



Mountain Equipment Co-op and the Outdoor Council of Canada partner to launch the 'OUTDOOR ACTIVE SCHOOLS' Initiative

With financial assistance from **Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC)**, the **Outdoor Council of Canada (OCC)** will create a flagship program to enable the delivery of high quality, low risk, outdoor active and outdoor experiential programming in the K-12 school system.

“Outdoor activity and outdoor education have been disappearing from the lives of Canadian children for more than a generation,” says Andrew Stegemann, Community Program Manager with MEC. “Outdoor experiences are a critical part of healthy physical, psychological, social and educational development. Without providing children with these experiences we fail to adequately prepare them to become active, productive, and engaged citizens.”

Albi Sole, Executive Director with the OCC adds, “In general, most schools are ill equipped to provide the level of outdoor active and outdoor experiential education that is optimal for success. This is rooted in the chronic shortage of outdoor leadership expertise within the K-12 school system.”

The **OUTDOOR ACTIVE SCHOOLS** initiative will develop a comprehensive intervention that:

- 1) Trains, certifies and empowers teachers to provide outdoor active and outdoor experiential programming.
- 2) Trains, certifies and empowers school administrators to supervise and support a comprehensive outdoor active and outdoor experiential educational program
- 3) Provides the risk management protocols required to ensure that outdoor activities are reliably safer than other physical activities.

For 2015, this initiative will be centred in Alberta, with the intention of moving towards Canada-wide implementation.

About the Outdoor Council of Canada

The Outdoor Council of Canada is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote and enable accessible education and recreation in the outdoor environment. The OCC provides entry level training and certification for teachers and anyone leading youth outdoors and risk management support to the organizations that hire them. The voting members of the OCC are outdoor leaders and any individual who supports our mission. The OCC is headquartered in Calgary but has growing chapters across Canada.

About Mountain Equipment Co-op

An outdoor retail co-operative, MEC exists to encourage and inspire Canadians to live active outdoor lifestyles. From backcountry trails to city streets, MEC supports a range of outdoor activities, including climbing, hiking, camping, snowsports, watersports, cycling, running and yoga. Well known for selling high-quality well-designed products that offer great value, MEC employs outdoor enthusiasts who possess a strong service ethic to provide its members with an authentic and accessible customer experience. MEC has more than 3.5 million members across Canada, whom it serves through 17 stores in 6 provinces as well as mec.ca and the Shop MEC iPhone® app. Anyone can join MEC by purchasing a \$5 individual lifetime membership.

For Further information:

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