

## **ACEE Strategic Plan, 2016-2019**

*Approved by the ACEE Board on 6 October 2016*

### **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 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.

### **Our Vision**

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.

### **Our Mission**

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 stakeholder 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 (EE)’ is used in this document, we take this to mean a broad family of ‘educations’ that includes energy education and climate change education.

In this plan we use the phrase literacy; we view education as a process that results in literacy as an outcome. So, environmental education creates environmental literacy in learners, which manifest as behaviors we call environmental citizenship or environmental stewardship.

## Describing our work through our ‘Theory of Change’

Much of the work described appears in our ‘Theory of Change’ documents, which show the causality between the outcomes and ‘literacies’ we seek to create. These documents have the benefit of showing our work through this different lens, are created and refined by Board, staff, and stakeholders, and form part of this strategic plan.

## 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.

<b>Impact #1: Society increasingly values, supports, and implements environmental education.</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b> <i>what we do to create change</i>	<b>OUTPUTS</b> <i>deliverables that create the potential for change</i>	<b>OUTCOMES</b> <i>changes that occur as a result of this initiative</i>
<p><b>1-1. Advance FORMAL environmental education and environmental citizenship, by taking a lead role in working with Alberta Education and Alberta’s educational leadership to create policy – and reorienting the K-12 Education system towards EE.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and deliver on emerging opportunities to advance EE – guided by our Curriculum for a Sustainable Future, and our Theory of Change, which frames this as an opportunity to advance Climate Leadership in Alberta</li> <li>Continue to work with Alberta Education and other ministries as they develop new curricula and related programs</li> <li>Create and sustain networks of prominent stakeholders (including key education leaders) and audiences, engage them in relevant discussions and consultations, and support their work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendations from key stakeholders (e.g. youth) on how Alberta Schools should show Climate Leadership</li> <li>Curriculum for a Sustainable Future document, implementation strategy, and related Theory of Change</li> <li>New curriculum, assessment and accountability policies contain more EE content</li> <li>EE learning resources developed in lockstep with new curricula development</li> <li>school districts’ Climate Leadership plans, or equivalent</li> </ul>	<p>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, and provincial politicians and bureaucrats view ACEE as the ‘go-to’ organization for the sector.</p> <p>Knowledge, value, and skill concepts relevant to environmental literacy are included in new curricula. School districts demonstrate Climate Leadership, implement more environmental education, and students are more energy and environmentally literate.</p> <p>Environmental Education moves from the margins into the mainstream of K-12 Education in Alberta.</p>
<p><b>1-2. Communicate about ACEE, EE, and the EE Community to create a narrative in Alberta.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with teachers and groups to create and promote stories that promote their work, show the value and impact of EE in classrooms and its importance in curriculum, and work with media to leverage and amplify this work</li> <li>‘Shine a light on’ early adopters and leaders in environmental, energy and climate change education to encourage widespread adoption of this approach; and encourage such leaders to step into a leadership role (e.g. CBE)</li> <li>regular updates to website (new jobs, development opportunities, etc.) from the sector, and regular distribution of e-newsletters, blogs, etc.</li> <li>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</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-line Learning stories and media centre</li> <li>Communication vehicles: robust and current website, regular e-newsletters, blog, op eds, articles, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>A significant public narrative supports environmental education:</p> <p>A variety of communication tools help position ACEE as the key go-to group vis-à-vis EE in Alberta.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>EE is seen as an important tool to help address current issues and societal priorities for all audiences in Alberta.</p>

<p><b>1-3. Advance NON-FORMAL environmental education and environmental citizenship in Alberta, by working with multi-sectorial partners to shift systems.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our primary program will be the 'Get Outside and Play Early Childhood Network'. ACEE will act as the backbone coordinating organization. This network engages with the early childhood, health and wellness, recreation and physical literacy, environmental education sectors to advance this work.</li> <li>• This program has two areas and a flagship event:</li> </ul> <p><b>Childcare</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review regulations at the provincial level to create policies and regulations that support outdoor nature play in childcare settings.</li> <li>• Convene conversations between licensing, accreditation and AHS to align and support outdoor play and nature connection in childcare settings.</li> <li>• Develop professional learning opportunities for childcare workers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Families and Communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with provincial organizations (Alberta Parks and Recreation Association (ARPA) and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)) to reach municipal planners and leaders.</li> <li>• Develop resources for communities that can be used by network members to support outdoor nature play.</li> <li>• Support and promote existing initiatives – CWF Wild Family Nature Clubs, IPA conference, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Get Outside and Play Week</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A provincial celebration that provides resources, inspiration and events across the province to childcare providers and families/communities to encourage outdoor nature play for young families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of all organizations from all sectors who belong to this initiative</li> <li>• Theory of Change document</li> <li>• Meeting notes and action items from all meetings</li> <li>• Recommendations from stakeholders/network members on how licensing regulations should be changed.</li> <li>• Professional learning sessions delivered to early childhood educators.</li> <li>• List of participants in Get Outside and Play Week</li> <li>• Media related to this area</li> </ul>	<p>All young children, 0-5 years old, their families and caregivers in Alberta engage more in active, outdoor play and nature connection that is safe, positive and engaging. Active outdoor nature play in the early years...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves physical literacy and general health outcomes</li> <li>• Builds a foundation of nature connection that develops life long environmental literacy and stewardship</li> <li>• Connects young children and their families with their communities, contributing to family resilience and social connections.</li> </ul> <p>Children in childcare settings engage in more nature connection and outdoor play because supportive policy structures are in place and early childhood educators have the training to confidently create safe and engaging spaces for young children.</p> <p>Communities across Alberta recognize the value of outdoor play and nature connection and municipalities create spaces that promote and encourage outdoor play and nature connection for families and young children.</p>
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**Impact #2: Environmental educators more effectively mobilize learners to practice environmental stewardship.**

<p><b>ACTIVITIES</b> <i>what we do to create change</i></p>	<p><b>OUTPUTS</b> <i>deliverables that create the potential for change</i></p>	<p><b>OUTCOMES</b> <i>changes that occur as a result of this initiative</i></p>
<p><b>2-1. Annual leadership clinic</b> is offered for environmental, energy and climate change educators across a variety of sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete outreach for applications</li> <li>• Conduct a needs assessment for groups accepted</li> <li>• Deliver a multi-day leadership clinic with PD and planning to meet the groups needs</li> <li>• Provide follow-up support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach to EE groups</li> <li>• Application process and review of applicants</li> <li>• Online assessment</li> <li>• Delivery of clinic</li> <li>• Evaluation of clinic</li> <li>• Follow-up progress reports</li> </ul>	<p>EE groups learn about best practices and document increased capacity and effectiveness in delivering quality EE and their audiences increase their environmental stewardship.</p>
<p><b>2-2 ‘Reconnection’ Retreat.</b> We will create and offer a series of multi-day sessions (possibly over the course of a weekend) in different regions of Alberta, encourage both teams and individuals to attend, and use Open Space technology. Participants are to ‘retreat in order to advance,’ and invited to bring a question for the open space, working with colleagues to answer the question and using their learning to create a plan for change. We’ll create an airy, open format to allow abundant time for reconnecting with colleagues, with nature, and with themselves, on a personal and professional level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website advertising and celebrating gathering at retreat venues</li> <li>• Post-event satisfaction ratings and testimonials</li> <li>• Individuals and teams document their progress, on a personal and professional level</li> </ul>	<p>Participants reconnect with colleagues, with nature, and with themselves, on a personal and professional level. They learn from colleagues, and apply that learning to their own work. They network, share resources and stories, inspire one another, and have fun!</p>
<p><b>2-3. Support Alberta pre-service teachers.</b> Create a policy-focused strategy to deliver on this outcome, which will include...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building relationships with Faculties of Education across the province.</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Offer environmental education workshops by ACEE staff, contractors, and/or EE community members to teacher preparation programs within Faculties of Education classes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulation of University-specific strategies</li> <li>• Package of support materials</li> <li>• Workshops for classes within faculties of Education</li> </ul>	<p>Alberta pre-service teachers increase and enhance their environmental education competencies, and integrate EE into their teaching throughout their teaching careers</p>

<p><b>2-4. Support established teachers.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create relationships with organizations (ATA, regional consortia, etc.) and seek synergistic and strategic arrangements 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</li> <li>• 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, and orient education towards careers in the new economy</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a strategy for establishing ‘coaches’ and leaders within school boards, in partnership with groups such as Everactive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More EE groups, speakers and ‘streams’ at conferences and conventions</li> <li>• Annual outreach to key nodes of the ATA’s PD network, promoting relevant services of EE groups</li> <li>• EE Resource Centre highlights the relevant resources from EE groups, PD Network, etc.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>Environmental education becomes integrated into teacher practice through effective and innovative professional learning and coaching.</p> <p>EE providers and other community organizations work closely with teachers to bring real world learning experiences to students.</p>
<p><b>2-5. Help school divisions create Green Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to deliver the program to school divisions providing professional learning and planning time to assist schools in furthering their environmental, energy and climate change education, based on our leadership clinic model</li> <li>• Share exemplary practices by schools/teachers to a broader community</li> <li>• Build connections between schools and community resources</li> <li>• Help schools improve their environmental performance</li> <li>• Utilize this network to create champions and create a public narrative</li> <li>• Connect the AGS schools Alberta and showcase their work to inspire other school boards, schools and teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 4 Alberta Green Schools sessions annually with school boards</li> <li>• School reporting to share results and achievements</li> <li>• Evaluation on sessions</li> </ul>	<p>Schools boards and schools teams increase capacity to deliver more and deeper environmental, energy and climate change education. Students increase their environmental, energy and climate change literacy.</p>
<p><b>2-6. Galvanize energy efficiency education.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and deliver on a stakeholder-built strategy that supports Alberta’s Climate Leadership and links to Alberta Energy Efficiency Agency with education around energy efficiency, conservation, and renewables.</li> <li>• Within schools, connect teachers and their students with high-value education programs, professional development, technologies, and grant programs that help students ‘learn by doing’ as they make their schools and homes more energy efficient.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder-built strategies for schools and communities</li> <li>• Metrics will relate to environmental literacy, GHG emissions, energy reduction, and costs savings</li> <li>• Stakeholder satisfaction surveys and self-reported increases in capacity by program delivery professionals</li> </ul>	<p>This work will promote environmental literacy and energy literacy, reduce environmental impact and greenhouse gas emissions, bring down operating costs, make schools - and students’ homes - more energy efficient, and spur Albertans’ environmental stewardship.</p>

<b>Impact #3: Build, support, and strengthen coordinated networks of engaged and collaborative stakeholders.</b>		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b> <i>what we do to create change</i>	<b>OUTPUTS</b> <i>deliverables that create the potential for change</i>	<b>OUTCOMES</b> <i>changes that occur as a result of this initiative</i>
<b>3-1. Support coordinated networks of stakeholders.</b> Work with government, corporate, NGO, for-profit, formal education, etc. in several different program areas, where needed (environmental literacy and energy literacy, cross-sectorial community members involved in 'Get Outside and Play", etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiative-specific pages and discussion boards, etc. created on ACEE website</li> <li>Network gatherings, meeting minutes, training sessions</li> </ul>	EE stakeholders collaborate to help 'build a bigger boat." Groups feel networked to others and to ACEE, collaborate more, coordinate their programming and fund-seeking, and become more effective.
<b>3-2. Develop, maintain, and promote the use of the EE Resource Centre.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update content, helping organizations list their programs; possibly engage volunteers in this work</li> <li>Advertise to teachers and key non-formal audiences</li> <li>Create a teacher-friendly entry point to the database</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A highly functional database/ website platform</li> <li>Contains current information (over 500 resources) from over 130 EE organizations</li> <li>Teacher Toolkit</li> </ul>	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.
<b>3-3. Deliver environmental education conference(s) annually.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with school divisions and other partners to host annual conferences across the province</li> <li>Conferences may be provincial or regional, depending on available sponsorship and mediated by specific opportunities</li> <li>Conference program will create synergy by weaving together significant and timely themes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of committee members</li> <li>List of conference registrants</li> <li>Conference marketing materials and on-line resources</li> <li>Delegate testimonials and on-line satisfaction survey results</li> </ul>	Teachers and agencies professionals have their professional needs met, learn about new resources and approaches, share best practices, celebrate our accomplishments, and improve their professional practice.
<b>3-4. Create and support a dynamic network of high school students.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and support a network that engage high school students in a provincial conversation relevant to advancing EE as they advise and share best practices with government, school boards, other education stakeholders and media</li> <li>Network is organized at provincial and 'chapter' levels to call for change both provincially and within specific school divisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online community on a virtual platform</li> <li>Regional face to face meetings</li> <li>Student presentations and outreach to decision-makers</li> </ul>	A well-informed and powerful youth voice calls for more climate leadership and environmental education, informs regional and provincial policy and creates change within the K-12 education system.

**Impact #4: Organizational development and diverse revenue streams ensure that ACEE sustains and increases its impact.**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ACTIVITIES</b> <i>what we do to create change</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OUTPUTS</b> <i>deliverables that create the potential for change</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OUTCOMES</b> <i>changes that occur as a result of this initiative</i></p>
<p><b>4-1. Build the organizational capacity of ACEE Board and staff.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct regular board meetings, actively engaging the board in strategic planning, fund development, communications, and committees</li> <li>• 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.)</li> <li>• Implement internal control procedures to meet legal and fiduciary responsibilities (quarterly financial reports, reporting to regulatory bodies, etc.)</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board meeting minutes and online presence</li> <li>• Board Manual</li> <li>• Staff performance reviews</li> <li>• Suite of robust and active committees</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p> <p>Staff members are provided with appropriate compensation and benefits, within the financial means of the organization.</p> <p>Sound financial systems are in place to guide program planning, and meet legal and financial standards for monitoring and reporting.</p>
<p><b>4-2. Create and maintain a diverse and sustained funding stream.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and effectively distribute Annual Report and Case for Support</li> <li>• Create and maintain robust internal systems to track and nurture all funders, including individual/major donors</li> <li>• Generate and maintain an annually-revised Fund Development Strategy, to include an annual stewardship and celebration event, legacy giving, and estate assignments</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Provide relevant professional support for staff around grant-writing and funder relations</li> <li>• Maintain support from current funders; and annually build new relationships with at least two new foundations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case for Support</li> <li>• Annual Report</li> <li>• CRM or other system is up to date and well maintained</li> <li>• Fund Development Strategy</li> <li>• ‘Cheat sheet’ to support Board fundraising activities</li> </ul>	<p>ACEE’s revenue streams are diverse and include a healthy component of funding from corporations from various sectors, Foundations, and individuals.</p> <p>ACEE steadily increases the percentage of its revenue that it receives from individuals.</p>