

# Ontario Education For Sustainable Development Working Group

## UPDATE #3

MAY, 2006

### PROGRESS

The project is progressing well, although we have re-scheduled the first meeting of the Ontario ESD Core Working Group for September. The revisions to our Work Plan and an outline of the upcoming deliverables and deadlines can be found on page 3.

#### ADMINISTRATION

There is a large workload involved in contacting people and in setting up this initial meeting. In the next few weeks we will be recruiting and contracting an Research/Administrative Assistant to help with some of this work and we will likely contact someone to act

as a coordinator for the first few meetings of the OESDWG. If you are interested in knowing more about these positions or if you or your organization can provide in-kind support to help with some of this work please contact us at [m\\_switzer@ducks.ca](mailto:m_switzer@ducks.ca).

#### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

We have received \$15,000 from the Ministry of Education and \$10,000 in support from the Ministry of the Environment. The Ministry of Natural Resources is providing significant in-kind support by organizing and acting as Secretariat for the Biodiversity Subcommittee.

In addition to government support, support continues to be

provided by Ducks Unlimited Canada and other partners.

#### MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUPS AND THE NATIONAL EXPERT COUNCIL:

In early May representatives from the newly forming working groups met to discuss their progress. This included one or two reps from each working group in Manitoba, BC, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Nunavut, Saskatchewan and Ontario as well as two representatives exploring the potential for creating a group in Quebec.

This was a very preliminary meeting but helped groups compare their approaches and challenges as they move ahead with implementation in their own regions.

A second full day meeting took

place to discuss the National ESD Expert Council, its role, function and possible members. This was attended by about 40 individuals representing different aspects of ESD and education including the ESD Working Group representatives. The discussion paper guiding this meeting and a summary of the results may be found on the LSF Website.

#### THE NATURAL CITY 2006 CONFERENCE, Toronto

#### ESD Workshop, June 2nd

There will be a brief presentation about the Ontario ESD Working Group project as part of a full day workshop which

includes presentations from the Canadian Commission on UNESCO as well as panels deal with school-based ESD, community-based programs

and the business perspective. Visit [www.environment.utoronto.ca/NaturalCity/Workshops](http://www.environment.utoronto.ca/NaturalCity/Workshops) for details

### COMMUNICATIONS & NETWORKING

We have been working with Learning for a Sustainable Future to setup some communications tools that will help our group to function more effectively. These should be coming on-line very soon and will include:

**ONTARIO SECTION OF THE LSF WEBSITE:** As part of the Provincial/Territorial Working Groups section of the LSF site, there will be an Ontario section where we will post updates, information about upcoming meetings and so on.

#### INTERACTIVE TOOLS TO TAKE IN AND SHARE INFORMATION

**ABOUT ONTARIO ESD ACTIVITIES:** We are working to create an interactive, on-line tool to allow for the input and exchange of ideas on the website. We hope to include within this an interactive electronic intake form that will allow groups to provide information about their ESD activities. This will help us to build our network and increase our knowledge about ESD activities in Ontario. It will also help us to compile the Report on ESD Activities in Ontario, one of our Deliverables

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### WHAT IS THE OESDWG?

The Ontario ESD Working Group is one of six provincial/territorial Working Groups currently forming across Canada. Along with Ontario and the pilot group in Manitoba, groups are under development in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Nunavut, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. It is expected that over time groups will exist in each province and territory. These groups will be part of a network and will relate to the National Expert Council on ESD, currently under development.

These efforts are all linked to

international efforts relating to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and form, in part, Canada's response to this very important effort.

Background Information about this initiative can be found in the *March, 2006 Update* which can be found on the website for Learning for a Sustainable Future at: [www.lsf-ist.ca](http://www.lsf-ist.ca) or it can be requested via email from: [m\\_switzer@ducks.ca](mailto:m_switzer@ducks.ca)

**YOUR SUPPORT . . .** This success of this initiative will come from the commitment and work of many individuals and organizations who are already making excellent strides in educating in the diverse areas that fall under the umbrella of Education for Sustainable Development. We welcome your feedback, all forms of support and look forward to hearing from you.

(Continued from page 1)

as part of our agreement with LSF (see page 3 for outline of dates and deliverables.) The information will eventually be shared in some form with our

partners.

#### UPDATES

We will continue with these on a monthly basis. However, we would like to begin to provide these in French as well. If you can help please contact us.

## SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES

The OESDWG is being formed based on some basic principles, and specific terms and deliverables. Much of this information has been outlined in the first Update, March 2006 and in the background resources and discussion papers contained on the LSF website at [www.lsf-ist.ca](http://www.lsf-ist.ca)

Since the first seed funding was approved three months ago, some key points have been reinforced through feedback and discussions that have taken place. We thought that it might be valuable to summarize some of the points:

- This is an initiative to address Education for Sustainable Development as defined by UNESCO, integrating environment, society and economy concerns and linking back to the UN Decade.
- Our approach needs to address formal, informal and non-formal education simultaneously and recognize the importance of all forms of ESD.
- We must include the wide-range of organizations interested and involved in educating for and about Sustainable Development.
- Our efforts must result in action. The activities of the working group and the subcommittees will be action-oriented and we will not be

a group of “talking heads.”

- We need to identify our “product”. That is, we need a simple, clear vision of ESD and our vision for Ontario that is understandable by people in general and not simply something that is understood by those “in the know”.
- Measures of evaluation and assessment tools must be incorporated from the beginning. We must identify what we are trying to do and identify ways of measuring our success or failure in reaching these goals.
- All members of the working group and subcommittees must be agents of change. While they do not “speak” for others, they must act as messengers/conduits who bring information to the table and return to influence their organizations and other partners to take action.
- The OESDWG must be a catalyst for action. It must work to create a whole that is bigger than the sum of its parts.
- We want this to become a “network of networks” connecting those involved in the important work related to ESD. We want to expand the reach and influence of all of the groups, especially as it relates to ESD.

## SPECIAL THANKS

To date, all of the work relating to the Ontario ESD Working Group has been done on a volunteer basis or through in-kind support.

This includes individuals working internally within their own organizations to help initiative support for the OESDWG, as well as oth-

## How you can help . . .

### Help us expand the network.

Share this information with others—post it on your website, on your listserv or office bulletin board. We are still working on the creation of the OESDWG but we need to start to get this important information out to everyone interested in moving ahead ESD.

### Provide us ideas and feedback.

We are always open to feedback. Please forward your comments to the email address below. (We will acknowledge your submissions but we are still limited in our ability to provide detailed or individual responses until the OESDWG is fully up and running.)

### Just hearing about this initiative?

If you want to be added to our email distribution list please email us at [m\\_switzer@ducks.ca](mailto:m_switzer@ducks.ca) and request to be added to our list.

### Take part in our “Networking Forum” or consider partnering to host one in your own community.

We are planning our first Networking Forum in partnership with The Sustainability Network. It will take place in September in Toronto. The date and location will be confirmed shortly and will appear in our June Update. If this is successful, we will be looking for ways to offer more of these throughout Ontario. To do this, we will need the support of partners in those communities. If you want to help with the upcoming event or with one in your own community, let us know!

### Volunteer or In-Kind Support

The groups that came together to start this initiative recognized that it would take all of our support to make it work. If you think you can help, we would love to hear from you.

### Please forward all inquiries or feedback to:

Merebeth Switzer

Acting Project Manager, OESDWG

email: [m\\_switzer@ducks.ca](mailto:m_switzer@ducks.ca) fax: (705) 721-4999  
(include: ATTN M. Switzer fax cover page)

ers who have helped to clarify our thinking and grow our network around ESD. While this list of supporters grows daily, there are a number of people have taken time out of their very busy schedules to help support our efforts and we would like to thank them.

A special thanks to:

Pam Schwartzberg and the LSF staff

Susan Gesner, Gesner & Associates Environmental Learning

Ellen McGregor, Fielding Chemical Technologies

David Bell, Park Downsview

Chuck Hopkins, UNESCO

Paul Bubelis, Sustainability Network

Gord Miller, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario

David McRobert, Office of the ECO

Janis Nostbakken, Lowertown Youth Centre (Ottawa)

Bill Rapley, Toronto Zoo

## WORK PLAN AND DELIVERABLES

- Current and on-going activities include fundraising, enlisting support for project; hiring Coordinator and Research/Admin Assistant

### June– Summer

- June 2nd** Presentation as part of the Education for Sustainable Development Workshop, The Natural City—2006 Conference, Toronto. For more information visit:  
[www.environment.utoronto.ca/NaturalCity/Workshops/SustainableDevelopmentEducation](http://www.environment.utoronto.ca/NaturalCity/Workshops/SustainableDevelopmentEducation)
- June 30th** Establishment of a multi-stakeholder Working group
- August 30** Report on status of ESD activities in Ontario undertaken in the formal, non-formal and informal education sectors  
Progress Report on the OESDWG

General Activities to be undertaken:

- Organize and schedule meetings of core group and subcommittees
- Work with LSF to create intake and database systems
- Compile initial Ontario ESD organizations and activities Inventory (this inventory will expand with overall growth of the project and as networking forums take place)
- Further develop communications plan including work to provide information and feedback on-line
- Develop fundraising plan to help develop long-term sustainability

### September 2006–2007

- Mid-Sept** First meeting of the core OESDWG; approval of Terms of Reference; planning for the creation of initial subcommittees
- First “Networking Forum” in cooperation with the Sustainability Network; look for partners and further opportunities for Networking Forums in other places around the Province.
- The dates and locations for both of these above will be confirmed in June update.
- Nov. 20** Completion of a **Vision Document** identifying vision, goals, priorities and objectives to 2014
- Dec. 31** **Action Plan** including Implementation and Communication Plans; Action Plan should include securing the commitment of the working group members and others, and setting realistic timeframes for work schedules
- Assessment Model** - to evaluate progress against the Vilnius Framework and accompanying indicators.
- Fundraising Plan** which demonstrates commitments to sustain and enhance the working group
- Written Update** of OESDWG Activities

### March 24, 2007 REPORT ON YEAR 1

#### For the Ontario Education for Sustainable Development Working Group:

Merebeth Switzer  
National Education Coordinator  
Ducks Unlimited Canada  
566 Welham Road, Barrie, ON L4N 8Z7  
Ph: (705) 721-4444 Ext. 225  
Fax: (705) 721-4999  
m\_switzer@ducks.ca

#### For information about Learning for a Sustainable Future and initiatives nationally and in other provinces and territories:

Learning for a Sustainable Future  
343 York Lanes, York University  
4700 Keele Street  
North York, ON M3J 1P3  
Ph: 1-877-250-8202  
Fax: (416) 736-5837  
Email: info@lsf-lst.ca