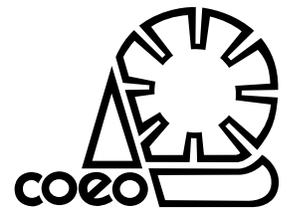


# Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION  
Fall 2022, 35(1)



# Pathways

COEO

Formed in 1972, the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO) is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that promotes safe, quality outdoor education experiences for people of all ages. We achieve this by publishing the *Pathways* journal, running an annual conference and regional workshops, maintaining a website, and working with kindred organizations as well as government agencies. Members of COEO receive a subscription to *Pathways*, as well as admittance to workshops, courses and conferences. A membership application form is included on the inside back cover of this issue of *Pathways*.

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## **Pathways**

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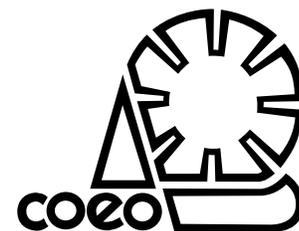
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Schools, camps, centres, clubs: these are all commonly understood as places where outdoor education takes place. But outdoor education “happens” ever more widely, it seems, among families, communities and friends. It serves as an umbrella term for an ever increasing understanding of the need to support and advance nature in people’s lives.

The label has breadth. Similarly to how *Acclimatization* (Steve Van Matre’s Programming) started out as a specifically understood set of outdoor education practices in camp settings in the 1970’s, forest bathing, for example, is now another well-crafted set of practices under a wide understanding of outdoor education. I’m speaking here of holding true and strong to the importance of the outdoor education umbrella term identity: strength for all programs and activities. This issue of *Pathways* dives into the idea of community.

Community work and outdoor education is perhaps less recognized, but I suppose this depends on where you live and its community initiatives. Long time COEO friend, Barrie Martin with Yours Outdoors in Haliburton, would have much to say about this connection of community and nature. In fact, I’d say he’s an expert in connectivity. *Pathways* showcases community not-for-profits and community-minded programs and people. Each article here speaks to different aspects of community-centric thinking, from Matt Thompson’s community canoes to the partnership of Outward Bound Canada and Ancient Forest Exploration and Research to the solid specific

commitment of programs such as Girls\* on Ice, Spirit North and Waterways. Another kind of specific programming is the work in leadership development of MHO River Roots and canoe heritage education of the Canadian Canoe Museum. All are present here along with a community muse by the always thoughtful Chris Peters.



A special shout out too, to Helena Juhasz, this issue’s artist who has contributed to *Pathways* and other COEO publications for over twenty years. Please find her Sketch Pad bio just below.

Let’s celebrate just a small sample of community minded outdoor education.

---

*Bob Henderson*  
Editor

**Sketch Pad** – Helena Juhasz is an artist, author and illustrator specializing in children’s book illustration and sequential art. Although she has two science degrees, one in Kinesiology and the other in Physical Therapy (with a minor in Environmental Science), her passion is the arts and she enjoys connecting with her soul through writing, drawing and painting.

When not involved in creative pursuits, Helena loves cycling and skiing where she lives in the Pacific Northwest with her husband, daughter and dog named Twig! Helena can be reached at [helena.juhasz@gmail.com](mailto:helena.juhasz@gmail.com). Helena’s artwork appears on the cover and pages 2, 5–6, 9, 16, 19–20, 24–25, 27, 30–31, 33 and 34.

# President's View

As this fall arrived, cast in the golden light and foliar brilliance of September, COEO extended the invitation to "Gather Round the Fire" once again.

Our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference was an incredible celebration of our Council's invaluable community, the hard work we've accomplished and the fun we've had over the past 50 years. The conference, graciously hosted by Camp Muskoka, offered a festive opportunity for reconnection, reflection and planning forward towards our next 50 years.

Such an enormous undertaking requires a committed community of talented volunteers. From Miigwech to Elder Peter Schuler who both began and concluded our conference in a good way with his teachings, both challenging and inspiring our council onward in our vital work of reconciliation. Thanks to our keynotes Bob Henderson and Simon Priest for both reflecting on OE's history and our future. A rousing applause to the wealth of presenters who burned brightly, volunteering their vast knowledge, experience and joy through a diverse complement of workshops, as well as our talented entertainers who helped us dance both nights away. Thanks to the 2022 Conference Organizing Committee.

The success of this weekend was co-chaired by Natalie Kemp and Aaron Parcher, with incredible support from Danielle Barrett, Ben Blakey, Kyle Clarke, Hil Coburn, Bob Henderson, Claire Kemp, April Nicolle, Jennie Nicolle-Smith, Karen O'Krafka, Walt Sepic, and David Spencer. And finally, thank you to all who attended this heart-warming weekend! COEO continues to be a supportive and vibrant community, due in large part to the energy and enthusiasm of its members. This conference was no exception. These injections of high quality professional learning opportunities are enhanced by our collective experience, engagement and COEO's incredible ability to celebrate our Outdoor Ed community.

We were finally able to celebrate outstanding members of our community again with the return of our COEO awards and were treated

to a heartening celebration of these deserving recipients! Congratulations to our award winners, recognized for their exemplary work in Outdoor Education. These include the career-long contributions of Bonnie Anderson, winner of the Honorary Life Membership Award and Bill Elgie, winner of the Robin Dennis Award, as well as members who have made significant contributions through their work on the board of directors as well as in their careers, including this year's President's Awards recipients, Liz Kirk and Minka Chambers. We also recognized an extraordinary emergent outdoor educator, Jennifer Oelschlagel, with the Amethyst Award.

I would also like to extend enormous gratitude to our outgoing 2021/2022 Board of Directors. Your hard work and adaptability during an ongoing pandemic have been extraordinary. We continued to support our members through another difficult winter, and then to invite an in-person event for our anniversary! We bid farewell to Aaron Parcher, Danielle Barrett, Barb Sheridan, all of whom made so many important contributions to the board and to outdoor education. I am thrilled that so many will be continuing on the board this year and that we can welcome new directors with energy and ideas to enrich our work. I look forward to all that our dynamic, experienced and energetic board will accomplish together in 2022/2023. In my second year as president, I am humbled to continue our work as a council, including planning future advocacy and events!

As we look forward to events in the chillier season, we are thrilled to extend an invitation to join us in January at our annual Make Peace with Winter conference, hosted by Camp Kawartha. We relish the comradery and connection of in-person professional development and fun as we Make Peace in 2023. We hope to see you there!

Whatever the winter ahead might bring for you, I hope you can carve out time and energy to experience it outdoors!

---

*Karen O'Krafka*  
*President*

## Canoeing & Cultural Kinship: An Analysis of the Perceived Benefits of Canoe Programs for Indigenous Youth in Manitoba

By Madeline Mitchell

### Introduction

The promotion of sport, recreation and land-based learning has continually been referenced as a positive step in addressing numerous aspects of the 94 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action including #89, supporting reconciliation through physical activity. The use of canoes in school programs can help to achieve this call to action. The history of the canoe can be used as a pathway to reconciliation by educating students on the impacts of colonialism and encouraging the continuation and revitalization of Indigenous canoeing practices (Erickson & Wylie Krotz, 2021) The dispossession of traditional land and practices from Métis, Inuit and First Nation peoples has degraded the relationship with the natural world and slowed the transmission of teachings on how to protect all of nature, human and non human.

There is a magic to canoeing that can facilitate reconnecting with ancestral and cultural ties, improve self-confidence, and allow for a deeper understanding and appreciation for nature. These benefits were felt overwhelmingly by a group of Indigenous youths in Winnipeg, who had the opportunity to connect with paddling and then realized they needed to help provide others with those same opportunities. As a result, they created Waterways, a Manitoba-based, not-for-profit organization that specializes in empowering Indigenous youth of all ages to connect with their culture, discover their passion for exploring, and foster a sense of curiosity and passion for nature through paddling.

The organization works to strengthen connections among participants with the land, their identity, and their community by teaching basic paddling skills and safety lessons interwoven with traditional

activities. These programs operate in a number of First Nations in Manitoba in collaboration with school groups and community organizations to integrate programs into schools and to offer camps for youths during summer holidays.

I interviewed a number of Waterways staff and chronicled some responses here to better understand the ways in which the promotion of canoeing in schools and land-based education is furthering reconciliation. Questions were asked to assess any perceived changes in youth curiosity, awareness and respect for the environment, as well as any obvious changes in youths' physical, mental, and spiritual states following canoe programs. Answers were looked at with an Indigenous Studies lens and compared with other work around the effects of land-based education. With every interview, new benefits emerged, and the following themes were found:

### Cultural and Ancestral Ties

Relations to the canoe and the indigeneity of the craft are important realities that Waterways staff recognize. The land is not seen by many Indigenous people as having specific delineations; rather, all aspects of the environment including the water and the sky are believed to be formed from the same substance by the Ancestors. Canoes are not only made from this substance, but are intrinsically intertwined with Indigenous peoples and practices (Erickson & Wylie Krotz, 2021). Canoeing is innately Indigenous and providing youths with more opportunities to be on the land is a chance to connect with their culture. "[I]n Indigenous cultures, previously the canoe used to be considered part of the family, and I think by facilitating more time in a boat and a canoe, kids begin to remember that familial tie to being on the land and on the water" (Allison).



Connections to the land and community are integral to participating in the flow of traditional knowledge, often referred to as blood memory; this connects Indigenous peoples with ancestral practices that support everyday life (Weber-Pillwax, 2021). One staff member mentioned that many youths admitted to never having canoed previously, but “a lot of Indigenous youth, like, they’ll just get on the water and be immediately really good at paddling or whatever they do on the land just because they have that ancestral knowledge” (Nadya). Being able to and being “good” at paddling, many staff noted, not only seemed to help youths’ self-confidence, but also offered them opportunities for self-discovery. “Connection with the land means connection with your individual self and your unique identity and these kids

are learning who they are as Anishinabe, through being outside” (Allison).

Historically, canoes were seen not only as useful for transportation and the collection of food or appreciated only for their instrumental value, but as living beings that framed social relations and participated in ceremony, spirituality, and identity (Erickson & Wylie Krotz, 2021). This theme supports the idea that, by teaching younger generations paddling skills, these relationships can be revitalized and connect more people to traditional ways of being.

#### **Connection to the Land**

The canoe and the land are spiritual beings and relatives that help us to understand the interconnected relationships between

Indigenous peoples and nature (Erickson & Wylie Krotz, 2021). Land-based education recognizes the interdependent relationship between health, culture and nature and helps students reach their educational potential through interaction with the land (Johnson & Ali, 2020). The dispossession of traditional lands has led to difficulties in participating in and sharing of traditional knowledge, which can affect the health, culture, identity, and function of the community (Big-Canoe & Richmond, 2014).

Canoeing offers a way for youth to see firsthand the fascinating intricacies of their environment and explore a deeper understanding of their own identity and that of the natural world. “[Youths] hear about climate change, they hear about environmental issues, but it’s not really realized until they’re out there and they see it and they know what’s happening. So, I think that really helps because they’re able to go onto land and listen to people and learn about why the environment is changing around them, why that isn’t good, and they’re learning about their own stewardship practices from their own communities” (Olivia).

A few interviews revealed tangible evidence that the youth’s interest in their lands had increased following canoe programs. As one staff member remarked, “I watched these kids go from, like, throwing trash in the river, throwing trash all over the ground, and now they pick up other trash that they see. You know, it doesn’t take much. It’s just like you plant the seed that this is their land, this is their home, and they need to protect it, and it starts to grow” (Allison).

In addition to an increased respect for the natural world that was observed after canoeing, many staff confessed that some of their favourite moments were those in which the kids were quiet. Well, silent but in awe watching an eagle fly overhead, or at peace while they reveled in the beauty of the river. Many noticed that spending time outdoors allowed youths to relax by connecting with the land and their traditions. Through Waterways programs, “kids are experiencing something that is inherently theirs [...]: canoeing. And, they’re experiencing the land and the environment in a traditional way which most of them have never had the opportunity to do” (James).



## Community

*Mino-bimaadiziwin*, which loosely translates to “living the good life”, is an Anishinabe term that refers to the equitable and holistic relationship between Anishinabe physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and the community, which includes the human, natural, and spiritual worlds (Big-Canoe & Richmond, 2014). It is believed that, due to the profound cultural and spiritual connection between Indigenous peoples and their traditional lands, environmental health is directly related to community and human health (Big-Canoe & Richmond, 2014).

This idea is a central theme supported by many staff who run canoe programs with Indigenous youth. One noted that “there’s a lot of kids who didn’t feel like they mattered or felt like they didn’t belong to anything that was really hard to see, but you can see that they were building that sense of community with their peers through the [canoe] programming. And they were finding a place where they belong in nature” (Olivia).

Many staff also felt the importance of including community members in program creation and implementation in order to produce community-specific, culturally relevant canoe programs for the health and benefit of youths. The TRC Call to Action #90 includes working collaboratively to ensure access to programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Indigenous peoples. Community integration can create more meaningful programs and relationships. These interviews found that, through canoeing, youth also learn to interact with others positively. “As we were canoeing, they were learning how to paddle and how to steer and how to cooperate with one another instead of spinning in circles” (Olivia). Others interviewed felt that through paddling and engaging with others and the natural world, participants started to care more for the people in the community and developed a deeper sense of responsibility for human and environmental health. Canoeists cared

about their paddling partners and were sharing skills with others by the end of the programs. These benefits were observed by a majority of interviewees, with most hoping to incorporate more community members in canoe programs. There is strong evidence from a growing body of research that supports the idea that youth with stronger social ties within their community have greater feelings of self-identity and self-esteem (Big-Canoe & Richmond, 2014).

## Positive Learning Environment

Overcoming the fear of tipping and the challenges of properly executing a T-rescue or simply having the opportunity for unstructured (safe) play were recurring themes in interviews. There are a range of feelings that come with land-based learning, from the frustration of learning a new skill to the joys of exploring new landscapes. Allowing youths to experience the entire spectrum of emotions through unstructured play in a positive setting, letting them just be kids and enjoy play, can be immensely educational (Cotton, et al., 2017). “Certainly, the most important part is being on the land, as often as possible, through every season, giving kids a daily opportunity to play and simply be children outdoors, in a safer space” (Allison).

One of the main goals of canoe programs for Indigenous youth, as noted by many staff, is to have fun in any and all ways possible, “and with kids, having fun, first thing they do is tip. And they tip often.” (Mo). Then, through play, youths learn problem-solving skills and work together to get back in the boat, just to do it all again. By providing participants with opportunities for play, youth are also given the chance to choose their own adventure, allowing “them to take control in a way that they hadn’t really been able to before” (Olivia). Some told stories of youth teaching other friends how to execute T-rescues, so they could tip continually without the help of staff to recover.

Many staff also noted the benefits of having an opportunity to participate in activities that challenge youths both physically and

mentally, as some communities lack the resources to be able to provide youths with activities. Respondents also recognize the benefits to participants' physical and mental health that sport and canoeing allow. The promotion of physical activity also helps to address the TRC Call to Action #19, closing the gap in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

### **Decolonizing Land-Based Education**

The lasting effects of colonialism have altered many ways of life for Indigenous peoples, including cultural connections and perceptions towards the environment. Previous work in this field has found that developing recreation and sport opportunities to encourage activity for Indigenous youth through properly structured programming interwoven with cultural teachings can have transformative effects (Johnson & Ali, 2019). However, the colonial education system produces some resistance in the implementation of these types of programs, as some methods invalidate Indigenous knowledge or fail to adequately include Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing (Johnson & Ali, 2019).

The TRC Call to Action #10 calls for the development of culturally appropriate curricula to improve educational success. The theme of decolonizing land-based education, which canoeing in itself addresses, was a common one; "it's one thing to do a soccer camp in a community or [...] baseball or football. But if you're bringing something that folks have grown up with, [or] relatives have grown up with [and] has been part of their history, people might feel a deeper connection to it" (Cam). Similarly, one staff member interviewed in this research noted that "[we] offer an opportunity to reconnect with a traditional activity that, had colonization not been such an atrocious thing, would have been something that we all would have grown up doing" (Caralynn).

Colonial views including those on education and research are critiqued for the ways in which concepts like nature and relationships are seen as universally experienced, understood, and taught (Liboiron, 2021). Colonial education and research methods aim to be independent from the place of practice as well as universally replicable (Liboiron, 2021). This universality can give land-based education a type of rigidity and structure that these canoe programs try to avoid. The fluidity and freedom of the programs was something that staff felt the kids really enjoyed. "You teach them the things that need to be taught like the safety and the basic skills and all that kind of thing, but then allowing the space to kind of just let it evolve according to what that group wants to do, or you can see, like what they're inclined more towards" (Caralynn).

Staff also acknowledged that their lessons purposefully did not focus on specific skill-oriented goals other than those pertaining to safety, so that there were no ways that youths could be seen as paddling "wrong" or not measuring up. Interviews also found that canoe programs brought in many community members to share local knowledge and incorporate community specific traditions and practices, creating variation in each program.

Culture and land are approached as two separate subjects in Canadian colonial education curricula, which implies an invalidity to Indigenous ways of knowing (Johnson & Ali, 2020). Although complex, attempts to decolonize land-based education in canoe programs can be made by encouraging Indigenous land-based educators to share the joys of canoeing with youths, including community members and local knowledge keepers, and providing youths with a positive, inclusive, and free space to connect with the canoe in any way they like.

### **Conclusion**

There is an inseparable interconnected nature believed to exist between Indigenous peoples and the natural, physical and spiritual

worlds (Big-Canoe & Richardson, 2014). Similarly, each of the themes represented here relate to each other through an intangible web of benefits. Canoeing itself is an intrinsically Indigenous activity that relates and connects paddlers to themselves, to each other, and to all spiritual beings including the land (Johnson & Ali, 2020). I am sure that many reading this article have experienced the awe, wonder, and timelessness that comes with canoeing, and although I have tried to do so here, even I struggle to quantify the benefits and feelings that I have experienced. What I can confidently say, and as these interviews have shown, is that canoeing is uniquely powerful in its potential to empower Indigenous youth and it is something that needs to be shared with wider audiences.

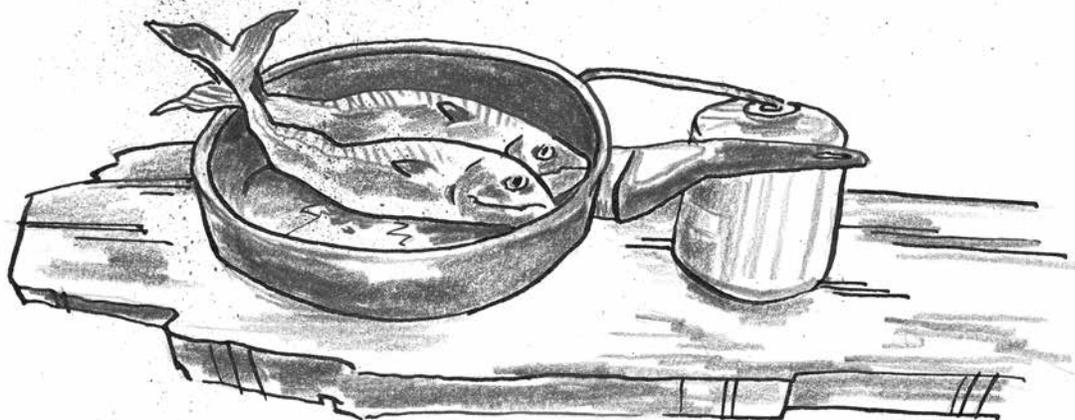
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*Madeline Mitchell is an undergraduate Environmental Sciences student at the University of Manitoba. With the help of Dr. Bruce Erickson, she is exploring the human-nature connections facilitated through canoeing for an honours thesis with hopes to continue this research in the future.*

*Waterways Canada and information on ways to support future programs can be found at [www.waterwayscanada.com](http://www.waterwayscanada.com). By supporting their work, you are furthering the TRC Call to Action #92, Business and Reconciliation, and all others mentioned here.*

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## Building a Transformational New Offering At the Canadian Canoe Museum

By Carolyn Hyslop



After many years of planning, along with an unexpected but necessary pivot just as the pandemic was emerging, The Canadian Canoe Museum is finally moving to the water and will open its doors in the summer of 2023! Taking shape on the shores of Little Lake in Peterborough, Ontario is a brand new 65,000-square-foot facility that will be home to the largest, most diverse and significant watercraft collections in the country, and indeed the world. On the traditional territory of the Michi Saagig or Mississauga peoples, and Williams Treaties First Nations, this new home will ensure the stories and teachings embodied in a collection like this are fully cared for and accessible to the community.

The Canadian Canoe Museum and its collection were declared by the Senate in 2013 a cultural asset of national significance. Through its exhibitions and programming, the Museum will continue to inspire storytelling, discourse, research and engagement for generations to come. At this new location, however, the Museum will not only boast a world-class cultural

facility, but also an exceptional lakefront campus that will truly transform and redefine how this organization engages with its visitors and the community. Whether taking place on land, on water or a combination of both, a unique range of programming will result in a Museum experience crafted to inspire visitors to walk in the front door and paddle out the back!

The new Canadian Canoe Museum is located on the shores of an ancient canoe route and within view of a significant portage landing locally known as Nogojiwanong (“at the foot of the rapids”). On our new five-acre waterfront property, a stunning, west-facing point offers expansive views that beckon guests from the new Museum towards the lake along its accessible “portage path”. The Trans Canada Trail also bisects this property parallel to the shoreline, offering its steady stream of pedestrian traffic a new destination along an active route. Inspired by the lands and waters of this perfect new home, we are imagining a new suite



of programming that aligns with the importance we place on learning, building community, and inspiring curiosity and new understandings, all through the lens of the canoe and kayak.

There is an incredible opportunity in Peterborough to transform how the community interacts with the waterways that surround the city by creating a safe and accessible launch point that supports a wide range of on-water paddling activities. Whether for visiting schools and youth groups, tourists, corporate team-building groups, clubs, camps, or adult learning programs, we will be offering a range of programs where people can experience paddling in a variety of watercraft, augmented and integrated with a myriad of heritage and making-inspired workshops. These offerings, of course, will be uniquely enhanced by the opportunity to also explore the Museum's amazing watercraft collection and its fresh suite of exhibits.

A staple on-water program offering will be Voyageur canoe tours around the lake as well as up and over the historic Peterborough Lift Lock, and longer trips north along the waterway to the nature areas at Trent University. However, a broad spectrum of other program offerings will include:

- Paddling day camps for youth, as well as backcountry canoe tripping
- Skills courses for adults and youth alike (ranging from competency and confidence-building skills courses to certifications)

- Team-building courses
- Add-on paddling courses for artisan workshops, including canoe and kayak paddle making
- Guided paddling tours for groups
- Community paddling nights and events (enhanced by the Museum's fleet of heritage watercraft)
- Paddling programs for visiting school groups
- Canoe rental programs
- Partnerships with organizations like the New Canadian Centre to orient recently-arrived individuals and families to the region's natural environment, Indigenous cultures and the complex histories of this country
- "Learn to Camp" and campfire-based programs

The new Museum site has many dedicated spaces that have been creatively designed to support and enable these program offerings. At the campus' shoreline, one will find thoughtfully designed paddling docks that also feature an adaptive canoe/kayak launch system, as well as a natural lake entry, an accessible boardwalk and pathway from the Museum to the docks, and of course, canoe/kayak parking near the lake for those choosing to paddle to the Museum!

Our Canoe House, situated close to the lake, will be an active hub of the Museum's

paddling and outdoor programs. This is the point position where instructors and participants in educational and recreational activities can gather before and after exploring the lake, waterways, and Museum property. And with its prime visibility from the water, it will also be the beacon for program participants and visitors as they paddle into the Museum.



A campfire circle will provide children and adults alike with the opportunity to connect with nature through fire stewardship, storytelling, and countless other programs. Many of the Museum's school programs, youth camps, community programs for organizations such as the New Canadian Centre and adult outdoor skills programs will find this the perfect setting to gather around for an end-of-program debrief or a rewarding session of baking bannock or roasting marshmallows.

Not far from the campfire circle, the Museum's Artisan and Canoe-Building Studio lets onto the outdoor campus through its large overhead doors. These studios will be dedicated to canoe and kayak-making courses, makers-in-residence, and a broad range of DIY artisan workshops and demonstrations that will no doubt spill outside, allowing course participants to test their newly made paddle in the lake or take a recently finished canoe for its inaugural float test.

Management of the new museum property includes a comprehensive plan to restore and rehabilitate this ideal site by introducing a mix of diverse native plants and tree species to enhance its ecological function and to bolster the existing woodlot. A constructed wetland and rain garden, along with permeable paving and other innovative stormwater features, provides on-site infiltration and control of runoff before it reaches the lake. The Museum is committed to minimizing its impact on the natural environment through the design and building of the new Museum and plans to integrate these actions into the environmental education programming with a strong focus on watershed stewardship with visiting schools and community groups.

In balance to these naturalized areas, open areas for picnics, frisbee, large group games, events and festivals have been carefully considered to ensure continued community use of the property. National Canoe Day and National Indigenous Peoples' Day, as well as conferences and gatherings like the Annual Assembly of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association or a COEO conference, are just a few examples that support the vision of the Museum as a community hub.

Integral to all of the program development and exhibit design, the Museum has worked with and invited Indigenous Peoples from coast-to-coast-to-coast to share their stories in their own voices, and to support the Museum in being a platform for conversation, learning, and for truth and reconciliation. Created by Indigenous peoples, the amazingly diverse forms of the canoe and kayak are elegant expressions of a connection to landscape and waters that continue today; more than that, they are objects around which communities gather and connect. The canoe embodies Indigenous cultural memory and, most importantly, is a living artifact with both historical and contemporary relevance. Across Turtle Island, Canada, activity around the canoe continues to strengthen Indigenous

Peoples' connections to their land, culture, language, and communities.

*"At this time in Canada, we are beginning a process for Truth and Reconciliation. Together, we need to learn, understand and acknowledge our shared history. We can't do that without first knowing and understanding the impact of the canoe in Canada's story, from those very early times when the first visitors came to our shores. The Canadian Canoe Museum provides us with an opportunity to learn, to feel, to smell, and to see the canoe in its diversity and endurance."*

—Victoria Grant, Teme-Augama Anishnabai Qway, Chair, Canadian Canoe Museum Board; CCM National Council Member; Past Chair, Community Foundations of Canada; Officer of the Order of Canada

Ultimately, the vision for the programming that is being created for the new Canadian

Canoe Museum seeks to build an offering of authentic hands-on experiences that are grounded in experiential learning, environmental stewardship, community engagement, and the opportunity for Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing to be shared through the collection and the programs. Multiple points of engagement exist at the new Museum and it is our hope that, through these experiences, people will strengthen their connection to the natural environment, themselves and each other.

*Carolyn Hyslop is the Executive Director of the Canadian Canoe Museum.*



THE CANADIAN CANOE MUSEUM  
LE MUSÉE CANADIEN DU CANOT

**Inspiring Canada**  
-by canoe



## Girls\* on Ice Canada: A Tuition-Free Science Immersion Field Program for High School Girls\*

By Michelle Ives and Eleanor Bash

*“She did not simply teach me how to do things in the mountains; she empowered me to understand that I was stronger and more capable than I had previously believed.”*

—Claire Giordano, on her mentor Cecelia Mortenson

Girls\* on Ice Canada (G\*OIC) runs tuition-free, science-immersion field expeditions developed for Canadian high school girls\* from all backgrounds. A guiding vision for G\*OIC is to help create a world where young women\* are empowered to pursue sciences, art, nature, or anything else about which they are passionate. Each summer, teams of 10 girls\* (aged 16-18) spend 12 days exploring and learning about glaciers and alpine landscapes in Canada. In 2022, we will be running three expeditions: G\*OIC–Illecillewaet Expedition (Glacier National Park, BC), G\*OIC–Kootenays Expedition (Kootenays, BC), and G\*OIC–Yukon Expedition (Yukon). The expeditions include one-on-one interactions with female scientists, artists, and guides, facilitated discussion of the value of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Maths), and meeting intellectual and physical challenges in a team environment. Our expeditions are the science version of a “language immersion” experience where we connect science and art with all aspects of daily life, with the goal of creating lifelong advocates for science and the scientific process as a whole.

Girls\* on Ice Canada expeditions are set apart from other wilderness education programs. In our curriculum, the participants observe, ask questions, and make discoveries as they travel through the landscape, a program modeled after scientific and artistic exploration. We use hands-on, inquiry-based methods of teaching to encourage participants' ideas, empower their learning, and give them confidence in their observational skills. Our instructors of professional scientists, artists,

and guides act as role models and mentors for our participants during and after the expeditions. Our tuition-free model makes our program accessible to all participants, regardless of their resources.



Our expeditions begin at a frontcountry basecamp, where participants take the first few days to get to know their teams and their equipment, as well as learn about traveling and camping in the mountains. From the frontcountry basecamp, we embark on several day hikes to get comfortable using our gear and begin the process of immersion science and developing observational skills. Around day five, the team hikes to a remote backcountry basecamp where they are based for the next 4-5 days. The next few days are spent exploring the glacier and surrounding mountains while learning about ice, snow, and ecosystems that depend on them. Our model enables girls\* to build their skills and confidence progressively, moving from frontcountry camping at the beginning of the expedition to a remote basecamp where they are immersed in the experience of wilderness learning. The expedition culminates in two challenges: a physical challenge of ascending a peak and an intellectual challenge of designing and executing their

own science experiment. At the close of the expedition, the team returns to the front country to synthesize their field research, give public presentations on their projects, reflect on their personal growth, and brainstorm ways to pursue their passions and bring their experience home to their communities.

Girls\* on Ice Canada is designed for young women from all backgrounds, with an emphasis on young women who are from minority groups, who are from economically disadvantaged communities, or who are the first in their family to go to college. As a tuition-free program, our aim is to support and inspire young women who likely would not have had this opportunity otherwise. To achieve this goal, we provide the necessary technical equipment and clothing, as well as financial support for a portion of the travel costs. This relieves potential financial barriers for the young women we hope to serve. As a program aimed particularly at serving young Canadian women, we want to reach First Nations and Northern communities in addition to the demographic groups above.

Society continues to underestimate both the ability and desire of young women to explore the wilderness, ask questions, and have the confidence to answer them. We tackle this challenge head on: we take girls\* on authentic scientific expeditions that have them climbing, observing, measuring, reflecting, listening, and asking questions. Not only does this help the girls\* to realize their capabilities, but everyone we interact with on the trails, everyone who sees the girls\*' public talks, and everyone who reads about them in the newspaper gains a new perspective too.

G\*OIC expeditions are run by the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) in partnership with the Girls\* on Ice Canada Society, with additional support from Inspiring Girls\* Expeditions (IGE).

Girls\* on Ice Canada offers uniquely Canadian experiences. The first Girls\* on

Ice Canada expedition was launched in 2018 by G\*OIC founders Eleanor Bash, Alison Criscitiello, Jocelyn Hirose, and Cecelia Mortenson. Girls\* on Ice Canada expeditions emulate similar Girls\* on Ice Expeditions offered by IGE but are adapted to Canadian landscapes and issues. Our expeditions present a unique opportunity for a diverse group of Canadian girls\* to study mountain and conservation issues in Canada, led by a team of Canadian-based scientists, artists, and mountain guides.

Our Canadian-based programs have the following goals:

1. Provide transformative experiences for girls\* using science, art, and nature that empower them to follow their passions.
2. Create lifelong advocates for the scientific process and its role in Canadian public policy.
3. Teach critical thinking skills, which will be important for participant's future pursuits.
4. Expose and develop outdoor field skills in a remote and inspiring environment.
5. Enhance leadership self-confidence for participating young women so that they have a higher likelihood of becoming future Canadian leaders.

Our immersive program includes self-directed, inquiry-based teaching, interaction with role models and mentoring, and discussions on the importance of science in society. We do not expect all our participants to become scientists in the future, but we do want them to become critical thinkers, observers, listeners, and advocates for the scientific process. Our vision at G\*OIC is a world where young women\* are empowered to pursue sciences, art, nature, or anything else they are passionate about. We're opening eyes to a world of possibilities.

\*While we acknowledge our name is imperfect, we want to clarify that Girls\* on

Ice Canada welcomes cis girls, trans girls, and any girl-identified youth, as well as non-binary and gender non-conforming youth.

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*Michelle Ives is the program administrator for Girls\* on Ice Canada and a Master of Science student at the University of Calgary. When not*

*in the field or lab, you can find her hiking, rock climbing, or skiing in the beautiful Canadian Rocky Mountains.*

*Eleanor Bash is a co-founder of Girls\* on Ice Canada and a hydrologist at The Freshwater Trust. Her lifelong passion for the environment has led her to glaciology, field science, and science education.*



## Letter From an Enthusiast

By Sarah Simone with support from Tim O'Connell

*I am standing on the shoreline of a rushing river, identifying hazards and what I think are safe zones, but it all looks blurry. The water is loud, chaotic, angry. My nerves are weak—the power of the river is overwhelming. I spent the day pushing down my fears, jumping in the water and swimming the rapids, not with joy and comfort, but with determination to overcome fear. Was this blind trust in my instructors, or an attempt to show the river and myself that I can move with it? I am not sure which—I could only keep pushing through. I am exhausted. My legs quiver at the thought of moving my feet that have sunk into the soggy shoreline.*

*We were to perform a river rescue training scenario. As a collective, our group decided to move upstream and cross there. It is flat current. We swam in pairs along the way, my weary mind lost focus of the shore to which I was headed, and fear of the rapids below took hold. Doing the front crawl, my chest constricted and I cannot breathe. “Just tread water for a minute,” I thought. The current is pulling me closer to the rapids, “try to swim!” I can't, I'm panicking, my life jacket isn't keeping me up enough...My head dips under (this doesn't make sense, I am a strong open water swimmer), the current is pulling me closer, I yell out and my buddy swimmer busts through my panic, gives me focus and courage to keep going. I dig deep with my buddy shouting to get moving. I've got this! Painfully, I back-crawl to shore because the front crawl feels suffocating. The shore feels an eternity away, but my buddy and I get me there. The rescue scenario was still happening, but I was not supposed to be the rescue. She goes on to join the scenario. I take a minute to collect myself before rejoining the group.*

Dear Adventurers & Curious Spirits,

I have a yearning to get outside. Beyond the limits of my town, exploring rivers and forests unknown to me. The idea of wandering out into it is simple, yet the planning and preparation can be overwhelming when you do not know

what you do not know. Joining an educational course on the matter seems the most logical solution to learning. An outdoor leadership course would be the right direction. However, this would entail hands-on education, possibly out in the field trialing skills while building them. Amidst lockdowns and fluctuating public health rules and guidelines, it was a blessing to find the River Roots program. It is hosted by MHO Adventures, a highly regarded organization in the outdoor industry. MHO provides adventure and educational canoe trips for a wide variety of age groups around Canada.

River Roots is purposefully designed to be an immersive whitewater canoe guiding foundations course. This program offers participants first-hand experience in outdoor guiding education. Upon completion, many relevant certifications are earned, including Whitewater Rescue Technician (through Boreal River Rescue), Paddle Canada Whitewater Tandem Canoeing, Outdoor Council of Canada Field Leader in Overnights, Paddling, and Hiking. Not only do participants leave with tangible proof of skills to provide potential employers, they gain an immense amount of intangible personal growth and knowledge to apply to their professional practice. For someone new to the outdoor leadership field with little or no experience, River Roots aims to provide a foundation that can confidently be applied to working in the field.

Over the course of 42 days, two instructors and seven students worked through the lessons and skills required to guide whitewater expedition canoeing. After three weeks of building skills, training and practicing, we went out on expedition. We traveled 21 days through the backwoods of Quebec down the breathtaking Harricana River, leading us to the remote northern town of Moosonee, Ontario. Every day we moved over the same water and through the

same challenges together. Yet each of us walked away with a different story to tell. We experienced the same weather but weathered it differently. Each one of us went into River Roots with a different goal for the program. One of mine was to face my fears of whitewater and develop a better understanding of an element of nature that was so foreign to me. I was also really looking forward to improving my paddling skills and further developing skills such as navigation and trip planning (especially when it came to food preparation, both pre-expedition and once on trail). Due to my cultural heritage, I love to feed people! Hunger is something every person understands; it is an easy common ground from which to start forming bonds and a sense of community with food around the table.

We made it back in one piece with our own trials and triumphs to share and process. The community that was formed over the course of the MHO River Roots program is one of the many factors that led to individual successes. We learned from seasoned and proficient instructors on technical skills (knot tying, paddle strokes, map reading, campfire cooking, etc.). These same instructors, and many other leaders in the industry, brought informed conversation to important topics such as burnout, positive praise, creating community on trip and risk management, to name a few. However, the magic of building the community I spoke of happened as each of our (students in River Roots) talents and strengths shined through. This added so much value to the program that I didn't expect! We learned to lean on each other, ask for a helping hand where someone else excelled, to step in and offer confidence and praise. Sitting around the campfire having dinner at the end of the night hashing out the successes and learning moments from the day, our community formed. Trust in each other and trust in one's own skills grew. Forming a community is not unique to the MHO River Roots program. However, it is something many educational programs strive to achieve with varying degrees

of success. From my experience in life, when you are surrounded by people you can trust, it becomes a platform for personal growth and trust in oneself to develop. When trust and confidence are combined, I have found the result to be courage. Courage becomes the willingness to attempt the things that one is fearful of, and whether failure or success follows that attempt, it is okay either way. Success is already achieved in the willingness to be vulnerable and try. Whitewater was a paralyzing fear of mine. Paralyzing to the point that standing far up on the edge of the river looking at it, I was stopped in my tracks. I was able to find joy and playfulness through skillful breakdown of reading the water, being given space and time to bring myself to try paddling maneuvers, and never feeling like I was being judged for my fear by my peers or instructors. I went from holding my breath and clenching my teeth with a death grip on my paddle as we approached rapids to anticipation, laughter and executing maneuvers such as catching an eddy or riding a wave train for fun.

A picture is worth a thousand words but standing amongst the rugged untamed beauty of our land and rivers leaves me breathless. The only way to understand for yourself is to get out and experience it. Taking an educational course on outdoor leadership helped me achieve confidence and knowledge so I may get out and explore where my heart leads me, beyond the city limits. This program also engaged me in a way that allowed me to face fears that may have otherwise been restricting to me. Education is invaluable: I went out seeking knowledge to become comfortable in a foreign space and possibly face my fears. Having completed the MHO River Roots program, I learned many interpersonal and technical skills, I learned to trust myself, to listen to my body and to my peers, to lean into hard situations, and to lean on others for support.

The river is an interesting teacher when you take the time to listen to the lessons

she holds within her. Where she creates rapids, her water churns, bubbles, sounds angry and loud—the river looks violent. The harder you try to muscle your way over or through her, the more likely the river will try to tip your boat over, soak you and spit you out. Once I understood the subtleties of the currents, to see the little signs and read the water, when to ride it out and where to lean in, paddling the river became much like how I aim to make my way through life. Leaning into the hard moments that need just a little more effort, slipping into an eddy when I need a pause and taking the time I need to regroup, or just sitting back and enjoying

the ride. Learning to move with the river (and life) rather than muscling through it was a key takeaway for me.

*It is Angus and I as leaders of the day. His easy-going love of whitewater balances out my uneasy nervousness. Today, he looks at me with simple joy and playful egging on: "You got this, you're sterning!" with my paddle outstretched in his hand for me to take. Everything in me wants to shy away. He is the stronger sterner, he can get us through the rapids with ease, and I can paddle in the bow. But then would I really be doing myself any justice if I bailed out of this opportunity? With this added boost of confidence and*





*Angus' eager smile for me to take my place in the canoe, I agree. As he sits in the bow, we discuss what he sees ahead, agree on how to approach it and how to run the rapid. With his confidence in me, my own confidence is growing. Ahead of us lies a widespread rapid that can be read and paddled successfully. We tell the group this mission is to "try to catch every single eddy." And we do. I cannot hold back laughing and I am bubbling over in joy as we slip into the first eddy. Angus turns around and gives me a paddle high five to celebrate the success! We head out of the eddy and identify the next, leapfrogging down the rapid. I can hear the whoops and hollers of fun being had by each boat over the churning hum of the river.*

The goal of the MHO River Roots Program is to create a learning opportunity for students to become well rounded outdoor professionals. Those who graduate from the program will be hard working, growth-oriented leaders that have the skills, experience, and certifications to manage risk, make decisions, be environmental stewards, and inspire others. Details can be found at: <https://mheadventures.com/training/riverroots/>

*Sarah Simone is an undergraduate student completing a Bachelor of Recreation and Leisure Studies degree with a concentration in Outdoor Recreation at Brock University. She is striving to marry her love of the outdoors with her career in the health and wellness industry. Sarah was a student in the inaugural River Roots program during the summer of 2021.*

*Tim O'Connell is a Professor in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at Brock University. His research focuses on sense of community in outdoor adventure groups, mental health impacts of participation in outdoor recreation activities and outdoor orientation programs, and impacts of the COVID pandemic on outdoor recreationists in Canada.*

## Empowering Citizen Scientists Through Not-for-Profit Collaboration: A Connection Between Ancient Forests Exploration and Research (AFER) and Outward Bound Canada (OBC)

By Robert Wallis, Amy Mudan, Camille LeClair

### Old Growth Trees in Algonquin Park

If you were to stop someone in the street in Toronto, they've probably heard of Algonquin Park. They'll understand that it is a protected provincial park, full of pristine lakes and deep forest. They will most likely be surprised to hear that vast areas of it are still available to logging. This is counter-intuitive, especially given that First Nations were forcibly removed from many parks in Canada to keep them "pristine" and "unadulterated by human influence". When they did live here, these First Nations most likely realized the wisdom of leaving old growth trees in their place given the extensive benefits they have, not only to the natural biodiversity and health of the forest, but also in education and spirituality.

It is generally accepted that **all types of old-growth temperate forests in Ontario are endangered ecosystems**, and the vast majority of them remain unprotected and available to logging, even in Algonquin Park. These unique landscapes provide numerous benefits to people locally, regionally and globally, including carbon storage and sequestration, scientific study, and recreation. However, we don't actually have a solid idea of where the old growth exists and so we are somewhat blind to whether or not these particular old-growth trees are at risk.

### Ancient Forests Exploration and Research (AFER)

The not-for-profit AFER (Ancient Forests Exploration and Research) has been looking at this issue since the organization was formed in 1992, trying to map these old-growth stands and gather information

to inform best practices. However, Canada is vast, and by their very nature "still standing after all this time", old-growth trees are generally found in quite remote areas and are difficult to get to.

Mapping remote old-growth forests and gathering information is therefore an excellent citizen project for those that routinely find themselves in remote areas; for example, organizations such as Outward Bound! What is a citizen project? A citizen project uses the volunteering public to gather scientific data, which serves both to contribute large amounts of data that would normally be difficult and expensive to gather, and also increases scientific awareness. So, the surveying for old-growth forests in Algonquin Park is a citizen science project that is being implemented in collaboration between Outward Bound Canada and AFER. The project uses basic field sampling techniques to gather data about the old-growth trees in the area.

### Environmental Leadership and Outward Bound Canada

Why would Outward Bound Canada, known for its experiential, expedition-based pedagogy, be interested in citizen science? Well, it actually is linked to OBC's long history back when it was founded in the midst of a global crisis, that of World War II. Outward Bound was created to increase participants' "tenacity and fortitude to survive the rigors of war", and today, Outward Bound is well poised to respond to another global crisis: the Climate Crisis. As well as building up participants' resilience and focusing on social and emotional learning, Outward Bound Canada is doubling down on its environmental pedagogy. We aim

to produce environmental leaders, and have recently committed to having a third of our pedagogy be focused on environmental leadership.

In the past, Outward Bound has relied mainly on the osmotic effect of being in nature to provide our environmental curriculum. The famous quote “Let the mountains speak for themselves” was coined by Rusty Baillie of the Colorado Outward Bound School in the 1960s, and there certainly is a certain amount of respect and love of the outdoors that is nurtured by extended immersion in it. However, without facilitation and even a small amount of ecological literacy, the level of environmental sensitivity generated by nature immersion is limited (Hungerford and Volk, 1990).

Outward Bound is an organization that prides itself on teaching experientially, and so the opportunity to provide this curriculum through service projects is easy to see. Since its early years, Outward Bound has had “Compassion through Service” as one of its four pillars. In Canada, Outward Bound’s model focuses on the journey, mainly through expeditions: travelling through the land using non-motorized means for days and weeks, camping, cooking, and journeying. However, in the remote areas that OBC travels within, the development of service projects that are relevant, useful, and interesting enough for students to buy into at short notice has proven to be a challenge.

Outward Bound Canada was therefore very excited when we were introduced to AFER, focused on identifying and characterizing old-growth forests in some of the very regions OBC travels through.

How did this project come to life?

Luckily, people like to network, especially Bob Henderson, the resource editor of this edition of Pathways. Because of this, the founding executive director of AFER Dr. Peter Quimby was put in contact

with Outward Bound Canada (OBC). The relationship is ideal: AFER can access different areas consistently, primarily based on overlaying canoe routes with their old-growth maps, and Outward Bound participants get a meaningful, relevant, and interesting project that connects them closely with the natural world.

So, the perfect match! But how do we go about such a project?

Dr. Quimby has been very generous with the sharing of his time and expertise. He also shared his data so that participants can actually see the impact of what they are doing. The trick with a citizen project is to make it easy enough so that lay people can understand how to collect the data in a manageable way on expedition, while still maintaining the academic rigor and attention to detail that is required for an academic research study.

### Overview of the Project

To allow organizations to be as independent as possible, AFER produced a map of old-growth forests in Algonquin (see end of this document) that can be used in conjunction with an Algonquin Canoe Routes map to select the type and location of an old-growth forest for citizen scientists to visit. In addition, AFER provides the conservation status of central Ontario’s temperate forests at risk (**all forest ages**) to help determine the forest types on which citizen scientists should focus their field surveys. **These forest types at risk include forests of all ages, not just the old-growth age group.** Using this, citizen scientists can choose to survey in old-growth forests that are most at risk given their precarious population levels and thus, increasing their likelihood of protection.

Participants are guided to select trees that meet the minimum diameter to ensure they are at the provincial old-growth age, and are provided a basic sampling protocol to support field surveys of

potential undocumented old-growth forests in Algonquin Park.

AFER organizes, analyzes and presents the field data and related results obtained by Outward Bound on one or more of AFER's websites. They also use feedback and observations on habitat conditions around old-growth trees, in order to refine their predictions of tree age from tree diameter across landscape variations. The beauty of citizen science projects is the diversity and number of individuals making the observations.

This old-growth tree project helps students be empowered to become stewards of our planet and the environment. Outward Bound instructor Camille LeClair shares students' experiences with the old-growth tree citizen project:

"This experience makes sense in the woods. When we introduce the old-growth tree project to the students, they are intrigued and we could have a great conversation about the ecology and especially about the trees in the Algonquin Park. I remember that the students were impressed about how big the trees could be and to know more about the signification of old-growth trees."

Service projects help connect environmental issues to real-world experiences. The connection is powerful as experiences make the most significant emotional impact, serving as a catalyst to students developing a passion for environmental stewardship.

"The students were glad to participate in this type of project and to be able to maybe protect those big trees from the logging in the park. The curiosity to find more trees was particularly there for two students in the group that keep having this idea in their mind as long as the expedition goes. The interest was more there. They wanted to also know what they could do at home or if there were any other kind of project they could do back in the civilisation."

Although this project really connects to some, for others it doesn't. To overcome this, OBC frames service in

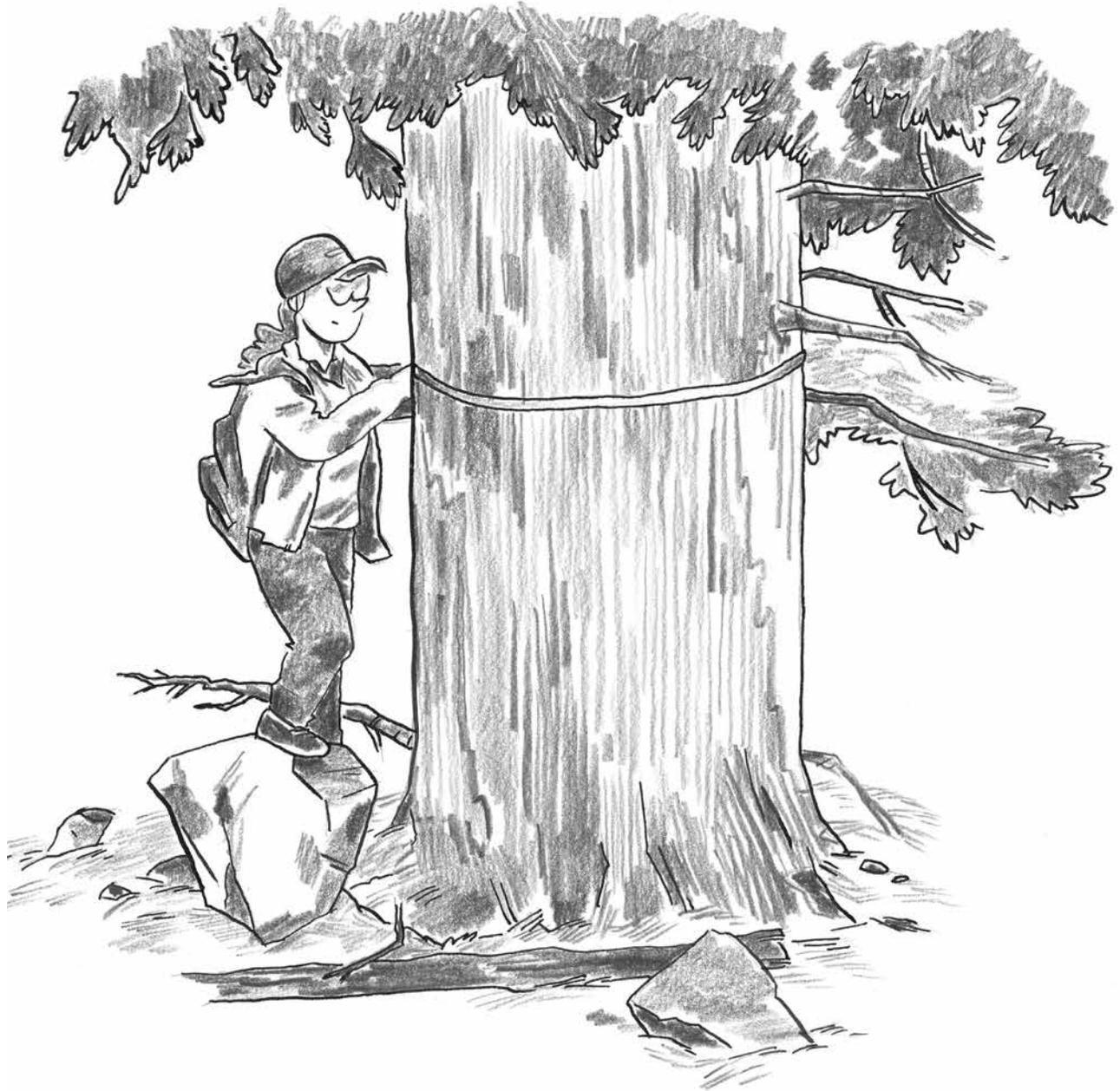
a number of ways. One such way is to frame this experience as an example and to allow students to set their own goals for service and volunteering post course. Explaining that service, and to some extent volunteering, is one of the only ways that a person has complete autonomy over what they want to do is a potent message—where else do you get that choice? Being able to decide where you will put your efforts to do good is a powerful motivator.

"It introduced well one conversation that we got into about climate change and little things that we could do on our own at home and in expeditions to help this crisis. Even what we could change at Outward Bound to use less plastic, have less garbage and habits that they could change in their own life. The students that were more concerned by this activity wanted to protect the environment. During the ecological conversation ideas also came out, to try to have less impact, not just in the woods but in the way that they lived at home. At least, this environmental project helps to do something about the environment and to give some ways to engage in a tangible activity."

Therefore, after being introduced to a citizen science project on an outdoor immersion, students gained an interest in staying involved with environmental stewardship projects. This is one of the main goals of Outward Bound, to inspire and empower youth through outdoor experiences to become environmental leaders.

### **Tree Museum**

Today, as we see the effects of decades of procrastination over environmental action including a summer of heat waves and other extreme weather, the climate crisis is causing intense "eco-anxiety" in our youth. Learning about ecological literacy and environmental issues in the classroom is only one small part of environmental education and may, in fact, be disproportionately contributing to the rise in eco-anxiety.



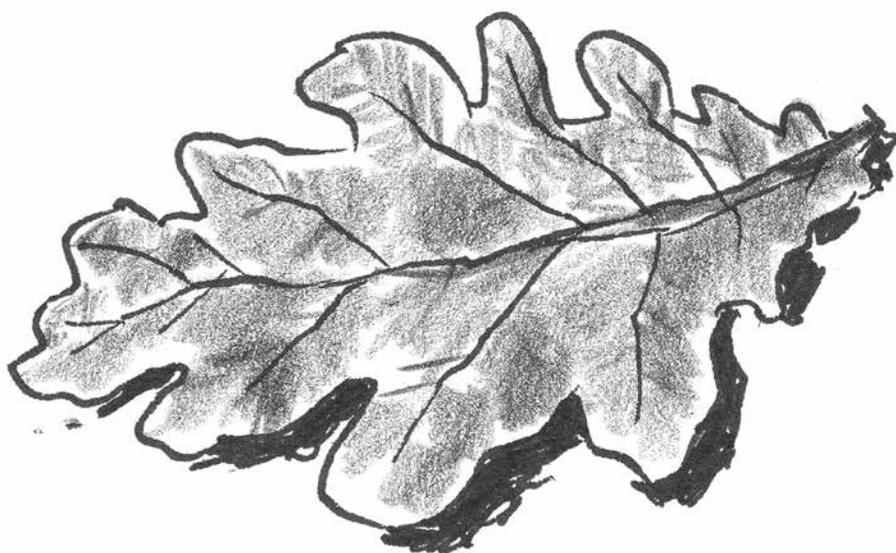
The lyric from Big Yellow Taxi by Joni Mitchell “They took all the trees put em’ in a tree museum” can serve as a metaphor for learning about the environment only through the classroom, as students start to feel hopeless and helpless if they are not able to do something—anything—about it. Providing experiences in which students feel that they are making a positive difference alleviates some of this anxiety and also motivates them to be environmental stewards.

Projects such as the old-growth tree citizen project increase participants’ connection with themselves by increasing confidence in their own abilities, forming connections with their peers through working as a team, and improve their connection with the Earth by contributing to the health of the planet. Instead of being paralyzed by eco-anxiety, youth are empowered to take action and feel they can make a difference in their communities when they are given the opportunities and real-world experiences to do so. And they may save a few trees in the process...

*Rob Wallis, BEd (OISE), PhD (Oxon), changed careers from academic science to teaching and he became an instructor with Outward Bound Canada in 2011. He has grown with the organization to become the Principal, Curriculum and Education Manager, and is currently focused on the educational and societal impact of Outward Bound programs, and outdoor education as a whole.*

*Amy Mudan is a student at the University of British Columbia studying Natural Resource Conservation. Her passions include creative environmental communication and connecting nature with wellness.*

*Camille LeClair, holds a Bachelor’s degree in Intervention by Nature and Adventure from the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi and has been an instructor for Outward Bound for the last 3 years. She is an avid canoeist and also guides sea kayaking, hiking trips and backcountry skiing tours across Canada.*



## Nova Scotia Sea School: Nothing Like It!

By Heather Kelday

The Nova Scotia Sea School was founded as a registered charity in 1994 by Crane Stookey, bringing together his passion for boats and the sea, his years as deck officer on Tall Ships, his love of working with teenagers, his training in Buddhist philosophy and meditation, and his aspiration for a more contemplative approach to life rooted in the experience of the real world.

Sea School was officially incorporated as a non-profit and we began construction on our first boat, *Dorothea*, a 30-foot Sable Island Pulling Boat that launched on Canada Day, 1995. *Dorothea's* maiden voyage was a seven-day expedition from Halifax to Mahone Bay with her builders. She has been sailing ever since, and in 2004 we launched a sister ship, *Elizabeth Hall*, built on the Halifax waterfront with over 300 friends and volunteers.

Since 1994, the Nova Scotia Sea School has been offering youth ages 11 to 21 adventure experiences that transform how they see themselves, the world around them and their capacity to contribute to our society. Through the simple experience of life on a small boat, youth gain the confidence and awareness to make important decisions about their lives. On a Sea School expedition, young people discover areas of personal intelligence they might not have valued or known about, gain firsthand experience of our maritime history and traditions, learn healthy living, build new skills and relationships, and connect with the beauty of Nova Scotia's coast and their role in preserving it.

This is the only program of its kind in Canada. The Sea School was founded with the mission to promote the maritime tradition of boats and the sea as a means for young people to learn the values that seafaring has taught for generations: leadership, courage, responsibility, cooperation, generosity and respect. In

2003, the School's founder, Crane Stookey, was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal for the Sea School's contribution to the Canadian community. Since 1994 the Sea School has worked with over 2,000 teenagers, built 14 wooden boats and spent over 10,000 hours on the water in the boats we've built. In recent years the programs have been expanded to include multi-day adventures in wilderness survival, sea kayaking and surfing. In 2022, over 100 youth participated with us and we reached over 300 youth through leadership workshops and events. We consistently provide over 50% of our participants with bursary support. Because we prioritize diversity and serving marginalized individuals, the youth make friends with peers that they may not have met otherwise at school or in their community.

Our programs operate out of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia and offer youth the chance to take command of their adventure and of their lives as they explore the coves and islands of the south shore including Mahone Bay, St. Margaret's Bay, LaHave Islands and Lunenburg Bay.

Sea School has always been committed to ensuring that underrepresented youth access our unique programs. In recent years we have been addressing barriers in a more intentional way through partnerships with key youth service providers who represent Black, Indigenous and Newcomer youth. This initiative includes cultural training for staff and board and offering free programs that are catered to each group's needs.

### Seafaring Programs, Education, & Community Impact

Each of our seafaring expeditions offers transformational learning for young people. We also offer participants a path to deeper learning through participation in multiple elements of our programming.

We call this approach our Youth Leadership Arc and it creates a powerful way for youth to deepen their leadership and job skills training with the Sea School. As an effective way to bring leadership training to a broader range of youth, we also offer group training programs designed for youth and community groups.

Our five, seven and 11-day sailing and wilderness programs are where youth can begin their journey with the Sea School.

In all Sea School programs, leadership training is at the root of program design.

Our instructors aim to “teach themselves out of a job” by handing as much responsibility as possible over to participants to create the group dynamics, plan their journey and make all of the decisions.

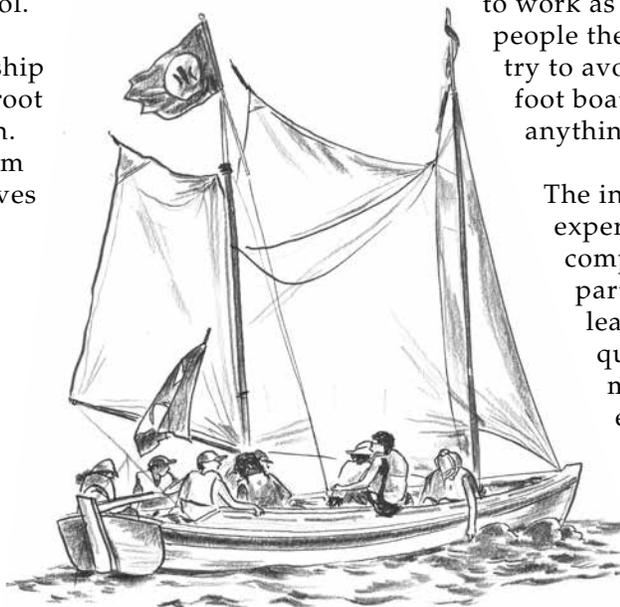
This learning structure is unlike anything most young

people have ever experienced—it is all up to them! Participants grow themselves into a true ship’s crew, putting those abilities to work for each other, for the Sea School, and for the community at large.

During a Sea School sailing expedition, youth develop many specific skills. They learn navigation, which requires the use of measurement and geometry, compass reading (understanding degrees and orientation), chart reading (understanding latitude and longitude, true and magnetic north, chart symbols, and velocity), local geography, as well as tides and currents (and their impact on the vessel). They learn sail handling, which requires being able to sense the wind direction, reading the wind shifts

on the water, understanding simple aero and hydrodynamics. They learn knots and rope work and simple rigging. They cook their own meals, a new experience for many, and do all of the cleaning up. They learn to create shelter with tarps. They learn to identify local seabirds, they see dolphins, sunfish and whales. They learn to use hand tools and problem solve in a demanding work project. They have an opportunity to connect with local vendors for materials and create relationships with community members. They learn to work as a team, even with people they might normally try to avoid, because on a 30-foot boat there’s no avoiding anything!

The intensity of this experience, the companionship of other participants and the leadership of our high-quality staff members make each Sea School expedition a life-changing voyage for these youth, where their resiliency, life skills and career plans are solidly built.



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*Heather Kelday is the Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Sea School. In her 15th year with Sea School, she is deeply committed to reducing barriers so that all Nova Scotian youth can access Sea School programs. Heather advocates for outdoor recreation and leadership through her work as former President of Recreation Nova Scotia, as a member of the Nova Scotia Outdoor Network leadership team, and has supported the implementation of national initiatives including the “Parks for All” strategy and the Canadian Adventure Therapy Symposium.*

## Part of the Community

By Chris Peters

My wife Maureen is very good at keeping me on top of current events. She is fascinated by material culture and contemporary society and has a finger on the pulse of social media trends. My Facebook profile hasn't been updated in a dozen years. More than once she has connected me to trends, and I've pretended savviness in front of my students.

Recently though she showed me a video of an irate customer in a smoothie bar in Somewhere, USA. Perhaps you've seen it. It's been shared millions of times: a middle-aged man demands to see the manager. He is shouting at the four teenagers running the shop. One of them finally confronts the man and he throws his smoothie at her, covering her in beige slop. Off camera you hear the man lurching towards the employee door which, in the jumbled camera angle two of the employees are leaning against to keep him out.

"Call the manager!" says one.

"No! Call the police!" urges another.

Behind them fists thud into the door. More angry words, more swearing and racial slurs from the man.

I stopped watching when the man emerged back on screen, still held behind the plastic counter. His face contorted into a rictus of rage.

We have all seen videos like this, especially lately. At protests against the COVID-19 vaccine, and from those who are for them. By those against drilling for more oil, and those who want more oil pipelines. We are divided, stuck in our camps For and Against.

We know we are Right. Truth is with us.

This particular video stayed with me

though, a festering sore. I wanted to gain some perspective on it, to see the larger picture.

I find perspective in the Outdoors. Among the trees, with the dart of birds between branches, maybe the startle of a hare (white in this bleak brown winter) beneath, the play of water in half-frozen streams, the air cleaner, I will feel myself settle. Maybe I don't understand why. But I come to an equilibrium with the world.

The Outdoors, however, isn't always a benign middle ground, a well of spiritual grounding that connects people with their better selves. *That* Outdoors is a construct. One that I, a middle aged, white, heterosexual, able-bodied male, have helped create and perpetuate.

After my undergraduate degree, I spent the summer with Frontier College working as a labourer-teacher. I landed on a fruit farm on the Niagara Peninsula. There were acres of orchards (cherry, peach, apricots and plums, apples) and a sprawling pumpkin patch.

I lived and worked with men from Mexico who came to Canada each year for reliable work. The costs of this work to them personally were enormous. They spent eight months away from their families in a foreign country, doing repetitive work for little pay and few benefits. They were exposed regularly to pesticides. They worked in snow, rain, hail and towering thunderstorms. They were not always welcomed.

My job, in part, was to help make bridges between the farm and the larger community. I came to the farm with idealistic notions of farm work, of what my contributions would be.

I was quickly disillusioned.

I slept on the second story of a barn on an

old, metal-framed bed with two dusty fans circulating hot, humid air. The work was as stifling as the weather. More than once I woke from dreams of thinning peaches or picking cherries to realize that my work day hadn't yet begun. Every week after picking pumpkin flowers, my wrists would swell from the pesticide residue on the thorny vines until my hands were unusable. I humped orchard ladders to U-Pick customers. I cleaned up soiled diapers and beer cans from the orchards in the fiery red of mid-summer dawn. I sorted cherries in a freezer, laid out irrigation piping at two in the morning with heat lightning playing tricks on me.

We worked 6.5 days a week.

The Niagara Escarpment loomed not a mile from the farm. On my free Sunday afternoon, I would ride one of the brakeless wonder bikes up the road to the trailhead. Inside the forest shade, the day cooled by ten degrees. For a time no one placed any expectations on me.

I felt liberated and breathed easier.

Sunday afternoons were also the only chance to clean up the barn, our home. Cleaning operated on a rotating schedule. Each week someone else had to clean the kitchen and shared bathrooms.

When my turn came up I was annoyed. I wasn't sleeping well. I would take a cold shower in the morning and emerge sweating into the day. I would watch with jealousy as middle-aged men in lycra on five-figure road bikes cruised past the farm, a reminder of my mountain bike at home gathering dust. All I wanted to do was get up to the escarpment and escape.

I promised Antonio, the elderly statesman on the farm, that I would get the cleaning done. I worked with a frenzy. I dusted, wiped, washed. If I was quick, I thought, I could still get out on the trail.

I don't know if Antonio got to the phones first.

There was a bank of public phones in the town centre that the workers from all the farms would line up to use in the evenings and on Sunday afternoons. There they were at ease, able to talk and lament the distance. They compared *patrons* and the quality of the *trabajo*, discussed their wives and families they missed. Antonio was a popular guy, sought out for his advice.

Looking back, I think he came back to make sure I had done the work properly. He did not like what he found.

He shook his head when I showed him the kitchen. Clucked audibly when he glanced in the bathrooms. I felt my heart sinking.

"Chris," he said. "There are seven men using this kitchen. Seven men using these bathrooms."

He stopped, his eyes holding mine. His accented English was excellent. Antonio spoke French and creole, learned from the itinerant Quebecois and Jamaican workers on other farms.

"None of us want to be here. We are sad to be away from our families. We get angry at the work, at each other. So if we start arguing we may never stop. This is why you don't see us Mexicans fighting ever.

"So when it is our turn to clean the kitchen and bathrooms, we do it. Because we have to help each other while we are here."

The rebuke stung more than if he had shouted or lashed out. He knew what I wanted to do. He knew, better than even I did, that I could leave. Anytime. If I was going to stay and live with these men, in this barn, then I had to make time to clean the bathrooms and the kitchen. Properly.

As an assignment, I once asked a high school class to analyze a Wendell Berry (2012) line on community:

*"A community is the mental and spiritual*



*condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives [emphasis mine]."*

My students hated it. They zeroed in on Berry's use of the word *limit*. A community, they argued, works best when it builds individuals up. We should never place limits on people. I couldn't bring them to see other possibilities.

That Sunday afternoon on the farm I did not make it to the escarpment. I went back and cleaned the kitchen thoroughly, scrubbed the bathrooms. When my workmates, *mis amigos*, came back I sat with them on the wooden picnic tables in the relative cool of the late afternoon, the sun filtered through a peach orchard. I tried to follow their stories and jokes told in rapid-fire Spanish.

Not right away, but in time I felt some threshold had been passed between myself and them. That we shared a little more in common.

The man in the smoothie bar felt wronged. He refused to see the employees as part of his community, so he acted without limits.

Antonio taught me that community is earned. By the same token, the Outdoors places demands on us. To claim the Outdoors as benign is to forget the centuries of abuses we have wrought on forests, rivers, streams, fields, insects, animals, oceans, mountains and glaciers as well as the Indigenous communities who live and rely on these diverse ecologies. To suggest the Outdoors as restorative is to ignore migrant workers toiling in harsh conditions, breathing in pesticides for little pay and their loved ones thousands of kilometers away.

I think the limits that Berry spoke of encompass the realities of *everyone* in the community. We cannot take while another does without. When we have more than enough, we should share. In one sense,

we are limited. In another sense, we grow more connected.

If we want an accepting community, if we want an inclusive Outdoors, we have to come together.

Help each other while we are here.

### References

Berry, W. (2012) *The Long-Legged House*. Counterpoint Press. Berkeley, California.

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*Chris Peters lives and works in St. John's, Newfoundland with his wife and daughters. He is committed to bringing his students outside, be it on the water, in the garden or on the trail.*



## Community Canoe

By Bob Henderson

Matt Thompson has lived in downtown Hamilton for a long time. He is embedded in the community with a variety of social and environmental initiatives. Here is one of them.

In the spring of 2020 when the COVID pandemic rolled in and began to reframe our lives, Matt cottoned on to the idea of a community canoe. He happened to have one plus a trolley for easy urban street transport to water. Hamilton is blessed with water, including multiple waterfalls, hiking off/on the Niagara Escarpment and Cootes Paradise, as well as harbour shorelines for calm, accessible Lake Ontario waters. The issue isn't accessibility to water. Rather, the issue is the overall capitalist agenda.

More specifically, access to equipment. Matt had a vision of folks dropping by his home and borrowing his canoe/ community canoe, as well as paddles, lifejackets, and a camp stove for a picnic lunch. They would head to the water for a break from the burdens of COVID-19 and a break from the city using nature as a tonic of open spaces. And a bonus: the 17-foot canoe affords a separation of people as recommended by COVID-19 protocols. Hey, the canoe is the perfect COVID-safe vehicle, just one example of the canoe's many attributes.

As for the capitalist agenda: the canoe is an item of outdoor gear that some urbanites have, but most do not. Downtowners close to the water generally cannot afford digs that have the space for a canoe. Also, those that do have canoes likely use them sparingly. Canoes often sit in a garage or backyard for the bulk of the three paddling seasons. But the expectation remains that we each as individuals—as privilege allows—purchase a canoe for personal use. It smacks of capitalist hegemony for Matt. Enter the community canoe.

Well, it is a grand success. Matt's canoe has been busy. Folks reach out, book an appointment, one could say, and borrow the canoe for a COVID-friendly excursion. They're getting nature's tonic in the midst of the pandemic, staying close to home and social distancing as a precaution.

Word of the community canoe spread on social media. A short nine-minute film has been made. Matt has been interviewed on local radio and, best of all, Matt reached out to Nova Craft Canoe Company who loved the idea of the community canoe and gave him a great deal to triple his fleet and borrowing power. Yup, he now has three community canoes going. He can talk fleet now, tripling his community service, or, I should say, his community power.

Ahhhh, a thoughtful gesture of kindness and a re-thinking of how we interact with people and our stuff. It's a retooling of the social structure overall, an urban project well played, an acknowledgment of the primacy of nature and a celebration of the canoe. Good on ya Matt. Gets ya thinking doesn't it.

---

*Bob Henderson knows well the urban nature gems of the Hamilton area having been a student and professor at McMaster University for over 30 years. He also well remembers Matt and many of his university friends who wisely lived by their own rules as students to which many a professor and fellow student benefited from new insights in keeping with the spirit of the community canoe idea.*

*People can reach Matt via @FortElgin on Instagram and Twitter.*

## Where I'm From

By Max Vendrig

I am from maple trees and autumn leaves,  
from friendship bracelets and skinned  
knees,  
from red-bricked houses and yellow school  
buses,  
from my mother's spaghetti and meatballs  
and curiosity,

I am from sandcastles and sunscreen, early  
mornings  
at the rink, long drives viewed from the  
backseat,  
baptised by night in the dark waters of  
Lake Erie.

I am from loonies and toonies, nickels and  
dimes,  
from Blockbuster movies, the sharp tang of  
chlorine and  
fresh cut grass in June,  
from my brother's laugh and my father's  
pride.

I am made of calluses, chipped nail polish,  
white teeth,

of tan lines, of horizon lines, of dancing  
barefoot,  
of first kisses and (inevitably) last kisses.

I am made of heart-deep snowdrifts and  
the Milky Way,  
of godly mountains vaulting like cathedrals  
in the sky,  
of cold coursing rivers and warm nights,  
my hair smelling of  
woodsmoke and wolves.

I am always from somewhere else far away,  
and  
I always carry a map with me, but  
never one that leads back home.

---

*Max Vendrig is a Canadian outdoor guide, instructor and educator. Max has worked internationally across New Zealand, Japan, Hong Kong, Switzerland and the U.K. She is currently pursuing a Masters in Outdoor and Experiential Learning at the University of Cumbria with a focus on health and well-being.*



## Water

By Lee Beavington

transparent as a miracle  
you hold the oceans together  
glue for body and blood

you trickle from cloud and kidney  
pool invisible light—  
diamonds in dark places

you ascend the tallest trees  
dissolve mountains into memories  
steep in planet-sized puddles

science calls you colourless—tasteless  
yet you float, flow and freeze  
keep DNA from falling apart

atmospheric river  
the great giver  
all life flows from you

but too much and we drown  
like my grandfather—  
his lungs swallowed you whole

---

*Lee Beavington, PhD, is a TEDx speaker, award-winning author, learning strategist, and interdisciplinary instructor at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. He served as co-curator for Wild Things: The Power of Nature in Our Lives at the Museum of Vancouver, recipient of the Award of Merit for Excellence in Exhibitions. His research explores place-based learning and environmental ethics. More at [www.leebeavington.com](http://www.leebeavington.com).*



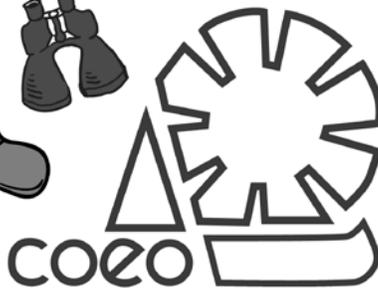
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Plan to join the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario for two days of professional development, experiential learning and winter fun. Make Peace with Winter is a retreat-style conference for educators interested in learning how to share the outdoors with their students in the coolest of seasons! Snowshoeing and cross country skiing, activities, games and crafts, winter ecology and the science of snow, traditional winter camping skills, and much, much, more.



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## Purpose

*Pathways* furthers knowledge, enthusiasm, and vision for outdoor experiential education in Ontario. Reflecting the interests of outdoor educators, classroom teachers, students, and academics, the journal focuses on the practice of outdoor experiential education from elementary to post-secondary levels, from wilderness to urban settings. *Pathways* highlights the value of outdoor experiential education in educating for curriculum, character, well-being, and environment.

## Submitting Material

The *Pathways* editorial board gladly considers a full range of materials related to outdoor experiential education. We welcome lesson outlines, drawings, articles, book reviews, poetry, fiction, student work, and more. We will take your contribution in any form and will work with you to publish it. If you have an idea about a written submission, piece of artwork, or topic for a theme issue, please send an email outlining your potential contribution to the chair of the editorial board, [pathways@coeo.org](mailto:pathways@coeo.org)

We prefer a natural writing style that is conversational, easy to read and to the point. It is important for you to use your style to tell your own story. There is no formula for being creative, having fun, and sharing your ideas. In general, written submissions should fit the framework of one of *Pathways* 20 established columns. Descriptions of these columns may be found at [www.coeo.org](http://www.coeo.org) by clicking on the publications tab.

Whenever possible, artwork should complement either specific articles or specific themes outlined in a particular journal issue. Please contact the chair of the editorial board if you are interested in providing some or all of the artwork for an issue.

## Formatting

Use 12 point, Times New Roman font with 1.25 inch (3.125 cm) margins all around. Text should be left justified and single spaced. Place a blank line between paragraphs but do not indent. Please use Canadian spelling and APA referencing.

Include the title (in bold) and the names of all authors (in italics) at the beginning of the article. Close the article with a brief 1–2 sentence biography of each author (in italics).

Do not include any extraneous information such as page numbers, word counts, headers or footers, and running heads.

*Pathways* contains approximately 600 words per page. Article length should reflect full page multiples to avoid partially blank pages.

Submit articles to the Chair of the Editorial Board or issue Guest Editor, preferably as a Microsoft Word email attachment.

Each piece of artwork should consist of a single black and white drawing (crosshatching but no shading) scanned at 300 dpi.

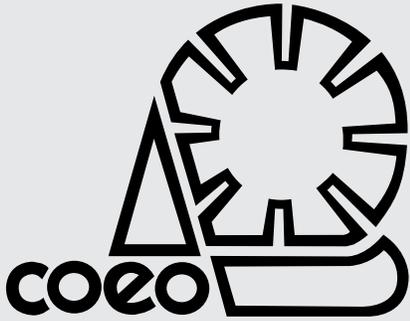
Submit artwork to the Chair of the Editorial Board or issue Guest Editor as a digital file (jpeg is preferred.)

## Submission Deadlines

Volume 1	Fall	September 1
Volume 2	Winter	December 1
Volume 3	Spring	March 1
Volume 4	Summer	June 1

## Complimentary Copies

The lead author receives one copy of the issue in which the article appears and one copy for each co-author. Lead authors are responsible for distributing copies to their coauthors.



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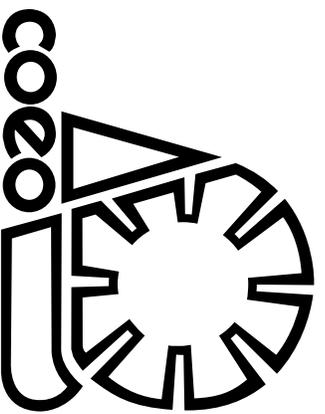
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