

UPDATE
Education Alliance for a Sustainable Ontario
October 2, 2007

Governance/ Administration:

At a series of meeting held in the spring and early summer, EASO adopted its name, a vision and set of goals, established several sub-committees, and refined a Terms of Reference document which will be presented for approval later this month.

EASO was without an administrative coordinator over the summer, and co-chair Merebeth Switzer has had to resign from her duties. We have now identified a very capable person to provide administrative coordination (starting this week) and EASO will be meeting in a few weeks to approve a revised workplan.

Formal Education:

EASO participated in reviewing and commenting on Ministry of Education science curriculum documents, and providing input to the Bondar Working Group which was established jointly by the Ministers of Education and Environment to advise the province on strengthening Environmental Education in Ontario. (Pam Schwartzberg was a member of the WG and devoted much energy and time to its deliberations and report.) Although all 32 recommendations of the WG were immediately accepted by both Ministers, there have already been indications that implementing the recommendations will face many challenges.

EASO also participated in the review of Environmental Education Standards being developed by the Ministry of Education as a follow up to the Bondar Report. EASO will continue to provide input into this process as it is implemented.

EASO will build on the Sustainability Curriculum Initiative work of LSF to convene an expert team to provide input into the Ontario Health and Phys Ed curriculum beginning this fall.

Non-formal and Informal Education:

Co-chair Merebeth Switzer made a presentation on EASO to the Bluewater Sustainability Forum held at Lambton College in Sarnia in June. We anticipate further collaboration with the "Bluewater Sustainability Initiative" which is led by representatives from the city and country, the Sarnia/Lambton Economic

Partnership, Lambton College, industry, business and environmental associations.

David Bell and Pam Schwartzberg held a number of meetings with the Ministers of Education and Transport and senior staff from MOE to push forward the ESD agenda.

EASO has collaborated with the Toronto Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) to develop a survey monkey website in order to complete an inventory of existing ESD activities across the province. Toronto RCE is also working on five case studies of the best practices and is planning to profile these case studies in a web site.

EASO has a strong link through Alan Crook (who chairs EASO's subcommittee on this issue) to the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network.

At its June meeting EASO heard an interesting presentation from Douglas Worts on "Fostering a Culture of Sustainability" which emphasized the importance of engaging cultural institutions (such as museums and art galleries) in ESD.

EASO also learned that 13 of Ontario's leading environmental organizations had come together to develop a set of key Environmental Priorities to help steer Ontario in a new and healthier direction.

The Six Priorities are: Boreal Forest, Energy, Great Lakes, Greenbelt, Toxics and Waste. EASO attempted but did not succeed in having ESD added to this list.

David Bell made a presentation to staff at the advertising agency DDB (which has announced its intention to "go green") about "The Challenge of Sustainability in the 21st Century", and invited them to join EASO.