

## Introduction



### Advancing Ecological Literacy

*The great challenge of our time is to build and nurture sustainable communities—communities that are designed in such a way that their ways of life, businesses, economies, physical structures, and technologies do not interfere with nature’s inherent ability to sustain life. The first step in this endeavour is to understand the principles of organization that ecosystems have developed to sustain the web of life. This understanding is what we call ecological literacy.*

— Fritjof Capra,  
*Ecoliteracy: Mapping the Terrain*

At the core of this public strategic plan is the notion of making ecological literacy mainstream. Sustainable societies will require that ecological knowledge and its practical applications are a skill set as standard as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Ecological literacy provides reference points against which to check if designs, technologies, processes, common practices, or policies enhance or harm the integrity of ecosystems.

The successful implementation of *Greening the Way Ontario Learns* will contribute not only to an increase in ecological literacy, but will also provide Ontario’s citizens with the knowledge and skills necessary to build healthy, sustainable communities.

