

**Environmental Education: Department of Teacher Education, Faculty of Education,
Brock University**

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The history of Environmental Education (EE) in the Department of Teacher Education within the Faculty of Education at Brock University can be summarized in two historical periods. The first period (1964-2013), largely programmatic, culminated in an elective EE course being offered on an annual basis for all preservice teachers. As well, a series of weekend Project Wild Workshops were offered annually to interested preservice teachers. For many years, the elective courses and workshops were very popular with preservice teachers, at both campuses (St. Catharines and Hamilton). Despite their popularity, these activities tended to operate in relative curricular isolation, their success and implementation dependent solely on the passionate and enduring commitment of several part-time instructors and one tenure-track faculty member.

The second period (2013-present) commenced as a result of several recent events. One, the release of the Ontario Ministry of Education's *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario* (2009). Two, the Deepening Environmental Education in Preservice Education Roundtable hosted at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (May 2013), three, the re-conceptualization of teacher education in the province of Ontario (2015), and four, the collective activities of several committed faculty members across four Faculties of Education in Ontario (since 2013). Collectively, these events have re-invigorated the status of environmental education in Ontario's faculties of education.

The upshot of these events resulted in the following ad hoc committee being struck: *Enhancing Environmental Education in the Department of Teacher Education*. The following priority objections were identified:

Curricular Programming:

- the design and administration of a course survey for all department faculty members to access EE content and curriculum implementation methods;
- an evaluation of this survey with the identification of current programming strengths and weaknesses;
- specific activities developed to support faculty members experiencing challenges with the integration of EE in their programs;
- the implementation of a new EE elective course for intermediate-senior preservice teachers (approved);
- the development of a new EE optional course for primary, junior, and intermediate preservice teachers (under way);
- service learning grant writing to support EE-related activities in all curricular programs;

Professional Development:

- workshops and/or conferences to support preservice teachers;
- department meetings/forums to support department faculty members;

Research:

- liaising with faculty members across all faculty of education departments;
- becoming a member of Brock's transdisciplinary research unit—Environmental Sustainability Research Centre;
- editing a volume for the Canadian Association for Teacher Education's (CATE) polygraph series, Canadian Research in Teacher Education--*Canadian Perspectives on Initial Teacher Environmental Education Praxis*.
- writing a chapter for inclusion in CATE's polygraph series: Canadian Research in Teacher Education—*Initial Teacher Environmental Education Capacities: What Is The Role Of Ontario's Faculties Of Education?*