Real World Video Challenge is a joint initiative of provincial or regional councils for international cooperation, acting collectively as the Inter-Council Network (ICN). The contest is funded in part by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Hans Olson is Alberta regional coordinator for Kaleidoscope.

... Articles and Features ...

KALEIDOSCOPE

DÉFI VIDÉO / REAL WORLD VIDEO CHALLENGE



Kaleidoscope winners from across Canada celebrate at the National Youth Gala, Ottawa, 2008



Resources

Five-Minute Field Trips

25 November 2002

Dear Teacher:

The activities in *Five Minute Field Trips* have been grouped into three sections: Awareness, Understanding and Action. We feel that sequencing activities in this order is a natural flow for learning about our world.

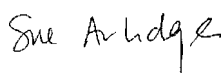
How does it work? Begin your nature studies with **AWARENESS**: outdoor activities that are sensory and experiential. They give kids a chance to reconnect with the earth, to become a bird or a tree, to smell the dandelions, and imagine the wind.

After having some fun, ooohing and ahhhhhing with the natural world, lead the group into the **UNDERSTANDING** activities that are more exploratory and inquiry-based. For instance, investigate a tree from its bark and leaves to the functions of various parts; or examine and record the insects that live in a shrub; or locate and make a temporary habitat for insects that live in a nearby pond.

After the students have had a chance to reconnect with and explore the natural world, they're ready to look for a local **ACTION** project. In schools, we often overlook the action component of education. This is the opportunity to give students valuable citizenship skills while guiding them towards shaping a more ecologically sound, sustainable community. Please don't overlook the significance of small, local habitat projects. From our experience, small projects teach kids how to have a positive impact on their local world, and then they get to live with the beautiful change. Take our advice, try it! You'll like it! It's some of the most meaningful education you'll ever do.

Five Minute Field Trips was produced through a partnership between the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the Calgary Zoo, and the GEOEC. More information on the annual conference, workshops, and on-line website based resources for teachers can be obtained from our website (www.geoec.org) or by calling the Alberta Teachers' Association at 1-800-232-7208. To request a workshop for teachers on *Five Minute Field Trips*, or to give us your valuable feedback, you can contact the authors through Gareth (e-mail gthomson@cpawscalgary.org, or call 403-678-0079). Thanks to Alberta Ecotrust for their support of this project.

Have fun!



Sue Arlidge



Gareth Thomson

Un-Nature Trail

A brief and enjoyable activity in which students walk quietly down a trail, looking for objects not found in nature. Useful for developing observation skills and for discussing camouflage and the problem of litter.

Time Required: 30 minutes

Materials Required: A bag containing ~15-20 objects collected from the schoolroom. Colours should range from neutral or green (e.g. crayon) to brightly fluorescent (e.g. highlighter), and from small (eraser) to large (e.g. exercise book).

Instructions: You'll need to identify a well-defined path that students will be able to follow. Before the students arrive in the area count the number of objects in the bag, then walk the path and 'litter' the area with your objects. For added fun you can suspend them from branches (we humans rarely look up!), insert pencils partially into the ground, etc.

Next, gather your students at the beginning of the trail, and tell them that there are some unnatural objects spread along the trail. The students' challenge is to find as many of them as they can. Ask students to walk slowly, look actively, and not point out items to other students (as this is a friendly competition). They can use their fingers to keep count of the objects they see.

Then lead the way on the trail. Walk veery slowly, and model quiet looking for your students. Gather students at the end of the trail, and ask them "If you saw more than three objects, put up your hand". Next ask them if they saw 5, then 7, etc. until you exceed the number of items on the trail! Ask them "If you saw the pink flamingo, put up your hand" (If you didn't actually put out a flamingo, this will tell you which students are being overly-imaginative!). Ask students if they saw specific, hard-to-see items. Were some items harder to see than others? (Yes - because they are camouflaged. If necessary, define this word for students). Is it easy to tell the human items that don't belong in nature? (YES! It's best not to litter - for environmental and aesthetic reasons).

Encourage students to walk the trail again and look for items they missed the first time.

Extension: Your students could set up a simple nature trail for other students to walk during recess. They could also use this as an opportunity to ask other classes to help in the crusade against littering!



Who am I?

This is an entertaining activity in which students get a crash course in both schmoozing and ecology! A picture of a common ecosystem element (e.g. grass, hare, coyote, etc.) is attached to the back of each student. Students mingle with others and ask questions to determine what plant or animal they are.

(Reproduced with the permission of Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society)

Materials: Laminated **Who am I?** signs, string. Please note that you should either make these signs yourself (with the help of students!) or alternatively download the signs from the **Who Am I?** activity on the CPAWS website: www.rockies.ca/cpaws/education

Time Required: 30 minutes (can be done in conjunction with **Weird Webs**)

Instructions: Introduce (or review) with the class a number of different classification schemes, recording them on the board so that students will be able to see them throughout the activity.

producer, consumer and decomposer
first order, second order, third order consumer
predator and prey
carnivore, omnivore, and herbivore.

Students should then be given a picture of one of the common ecosystem elements included in the **Who am I** tags (e.g. grass, hare, coyote, etc.). Tell students to show this card to no one.

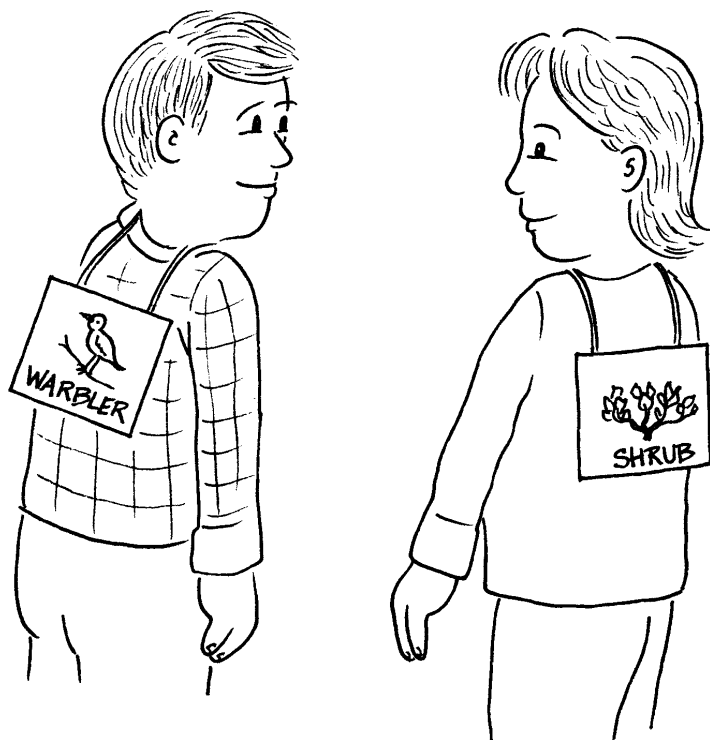
Next, ask each student to hang a sign around the neck of one of their fellow students so that the sign is on their back. Tell the students: "The object of this game is for you to determine what ecosystem element you are. You can do this only by asking questions of the other students that use the vocabulary on the board. You'll have to ask questions like 'Am I a consumer?' - and all your questions can only be answered by a "Yes" or a "No". You can guess what your ecosystem tag is - but you only get one guess, and if you're wrong, you're out of the game! I encourage you to 'schmooze' around and mingle, moving from student to student".

Next, answer any questions and let the game commence. Monitor all questions and answers. If students find they need more information, stop the game briefly, tell students that they are allowed to ask more general yes/no questions ("Do I have fur?" "Am I bigger than a breadbox?") to find out more. Towards the end, allow students to give hints to their peers.

Once everyone has found out their identity, ask students to get into one of the following groups:

- producer, consumer and decomposer
- first order, second, order, third order consumer
- predator and prey
- carnivore, omnivore, and herbivore

Extension: Weird Webs (next activity), in which the **Who Am I** characters are joined together with string to create a food web. It is an excellent follow-up activity that you can do immediately after **Who Am I?**



Defending Nature

"The idea of wilderness needs no defence. It just needs more defenders."
- Ed Abbey

Someone once said that the pen is mightier than the sword. Throughout Canada and the world, nature is under attack - we owe it to our students to help them understand this threat, and to give them letter-writing skills they can use to defend their natural heritage. In the process they learn about citizenship!

Time Required: will vary

Material Required: up-to-date resource material from environmental group

Instructions:

To help protect natural ecosystems, have students learn about - and then act on - an environmental land use issue, in which natural areas are under threat from development. A network of environmental groups can be accessed to provide you with this information, and are listed in the Resources section.

You may wish to take on a CPAWS campaign. CPAWS works to protect nature in many regions of Alberta. Up-to-date information on CPAWS campaigns can be obtained on the Internet at <http://www.rockies.ca/cpaws>, or by calling CPAWS in Calgary at 1-403-232-6686.

"Without action, environmental education is just talking, talking, talking..."

Dr. Wangari Maathi



CPAWS' tips for writing effective letters

Keep the following tips in mind as you write your letter:

- state your purpose for writing
- make a very specific request
- tell them about what you've been studying, mention any outdoor field trips, and state how you *feel* about the issue
- if you have made any commitments to lessen your environmental impact, consider mentioning them
- check to make sure that the person you're sending the letter to the right person. Ask yourself if the letter should be copied to anyone else.
- if possible type your letter, using a business letter format - however a neatly handwritten letter can be just as effective.
- be honest: include only necessary and truthful facts
- be concise, brief, and organized. It would be nice if your letter fits onto one page
- be courteous: there is no harm in being polite
- ask for a reply
- check your letter before sending it: edit, revise, check for spelling and grammar
- keep a copy for your records
- SEND a copy to CPAWS for entry into the Edu-Action Award program.

Cool Websites

Check this out—the No Impact Project was conceived by Colin Beavan, aka No Impact Man. Follow the chronicles of his family’s year-long experiment living a zero-waste lifestyle in New York City, at <http://noimpactproject.org/explained/>.

For a *huge* list of books and articles on children and the outdoors, go to <http://idahoptv.org/outdoors/shows/next/book.cfm>.

The City of Edmonton’s Waste Management Branch (www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/garbage_recycling/tours-and-presentations.aspx) offers the following presentations and tours:

- **Waste and Our World—Grades 4–12**
The world of waste comes alive as students discover the past, present and exciting future of waste management in Edmonton. Many teachers say it’s a really great presentation that supports curriculum learning. Call 780-496-6879.
- **Squirmy-Wormy Vermicomposting—Grades 4–6**
Worms can eat your garbage and produce great compost while they’re at it. Explore their fascinating world. Students assist in starting a worm composting bin and examine semifinished worm compost. This workshop is offered Wednesdays and Thursdays from September to June. Call 780-496-5404.
- **The Edmonton Waste Management Centre (EWMC)**
This fascinating tour is for school groups (or any group of ten or more). With its collection of advanced recycling and composting facilities, the EWMC has been called “the ultimate waste theme park.” Discover how recyclables get sorted, how old computers get recycled and how your garbage is turned into compost. Book now! This popular tour fills up quickly. Call 780-496-6879.

GEOEC Executive 2010/11



*Christina Pickles, Robert Twerdoclib, Lara Fenton, Jessica Scalzo, Shashi Shergill, Erin Couillard,
Sharon Vogrinetz, Peter Lenton, Karen Whitehead, Don McLaughlin, Chenoa Marcotte.
Missing: Tanya Stogre, Rita Poruchny, Patricia Hamlin*

Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education Council

Mission Statement

To promote involvement in quality global, environmental and outdoor education

Objectives

- To provide a vehicle for Alberta teachers for professional development and communication in global, environmental and outdoor education
- To study and make professional recommendations about global, environmental and outdoor education issues
- To network with other provincial organizations that have similar concerns

Membership

- Regular member—Active and Associate members of the Alberta Teachers' Association, as specified in ATA bylaws, are entitled to full privileges of council membership including the rights to vote and to hold office.
- Student member—Student members of the ATA are entitled to all benefits and services of council membership except the right to hold office.
- GEOEC members may also choose to belong to the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM) for an additional fee.
- ATA members may sign up for a GEOEC membership through the ATA website as their choice of one free specialist council membership included in the ATA annual fee.
- ATA members and subscribers may also sign up for a GEOEC membership and pay a fee determined by the GEOEC executive. From time to time the executive may decrease the fee to provide incentives for membership recruitment.

Subscribers

- Persons who are not ATA members as specified by ATA bylaws receive all the benefits and services of

council membership except the rights to vote and hold office. Subscribers do have the right to serve as Community Liaisons on the Council Executive.

Publications

- The GEOEC recognizes the wide range of interests among members and strives to foster the exchange of ideas and provide information and articles relating to the various components of the elementary and secondary curricula through the publication of Connections.
- The GEOEC maintains a website in order to publish timely information and provide access to like-minded organizations and individuals.

Annual Conference

- The annual conference features a blend of activities, indoors and outdoors, ranging from hands-on workshops to social gatherings. All grade levels are represented in sessions. The emphasis is on practical information and application. The annual general meeting of the GEOEC is held in conjunction with the conference.

Executive

- Volunteer teachers are elected to serve on the GEOEC executive.
- Contact the president or past president of the GEOEC through the ATA office if you are interested in seeking a position.
- Elections take place at the annual general meeting during the annual conference.

Workshops

- Various activities and workshops are organized by the GEOEC either as stand alone events or in conjunction with other organizations

Join now and become involved in the Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education Council

Name _____ Alberta Teaching Certificate No _____

Address _____ Postal Code _____

School or Employer _____ Grade Level/Specialty _____

New Membership Renewal of Membership

\$25.00 Regular Membership

\$12.50 Student Membership

\$30 Subscription

\$10 EECOM Membership (in addition to Council Membership)

Make cheque payable to the Alberta Teachers' Association and mail it with the application to the Association at 11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton AB T5N 2R1.

Permission for Use of Photographs or Student Work

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) requests the permission of parents/guardians for the reproduction of photographs depicting their children and/or the reproduction of work assignments completed by their children. The photograph/work will be reproduced in the Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education Council (GEOEC) newsletter, *Connections*, and is intended for teacher professional development.

Name of student _____

I, _____ (printed name of parent/guardian of student), agree to the use of this photograph/work for the purpose stated above.

Signature _____

Relationship to student _____

Address _____

Postal code _____

We have recently begun posting archived issues of *Connections* on the GEOEC website (www.geoec.org/newsletter). Are you willing to have your child's written work posted on the Internet as well?

- Yes, I agree to have my child's written work posted on the GEOEC website.
 - Yes, I agree to have my child's written work posted on the GEOEC website, using a first name only.
 - No, I do not want my child's written work posted on the GEOEC website.
-

Please fax or mail forms to

Karen Virag
Supervising Editor
The Alberta Teachers' Association
11010 142 Street NW
Edmonton T5N 2R1
Phone 780-447-9491
Fax 780-455-6481



The Alberta Teachers' Association

\$3,000 Project Grants Available

The ATA Educational Trust is a charitable organization dedicated to the professional growth of Alberta teachers. The Trust awards a number of grants of up to \$3,000 to help Alberta teachers or others involved in education and teaching to develop innovative resources that support curriculum, teaching or learning. Individuals or groups planning to undertake a project or conduct research must submit a detailed proposal on or before May 1, 2011.

In January of each year, the Trust posts application forms for grants and bursaries on its website. For details, go to www.teachers.ab.ca, and click on For Members; Programs and Services; Grants, Awards and Scholarships; and ATA Educational Trust.



AR-ETF-25 2010 09

\$300 ATA Specialist Council Grants

The ATA Educational Trust is a charitable organization dedicated to the professional growth of Alberta teachers. For this grant program, interested teachers may enter their name into a draw for \$300 towards the cost of an ATA specialist council conference.

In January of each year, the Trust posts application forms for grants and bursaries on its website. The deadline for conference grants is September 30, 2011. For details, go to www.teachers.ab.ca, and click on For Members; Programs and Services; Grants, Awards and Scholarships; and ATA Educational Trust.



AR-ETF-23 2010 09

\$500 Bursaries to Improve Knowledge and Skills

The ATA Educational Trust is a charitable organization dedicated to the professional growth of Alberta teachers. The Trust encourages Alberta teachers to improve their knowledge and skills through formal education. The names of 40 (or more) eligible teachers who apply for this bursary will be entered into a draw for up to \$500 to be applied toward tuition.

In January of each year, the Trust posts application forms for grants and bursaries on its website. The deadline for bursary applications is May 1, 2011. For details, go to www.teachers.ab.ca, and click on For Members; Programs and Services; Grants, Awards and Scholarships; and ATA Educational Trust.



AR-ETF-24 2010 09

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY VOICES

Building Momentum in Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education

May 12-15, 2011

Goldeye Centre
Nordegg, Alberta

Keynote Speakers



Mark Anielski

Mark is an economist specializing in measuring the sustainable well-being of communities. Most recently he has become a best-selling book author with his first book *The Economics of Happiness: Building Genuine Wealth*.



Will Gadd

Will is one of the top outdoor adventure athletes in the world. He is an award-winning writer and filmmaker. His book on ice climbing, *Ice & Mixed Climbing—Modern Technique*, is the top publication in its field.



Donna Kennedy-Glans

Donna is the founder of Bridges Social Development, a volunteer organization that trains community leaders in healthcare, law, journalism, education and politics in places like Yemen, Egypt, Oman, Sudan, India and Nepal.

geoeec

Global, Environmental & Outdoor Education Council

For conference information, please contact

Erin Couillard by phone (403-282-2890 ext. 217)

or e-mail (conference@geoeec.org).

www.geoeec.org

GEOEC Executive 2010/11

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