ACEE Strategic Plan, 2015-2018

Approved by the ACEE Board on 25 September 2015

About the Alberta Council for Environmental Education (ACEE)
ACEE is a non-profit organization with charitable status, incorporated in Alberta in 2005. Our Charitable Number is 83043 5079 RR0001. The ACEE Board represents a broad cross-section of different environmental education stakeholders.

Links between this Strategic Plan and ACEE’s other planning documents
The ACEE Board annually revisits this strategic plan to ensure that it the organization is best positioned to deliver on its mission. Board approval of this multi-year plan is subsequently followed by Board approval of an annual ‘Program Plan’ and accompanying budget, which detail the Board’s wishes for those elements of the Strategic Plan that should take place during the upcoming calendar year. Please contact the ACEE Executive Director for more information on this process or these plans.

Vision of ACEE
Alberta is a leader in environmental education, with citizens that are informed and motivated to live more sustainably, be responsible stewards of the environment, and help ensure future generations’ quality of life.

Mission of ACEE
Our mission is “to work collaboratively to advance environmental education in Alberta,” creating the conditions required to move environmental education from the margins to the mainstream of education in Alberta.

Core Values
These core values guide ACEE as it works to accomplish its vision and mission. ACEE will be...

- **Strategic.** ACEE will consult and engage practitioners in activities that support and complement efforts of other environmental education organizations in Alberta, and will develop strategic initiatives based on the community’s needs.
- **Transparent.** ACEE will be transparent and inclusive in its dealings with the EE community, making relevant policies, budgets, and other documents available to all.
- **Inclusive.** ACEE’s activities will be inclusive of all stakeholders and includes formal, non-formal, and informal education. ACEE board members will have a wide range of relevant competencies, and will be drawn from a diversity of groups within the environmental education community.
• **Respectful.** ACEE will work in a collegial manner to add value to the efforts of the environmental education community. ACEE will NOT duplicate, compete with, or attempt to represent others in the community.

**Roles**
We take on the following roles in our work to “build a bigger boat” for environmental education in Alberta, as we implement the ACEE vision and mission:

• **Champion environmental education (EE).** ACEE will be a voice for the advancement of environmental education, speaking in support of the need for EE and its role in a changing society.

• **Convene stakeholders.** ACEE will convene the EE community, encouraging a variety of strategic conversations, liaisons, networking, actions, and synergistic collaborations between EE groups.

• **Facilitate leadership.** ACEE will help create, clarify, and coordinate leadership within the environmental education community.

• **Build networks.** ACEE will develop, encourage and support networks that facilitate the exchange of information and provide opportunities for collaboration within the Albertan EE community.

• **Increase capacity.** ACEE will develop partnerships and mechanisms to build capacity for, and help ensure, the continual improvement of environmental education groups.

• **Connect the community.** ACEE will work with all interested EE providers to promote EE resources, services, and events to the widest possible audience of Albertan educators; and connect Albertan environmental education efforts to relevant national and international networks, resources, and activities.

**Links to other ‘Educations’**
Although environmental education is our core concern, we create connections to other related and relevant educational interest areas such as outdoor education, energy education, wellness education, and sustainability education – and leverage those connections for the benefit of all learners in Alberta.

In particular – in this era of Alberta’s ‘Climate Leadership,’ and considering this province’s economic drivers, ACEE has embraced the point of view that ‘energy and environment are two sides of the same coin;’ where the phrase ‘environmental education’ is used in this document, we take this to mean a broad family of ‘educations’ that includes energy education.

**Evaluation**
ACEE strives to evaluate the success of our work. We identify and measure key indicators of success, including the desired outputs and outcomes of our work; report our findings to stakeholders; and integrate what we learn into our work to ensure evidence-based continual improvement of our programs.

**Our ‘Theory of Change’ process**
Much of the work described here flows from our ‘Theory of Change’ working documents: these are created and refined by Board, staff, and stakeholders, but do not form part of this Plan.
### Impact #1: Society increasingly values, supports, and implements environmental education.

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- **1. Advance FORMAL environmental education and environmental citizenship, by taking a lead role in working with Alberta Education to create policy – and reorienting the K-12 Education system towards EE.**
  - identify and deliver on emerging opportunities to advance EE – guided by our Curriculum for a Sustainable Future, and our Theory of Change
  - Continue to work with Alberta Education as they develop new curricula and related programs
  - Create and sustain networks of prominent stakeholders and audiences (EE groups, corporate groups, GOA, etc.); engage them in relevant discussions and consultations, and support their work
  - Engage key education stakeholders and work with them to support CSF
  - Curriculum for a Sustainable Future document, implementation strategy, and related Theory of Change
  - New curriculum, assessment and accountability policies contain more EE content
  - EE learning resources developed in lockstep with new curricula development
  - Informal agreements between Alberta Education, school jurisdictions, and key EE community members

- **2. Advance NON-FORMAL environmental education and environmental citizenship in Alberta, by working with multi-sectorial partners to shift systems.**
  - Our primary program will be ‘Get outside and Play:’ with ACEE as the backbone organization, we will use collective impact principles to organize and work with sectors such as early childhood, play, recreation, etc. towards a common agenda
  - Use system mapping and social innovation techniques to deliver on the strategies articulated in our Theory of Change. As part of this work, convene and galvanize the conversations necessary to build key relationships, identify opportunities to change policy - and support activities to create these changes
  - List of all organizations from all sectors who belong to this initiative
  - Backbone Team members list
  - Theory of Change document (successive drafts)
  - Meeting notes and action items from all meetings
  - Online discussion forums
  - Systems map, analysis, and recommendations of intervention strategies
  - Presentations and communications material

EE considered at all levels of decision making within educational organizations. ACEE is viewed as a champion of EE in Alberta. Political support for EE increases. Knowledge, value, and skill concepts relevant to environmental literacy are included in new curricula (programs of study, teaching resources and assessment). School districts implement more environmental education, and students are more energy and environmentally literate. Environmental Education moves from the margins into the mainstream of K-12 Education in Alberta.

All young children, 0-5 years old and their families in Alberta have the opportunity for active outdoor nature play that is safe, positive and engaging.
3. **Communicate about ACEE, EE, and the EE Community.**  
   - Create and promote learning stories that show the value and impact of EE in classrooms, using on-line videos and social media; and work with media to leverage and amplify this work  
   - Develop videos and vehicles that show why EE is excellent education: connect to relevant research, brain research, show linkages to health and wellbeing, educational best practices such as inquiry learning, etc.; and show the role of EE in addressing issues and societal priorities  
   - Regular updates to website (new jobs, development opportunities, etc.) from the sector, and regular distribution of e-newsletters, blogs, etc.

| • On-line Learning stories  
| • Communication vehicles: robust and current website, regular e-newsletters, blog, op eds, articles, etc.  
| • Audience-specific case statements are detailed on the ACEE website |

A variety of communication tools help position ACEE as the key go-to group vis-à-vis EE in Alberta. Specific audiences (school administrators, individual funders, etc.) more deeply understand and appreciate that ACEE and EE is highly relevant, and that a variety of groups provide quality EE services. EE is seen as an important tool to help address current issues and societal priorities for all audiences in Alberta.

4. **Create, encourage, profile, and support EE Champions.**  
   - Work with groups to help them better tell their stories, promote their programs, and weave in key messages regarding the efficacy of EE and its importance in curriculum, using ACEE’s efforts as an example  
   - Work with youth engagement groups such as the Centre for Global Education to ensure that an informed ‘youth voice’ speaks in support of EE  
   - Leverage the recommendations from teacher surveys/focus groups to help groups enhance their programs, grants and awards to better showcase the benefits/impacts of environmental education and to align processes to engage more teachers in programs, grants and awards.

| • Online and written materials designed to help organizations promote their programs  
| • Online media centre captures the news stories and press conferences  
| • Awards program |

The EE community becomes more skilled at championing EE. Albertans increasingly understand and support EE, and recognize EE champions. A significant public narrative supports environmental education. Provincial leaders value and support environmental education.
**Impact #2: Environmental educators more effectively mobilize learners to practice environmental stewardship.**

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**ACEE Board and staff time, partner organizations, training resources, on-line survey tools, funds**

1. **Annual leadership clinic for...**
   - diverse teams from EE organizations (e.g. agencies, schools).
     - Conduct a needs assessment of EE groups accepted to the clinic
     - Planning, using leadership clinic model
     - Delivery of training, and follow-up support
   - corporate teams.
     - Conduct a focus group and feasibility study
     - Clinic content to focus on communication and education initiatives designed to support corporations in their energy efficiency and environmental sustainability efforts; and include the exploration of stronger linkages to schools and the NGO EE community
     - Delivery of training, and follow-up support

**Support Alberta pre-service teachers.** Create a strategy to deliver on this outcome, which will include...

- Engage and work with relevant universities, using informal dialogues to seed discussion
- Build relationships and create specific strategies with Education faculty
- Create a package of relevant support materials for outreach to pre-service teachers: this may include an “Orientation to EE, and excellent EE programs;’ a guide to how EE delivers on existing curriculum; and an introduction to the rich EE resources available in Alberta
- Offer environmental education workshops by ACEE staff, contractors, and/or EE community members to teacher preparation programs within Faculties of Education classes

- Online needs assessment
- Summary of findings
- Multi-day team-based trainings, and post-clinic support, for two audiences: high-potential EE groups, and corporate groups
- Highlight cumulative impact of leadership clinics delivered to 8 teams a years since 2008!

EE groups learn about best practices and document increased capacity and effectiveness; and learners report greater readiness to practice stewardship.

Corporate groups’ environmental sustainability work is improved due to better communication and internal education.

Alberta pre-service teachers increase and enhance their environmental education competencies, and integrate EE into their teaching throughout their teaching careers
### 3. Support established teachers.
- Create relationships with organizations (ATA, regional consortia, etc.) that support professional learning, to facilitate more EE programming. Work with such groups to build ‘connective tissue’ between the teachers they serve, and the EE community.
- Develop a capacity-building program for EE providers who support teacher professional learning, helping them understand the new dynamics of the K-12 education system.
- Based on teachers’ needs, create a program to ensure that teachers are prepared to deliver more EE. Deliver teacher workshops and other learning opportunities to teachers in collaboration with other EE groups.

### 4. Develop the Alberta Green Schools Program: ‘creating environmental stewards through instructional leadership, inquiry learning, and environmental education’
- Create a program that creates and supports Green Schools in Alberta; a network to support all involved schools and divisions; and a stream at the annual conference.
- As part of this, develop and deliver a professional learning event for teachers and administrators that is custom-designed to meet the needs of specific school divisions, and includes the instructional leadership model.

### 5. Galvanize energy efficiency education.
- Create and deliver on a stakeholder-built strategy that supports Alberta’s Climate Leadership initiative with education around energy efficiency, conservation, and renewables.
- **Within schools**, connect teachers and their students with high-value education programs, professional development, and grant programs that help students ‘learn by doing’ as they make their schools and homes more energy efficient.
- **In the community**, convene and build the capacity of those who deliver energy efficiency education and outreach programs, using our expertise in communities of practice and professional learning to increase impact.

### Teachers learn about, and enhance their EE practices; EE groups and speakers gain greater exposure to, and more interest from, teachers.

### More EE groups, speakers and EE ‘streams’ at conferences and conventions
- Annual outreach to key nodes of the ATA’s PD network, promoting relevant services of EE groups.
- EE Resource Centre highlights the relevant resources from EE groups, PD Network, etc.
- Developed and implemented strategy for establishing ‘coaches’ and leaders within school boards.

- Advertising materials and website
- Series of Green School training sessions
- Network and follow-up activities
- Stream at Earth Matters conference

### Individual school boards in Alberta embrace and implement EE, build bridges over systemic barriers to environmental education, and students become more environmentally literate.

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## Impact #3: A coordinated network of engaged stakeholders collaborate to advance environmental education in Alberta.

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| ACEE Board and staff time, support and advice from EE groups, specialists (e.g. database specialists), participating teachers, meeting venues, funds. | **Create and support coordinated networks of stakeholders.** Work with government, corporate, NGO, for-profit, formal education, etc. in several different program areas:  
- follow-up support for our 2015 “Summit on environmental literacy and energy literacy”  
- seeking collective impact through our work with cross-sectorial community members that seek to help preschoolers ‘Get Outside and Play”  
- Communities of Practice dealing with topics such as water |  
- Initiative-specific pages and discussion boards, etc. created on ACEE website  
- Network gatherings, meeting minutes, training sessions | EE stakeholders collaborate to share their learnings and help “build a bigger boat.” Groups feel networked and linked to others and to ACEE, collaborate more develop coordinated approaches to programming and seeking funding, become more effective, and develop a culture of collective impact. |

1. **Develop, maintain, and promote the use of the EE Resource Centre.**  
- Promote this to EE groups  
- Support EE groups’ efforts to list their services on-line  
- Engage pre-service teachers to improve content  
- Advertise to teachers and to key non-formal audiences  
- Create a teacher-friendly entry point to the database |  
- A highly functional database/website platform  
- Contains current information (over 600 resources) from over 130 EE organizations  
- Teacher Toolkit | Educators and other groups learn more about the services offered by EE groups, and use more of these services. Website becomes the go-to ‘hub’ for EE resources in Alberta. |

2. **Deliver an annual environmental education conference.**  
- Engage with corporate partners, the ATA, and other key stakeholders and partners to organize and plan an annual conference  
- Conference program will create synergy by weaving together significant and timely themes  
- Support post-conference ‘connective tissue’ networks and communities by requesting participant commitments at the conference, and through the promotion of on-line platforms |  
- List of conference committee members  
- Meeting minutes  
- Conference marketing materials and on-line resources | Teachers and agencies professionals learn about new resources and approaches, share best practices, celebrate our accomplishments, and improve their professional practice. |
### Impact #4: Organizational development and diverse revenue streams ensure that ACEE sustains and increases its impact

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| ACEE Board and staff time through committees and meetings | 1. **Build the organizational capacity of ACEE Board and staff.**  
   - Conduct regular board meetings, actively engaging the board in strategic planning, fund development, communications, and committees  
   - Create and maintain a suite of robust and active committees that engage most or all Board members, and support ACEE’s work (governance, personnel, program, fund development, etc.)  
   - Maintain an up-to-date Board manual that captures all Board policies and committee terms of reference  
   - Implement internal control procedures to meet legal and fiduciary responsibilities (quarterly financial reports, reporting to regulatory bodies, etc.)  
   - Maintain practices that support staff and build staff capacity and job satisfaction. Staff will have contracts that clearly articulate their responsibilities and benefits; plus annual workplans, performance reviews, and professional development budgets. | • Board meeting minutes and online presence  
• Board Manual  
• Staff performance reviews  
• Suite of robust and active committees | An engaged, diverse, and enthusiastic Board of Directors guides ACEE; and its staff are well-supported, empowered, and work to their potential as they drive ACEE’s work forward.  
Staff members are provided with appropriate compensation and benefits, within the financial means of the organization.  
Sound financial systems are in place to guide program planning, and meet legal and financial standards for monitoring and reporting. |
| | 2. **Create and maintain a diverse and sustained funding stream.**  
   - Create and effectively distribute Annual Report and Case for Support.  
   - Create and maintain robust internal systems to track and nurture all funders, including individual/major donors  
   - Generate and maintain an annually-revised Fund Development Strategy  
   - Build the capacity of the ACEE Board to leverage their relationships and ask colleagues to support the organization – with the result that the proportion of funds received from individuals grows annually  
   - Provide relevant professional support for staff around grantwriting and funder relations  
   - Maintain support from current funders; and annually add onto build new relationships with at least two new foundations. | • Case for Support  
• Annual Report  
• CRM or other system is up to date and well maintained  
• Fund Development Strategy  
• ‘Cheat sheet’ to support Board fundraising activities | ACEE’s revenue streams are diverse and include a healthy component of funding from corporations from various sectors, Foundations, and individuals.  
ACEE steadily increases the percentage of its revenue that it receives from individuals. |