



## Outdoor Recreation Resource Users

This section is for individuals and organizations that support, deliver, or provide environmental and sustainability education to individuals and groups who use the outdoor environment for recreation (e.g., sports and recreational groups, naturalist groups, anglers and hunters, outdoors clubs, disability groups, and eco-tourists).

### Outcomes

#### Outdoor recreation resource users will:

1. Understand ecological sustainability concepts in relation to the multiple uses of outdoor recreation resources

#### *Sample Indicators:*

- They are aware of the potential human impacts on the natural systems of the sites they use, and of the need for their cooperation in preserving the quality and integrity of these sites for the future.
  - They are routinely offered information on the environmental issues related to ecosystems (e.g., forest and aquatic) of the sites they use, and they make environmental protection part of outdoor recreation “culture” through example.
2. Care for and steward outdoor recreation sites as a natural part of their enjoyment of them

#### *Sample Indicators:*

- They are well informed about both the special environmental issues and ecological needs of the sites they visit and of their aesthetic natural features, history, and significance.
- They embrace an attitude of acting as an integral part of, and as stewards of the natural areas they visit.
- They become involved with projects that increase naturalized areas in urban centres (e.g., naturalizing parks, schoolyards, and neighbourhoods).
- The numbers of outdoor recreation users, and membership in outdoors groups, increases.



3. Protect natural environments through the use of responsible, ecologically sustainable practices

*Sample Indicators:*

- They understand and respect the access restrictions of sites in terms of ecological limitations and the long-term preservation of protected areas.
  - They are informed about the ecological impacts of transportation methods, camping equipment, outdoors products, and recreational activities, and they plan their visits and behaviour to minimize these impacts.
  - Surveys and statistics indicate a reduction of improper garbage disposal, accidental fires, damage to trails; better water conservation; fewer violations of hunting and fishing regulations; and reductions in visitors' **ecological footprints**.
4. Be informed about policy-making for the conservation of natural sites, and support the protection, improvement, and sustainable use of the outdoor environment

*Sample Indicators:*

- They advocate for legislation and funding for the protection of parks, pristine wilderness areas, habitats, and species at risk
- They initiate and participate in projects and public forums to share information about and support outdoor recreation resources
- They contribute to decision-making processes at local and provincial levels by making their views known to government representatives

## Needs

### Outdoor recreation resource users need:

- Educational resources that increase understanding of ecological concepts, issues, and environmental impacts related to outdoor recreational activities
- A central information source for outdoor recreation areas that includes not only facility information, but also information about ecological features and environmental concerns, as well as clear directions on why and how to minimize impacts on those areas
- Clear ecological information specific to each recreational area
- Trained personnel at recreation areas who can provide information about ecological features and **sustainability** concerns, and ways to minimize users' impact on the environment
- Public forums for decision-making on the protection of outdoor environment, parks, pristine wilderness areas, habitat, and species at risk
- Specialized courses and workshops in resource management, wilderness camping, trail maintenance,



mountaineering, and other outdoor activities that focus on minimizing negative impacts of these activities on the environment

- Media that creates and reinforces positive, caring relationships with the outdoor environment (e.g., broadcasts, print media, the Internet, CD-ROMs, videos, brochures, and flyers)
- Funding and flexibility to adapt transportation vehicles used in carrying equipment to provide lower impact travel options
- Access to information about projects that improve and restore outdoor recreation areas
- Funding for urban naturalization projects
- Increased public awareness of government policies related to the protection of natural areas
- Networking among like-minded groups on conserving the ecological integrity of sites
- Encouragement for positive, caring relationships with the outdoor environment and sustainable practices
- Financial incentives, awards, and public recognition for participation, initiatives, and achievements in outdoor recreation area improvements and the education of other outdoor recreation resource users
- Reduction of the polarization of views among competing users of environmental resources

## Strategies

### *Programs, Projects, and Policies*

1. Educate the public about environmental and ecological **sustainability** issues related to outdoor recreation.
2. Offer regular environmental **stewardship** programs to the public that focus on outdoor recreation resource areas, and how to both enjoy and protect them.
3. Develop special courses on outdoor recreation that describe the types of environmental features of recreation sites, reasons for protecting sites, ecological and **sustainability** issues, decision making, and protective behaviours.
4. Introduce school curriculum that includes instruction on the ecology of outdoor recreation areas, the environmental impacts of outdoor recreational activities, ways to minimize them, and why.
5. Increase naturalization programs at recreational sites and schools.
6. Make more programs and courses in outdoor recreation affordable and available at times and locations that are convenient for participants.

### *Resources*

1. Create a central information website to list outdoor recreation facilities, with a focus on their ecological significance, environmental and **sustainability** issues, and ways for users to minimize environmental impacts.
2. Use media to provide environmental **stewardship** information to current and potential outdoor recreation resources users (e.g., print and broadcast media, brochures, flyers, videos, CDs, and the Internet).
3. Design information pieces on ways to minimize recreational environmental impacts, for distribution at sports shows and outdoor recreation activities.



4. Place on-site information about environmental concerns at hiking and biking trails, ski areas, campsites, boat ramps, and hunting and fishing areas, where users can most conveniently access it. Include easily accessible facts, statistics, and graphic representations about wildfires, water resources, species and ecosystems at risk, and ways to avoid harm.
5. Partner with outdoor recreation equipment manufacturers and retailers to provide information about environmentally sound recreational behaviours and practices, for distribution at outdoor equipment retail outlets.
6. Train personnel at outdoor recreation areas to help users become adept at environmental protection, and to develop a positive attitude about recreation within ecological limitations.
7. Develop training courses for outdoor recreation clubs, and youth and community groups to provide environmental information and education at outdoor recreation areas.
8. Develop guidelines for sound environmental behaviours and practices, and create opportunities for communication and education in schools and within the community.
9. Develop courses and outdoor recreation resource user guidelines:
  - a) focus on outdoor related activities such as resource management, wilderness camping, trail maintenance, mountaineering, and mountain biking; and
  - b) include **ecological thinking** and choices, outline an environmental code of ethics, and describe the advantages of minimizing the negative impacts of recreational activities on natural environments.
10. Increase support for and access to outdoor recreation areas by making them accessible to more users; eliminate financial, physical, and cultural barriers.
11. Create educational experiences to highlight the many ways the outdoor environment is valuable to people (e.g., beauty, natural resources, cultural significance, research and education, relaxation, camping, wilderness appreciation and sports, exercise, spiritual experience, uniqueness, ecological function, preservation of species biodiversity, geological history record, tourism, and human connection to nature).
12. Heighten public awareness of our natural heritage and increase the availability of experiences in the outdoor environment.

### *Support*

1. Research the effects of outdoor recreation and eco-tourism on the ecological **sustainability** of outdoor recreation areas, as well as the best ways to minimize negative effects; develop effective methods and resources to educate outdoor recreation resource users.
2. Collaborate with conservation authorities, parks, the Ministry of Natural Resources, **stewardship** councils, outdoor recreation clubs, schools, and the community to improve the ecological awareness and **stewardship** skills of outdoor recreation resource users.
3. Increase communication, networking, and cooperation among various conservation and outdoor recreational user group.
4. Collaborate with organizations on the core issues of sustainable use of outdoor resources.
5. Network to provide opportunities to participate in public forums and decision-making processes related to the



- protection of the natural environment, parks, pristine wilderness areas, habitat, ecosystem health, and species at risk.
6. Promote, facilitate, and fund the research, development and implementation of environmental programs by outdoor recreation clubs, organizations, and volunteers.
  7. Promote the organization of conferences and business meetings at outdoor recreation facilities where participants can experience the natural environment and learn about current environmental concerns and healthy ecosystems.
  8. Survey outdoor resource users and recreational site visitors about preferences for special events; create special events and projects that
    - a) improve and restore outdoor recreation areas, and include plantings, cleanups, stream restoration, and trail maintenance;
    - b) teach the ecology of the areas; and
    - c) provide advice on environmentally friendly camping equipment, products, practices, transportation, behaviour, stewardship, and protection of natural areas.
  9. Provide funding for camp programs that include ecological learning.
  10. Identify granting organizations, and fundraise for information publications, program design, and projects.
  11. Provide recognition to outdoor recreation users and groups who complete **environmental education** programs or demonstrate environmental **stewardship** in their resource use (e.g., refunds and discounts on licenses and registrations, special access privileges, participation in research projects).
  12. Provide incentives, recognition, awards, grants and scholarships to individuals and organizations that make outstanding contributions to the **stewardship** of outdoor recreation resources, or to **environmental education** efforts relating to outdoor recreation.

*Please see Appendix 1 for a list of useful websites.*

