



OUTDOOR COUNCIL
OF CANADA

To Inform & Engage

CONNECTIONS

Issue No 2 - Fall 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.

Reflections on the Leadership Level 1 Pilot Course

In early summer, the OCC launched the 'Leadership Level 1 (Hiking)' training and certification course. The course is designed to be an entry level program for those wanting to lead outdoors. The focus is on helping instructors understand their roles and responsibilities as a leader, while providing them with a solid foundation in how to go about organizing and leading a high quality activity in a low risk environment.

A total of 36 students in Alberta and Ontario took the course. They came

from very diverse backgrounds and with a wide variety of previous experience. Everyone had good things to say, and that the general consensus was that the course is on target.

For the Certification Committee members who developed and taught the courses, it was also a big learning experience. We were struck by the huge diversity amongst the students, the skills they brought with them, and the things they found of high value in the course. That such a diverse audience, many of whom are experts in their own right, should all find something new in the course speaks

to the depth and timeliness of the new program.

Next Steps

The big challenge for us now is to make the course widely available. To do this we will have to train and certify a cohort of instructors to deliver the course. This is the Certification Committee's next project. We plan to complete the training of the first instructors before the end of winter so that they can take the course to their communities in time for the spring training period.



Calgary Outdoor Festival concurrent with OCC AGM

Get out there and explore your outdoor community with a Film Festival, Gear Swap, Demos, a Trade Show and specials at local retailers and climbing gyms. More info at the Calgary Outdoor Festival site [here](#).



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Report from the Field

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IN THE SHADOWS OF RISK

MANAGEMENT: watch out for those bears, take care close to that cliff.
- Bert East

How do we minimize hazard for our school/ scouts/ church or other custodial groups as we lead trips in remote areas? This question is often answered with lists. What clothing and equipment should you bring and has it been checked? Do you have adequate liquids and nourishment? Once you have ensured that your group is properly equipped and has been briefed on hazards such as wildlife and terrain you are more or less ready to go.

Having led school wilderness trips for the last 30 years with the Calgary Board of Education I have grown to appreciate the impact of thorough preparation on the performance and experiences of a group. My test would always come on the trip where I would discover either what I had forgotten to cover or had not covered well. Planning templates now guide a teacher with the CBE through the planning process. Appropriate supervision with security checks is now the norm. Transportation to and from the trailhead is now recognized as a hazard that must be managed. Detailed itineraries are submitted with

contingencies for interruptions in the itinerary. A recent site visit is required in order to familiarize the leader with changes to the area and recognition of objective hazards. Weather considerations, student readiness, parent communication and supervision strategies also need to be considered.

Over the last few years I have discovered the value of simulations to help prepare students for the wilderness. These ranged from practicing lead sweep travel partnering in the school yard in advance of a short hike for grade 7s, a full day camping and hiking day in a local park with tent set ups meal cooking and food hangs to a winter day trip where skiing, snow shelter building and cooking in the snow could be practiced. I found that this improved the student's confidence and competence. I still felt uneasy at times with students who took unnecessary risk. I found myself often using the words trustworthiness and commonsense.

Supervision may mitigate this sort of hazard however; connecting students' behaviours at school to program opportunities has been a useful way to foster reflection and positive character development. I communicate early on that field trip opportunities are a

privilege, not an entitlement. I use classroom activities such as cooperative and initiative games and equipment practice to communicate expectations. These activities also aid in developing a supporting and caring culture in the group. High expectations have not hurt the participation level in my program and parents support the character development of their child. I have found that I need to tailor my expectations by grade but the overall message is the same.

It is so rewarding for the students, volunteers and the teacher when this habit of helping, supporting and caring becomes the group's culture on a trip. **Quote from a Grade 8 trip in April 2010** "This trip was the most amazing experience! I have learned so much about myself and what I can do. Working with a group for six days has made me a stronger person and leader..... you really turn into a family. When it came to the trail we really had to trust each other. I thought it was really great when we had to help each other over obstacles because it brought us all closer together..... I also learned that being yourself is great. We all smelled, had greasy hair and were wearing dirty clothing, but it was fine because nobody judged. People's real personalities came out. I hope that everyone can one day just see the people around them for who they really are. Just see everyone's natural beauty"



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AGM & Resources

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Board Positions standing for Election at October AGM

- President
- Secretary-Treasurer
- Director-at-Large
- Director, Associate Members
- Regional Representatives for British Columbia, Ontario and the Maritime provinces
- Aboriginal Representative

All Directors and representatives shall be elected for a term of two years. Members can be nominated from the floor at the AGM or if unable to attend can inform the Executive Director in advance, and be nominated in absentia.

Consider joining the OCC board, we can use you! If you have treasurer or financial experience, contact [Albi](#) about the Secretary/Treasurer position.



Upcoming AGM & LL1 Course

Date: AGM - October 30th, 2010

Location: 13931 Woodpath Rd SW. See a map [here](#) (Fish Creek Park Map) or [here](#) (Google Maps)

Schedule: AGM 6:00 - 9:00 pm

Leadership Level 1 course - Oct 30, 9am - 5pm, Oct 31, 9am - 5pm

Join us for the Leadership Level 1 course and learn the essentials of outdoor leadership. Interested in being an OCC instructor? Come on out for the LL1 course to complete step one of your instructor training. For more details or to register, contact [Albi Sole](#) or see our [website](#).

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

OCC Facebook group

OCC discussion forum

Canadian Avalanche Centre

Children and Nature Network

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

Inside Education

Global Environmental & Outdoor Education Council

Leave No Trace

Canadian Camping Association

Peakfinder

Interpretive Guides Association

Recently Added:

Wild Adventure

Alpine Club of Canada

**The Whyte Museum
of the Canadian Rockies**





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ED Greeting & Contact

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Executive Director Albi Sole - The OCC's mandate is a big one, and that can seem pretty daunting at times from my perspective. There is a lot of work to do and few resources available to get it done. I feel real progress is being made however. The successful delivery of our first courses has been a huge milestone. I am sure that very soon an OCC 'leadership Level 1' will be seen as the logical 1st step for the majority of people on their journey to be an outdoor leader. More than that, I think it will help move our industry forward in many ways. All this has been made possible through the volunteer help of our Board and Certification Committee. I want to offer a big thank you to everyone involved for their faith in and commitment to the project.

Our Annual General meeting is coming up very soon. This will be our opportunity to touch base with our membership and induct new blood into our leadership. The OCC is a practitioner-owned organization. Ultimately we are here to serve your interests. I hope you can join us, share your ideas with us, and perhaps consider volunteering to become part of our team.



Message from the Curriculum Development Committee - Ian Sherrington

Struck in February of 2010, the Curriculum Development Committee of the OCC was charged with the first task of creating and facilitating a Level 1 Outdoor Leader course. The initial offerings of this course were launched in Calgary on two separate weekends at the end of May with the goal of evaluating the curriculum, content, and delivery. Participant feedback was a key piece in this evaluation and as such, the committee made various small but important changes before the final two course deliveries in June; one held in Ontario and the other in Calgary. The Level 1 Outdoor Leader course was very well received despite a wide range in participant experience levels and backgrounds. Following the successes and learning opportunities these initial courses provided, the committee will be working to create a system of standardizing and supporting the manner in which the level 1 is taught. This will include an instructor manual and a system of identifying and validating potential course providers.

Contact Information

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