



Exemplary Environmental Leadership/Sustainability Program or Initiative

School Board _____ DDSB _____

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Name of Program/Initiative _____ The Great Outdoors Ecochallenge _____

Hyperlinks to Documents or Website(s) Describing this Program/Initiative _____

Description of Program/Initiative

The Durham Board Outdoor Education Staff is putting on its 18th Earth Day Eco-challenge, and this year's theme is learning to appreciate the outdoors that are offered to Ontarians in the extensive park system this province has to offer. This annual event invites teams of intermediate students from all over the board to participate in "The Great Outdoors Eco-challenge". Teams are split apart into learning sessions in the morning, and bring the skills they have acquired to their home groups in the afternoon. Team members must then use their knowledge to work together to complete a wide variety of tasks.

This day takes place at the Durham Forest Outdoor Environmental Centre just south of Uxbridge, and is run by the staff from the DDSB Outdoor Ed Centres, which also includes the Nonquon Environmental Ed Centre and the Duffin's Creek Environmental Ed Centre. Helping out with this day will also be Waterloo Co-op students and DDSB high school co-op students. Students of the school teams must research their park and assess their ecological footprint prior to the day of the event. After their day of learning and exploration, students are to share their acquired knowledge with their peers back at school. Some students have returned as high school co-ops in later years.

What has been the Impact on Student Learning?

Students walk away with a sneak preview of Ontario Parks, and an appreciation of the nature they can find at these parks. Students also learn the value of working together in teams to accomplish common tasks.

Some specific curriculum connections are made on this day:

- 1) follow established safety procedures for investigating ecosystems
- 2) describe ways in which human activities and technologies alter balances and interactions in the environment
- 3) describe the roles and interactions of producers, consumers, and decomposers within an ecosystem
- 4) describe Aboriginal perspectives on sustainability and describe ways in which they can be used in habitat and wildlife management

- 5) demonstrate an understanding of the watershed as a fundamental geographic unit, and explain how it relates to water management and planning
- 6) use adaptive, management, and coping skills to help them respond to the various challenges they encounter as they participate in physical activities
- 7) demonstrate an understanding of procedures for anticipating and responding to hazards that may lead to injury or ailments while participating in physical activity outdoors

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/environ18curr.pdf>