



OUTDOOR COUNCIL
OF CANADA

To Inform & Engage

CONNECTIONS

Issue No 1 - Spring 2010

Our Vision

Every Canadian will have access to outdoor education and recreation.

Our Mission

To promote and enable accessible education and recreation in the outdoor environment.

Our Members

- Are people like you: Anybody who is active in the outdoors, and who has led others there, is invited to join us as a 'Practitioner Member'. You will help support the health and positive development of outdoor activities and education.
- Are organizations like yours: Your organization can join as an 'Associate Member' and help build our industry.

Upcoming OCC courses

Why? The First of the OCC Courses, Leadership Level 1 (hiking), will fast track you on the way to providing high quality programs in natural environments. We have distilled the best of current leadership theory into a two day practical introduction to the nuts and bolts of leadership. The focus is on leadership (75%) with hiking (25%) as the medium to make it real. At the end of this course, you will have



practical skills to plan a day from beginning to end. What you will learn will help you provide the highest quality of experience for your participants, maximize safety, and cover the 'risk management' bases.

Who? Anybody who wants to lead others, especially children, into any natural environment should consider this course. If you are a teacher who wants to take your biology class into the field, or a camp counsellor planning to lead a hiking trip, this course is where you should start. If you are already a leader but have never had any formal training, this course is for you too: It will benchmark your skills and help you find new ways to improve your skills.

How? The OCC will be running courses this spring and summer. Check online [here](#) to register.

A Custom Course? If you want the OCC to run a course for your organization, contact Albi Sole [here](#).

Want to become an Instructor? The OCC doesn't want to be in the business of offering courses over the long term, we want to facilitate others to provide them. If you have leadership experience and want to become an instructor who can run your own courses, see [here](#) for details.

Course Schedule Spring 2010

- May 22-23 - Calgary
- June 19-20 - Vancouver



Name our Newsletter!

The OCC newsletter needs a name and tagline. "Connections - To Inform & Engage" is temporary. Submit your ideas to Alanna Thompson [here](#) or if you like it as is, let us know that too.



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Report from the Field

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The Power of Connections

Written by Jeff Storck, Program Manager for the Tim Horton Children's Ranch

When it comes to making a positive difference there is no stronger tool than connections. Connections develop knowledge, encourage sustainability and promote passion. When an individual makes a connection with the environment, they develop a bond, a distinct relationship that strengthens with each experience. In the increasingly technologically oriented world of the internet, video games and television the gulf between Canadians and the outdoors widens. With this detachment comes apathy towards environmental concerns and human interconnection.

Involvement in outdoor activities promotes good health, develops

positive character principles and encourages environmental stewardship. Participants involved in outdoor activity gain tools that help to create new opportunities for themselves

Trust and respect are the corner stones to strong, successful relationships. Children who learn about trust and respect in school rarely have opportunity to implement this knowledge. Introducing these concepts and what they mean through an activity in the outdoors puts these principles into action makes them real.

Ideas without actions are worthless. – Helen Keller



Simply, the Outdoor Council of Canada connects Canadians to their outdoors. This connection is not only beneficial to environmental sustainability and developing healthy Canadians, but is integral in the success of our future.

"Mon activité préférée parmi tout c'était l'escalade. Avant, j'avais seulement vu l'escalade à la télévision et c'était mon rêve de le faire. L'escalade m'a permis de surmonter ma peur des hauteurs. Je vous remercie pour l'expérience."



"My favourite activity of all was climbing. Before, I had only seen climbing on tv and it was my dream to do it. Climbing allowed me to overcome my fear of heights. Thank you for the experience"

- camper at Tim Horton Children's



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Greetings & Resources

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Associate Member's Director Sarah Osberg

- It is exciting to be part of the Outdoor Council of Canada, as it grows to represent the interests and voices of our outdoor community across Canada. As an outdoor educator and guide myself, I am thrilled to be on the OCC board, and hope to communicate with

many new comers either as associate or individual members. As the Associate Members' Director, it has struck me how many other impassioned educators, guides and advocates there are across Canada that take people of all ages outside to connect and experience our shared wilderness, and whose values and missions align with those of the OCC.

Currently, the associate members include a wide range of outdoor or wilderness education, guiding, advocacy, and outdoor recreation groups. These groups transect middle and high school programs, college and university programs, summer and year-round camps, outdoor centres and certifying bodies. We are looking for more input and involvement to help create a voice and strength to support a Canada-wide group with huge vision and a starting point that is relatively new. You can join as an 'Associate Member' and help build our industry.

I'm looking forward to hearing and learning more about our nation's outdoor education and recreation programming.



President Doug Saul

- Imagine a time when outdoor education is a core subject in schools, and our nation is as literate in ecology and outdoor travel as it is in reading and arithmetic. Imagine when newcomers to Canada have the opportunity to discover the richness and beauty of our nation's natural heritage.

And imagine a time when every person in Canada has a favourite natural spot to visit in their neighbourhood - whenever they want or need it: a tree or a bend in a river bank or a clearing in a ravine or a rock outcropping. This type of citizenry would create a nation that cherished and protected its wild spaces in a way that returns the health and joy that wild spaces have always provided for us. This goal is entirely possible. If we are to attain this, we as a nation will have to find a national voice for outdoor leadership and recreation. We will have to create accessible leadership templates and provide to government research results that demonstrate the benefits and the relative safety of outdoor recreation and education.

The Outdoor Council of Canada is dedicated to enabling all Canadians to have the opportunity to enjoy our natural heritage. We have made much progress since its inception just over one year ago. We are determined to maintain our goal of advocacy, enablement and access with regard to outdoor recreation. Please join us. Become an involved member of the OCC. Join us with your active membership and with the guidance of your outdoor community.

Learn more and connect with the community by checking out these helpful resources

OCC Facebook group

OCC discussion forum

Canadian Avalanche Centre

National Parks of Canada

Environment Canada Weather Office

Mountain Equipment Coop

Children and Nature Network

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

Pembina Institute

Inside Education

Global Environmental and Outdoor Education Council

Wild Backpacker - Recipes

Leave No Trace

Canadian Camping Association

Peakfinder

Interpretive Guides Association





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ED Greeting & Contact

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Executive Director Albi Sole - These are exciting days for the OCC. For over a year we have worked hard to build the infrastructure for a national organization that can make a difference, and now we are ready to launch our first certification course: 'Leadership Level 1 (hiking)'.

When we started on this journey, we knew that Canada had big gaps in certifications that were accessible and appropriate for teachers, camp councilors, and others. We set out assuming that we could build these courses from those offered by national organizations in other countries. But when we went looking, there was nothing that fitted us. There are many skills courses, but nothing to help a beginner leader plan and lead a simple day out into a natural area. So we set out to build our own from the ground up. The challenge was huge. From the start we were committed to providing a course that would provide all the key tools needed for a beginner leader to run a high quality program in a safe way, *and* deliver it in a weekend. No easy task, but the result is fantastic. The course will be a rich source of key ideas for any leader. Designed for the beginner leader, even experienced leaders will find it to be both a great refresher and a source of new inspiration.

I want to thank the many people on our Board and the Certification Committee for their generous donation of time and ideas. Their commitment will make possible the dawn of new era in the relationship between Canadians and their natural environments.

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