A SAFETY VALVE TO MODERN LIVING:
ANTIMODERNISM, CITIZENSHIP, LEISURE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN
TORONTO’S OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRES, 1953-1997
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ABSTRACT

In 1960 the Toronto Board of Education opened its first residential outdoor education centre, the Toronto Island Natural Science School, which signaled the beginning of an outdoor education movement in the city. By the mid-1980s the school boards and conservation authorities of Metropolitan Toronto had opened 12 residential outdoor education centres to serve Toronto public school students. This thesis seeks to explain why these programs were developed at this time and in this place. It finds that these programs fit into a broader ‘modernizing antimodernism’ paradigm which shaped many similar formal and informal educational programs in the twentieth century, and argues that democratic citizenship education was the major factor that was used to justify and shape them. This democratic citizenship education had three main components: education for democratic living, education for productive use of leisure time, and education for the environment, each of which is explored in depth.
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Completing this thesis was a journey: the final product is very different (and better) than I imagined that it would be when I started it more than a year ago. I could not have completed this journey without the help of many people along the way.

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In 1956 the Toronto Board of Education sent a delegation to Michigan with the purpose of investigating the Dearborn Board of Education’s outdoor education program at the Mill Lake School Camp. The members of the delegation explored the camp’s site, its operation, and its curriculum. They were impressed by what they saw, and recommended that a school camp be set-up for Toronto children on Toronto Island. It did not take long for the delegation’s recommendations to be put into action, and the Toronto Island Natural Science School opened to much acclaim in 1960. It was the first permanent residential outdoor education centre in Canada.

Meanwhile, since 1953 Grade 9 students at York Memorial Collegiate, in cooperation with the Humber Valley Conservation Authority, had been spending three days every June camping in the Humber Valley. Three years after the Island Natural Science School opened, a permanent outdoor education school at the Albion Hills Conservation Area was constructed to extend York Memorial’s program to other schools in the region. These were the first of many residential outdoor education field centres to serve students enrolled in Toronto’s public schools in the second half of the twentieth century.

These programs did not appear out of the blue; the development of residential outdoor education for Toronto students fits into a larger history of education in the
outdoors. They also appeared at a moment during which education was being debated across society. The 1960s was a time of significant educational change in Ontario, when the purposes of education were being debated, shaped, and redefined. The outdoor education programs of this era reflected these new understandings of schooling.

There is no doubt that a major purpose, if not the main purpose, of these outdoor education programs was the teaching of science to children. In the post-Sputnik era\(^1\), educators were encouraged to improve the scientific literacy of the population, a task which had begun a half-century earlier in nature study programs across North America. However, as the Toronto Board of Education put it, “[[learning about science is only a small part of what the children learn.’’\(^2\) Other aspects of education played an important role in the establishment of these programs. I will argue that democratic citizenship education was the major factor that was used to justify and shape the programs of residential outdoor education centres in the postwar era. This democratic citizenship education had three main components: education for democratic living, education for productive use of leisure time, and education for the environment, each of which closely reflected the redefined purposes of education in this new, progressive, time.

In the Cold War era, North American governments and many citizens were concerned with what they termed “keeping the world safe for democracy.” In order to

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\(^1\) Sputnik, the first artificial satellite to be put into Earth’s orbit, was launched by Soviet Union on October 4, 1957. The launch precipitated the space race between the United States and the USSR.

\(^2\) The Board of Education for the City of Toronto, *The Island School* ([Toronto: The Board, 196?]), n.p.
do that, they believed they had to ensure that their children learned how to live democratically. Thus, a major focus of schooling in the 1950s and 1960s was education for democratic living, something which educators and educational bureaucrats believed could be best learned in the group-living situation of residential outdoor education centres.

The economic and technological booms of the post-World War II era saw an ever more productive and affluent society with a seemingly ever-decreasing workload. It was not until the 1950s that the five-day workweek was usual for manual workers, and the 40-hour week was not normal until the 1960s.\(^3\) However, as the shortened workweek became increasingly common throughout North America, many observers believed that the trend of decreasing number of working hours would continue. The fewer number of hours spent on the job meant that adults and children had more leisure time to fill. The Ontario government was concerned with the ways in which Ontarians would choose to make use of this time. So, educators and educational bureaucrats set out to teach children how to productively use their leisure time, both as children and as adults. They felt that an appropriate setting for education for the productive use of leisure time was the new outdoor education centres.

Finally, the environment was an important topic in Ontario society both before and after Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* in 1962. Prior to the mid-1960s, environmental concern had been focused on forest and soil conservation, especially

along watersheds. By the late-1960s, environmental concern was beginning to take the shape of the more radical environmental movement, concerned with chemical pollution, acid rain, and nuclear proliferation. Educators hoped that their students would come to share the concern surrounding conservation and environmental pollution, and work to affect positive change for the environment. They saw outdoor education programs as an effective space in which to help shape this concern in students.

Each of these three elements also reflected outdoor education’s “modernizing antimodernism” project. Here I take Ian McKay’s term from his seminal work *The Quest of the Folk*. Modernizing antimodernism is the contradictory process via which antimodern spaces, people, or traditions are only valued if brought into the modern world using modern technology or processes, such as commodification. For my purposes, I tweak this definition to use the term “modernizing antimodernism” to mean the understanding held by many educators that the best way to teach students to live well in modern society was by bringing them to antimodern spaces where they would be taught antimodern skills.

Historians have argued that programs related to the modern outdoor education programs discussed in this work, such as early-twentieth century nature study and summer camps, have been shaped by opposing forces of modernization and antimodernism. George Altmeyer, in his article “Three Ideas of Nature in Canada, 1893-1914,” argued that nature-study was connected to antimodernism, as

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it was often justified by the idea that “modern society had atrophied or stunted the senses.” In her book on the subject, Sally Gregory Kohlstedt notes that nature study was supposed to connect those who had recently moved to the city back to the rural country and overcome the negative aspects of urban life. In her book on the history of Ontario children’s summer camps, Sharon Wall argues that summer camps fit into this paradigm:

Via the camp, modern ways of thinking and feeling about numerous aspects of society, the self, and racial others were reinforced. Preoccupations with intense experience and with identity, and the belief that both were to be sought on the terrain of leisure were all typical of the modern condition. Even in its very ‘antimodernness,’ the summer camp further points up the progress of modernity.

The residential outdoor education programs that served Toronto public school students were part of this paradigm: educators sought to bring students into the modern world by exposing them to antimodern and timeless spaces.

Before I address how each of these three factors, as well as these two overarching themes, were used to shape outdoor education programs and in turn shaped them, I will first explore the larger picture in which these outdoor education centres were created. Firstly, they came about at a time when there was a strong belief in the power of education to change society. Secondly, they grew out of a long tradition of outdoor education, both in Canada and abroad. Thirdly, they came about

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in a time of educational innovation and administrative change. Finally, they came about in a time of a largely positive public mood. However, before I explore any of this, I will first outline the two types of outdoor education programs which served Toronto students in this era.

**The TBE, the MTSB, and the MTRCA**

Students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools in Toronto between 1954 and 1997 were each served by two different schools boards, their local area board and the Metropolitan Toronto School Board (MTSB). In 1954, the provincial government set up the federated municipal structure that would govern Toronto for the next 43 years. Metropolitan Toronto was an overarching body designed to address the strategic needs of the metropolitan area, including arterial roads, regional planning, and public transportation. The Metropolitan Toronto Council was made up of representatives from the 13 municipalities under its jurisdiction: the City of Toronto; the towns of New Toronto, Mimico, Weston, and Leaside; the villages of Long Branch, Swansea, and Forest Hill; and the townships of Etobicoke, York, North York, East York, and Scarborough. In 1967 the smaller municipalities were merged into the larger townships, leaving the City of Toronto, and the then boroughs of Etobicoke, York, North York, East York, and Scarborough. Each municipality had its own school board in addition to the MTSB, which was entrusted with ensuring educational equality across Metropolitan Toronto.

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8 Tim McCaskell, *Race to Equity: Disrupting Educational Inequality* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 3-5. In his book about equity initiatives in the Toronto Board of Education, McCaskell notes that the board had been reform-minded since the late-1960s.
The Toronto Board of Education (TBE) was the largest and wealthiest of the area boards which made up the MTSB. It was also the most innovative. As such, it was the first to develop a residential outdoor education program, the Toronto Island Natural Science School, which opened in 1960. This program was designed to serve Grade 6 TBE students. Other area boards, specifically the five large area boards that joined the TBE in continuing to exist post-1967, established their own outdoor education programs in the late-1960s and 1970s (see Appendix A). However, I will focus on the Toronto Island Natural Science School as representative of this class of outdoor education programs, as it has existed the longest and has the most archival material available.  

The MTSB, however, wanted all Metro Toronto students to have access to residential outdoor education programs for the time-being. So, in partnership with several area boards and the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA), the MTSB worked to establish programs that would be available to all students in Metro Toronto. The first of these programs was the Albion Hills Conservation School, established in 1963, located at the MTRCA’s Albion Hills Conservation Area. The program at Albion Hills was designed to serve secondary school students in Metropolitan Toronto and other local areas, such as York County. It was the first of many residential and day outdoor education centres that would be established by the MTRCA throughout the 1960s and 1970s (see Appendix A).

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9 With the creation of the Toronto District School Board in 1998, the former area boards sent selections of their archival material to the Toronto District School Board Sesquicentennial Museum and Archives, formerly operated by the Toronto Board of Education (TBE). The former TBE is best represented in the collection.
The board-operated centres and the MTRCA-operated centres shared many common program elements, despite catering to different age-groups and answering to different organizations. Though there were and continue to be key differences in their programs which are highlighted throughout this thesis. In this work I focus on the multi-day residential programs offered at these centres. Although day programs did exist, being shorter in duration they were both easier to justify and covered less content than the residential programs. However, I will make mention of them when the opportunity arises.

A key element that both types of centres share is their understanding of outdoor education. The term ‘outdoor education’ can mean many things. As Donald Hammerman, William Hammerman, and Elizabeth Hammerman put it, outdoor education is “a rather vague and nebulous concept.”\(^{10}\) The best definition of it is broad and all encompassing: Camille Bunting defines ‘outdoor education’ as education in, about, through, and for the outdoors.\(^ {11}\) It is a location for teaching, a content to be taught, a method of instruction, and an advocacy for a space. The programs that Toronto students attended shared these elements: they sought to use the outdoors to teach students components of the regular curriculum best suited to be learned in that setting, using methods available only in the outdoors. They also advocated the use of the outdoors and environmental protection.


Outdoor Education for Urban Children

This work focuses on Toronto because of the accessibility and breadth of its archival record and its position as the first jurisdiction in Canada to establish a permanent residential outdoor education program. However, this work cannot act as a case study – Toronto cannot be a stand in for other communities in Ontario or across Canada, although all outdoor education programs developed in this era certainly shared some commonalities. The TBE and the MTSB were too large, too rich, and too urban to be equated with other school boards in the province in the second half of the twentieth century. However, the two schools that it focuses on, the Toronto Island Natural Science School and the Albion Hills Conservation School, can act as case studies of the other board-operated and MTRCA-operated outdoor education centres in Metropolitan Toronto in this era.

Instead, this is a work of microhistory. According to Ruth Sandwell, microhistory “is a very close reading of evidence documenting how people ordinarily (day to day) related to each other, and to their environment, in one place.”\(^\text{12}\) It “provides a close-up view of people and place over time.”\(^\text{13}\) Its most common form is a community-based study.

Sandwell suggests that microhistory is particularly valuable for those doing environmental history, by “providing a focus through which to see the complex daily


\(^{13}\) Ibid., 124.
series of relationships involving humans and nature."⁹⁴ Although dealing with environmental topics, this thesis is not an environmental history. Instead, it offers a microhistorical study of a particular form of schooling (outdoor education) in a particular place (Metropolitan Toronto) in order to understand both the realities of how people related to each other and the environment, but also how ideas about these relations shaped these interactions.

**Teaching Ontario’s Children in the 1960s**

The era in which the TBE, MTSB, and the MTRCA developed residential outdoor education programs was a time of societal change. George S. Tomkins argues in his influential study of the history of curriculum in Canada, *A Common Countenance*, that “the school can only be understood in relation to the other educative institutions and to society itself.”¹⁵ This is true of educational movements as well, including outdoor education. In her work on nature study in North America, a precursor of modern outdoor education, Sally Gregory Kohlstedt argues that educational movements are only possible if they “resonat[e] with other social, intellectual, and cultural currents” of the times.¹⁶ Therefore, it is necessary to explore not only the larger educational scene during this time period, but also to place my discussion of Toronto’s outdoor education programs in wider societal trends.

⁹⁴ Ibid.
Modernity came to Canada around the turn of the twentieth century, with Toronto being at its forefront. Many historians have explored this phenomenon. Donica Belisle, in her recent history of department stores, attributes “the growth of cities, industry, the state, and capitalism” with “transform[ing] Canada into a modern nation” between the 1880s and 1920s. Veronica Strong-Boag argues that modernity in Canada was characterized by increased urbanization, the weakening of local cultures, greater racial and ethnic diversity, the growth of white-collar bureaucratic and blue-collar service employment, the emergence of a domestic economy based on credit and consumption rather than thrift and production, and the inauguration of new public roles for women.

Keith Walden argues that the “staggering” extent of change in the late Victorian Western world caused people to “re-establish the comprehensibility of their physical and intellectual environments”; they had to learn and to give meaning to the new modern spaces.

Although modernity had come to Canada at the beginning of the century, changes in society following World War II were almost as disorienting. Historians have argued that there was massive social change in Canada in the postwar period. In Quebec, this change manifested itself as the Quiet Revolution, the dramatic shift from a parochial society led by the Catholic Church to a secular society based on the welfare state and the rise of nationalism. José E. Igartua argues that a similar

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change took place in English Canada between 1945 and 1971 that he terms the ‘Other Quiet Revolution’. During this period English Canada “shed its definition of itself as British and adopted a new stance as a civic nation, that is, without ethnic particularities, and erected this as the Canadian model.”20 Bryan D. Palmer makes a similar argument in a recent book: “Canada as it had been known ceased, for all practical purposes, to exist in the 1960s.”21 Prior to the 1960s, Canadian identity was a subset of British identity.22

The change from a nation consumed with its Britishness to one which was more open to other cultures and identities was just one of many changes that occurred in this time period. The end of World War II brought an economic boom to Ontario which was sustained, save for a mild recession in the late-1950s and early-1960s, until the mid-1970s.23 This economic boom coincided with a shift from a manufacturing economy in the late 1940s to a service sector economy in the 1970s.24 Randall White, in his history of Ontario, argues that this economic shift revitalized the role of education in the province, as “education was seen as the fundamental engine of progress in the new service state.”25

Modernism evolved as the twentieth century progressed. In his book The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada, Christopher Dummitt argues that the

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22 Ibid., 416.
23 Randall White, Ontario 1610-1985: A Political and Economic History (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1985), 244.
24 Ibid., 256.
25 Ibid., 285.
modernism of the postwar area can be characterized as technocratic and manly.\(^{26}\) This form of modernism was shaped by the “the belief in the rational control of nature, in the possibilities of planned progress, and in the skilful transformation of dangers into manageable risks.”\(^{27}\) This control was not only directed at nature, but also the citizens of the state: “managing economic and social life through the welfare state.”\(^{28}\)

Valerie J. Korinek argues that we should be careful when discussing postwar affluence, suggesting that national affluence in the 1950s was a myth.\(^{29}\) Instead, she argues, “[p]ostwar affluence in Canada is much better understood as a sixties’ phenomenon, when most areas of the country had modernized their houses and durables, and leisure pursuits and ‘fashionable’ spending were commonplace.”\(^{30}\) The expansion of the education system to include ‘extras’ such as outdoor education in the 1960s fits into this analysis of postwar affluence.

These changes in identity and in the economy coincided with an era of massive population growth, due to the baby boom and increased immigration.\(^{31}\) David K. Foot in *Boom, Bust & Echo* notes that Canada’s baby boom was the largest in the industrialized world; between 1947 and 1966, Canadian women had an

\(^{27}\) Ibid.
\(^{28}\) Ibid., 9.
\(^{30}\) Ibid.
average of four children each.\textsuperscript{32} This increase in the population of children required an expansion in the educational system, an expansion which allowed for discussion around the purposes and means of education in the province. The increased immigration rate, and immigration from countries outside of Europe, especially affected Canada’s large cities, including Toronto, which now more than ever had to work to integrate people from around the world into a common social space. This would come to play out in outdoor education classrooms attended by Toronto children, as will be explored in Chapter 1.

The postwar period in Ontario was a time of societal change in terms of identity, economics, and population make-up, among others. Tomkins argues that in times of societal change the school curriculum becomes an issue important to the public.\textsuperscript{33} There can be no doubt that Ontarians were preoccupied with education in the 1960s. Historians including George S. Tomkins, R.D. Gidney, and Robert M. Stamp note not only the priority placed on education in 1960s Ontario, but also the explosive expansion of education in the province, as well as the public’s “optimistic faith in education.”\textsuperscript{34}

In the era in which these residential outdoor education centres were established, schooling was imbued with the power of changing society. Stamp argues that “[s]ince its origins in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, public

\textsuperscript{32} David K. Foot with Daniel Stoffman, \textit{Boom, Bust & Echo: How to Profit from the Coming Demographic Shift} (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1996), 18-19.
\textsuperscript{33} Tomkins, \textit{A Common Countenance}, 437.
education had been expected to buttress the accepted political, religious, and economic norms.” However, in times of societal change, these norms are in flux, and thus create a space for a public debate on the purpose and means of education.

North Americans, Tomkins argues, hold a “naive [...] belief that complex social problems [can] be alleviated, if not solved, by formal institutions,” including the school. This belief was especially prevalent in the postwar era. In the 1960s, many sociologists of education believed that education was a major factor in bringing about social change, because, as Brian Simon notes, the human capital theory, the belief that investment in human capital (education) would bring about social and economic advances, was widely accepted. Historians have found evidence of this belief across Canada. K.J. Rea notes that in the late-1950s and early-1960s a notion arose in Ontario that “investments in ‘human capital’ were possibly important sources of economic growth: that outlays made on education, and possibly other services such as health care, could be expected to yield a stream of future benefits, just as investments in physical capital could.” Tomkins confirms the application of this notion to educational expansion in Ontario, arguing that that the human capital theory was a major rationale for the expansion of Ontario education in the 1960s. This theory was not confined to Ontario: for example, Amy von Heyking argues that

36 Tomkins, *A Common Countenance*, 266.
between 1945 and 1970, in Alberta, “[p]ublic education was seen to be central to the task of reconstructing and reorienting society to face the new world.”

However, as Simon notes, by the late 1970s, this understanding had changed, and it was instead widely believed that education served to reproduce existing social inequalities. Simon argues that the belief in the power of education to change society is directly tied to the economy: in expansionist phases of the economy, people are optimistic about the role of education; in recessionary periods, people are pessimistic. It is unsurprising, then, that by the beginning of the economic decline of the early-1970s, the sheer optimism that had shaped discussions around education in Ontario and Toronto had come to be weighted down by an “increasing public realization that education is not going to solve all the ills of society.”

A decade earlier, however, the belief in the power of education to solve societal problems, both real and perceived, reigned in Ontario. William G. Davis, the minister of education from 1962-1971, shared this optimism in the preface of the Ontario Department of Education’s 1964 annual report:

Education, today, must be a flexible process, operating as it does under a multitude of changing influences, many of them novel, some revolutionary. Upon the results of that process, more and more, depends the economic and

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42 Ibid., 50.
social health of a people. There is now widespread recognition in the modern world of the vital importance of informed educational planning.\textsuperscript{44}

This “optimistic faith in education” allowed for and was one of many factors that gave rise to permanent residential outdoor education programs for Toronto students.\textsuperscript{45} These factors included school funding, curriculum innovation and decentralization, and more permissive methods of instruction.

Historians of Ontario and of education have noted the quick expansion of the province’s education system in the 1960s and 1970s. Randall White describes the expansion as “dramati[c].”\textsuperscript{46} Spending on education in the province increased by 454 percent during Davis’s term as minister of education. And spending was not limited by provincial funding; school boards also increased their spending during this period.\textsuperscript{47} Until 1998, school boards in the province had the power to raise funds by taxing property.\textsuperscript{48} Of course, a board’s ability to raise revenue was directly tied to its location. Only the urban boards of Metropolitan Toronto and Ottawa-Carlton were able to benefit from their ability to raise taxes over and above the provincial grant ceilings. As Gidney explained, the Metropolitan Toronto Boards and the Ottawa-Carlton Boards were “able to raise money for all kinds of educational programs that poor boards could only dream of offering to their students.”\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{44} Ontario Department of Education, \textit{Report of the Minister, 1964} (Ontario: The Legislative Assembly, [1965]), xiii.
\textsuperscript{45} Tomkins used the phrase in \textit{A Common Countenance}, 303.
\textsuperscript{47} Gidney, \textit{From Hope to Harris}, 51-7.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 188-9.
However, the area boards that made up the MTSB were not equal in their ability to raise taxes, which was one of the reasons why the MTSB was created. Although the MTSB was supposed to address the differences in tax-assessment capability of the various area boards in Metropolitan Toronto and create a more equal educational experience for all Metro students, it had many problems executing this goal.\textsuperscript{50} The difference in the assessment base between the urban, assessment-rich Toronto Board of Education and the new, almost rural, boards of what would come to be called the inner-suburbs, Etobicoke, Scarborough, and North York, was just too large to be easily addressed.

The ability of the downtown board, the TBE, to raise revenue far in advance of what other boards in the area and in the province could, allowed it the ability to far outspend other boards. This played a major role in allowing the TBE to be the first school board in Ontario and in Canada to create a permanent residential outdoor education program. It simply had the money to do so.

The 1960s was also a time of curriculum innovation. Hand in hand with curriculum innovation went innovation in the method of instruction. These innovations were part of a longer trend of increasing emphasis on method of instruction and learning by activity.\textsuperscript{51} Stamp dates this innovation to the New


Education movement at the turn of the twentieth century; however, Tomkins argues that activity-oriented curriculum did not factor into a wide range of Ontario’s schools until the 1937 curriculum revision, which had a “progressive thrust”, made use of experiential education, and was more “play oriented” in the primary grades. He further argues that the 1937 revisions anticipated the revisions that were to come in the 1960s, although they suffered problems of implementation.

Agreeing with Tomkins, Gidney notes these early calls to progressivism in Ontario education, but argues that it was not until the mid-1960s that progressive education had widespread influence in the province. During the 1950s, the traditional achievement orientation and career-focus of education still shaped the school system; by the 1960s and 1970s the focus was far more individualistic and humanistic. The document which perhaps best displays the 1960s ideas about innovative curriculum and progressive methods of instruction is *Living and Learning*, the report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives in Education, more commonly known as the Hall-Dennis Report after the committee’s co-chairs. It was released in 1968.

Stamp argues that this report was the “most radical and bold document ever to originate from the bureaucratic labyrinth of the provincial department of

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54 Ibid., 198.
55 Gidney, *From Hope to Harris*, 32.
education. It espoused a child-centred educational ideal based on dynamic learning, and called for a shift from content to experience in schools. The Hall-Dennis Report’s vision of education was “for the good of all men.” Hall and Dennis elaborated on this point:

Today’s challenge is to teach our children to be humanely literate, so that they may, with clarity and a sense of commitment, read, understand, and communicate the new words, signs, symbols, values, and knowledge bombarding them.

The report made several specific recommendations relating to outdoor education. For example, recommendation number 30 called on schools to “[p]rovide for educational tours and field trips as a regular part of the learning experience at all levels.” Even more specifically, recommendation number 33 called for co-operation between “school boards and other agencies to provide natural science schools for outdoor education and the development of conservation principles,” something which was already occurring in the form of the Albion Hills Conservation School. Finally, recommendation number 34 called on the provincial government to “[e]stablish school hostels in provincial parks, historic site complexes, and conservation areas, which would be used to accommodate groups of children during on-the-site

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57 Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 217.
59 Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education, Living and Learning, 9.
60 Ibid., 65.
61 Ibid., 182.
62 Ibid., 182.
explorations of the area for extended periods of time during any particular semester."\textsuperscript{63}

More generally, the type of instruction advocated in the Hall-Dennis Report, namely ‘discovery’ or ‘experiential’ learning, was conducive to the creation of outdoor education programs, as these programs sought to have children learn-by-doing in a more natural setting. Outdoor education programs such as the ones developed for Toronto students in the 1960s could not have been accepted by a cohort of teachers, bureaucrats, and parents who expected their students to learn didactically while sitting at quietly at their desks. These programs were part of a greater shift in ideas about what constituted appropriate and effective education.

Content areas of the curriculum were also broadening in this era. Tomkins identifies an “explosion of the curriculum that took place after 1960,” including the introduction of theatre arts, Boolean algebra, and forest ecology.\textsuperscript{64} This was in part due to the consolidation of school boards in Ontario during the 1960s, which led to decentralization of curriculum planning.\textsuperscript{65} These larger boards were more professional and employed many more staff than the earlier, smaller boards had.\textsuperscript{66} Because of this, the provincial department of education began to replace detailed course outlines with more general curriculum guidelines, leaving the boards themselves in charge of curricular development, implementation, and evaluation.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 182.
\textsuperscript{64} Tomkins, \textit{A Common Countenance}, 384.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 281-2.
\textsuperscript{66} Gidney, \textit{From Hope to Harris}, 51-2.
\textsuperscript{67} Tomkins, \textit{A Common Countenance}, 282.
This began in the 1950s, as outlined in the department of education’s 1956 annual report:

Within the last few years, many local groups of teachers have assumed to some considerable extent responsibility for curriculum development. Local co-ordinating committees with the power and responsibility of appointing curriculum committees to make revision were first established in 1950. This departure from the former pattern represented an extension of freedom for teachers and an increased in responsibility for local authorities. This development was generally approved. The teachers responded to the new challenge with commendable professional zeal. They used their enlarged freedom with wisdom and intelligence. They initiated, and have continued to engage in, projects for curriculum study and improvement that are of inestimable value to the whole system.68

These curriculum committees were able to construct or modify for local use course outlines provided by the Department of Education.

The height of decentralization of curriculum was reached in late-1960s and early-1970s.69 By the end of the 1960s, only Grade 13 courses were outlined in detail by the Department of Education. Grades 1-12 had only general outlines, which allowed for “considerable opportunity for variety in the treatment of a given subject from school to school.”70 This new freedom allowed boards, schools, and individual teachers to innovate in both the content and the method of instruction in almost all courses. This freedom also allowed boards to develop new programs incorporating new curriculum content and methodologies, including outdoor education.

69 Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 251 and Gidney, From Hope to Harris, 53.
The Roots of Outdoor Education

The outdoor education programs developed for Toronto students in the 1960s were part of a larger outdoor education movement which had begun in earnest in the late nineteenth century. Nature study, agricultural education, summer camping, and the school camping movements were all precursors of modern outdoor education.

In their books on the teaching of outdoor education, outdoor educators have often taken the time to document the subject’s history. Most scholars of outdoor education look for origins in a more distant past. Camille Bunting, for example, sees the eighteenth-century’s Jean-Jacques Rousseau as the originator of outdoor education, as he “was a philosopher who advocated learning from direct experience” and believed in the value of physical activity.71 Others, including Keith Wheeler and Joy Palmer and Philip Neal, see the Industrial Revolution, because of the disjuncture it caused between people and nature, as the catalyst of outdoor education, embodied in Sir Patrick Geddes (1854-1933), a Scottish botanist who used the outdoors as a resource for active learning.72 However, most, including Donald R., William M., and Elizabeth L. Hammerman in their five editions of Teaching in the Outdoors, argue that prior to the 1930s, experimentation with outdoor education was mostly isolated.73

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73 Hammerman, Hammerman, and Hammerman, Teaching in the Outdoors, 230.
This position, however, ignores the contributions of nature study, which officially reached Ontario in 1904, and agricultural education, which officially appeared in 1911, to modern outdoor education. Nature study was an early-twentieth century educational movement that attempted to introduce science to elementary school students by taking children outside of the classroom to experience nature firsthand. Agricultural education was a movement which attempted to keep rural children on the farm by valourizing farm life. Phyllis Ford is the only outdoor education scholar who specifically mentions nature study, although she still suggests that outdoor education was fairly isolated prior to the 1930s.\(^{74}\) This is unsurprising, as in the history of education nature study is often assumed to have been “an insignificant fad that had been promoted in textbooks and by a few activist school administrators.”\(^{75}\) However, as Sally Gregory Kohlstedt identifies in her recent book on the subject, the evidence suggests that it was pervasive, although it was a local curriculum situated in local sites.\(^{76}\)

Much like the later outdoor education programs discussed in this thesis, Kohlstedt argues that “nature study was intimately related to the social outlook and political activism that undergrid a broad interest in the environment and generated conservationist and preservationist activities in the early decades of the twentieth century.”\(^{77}\) Kevin C. Armitage, in another recent book about nature study, makes a

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\(^{75}\) Kohlstedt, *Teaching Children Science*, 2.

\(^{76}\) Ibid., 2-3.

\(^{77}\) Ibid., 228.
similar argument, suggesting that, “[a]t its best, nature-study intended to make children into active citizens who were skilled in reasoning and were committed workers on behalf of their environments.”78 Those behind the nature study programs of the turn of the twentieth century believed in its power to shape hearts and minds, much as did those who advocated outdoor education in the mid-twentieth century.

Much like nature study, agricultural education, according to Charles E. Phillips, tended to have a “sentimental or propaganda value” attached to it, a point which has been echoed by others.79 Mike Corbett argues that, like nature study, agricultural education was “designed to promote school agricultural programs as a way to valorize rural experience in the eyes of country children and to purify the lives of urban children who lived in the dirty, unnatural bustle of the industrial landscape.”80 Much like nature study, reigning societal ideals shaped agricultural education programs; as David C. Jones has argued, “[w]ithout the ruling set of ideas about rural life, moreover, it is impossible to understand the motivating force behind virtually every single educational strategy designed in the era to elevate life on the farm.”81

Nature study and agricultural education date to the New Education movement of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, a movement which also included

health and physical education. Physical education was added to the Ontario high school curriculum in the 1880s, according to Robert Stamp, because of its “perceived benefit in relieving an examination-ridden curriculum, providing recreation in crowded urban environments, and building character through organized games and gymnastics.” These themes would remain important in the establishment of outdoor education programs in Toronto’s schools.

Throughout time, the major goal of the majority of curriculum-based outdoor education programs in North America has been the teaching of science. The origins of this are in the nature study movement which swept North America in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. As Kohlstedt argues, “[t]he nature study movement introduced science into public schools of North America.” Armitage makes the same point, arguing that one of nature study’s “last achievements is that it helped institute science as an important part of the primary school curriculum.” In the post-Sputnik era, science emerged as an important component of elementary and secondary education in North America. In the late-1950s and 1960s, Canadian teachers were encouraged to teach science using activity methods, drawing on the nature study of an earlier era. Outdoor education centres were perfect places to teach science using hands-on methods, and natural science has been an important

82 Tomkins, A Common Countenance, 115.
83 Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 43.
84 Kohlstedt, Teaching Children Science, 1.
86 Tomkins, A Common Countenance, 392.
part of the curriculum of the Toronto Island Natural Science School since its establishment in 1960.

It would be impossible to discuss the residential outdoor education programs of the mid-twentieth century without highlighting the connections between these programs and the summer camp movement of the early twentieth century. Outdoor educators have long recognized the connections between their programs and the early summer camp pioneers.87 Organized summer camping first came to Ontario in the 1890s with the establishment of ‘fresh air’ camps for urban children, and ‘school’ camps soon followed.88 These were established by teachers from American private schools who came to Canada “to seek ‘wilderness,’ the kind which had disappeared in America.”89 These teachers wanted to “expand the classroom beyond the school house” and to develop “alternative approaches to education by moving the classroom outside and breaking down traditional structures.”90

Sharon Wall and Leslie Paris have both recently written books about the history of summer camps, discussing Ontario and the United States respectively.91

As noted earlier, both argue that summer camps were, at least in part, an

87 Ontario Teachers’ Federation, Outdoor Education Committee, Outdoor Education Manual (Toronto: The Federation, 1970), 12.
90 Ibid., 115-117.
antimodernist response to the nature of modern life in North America. As modern life became increasingly modern, reaching what Christopher Dummitt calls ‘high modernism,’ schools responded with the creation of similar antimodern spaces: outdoor education centres modeled on summer camps.92

The Ontario Camping (now Camps) Association (OCA) also recognized the connections between outdoor education and summer camps in its history of children’s camping in Ontario. Brian Blackstock, when discussing the roots of the OCA, notes that by the 1930s, some individual teachers and schools were experimenting with outdoor education.93 But, as Mary L. Northway and John Passmore note in the same collection, it was not until after World War II that schools more generally became interested in outdoor education.94 During that decade, education and camping were being promoted as synergistic to each other in the province: Premier George Drew famously stated that there should be “a camp for every child” in Ontario, and thus set up two camp counsellor training programs, which will be discussed in Chapter 2.95

In the 1950s, the outdoor education experiments grew, and the emphasis of these new programs being developed was on learning to live out-of-doors and on academic areas such as meteorology, astrology, conservation, applied math, and

92 Dummitt, The Manly Modern, 1.
95 George Drew, quoted in Northway and Passmore, “Camping and Outdoor Education,” 58.
biology. This is unsurprising, as the 1937 curriculum revisions in Ontario emphasized natural science and activity-based learning, two important aspects of outdoor education. Concurrently, there was a shift in the physical education program away from drill and training to “game skills, recreational activities, athletics, and physical fitness.” Recreation was to be an important aspect of Toronto’s outdoor education programs, and Meg Stanley argues that in the 1960s outdoor recreation has emerged as a “legitimate part of the public school curricula.”

The Ontario government began to support residential outdoor education programs in a meaningful way in 1965, when the legislature amended the School Administration Act to permit school boards with an enrolment of over 10,000 students to buy land outside of the school district to operate natural science schools. It expanded this ability to all boards in 1972. Despite this policy shift, Sheila M. Scott and John Gordon Nelson argued in 1973 that the Ontario Ministry of Education gave “virtually no encouragement […] to the development to outdoor environmental education programs.” Because of this, outdoor education programs

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97 Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 164-5.
98 Tomkins, A Common Countenance, 125.
99 Stanley, “The Not So Lazy Days of Summer,” 34.
101 Ibid.
in Ontario were locally developed, on a board-by-board basis, although they had to be approved by the ministry.\textsuperscript{103}

By the early 1970s outdoor education was accepted as an important part of the school system in Ontario and North America. By this time, Canadian and American outdoor educators were working together, and several camps made their sites available for school use.\textsuperscript{104} In 1972, John Passmore was ready to declare that “outdoor environmental education is here to stay, and will gradually become woven into the whole fabric of the Canadian educational system.”\textsuperscript{105}

\textbf{Educating Ontario’s Children in the Personal Computer Era}

Passmore’s words came at the peak of support for outdoor education in Ontario. Although the 1960s and early 1970s saw a dramatic expansion and reform of the province’s education system, pushback began as early as 1969. That year, spending on education “suddenly became an explosive political issue.”\textsuperscript{106} Minister of Education William Davis introduced expenditure ceilings for the first time in 1970. These ceilings were cuts in the rates of growth, not total dollars spent; however, this caused school boards to begin to cut costs.\textsuperscript{107} The Ottawa and Metro Toronto boards were hit the hardest, because they were the highest spending boards.\textsuperscript{108}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 14 and Passmore, \textit{Outdoor Education in Canada – 1972}, 44-5.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Passmore, \textit{Outdoor Education in Canada – 1972}, 59.
\item \textsuperscript{106} Gidney, \textit{From Hope to Harris}, 58.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 60-1.
\item \textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 61.
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Although lobbying by the Ottawa and Toronto boards caused the abandonment of the expenditure ceiling policy in 1975, more permanent budget cuts came to Ontario education by late in the decade.\(^{109}\) As White notes, because of “slower population growth and declining enrollments, public spending on education [...] lost its 1960s glamour and became a focus for financial restraint.”\(^{110}\) As a global economic depression took hold in the mid-1970s,\(^{111}\) the Ministry of Education and of Colleges and Universities stated the reasons for declining budgets:

Expenditures for education have ranged widely in government priority as societal needs have changed: for example, educational finance was given very high priority in the 1960s but more moderate priority in the 1970s as other problems have emerged – notably environmental – and as enrolments [sic] have declined in the most recent years.\(^{112}\)

By this time, the Ministry argued, “[w]hile education still shares with health the highest priority in provincial budgeting, the free-spending days are over.”\(^{113}\)

These budget reductions caused the area boards of Metropolitan Toronto to complain: “the educational leadership enjoyed by the Boards in Metro Toronto is no longer possible. The lighthouse programs are being dimmed or even blacked out, which has resulted in a stultifying professional climate for staff and a pronounced reduction in the quality of education provided.”\(^{114}\) However, the budget reductions did not spell the end of innovative education in Metro Toronto, which, by 1974

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\(^{109}\) Ibid., 114.


\(^{111}\) Rea, \textit{The Prosperous Years}, 5.


\(^{114}\) Ibid., 46.
represented more than 25 percent of students and teachers in Ontario.\textsuperscript{115} That decade, the TBE began introducing board-approved alternative schools.\textsuperscript{116} Other constituent boards of Metro Toronto continued to open both day and residential outdoor education centres until the end of the decade (see Appendix A). “[I]t is heartening to note,” Passmore stated, that “[i]n spite of restrictions recently placed on education budgets in Ontario [...] outdoor education programs have continued to grow.”\textsuperscript{117}

The economic constraints of the 1970s were coupled with changing public priorities. The public’s infatuation with education in the 1960s ended, and instead Ontarians became interested in air and water pollution, the renewed threat of nuclear war, new economic challenges imposed by technology, and intensified foreign economic competition, which led to a back to basics approach in schooling.\textsuperscript{118} However, these changing public priorities did not spell the end of outdoor education programs, but instead were reflected in the programs as the years went on. This is especially true of the changing environmental concerns, which will be fully explored in Chapter 3.

Even though new public interests were being incorporated into existing outdoor education programs, the career-focused, back-to-basics approach to education of the 1970s and 1980s caused, as Neil Sutherland argues, “enthusiasm

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., v.
\textsuperscript{116} Stamp, \textit{The Schools of Ontario}, 230.
\textsuperscript{117} Passmore, \textit{Outdoor Education in Canada - 1972}, 45.
\textsuperscript{118} Tomkins, \textit{A Common Countenance}, 315.
for curriculum innovation [to] wan[e].”¹¹⁹ This led to re-centralization in education and the ministry’s creation of a core curriculum, which it began to implement in 1976.¹²⁰ By the late 1980s, accountability and achievement testing became important themes in Ontario education.¹²¹ This was part of a broader outcomes-based education trend that swept North America during the 1980s.¹²²

The existing outdoor education programs serving Toronto students survived the changes of the 1970s and 1980s, although they were never expanded to serve the desired number of students. However, they began to be seriously threatened in the 1990s, when the recession in the early years of the decade led to decreased public expenditure across the board.¹²³ By this time, the optimism in education of the earlier decades was long gone, and, Ken Osborne argues, by the end of the 1990s, “education in all parts of Canada [was] being turned into an instrument of economic policy.”¹²⁴

The changes in the 1990s which threatened established outdoor education programs included the introduction of a province-wide common curriculum focused on reading, writing, and problem solving skills; the amalgamation of school boards; and changes to the funding formula. The new curriculum was designed to make education consistent province-wide, and was more traditional in content than any

¹¹⁹ Neil Sutherland, Foreword, in A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum, by George S. Tomkins (Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1986), xii.
¹²⁰ Tomkins, A Common Countenance, 320 and Gidney, From Hope to Harris, 95.
¹²¹ Gidney, From Hope to Harris, 200-202.
¹²² Ibid., 202.
¹²³ Ibid., 168.
curriculum had been since the 1950s. Teachers had to cover more content and were more accountable for its coverage than ever before, giving teachers, schools, and boards less leeway in how to spend the school-day. The school board amalgamation presented other problems: the six area boards and the MTSB were reduced to the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). The new board was controlled by the more suburban areas of the city, leaving the more progressive programs of the former TBE in flux.

The 1998 amalgamation coincided with a change to education funding in the province. Until that year, school boards had been able to levy taxes to increase their budgets above and beyond provincial funding; however, in 1998 the provincial government took over control of taxation from school boards, which would instead receive all their funds in a grant from the government in an effort to equalize education funding across the province. This meant that the high spending Toronto boards, particularly the TBE, could no longer afford all of their previous “lighthouse” programs, including outdoor education.

This thesis explores the justifications for the permanent residential outdoor education programs that served Toronto students from the first school camp held in the Humber Valley in 1953 until the creation of the TDSB in 1998. It argues that, in addition to the teaching of natural science, two major educational paradigms,

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125 Gidney, *From Hope to Harris*, 240-1.
127 Gidney, *From Hope to Harris*, 246.
democratic citizenship education and modernizing antimodernism, shaped these programs. These two paradigms were reflected in three curricular areas that were used to justify these programs, and, in turn, were reflected in them. Chapter 1 explores how a specific type of citizenship education – education for democratic living – shaped and was incorporated into these residential programs, particularly in their early years. Chapter 2 looks into the leisure revolution of the postwar era and how ideas about the productive use of leisure time helped justify the expense of developing these permanent outdoor education centres. Chapter 3 investigates how the development of an environmental culture in Ontario in the postwar era created a space for outdoor education, and how changing perceptions of environmental problems shaped and were shaped by the outdoor education programs serving Toronto students. The Conclusion attempts to evaluate the success of these programs in educating students in democratic living skills, productive use of leisure time, and environmental concern and care by revisiting the public outcry in response to the proposed closure of all of the TDSB’s outdoor education programs after 2002.
Chapter 1
“Aiding the Development of Young Canadian Citizens”: Education for Democratic Living in the Outdoors

Education for democratic living, or, training students in how to live in a democracy, has played an important role in public schooling throughout the twentieth century. It was embraced by those who emphasized the socializing role of the school in turbulent times. It appears to have played an especially important role in Ontario from the Second World War until the late 1970s.

Education for democratic living is part of the broader educational concept of democratic citizenship education, the goal of which is to create citizens ready and willing to take on their roles in a democracy. The democratic living component of citizenship education is made up of many elements, including, but not limited to, advancing physical wellbeing, building human relationships, enjoying leisure, satisfying religious and aesthetic needs, developing economic competence, thinking and communicating ideas, meeting work responsibilities, and becoming concerned citizens. Social living education and citizenship education are important aspects of education for democratic living.

In this chapter I will discuss how education for democratic living informed and was mobilized by educators and educational bureaucrats to first advocate for residential outdoor education, and to then plan the programs that were offered at the field centres. Drawing on Department of Education annual reports, school board

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reports and minutes, and field centre curricula and promotional materials, I will argue that education for democratic living played a large role in the development of both board-run and conservation authority-run outdoor education centres in Metropolitan Toronto. Two aspects of education for democratic living which played a very significant role in the development of outdoor education programs, education for leisure and physical fitness, and the creation of concerned environmentalists, will be discussed at length in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively.

The education for democratic living that shaped and was taught at these outdoor education centres was a force of the modernizing antimodernism paradigm which informed postwar outdoor education. Democratic citizenship education was ostensibly modern: the dramatic societal changes which occurred in Canada, and specifically in Toronto, following World War II prompted educators to call for renewed citizenship education that addressed both ‘new’ and ‘old’ Canadians, and was directed at the widely-perceived need to keep the Western world safe for democracy. At the same time, however, the methods and spaces used to conduct this education were decidedly antimodern. Outdoor education centres, located in ‘natural’ spaces, were seen as some of the most appropriate places to (re)establish an equality amongst all of those taking part: adults and children, teachers and students.

Weaving the timeline of the establishment of the field centres throughout, I will begin with an overview of education for democratic living, and then, while being cognizant of the differences between the two types of centres, I will explore how ideas about democratic living shaped programs at outdoor education centres in three
aspects. The first section will deal with the program elements, both curricular and not, of the field centres. The second will look at how educators used residential outdoor education to cure social ills. The third will explore the degree to which programs were gendered, both formally and informally.

Democratic Living and Residential Outdoor Education

Education for democratic living is a form of citizenship education that involves training students how to live in a democracy. Writing in 1943, Paul R. Pierce identified several objectives of education for democratic living, including advancing physical welfare, building human relationships, enjoying leisure, satisfying religious and aesthetic needs, developing economic competence, thinking and communicating ideas, meeting work responsibilities, and developing skills in cooperative group and independent living. Educators and educational bureaucrats used elements of education for democratic living to justify the establishment of outdoor education centres for Toronto students in the post-World War II era.

Citizenship education is a topic which has been discussed and debated by historians. Unsurprisingly, citizenship education is often debated in public, no doubt, as Ken Osborne notes, because it is value laden. Also, debate around school curriculum emerges, argues George Tomkins, during times of massive societal

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2 Ibid., 524 and 527.
change, times at which the concept of citizenship is being redefined. Tomkins notes that the post-World War II period was one of these periods of change, something with which, as demonstrated in the introduction, José E. Igartua and Bryan D. Palmer agree.

Historians of education have noted the important role education for democratic living played in the classrooms of the 1950s. Doug Owram, in his book about the baby-boom generation, argues that school “is a means by which a culture, religion, language, or values can be preserved or eradicated for the next generation.” In this period, he argues, the perception that democracy was “under threat,” and the recent demonstrations in Europe of “how easily freedom could slip away,” caused education for democratic living to “become a much more pervasive part of school policy in postwar years.” It was brought into the classroom via the basic principles of Deweyite theory: child-centredness, anti-authoritarian teaching, and the belief in the social importance of education, which involved the inclusion of a greater quantity of non-traditional subjects into the classroom.

By 1954, the Ontario Department of Education was ready to embrace the preparation and equipping of students “to assume the duties and responsibilities of citizenship a few years hence” as the overarching purpose of education in Ontario.

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4 George S. Tomkins, A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum (Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1986), 437.
6 Ibid., 127.
7 Ibid., 125-128.
schools. The following year, the Minister of Education, W.J. Dunlop, espoused the view, in the foreword of the Department’s 1955 Annual Report, that “there are three aims in education: to prepare people to earn a living, to develop good citizens, and to help individuals to grow as persons – physically, mentally, socially, and religiously.” Dunlop made a similar statement two years later:

The schools of this Province are endeavoring, with a great measure of success, to impart the knowledge and the skills which will help our boys and girls to become useful citizens. Pupils must develop certain characteristics and ideals if they are to play an intelligent and useful part as adults. They must learn the value and the satisfactions of hard work and they must recognize the duty which they owe to their country. They must learn that the privileges of citizenship are attended by corresponding responsibilities.

Throughout this period North American democracy was widening to include more people than ever before. R.D. Gidney argues that “the widening of democracy in society at large prompted calls for parallel progress in education, especially with respect to a more extended education for all young people and the democratization of the school itself.” After the Citizenship Act was passed in 1947, creating Canadian citizenship for the first time, the federal government realized that citizenship education could not be confined to the schools, but must also be taught in churches, social service clubs, and service organizations. Alan Sears, Gerald M. Clarke, and Andrew S. Hughes, “Canadian Citizenship Education: The Pluralist Ideal and Citizenship Education for a Post-Modern State,” in Civic Education Across

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10 W.J. Dunlop, Foreword to Report of the Minister, 1957, by the Department of Education (Ontario: Legislative Assembly, [1958]), iv
11 R.D. Gidney, From Hope to Harris: The Reshaping of Ontario’s Schools (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 30-1.
12 Alan Sears, Gerald M. Clarke, and Andrew S. Hughes, “Canadian Citizenship Education: The Pluralist Ideal and Citizenship Education for a Post-Modern State,” in Civic Education Across
Clarke, and Andrew S. Hughes note that this realization led to the federal government’s sponsorship of a wide variety of programs, including camping programs.\textsuperscript{13} Although Toronto’s outdoor education programs were not directly a part of the Canadian government’s citizenship education push, they did come about in the same era.

In his 1996 article, “Education is the Best National Insurance: Citizenship Education in Canadian Schools,” Ken Osborne periodizes citizenship education in Canada.\textsuperscript{14} He argues that until the 1920s citizenship education was based on assimilation and Canadianization; from the 1920s to the 1960s it began to encompass personal values and focus on socialization and social living; in the 1960s through the 1980s it became more activist and global in focus; and it began to decline in the 1990s in the face of a reconceptualizing of schooling that focused on preparing students to participate in the market-driven work force.

In a different article, Osborne argues that democratic citizenship education in particular, which is a more activist conception of citizenship education, has enjoyed several periods of popularity in the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{15} These periods are immediately prior to World War I, especially in Western Canada, due to the rise in reform movements; immediately following the war while a reforming feeling was in

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\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Osborne, “Citizenship Education and Social Studies,” 51-3.
the air; in the 1930s in reaction to the rise of fascism in Europe; and, most importantly for this paper, in the 1950s because of the Cold War and again in the 1970s, although this last period was more activist in orientation, in that it encouraged students to engage in activism work in the support of various causes.

Other scholars have made similar findings. Bob Davis labels the 1937-1957 period of Ontario citizenship education as “immersion citizenship,” which was “the kind of citizenship training that played down the civics text and played up kids attending meetings and helping out community organizations.”16 George Tomkins argues that by the 1950s, the socializing role of the school was being recognized and celebrated as “secular values of success, health and happiness” began to supplement religious values.17 He argues that this socializing role placed an “emphasis on personality development, on social knowledge or savoir faire designed to maintain, or attain, a superior status, and on co-operation.”18

Amy von Heyking makes a similar argument to Osborne, finding that in the 1920s and 1930s citizenship education “emphasized the new social aims of schooling: taking up one’s place in society, doing one’s part, and getting along with others.”19 Moving on in time she argues that:

Progressive curriculum revisions during the Depression and into the 1940s embodied a view of citizenship that stressed the importance of working for social reform and global harmony. After the Second World War, Canadian

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18 Ibid., 267-8.
schools stressed education for democracy and preparation for the ideological battle of the cold war.\textsuperscript{20}

Educating for democracy in the Cold War, she notes, included project-based group work and student councils, as well as teaching about government.\textsuperscript{21} Rosa Bruno-Jofré notes that by the 1930s the official discourse of Canadianization in Manitoba’s education system had begun to be influenced “by progressive education notions of education and democracy.”\textsuperscript{22}

Outside the classroom, social historians have addressed the democratic ideals of the summer camp. In her book, *Children’s Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp*, Leslie Paris argues that “camp leaders of every generation extolled the democratic possibilities of camp life and promised to mold better citizens without coercion.”\textsuperscript{23} However, the postwar period brought changes to organized camping as well. Bruce Hodgins and Jamie Benidickson outline these changes in Ontario:

During the 1950s and early 1960s, following the trauma of the war and in the midst of the controversies of the cold war, youth camping in parts of Ontario and beyond went though much soul-searching. In most Haliburton-Muskoka summer camps, heavy physical challenges and intense competition were out of favour. Furthermore, high adventure and all life-threatening challenges were discouraged. Organized camping seemed more and more to stress social development; skills acquisition, while important, was secondary.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 382.
‘Democratic group living’ in the out-of-doors rather than the rugged wilderness canoe trip was in vogue.24

These changes were both implicit and explicit. Mary Hamilton, the long-time director of Camp Tanamakoon, a private girls’ camp in Algonquin Park, developed an explicitly citizenship-focused program for the 1945 camp season:

We aimed to build in the camp the kind of community we would like to have in our home town or in our country. I had long looked on the role of camping as a unique opportunity to develop qualities of leadership. I hoped that the camper might receive not only training in camp activities, but the kind of training that would make her effective in working and living with people. Here was an opportunity to develop the type of citizen concerned for the good of the country, not her own personal gain – a person with vision, who could see what needed to be done, knew how to do it, and had the courage and initiative to go ahead.25

Clearly camp directors were taking education for democratic living to heart.

Since education for democratic living was playing an important role in both the education system generally, and in the summer camp movement at the mid-twentieth century, it follows that it must have also played an important role in the program than combined the two: outdoor education. However, historians have yet to investigate the role of education for democratic living in curriculum-based outdoor education programs. Drawing on these scholars’ analyses of the primacy of education for democratic living in the postwar era in education, I will demonstrate how outdoor education programs for Toronto students fit into this paradigm.

The residential outdoor education programs that served Metropolitan Toronto students were developed along two models. The first is that of the school board owned field centre, of which I will use the Toronto Island Natural Science School as my main example. The second is the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) owned and operated centre, of which I will use Albion Hills Conservation School as my main example. Both of these centres were the first developed in each of these categories, and have the most available information.

These initial programs were established in an era dedicated to educating students for living in a democracy, as evidenced by the sentiments of the ministers of education expressed above. It was the height of the Cold War, which “spur[red] special interest in specific fields of education,” notably science and citizenship.26 The outdoor education programs established in this era not only reflected but also harnessed these sentiments.

From the beginning, Toronto-based outdoor education programs were about citizenship. In one of the earliest documents pertaining to the establishment of residential outdoor education programs in the city, a 1956 brief on outdoor education to the Toronto Board of Education, the authors titled one of the sections “Showing the Value of Camp Schools in Aiding the Development of Young Canadian Citizens.”27 In this section, they noted that “[e]xcursions of various types have

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become standard technique for education of the whole child in the Toronto Public Schools.” So, they continued, “[i]t seems logical to extend these excursions to cover several days with the resulting social benefits which involves living out-of-doors, developing a keener insight into the responsibilities of citizenship, a concern for the welfare of others and a better understanding of man’s relation to the environment.”

It is unsurprising that education for democratic living was an important part of the residential outdoor education programs serving Toronto students, as outdoor educators have frequently emphasized the citizenship aspects of their programs. In her book on the subject, Sally Gregory Kohlstedt argues that this goes back to turn of the century nature-study programs. She notes that democratic and civic life were taught as well as aesthetics of nature, and found that “for many advocates nature study was as much about civic and individual enhancement as it was about the natural sciences.” John Dearness, in his 1905 *The Nature Study Course*, argued that school gardens had many benefits, including physical exercise, manual training, intellectual work, and moral education. He quoted the Nova Scotia nature study curriculum of 1880, which claimed that natural history activities “have special power in developing [...] in connection with history and civics an intelligent attachment to both the material and ideal features of our country.”

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28 Ibid., 12.
31 Quoted in Ibid., 35-6.
education in Canada’s public schools, Ken Osborne notes the in the early twentieth century, school gardens were promoted as an element of citizenship education.\textsuperscript{32}

From these origins, outdoor educators have continued to emphasize the benefits outdoor education programs can have in creating good citizens. Donald R., William M., and Elizabeth L. Hammerman argue in their \textit{Teaching in the Outdoors}, in which they provide an overview of the history of American outdoor education, that the civic and social values of camping were stressed in the 1930s in the U.S. outdoor education movement.\textsuperscript{33} For example, Lloyd Burgess Sharp, in his 1930 \textit{Education and the Summer Camp: An Experiment}, states that “[c]amping as an organized movement means working for the fullest development of character and citizenship of the individual and the group through meeting life situations in the more primitive ways of living, which can best be offered in the isolated environment of camp life.”\textsuperscript{34} During this period camps in Ontario were meant to fulfill a similar purpose. Megan Stanley argues that “[c]amp was to contribute to the development of the ‘normal’ personality who could function effectively in an increasingly complex society by encouraging co-operating, helping campers to develop group skills,


\textsuperscript{34} Lloyd Burgess Sharp, \textit{Education and the Summer Camp: An Experiment} (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1930), 2.
promoting thoughtfulness for others, and assisting campers to develop self-confidence.”

Donald R. Hammerman, William M. Hammerman, and Elizabeth L. Hammerman argue that throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s, the program emphases of school camping in the United States were “conservation education, healthful living, meaningful work experience, socialization, group guidance, and democratic living.” In 1956, Julian W. Smith argued that good citizenship is an objective of the curriculum that “can be achieved more effectively outside the classroom in an outdoor situation.” In 1965, Charles Holtzer wrote that children need to learn to live with others, and outdoor education provides a good opportunity for that to occur.

Education for democratic living appeared in both the curricular and non-curricular aspects of Toronto’s outdoor education programs. In the 1956 Brief, the authors state “[a]ll of the activities emphasize the development of good citizens.” The early MTRCA programs had three objectives. The first two related to environmental/conservation education, while the third was: “To provide a more intensive experience in group living where teacher and taught learn more realistically

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36 Hammerman, Hammerman, and Hammerman, Teaching in the Outdoors, 238.
and dynamically how to live, work and play together; to create the opportunity to acquire the broader human insight so necessary if man is to learn better how to understand and appreciate his fellow man." Both organizing groups understood the overarching goal of their programs as the creation of good citizens.

Curricular aspects are those which are drawn from the academic curriculum, and are the same or similar to those that would be covered in the school if the students had not had the opportunity to attend a residential outdoor education centre. Home economics, health education, and social studies, for example, are curricular aspects that were connected to democratic living and taught at residential field centres. Non-curricular aspects are those which do not relate directly to the content of material to be covered. Non-curricular aspects include group dynamics and chores.

In the 1950s when Toronto educators and educational bureaucrats began to form the basis of the Island Natural Science School’s program, they created a list of all of the curricular aspects they hoped to see included. I have reproduced this list verbatim in Appendix B, and italicized the items related to education for democratic living. Although the non-curricular designator is more appropriate to three of the four categories, the fourth, Outdoor Educational Activities, includes the elements of the formal curriculum the framers hoped to see taught at the field centre. Those curricular elements most related to education for democratic living include

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40 Blanche Snell, Guide to Pre-Planning: A Guide to be Used in Preparation of Classes Attending Albion Hills Conservation Field Centre or Claremont Conservation Field Centre, Revised Edition (Downsview, ON: Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, 1971), ii.
mathematics, shop, and homemaking. In math, the authors of the report hoped that students would learn how to calculate the cost of food and operate the camp store. In shop, they expected students to learn how to use blueprints and create signs to improve the Island School site. And, in homemaking, they believed that students should gain experience in menu planning, bed making, and cabin sanitation. All of these curricular elements existed to help socialize students and prepare them to live in a democracy.

Although not mentioned in the Brief, social studies was included as a curricular block that the students rotated through in the early years of the Natural Science School’s operation. Historians of citizenship education and education scholars have noted that social studies was an important vehicle through which citizenship was taught. Ken Osborne, for example, has argued that much of the burden of citizenship education in Canada was assigned to social studies subjects. Alan Sears agrees: in a 1994 review essay on social studies as citizenship education, he found that the literature shows that “citizenship education is clearly seen as a central focus for the social studies curriculum in Canada.” The fact that it was included as a subject of the formal curriculum at the Island School is indicative of the degree to which those who developed these residential outdoor education programs believed in their power to create good citizens.

41 The Board of Education for the City of Toronto, The Island School ([Toronto: The Board, 196?]), no pages.
42 Osborne, “Citizenship Education and Social Studies,” 44.
Of course, many of the elements of the education for democratic living were not curricular in nature. However, this non-academic work was at least as, if not more, important than the academic work, especially in the early years of residential outdoor education. The program at Albion Hills, for example, was “based on the conviction that intensive academic study and practice in good group living can, and do, go hand-in-hand [...].”\(^{44}\) Non-curricular aspects range from program-planning, interpersonal relationships, and group living. The activities that were undertaken in order to teach democratic living fit into Ken Osborne’s classification of citizenship education in the 1920s-1960s as a period focused on personal values, socialization, and social living.

In Appendix B I have italicized all of the elements that I believe to belong to a broad interpretation of the category democratic living. The items under Social Living Experiences, including program planning, group living, camper-teacher relationships, facing social situations, development of group and individual responsibilities, personal development, and democratic problem solving, are most directly related, and these are the items most frequently elaborated upon in other reports and curriculum guides.

One of the most frequently cited benefits of outdoor education is the ability of students and teachers to see each other as people instead of as the roles they play. In the 1956 Brief, the authors argue that “[t]eachers as well as children benefit greatly through camping experiences,” because, “[i]n the freedom of the outdoor

\(^{44}\) Snell, *Guide to Pre-Planning*, ii.
authority. At the same time, students were expected to develop respect for others. Notably, organizers hoped that students would learn that “the ways of rural and urban life are not necessarily inferior each to the other,” and that they would come to recognize, through the performance of tasks, that “all work which involves manual labour is honourable and merits a respectful understanding.”

The MTRCA program at Albion Hills seems to have been particularly strong in the citizenship aspects of democratic living. This is probably due to Blanche Snell’s influence. Snell was a teacher at York Mills Collegiate in the former City of York. Beginning in the 1950s, she instigated a 10-year long experiment in school camping which would eventually become the Albion Hills Conservation School. According to J.R. McCarthy, an Ontario teacher, Department of Education employee, and Deputy Minister of Education from 1967 to 1971, Snell was the high school history teacher “who was the greatest practitioner both of citizenship training of the best variety and of integrating geography and history.”

The roots of her influence can be found in her conviction “that intensive academic study and practice in good group living can, and do, go hand-in-hand [...]”. The goals and objectives discussed in the above paragraphs grew out of this conviction. But she also advocated activities more directly related to the community. For example, one of the additional activities students could participate in was “attendance at community function if feasible, such as a council meeting or livestock [...].”

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
51 Snell, Guide to Pre-Planning, ii.
Attending a council meeting fits into Bob Davis’s conception of ‘immersion citizenship’ education in this period.

Doug Owram uses the phrase “domestic democracy” to describe the overarching values that were taught in schools in the 1950s. It follows then that students were also expected to use their time at residential field centres to better the skills they would need to keep house in a democracy. This was true of both female and male students. As Robert Rutherford has found, middle-class men came to be increasingly involved in domestic life after the war, adopting “family- and home-centred practices among fathers responding to suburbanization and among the expanded sectors of middle-class men in the wage economy.”

In the 1956 Brief, these experiences are listed under the Healthful Living Experiences category (see Appendix B). Students were expected to do most of the housekeeping, including making their beds, setting and clearing the tables, serving food, and doing the dishes. At the Island School, these sorts of experiences “require[d] students to assume responsibilities and to work through problems with new independence, away from the home atmosphere.”

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52 Snell, Albion Hills Conservation Authority, 14.
53 Owram, Born at the Right Time, 130.
Although the authors of the 1956 Brief argued that “[a]ll of the activities emphasize the development of good citizens,”\(^{57}\) the rhetoric surrounding citizenship was much stronger at the MTRCA field centres. In his address at the ground-breaking ceremony for the Albion Hills Conservation School, then education minister William G. Davis hoped that the students attending the school would learn to “become responsible citizens and respect and love their country.”\(^{58}\)

The Albion Hills Conservation School’s program was focused on conservation; however, it still promoted many aspects of education for democratic living. Snell argued that “[t]oday’s adolescent is in special need of help to find his role in [a] society” in which he is a consumer and not a producer.\(^{59}\) She further argued that

Attendance at a school like the Albion Hills School helps to meet these needs. The youth finds himself living with his group, eating, sleeping, doing his share of the required tasks and exploring the new environment with his classmates. His teacher also becomes a part of his life. He sees, perhaps for the first time, the greatest problem of our thirty-five-foot-frontage and apartment dwelling [sic] age, the necessity of learning co-operation, the skill of relating himself to the society crowded around him. This need for a sense of personal responsibility, divorced from external controls, becomes real to him. Freedom, so frequently interpreted as license, gets put into its rightful place – freedom within the social setting in which he finds himself. This is a vital, dynamic and exhilarating educational experience, one which should be the heritage of every youth in a country where the resources, the facilities and the personnel are at hand.\(^{60}\)

\(^{57}\) “Outdoor Education: A Brief,” 21.
\(^{59}\) Snell, Albion Hills Conservation Authority, 5.
\(^{60}\) Ibid.
Snell argues that by living together with his classmates and understanding “the effect of the cultural and physical environment upon man’s life,” the student will become a better citizen.\textsuperscript{61}

Snell’s argument about the importance of the MTRCA’s outdoor education program uses the rhetoric of modernizing antimodernism so vital to the success of these residential outdoor education programs. She suggests that in order to survive in the modern, urban world, students need to visit an antimodern, non-urban (rural or wilderness) space to gain antimodern skills. For her, and for the Albion Hill’s program, modernizing antimodernism and education for democratic living go hand-in-hand.

This focus on democratic living continued into the 1970s. In 1970 the Metropolitan Toronto School Board (MTSB) conducted a survey of outdoor education programs in Metropolitan Toronto. In this survey, Gins Doolittle identified six content areas of outdoor education programs, including the social sciences, encompassing history, and democratic living and citizenship.\textsuperscript{62} Social studies was still being taught at these schools. As well, she provides an overview of the programs of the Island School and its summertime equivalent, the High Park School of Natural Science, and classifies them into the areas of social living, healthful living, work experience, recreational living, and outdoor education activities, which suggests that the program had not undergone much change from its proposed form in the 1956 Brief.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{62} Doolittle, “A Report of Student Activities in Outdoor Education,” 152.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 199.
The citizenship rhetoric of the 1965 Albion Hills Guide was echoed by the MTSB in its 1971 Outdoor Education Policy. The Board looked to the work of the Field Studies Council in Great Britain for inspiration: “[t]he British programs stress the development of resourcefulness, self-reliance, a sense of responsibility and qualities of leadership, and are seen as vital elements in the preparation of worthy citizens.” Following this, the Policy lists several aims of outdoor education, several of which related to education for democratic living. Throughout the Policy the Board argued that “[b]oth the responsibilities and the privileges of citizenship in a democratic community can be learned through the group planning and sharing of work experiences inherent in out-door study, especially in overnight and longer residential situations.” These “[o]ut-of-school studies help the student to develop an understanding of and sensitivity to the community in which he lives.”

Other groups expressed similar sentiments. One of the Ontario Teachers’ Federation’s 1970 justifications of outdoor education was that “[g]roup experience outdoors provides the physically healthy environment in which the opportunity is presented for promoting those basic virtues and values necessary for modern democratic living.” Seven years later, the Scarborough Board of Education stated that “[t]here can be no doubt that social experiences are an important part of our

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65 Ibid., v.  
66 Ibid.  
educational program.” So, it questioned, “[w]hat better way is there to inculcate values than by living closer to the land and living and working with other people?”

All of these groups were expressing an antimodernist sentiment, a nostalgia for an imagined past when people lived in a physically-healthy, character-building environment. However, while doing so they are also suggesting that these antimodern skills are necessary to succeed in modern democratic life. They all relied on the contradictory process of modernizing antimodernism to advocate for outdoor education programs: the best way to prepare students for modern democratic urban life was by taking them ‘back to the land’ and teaching them antimodern group living skills.

Toronto was not alone in using education for democratic living as a justification for its outdoor education programs. In an American publication promoting outdoor education that appeared the same year the Toronto Board of Education began considering adding an outdoor education program to its offerings, Dorothy Lou MacMillan argued that the school camp “provides experiences in living together that cannot be duplicated in the classroom; it gives the child an opportunity to care for his own daily needs.” Of the six objectives of school camping that MacMillan identifies, four are related to democratic living: experience in practical democratic social living; understanding of, and practice in the rules of healthful living; experience

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69 Ibid.
in purposeful work experiences; and increased moral and spiritual consciousness. By the 1960s, homemaking was prevalent in American outdoor education programs. As was social studies: a 1970 study of Environmental Education programs in the United States found that 42.8 percent of programs included social studies as a component.

The Ontario government was also using democratic living as a justification for other programs. In the Ontario Sports and Recreation Bureau’s early 1970s Day Camp Manual, of the seven identified purposes of the day camp, four are related to democratic living: (1) teach campers to respect the rights and opinions of others through group living; (2) add to social and emotional growth because of the co-ed environment; (3) develop closer family relations because campers will have something to talk about at the dinner table; and (4) develop self-discipline and creativity by sharing in the program planning. The Ministry of Education also justified day trips in the school yard by their ability to aid in students’ “learning to consider others.”

Outdoor education scholars retained the emphasis on democratic living well into the 1980s. In 1981 Phyllis M. Ford argued that the “ultimate purpose of [outdoor education programs] is to contribute to the individual’s ability to function efficiently in

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71 Ibid., 5.
72 Arthur Ryan, Teacher’s Guide to Outdoor Education (Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Union County Outdoor Education Center, [1965]).
74 Ontario Sport and Recreation Bureau with Ontario Camping Association, Day Camp Manual Book I - Administration, [Toronto?: The Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1974?], 1-2
More recently, Camille Bunting (2006) argued that character development fits naturally into outdoor education. She also argues that outdoor education can meet the need of relating well with others.

However, in Toronto the 1980s saw the beginning of the dispersal of the focus on education for democratic living. Many of these aspects, both curricular and non-, were not discussed in the Toronto Board of Education’s “Planning for the 80s: Report on Outdoor and Environmental Education.” Instead, the report focused on environmental education and recreation. When these elements were discussed in the 1990s it was no longer as part of a discourse on citizenship or democratic living. Instead, the discourse was focused on individuals and communities. For example, the Toronto Board’s 1996 Fact Sheet on Environmental and Outdoor Education suggests that “[t]hese programs emphasize the development of positive attitudes and values among the students themselves and toward their social and physical environment.”

Although many of the program elements that contributed to citizenship education in this era continued to exist, the rhetoric surrounding the programs changed. This change occurred around the time of a shift away from a citizenship

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78 Ibid., 22.
education based in socialization and democratic living to a more activist and global conception of citizenship education that Ken Osborne and Alan Sears, Gerald M. Clarke, and Andrew S. Hughes identify. The new conception of citizenship education allowed for environmental education to take the place of democratic living in the justification of Toronto’s residential outdoor education programs at this time.

Special School Populations and Democratic Living: A Cure for Social Ills

As noted in the Introduction, during this period of history, education was seen as having the power to cure social ills. This aspect grew in importance as time went on, and helped justify the field centres in increasingly tight economic times. Educators were especially concerned with students who were economically-disadvantaged, ‘culturally-disadvantaged’, and academically disadvantaged, both because of special needs and because they were at-risk of dropping out. They were also concerned about the development of good mental health. These categories are not mutually exclusive. Not only are students the subjects of intersectionality, that is, they are affected by more than one aspect of their lives, but also educators often saw outdoor education programs as beneficial to members of all disadvantaged groups, giving few reasons as to why.

The MTRCA understood that students are citizens and citizens are a diverse group of people. Blanche Snell notes that

For this reason, the Authority would not wish the Conservation Field Centre to be thought of by the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto as a Centre designed for any especially selected group – for ‘good’ or ‘bad’ girls and boys, for ‘over-
achievers’ or ‘under-achievers’, for the ‘academically gifted’ or the ‘manually
minded’, for the ‘interested’ or ‘disinterested’. It is important that the school
systems understand that the facilities provided by the founders are intended
to be used without preference.\textsuperscript{81}

Not only were outdoor education organizers committed to exposing a cross-
section of the population to their programs, educators began to see outdoor
education programs as particularly beneficial for students who did not excel in the
classroom. Gins Doolittle, in her contribution to the 1970 MTSB outdoor education
survey, argued that

Students who cannot do things in a textbook situation, are finding that the
outdoors acts as a medium through which they can express themselves. They
are finding that they can contribute and understand... Curricular data has
been translated into terms they can deal with – things in real life. It means a
lot to them when they can see and do things successfully. Their stature in
their own eyes and in the eyes of others definitely improves.\textsuperscript{82}

By the 1970s, Toronto educators were beginning to see benefits in outdoor
education for those with more extreme limitations. Doolittle notes that “[t]he needs of
a special education student seem to be social development and self-management.
Outdoor Education is providing an advantageous situation for progress in these
areas.”\textsuperscript{83} Doolittle notes that “Professor Elliot of the Ontario College of Education has
explained that you can do valuable work with the disabled in the outdoor situation –
smelling, and feeling to understand the nature of things.”\textsuperscript{84} In the 1967-1968 school
year, the North York Board of Education began to work to integrate “perceptually

\textsuperscript{81} Snell, \textit{Guide to Pre-Planning}, iii.
\textsuperscript{82} Doolittle, “A Report on Student Activities in Outdoor Education,” 179.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 186.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 202.
handicapped children,” those with difficulties interpreting print, auditory, and/or tactile information, into its outdoor education programs.\(^85\)

Educators also saw benefits in outdoor education for those with behavioural problems. A teacher attending the Bolton Camp with her students with behavioural problems is quoted by Doolittle as saying:

In school they would clobber you if you bumped into them in the hall. One of these students bumped into me this morning and said, ‘Excuse me’. Some of our worst students signed up for the 5 a.m. hike this morning. They are the kind that have no respect for anything – at least that is the way they behave at school. On the hike, these kids were the brightest in the group. They asked the most interesting questions. They saw many things that others didn’t see. I think it was the fact that they were away and could be a little more honest with themselves.\(^86\)

A change in environment may have made all the difference.

Educators also noticed that students who were at risk of dropping out could be cajoled to remain in school by participating in outdoor education. In a portion of the MTSB 1970 survey, Doolittle seeks to describe student behaviour in outdoor education settings, and she published quotations from students she interviewed while attending the Albion Hills Conservation School. Many of these students seemed to see Albion Hills as a kind of detox centre. Comments from students include: “A lot of us have been on drugs for a while now. Up here we can be happy and feel free without them” and “The kids that are on speed and hash are not thinking about that stuff up here. We get interested in what’s going on outside just like in the city. But here, instead of drugs, its land and animals and that muskrat. All

\(^86\) Quoted in Doolittle, “A Report on Student Activities in Outdoor Education,” 207.
important learning seems to go on outside the school. No wonder so many are dropping or flunking out." Another student argued that “I think you would find a lot of kids not dropping out of school if they had an experience like this at an outdoor centre.” However, this student continued on to say: “As for myself, I am dropping out at the end of this year. There is no way I can stand the garbage that they feed us and expect us to throw back at them at exam time.” So, the degree of effectiveness of outdoor education in keeping students in school is hard to judge.

Another group of students that educators were interested in were recent immigrants or “New Canadians.” Immigration that had been restricted in the 1920s and nearly nonexistent in the 1930s suddenly opened-up after World War II. Harold Troper notes that this process occurred so quickly that it seemed to many people that Canadian cities became immigrant cities overnight. He argues that the "onslaught of urban bound immigration and the mediating force of government pressing a new urban liberal agenda" weakened the xenophobia of the pre-WWII era, and “paved the way for citizenship education – education grounded in civic participation, respect for human rights, and the affirmation of the positive value of pluralism.” In this era, Doug Owram has found that tolerance and inclusiveness were important themes in textbooks.

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88 Ibid., 169.
90 Ibid., 157.
91 Owram, Born at the Right Time, 132.
Educators believed that this group of recently-arrived students could benefit from outdoor education. In the 1970s, the TBE really began to recognize cultural pluralism and the needs of “New Canadians.” Doolittle quotes the principal of a downtown Toronto school as saying “the new Canadian students come to school and participate more freely when outdoor education is included in their programme.” However, it is difficult to know how effective these programs were in reaching these students, as some parents did not want their children to participate in outdoor education activities for ethnic or cultural reasons.

Perhaps the most important area that residential outdoor education programs were seen as helping in was that of socio-economic class. The Toronto Board of Education, more than the other constituent boards of Metropolitan Toronto, saw residential outdoor education as an opportunity to relieve tensions between different social/economic classes. Board officials worked to relieve these tensions by pairing up schools from neighbourhoods associated with different classes to attend the field centres together. In doing so, the Board allowed “boys and girls of contrasting experiential and socio-economic backgrounds [to] live, work and play together.” However, cost was a limiting factor for some students.

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92 Tomkins, A Common Countenance, 339-341.
94 Erica Wright, “Activities and Attitudes of Principals and Teachers in Metropolitan Toronto Concerning Outdoor Education,” in A Survey of Outdoor Education Activities in Metropolitan Toronto: Attitudes, Activities and Facilities, ed. D. Hambleton (Toronto: Metropolitan Toronto School Board, 1970), 64. ONTERIS 00591.
95 Doolittle, “A Report on Student Activities in Outdoor Education,” 199.
96 Ibid., 201.
97 Wright, “Activities and Attitudes of Principals and Teachers in Metropolitan Toronto Concerning Outdoor Education,” 64.
This desire to provide children with mixed-class experiences was not unique to Toronto’s outdoor education programs. Leslie Paris, in her book on the rise of the American summer camp, notes that although camps were generally more socially exclusive than urban leisure, their guiding principles promoted a mixed space: in 1945 the American Camping Association “officially promoted intercultural, interracial, interclass, and interfaith camps as a means to build democratic character, tolerance, and acceptance of difference.”\(^98\) However, the actual accomplishment of providing students with mixed-socio-economic experiences may have been unique to Toronto’s outdoor education programs. Sharon Wall has found that although summer camp directors demonstrated some desire to provide mixed-class socializing experiences, “[t]he reality was that children of vastly different socio-economic groups did not mix at camp; they found their class standings solidified, not challenged, by their camp experiences.”\(^99\)

Mental health became a major theme in children’s schooling by the 1950s. Residential outdoor education was expected to contribute to the good mental health of the participating students. One of the areas of curriculum proposed in the 1956 Brief was that of “[o]pportunities for good mental health.”\(^100\) This conforms with Wall’s analysis of mid-twentieth century Ontario summer camps:

While the notion that outdoor living was ‘good’ for one dated back at least as far as the mid-nineteenth century, during the middle decades of the twentieth century this idea was elaborated and refined by those influenced

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\(^100\) “Outdoor Education: A Brief,” 13.
by the emerging discipline of psychology. During these years, promoters of camp life regarded it as providing the ideal environment for fostering psychological health and well-being. They also argued that camp was unique in its ability not only to preach the ideals of progressive education, but, more importantly, to apply them.  

This continued at Toronto’s residential outdoor education programs into the later-twentieth century, as the MTSB’s 1971 Outdoor Education Policy lists one of the aims of outdoor education as its contribution to good mental health: “The out-of-doors provides opportunities for emotional and social growth which cannot be duplicated in the classroom,” because of the more informal nature of outdoor education settings. 

In general, outdoor education programs were seen as contributing to students’ “moral well-being and to their sense of belonging in a community,” no matter their advantage or disadvantage. Doolittle quotes the principal of a downtown school saying: “The staff considers outdoor education important for our students who are ‘disadvantaged’ culturally, socially and/or economically.” The Toronto Board of Education understood the “pupil encounter with the more subtle concerns involved in group living; the concerns connected with the consideration of others; the concerns involved in fears and prejudices,” to be equally important to the academic objectives of residential outdoor education.

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102 Metropolitan Toronto Board of Education, *Metropolitan Toronto Outdoor Education Policy* (1971), V.
103 Doolittle, “A Report on Student Activities in Outdoor Education,” 188.
104 Ibid., 178.
105 [The Board of Education for the City of Toronto, Weekly Circular?] 87-88:34, May 13, 1988, II:2, TBE-Schools-Elementary-Island Public School/Natural Science School, 1982 to present, Vertical File, TDSB Archives.
“[e]ven meal times become learning experiences” when students are “[t]hrown together in a single group with others who have different backgrounds – social, economic, racial, ethnic, religious” as they are able to “experience a multitude of situations in a natural and normal way.”

Gender and Outdoor Education

Citizenship involves many categories. So far, I have explored hegemonic ideals of citizenship education in Canada and how these have played out in Toronto’s outdoor education programs, and how various non-majority groups were included in them. In this section I will explore the degree to which outdoor education in Toronto was gendered, and how this gendering played out in the programs.

Outdoor education is often understood to be a masculine environment. Linda Allin argues that “[o]utdoor education and outdoor activities have a gendered historical background,” and have remained gendered as largely male.

Mary Breunig argues that this is because the social and political climate in which we live has not allowed women’s ‘voices’ to be ‘heard’, and this has meant that the “long and inspiring history” of women in outdoor education has often been poorly represented in discussions about the history of outdoor education.

106 Ibid.
Other researchers have made similar findings. Karla Henderson argues that women have been involved in outdoor recreation activities throughout the twentieth century, although researchers have not always recognized them.\textsuperscript{109} Wilma Miranda and Rita Yerkes note that women were very involved in the early twentieth century camping movement.\textsuperscript{110} Sally Gregory Kohlstedt found that nature study, one of the earliest outdoor education movements, opened up doors for women teachers in supervisory roles.\textsuperscript{111} Since then, Breunig argues, women have continued to be involved in the development of outdoor education programs in K-12 schools.\textsuperscript{112}

Some outdoor education programs, both informal, like that of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guide movements and summer camps, and formal, in the schools, were “deeply gendered.”\textsuperscript{113} This gendering of formal outdoor education programs has been thoroughly explored in the United Kingdom. Lynn Cook argues that early twentieth century British outdoor education programs were designed for boys, to keep them fit for war and for service in the Empire.\textsuperscript{114} Alison Lugg found the same thing, that “[i]n Britain outdoor education programs initially developed primarily to


\textsuperscript{111} Kohlstedt, Teaching Children Science, 7.

\textsuperscript{112} Breunig, “Women and Outdoor Education,” 36.

\textsuperscript{113} Kohlstedt, Teaching Children Science, 217 and 231 and Wall, The Nurture of Nature, 175.

meet the needs of boys for military training, physical health development as an antidote to juvenile delinquency.”

Programs remained deeply gendered in the post-WWII period. Di Collins argues that early postwar programs in the UK were based on the Outward Bound model of “outdoor activity and character building,” which were dominated by men. Cook argues that even when outdoor education programs were expanded to include girls in the 1960s, girls were mainly “absorbed into courses designed for boys. It seems outdoor education generally reflected wider social assumptions about gender rather than challenged them.”

In North America, however, outdoor education programs did not appear to be as highly gendered. Wall has noted that even though children’s summer camps were highly gendered in the early-twentieth century, by the 1950s they were becoming coed. Paris suggests that the creation of coed camps in the 1950s was in part as response “to adult concerns about children’s heterosexual development, which resonated among postwar American parents and youth leaders at a time when the heterosexual family was imagined to be a bulwark against communism.”


argues that in school-based nature study similar work was required from boys and girls. Whether this remained true as time moved forward is yet to be examined.

The program areas that had the most opportunity for gendering were the socialization components of education for democratic living, such as homemaking and meal preparation. However, there appears to have been no formal gendering of such activities in the board-run and MTRCA-run residential outdoor education programs. This is most clearly demonstrated by the reactions of those who saw both boys and girls engaged in stereotypically ‘women’s work’.

In the early 1950s a delegation from the Toronto Board of Education went to Michigan to investigate residential outdoor education and took a number of pictures at the Mill Lake School Camp which would eventually appear in the 1956 “Outdoor Education: A Brief Submitted to the Toronto Board of Education.” Most of the pictures show boys and girls engaged in the same activities; however, the caption of a photo showing children cleaning up after a meal reads: “After the meal, even the boys help clean up. All serving and dish washing is done by the children under the supervision of the teacher and the cook. These duties are cheerfully accepted and carried out most efficiently.” Gender was not discussed further in this report.

Twenty years later, participation by members of one sex in activities traditionally gendered to the other evoked similar reactions in observers. For

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120 Kohlstedt, Teaching Children Science, 217 and 231.
example, a student teacher who visited the Island school was quoted in the MTSB’s 1970 survey report as say: “Even the girls did the ‘dirty’ jobs.”

In this era Ontario was working towards creating a more equitable environment for girls and women, and the Toronto Board of Education was particularly interested in issues relating to equity in education. Growing out of the Hall-Dennis report’s call for an end to sex-role stereotyping of subjects, by the mid-1970s the TBE “had a sophisticated curriculum-development and equity unit that would provide much of the early impetus in developing new learning materials, and in establishing more equitable promotion policies,” relating to women and girls. Around the same time, the Ministry of Education produced its 1975 primary curriculum revisions, “The Formative Years,” in which was noted the government’s policy to work to end the limitations imposed by sex-role stereotyping. The Federation of Women Teachers’ Associations of Ontario put together a handbook to help teachers teach this way.

That same year, the Ministry of Culture and Recreation commissioned a study of gender equality in recreation, and found that there were fewer recreational opportunities for girls, and those that existed were in a narrower range than those for girls.

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123 See Tim McCaskell, Race to Equity: Disrupting Educational Inequity (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005) for an in-depth discussion of the Toronto Board of Education’s equity programs from the 1970s through to the board’s amalgamation with other Toronto area boards in 1997.
124 Gidney, From Hope to Harris, 158 and 160.
The authors of the report, Michael Heit and Don Malpass, argued that “[i]f we combine the notion of a narrow range of opportunities and fewer opportunities being available for girls with the fact that a child’s play affects the way he or she plays as an adult then this becomes an important leisure education issue.”

The plight of girls (and boys) exposed to sex-role stereotyping was being widely discussed in the city and the province during the time in which Toronto’s residential outdoor education programs were being established. Although there is no doubt that gender stereotypes continued to shape aspects of these programs, and whether or not students self-segregated while in attendance is beyond the scope of this project, there was no formal gendering of these programs. Modern boys and girls were expected to undertake the same activities and share in the same household chores as each other while in residence at these outdoor education centres.

**Conclusion**

The residential outdoor education programs that were developed to serve the students of Metropolitan Toronto beginning in the 1950s were both justified by and shaped by popular understandings of citizenship education. Educators worked to create modern citizens through group living in an antimodern space, and to include those who were generally excluded from hegemonic understandings of citizenship.

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127 Ibid.
128 See, for example, Wright, “Activities and Attitudes of Principals and Teachers,” 114 and 140.
As the focus of citizenship education moved away from democratic and social living to a more activist and global conception, the rhetoric surrounding residential outdoor education programs changed, to become increasingly focused on creating citizens concerned about the environment.
Chapter 2
Preparing the Children of Tomorrow:
Outdoor Education and the Productive Use of Leisure Time

In postwar North America, the shrinking work week and the concurrent growth in the amount of leisure time available to citizens concerned many policy makers. There was a general fear that the public would not know how to make productive use of this newfound spare time. In order to encourage a productive use of leisure time, governments implemented many recreation training programs.

Education for productive use of leisure time can be understood as an element of democratic citizenship education, and, as such, as part of the wider belief in the socializing power of schools. It grew out of both an increasing concern for physical fitness and the incorporation of physical education in schools, beginning in the 1880s, and also a government more concerned than ever about the daily activities of its citizens. It was both about training for the future, but also about trying to recapture a lost past, and thus was an integral part of the modernizing antimodernism paradigm that shaped these programs. In this chapter, I will outline how this took place in Ontario and demonstrate that the residential outdoor centres operated and used by the Metropolitan Toronto School Board and its constituent boards were shaped by idea of education for leisure.¹

¹ The area which is now the City of Toronto was, from 1954-1997, served by a federated city-structure, in which the constituent cities (originally East York, Etobicoke, Forest Hill, Leaside, Long Branch, Mimico, New Toronto, North York, Scarborough, Swansea, Toronto, Weston, and York; after the amalgamation of 1967, East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, Toronto, and York) had representation on the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto for the purpose of coordinating city services. The public school board (as opposed to the Catholic board) had a similar structure. Each
Leisure, for all but the upper classes, historians have explained, is an element of modernity. Modernity came to Toronto at the end of the nineteenth century. Donica Belisle argues that the growth of cities, industry, the state, and capitalism transformed Canada into a modern nation between 1880 and 1920.\textsuperscript{2} Keith Walden, in his book \textit{Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture}, argues that in the late nineteenth century, leisure, which had been a defining feature of the upper class, was becoming “universalized [as] a middle-class standard, suggesting that rational recreation was not a wasteful extravagance but a normal expectation.”\textsuperscript{3} Patricia Jasen, in her book on wilderness tourism in Ontario, echoes this point, noting that “[t]he growth of Canadian cities coincided with the greater tolerance for the notion of legitimate recreation, conveniently justified by growing fears about the effects of overwork and ‘overcivilization’ on personal and racial health.”\textsuperscript{4}

Although leisure was becoming normalized for the middle-classes, from this time forward the leisure of the lower classes and children was subject to formal and informal regulation. For example, Carolyn Strange, in \textit{Toronto’s Girl Problem}, argues that from the 1880s onwards the leisure time of working class women had been highly regulated, noting that organizations including the YWCA worked to “devis[e] constituent city of Metropolitan Toronto had its own school board, and each of these area boards had representation on the Metropolitan Toronto School Board in order to standardize education services across the metropolitan area.

\textsuperscript{2} Donica Beslile, \textit{Retail Nation: Department Stores and the Making of Modern Canada} (Vancouver: UBS Press, 2011), 3

\textsuperscript{3} Keith Walden, \textit{Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 24.

means to steer working girls away from disreputable pleasure.”⁵ Children’s leisure, especially working-class children’s leisure, was also regulated by many of the same middle-class organizations.

School boards frequently played a role in this leisure regulation. The Toronto Public School Board, a precursor of the Toronto Board of Education, became the first public body in the country to administer summer playground programs when it first opened playgrounds supervised by female teachers in the summer of 1908.⁶ The early-twentieth century supervised playground movement was one of the earliest incidences of large-scale middle-class regulation of the leisure of working-class youngsters. In addition, until the City of Toronto created a parks department in 1945, community centres were administered by the Toronto Board of Education.⁷

Although many attempts were made to regulate the leisure experiences of working-class women and children, Sharon Wall suggests that these attempts had some very positive attributes in promoting leisure time for the working classes. For example, she argues that “the appearance and flourishing of fresh air camps bolstered the quintessentially modern belief that life should include regular and gratifying bouts of leisure, even for the nation’s poorest citizens.”⁸

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⁷ Ibid., 56.
As the twentieth century went on leisure became a more significant part of everyday life for the majority of Canada’s citizens. Ontario residents flocked to recreational activities in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1958, for example, the number of campers using Ontario’s provincial parks increased by 68 percent over the 1957 season. They had the time to do it: after World War II, leisure time increased because of shorter working hours, new technology, extended holidays, early retirement, and longer life expectancy. They also had the money: rising incomes helped Canadians participate in all sorts of recreational activities. Historians have explored the expansion of public leisure programs in the mid-twentieth century and identified three themes in that process: democracy, outdoor recreation, and antimodernism.

In her book *The Public at Play: Gender and the Politics of Recreation in Post-War Ontario*, Shirley Tillotson argues that state-sponsored public recreation in Ontario began as a social movement in the postwar period, directly connected to “the liberal democratic idealism bequeathed by the 1930s and the war.” The public recreationists of the postwar era drew “on the mixed legacy of early twentieth century private recreation services” to justify the intrusion into the private life: one

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tradition was illiberal and elitist, “defin[ing] recreation services as a means by which wise and well-washed folk could correct or prevent moral decay among the weak”;\(^{13}\) and the other had a social-liberal, participatory democracy tradition – “Recreation could help to construct a public capable of acting as ‘the people,’ as required by a liberal democratic state.”\(^ {14}\) She argues that it was through recreation’s association was this second tradition that “the links between cold war democratic ideals, liberalism, and public provision of recreation would be forged.”\(^ {15}\)

This phenomenon was not confined to Ontario. The same forces were at work in Britain and the rest of Canada. Sandra Trudgeon Dawson argues that in Britain, leisure was an important aspect of mid-twentieth century social citizenship, in that it aided in the transition in the identity of the worker from producer-citizens to consumer-citizen.\(^ {16}\) Doug Owram, in his history of the Canadian baby boom generation, argues that “the leisure world of the baby-boom generation is unique.”\(^ {17}\) This, he suggests, is because of “the degree to which non-family forces shaped the childhood world” – organized activities which took place outside of the family enrolled more children than ever before.\(^ {18}\) He argues that the organizations that offered these activities can be traced back to the Victorian notion of ‘useful leisure.’\(^ {19}\)

\(^ {13}\) Ibid., 13-4.
\(^ {14}\) Ibid., 14.
\(^ {15}\) Ibid., 15.
\(^ {18}\) Ibid., 87.
\(^ {19}\) Ibid., 99.
Although weakened by the Depression and war years, these organizations were revived in the 1950s.\(^{20}\)

These 1950s youth organizations were shaped by themes similar to those identified by Tillotson as shaping public recreation in postwar Canada. Owram argues that two themes shaped these organizations: “First, the notions of betterment and socialization were present throughout. Second, the combination of prosperity and sheer numbers allowed individual organizations to expand to an unprecedented scale.”\(^{21}\)

However, as much as leisure was charged with creating ‘the people’ of the democratic state, it was still highly gendered. From the leisure services aimed at working women that Strange analyzed, to the highly gendered space of the single-sex summer camp, leisure has been more available for some rather than others and used for different purposes for different groups. This gendering did not, however, simply seek to reproduce existing gender lines. Robert Rutherford argues that leisure was gendered in the postwar period, but that this gendering was new: the rise of masculine domesticity “moved fathers toward the center of many family- and leisure-based activities, from acquiring the first television to buying a new car or boat or taking the family on vacation.”\(^{22}\) Tillotson argues that since recreation was “[n]either definitively mother’s work nor unambiguously that of the father, recreation

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\(^{20}\) Ibid., 100.
\(^{21}\) Ibid., 100.
was able to move across, and even to reposition the gendered public-private boundary.”

A wide variety of recreation activities were being developed by the state in this era, ranging from craft and cooking classes to swimming lessons and sports leagues at the newly built community centres. However, historians have identified outdoor recreation as one of the most important aspects of the postwar recreation boom. Gerald Killan, in his history of Ontario’s provincial parks, argues that “[d]uring the affluent sixties, a period of heightened interest in quality-of-life issues, Ontarians had redefined the concept of outdoor recreation and now viewed it as a social amenity, a necessary and enriching aspect of daily life.” By the mid-1960s, it was clear that outdoor recreation had “proven to be the extremely popular choice.”

As early as 1950, the provincial government had made the connection between increased leisure time and the need to provide spaces for outdoor recreation. That year, the Select Committee on Conservation reported to the Ontario legislature that

Recreation is the pleasurable use of leisure time. It is an essential physical and mental need. Good recreation facilities are now recognized to be as significant in modern life as are good working condition. Since many types of recreation facilities involve use of the land, recommendations for the proper use and development of recreation resources are a normal part of any conservation plan.

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24 Killan, Protected Places, 206.
26 Ontario, Report to the Ontario Legislature from the Select Committee on Conservation (Toronto: Baptist Johnson, 1950), 151.
The need for outdoor recreation was seen as an urban phenomenon. The Canadian population was becoming increasingly concentrated in urban centres in the decades following World War II. By the 1960s, over two-thirds of Ontario’s population lived in six counties of the urbanized, industrial south-central area of the province: Hamilton-Wentworth, Halton, Peel, York, Durham, and, of course, Metropolitan Toronto. The Committee identified a need for recreation areas located within a one-to-two hour drive of the urban workers and agricultural workers of Southern Ontario. Killan describes how this need played out over the following decades:

During the two decades following World War II, dramatic social and economic changes in Ontario generated unprecedented demand for parklands. A larger, more affluent, highly mobile urban population with newly acquired leisure time took to the highways in search of recreational opportunities. So great were their numbers that they saturated the few available parks and created a crisis in outdoor recreation.

The government responded to this by creating the Division of Parks in the Department of Lands and Forests in 1954, which launched an era of provincial parks expansion, from eight prior to 1954 to 94 in 1967.

Due to the availability and affordability of automobiles, decreased working hours, and the desire to leave the urban environment, leisure was intrinsically linked with modernity for the majority of the population. One aspect of modernity was the antimodernist reaction it provoked in many middle-class urban-dwellers. This antimodernism was not new to the mid-twentieth century. Wall argues that one

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27 Killan, Protected Places, 75.
28 Ibid.
29 Killan, Protected Places, 74.
30 Ibid.
antimodernist response to urban modernity was the increasingly positive view of nature that Canadian began to adopt in the late nineteenth century. Patricia Jasen argues that this response was exemplified by that era’s rise in popularity of wilderness or back-to-nature holidays, which were “motivated by a desire to recover something that was lost,” an older space, wilder, not like the city.

As much as leisure education was about a future of increased leisure time, it was also about the past. Earlier movements directly connected to the modern residential outdoor education programs that served Toronto students, including nature study and summer camping, were motivated by antimodern responses to modern, urban life. George Altmeyer, in his seminal article “Three Ideas of Nature in Canada, 1893-1914,” argues that nature-study was connected to antimodernism – “That modern society had atrophied or stunted the senses was an often expressed idea associated with nature study.” Wilma Miranda and Rita Yerkes argue that the antimodernism that led to the establishment of boys camps in the 1890s had much to do with the ‘effeminizing’ threat of modern city life. Sharon Wall argues that the summer camp is an “antimodern leisure pursuit.” However, this particular form of antimodernism might be best described as modernizing antimodernism, the use of “pre-modern” spaces and skills to better adapt to living in the modern world.

Sally Gregory Kohlstedt argues that nature-study, for rural students, was justified both by “an agrarian nostalgia while simultaneously presenting a forward-looking determination to make agriculture more systematic and attractive.” Wall argues that

Born of antimodern sentiment, the summer camp was ultimately a modern phenomenon, a ‘therapeutic space’ as much dependent on the city, the factory, and ‘progress’ to define its parameters as on that intangible but much lauded entity called nature. In short, the summer camp should best be read not as a simple rejection of modern life but, rather, as one of the complex negotiations of modernity taking place in mid-twentieth century Canada.

Leslie Paris, in her study of American summer camps, made the same argument as Wall:

Nostalgia for the imagined ‘good old days’ when camps were somehow more authentic, and childhood better protected, is a longstanding camp tradition. But camps are fundamentally modern, hybrid communities, and their power as spaces of children’s socialization lies precisely in their flexibility. The decisions taken by camp leaders (and sometimes their campers) about what to maintain and what to let go exemplify Americans’ continued ambivalent negotiation of modernity.

Modern residential outdoor education has been shaped by this modernizing antimodernist project, much as the earlier nature study and summer camp movements had been. This antimodernist tone is best understood in terms of its focus on leisure education.

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37 Ibid., 14-5.
Across North America outdoor educators were justifying their programs with a nod to the past, suggesting that these programs could act as “the safety valve” to the “frenzied tempo of modern living.” In resource after resource authors lamented the disconnection that modern children had with the outdoors in a world of television and supermarkets. The antimodernism was decidedly antiurban. This passage by Charles Holtzer, which appeared in a 1965 New Jersey teacher’s guide to outdoor education is indicative of this sentiment:

In the days when the United States was less industrialized, our children had the forests, lakes and fields as their playground. The rapid growth of industrial cities divorced our children from the land, the land which played so vital a role in the development of a well-rounded life. The restlessness of our youth today may be at least partially attributable to the ever-widening chasm between them and living close to the land. There had become an increasing need to retain an awareness, understanding and appreciation of the contribution made to society by our natural resources.

Although this sentiment was directed towards all children, those in major cities, such as New York, were understood to particularly need “expos[ure] to the beauty and wonder of the outdoors – to recognize that there is a living world away from the


41 For example, see Ontario Teachers’ Federation Outdoor Education Committee, Outdoor Education Manual (Toronto: The Federation, 1970), 4 and Donald R. Hammerman and William M. Hammerman, Teaching in the Outdoors (Minneapolis: Burgess Pub. Co., 1964), 4-5.

ugliness and crush of tenements and subway rumblings – a world to which they can aspire.”

There is clearly a class element in the previous statement. Class has been an element of organized leisure since the turn of the twentieth century. Middle-class reformers have often believed that they can work to better the lower classes by encouraging their proper use of leisure time, as outlined by Carolyn Strange and Shirley Tillotson earlier in this chapter. If the Toronto-based residential outdoor education programs were designed in part to harness the belief in the power of schools to change society, as I am contending, it should not come as a surprise that classist language was used to describe the power of outdoor education, as I explored further in the previous chapter.

These antimodern sentiments were just as strong in Ontario and Toronto. At its opening, journalists celebrated the Island Natural Science School’s ability “to counteract ill-effects of urban living.” Albion Hills was also justified in part by the belief that urban students, who were often two-generations removed from the land, need to be reconnected first-hand with nature. It was hoped that students would learn appropriate outdoor recreation activities during their time at the various outdoor education programs that would allow them to reconnect and maintain a connection.

44 J. Bascom St. John, “Science Can be Fun Too,” The Globe and Mail October 27, 19[60], series of four articles regarding the Island School reprinted as a supplement, TBE-Schools-Elementary-Island Public, to 1969, Vertical file, TDSB Archives.
with the outdoors. Nature, hikes, camping and boating all were mentioned frequently in government documents as possible leisure activities.46

These justifications continued into the 1970s and 1980s. Dave Scott, in a 1971 article in the Toronto Daily Star, suggests that “[w]e may be raising a generation of children so city-oriented and ignorant of nature and the outdoors they are the opposite of the hayseed stereotype.” Charles Hopkins, director of the Island Natural Science School, “sees in outdoor education, exposing city children to country life as part of the regular school curriculum, part of the answer to the problem.”47

The MTRCA was committed to recreation in addition to education and conservation. However, the clearest articulation of the connection between outdoor education, leisure, and antimodernism appeared in a 1983 guide to the Ontario Camp Leadership Centre:

Urban technology is evolving in isolation from nature and natural processes. At the same time many desire to escape the environment created by technology. Today, as never before, urban people spend their leisure hours in the quiet of our parks and natural area. Because of their lack of experience and skill in outdoor recreation, they find it difficult to take full advantage of the many opportunities that natural areas offer.

To maintain the integrity of these environments and to encourage a higher quality of experience, training is required.48

The youth of Toronto would receive the appropriate training during their stay at the residential outdoor education programs that served them.

Since, as Christopher Dummitt has argued, the modernism of the postwar years emphasized control over the population by “managing economic and social life through the welfare state,” and the massive expansion in public education in the postwar years that allowed for the creation of residential outdoor education programs was undoubtedly part of the welfare state, then it follows that these outdoor education programs were elements of modernity. At the same time, however, the developers of the programs sought to use antimodern spaces to remove children from the modern life of the city, to engage in more natural leisure pursuits. So, much like Sharon Wall has argued that summer camps were hybrid places, encompassing both modernity and antimodernity, so too were these outdoor education programs. As such, they should be read similarly to summer camps, as “one of the complex negotiations of modernity taking place in mid-twentieth century Canada.” 49

**Education for Leisure**

The residential outdoor education programs that served Metropolitan Toronto public-school students from 1960 onward were informed and justified by the movement for the productive use of leisure time. An aim of most outdoor education programs is that students will learn skills and behaviours that they can carry to other parts of their lives. 50 The era in which these programs were developed was one in which the productive use of leisure time was understood to be a skill, one which had to be

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taught and learned. A pamphlet suggesting jobs in recreation produced by the Ontario government in the late 1950s outlines this issue:

Leisure, not work, challenges man today. Boredom from leisure, and the strains it places on family life, mental health and social well-being, cancels the benefits of freedom from labour. Change is inevitable, but man can shape his environment and find fulfillment through recreation.51

Ontarians, young and old, needed to learn how to meet the challenge of leisure time, and recreation was to be the way to fulfillment.

Many adults in this period were benefitting from the physical education they had received in their school days. Although first appearing in the 1880s, beginning in the 1930s physical education was receiving some degree of emphasis in Canadian public schools, and by 1948 physical education programs had shifted away from drill and training to “game skills, recreational activities, athletics, and physical fitness.”52 That, however, had only been the beginning.

Across North America, educators were beginning to believe that more had to be done, that urbanites with more free time had to learn how to purposefully use their time in order to avoid the risks of a sedentary lifestyle and to protect the areas used for recreation. Julian Smith et al., in 1972, noted that although people were spending more of their “newly acquired free time” outdoors, they needed to educated in the proper ways in which to do so, as “most of the adult population is two generations removed from the land there is a noticeable lack of skills, appreciations,

and attitudes about the land and outdoors." Charles Holtzer believed that these skills needed to be in the area of "lifetime recreational pursuits," including camping, fishing, hiking, swimming, and boating, and suggested that "schools need[ed] to assume the responsibility of helping their students develop individual, non-team type recreation skills, skills which they can utilize during their leisure time when they become adults." 

Educators across North America believed that they could effectively teach the productive use of leisure time in outdoor education programs. Some of the earliest programs on the continent emphasized leisure education. Throughout the 1940s, American outdoor education programs were generally recreative. For example, 'leisure pursuits' was one of the program focus areas at the experimental school camp operated by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in Michigan in the early 1940s. Well into the 1970s American outdoor education programs included recreation as a main component: a survey of environmental/outdoor education programs in the United States conducted by the National Education Association in 1970 found that 67 percent of programs incorporated 'recreation' as a subject. As the incorporation of leisure education into outdoor education programs across North America was

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53 Smith et al., Outdoor Education, 2nd ed., 4 and 7.
54 Holtzer, "Outdoor Education Interpreted," 13 and 14.
widespread, exploring its history in Toronto can allow a more in-depth exploration of how these programs were informed by the rhetoric of productive use of leisure time.

Two organizations that served Metropolitan Toronto students took up the task of helping the citizens of tomorrow learn to use their leisure time productively. To do so, they established residential outdoor education programs that were informed by and incorporated leisure education. The first was the school boards themselves, notably the Toronto Board of Education with its Island Natural Science School, which opened in 1960. The second was the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, which opened its first conservation school at Albion Hills in 1963. In this chapter I will argue that the residential outdoor education programs operated for students at these centres were informed and justified by the productive use of leisure time movement, and I will demonstrate how leisure education was incorporated in them. In order to do so, I will first need to place Toronto in its provincial context, and so will first explore how the Government of Ontario rose to combat the leisure time challenge.

“Suggest a Career in Recreation”: Leisure and the Government of Ontario

In the years following World War II, Ontario was changing at a rapid pace. In the 1960s, the province “flourished in an era of automation and affluence.”\(^{58}\) In the workplace, Ontario residents experienced a reduction in the number of working

hours, earlier retirements, and longer paid vacations. In the home, they had labour saving devices and smaller families. Bonita Anne Elliot, Richard Smith, and Bryce Taylor argue that “[a]s work hours decreased and leisure-time increased, there emerged great fluctuation of the relative values of work and leisure. Non-work time gradually became a more important segment of the twenty-four-hour day.”

However, this change was not always perceived as positive. In an earlier document, a late-1950s pamphlet urging guidance counsellors to “Suggest a Career in Recreation,” described the challenges involved in adapting to an era of increased free time:

There is unprecedented social change. People live longer but in more crowded, impersonal, urban settings. They have more time on their hands and more money in their pockets. Earning a living is only a part-time task for many. Thousands who have previously equated work to security are trying to adjust to leisure.

And the provincial government sought to ease this adjustment because it was concerned that without sufficient opportunities for productive use of leisure time, citizens would not rise to the challenges of being members of a postwar liberal democracy. Shirley Tillotson argues that “[t]he purpose of state-funded recreation, like that of public education, was to mould a certain citizen personality,” including the more conservative traits of self-discipline, religious faith, patriotism, commitment to

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59 Ibid.
60 “Suggest a Career in Recreation,” pamphlet, [1950s?], 1, Miscellaneous Publications - Ontario, Youth and Recreation Branch - [1956?-1972?], OHEC, OISE, Toronto.
the heterosexual family, and the more liberal traits of tolerance, avoiding violence, and “a passion for participation in community life.”

In order to ease the transition of its residents into a new life of increased leisure time in a democratic state, the Government of Ontario had three areas of focus: summer camps, community recreation, and schools. In this section, I will explore each of these areas of leisure education in Ontario, and argue that each of these foci helped create a space for the residential outdoor education centres developed in and around Toronto in this period.

**Summer Camps**

As outdoor recreation grew in importance in Ontario, the provincial government decided that it had to do more to address the issue than just create parks. So, the Department of Education decided to become involved in the children’s summer camping movement. Residential outdoor education programs and summer camps share many features, and each often serves the purpose of the other. In general, both experiences provide prolonged exposure to a natural environment, the learning of recreational skills, and a group living experience. They also reflected society’s antimodern responses to modernity. Wall argues that “[t]o a greater degree than other recreational institutions, the summer camp combined fears over modern childhood with the expanded faith in back-to-nature solutions.”

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summer camps by Ontarians, and their promotion by the provincial government, helped create a space for residential outdoor education programs.

Privately operated children’s summer camps have existed in Ontario since the late-nineteenth century.\(^{63}\) During the interwar era, the organized camping movement grew extensively, and programs began to be offered to children across the socio-economic spectrum.\(^{64}\) By the 1940s, the provincial government started to show an interest in these camps, and became involved in their operation in three ways: by licensing camps, by providing grants to non-profit camps, and by running a camp counsellor training program. In this section, drawing on Ministry of Education annual reports, I will explore the government’s interest in summer camps, and how it is related to education for the productive use of leisure time.

Wall argues that “the Ontario camping movement truly flourished in the postwar period.”\(^{65}\) Summer camps operating in the province of Ontario, until 1941, were not subject to a specific regulatory body. During their early years of operation, Ontario camp directors came together to work as a self-regulators and self-improvers. Over time, as camps grew to serve a greater proportion of the population, the province became increasingly interested, and in 1941, the Department of Education began issuing licenses to qualified camps.\(^{66}\) During this decade, there

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\(^{65}\) Ibid., 12.

\(^{66}\) Ibid.
were hundreds of camps in the province; for example, in 1948, 469 camps were issued licenses by the Department.67

The Department, however, did not limit itself to the regulation of children’s camps. Instead, it began to support them. One way in which it supported camps was by offering financial aid to non-profit camps, which it began to do in 1945.68 This funding reached a significant number of camps in the province; for example, in 1947, 141 non-profit camps received financial assistance from the government.69 This funding lasted into the 1960s, but governmental support by that time had extended in such a way that the Department “provide[d] a consultative service to the non-profit camps in Ontario, conduct[ed] workshops for camp directors and employ[ed] 5 camp consultants to visit non-profit camps during the summer to assist and give advice to camp leaders.”70

The second way in which the province supported summer camps was by offering, beginning in 1947, counsellor training courses for high school students. The camp counsellor training program was one of two summer leadership programs for high school students offered in a summer camp setting. The other was an athletic leadership program which began in 1948.

The camp counsellor training program began because non-profit camps were having a difficult time finding trained young camp counsellors.71 So, in 1947, the

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Department of Education decided to “make a contribution to these camps through a training programme for camp counsellors between the ages of 15 and 18.”\(^7^2\) In its first year, 375 campers and counsellors in training attended the summer camp, each for a period of two weeks, with girls and boys housed at separate sites. The Department’s Annual Report for the year describes each course as consisting of “two weeks’ training in waterfront supervision, nature study, canoeing, craft work and the organization and supervision of overnight trips.”\(^7^3\)

In order to attend the camp, “[e]ach applicant agreed to render at least two weeks’ service at a non-profit camp within a year of completion of the course.”\(^7^4\) By 1949, the attendees were seen “making a valuable contribution in the camps to which they go.”\(^7^5\) It was viewed as such a success that the Minister of Education, W.J. Dunlop, commended it in the two-page foreword that preceded the 1952 Annual Report of the Ministry of Education.\(^7^6\)

The Ontario Camp Leadership Centre (OCLC) at Bark Lake, where the camp counsellor training program was held for most of its existence, closed in 1995 and was taken over by an independent organization. Throughout its tenure as a government-run camp, the OCLC increasingly emphasized the importance of leisure for Ontarians. In its early years, the focus was on teaching recreative skills to the

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\(^7^2\) Ibid.
\(^7^3\) Ibid.
participants, so that they could bring these skills to campers across the province.\textsuperscript{77}

By the 1980s, its program was more holistic, that is, it came to teach a wider variety of skills than it previously had. In a 1983 guide to the Centre, that OCLC’s challenge was stated as follows:

Outdoor Leaders require knowledge and skill in developing programs that meet the needs of increased numbers who use the outdoors in the pursuit of leisure. The O.C.L.C. program stresses outdoor leadership and skills along with environmental awareness. To implement this concept the staff plan and co-ordinate initiatives and resources in cooperation with outdoor leaders.\textsuperscript{78}

The OCLC’s primary goal in 1983 was “to enhance the leadership capabilities and skills of recreational leaders”; however, its second was “to encourage understanding about leisure and its importance and value to individuals and communities.”\textsuperscript{79}

Leisure was being discussed as it had been two decades earlier and remained an important part of the program.

The Department of Education also ran an athletic leadership camp, beginning in 1948. The purpose of the program, which first began accepting girls in 1952, was to give student leaders “a practical training in the instruction of basic athletic skills, the knowledge of game rules, the art of officiating, and the organization of a physical education programme.”\textsuperscript{80} The developers of the program believed that upon graduation from high school the participants would become “an asset to any community recreation programme.” \textsuperscript{81} Surveys conducted in the mid-1960s showed

\textsuperscript{77} Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, \textit{The Ontario Camp Leadership Centre.}
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
that the aims of the Ontario Athletic Leadership Camp were being fulfilled “since the vast majority of the students are continuing their training in universities, Teachers’ Colleges, nursing institutions, or in other forms of advanced education.”

Much like the OCLC, the athletic training camp’s program became increasingly holistic over time, losing its specific focus on athletic leadership to gain a more general focus on student leadership, a trend reflected in its name. In 1967 it was renamed the Ontario Leadership Training Camp, and by the mid-1970s it was being called the Ontario Student Leadership Centre. Along with the name changes came changes in the program. It was transformed away from a focus on athletics to a much broader range of leadership programs. In 1988 courses offered at the Centre “focused on music, general and basic level athletics, elementary (Grade 7) athletics, student government (English-language and French-language), and multicultural and multiracial relations,” and a sports leadership program was being offered in French for the first time. In 1991 it was given its current name, the Ontario Educational Leadership Centre, and transferred to a private, not-for-profit corporation funded by the Ministry of Education and the Ontario School Boards.

Over the years, these camps served many purposes, although all were based on the aim of creating recreation leaders for Ontario. In so doing, the provincial

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government was creating a space for residential outdoor education programs. By accepting and working to expand the market for residential camps, Ontario was normalizing residential camping experiences in the eyes of Ontarians, helping to create a public atmosphere receptive to residential outdoor education experiences.

Recreation Services

As the postwar period progressed, the government became increasingly concerned with how those who spent fewer than 40 hours a week at work were spending their spare time. Specifically, as Tillotson has argued, “public recreation was intended to be an instrument for making the welfare state democratic in a distinctly liberal form.”86 In order to have some say in how Ontarians were spending their free time, the government began advocating for community recreation services, and developing training programs for recreation leaders. In this section I will explore the government’s concern with leisure time, and suggest that this concern informed outdoor education programs in the province.

“More than any other institution of the recreation movement,” Tillotson argues, “the Department of Education’s Community Programmes Branch (CPB) did the ideological work of securing recreation’s place in the welfare state.”87 In 1948, the Community Programmes Branch of the Department of Education was formed, combining services in recreation and adult education formerly provided in other...
branches of the department.\textsuperscript{88} Its policies and services were “based on the strong belief that it is the right of the individual to choose his leisure-time activities and that the main growth of recreation and adult education will take place in communities under community auspices.”\textsuperscript{89} Its principal purpose was to work toward “the development and maintenance of municipal recreation programmes and services as the basis of well-balanced community programmes of organized leisure-time activities for all.”\textsuperscript{90}

In a history of the Youth and Recreation Branch written in the 1970s, Bonita Anne Elliot, Richard Smith, and Bryce Taylor argue that in the 1940s and 1950s, the Community Programs Branch of the Department of Education “laid the foundation for many leisure-time activities and clubs, and provided the incentive for towns to develop their own recreation committees.”\textsuperscript{91} By the 1960s, however, the Branch was playing a more removed role, acting to enable and assist, as opposed to developing the programs itself.\textsuperscript{92}

The Community Programs Branch focused mainly on recreation and education for adults no longer in school. However, in 1963, the Youth Branch was established by the Department to coordinate out-of-school educational services for youth because “[s]pecial problems have arisen in this field as a result of automation, increased leisure time, the progress of urbanization, premature withdrawals from

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{91} Elliot, Smith and Taylor, "History of Provincial Government Services of the Youth and Recreation Branch," 5.  
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
school, and changes in the social and family patterns."\(^{93}\) Although many agencies were working to find a solution to these problems, it was hoped that by working together, "governmental and private agencies may be enabled to help out youth to help themselves become fit and effective citizens in a society that promises rapid change and constant challenge."\(^{94}\)

Five years later, in 1968, the two branches merged into the Youth and Recreation Branch. This new branch’s purpose was "[t]o provide leadership and to assist in the development of Ontario communities in the broadest sense – particular consideration being given to the need of young people to participate fully in the life of the community, and to the need of all ages to learn to use their leisure creatively."\(^{95}\) Helping residents learn how to use their leisure time wisely was driving the government’s programming.

One of the early ways in which the Department worked to do this was by creating recreation leader training programs and recruiting students to them. This began almost as soon as the Branch was established. In the 1950 Department of Education Annual Report bureaucrats noted that "[s]ince the scope and extent of adult education and recreation programmes are largely dependent upon the availability of trained leaders, the policies and resources of the Community


\(^{94}\) Ibid.

Programmes Branch are primarily directed towards leadership training.”\textsuperscript{96} In 1951, the Branch established a three-year course for Municipal Recreation Directors.\textsuperscript{97}

The Branch worked to recruit young adults to these programs through many vehicles, including career counselling pamphlets. In one published in the late 1950s called “Is Recreation the Right Career for You?”, the authors emphasized the respectability of a career in recreation: “[t]he recreationist, one who has studied the leisure sciences, is a professional person dedicated to providing enjoyment and this fulfillment through the creative and satisfying use of leisure.”\textsuperscript{98} They also emphasized the longevity of this career, addressing leisure’s connection to democracy:

The amount and importance of leisure is ever-increasing. Our democratic way of life requires a broad spectrum of activities and freedom of choice in leisure pursuits. In Ontario, demand exceeds the supply of qualified and educated recreationists who are dedicated to providing this choice. Predictions are that this imbalance will continue and likely increase.\textsuperscript{99}

Recreationists could expect to find jobs with the government, with youth serving agencies such as the YMCA and the Girl Guides, which, as Owram noted, were enjoying a heyday during this time, as outdoor education centre directors, and as year-round summer camp staff.\textsuperscript{100} Recreation leadership remained a top priority of the Community Programs Branch throughout the 1960s.\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{98} “Is Recreation the Right Career for You?,” 3.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 4-5 and Owram, \textit{Born at the Right Time}, 100.
\textsuperscript{101} Elliot, Smith and Taylor, “History of Provincial Government Services of the Youth and Recreation Branch,” 7.
recreation education and leadership training became increasingly professional, and by its end, courses were being offered at the university level.\footnote{Ibid., 9.}

By working to professionalize careers in recreation, the government was lending the field middle-class respectability. By encouraging these new professionals to search for jobs in outdoor education, it was also granting outdoor education programs the same respectability. In so doing, it helped make them a proper use of school time for the children of middle-class.

**Leisure in Education**

By the 1950s, Canadian educators were starting to see a place for leisure education in formal schooling. The Canadian Research Committee on Practical Education's 1951 report, *Better Schooling for Canadian Youth*, included as one of its nine general goals, schooling for the proper use of leisure time.\footnote{Canadian Research Committee on Practical Education, *Better Schooling for Canadian Youth* (1951), summarized by Tomkins, *A Common Countenance*, 297-8.} By the 1960s, the Ontario Department of education took up this goal.

*Living and Learning*, the 1968 report of the Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario, more commonly known as the Hall-Dennis Report, emphasized the importance of leisure education. It sums up the reasons for it as follows:

The changing patterns of living, of working, and of recreation require that the education system prepare the children of tomorrow to live in a world vastly different from that of this generation. There must be education for leisure time,
for a more mature culture, and for a greater sense of personal responsibility, and the curriculum must be designed accordingly.\textsuperscript{104}

Since “leisure time [was] growing in importance,” educators were “beginning to realize that preparing oneself to cope with leisure time is as important as preparing oneself to cope with a job.”\textsuperscript{105}

Educators were beginning to incorporate these beliefs into formal schooling, beginning with the physical education program. Although by 1948 games and recreational activities were part of Ontario’s physical education program, George S. Tomkins notes that it was not until after 1960 that the focus of the program fully shifted away “from a militaristic orientation, mass calisthenics and aggressive team sports to a focus on sports to be pursued throughout life.”\textsuperscript{106} It was becoming increasingly tied to the ideal of the wise use of leisure time.

In the North York Board of Education, one of the MTSB’s constituent boards, for example, physical education courses were often tied to the fulfillment of leisure. By the 1968-1969 school year the board wrote in its annual report that

[a] major emphasis of the [physical education] program is on specific recreational objectives so that the student may make profitable use of increased recreational opportunities in a social environment where leisure time plays such an important role.\textsuperscript{107}

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\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 45.
\textsuperscript{106} Tomkins, A Common Countenance, 404.
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These beliefs were also upheld by the province, as evidenced in the 1976 Ontario senior physical and health education guidelines which “emphasize[d] activities that students may continue to enjoy after leaving school – such as golf, tennis, archery, badminton, curling, swimming, and camping – as well as the traditional secondary school team sports.”

Leisure education was not limited to physical education. In the late 1970s, the Ministry of Education released “Leisure Time: A Sample Unit in the Study of North America” as a supplement to the 1977 Intermediate Division Geography Guidelines. This unit was part of the year’s work in geography, and this sample unit was developed in order to provide examples of the way ‘leisure time’ “can be used to explore the geography of North America.”

This unit was designed to “encourage students to become more aware of the manner in which they spend their free time.” The unit equates leisure with recreation, which is true of many of the government programs advocating the productive use of leisure time. This is evidenced by the titles of the sub-units, which include (1) Leisure time: a Canadian heritage; and (2) Where are all the tourists going?

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109 Ibid., 2 and 4.

110 Ibid., 2.

111 Ibid., 2.

112 Ibid., 3.
In ‘Leisure time: a Canadian heritage,’ the unit designers connect recreation and environmental concern, a connection often made in outdoor education programs. In the unit, the connection is made as follows:

There is much to be seen and enjoyed in the national parks. But with increasing use they are subject to more and more damage. Canadians are conscious of the need to protect land for recreational uses, but there is an equal need to protect the land from the destructive forces inherent in the demand for recreation itself. The many examples of conflicts between recreational demands and the need for conservation of our heritage are well worth investigating, as are opposing opinions of commercial interests and environmentalists.113

The formal curriculum was beginning to look like the curriculum used at outdoor education centres.

Finally, resources were published which encouraged teachers to incorporate leisure education across the curriculum. In 1978 the Ministry of Culture and Recreation published Leisure: A Resource for Educators with the intent of encouraging teachers to incorporate leisure education into their teaching.114 Catherine Cherry and Bob Woodburn, the authors of this book, argue that “[w]e are not naturally endowed with leisure interests, attitudes and skills. We must learn them. But our learning is incomplete. As a result we are often unprepared for leisure, not only physically but culturally, emotionally and creatively.”115 To combat this problem, they argued, teachers needed to include leisure education in their teaching.

113 Ibid., 5.
115 Ibid., 6.
Cherry and Woodburn argue that leisure should not be taught as a separate course or subset of a subject, but should be incorporated and integrated across the curriculum, using a variety of methods and strategies to integrate the four key areas of leisure learning: knowledge and understanding about leisure, personal resources and skills for leisure, personal values about leisure, and positive attitudes towards leisure.\textsuperscript{116} By doing so, students will come to understand, among many other things, the importance of the environment. They will learn to regard it “as an irreplaceable resource for leisure that demands sensitive care and treatment.”\textsuperscript{117} The connection between leisure time and the environment is an important one for outdoor education programs. One of the primary justifications for residential outdoor education programs in Toronto, which will be explored further in the following section, was the need to preserve natural environments for recreational use. In order to do this, students would have to learn how to use the environment safely and respectfully.

Although the provincial government, through its many programs encouraging the productive use of leisure time and recreation leadership, helped create a space for residential outdoor education programs, it took many years for it to support the programs themselves. In their studies of Canadian outdoor education, John Passmore and Sheila Scott and James Nelson argue that Canadian outdoor education programs have, for the most part, been grassroots initiatives, with

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 84.
provincial governments offering little encouragement to their developers.\textsuperscript{118} However, the outdoor education programs which served Metropolitan Toronto students had the advantage of being developed at a time and in a space more accepting of the importance of the wise use of leisure and the relevance of recreational skills.

**Leisure Education at Outdoor Education Centres**

From World War II onward, leisure time was increasingly becoming a concern for the Government of Ontario. The provincial government offered programs for youth and adults, and even included leisure topics and skills in the provincial curriculum. School boards took this concern and these programs one step further, by developing residential outdoor education programs for their students. Education for the productive use of leisure time, including its democratic and antimodernist components, was a concept that helped educators and educational bureaucrats justify outdoor education beginning in the 1950s.

In Metropolitan Toronto, the first Canadian jurisdiction to open residential outdoor education programs, two program models were developed. For reasons outlined in the Introduction, I focus on the Toronto Board of Education’s Island Natural Science School as the example of the board-operated outdoor education field centres, and Albion Hills Conservation School as the example of the

Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority-operated field centres. In this section I will explore how education for productive use of leisure time was used to justify the programs of both board operated and conservation authority-run field centres. To do so, I will draw on reports made to the constituent boards of the Metro Toronto School Board, and promotional materials of these centres.

**Board Operated Centres**

The first permanent residential outdoor education program in Canada began in Michigan in the winter of 1956, when a delegation from the Toronto Board of Education (TBE) visited the Mill Lake School Camp run by Michigan’s Dearborn Board of Education. Following their return to Toronto, the group submitted a brief to the Toronto Board, discussing their visit and the ways in which they saw outdoor education fitting into the Toronto public school program.\(^{119}\)

The members of this delegation understood school camping, their term for outdoor education, as an extension of formal schooling to the out-of-doors. They held this belief strongly, arguing that “[t]here is no reason for a school camping programme to exist except as a definite part of the school curriculum.”\(^{120}\) So, any outdoor education program that would come out of this report would clearly have to be closely connected to the formal curriculum, one which, in this period, was growing to include leisure education.


\(^{120}\) Ibid., 13.
Leisure skills were one of the many components that the members of the delegation thought that students would gain from participation in outdoor education. They noted that many outdoor activities are being enjoyed by the present-day generation, most of whom have few skills and little appreciation necessary to get the most from these pursuits. This is a challenge to education in a day when greater numbers of citizens who have longer week-ends and paid vacations turn to the out-doors for recreation, health, and adventure.\textsuperscript{121}

To this end, many of the proposed curricular elements in the brief are related to leisure and recreation, including music, art, and dramatics and outdoor physical activities.\textsuperscript{122} I have underlined those proposed curricular elements that I understand to be related to leisure education in Appendix B.

Much like the provincial government, members of the delegation were concerned with the professionalization of outdoor education. While the province was concerned with training professional recreationists, the TBE delegation was concerned about the state of outdoor education in Ontario, noting that it “is now being carried on by voluntary groups with or without profession[a]l leadership as would be provided by schools and colleges.”\textsuperscript{123} They hoped to change this with the introduction of a program for students served by the TBE.

The delegation suggested a school board owned site on Toronto Island as the location of the proposed program. This site was chosen not only for its proximity to Toronto public schools and hospitals, and the available building, but also because of

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 13-14.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 12.
Metropolitan Toronto’s vision of the Island as a park. The Metropolitan Parks Commission, the Chairman of Metropolitan Toronto, and the Metropolitan Toronto School Board “displayed keen interest and indicated they would heartily support such a plan.”

The fact that the school was to be in a park was an indication of the role of leisure in the proposed program and in the city as a whole. In 1948 Toronto City Council decided to discontinue the leases of Island residents by 1968 in order to turn the entire Toronto Island archipelago into a park. The Metropolitan Toronto council took over this process in 1956, evicting many of the year-round residents, and thus decimating the population of the Island School, which had been greatly expanded in 1954 to accommodate a total of 600 students. Although this process was never completed, the population of the Toronto Islands is much smaller than it was before the evictions began, and the archipelago has been transformed, for the most part, into a large park.

When the Island Natural Science School opened in the fall of 1960, its focus was, unsurprisingly, on teaching natural science to Grade 6 pupils. However, an early promotional brochure for the program noted that “science is only a small part of

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124 Ibid., 14-15.
126 Ibid.
what the children learn." Recreational activities took place in the evening, and included stories and games. But, recreation was not a main focus of the early program, and in the sample schedule provided in an early 1960s promotional guide, no recreation activities appear, although it does not include the after-dinner period. This began to change by the end of School’s first decade.

In a 1970 report on outdoor education in Metropolitan Toronto, Gins Doolittle noted about the Island School that

> While science has provided a basis for organizing the overall programme, new emphases are being explored and introduced into the programme as conditions change and new environmental concerns are expressed. Life-time sports such as rifle-shooting, bait-casting and archery and outdoor oriented activities are being given a greater share of available time in the program.

The incorporation of these life-long recreative skills in to the program is reflective of changes being made at the provincial level in the physical education curriculum.

By the late 1960s, outdoor education had begun to reach many Metro Toronto students, and the trend towards inclusion of recreational skills in outdoor education programs was apparent across the city. The 1970 report on outdoor education in Metropolitan Toronto identified the preparation of students for the use of increasing leisure time as one of six basic objectives of outdoor education. The 1971 Outdoor Education Policy Statement of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board also identified the development of recreational skills as one of six broad aims of outdoor education:

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129 The Board of Education for the City of Toronto, *The Island School* ([Toronto: The Board, 196?]), n.p.
130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
133 Ibid., 153.
“[t]he tensions of an urban technological society and the increase in leisure time over that enjoyed in previous years, give rise to a real need for recreational skills.” This statement clearly reflects a modernizing antimodernism justification for these programs.

The early 1970s outdoor education policy statement of the Toronto Board of Education is perhaps most telling in how the concept of education for the productive use of leisure time was used as a justification for outdoor education. The framers of the policy argued that:

In the near future, when pupils leave school to get jobs, the working week will probably be thirty-five hours or less. Holidays will be longer. Some are even predicting that in the future the majority of people will not have to work at all. Leisure will not always be a sought-after pleasure. For many, it will become a problem. ‘What can we do with our time?’ will become a big question.

This problem was not limited to the outdoors, but they suggested that

If we connect this coming problem of leisure time with the present problem of decreasing environmental quality, we can see the need for educating people in using the out-of-doors wisely. During the pupils’ stay at the Outdoor Schools, we hope to develop some forms of recreation that are unique to the natural setting.

Clearly, educators were justifying outdoor education in part with the perceived problem of leisure time. And, in doing so, they were making many of the same

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135 “We Call it Outdoor Education,” 4, included at Appendix A in M.K. MacDonald et.al to Chairman and Members of the Management Committee from the Office of the Director of Education, January 7, 1971, 4, TBE-School-Elementary-Boyne River Natural Science School, Vertical File, TDSB Archives.

136 Ibid.
arguments being made in provincial educational documents and by the Youth and Recreation Branch.

These objectives made their way onto the ground: the use of leisure time was not just discussed, but was being taught in outdoor education centres. In the 1970 Metropolitan Toronto School Board outdoor education report, Doolittle divides the activities of the students at the centres into nine categories, four of which I categorize as recreation/leisure education, including engaging in physical activity (e.g., climbing a tree), engaging in sports (e.g., archery or canoeing), engaging in competitive/challenging activities (e.g., cliff climbing with a rope), and recreation (e.g., playing in the snow). Another 1970 publication, the Ontario Teachers’ Federation’s *Outdoor Education Manual*, noted that “[t]he importance of educating for the productive use of leisure time is being reflected increasingly in Outdoor Education.”

Given this new emphasis on leisure education in outdoor education, it is not surprising that when the TBE opened its second outdoor education centre, the Boyne River Natural Science School in 1973, it had a much greater focus on recreation than did the Island School. A 1982 brochure promoting the Boyne listed several recreational activities that were taught on site, including cross-country skiing, ropes challenge course, archery, wood carving and macramé.

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139 “The Boyne River Natural Science School,” [1982], TBE-Schools-Elem., Boyne River Natural Science School, Vertical File, TDSB Archives and Toronto Board of Education, “Fact Sheet 10:
By the mid-1970s, most schools in Metro Toronto saw residential outdoor education experiences “as a vital part of the total school program.”\(^{140}\) Although only the Toronto Board of Education owned its own residential centres at the time, other area boards of Metro were working towards acquiring their own.\(^{141}\) For example, in 1976, the North York Board of Education purchased 86 acres with the intent of building a field centre like the TBE’s Boyne River.\(^{142}\)

Outdoor education activities run by the school boards were not limited to residential experiences at their field centres. Some students attended outdoor education day centres, both during the school year and in the summer time. For example, the High Park School for Outdoor Education and the Sprucecourt Outdoor Education Program operated as joint-ventures between the TBE and the City of Toronto Parks and Recreation Department, as day camps focusing on natural science and recreation education.\(^{143}\) Beginning in 1968, the High Park program was to serve those “Grade six pupils who did not get the opportunity to attend the Island Natural Science School during the year.”\(^{144}\)

Teachers were also welcome to take students on outdoor education trips focusing on recreation. By 1982, the Physical and Health Education department of

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\(^{141}\) Ibid., 8.

\(^{142}\) Ibid.

\(^{143}\) Toronto Board of Education, “Fact Sheet 10: Environmental and Outdoor Education.”

\(^{144}\) Ivan B. Forrest and Graham M. Gore, “Report to the Joint Committee to Establish Shared Use Area - Toronto Board of Education Trustees and Members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation RE: High Park Forest School,” April 16, 1968, TBE-Schools-Elementary-High Park Outdoor School, Vertical File, TDSB Archives
the TBE had made available guideline materials on physical activities in the natural environment including snowshoeing, alpine and cross-country skiing, orienteering, canoeing, cycling, skating, camping, Vita par cours, and swimming. Schools could borrow the equipment for many of these activities from the Board, including cross-country skis, snowshoes, orienteering kits, canoes, bicycling helmets, and lifejackets.

Throughout Metropolitan Toronto, students were taking part in outdoor education activities that including education for the productive use of leisure time. The board-run programs, including the Toronto Board of Education’s Island Natural Science School, incorporated life-long recreation skills in their curriculum, reflecting a provincial trend of their inclusion in the physical education curriculum. However, the programs run by the MTRCA had a much greater focus on leisure than did the board-run programs.

**Conservation Authority Field Centres**

In addition to the school boards of Metropolitan Toronto, the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) operated outdoor education centres for Toronto students. Unlike the school boards, the MTRCA was committed, as an

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146 Ibid., 5-6.
organization, towards conservation and recreation. These commitments shaped its outdoor education programs.\textsuperscript{147}

The first conservation authority field centre operated by the MTRCA was the Albion Hills Conservation School, opened in 1963. It grew out of a ten-year experiment in which teachers from York Memorial Collegiate Institute, in the former City of York, with the cooperation of the Humber Valley Conservation Authority, took their Grade nine students camping for three days each year.\textsuperscript{148} The focus of the program was on conservation and resource-use education, but the growth in leisure time was one of the reasons why the program was developed.\textsuperscript{149}

A 1963 guide to the Albion Hills Conservation School outlines its programs and facilities. Recreation is one of the seven elements of the program, with the other six relating to either conservation or natural science.\textsuperscript{150} The recreational aspects of the program were there in order to

enable the adolescent to acquire not only a deeper understanding of the meaning of leisure, but also to discover a broader scope of attractive and satisfying activities for his leisure time. It will indicate to him new ways for retaining his mental and physical vigour after he has reached adulthood.\textsuperscript{151}

The belief that children had to learn how to use their leisure time appropriately was evident in this statement.

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\textsuperscript{147} Metropolitan Toronto Board of Education, \textit{The Outdoor Education Committee’s report of Fall 1975 to the Advisory Council of Directors}, unpublished report, 4, included as Appendix C in Scarborough Board of Education, \textit{Outdoor Education Report}, 1977, Local History Reference Collection, Cederbrae Branch, Toronto Public Library.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 5-6.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 15.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 8.
\end{flushleft}
This understanding of leisure was not to stop at the learning of recreational skills, but would continue towards an understanding of the relationship between recreational facilities and conservation programs.\textsuperscript{152} An example given in the program guide deals with water: “the study of water management including pollution is incomplete without some reference to swimming, fishing, boating. The study of flood plain land acquisition is incomplete without some reference to hiking and to learning as a leisure time activity.”\textsuperscript{153}

Leisure education was deeply embedded in the conservation authorities’ mission, something which would be made clear to students on their visit. Students were expected to understand their recreational interests and needs in both their historic and modern settings, and in relation to what the MTRCA could offer them.\textsuperscript{154} While at the Conservation School, students were encouraged to spend as much time as possible outdoors in both organized and unorganized play.\textsuperscript{155} Throughout their stay, students would learn that there were four wise uses of leisure time: self-improvement, physical and mental health, fun, and pleasure.\textsuperscript{156} Self-improvement was an important aspect of the human capital theory that informed the expanding educational state in this era.

Much like in outdoor education programs operated by the school boards of Metropolitan Toronto, the programs offered at the MTRCA field centres placed a...
great deal of importance on leisure education. This focus continued into the 1970s, as the MTRCA continued to redefine its mission. This aspect of the program was justified using similar rhetoric to that informing the province’s recreation programs and leisure education curricula. Including education for the productive use of leisure time was part of a wider trend in Ontario.

By the late 1960s, the provincial government was showing interest in outdoor education programs in the province. In 1968, the Department of Education appointed Jack G. Davis as an assistant superintendent of curriculum in out-of-school education. That same year, the Curriculum Section of the Department hosted a science course for teachers at the Albion Hills Conservation School, taught by Ontario experts and two visiting wardens from the United Kingdom’s Field Studies Council. As outdoor education programs developed at the local level reflecting aims of the province, the provincial government began to take notice and offer support.

**Conclusion**

The years following World War II was a time of rapid change in Ontario. Growing use of automation in the workplace and greater affluence of residents created what some perceived to be a coming crisis in leisure time. The provincial government sought to

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159 Ibid.
avert this perceived crisis by teaching residents, adults and children alike, how to productively use their leisure time. In doing so, the government helped create a space for residential outdoor education programs developed at the local level. The provincial government’s support of summer camps had made the residential component palatable. The support of recreation activities had made their inclusion in the programs almost unquestioned. And the incorporation of leisure education and recreational skills into the formal curriculum made it easy for school boards to justify their inclusion in their outdoor education programs.

At the same time, education for the productive use of leisure time was also an aspect of democratic citizenship education, the overarching educational paradigm for much of the second half of the twentieth century. At Toronto’s outdoor education centres, leisure education reflected the modernizing antimodernism project that Ontario’s educators sought to promote in many areas. In that sense, leisure education was possible because of the greater overarching themes of education in postwar Ontario.

The two types of programs that served the public school students of Metropolitan Toronto, those run by the school boards and those run by the MTRCA, were informed by the movement for education for the productive use of leisure time. This movement was used to justify programs, and, in turn, these programs were shaped to include leisure education.
Chapter 3
Exploding the “Idyllic Myth”: 
Educat ing for the Environment in Toronto’s Outdoor Education 
Centres

In the ground-breaking for the Albion Hills Conservation School, minister of 
education William G. Davis argued that “[t]he idyllic myth that Canada is a land of 
limitless dark green forests, a land of clear lakes, streams and waterfalls waiting to 
be harnessed, a land of unbounding [sic] deeply-seated mineral treasures and a land 
which Nature has endowed with a profusion of animal life must be exploded.”¹

One of the elements of outdoor education as identified by outdoor education 
scholars is advocacy, that is, education for the environment.² When the Toronto 
outdoor education centres were developed, both the board-run and conservation 
authority-run programs involved a significant amount of conservation education. 
Later on, the advocacy elements of these programs began to take a wider view of 
educating for the environment, and included programs in energy conservation and 
pollution.

In this chapter I will explore the role of education for the environment in the 
residential outdoor education programs that served Toronto students. I will argue

¹ William G. Davis, “Address given by the Honourable William G. Davis, Minister of Education, at the 
Ground-Breaking Ceremony for Albion Hills Conservation School, Wed., Nov. 21, 1962,” in Albion 
Hills Conservation Authority: Its Programme and Facilities, by Blanche E. Snell (Woodbridge, ON: 
The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, 1965), vi.
² See, for example, Phyllis M. Ford, Principles and Practices of Outdoor/Environmental Education 
(Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1981); Camille Bunting, Interdisciplinary Teaching Through Outdoor 
Education (Windsor, ON: Human Kinetics, 2006); and Donald R. Hammerman, William M. 
Hammerman, and Elizabeth L. Hammerman, Teaching in the Outdoors, 5th ed. (Danville, Ill.: 
that, much like the other two major justifications of outdoor education discussed in this thesis, education for democratic living and education for leisure, education for the environment can be understood as an aspect of democratic citizenship education. It was also an element shaped by the modernizing antimodernism paradigm that informed these programs. In doing so, I will also argue that education for the environment was a major justification for the development of outdoor education centres by both school boards and the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

In order to make these arguments, I will first explore the connections between environmental education and citizenship education. I will then discuss how Toronto’s residential outdoor education programs were in part justified by conservation education in the period from 1950 to 1970. Following that, I will demonstrate that as the environmental culture grew to include the activist environmental movement in the late 1960s, so did outdoor education become more activist in orientation and more focused on current environmental issues.

Citizenship

Much like the other two themes of outdoor education in Toronto, education for democratic living and education for leisure, education for the environment can be understood as an aspect of democratic citizenship education. George S. Tomkins argues that “the school can only be understood in relation to the other educative
institutions and to society itself.” Sally Gregory Kohlstedt makes a similar argument, suggesting that educational movements are only possible if they “resonat[e] with other social, intellectual, and cultural currents” of the times.

The period following World War II was a time of massive societal change. One aspect of this change was the rise of what environmental historian Samuel P. Hays calls an environmental culture. Environmental culture is much broader than the environmental movement, which is only “a set of social and political organizations which seek to use government to advance their environmental objectives.” In the postwar period, environmental affairs began to “pervade almost every part of society: science, law, education, economic enterprise, the media, homes, daily living, and leisure and recreation.” The publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* in 1962 coalesced this growing interest in environmental affairs into a recognizable environmental culture. Hays argues that “one of the most compelling ingredients of environmental culture” is an interest in acquiring knowledge and thinking about environmental issues, and suggests that the popularity of

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7 Ibid.
environmental education programs in postwar North America is one piece of evidence of increasing interest in the environment.\(^8\)

Although Hays focuses on the history of environmental concern in America, historians have argued that a similar process took place in Canada. In New Brunswick, for example, Mark J. McLaughlin argues that “the debates about the merits of the spruce budworm spraying program in the 1950s and 1960s helped fuel the growth of environmental consciousness.”\(^9\) “Ultimately,” he argues, “two decades of opposition to the spraying program in New Brunswick helped fuel the development of environmental consciousness and a political voice for environmental issues in the province.”\(^10\)

Ontario was also developing an environmental culture at this time. Historians have identified outdoor recreation as an important aspect of this process in Ontario. In his history of Ontario’s provincial parks, Gerald Killan argues that “[d]uring the 1950s, the postwar outdoor recreation boom helped to shape, and in turn was sustained by, new attitudes toward the environment. Those who took part in the great rush to get outdoors began to view natural areas differently from their utilitarian forebears.”\(^11\)

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\(^10\) Ibid., 20.

Alan F.J. Artibise and Gilbert A. Stelter argue that by 1961 these new attitudes towards the environment coalesced in the “Resources for Tomorrow” conference, which indicated the beginning of a new conservation movement in Canada.\textsuperscript{12} Killan argues that during the 1960s, Ontarians became aware that “their province was not immune to the problems plaguing many other parts of the world.”\textsuperscript{13} Jennifer Read agrees with this assessment, arguing that environmental values appeared in the province during the debates surrounding detergent pollution in the Great Lakes in the mid-1960s.\textsuperscript{14}

The mid-twentieth century adoption of an environmental culture by Ontarians was not the first time that environmental thinking had been known in Ontario. The earliest environmental movement had begun in the 1880s: Bruce W. Hodgins, Jamie Benidickson and Peter Gillis argue that “[c]onservation itself came of age in Canada with the meeting of the second Congress of the American Forestry Association in Montreal in 1882.”\textsuperscript{15} This early conservationism was shaped by two different, yet

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\textsuperscript{13} Killan, \textit{Protected Places}, 161.
\textsuperscript{14} Jennifer Read, “‘Let us heed the voice of youth’: Laundry Detergents, Phosphates and the Emergence of the Environmental Movement in Ontario,” \textit{Journal of the Canadian Historical Association} 7, no.1 (1996).
\textsuperscript{15} Bruce W. Hodgins, Jamie Benidickson, and Peter Gillis, “The Ontario and Quebec Experiments in Forest Reserves, 1883-1930,” \textit{Journal of Forest History} 26, no.1 (1982), 22.
\texttt{http://www.jstor.org/stable/4004566}.
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overlapping, strands of thought. George Altmeyer identifies these strands as the ‘doctrine of utilization’ and the ‘doctrine of unselfishness’.¹⁶

Those who subscribed to the doctrine of utilization, also called the ‘gospel of efficiency,’ were ‘conservationists’. As Killan defines this group, they “emphasized matters of utility and profit, together with the judicious and scientific management of natural resources to prevent depletion and destruction.”¹⁷ While conservationism is an economic ideology, those who subscribed to the doctrine of unselfishness based their environmental concern in a moral framework. Preservationists’ beliefs “rested on the idea that Nature itself should be protected.”¹⁸ They “sought to protect scenic and wildlife resources for aesthetic reasons and deemed it a moral responsibility to preserve natural areas for future generations.”¹⁹

Preservationists were one of three groups that Peter Gillis and Thomas R. Roach identify as making up the late-nineteenth century conservation movement in Canada.²⁰ However, they were “eventually repelled by the practical, utilitarian nature” of the other two groups: the scientific farmers who sought practical and efficient resource management and the profit-driven lumbermen.²¹ So, for much of

²¹ Ibid.
the early conservation movement, from about 1880 through to the 1960s, the utilitarian conservationists dominated the discussion.

The utilitarian conservation movement, however, did not remain static over time. Early Canadian resource policy was shaped by what R.C. Brown calls the “Doctrine of Usefulness,” which was similar to the above mentioned doctrine of utilization and gospel of efficiency. Brown argues that the earliest national parks in the country, particularly Banff in present-day Alberta, were established in the 1880s within the general resource policy of Macdonald’s National Policy, and that their usefulness had to do with exploiting their natural resources. The land was put aside and protected from development in order that the resources on and under it could be more easily exploited.

Twenty years later conservation had taken a turn towards resource perpetuation. Artibise and Stelter argue that conservation planning was “born” in Canada at the first Canadian Forestry Convention in 1906, and began on an organized basis in 1909 with the establishment of the Commission on Conservation. This policy usurped the doctrine of usefulness as the reigning resource policy in the country, and instead, according to Michel F. Girard, worked “to provide Canadian industries, farmers, loggers, fishermen and provincial officials with

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new tools to better husband resources.” However, the Commission was short-lived: it was dissolved in 1921 because, argues Girard, following WWI, “reform and scientific research to achieve conservation were no longer acceptable objectives to the government and business class. Instead, science and research were increasingly regarded as instruments to provide fast and unlimited growth and escape from arduous times.” The next 40 years saw very little wide-scale conservation planning.

However, preservationist voices were heard throughout this time. Alan MacEachern, a scholar of the history of Canadian national parks, argues that although the “Doctrine of Usefulness” reigned, preservationist impulses existed in Canada at the time of the founding of the first national parks and influenced that process. However, other historians have argued that preservationists did not play a leading role in Ontario environmental politics until the founding of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (FON) in 1931.

Conservationism and preservationism both have antimodernist elements. Environmental historian Tina Loo has argued that early twentieth-century Canadian

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25 Ibid., 20.
wildlife conservation created a “paradise for sportsmen” which was a modern wilderness, a “product of rational planning and marketing,” while simultaneously representing an antimodern dissatisfaction with modern urban life.\textsuperscript{29} She argues that “[i]n a sense, conservation, and wildlife management in particular, was about creating a landscape of nostalgia, born of the disruptive experience of modernity.”\textsuperscript{30} Preservationism, by nature, is nostalgic. The act of desiring to freeze a particular landscape in time suggests that the desirer understands that landscape to be representative of a timeless space that needs to be protected from the possible changes that may be brought to it by modernity.

Environmental impulses continued from their earliest organized articulations in the late-nineteenth century through to the mid-twentieth century. It was not until the stability and prosperity of the years following World War II, however, that the population as a whole gained an awareness and understanding of environmental issues. Drawing on Hays’ conception of environmental culture, I will explore how increased interest in the environment shaped residential outdoor education programs in a localized setting. Doing so will allow me to show how deeply environmental culture penetrated education in Toronto in the period following the Second World War until the early 1990s. It will also allow me to demonstrate how the adoption of an environmental culture by North Americans in this period allowed for

\textsuperscript{30} Loo, “Making a Modern Wilderness,” 109.
the rise of residential outdoor education programs in Toronto, and influenced their curriculum.

Scholars of outdoor education, many of whom are American, have long noted the connection between an increasing environmental awareness at the societal level and the expansion of outdoor education programs. George W. Donaldson and Alan D. Donaldson argue that in the 1960s both the quantity and the quality of outdoor education programs grew because of a greater awareness of ecology. Mark J. McLaughlin argues that the rise of ecology in the 1950s-1970s helped create an environmental consciousness in North America because it “quantified effectively the environmental impacts of human activity, [and thus] provided a useful framework through which scientists and the general public could better understand post-war environmental changes.” Phyllis Ford agrees with the Donaldson brothers, but goes further, suggesting that in this process outdoor education “became a change agent for attitudes and values.”

In Toronto, educators and education bureaucrats hoped that this would be the case when advocating outdoor conservation education. They did so by relating the adoption of conservation principals to good citizenship. For example, the Select Committee on Conservation, which reported to the Ontario Legislature in 1950,

argued that one of the objectives in Ontario education must be that “[e]very child should grow up with a lively awareness of our natural resources, their value and their relation to ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.’ The attitude that our soil, water and wood resources ‘just happen to be here,’ or can be taken for granted, is an attitude not compatible with good citizenship.” More explicitly, the Committee argued that “[n]o doubt school curricula are already crowded with important subjects, but the future welfare of society depends so much on Conservation that it must receive more attention than at present. Apart from its economic importance, conservation, properly taught, will contribute to the building of character and good citizenship.” Others followed suit.

In a pamphlet published around 1957 as part of a series on Canadian education, Kenneth F. Prueter argued that

Conservation is a way of life. Many of the obligations of citizenship are synonymous with those implied by the term ‘conservation’. It follows that the aims of a conservation programme cannot be attained unless conservation teaching is integrated with the existing courses of study; it should be a spirit pervading the present courses rather than a new subject of instruction.

At the ground breaking for the Albion Hills Conservation School, William Davis hoped for the school’s “influence [to] spread so that young pupils will enjoy a love for the out-of-doors, establish lasting friendships, gain new knowledge, and learn through conservation to become responsible citizens and respect and love their

34 [Ontario, Select Committee on Conservation,] Report to the Ontario Legislature from the Select Committee on Conservation (Toronto: Baptist Johnson, 1950), 155.
35 Ibid., 160.
country. Not only were there connections between conservation education and citizenship, but it was believed that conservation education could actually result in the development of good citizens.

Citizenship education became more activist in orientation over the course of the 1970s and 1980s. Ken Osborne includes environmental education under the umbrella of citizenship education, something which Max van Manen and Jim Parsons identify as happening during the same period in social studies. Outdoor education also became more activist in this period, and increasingly focused on current environmental problems such as pollution and energy conservation, which were widely known by the 1970s. For example, the program at the Toronto Board of Education’s Island Natural Science School began to focus on ecology around 1970.

Environmental education, an aspect of citizenship education “emerged,” according to van Manen and Parsons, “as a result of the many urgent crises man has created,” including food problems, pollution, energy shortages, nuclear

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holocaust, and world over population.\textsuperscript{41} It sought to teach students ways to work to alleviate those problems, which made it activist in nature. In Toronto, this conception of environmental education was used to justify residential outdoor education programs for urban elementary and secondary school students.

It is important to note that Toronto’s residential outdoor education programs were directed at urban students. Hays argues that the city is “one of the most promising conceptual vehicles” for addressing problems in environmental history as the rise of cities has caused changes in environmental circumstances and because “organized environmental action as well as favorable environmental opinion is stronger in the city than in the countryside.”\textsuperscript{42} One of the aspects of the massive social change that affected Ontario in the postwar period was increased urbanization. This urbanization was an important factor in the rise of Toronto’s outdoor education programs in multiple ways. In the previous chapter, I discussed how antimodernism with a distinct anti-urban bias played a role promoting residential outdoor education.

**Conservation Education to 1970**

In 1950 the Select Committee on Conservation, which had been appointed two years earlier to investigate conservation issues in the province, reported to the Ontario Legislature. In the preface to their report, the committee members stated that

This Committee has been deeply impressed by the importance of the issues and problems which appeared in its study of all aspects of conservation in

\textsuperscript{41} Max van Manen and Jim Parsons, “What are the Social Studies?,” 7.

\textsuperscript{42} Hays, “The Role of Urbanization in Environmental History,” 70.
Ontario. It was most gratifying to find that great interest in these matters is stirring in all walks of life. Wherever the Committee went throughout Ontario there were citizens and organized groups eager to be of assistance. The public response to the challenge of conservation bodes well for the success of a program which may be initiated at this time.\textsuperscript{43}

As early as 1950, then, an environmental culture concerned with conservation was beginning to take hold in Ontario. This marked the beginning of the push for conservation education in Ontario schools, and was a decade before the opening of first residential outdoor education program in Canada, the Toronto Island Natural Science School.

In the pre-war period, elementary school students were exposed to the environment through nature study courses. Nature study was a major educational movement in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century which sought to teach natural history to both urban and rural children. Ontario adopted a nature study curriculum in 1904,\textsuperscript{44} and from about 1900-1935, nature study was a required subject in most Canadian schools.\textsuperscript{45}

In her book on the history of the turn of the twentieth-century nature study movement, Sally Gregory Kohlstedt argues that, much like environmental education in the postwar era, “nature study was intimately related to the social outlook and political activism that undergrid a broad interest in the natural environment and generated conservationist and preservationist activities in the early decades of the

\textsuperscript{43} Ontario, \textit{Report to the Ontario Legislature from the Select Committee on Conservation}, x.
\textsuperscript{44} John Dearnness, \textit{The Nature Study Course with Suggestions for Teaching It Based on Notes of Lectures for Teachers-in-Training} (Toronto: The Copp Clark Company, 1905), 36.
twentieth century.”⁴⁶ Kevin C. Armitage, the author of another recent book on the nature study movement, also sees this connection, and argues that nature study was connected to the early-twentieth century conservation movement.⁴⁷

Conservation education began to emerge in North America in the 1920s and 1930s. It differed from nature study most notably in its activist orientation: students were expected to learn conservation practices and adopt attitudes supporting conservation programs. Armitage suggests that in the United States this was in order to create well-trained workers to staff governmental land management agencies, and thus it focused on technical skills more than nature study had.⁴⁸ I would like to demonstrate how the conservation movement influenced the programs at Toronto’s outdoor education centres. Conservation education grew out of the conservation movement, which, Hays argues, is “quite dissimilar” from the later environmental movement.⁴⁹ He argues that the first is part of the history of production, while the second is part of the history of consumption.⁵⁰ The point of transition from conservation to environmentalism “had been reached by the late 1950s as outdoor

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⁴⁶ Kohlstedt, *Teaching Children Science*, 228.
⁴⁸ Ibid., 204.
⁵⁰ Ibid.
recreation sustained a new emphasis on natural resources as environments rather than commodities.\textsuperscript{51}

This process happened in Canada as well. Killan argues that “[d]uring the 1950s, the postwar outdoor recreation boom helped to shape, and in turn was sustained by, new attitudes toward the environment. Those who took part in the great rush to get outdoors began to view natural areas differently from their utilitarian forebears.”\textsuperscript{52} By the early 1960s these new attitudes began to affect park policy. Kevin McNamee argues that the 1963 formation of the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (now the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society) “marked the beginning of a policy shift away from the recreational value of national park lands to their ecological value.”\textsuperscript{53} A similar Ontario-based group, the Algonquin Wildlands League, which had the mission of protecting the wilderness values of Ontario parks, was formed in the June of 1968, and had 1,200 members within 18 months.\textsuperscript{54}

The first residential outdoor education centres to serve Toronto students, however, were founded prior to this transition from conservationism to environmentalism. The early rhetoric surrounding the first residential outdoor education programs in Toronto, the Island Natural Science School and Albion Hills Conservation School, was ensonced in the language of production. The Select


\textsuperscript{52} Killan, \textit{Protected Places}, 160.


Committee on Conservation’s 1950 report, for example, was couched in the language of conserving natural resources for their economic importance. The committee members recommended that

The myth that Canada is a land of unlimited and inexhaustible resources must be exploded. For this great illusion politicians are probably even more responsible than school-teachers. We know better now and the people, both young and old, must be given the truth. It is indeed true that Canada, with its resources, is among the most fortunate countries, and Ontario is one of the most richly endowed provinces. It is also true, however, that most of our resources can speedily be dissipated unless wisely used and protected. They are not unlimited; they are not inexhaustible.\(^{55}\)

They also suggested that if students learn “the basic principles of conservation as revealed by modern science and modern farming,” they would come to understand how “man can gain more by co-operation with nature than by waste or destruction.”\(^{56}\) This form of conservation is a direct descendent of the gospel of efficiency and conservation planning of the early-twentieth century.

Students attending the Albion Hills Conservation School in its early years were expected to learn the economic returns of forests, among other things.\(^{57}\) Blanche Snell, one of the founders of the Conservation School and the author of its initial program document, raised the question: “[f]or the adolescent in Ontario what could be more suited to both his needs and those of this province than a

\(^{55}\) Ontario, Report to the Ontario Legislature from the Select Committee on Conservation, 155-6. Emphasis in original.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 156.

concentration on the conservation of our natural resources upon which so much of Canada’s economic welfare depends.\textsuperscript{58}

Conservation education was not new when the first residential outdoor education programs were developed. By the 1940s, conservation topics had begun to appear in the Ontario curriculum, including a Grade 7 science topic in the “Conservation of Fish and Forest Wealth” and in the secondary school General Science course.\textsuperscript{59} However, as Hays argues, “it was only after World War II that the environment was subject to much increasing deliberative thought, analysis and action.”\textsuperscript{60} Conservation education was also becoming more experiential. In his late-1950s study pamphlet on education and conservation in Canada, Kenneth Prueter argued that “It seems true, however, that conservation attitudes can best be developed by planning activities in which the children can take part. Seeing and doing are the keywords to any successful programme.”\textsuperscript{61} In Toronto, some individual teachers, including Mr. S.G. Hambly, took small groups of students on field trips “to teach natural science and conservation to selected pupils by actual field practice.”\textsuperscript{62}

The path out of this early era of conservation education and towards the new experiential conservation education programs was laid by the Select Committee on Conservation in 1950. The members of the Select Committee on Conservation, after

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{60} Hays, “The Role of Urbanization in Environmental History,” 85.
\textsuperscript{61} Prueter, \textit{Study Pamphlets in Canadian Education No. 3: Education and Conservation}, 2.
outlining their conservation program for the province, argued that “[i]f a long-range conservation program in Ontario is to succeed, education must play an active and important part,” because “[i]f every trustee, every teacher and every child in school became an ardent conservationist, the program cannot fail.”

As Robert Stamp argues, this belief in the power of education in solving public problems is to be expected, as “[s]ince its origins in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, public education had been expected to buttress the accepted political, religious, and economic norms.” So, it is unsurprising that in an era of a rising environmental culture and increasing concern over conservation, educators and educational bureaucrats would work to develop programs that sought to teach students conservation principles and encourage them to adopt environmentally-friendly attitudes. In the rest of this section, I will explore how the Toronto Board of Education and the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authorities took up this belief in the power of education and used it to justify and shape their residential outdoor education programs.

**Conservation Education in the Toronto Board of Education**

Teachers in the Toronto Board of Education began to experiment with experiential conservation education in 1949. In his report on the experimental and newer aspects of school work for that year, C.C. Goldring, the director of education for the Toronto Board, noted that Mr. S.G. Hambly, the Grade 7/8 teacher at Runnymede Public

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School, was “conducting an experiment in interesting pupils in conservation.” In this experiment, “a dozen or more boys” visited Hambly’s property north of Weston several times to study soil conservation methods and to do some gardening with the purpose of teaching natural science and soil conservation to select pupils by actual field practice. Goldring notes that “Mr. Hambly’s attempt to take teaching of science out of the classroom is unique in the Toronto area, and very commendable. He has the support of his principal and of pupils’ parents. A representative of the Provincial Department of Planning and Conservation has commended the scheme.”

The following autumn the Conservation Committee of the Toronto Public Schools was formed with 13 members, two of whom were women. The committee members were tasked with raising awareness of the importance of conservation education among the board’s teachers. It seems as though they were up to the task, as in the spring of 1951 eight Toronto schools planned on participating in a trip to the rural schools of Essa Township: “It is expected that this excursion will include a visit to one or two model farms, a tree seed extraction plan[t?], and the Forestry Station at Midhurst. Topographic maps of the route will be studied and modified copies prepared for use en route. It is hoped that the pupils will acquire first-hand knowledge of both conservation and map using.” As well, that fall, 63 conservation

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66 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid., 30.
tours were taken by senior students in Toronto public schools in cooperation with the Department of Planning and Development.\textsuperscript{70} Of course, the Board’s largest experiment in experiential conservation education was yet to happen.

In 1956 a delegation from the TBE visited the outdoor education program at the Mill Lake School operated by Michigan’s Dearborn Board of Education. That program was partially based on conservation, and had a section designated as ‘conservation studies’ and the local conservation warden visited the camp once a week to aid in the study.\textsuperscript{71} When the delegation prepared its proposal for a residential outdoor education program for Toronto students, the members incorporated conservation education.

The delegation’s proposed program for Toronto, as outlined in the 1956 “Outdoor Education: A Brief,” included forest, wildlife, and fish management, as well as soil conservation and fire prevention (See Appendix B).\textsuperscript{72} The delegation also identified conservation more explicitly under the heading of ‘outdoor educational activities,’ including land use problems, soil, and pollution in this category.\textsuperscript{73}

This proposal was one of the first steps in the creation of the Island Natural Science School program, which opened in 1960. Students who attended the school in its early years participated in conservation education activities such as tree

\textsuperscript{70} C.C. Goldring, \textit{Report on the experimental and newer aspects of school work for the year 1951} (Toronto: The Board of Education for the City of Toronto, 1952), 12.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 14.
planting to help reduce soil erosion and composting. Conservation was also one of the six activity areas that students participated in throughout the week.

Students were exposed to conservation education at the Island Natural Science School, which was in part justified by conservation principles. However, the students who attended the residential programs run by the MTRCA gained a much greater conservation education.

**Conservation Education in the MTRCA**

In 1946 the Ontario legislature passed the Conservation Authorities Act, which allowed for the establishment of Conservation Authorities in order to “facilitate coordination between municipal and provincial governments, and to promote a comprehensive approach to resource management.” Conservation Authorities, particularly the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA), played an important role in the creation and sustenance of residential outdoor education programs that served Toronto students.

Arthur Herbert Richardson argues that the conservation movement in Ontario began in the 1930s with the founding of the umbrella organizations Federation of Ontario Naturalists (FON) in 1931 and the Ontario Conservation and Reforestation

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75 The Board of Education for the City of Toronto, *The Island School*, n.p.

Association (OCRA) in 1936. These early organization were involved in conservation education. For example, OCRA ran field days and conservation tours for adults and school children for the purpose of “arousing interest in conservation.”

The establishment of conservation authorities in 1946 was part of, as Bruce Mitchel and Dan Shrubsole argue, a worldwide trend in establishing ways to address problems of water and land management. In the Toronto area, the first authorities were created immediately following the passage of the act. The Etobicoke River Conservation Authority was created in 1946, and the Don Valley and Humber Valley Conservation Authorities were created in 1948.

Although these authorities existed, they did not enjoy a great deal of public support until after Hurricane Hazel hit Toronto on October 15, 1954. The devastation caused by the storm, which included the deaths of 81 people in Ontario and the destruction of thousands of homes in the province, brought the population onside to conservation programs. Jennifer Bonnell, in her history of the Don River, argues that although “Hazel can be credited with tipping the balance toward watershed conservation in southern Ontario,” conservation had been a topic of discussion in Toronto for at least a decade. Richardson argues that Hazel brought advances in conservation, but, more importantly, it brought the public onside to the

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78 Ibid., 7.
79 Mitchel and Shrubsole, Ontario Conservation Authorities: Myth and Reality, 6.
80 Richardson, Conservation by the People, 36.
conservationists’ understanding that “flood control and water conservation are but two sides of the same coin; a river system must be dealt with as a single unit, with a coordinated plan put into effect over a number of years.”

Hazel also brought about a surge in conservation education in the Toronto Board of Education.

Mitchel and Shrubsole argue that “conservation authorities were seen as a mechanism for social and economic change.” Not only would the creation of authorities improve the rational management of natural resources and thus increase the efficiency of production, but they would also encourage the adoption of an environmental culture by the people of Ontario. This would be accomplished through various education programs.

Bill McLean argues that of all the MTRCA’s programs, “education programs have had the greatest and most lasting impact on the community.” Although not recognized as a core responsibility of conservation authorities by the province, the MTRCA saw the value of an informed public, and saw the school system “as one of the main vehicles for spreading the conservation message.” Ontario conservation authorities were involved in education from their beginnings. In the early 1950s, the Don Valley Conservation Authority created a 50 mile conservation trail in the valley which was used, for the most part, by groups of Grade 7 and 8 Toronto students.

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82 Richardson, Conservation by the People, 36.
84 Mitchel and Shrubsole, Ontario Conservation Authorities: Myth and Reality, 16.
85 Bill McLean, Paths to the Living City: The Story of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (Toronto: Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, 2004), 151.
86 Ibid.
87 Richardson, Conservation by the People, 122.
The TBE encouraged this development: these excursions were paid for jointly by the school and the board.  

When the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) was created in 1957 by the amalgamation of the Etobicoke and Mimico, the Humber Valley, the Don Valley, and the Rouge, Duffins, Highland and Petticoat Creek Conservation Authorities, it was ready to continue and improve upon their educational programs. One of these programs had been taking place since 1953 in the Humber Valley Conservation Authority.

In 1953 Blanche Snell and Catherine Scholes, two teachers from York Memorial Collegiate in the former City of York, established a school camping program for their Grade 9 students in association with the Humber Valley Conservation Authority. The program took place for three days in May, with Grade 13 students and teachers acting as counsellors. While camping in the Humber Valley, the students learned about natural science, history, English composition, math, health, rural living, group cooperation, and conservation.

The program was popular and supported by the students’ parents, so a year after the creation of the MTRCA, the authority decided to authorize the establishment of a permanent conservation camp school facility at Albion Hills. However, difficulty

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89 Richardson, *Conservation by the People*, 128-9.
91 Richardson, *Conservation by the People*, 129 and McLean, *Paths to the Living City*, 155
in financing the facility resulted in the ground-breaking being delayed until 1962.92 A year later, in 1963, the Albion Hills Conservation School, which would be renamed the Albion Hills Field Centre in 1970, opened to a very receptive public: Bill McLean notes that “[f]illing the school with students proved to be no problem.”

The provincial government took a special interest in the conservation school. Beginning in 1963, representatives of the Department of Education served on a committee interested in the school’s work.93 More importantly, then education minister William G. Davis spoke at the ground-breaking ceremony. He couched his address in the language of production and rational management of resources which had defined the conservation movement in Ontario up to this point.94 He defined conservation as “the wise and intelligent use of our natural resources – soil, water, minerals and wildlife.”95 He argued that since the people of Ontario were “rapidly learning” that natural resources were not unlimited and inexhaustible, “[o]ur children will have to realize the importance of conservation.”96 In order to be prepared to meet the challenges of the future, children needed to be acquainted with the spaces of the past.

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92 McLean, Paths to the Living City, 155.
94 Killan, Protected Places, 376 and Read, “‘Let us heed the voice of youth’,” 228. Although preservationist voices concerned with the protection of natural areas had been heard in Ontario environmental politics since the late 1800s, and were amplified in the 1930s, it was not until the 1960s that these voices began to exert significant influence in Ontario environmental politics.
96 Ibid., vi.
An important mission of the conservation school was to create democratic citizens, a mission which Davis also supported. The goal of creating democratic citizens could be achieved by many routes, including through conservation education. As discussed earlier, Davis argued that by attending the conservation school, “young pupils will enjoy a love for the out-of-doors, establish lasting friendships, gain new knowledge, and learn through conservation to become responsible citizens and respect and love their country.”

Unlike the Island Natural Science School, which was directed at Grade 6 students, the Albion Hills Conservation School’s program was designed to serve secondary school students. Throughout the 1960s, two classes, usually of Grade 9 and 10 students, attended the conservation school each week of the school year. The program focused on resource-use education and conservation, integrated the regular school subjects of general science, geography and history or social studies.

Albion Hills was justified by the belief earlier expressed by the Select Committee on Conservation that the success of conservation programs depends on public attitudes, so there is a need to educate the public to care about conservation. The early program of the school was shaped around this belief. The goals of the program included, under “Knowledge and Understanding”: “How the

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97 Ibid., vii.
100 Ibid., 7.
conservation of the natural resources of Metropolitan Toronto Region is being encouraged through public and private programmes,” and, under ‘Attitudes’: “A personal concern for the care of our natural resources.”\textsuperscript{101} The course was arranged around seven core elements, six of which were related to conservation: Albion Environment, Forest Conservation, Soil and Agriculture, Water Conservation, Weather, and Wildlife and Fisheries.\textsuperscript{102}

During this time, the conservation ethic espoused by the program was related to production-based conservation goals, justified by economic gain. For example, under the ‘Albion Environment,’ students were expected to learn about the economic development of the area, including the impact of conservation works on the economy and, conversely, the economy on the environment.\textsuperscript{103} Under ‘Forest Conservation’ students were expected to learn about forest values, including recreation, conservation of soil and water, and the economic returns of the forest.\textsuperscript{104} Students were also to learn a great deal about water conservation, including the operation of flood control dams and ‘channel improvement’.\textsuperscript{105} These were economically-justified conservation principles, which became increasingly less popular as the decade progressed towards the 1970s. However, the program also sought to teach about

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 21.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 22.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 34-6.
pollution, specifically water pollution and its effects on fish and wildlife, which would be an important aspect of later programs.\textsuperscript{106}

\textbf{The Centrality of Toronto}

An important question to be addressed is why, in this era, did outdoor education programs focused on natural resource conservation arise in Metropolitan Toronto? There are, of course, many factors which make up the answer to this question. To begin with, as R.D. Gidney notes, the 1960s was an “explosive decade” in Ontario education.\textsuperscript{107} Money was flowing, and new ideas about education, including progressive education principles, were being adopted by educators and educational bureaucrats.\textsuperscript{108} The Hall-Dennis Report, which was released in 1968, advocated a shift from content to experience in education, including a recommendation that the provincial ministry of education “[c]o-operate with school boards and other agencies to provide natural science schools for outdoor education and the development of conservation principles.”\textsuperscript{109}

Perhaps more importantly, the Toronto Board of Education had the money. In Ontario, until 1998, school boards decided how much to spend on education and how much property tax to raise.\textsuperscript{110} However, as of 1998, “the provincial government

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{107} Stamp, \textit{The Schools of Ontario}, 202.
\textsuperscript{108} R.D. Gidney, \textit{From Hope to Harris: The Reshaping of Ontario’s Schools} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 32.
\textsuperscript{110} Gidney, \textit{From Hope to Harris}, 7.
assumed the power to set the amount to be raised by school boards.” Gidney argues that the Metropolitan Toronto Boards and Ottawa-Carlton Boards were the only Ontario boards that were really able to benefit from the ability to raise their own taxes, because they could raise them over the provincial grant ceiling, and so “they were able to raise money for all kinds of educational programs that poor boards could only dream of offering to their students.”

However, more interesting is the idea of the role of the city itself. Samuel P. Hays argues that the city was “the origin and sustaining force” of the environmental movement. He notes that “organized environmental action as well as favorable environmental opinion is stronger in the city than in the countryside.” In the 1960s, he suggests, interest in nature was most prevalent in urban and suburban families. Gerald Killan makes a similar point in the Ontario context, finding that the park movement in the province, which rose to the fore in the 1960s, was based in Toronto and championed by the urban elite. However, George Warecki has argued that “cities did not foster preservationists. They were mostly suburban dwellers who had some contact with nature, whether in books, backyard gardens, ravines, youth camps, or parks. The ‘crabgrass frontier’ provided a solid force of upper-middle class volunteers eager to join conservation organizations to fight for

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111 Ibid.
112 Ibid., 188-9.
113 Hays, “The Role of Urbanization in Environmental History,” 85.
114 Ibid., 70.
115 Hays, A History of Environmental Politics Since 1945, 50.
wilderness.” So, perhaps educators hoped that a short escape to allow contact with nature would entice more urban-dwellers to join the environmental movement.

Many of those who advocated conservation education in Ontario believed in the power of education to bridge the urban-rural divide. Hall and Dennis argued that “[c]ity children and teachers should learn first hand about life in rural areas, and rural children and teachers should have personal experiences of life in urban areas.”

Almost two decades earlier, the Select Committee on Conservation suggested that both urban and rural students be taught conservation principals. Finally, agricultural education in the post-war era was in part designed to allow students to gain an understanding of “the interdependence of urban and rural communities.”

Educators and educational bureaucrats in Ontario clearly recognized the need to bridge the urban-rural split.

In 1965 Mary L. Northway saw a direct connection between the rise of outdoor education and increased urbanization, and argued that “[a]s the era of the rural school ends, the new era of ‘outdoor education’ begins.”

A 1974 MTRCA project outline makes these ideas even clearer:

As more and more people sacrifice country life for city life with its concrete, noise, polluted air, overcrowding and tensions, there is an ever-increasing need for places for people to rediscover their absolute dependence on their renewable natural resources. The conservation areas program of the

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Authority presents mass opportunities for rural and urban dwellers to get a taste of a natural environment and to appreciate and understand some of its values in our lives. People do not treasure what they do not know, let alone what they do not understand. They will not protect and treat kindly what they do not appreciate. Provision must be made to foster in young and old alike an awareness of the interrelationship between land, waters, forests, air, wildlife and man. The implementation of this plan can provide the setting for a learning program which will fulfill this need.\textsuperscript{122}

This desire to bridge, but also maintain, the perceived gap between urban and rural life through education dates back to the early twentieth century. R.W. Sandwell argues that the lack of focus on the rural in Western historiography, and the associated grand narrative of a transition from rural to urban, from traditional to modern, helps explain why rural populations so often take on a particularly rigid and emblematic identity, most commonly appearing as the timeless, traditional societies that provide the baseline against which urbanization can be measured; precisely because rural is defined as being outside of the urban and industrial framework, it tends to take on a coherent discursive identity as a pre-industrial or traditional ‘other’.\textsuperscript{123} For those living in the urban centres of twentieth-century Canada, this process has caused the rural to “become a ‘psychic space,’ a reminder of the Gemeinschaft world we have lost, or a retreat from the pressures and alienation of the modern urban Gesellschaft world.”\textsuperscript{124}

\begin{footnotes}{\begin{footnotesentry}{122}{[The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority], \textit{The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Outdoor and Conservation Education Project, 1976-1980} (Downsview, ON: The Authority, 1974), 7.}\end{footnotesentry}}\begin{footnotesentry}{123}{R.W. Sandwell, “Introduction: Finding Rural British Columbia,” in \textit{Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia}, ed. R.W. Sandwell (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 5.}\end{footnotesentry}}\begin{footnotesentry}{124}{Ibid.}\end{footnotesentry}
The educational activities that have been used to bridge and maintain the perceived gap between urban and rural children, then, have been predicated on an antimodernist nostalgia for a premodern space. Raymond Williams, in *The Country and the City*, argues that it is possible to trace nostalgic images of ‘the good-old-days’ of country life back, and back, and back to time immemorial. However, in times of mass urbanization, this nostalgia becomes more pronounced and felt by a greater portion of the society, and thus these are the times when rural-based educational programs for urban students are developed.

Nature study is the premier example of this form of education. It had different focuses for rural and urban students. It connected those in cities back to the rural country, in order to overcome negative aspects of city life; in rural areas it was connected to both by “an agrarian nostalgia” and “a forward-looking determination to make agriculture more systematic and attractive.” On both fronts advocates were influenced by anti-modernism, while acknowledging the power of technological innovation – specifically a modernizing antimodernism. They wanted urban students to reconnect with nature, and wanted to encourage rural students to stay on the land.

Half a century later another urbanization movement was taking place. As noted earlier, the increasing urbanization after World War II played a role in changing environmental circumstances and attitudes in the postwar era. It also reinvigorated the public’s nostalgia for the imagined, timeless past represented by

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rural life. The outdoor education programs developed to serve Toronto’s public school students in the years following World War II were shaped by this antimodernism. This antimodernism most often took the form of modernizing antimodernism—a desire to help the students face the challenges of the future by giving them experiences in antimodern spaces and with premodern skills. However, one aspect of this antimodernism had little connection to modernization.

Both the programs designed by the Toronto Board of Education and the MTRCA had farm-life components. Those who proposed the program at the Island School hoped that a scale 100-acre farm would be built on a cleared 10-acre site just west of the school, “where all farm animals could be kept.” They suggested that “[t]he resident campers would help to maintain the farm and gain valuable experience in this routine.” ‘Farm Animals’ was a period of instruction at the school in the 1960s and 1970s. At the Albion Hills Conservation School, students could participate in agricultural activities at a nearby working farm. There, they would learn about farm management, field crops, livestock, machinery, farm operation, and farm life, including “how the city dweller can break into farming as an occupation.”

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127 “Outdoor Education: A Brief,” 15.
128 Ibid.
129 The Board of Education for the City of Toronto, The Island School, n.p and Toronto Board of Education., Island Natural Science School [Workbook], 101.
131 Ibid., 32-3.
By the late 1950s it could be “assumed that the need for conservation education ha[d] been accepted by Canadian educators.”\textsuperscript{132} Preservationist and conservationist politics had been playing a role in the country since the end of the nineteenth-century. By the late 1930s, there had been growing public concern over the destruction of natural resources in Canada.\textsuperscript{133} In the late 1940s and early 1950s, this growing public concern over the conservation of natural resources “resulted in minor curriculum changes in certain provinces.”\textsuperscript{134} By the early 1960s, residential outdoor education programs had been established for students in the Metropolitan Toronto School Board which sought to impart conservation principles and attitudes in the students. Gins Doolittle found that, overall, the programs attended by MTSB students imparted “an understanding and appreciation of our natural resources and the need for their conservation.”\textsuperscript{135} However, J.R. McNeill argues that prior to 1970, “[e]nvironmental thinking appealed to only a narrow slice of society.”\textsuperscript{136}

Although educators had accepted conservation education in the 1950s, it was not until 1970 that the value of outdoor education was “widely recognized” in Ontario, with most school boards having adopted the objective of providing every elementary student with at least one residential opportunity.\textsuperscript{137} By this time, the environmental

\textsuperscript{132} Prueter, \textit{Study Pamphlets in Canadian Education No. 3: Education and Conservation}, 1.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{137} McLean, \textit{Paths to the Living City}, 160.
culture began to shift from a focus on conservation to a focus on environmentalism. With this shift came changes in residential outdoor education programs.

**Environmental Concern in Ontario, 1970 Onward**

Starting in the late 1960s, environmental concern began to move away from conservation, although never abandoning it, to an environmentalism which focused on pollution, the harmful effects of chemicals, and global food shortages. Some of these new concerns began to be integrated into the curriculum at the outdoor education centres. In this section I will discuss the changes in environmentalism from the late 1960s onwards, and explore the effect of this renewed environmental concern on outdoor education.

In a 1978 study about the role of the mass media in cultivating environmental concern in Canada, J.W. Parlour and S. Schatzow found that until the late 1960s “the general public had little interest in, or knowledge of, environmental problems.”

Due to increased media coverage of pollution problems, most notably the eutrophication of the Great Lakes, 1970 was the first year that national polls indicated that Canadians had a high level of concern about the environment. That year the national Gallup Poll, for example, showed that 91 percent of respondents were aware of pollution. However, immediately afterwards public concern over the environment declined, and by 1972 only six percent of Canadians saw pollution as a

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139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.
major national concern. Parlour and Schatzow argue that this was because of the media was able to raise concern but not adequately educate the public, so once these issues were out of the media, they were out of mind.

However, historians have argued that environmental politics began to play an important role in Ontario in the 1970s. George Warecki argues that environmental concern in Ontario often took the form of support for wilderness conservation. Both Alan MacEachern and Gerald Killan agree, arguing that preservationist impulses became important to both national and provincial parks in Canada during this time.

Jennifer Read also documents the changing environmental attitudes in the province. She uses the controversy surrounding detergent pollution in the Great Lakes during the 1960s “to examine the shift in attitudes that marked the emergence of environmentalism,” and argues that attitudes shifted by the late 1960s from a model “distinguished by traditional business-government problem solving strategies, which rejected non-expert input despite a significant outcry from municipal governments across the province” to a model that enabled non-governmental groups

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141 Ibid.
142 Ibid.
143 Warecki, Protecting Ontario’s Wilderness, 93.
144 MacEachern, Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 16 and Killan, Protected Places, 159.
to challenge closed-door decision making processes.\textsuperscript{145} She suggests that Ontario created the Ministry of the Environment in response to these views.\textsuperscript{146}

Another major moment in Canadian environmental history was the 1969 formation of the environmental group Pollution Probe at the University of Toronto. Ryan O’Connor argues in his doctoral dissertation that Pollution Probe was pivotal in environmental discourse and activism in Toronto, and representative of first-wave Canadian Environmental NGOs, which, unlike their American counterparts which had developed over several decades, sprang onto the scene in the late 1960s and early 1970s.\textsuperscript{147} Gerald Killan argues that as the environmental movement gained speed in the 1960s, “the preservationist movement came to the fore and successfully jostled aside the utilitarian conservationists for a more prominent place in the sun.”\textsuperscript{148}

Ontario’s changing environmental culture was part of an environmental culture being adopted across the Western World in the rise of ecology and concern over air and water pollution, which Hays identifies as taking place between 1965 and 1972 in the United States.\textsuperscript{149} By the 1970s, Hays suggests, there were three new environmental impulses: resource shortages, including the energy crisis; increased

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 250.
\item \textsuperscript{148} Killan, “Ontario’s Provincial Parks and Changing Conceptions of ‘Protected Places’,” 35.
\item \textsuperscript{149} Hays, “Three Decades of Environmental Politics,” 345-6.
\end{itemize}
personal and community action; and new concerns for human health.\textsuperscript{150} McNeill suggests that by the 1970s environmentalism was beginning to appeal to a large portion of society, and identifies this era as the beginning of environmental movements in wealthy countries.\textsuperscript{151}

In 1970, F.E. LaViolette provided a suggestion of how this was taking place in Canada:

Both widespread communication and international trade have encouraged Canadians to become increasingly concerned about the quality of life on Earth. The need for a more adequate food supply and improved standards of health and welfare, as well as discussion about the excessive increases in world population, are topics on which attention and efforts are being focused. In short, Canadians are not exempt from sharing in what has come to be called ‘the ecological crisis’.\textsuperscript{152}

Clearly Canada was taking part in a global movement of increased environmental concern.

In Ontario, it is possible to see this change taking place in many areas. For example, in 1972 the Ministry of the Environment was formed out of the Ontario Water Resource Commission.\textsuperscript{153} Between 1972 and 1974 the federal and provincial governments of Canada participated in the Man and Resources Conference Programme, which was a national forum for debate over resource issues, both environmental and economic. It was well attended: “Man and Resources was an interesting and productive experiment in practical democracy,” in which nearly

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{150} Ibid., “347-51.
\item \textsuperscript{151} McNeill, \textit{Something New Under the Sun}, 349-50.
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15,000 citizens from across the country, about half of them from Ontario, took up the challenge to express their views about resources and the environment to the Federal and Provincial governments.\textsuperscript{154}

The power of education in protecting the environment became a major focus of both educators and environmentalists in this period. Kohlstedt argues that “[s]tarting in the 1970s, in the context of growing concerns about the environment and a renewed sensibility about nature itself, conservationist leaders and advocates once again sought to encourage young children to appreciate and to respond to their natural world and, equally important, to think about their role in shaping it.”\textsuperscript{155} Armitage agrees, arguing that in the United States “[e]nvironmental education surged to prominence due to the environmental activism of the 1960s and was codified by the Environmental Education Act of 1970.”\textsuperscript{156}

Outdoor education was one way in which environmental education was delivered to students. Donaldson and Donaldson argue that “[s]ince its beginnings in this country [USA], outdoor education has applied its methodology to increased understanding of and positive action on environmental problems.”\textsuperscript{157} We have already seen how this took place in the Toronto-based programs under the title of

\textsuperscript{155} Kohlstedt, \textit{Teaching Children Science}, 236.
\textsuperscript{156} Armitage, \textit{The Nature Study Movement}, 204.
\textsuperscript{157} Donaldson and Donaldson, “Outdoor Education: Its Promising Future,” 133.
conservation education in the 1960s. I will now explore what happened in the decades following the shift to environmentalism.

**Educating for the Environment in the New Era**

In a 1971 article in the *Toronto Daily Star*, Dave Scott argued that children need a basic understanding of ecology if adults wanted them to grow up to be able to make good environmental decisions.\(^{158}\) This is indicative of the position held by many educators and educational bureaucrats in Toronto and in Ontario in this period.

The Ministry of Education played a large role in encouraging environmental education in this era. For example, in 1972 the ministry released a new interim Environmental Science curriculum document for the intermediate and senior divisions. In it, the Ministry notes that “[p]ublic awareness has become sensitive to environmental concerns.”\(^{159}\) The course had four aims, the first three of which are central to any science course: (1) “to enhance the development of the student in his many dimensions”; (2) “to help the student find logical patterns in terms of which he can understand and describe his environment”; and (3) “to give students practice in various methods of investigation as well as experience with equipment and techniques currently used in specialized fields.”\(^{160}\) The fourth aim, however, speaks volumes about the new ideas about educating for the environment:

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\(^{160}\) Ibid., 1.
The fourth aim is to encourage the student to become sensitive to environmental concerns and value issues within the community. This aim is central to the course because the quality of human life during the next century, and perhaps human survival, are dependent on an understanding of our environment and a common will to make decisions for the common good. All four aims imply a personal harmony with nature.\textsuperscript{161}

This was part of a larger movement in the Ministry of Education to bring more environmental and outdoor education to the students of Ontario. In the 1970s the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Natural Resources published \textit{Land Resources for Education Outdoors}, the third edition of which appeared in 1978. In these volumes, the ministries collected information about sites available for outdoor education, which were “intended to provide information and assistance to boards of education as they evolve policies and programs in environmental studies and education outdoors.”\textsuperscript{162}

This sentiment was not limited to educators but came from many different areas in the provincial government. For example, as part of its involvement in the Man and Resources Conference Programme in 1972-1974, the Ontario government released a report addressing how it would meet the recommendations made at the conference. In regards to education, the report notes:

The need for a closer examination of better equipping the people of Ontario, adults as well as youth, to cope with the emerging environmental and resource management problems is recognized by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. An examination of environmental courses of study in our schools has been under way for some time. The Ministries of the Environment, Natural Resources, Agricultural and Food, Energy, and Ontario Hydro have developed extensive programs of

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{162} Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Education, \textit{Land Resources for Education Outdoors III} (Ontario: the Ministries, [1978]), ii.
information and education related to the environment and natural resources.\textsuperscript{163}

It is unsurprising that many ministries and agencies of the government believed in the power of education to change social values. As demonstrated in the Introduction, schools are often seen as the answer to social ills, particularly in positive economic times. The residential outdoor education programs that served Toronto students were founded during an economic and educational boom time in Ontario. It is unsurprising, then, that they were partly justified by their power to create a society more in tune with the environment, either through conservation or environmentalism.

As I have suggested earlier, outdoor environmental education can be understood as an aspect of citizenship education. By the early 1970s the rhetoric had changed and no longer reflected the economic citizenship arguments of the early conservation education era. The new environmentalism was more global in focus, as was the contemporary understanding of citizenship. Alan M. Sears, Gerald M. Clarke and Andrew S. Hughes argue that by the 1980s in Canada, citizenship education became more activist and pluralist in orientation.\textsuperscript{164} Ken Osborne argues that this activism began in the 1970s, and included environmental education.\textsuperscript{165} The new environmentalism was more activist, as was the new citizenship.

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\textsuperscript{164} Sears, Clarke, and Hughes, “Canadian Citizenship Education: The Pluralist Ideal and Citizenship Education for a Post-Modern State,” 125.
\end{flushright}
The environmental education movement was also increasingly global in focus. Around the world, people were becoming more interested in the power of education in solving environmental problems. During the 1970s, three major international agreements relating to environmental education were drawn up by members of the United Nations: the Stockholm Declaration, 1972; the Belgrade Charter, 1975; and the Tbilisi Declaration, 1977. Toronto educators were aware of these agreements. In their report on outdoor education for the 1980s in the TBE, the study group noted that Canada and the member nations of UNESCO had signed onto this goal for environmental education:

The goal of environmental education is to develop a population that is aware of, and concerned about, the environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones.  

This is quoted, save for the punctuation, verbatim from the Belgrade Charter.

Environmental Education for City Students

To understand just how dramatic and pervasive the new environmental concern had become we can look to the prefaces and introductions of various documents dealing with outdoor education in Toronto during the 1970s. Of course, these sources can only speak to the intentions of their authors, and not how they were received by teachers and students. However, the fact that the authors espoused these views in a

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variety of official documents suggests that environmental concern had become a significant factor in Ontario’s educational politics and policies during the decade.

D. Hambleton begins the preface of the 1970 *A Survey of Outdoor Education in Metropolitan Toronto: Attitudes, Activities and Facilities* with: “Environmental crisis, mercury danger, pollution and air index are some of the words which have become common household language in the last few years.”\(^{167}\) He continued by arguing that “[c]oncentrated, selfless and all-encompassing action will be required if the earth is to remain a habitable place for man as we know him.”\(^{168}\)

Larry L. Sale and Ernest W. Lee, the authors of a 1972 book called *Environmental Education in the Elementary School*, argued that most programs in conservation education focus too much on natural resources, and neglect many of the “overwhelming problems of the man-made environment,” such as pesticide use, lack of environmental planning, and pollution.\(^{169}\) They were clearly inspired by the newer environmental movement: “[t]he roots of our ecological crisis are associated with three broad but interrelated areas: overpopulation, poor conservation practices, and pollution. The major immediate problem, however, is man’s ignorance of ecological concepts and processes, his insensitivity to his environment, and his failure to act positively in relation to it.”\(^{170}\)

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\(^{168}\) Ibid., 3.


\(^{170}\) Ibid., ix.
The Ontario Teachers’ Federation’s Outdoor Education Committee was also inspired by environmental change to write its 1970 *Outdoor Education Manual*, although the language is much less alarmist. “Probably,” the authors argued, “the most pressing issue of our day is the deteriorating quality of our environment. Our children should be made aware of the fact that all of their food is derived from green plants. They should understand the delicate balance which controls all living things, and their own place in this system.”171 They argued that “[t]hese concepts are very difficult to teach to children if they are not given opportunities to observe life and growth in the outdoors.”172

Hambleton agreed that outdoor education programs were the best place to learn environmental concepts:

> While all, or mostly all, would agree that Outdoor Education activities are most pleasurable, we must pursue with some degree of urgency, strategies of Outdoor Education which will in turn lessen the extreme environmental crisis the world faces at the present time. Present programmes must be carefully scrutinized to ensure that the intended effect on students will create a heightened awareness and a knowledgeable concern for the conservation of our environment. At this point in time, we can attempt, pragmatically, to fashion objectives and programmes which will lead students to a position where they will be able to help solve the growing environmental crisis.173

Teachers were interested in teaching these concepts. In her section of the survey, in which she surveyed the attitudes of principals and teachers in the MTSB concerning outdoor education, Erica Wright found that there was growing popular concern about

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172 Ibid.,
pollution and conservation. Donald Revell made a similar finding in 1974, arguing that “the concerns of most educators over environmental deterioration” have contributed to the rise of environmental education programs.

Outdoor education programs attended by MTSB students were adapting to these changes in environmental concern. The MTSB’s 1971 Outdoor Education Policy makes clear that although conservation education was still relevant to outdoor education, new aspects of ecology were being incorporated:

Outdoor education seeks to develop in children an understanding and appreciation of their environment, both natural and man-altered, so that as adults they may be better able to make decisions regarding the management of that environment. They are encouraged to become aware of the ecological relationships in nature, man’s place in those relationships and the interdependence between rural and urban dwellers. It is hoped that if sound ideals of conservation are instilled in the minds of young people, they will consciously promote and help control the wise use of natural resources for a healthy and safe living environment.

The 1977 Scarborough Board of Education’s Outdoor Education Report made a similar statement, hoping that students would learn about the interdependency of man and the environment.

Changes were being made on the ground to reflect these new policies. At the Island Natural Science School, for example, “[w]hile science ha[d] provided a basis for organizing the overall programme, new emphases [were] being explored and introduced into the programme as conditions change[d] and new environmental concerns [were] expressed.”\(^{178}\) For example, Gins Doolittle noted that “[b]acteria Kits used in testing levels of bacteria in water sources will likely be incorporated into the programme as a result of increased concern over environmental pollution.”\(^{179}\)

Similar changes were taking place in American outdoor education programs. By 1972 Smith, Carlson, Donaldson, and Masters saw fit to write that there is “[a] new urgency in the need for outdoor education pervades America today,” because of over population and the environmental problems that arose from it.\(^{180}\) Ford argues that by the 1970s there was a shift from outdoor to environmental education.\(^{181}\) Hammerman, Hammerman, and Hammerman agree, noting that environmental education “became a major thrust of many outdoor education programs” in the 1970s.\(^{182}\)

The provincial government became increasing enthusiastic about outdoor education during this period. In 1970, the Department of Education hosted the first Environmental Field Studies course at Albion Hills and Claremont Conservation Field

\(^{178}\) Doolittle, “A Report of the Student Activities in Outdoor Education,” 158.

\(^{179}\) Ibid.


Centres. Two years earlier, in 1968, the department had begun to encourage teachers to take their students outside. More importantly, in 1974 the Education Act was amended to allow school boards to enter into agreements with conservation authorities and land managers “concerning access to lands for education purposes and the erection and operation of facilities.” As a result of this amendment, although occurring just before it passed, the MTRCA entered into an agreement with the MTSB, the Metro Separate School Board, and the York County Board of Education for the development of the Boyd Conservation Field Centre in 1973.

Donald Revell argued in 1974 that “[a]s a result of encouragement from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Natural Resources, educational programs related to the out-of-doors have consistently burgeoned.” John Passmore also noted that the outdoor education programs continued to grow in the 1970s “[i]n spite of restrictions recently placed on education budgets in Ontario.”

The Energy Crisis caused by the OPEC oil embargo of 1973 hit Ontario in 1973 and 1974, and energy conservation education began to appear in the 1976-77 school year. This is a good example of how changes in environmental concern

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185 Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Education, Land Resources for Education Outdoors III, ii.
187 Revell, Critique of “Educational and Research Concerns in the Ontario Countryside,” 141.
188 Passmore, Outdoor Education in Canada – 1972, 45.
shaped environmental education, and, in turn, outdoor education, in Ontario. Environmental education became increasingly focused on energy conservation by the 1980s. In 1980, the Ontario Ministry of Education published a series of eight support documents to *The Formative Years*, the common primary curriculum, dealing with teaching energy conservation to primary-aged students. The documents in the series included: *We Really Care About Water and Air!; Eating and Energy – A Part of Everyday; Clothing and Shelter; Transportation and Energy; Communications and Energy; Energy and My Environment; Energy One Hundred Years Ago; and Where Does Energy Come From?*"\(^{190}\)

In 1991, energy conservation education became a part of outdoor education for Toronto students. That year, the Ministry of Energy announced that it was to give $375,000 to build a new ecology centre at the Boyne River Natural Science School to teach energy education: “The Ecology Centre will expose students to and teach them about the principles and means of living on renewable energy resources.”\(^{191}\)

Changing environmental concerns caused changes in the education students received at residential outdoor education centres.

Energy conservation education was a part of the reframing of outdoor education as environmental education that took place in the 1980s and 1990s in the TBE. In the 1990s, the TBE described the Island School as “offer[ing] core programming and extensions to the science curriculum for grades 5 and 6 with

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particular emphasis on environmental education."\textsuperscript{192} By this point, the curriculum explicitly included ecology and biology, along with "many other subjects related to outdoor and environmental education."\textsuperscript{193}

Throughout this period, 1970-1997, conservation remained an important aspect of the outdoor education programs that served Metropolitan Toronto students. In 1970, conservation of natural resources was usually included in outdoor education programs serving the students of the MTSB, while at Albion Hills land use and management was still the guiding theme in 1970.\textsuperscript{194} Also that year the Ontario Teachers’ Federation devoted space in its outdoor education manual to conservation education.\textsuperscript{195}

The consistency of conservation education is unsurprising when discussing the programs run by the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Part of a long term plan of the MTRCA is “to offer to significant numbers of the public and school children, an opportunity to gain an appreciation of, and a sense of responsibility towards, the intelligent uses of our renewable natural resources, so vital to our survival.”\textsuperscript{196} As part of its mandate, the outdoor education programs offered by the MTRCA have to involve conservation education.

\textsuperscript{192} Toronto Board of Education, “Fact Sheet 10: Environmental and Outdoor Education,” \textit{Education Toronto: A series of fact sheets on the school system operated by the Toronto Board of Education} ([Toronto: The Board], 1996), n.p.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{194} Doolittle, “A Report of the Student Activities in Outdoor Education,” 152 and 213.
\textsuperscript{195} Ontario Teachers’ Federation Outdoor Education Committee, \textit{Outdoor Education Manual}, 7.
\textsuperscript{196} [The Metropolitan and Region Conservation Authority,] \textit{The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Outdoor and Conservation Education Project, 1976-1980}, 11.
However, conservation education continued to be a program offering in outdoor education programs run by the Toronto Board of Education into the 1990s. In the 1984-1985 school year, conservation remained an area of study offered at the Island School. In the 1990s, at the program at the High Park School for Outdoor Education, a summer day program for Grade 4-8 students, was based on natural science and recreation, and conservation activities featured prominently.

Overall, it is unsurprising that conservation education had remained an important aspect of residential outdoor education programs, even as those programs were shaped by newer environmental concerns such as pollution and energy conservation over this time period. Conservation is a key concept in any sort of environmental education, and most conservation activities need to take place outside.

By the 1984-1985 school year, the Ministry of Education had adopted as one of its 13 goals of education in Ontario the “[d]evelop[ment of] respect for the environment and a commitment to the wise use of resources.” This goal encompasses both forms of environmental concern that shaped the residential outdoor education programs that Toronto students attended: conservation and environmentalism. Despite cutbacks in education funding beginning in the 1970s, residential outdoor

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197 Island School Calendar, September 1984-December 1985, TBE-Schools-Elementary-Island Public School/Natural Science School, 1082-present, Vertical File, TDSB Archives.
education programs continued to flourish. The constituent boards of Metro Toronto continued to open residential outdoor education centres into the 1980s, as did the MTRCA.\footnote{200}

The popularity of residential outdoor education was evident throughout the province. By 1970, nine conservation authorities in Ontario had residential outdoor education programs, which opened because of the success of Albion Hills.\footnote{201} By 1987, the authorities operated 57 education centres throughout the province offering a diverse array of programs.\footnote{202}

Outdoor education programs were seen as important across the population. Richardson wrote in 1974, that “[m]any now consider it [the Albion Hills Field Centre] the most important programme of the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.”\footnote{203} The public was concerned, especially after 1970, about the environment, and many felt that outdoor education could play a role in alleviating environmental problems.

But, this support raises the question of how successful these outdoor education programs were. In a survey conducted by Graham Mawson in 1973 for the North York Board of Education to evaluate the lasting impact of one week spent at the Forest Valley Outdoor Education Centre (day), he found that “[i]n summary, the results from both the questionnaires and the interviews would seem to indicate that the pupils enjoyed their visit to Forest Valley and one month later, still retained much

\footnote{200} See Appendix B.  
\footnote{201} Richardson, Conservation by the People, 130-1.  
\footnote{202} Mitchel and Shrubsole, Ontario Conservation Authorities: Myth and Reality, 4.  
\footnote{203} Richardson, Conservation by the People, 128.
of what they had learned."^{204} In 1987, Julia Margaret Dudleston, in her Forestry master’s thesis, sought to answer the question of how outdoor education centres produce the effect of making students more aware and respectful of their natural environment.\(^{205}\) She discovered that knowledge and attitude improved the most with the oldest students in her study (Grades 5-8) and that longer periods at the residential centre results in improved knowledge and attitudes.\(^{206}\) So, these programs were at least somewhat successful in created citizens concerned for the environment. How these students fared against those who did not attend the programs over time is yet to be seen.

However, these programs cannot be evaluated on any one criterion alone. Does knowledge matter without attitude, and does attitude matter without action? Did the students who attended these programs become better democratic citizens who were more nostalgic for an imagined rural past than others? I will address these questions further in the Conclusion, but, it is impossible to know without conducting a large-scale study, correcting for many other instances in Toronto residents’ lives over the past sixty years that have encouraged their gaining of environmental knowledge.

What can be said confidently, though, is that the residential outdoor education programs attended by Toronto public school students in the second half of the

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\(^{206}\) Ibid., 90 and 97.
twentieth century were informed by changing priorities in environmental management. As an environmental culture developed in the province in the postwar period, educators harnessed this new topic in the effort to teach children to be good democratic citizens in nonurban, antimodern spaces.
Conclusion
Into the New Millennium

Outdoor education programs proliferated in Ontario’s education boom years of the 1960s. However, by the early 1970s financial constraints caused outdoor education facilities and programs to be cut by school boards across Ontario.\(^1\) At the time, the programs serving Toronto’s public elementary and secondary students were spared; the TBE, the MTSB, and the MTRCA were able to maintain the already existing programs and open several others, although they fell short of the desired number of spaces.

However, Toronto’s outdoor education programs would not be safe forever. In 2002, when provincially-appointed board supervisor Paul Christie decided to close several outdoor education field centres operated by the Toronto District School Board as part of an effort to balance the Board’s books, there was an outcry from residents across the city. These opponents were fighting against the scaling back of a program that had existed in Toronto for more than forty years.

**Amalgamation**

By the 1990s there were many threats to outdoor education in Ontario. The provincial government elected in 1995 and led by Mike Harris introduced sweeping reforms in education that included the abandonment of Environmental Science as a

stand-alone subject at the intermediate and senior levels. The reduction in provincial education funding during the recession of the early 1990s had already caused some school boards to close their outdoor education centres in an effort to balance their budgets. However, the Toronto programs were not just surviving but also thriving at this time. For example, in June 1992 the TBE was in the process of selecting an architect to construct a new school, containing student dormitories, to replace the combined Island Public/Natural Science School.\textsuperscript{2} There were also informal outdoor education activities taking place in schools across the city. For example, in October 1992, the Coureur de Bois group of four students and two teachers from an East End high school went on a four-day backpacking trip to Killarney Provincial Park.\textsuperscript{3}

During this time outdoor educators in Toronto were still trying to justify their programs with their perceived contribution to democratic citizenship education. In response to the Ontario Expert Panels on Secondary Education that were being held in the mid-to-late 1990s for the purpose of informing the Ministry of Education on the creation of the new secondary school curriculum that would eliminate OAC\textsuperscript{4}, the supervisors of the Toronto residential outdoor education centres submitted a brief about the value of outdoor education.\textsuperscript{5} In it they echoed the TBE’s 1956 Brief on outdoor education:

\textsuperscript{2} The Board of Education for the City of Toronto, Meeting Minutes, Thursday June 24, 1993, p. 504-508.
\textsuperscript{4} By this point, Ontario was the only jurisdiction in North America to offer Grade 13, which was called the Ontario Academic Credit (OAC).
Residential living is designed to foster learning in a variety of circumstances: academic, life skills, social, recreational, personal, and cultural – including the world at night, and in all weather. Learners live with, and appreciate their peers for what each brings to the learning experience. These outcomes are achieved during classroom time, formal hikes and outdoor lessons, shared household responsibilities, social and cultural interchanges, and for a week sharing a living space with members of their class and their teacher and residential outdoor educators. Residential outdoor education centres provide the classroom for active participation and demonstration of sound environmental citizenship.6

They also drew on the modernizing antimodernism paradigm which had shaped outdoor education in the city since the first programs had been established more than 30 years previously:

In residential outdoor education, students are given the opportunity to learn and be part of what will be their future, to live and successfully participate in a society which welcomes practical learning and living experiences. Residential outdoor education centres must continue to be valued and recognized as major contributors in bringing our young citizens into the 21st century.7

The continuing success of these programs all changed in the spring of 1997, when the Conservative government passed Bill 103, The City of Toronto Act, which amalgamated Toronto, Scarborough, York, North York, East York, and Etobicoke into what was commonly referred to as “the Mega-City”, the new City of Toronto, and Bill 104, The Fewer School Boards Act, which reduced the number of boards in the province from 164 to 72, capped the salary of trustees at $5,000 (it had been around $40,000 in Toronto), and removed education from residential property taxes.8 Both

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid/
Acts came into effect on January 1, 1998. With the school board amalgamation came a new funding formula, which drastically reduced the budget of the wealthy Toronto school boards. Instead of being allowed to raise a portion of their revenue by collecting property tax, the boards would receive all of their funding from the Ministry of Education.

This new funding policy was created with the intent to equalize educational spending across the province; however, it hit the large boards particularly hard. Political scientist Duncan Maclellan argues that

This shift in policy posed a serious impediment to those boards accustomed to drawing substantial funding from this source to support a range of student-based programs. Now school boards are completely reliant on the Ministry of Education for funding their programs and activities. There was no consideration given to the unique needs of some large, urban boards that are supporting significant numbers of immigrant students in English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) Programs. The new system reigns in spending, curtails creative policy-making and this puts school boards in a weaker position when dealing with the Ministry of Education.9

Gidney argues that “[i]n effect, local school boards lost the right to determine how much money they would raise to support local education.”10

Many new Toronto District School Board (TDSB) trustees responded negatively to the new formula which would see the board reducing its budget by 5.7 percent over three years.11 Many of them believed that “the Provincial funding formula [did] not permit the delivery of a quality education,” and they were “dissatisfied that the funding formula [did] not permit them to continue their programs

9 Ibid.
10 R.D. Gidney, From Hope to Harris: The Reshaping of Ontario’s Schools (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 247.
11 Ibid., 266-7.
and services at a level that [was] consistent with the old Toronto Board's delivery philosophy. That is, the predecessor School Boards that existed prior to amalgamation were somehow viewed by the Trustees as needing to be brought up to old Toronto Board levels."\textsuperscript{12}

It was not only the trustees who felt this obligation to the former TBE’s educational standard. On December 7, 1997, not even a month before the new board would come into being, members of the new Metropolitan Toronto-wide board convened a community convention called “Joining Together to Save Our Schools.” The attendees identified several educational components they hoped to see survive the transition. In light of this convention, the TBE trustees passed a motion at their December 18, 1997 meeting asking that “the Toronto District School Board endorse the following programs and services as essential components of our publicly-funded educational system, and use these components as the basis for further decision-making and advocacy on behalf of our students, schools, parents, and community”: 24 programs and services were identified, including environmental education, outdoor education, and learning outside the classroom.\textsuperscript{13}

Despite the community support of outdoor education, other factors played a role in the beginning of the end of the programs. For example, as Tim McCaskell


\textsuperscript{13} The Board of Education for the City of Toronto, Meeting Minutes, Thursday, December 18, 1997, p. 758-9. Emphasis in original.
argues, the TDSB was significantly more conservative than the TBE had been.\textsuperscript{14} Also, while the amalgamation process and funding formula switch were happening, the new Common Curriculum was being implemented in Ontario. Beginning in 1998, all boards, including the TDSB, had to transition to the new curriculum, losing much of its former autonomy. With all of these changes, the cost of running eight residential outdoor education centres became too much to bear.

**After Amalgamation**

By 2002 the TDSB was having a very difficult time balancing its budget. The $750 million over four years that the province had given the board to aid in the transition ran out, and the trustees failed to submit a balanced budget to the province as required under the Ontario Education Act. In response, the provincial government commissioned Rosen & Associates Limited to conduct an audit of the Board’s financial position.\textsuperscript{15} Forensic auditor Al Rosen and his team criticized many of the trustees’ concerns with issues beyond the scope of what the province defined as elementary and secondary education, noting that “[t]o some trustees, virtually every societal issue is thought to have education roots.”\textsuperscript{16}

In the auditors’ opinion, “the majority of the TDSB Trustees have simply ignored the Government’s concept of having educational equality across the

\textsuperscript{14} Tim McCaskell, *Race to Equity: Disrupting Educational Inequality* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 258.


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 4.
Province,” which required the higher spending boards to reduce their programming, instead of increasing the funding to lower-spending boards to allow them to add programming. They criticized the Trustees’ decision “to maintain (and in some cases to expand) the former Toronto Board of Education’s program delivery model. The TDSB has elected to operate a number of supplementary programs, unlike other Ontario School Boards.” They identify outdoor education as an area “of historic excess.”

For the audit, the auditors asked the Board staff to rank proposed budget actions in descending order of implementation preference, with the last item resulting in the greatest negative impact on the TDSB and its students, in the opinion of the staff. The staff ranked the closure of outdoor education programs last out of 38 expenditure categories, therefore designating it as most valuable to the TDSB and its students. However, the auditors did not agree with the staff’s prioritization analysis, arguing that in our opinion, the TDSB’s Outdoor Education program, which is not recognized within the Provincial education model, should not be given priority over reductions in areas such as building maintenance and school budgets. We note that the Staff’s prioritization is consistent with their historical preference to extract savings in areas that directly impact classroom instruction, rather than eliminate programs that are not consistent with the Provincial education model.

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17 Ibid., 8.
18 Ibid., 5.
19 Ibid., 19.
20 Ibid., 103.
They instead believed that classroom computers, youth counsellors, and staff development held more value than outdoor education programs.\textsuperscript{21} The auditors note that “[t]he outdoor education centre [sic] is not specifically funded by the government, and any funds directed to it have to be taken from other spending, such as from the classrooms.”\textsuperscript{22}

At this point, the TDSB forecasted that outdoor education would cost the board $8.4 million for the 2002-2003 year.\textsuperscript{23} Approximately 65,000 students attended the day centres annually, and an additional 20,000 attended the residential centres.\textsuperscript{24} In order to save that $8.4 million, the auditors recommended closing all of the residential centres for the 2002-2003 school year, unless sufficient user fees could be generated: “However, given that the Outdoor Education Program is a local discretionary program, and that most School Boards in Ontario do not have an Outdoor Education Program, we also recommend that serious consideration should be given to restructuring the user fees or eliminating the entire Outdoor Education Program for 2003-2004.”\textsuperscript{25}

The auditors recommended that Minister of Education Elizabeth Witmer take “control and charge over the administration of the affairs of the TDSB,” as they did not believe that the trustees were willing and able to balance the budget.\textsuperscript{26} So, on August 27, 2002 the provincial government notified the TSDB trustees that it would

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 31.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 32.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 243.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 249.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 15.
\end{itemize}
be appointing a board supervisor. Three days later the Ministry stripped power and authority from the trustees and appointed Paul Christie to the supervisor position. Under Christie’s watch, the TDSB’s budget was reduced by the $90 million required to balance it. To do this, he reduced the number of secretaries and vice-principals, cut back on adult education, and eliminated some of the outdoor education programs.

His original recommendations included over $4.2 million in cuts to outdoor education, to be achieved by closing six of the eight residential outdoor education centres. Those to be closed were:

- The Island Natural Science School,
- The Boyne River Natural Science School,
- Pine River Outdoor Education Centre,
- Sheldon Centre for Outdoor Education,
- Noisy River Outdoor Education Centre and
- The Scarborough Outdoor Education School.

The two to be saved were the Mono Cliffs Outdoor Education Centre and the Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre at Albion, but visits would be reduced to half the previous length, from five- to 2½- days.

However, this proposal sparked a public outcry. Students and parents attended public hearings on the proposed cuts to argue against the closure of
outdoor education programs, among others.\textsuperscript{27} Christie’s first round of hearings occurred in November 2002. He is quoted by the \textit{Toronto Star} as saying “‘Over the last three days, I’ve had the opportunity to hear from hundreds of parents and students,’ he said, ‘and the one concern I’ve consistently heard is a desire for the outdoor education centres to be maintained.’”\textsuperscript{28}

The cuts were also condemned in the media. Articles regarding the cuts appeared in the \textit{Globe and Mail}, the \textit{Toronto Star}, the \textit{Hamilton Spectator}, and the \textit{National Post}. In his \textit{Globe and Mail} column “Inside Toronto,” John Barber noted that “none of what Toronto students experience at the Boyne is recognized as ‘classroom instruction’ by the province. As a result, the school appears to be doomed.”\textsuperscript{29} Nick McCabe-Lokos interviewed John Goodyear, the Island Natural Science School’s supervisor, for the \textit{Toronto Star}. Goodyear stressed the importance and longevity of “the week that students spend with experienced naturalists learning about bird migration or butterfly habitats,” noting that “‘I often meet adults in their 50s who came here, so it’s a memorable experience – one that stays with you probably forever,’ he said.”\textsuperscript{30}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{27} Tess Kalinowski, “Music, Maestro, Please; Student Pleads for School Programs; Parents Worried Over Police at Hearings,” \textit{The Toronto Star}, July 8, 2003.

\textsuperscript{28} Louise Brown, “Supervisor Okays His School Board Budget --- Little Changed After Three Tense Public Meetings; Christie Agrees to Seek Money for Outdoor Centres,” \textit{The Toronto Star}, November 23, 2002.


\end{footnotes}
The *Toronto Star*'s Jim Coyle dedicated several articles to the issue. He began by recounting the childhood envy he held as a student in the Catholic system for the public school students who had the opportunity to attend the outdoor education program at the Island School: “This was that exotic week of respite from normal classes and city concrete from which none of the Grade 5s and 6s we knew returned unchanged. They seemed to come back both more confident and somehow gentler. They never stopped talking about it.”31 Because of the clear success of the program in inspiring children, he argued that “it takes particularly soulless times, and a particularly soulless government, to propose ending an educational adventure that has provided lifelong memories to generations in this city and that has offered learning and inspiration in its purest form.”32

At the end of the column, Coyle asked readers to send him letters about their experiences at the Island School. Several did, and the following week he shared some of their stories, all stressing the positive aspects of the new experiences, independence, team-work, and being outside that they experienced while at the Island School.33 Over the next several weeks he continued to share readers’ experiences.

One letter he had received was from Ralph Belfry, who had been a science consultant for the Toronto Board of Education in the 1950s, when the idea of the Island School was first discussed. Belfry wrote that “the program was so well-

31 Jim Coyle, “Toronto Island School was a Hinterland in City,” *The Toronto Star*, November 23, 2002.
32 Jim Coyle, “Toronto Island School was a Hinterland in City,” *The Toronto Star*, November 23, 2002.
received that the school had to remain open for the month of July so that children whose classes couldn’t go during the school year could attend during their summer holiday.\textsuperscript{34} He also wrote that “[t]he parents whose children had attended raved about the week-long program.”\textsuperscript{35}

Several letters to the editor on the subject were published in a variety of newspapers. Some of these letters came from those directly involved with outdoor education. For example, Brian Lisson, a member of the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario’s board of directors, wrote to the \textit{Hamilton Spectator}, urging Ontario premier Ernie Eves to “provide funding that will restore outdoor and environmental education programs to school boards across” Ontario.\textsuperscript{36} He stated that “I will cast my ballot only for a political party prepared to provide adequate funding for an education system that seeks to prepare our children for the challenges of this rapidly changing world. Reading and writing will be of little value in a world devoid of potable water, renewable energy resources, and full of selfish indifference toward one another.”

Other letters were from concerned citizens who had no connection to outdoor education, other than having participating in the programs at Toronto’s outdoor education centres as children. Many expressed their fond memories of participating.

\textsuperscript{34} Ralph Belfry, quoted in Jim Coyle, “Memories of Outdoor Schools Refuse to be Forgotten,” \textit{The Toronto Star}, December 14, 2002.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Brian Lisson, “It’s Greatly Undervalued; Outdoor Education,” \textit{The Hamilton Spectator}, November 30, 2002.
Resident Sophie Nguyen wrote in her letter to the editor that “[m]any of my fondest memories are of Boyne River and my experiences there.”\textsuperscript{37} She believed that “[t]he life skills and knowledge that I gained from my experiences at Boyne River Natural Science School are invaluable and will remain with me for the rest of my life.”\textsuperscript{38}

Peter McBride, another Toronto resident, wrote to the \textit{Star} that “I am an adult who fondly remembers the exciting experiences I had at the school back in the early 1960s.”\textsuperscript{39} He expressed sentiments that those who designed the programs hoped that the participating students would gain – an appreciation for nature and an understanding of local history: “I remember being truly amazed at the serenity and beauty of nature, so near and yet so far from the hustle and bustle of the city. I still remember checking out the historic lighthouse and viewing the rotting remains of an old ferry, both testaments to the rich cultural heritage of our city. I remember banding birds in nets and studying aquatic life.”\textsuperscript{40}

In his letter to the editor, Trevor Mayoh of Mississauga, ON, very clearly demonstrated his learning of the democratic living skills that the program designers had hoped that the participating students would gain:

I am starting to wonder if Ontario's provincially appointed supervisor went to school. The proposed cuts to outdoor education are really disappointing. Outdoor education centres teach students responsibility, respect and equality.

I am upset that more students will not get to experience these very centres. When I visited one, there were boys there that came from broken families and

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{37} Sophie Nguyen, letter to the editor, \textit{The Toronto Star}, January 28, 2003. \\
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{39} Peter McBride, letter to the editor, \textit{The Toronto Star}, November 22, 2002. \\
\textsuperscript{40} Peter McBride, letter to the editor, \textit{The Toronto Star}, November 22, 2002. 
\end{flushright}
had never cleaned or cooked; they learned how to do these things and picked up other life-changing tools that they could bring home and apply to life.

The students of tomorrow are really losing out; these outdoor centres are very important to students in terms of understanding the benefits of nature.\textsuperscript{41}

Other groups condemned the proposed closures. Even the York University Faculty of Environmental Studies Council condemned the cuts to outdoor education.

In a November 26, 2002 press release, the Council argued that

Christie’s recommendations penalize outdoor education as a subject area over all other curricular areas, particularly at the elementary level. Cuts such as these, in Toronto and across Ontario, have consistently been used as a mechanism to rationalize funding formulas that do not fund outdoor education. The appointment of Paul Christie by the Tory government has also established a policy of privatizing education by recommending private investment to maintain outdoor education centers [sic] and funding.\textsuperscript{42}

The faculty group placed the 2002 cuts in a longer timeframe of threats to outdoor education:

Prior to the provincial Tory leadership in the 1990s, Ontario enjoyed one of the best environmental and outdoor education traditions in North America. Christie’s recommendations threaten the extinction of outdoor experience or cut those experiences to marginal duration. Implementing these cuts and closures endangers a long and living legacy of educational excellence. Worst of all, these cuts deny the youngest of the urban poor a familiarity with natural environments that are the essence of the Canadian experience.\textsuperscript{43}

This public outcry was somewhat effective in convincing Christie to reverse his decision to close three-quarters of Toronto’s residential outdoor education centres. As early as November 22, he agreed to try to find another source of money

\textsuperscript{41} Trevor Mayoh, letter to the editor, \textit{The Toronto Star}, November 21, 2002.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
to keep the outdoor education centres open.\textsuperscript{44} In an article in the \textit{Toronto Star}, Tess Kalinowski noted that Christie had responded to the outcry from the community: “Christie has said if he could relent on any of his $90 million in budget cuts, his first choice would be the nature camps because of their deep roots in the community.”\textsuperscript{45}

By January 2003, just two months after the cuts were proposed, the TDSB’s co-chair Donna Cansfield had found enough outside support to keep five of the centres open.\textsuperscript{46} The board had raised $1 million from public and private sources to allow three additional outdoor education centres to stay open, although on a reduced basis.\textsuperscript{47} The centres that stayed open offered a program of 2 1/2 days, reduced from five, at a rate of $75, increased by 50 percent from the $50 fee that students had paid for the five-day experience.\textsuperscript{48} Only the Boyne River Natural Science School, the Pine River Outdoor Education Centre, and the Noisy River Outdoor Education Centre were closed.

\section*{Evaluation}

How can we evaluate the success of these programs in creating modern democratic citizens of hundreds of thousands of pupils who have attended them over the past half-century? Are those who once spent three or five days at one of the field centres

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{44} Brown, “Supervisor Okays His School Board Budget.”
\item \textsuperscript{45} Tess Kalinowski, “Five Camps Survive in Board Plan --- $1 million Found in Private, Public Partnerships; Government Expected to Approve Program,” \textit{The Toronto Star}, December 18, 2002.
\item \textsuperscript{46} Tess Kalinowski, “Three Nature Centres Closing; Budget Cuts Force Shutdown of $1 million Ecology Facility; Students Now Take Shorter Visits to Six Remaining Sites,” \textit{The Toronto Star}, January 28, 2003.
\end{itemize}
more likely than those who did not to be active participants in the democratic state? Are they more likely to participate in outdoor leisure activities? Are they more likely to be concerned about the environment?

It is beyond the scope of this project to scientifically answer these questions. However, it is clear that for many participants their attendance at these programs stayed with them as they grew up. The outcry that was raised when the TDSB considered shuttering the programs was substantial. It was one of the most discussed issues of the budget-cut crisis of 2002. Tess Kalinowski claims that it was probably the most emotional. Clearly, the programs won the hearts of those who had the opportunity to attend.

As much as the response to the proposed closure of the outdoor education centres suggests that these programs were considered valuable by those who had participated in them, at a provincial level the past decade has demonstrated that residential outdoor education programs are not considered to have a high priority. For example, in 2004 the Ontario government, led by Dalton McGuinty, closed the Frost Centre, a provincial outdoor/natural resource education centre which had opened in 1974. In a *Toronto Star* opinion piece, Grant Linney, the president of the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario, identifies its closing as “one more step in a long sequence of cutbacks to outdoor education over the past 15 years,” and

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suggests that “the symbolism of its closing is profound.” In explaining the government’s decision to close the Frost Centre, Minister of Natural Resources David Ramsay argued that outdoor education is not a core responsibility of the ministry. Cameron Smith, a writer and environmentalist, argued that this position meant “the Liberal government decided that providing outdoor education was not one of its priorities.”

The Ontario government began to show some more interest in environmental education in 2009 with the release of the Ministry of Education’s *Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow: A Policy Framework for Environmental Education in Ontario Schools*. The framework promotes a form of environmental education that move[s] beyond a focus on symptoms – air and water pollution, for example – to encompass the underlying causes of environmental stresses. It seeks to promote changes in personal behaviour and organization practices that will allow us to minimize our ecological footprint, while also fostering greater community engagement in meeting that goal.

Although it suggests that environmental education can develop good citizenship practices, it is not focused on residential outdoor education programs. Instead it supports locally developed courses focused on in-class and school-yard based programs.

By the mid-1980s, according to Ken Osborne, Canadian policy-makers began to “abando[n] citizenship, however defined, as a goal of general education in their

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52 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
haste to turn schools into training grounds for the new global economy.”55 In less prosperous times, the belief in the power of the school to be an agent of social change diminishes. As the residential outdoor education programs that served Toronto students were inextricably linked to both citizenship and societal change goals it is, I believe, a profound testament to the strength of the particular programs that they were able to survive the several rounds of belt-tightening that began in the 1970s and occurred most recently in 2006.56

These programs clearly made a lasting impact on the students who attended them. In 2008 the Scarborough Outdoor Education School celebrated its 30th anniversary. In the days leading up to the event, about 85 people had registered to attend the anniversary celebration. The supervisor of the school, Len Elphick, argued that the program makes a lifelong impression on students, noting the two of the current staff members participated in the program at SOES when they were in Grade 6.57

It is nearly impossible, within the scope of this project, to evaluate the success of Toronto’s residential outdoor education programs in teaching children to be modern democratic citizens in antimodern spaces. Clearly fond memories of participating in these programs stayed with many children into their adulthood, and

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56 Tess Kalinowski, “Schools Team Sees $91.8M in Cuts; Report Acknowledges School Funding Flaws; Report Critiques Provincial Funding; Still Faults Public Board for Shortfall,” The Toronto Star, October 13, 2006.
these programs were able to survive several rounds of budget cuts, even with their designation as a ‘frill.’ So, they were successful at least in teaching children to love the programs themselves and the places they were located.

Schools are tasked with an impossible number of goals and responsibilities, and Toronto’s residential outdoor education centres were no exception. In a five-day period, students as young as eleven were expected to improve upon their scientific knowledge and skills, learn how to live democratically in a group, participate in and develop an affinity for outdoor recreation activities, and decide to change the environment for the better. The fact that many former students enjoyed and valued the experience seems like enough.
## APPENDIX A:
Outdoor Education Field Centres Used by Toronto Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>Residential/ Day</th>
<th>Opened</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>East York Board of Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Creek Park in Don Valley/East York Field Centre (mobile/leased)</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Prior to 1976</td>
<td>Before 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheldon Valley Field Studies Centre/Sheldon Centre for Outdoor Education</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Officially opened as Board owned in 1982, operated as leased property before</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Etobicoke Board of Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre at Albion Hills</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Between 1983 and 1987</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noisy River Outdoor Education Centre (Satellite Tenting Site of Etobicoke Outdoor Education Centre)</td>
<td>Residential (tents)</td>
<td>Between 1979 and 1983</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etobicoke Field Studies Centre at Claireville Dam</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Prior to 1970</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North York Board of Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Valley Outdoor Education Centre</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mono Cliffs Outdoor Education Centre</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Owned since 1974, opened in 1986</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scarborough Board of Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarborough Outdoor Education School/Camp Kearney</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillside Outdoor Education Centre</td>
<td>Day/Camping on site in the spring</td>
<td>Prior to 1979</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Toronto Board of Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto Island Natural Science School</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Park Natural Science School</td>
<td>Day (Summer)</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1975?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyne River Natural Science School</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto Urban Studies Centre</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
York Board of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pine River Outdoor Education Centre (at Horning’s Mills)</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>1978 (new centre built in 1996)</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Park Outdoor Education Centre</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albion Hills Conservation School/Albion Hills Field Centre</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyd Conservation Field Centre (affiliated with Kortright)</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>1973?</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claremont Field Centre</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold Creek Conservation</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Between 1962 and 1970</td>
<td>1990*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake St. George Field Centre</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kortright Centre for Conservation</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other

The school boards of Metropolitan Toronto also made use of a variety of other sites leased from both non-profit public and private organizations and private camps. These sites included Metropolitan Toronto parks, Girl Guide properties, and, most notably, the Bolton Camp, which was owned by the Family Services Association of Toronto and operated as a Fresh Air Camp for mothers and the young children in the summer months.

* Since 2002 the Township of King has operated an outdoor education program at Cold Creek. ([http://coldcreek.ca/king-prc-programs/](http://coldcreek.ca/king-prc-programs/))
APPENDIX B:
Curriculum Areas Outlined in the TBE’s 1956
“Outdoor Education: A Brief”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Living Experiences</th>
<th>Healthful Living Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Planning the Programme</td>
<td>• Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Group living at Camp</td>
<td>• Clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Camper-Teacher relationship</td>
<td>• Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities to face social situations</td>
<td>• Sanitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of group and individual responsibilities</td>
<td>• Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal development</td>
<td>• Rest and relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Democratic solving of group problems</td>
<td>• Opportunities for good mental health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outdoor Educational Work Activities</th>
<th>Outdoor Educational Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Improvement of the Camp</td>
<td>• Science - Experiences with soil, water, weather, plants, animals, and birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Forest management</td>
<td>• Conservation - Land use problems, soil, pollution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wildlife management</td>
<td>• Maps and compass - orienteering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fish Management</td>
<td>• Language - Keeping daily logs, evaluation, story-telling, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fire fighting and fire prevention</td>
<td>• Mathematics - computing cost of food, distances and heights, operating camp store, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Soil conservation</td>
<td>• Shop - bird houses, waterfront equipment, signs, blueprints, identification, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Weather observations</td>
<td>• Homemaking - planning menus, making beds, cabin sanitation, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: The *italics* indicate those areas that I understand to be included in education for democratic living; the *underlining* indicates leisure activities, and *bold* indicates environmental education.

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Vertical Files

Outdoor Education

Toronto District School Board Sesquicentennial Museum and Archives

The Board of Education for the City of Toronto Minutes

Vertical Files

T.B.E. -- Curriculum -- Outdoor Education

“Outdoor Education: A Brief Submitted to the Toronto Board of Education, 1956.”


T.B.E. -- Curriculum -- Science

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