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# Chalk Talk

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## Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers,

Poll after poll and daily media reports have made it clear that 'The Environment' has become a top priority among Canadians. Call it the effects of global warming or climate change, our awareness of and concern for environmental sustainability is pervasive. As we approach **Earth Day** this month, *Chalk Talk* will be dedicating this and the next two editions to issues surrounding the environment.

Young people are naturally hopeful and optimistic. They are also sensitive and impressionable. I know from my own experience, that those I talk to, including my own son, are on the one hand, worried about what they hear and read about the environment challenges, but are also wanting to learn and understand what is at stake so that they take steps to be part of the solution. Equipping them with the knowledge and understanding they need, and encouraging them participate will go a long way in helping to allay their fears. Parents and teachers are the key to ensuring that our young people don't feel helpless but look hopefully and work purposefully towards a brighter future.

This week's issue features information on a host of classroom resources available through Environment Canada, offering programs and tools that will help students become involved in the environmental movement.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing resources on a range of topics for the classroom. We invite you to visit our website at [4edu.ca](http://4edu.ca) to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

[Let us know what you think!](#)

Mary Kovack

## Environment Canada



Canada

**E**nvironment Canada's mandate is to preserve and enhance the quality of the natural environment; conserve Canada's renewable resources; conserve and protect Canada's water resources; forecast weather and environmental change; enforce rules relating to boundary waters; and coordinate environmental policies and programs for the federal government.

[Environment Canada](#) (EC) offers educators a variety of [environmental learning and sustainability](#) classroom resources and programs that are interactive and fun. Students are encouraged to learn about the environment and to apply this knowledge to help collect data that can be used by EC scientists in their work. This hands-on approach brings environmental learning to life for students and makes it relevant to their everyday lives. Participating school groups can share information and successes, find answers to their questions, network with others, and discover other environmental organizations.

Teachers are invited to explore three of Environment Canada's experiential learning programs: **Nature-Watch**, **ObservAction Network**, and **SkyWatchers**, all designed to challenge students to use their observational and research skills. **[See feature below]**

Visit the Environment Canada website for many more great classroom resources, including:

- **Great Lakes Kids** — [http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/greatlakes/For\\_Kids-WS4DB7BBAD-1\\_En.htm](http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/greatlakes/For_Kids-WS4DB7BBAD-1_En.htm)
- **Lessons Plans in Pollution Prevention** — <http://www.ec.gc.ca/cppic/citizens/lessonPlans/En/cr.cfm>
- **Educational Resources on Wildlife** — <http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/publications-e.html#education>

[Source: Environment Canada on-line]

## Environment Canada Experiential Learning Opportunities

- Environment Canada's **NatureWatch** programs are community based, "citizen science" monitoring programs that get students and nature enthusiasts involved on a voluntary basis in collecting valuable data. Existing monitoring programs such as **FrogWatch**, **IceWatch**, **Plant-Watch** and **WormWatch** encourage school groups to take part in the monitoring of soil, air, water and other aspects of environmental quality. Educators will find the supporting classroom resources offered through FrogWatch and WormWatch of particular interest. For more information and to order resources, [click here](#).

**Nature**  
watch

**FROG**  
watch



- ObservAction Network** offers environmental water projects that unite different organizations (elementary and secondary schools, businesses, etc.) in carrying out joint projects and collecting specific data. For most network projects, participants have access to training and equipment developed to facilitate their involvement and the collection of data. At present, the ObservAction Network offers three projects designed for young people in schools: **Fresh Water Fish EcoWatch Network**, **Adopt a River** and **Project H2O**. Educators interested in helping their students test the water, [click here](#).



- The sky is the limit with the **SkyWatchers** program! Make weather observation more than "just another subject" by integrating it into the school day. To reinforce their classroom lessons, students are invited to take daily weather observations and enter them online into our SkyWatchers database. To download **SkyWatchers**, a curriculum-based teachers' resources for Grades 4 to Grade 7, and **Project Atmosphere Canada**, a resource created in collaboration with the Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society, [click here](#).



Environment  
Canada

Environnement  
Canada

### Excerpt from "Global Warming Real, Worrying for Canadians" — Angus Reid Global Monitor: Polls & Research, March 22, 2007

"Canadian adults believe climate change is a reality, according to a poll by Angus Reid Strategies. 77 per cent of respondents are convinced that global warming is happening, 21 per cent think it may be occurring, and only two per cent flatly reject it. In addition, 69 per cent of respondents think the science behind climate change estimates is real, while 12 per cent deem it as "junk" and 19 per cent are not sure. The term global warming refers to an increase of the Earth's average temperature. Some theories say that climate change might be the result of human-generated carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. 47 per cent of respondents think global warming will significantly impact their own life and the life of future generations, while 42 per cent think it will not significantly impact their lives, but the lives of future generations. In 1998, several countries agreed to the Kyoto Protocol, a proposed amendment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The agreement commits nations to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Canada is one of more than 150 nations that have ratified the revised agreement, which came into effect in February 2005."

[\[To read the entire article, click here.\]](#)

#### Recommended Links

##### [Hinterland Who's Who](#)

There are important emotional and social reasons why humans need to experience wildlife and nature from time to time. We all have to recharge our batteries, to get out and breathe a little fresh air. The quality of these experiences is directly related to the quality of our Canadian wildlife and wildlife habitat. You'll find an incredibly wide range of information on an incredibly wide range of species in Canada, including those that are at risk accompanied by lessons plans for educators.

##### [Canadian Wildlife Federation - WILD Education](#)

More and more teachers, youth leaders, park interpreters, and other Canadian educators are nurturing nature — and young minds — through WILD Education. This eclectic family of learning programs, includ-

more and more teachers, youth leaders, park interpreters, and other Canadian educators are nurturing nature — and young minds — through WILD Education. This eclectic family of learning programs, including Project WILD, Fish Ways, WILD Schools, Focus on Forests, Ocean Education, and Space for Species, is giving youth unprecedented access to knowledge vital to the well-being of our lands and waters.

### [Teachers' Corner of Learning for Sustainable Future \(LSF\)](#)

LSF provides educators with innovative resources, teaching materials and programming. LSF creates unique professional development opportunities, delivers curriculum-based workshops to teachers and teacher candidates, and links to professional networks to support the teaching of Sustainable Development Education.

### In the News

[The stress of global warming reports; Students need help to deal with dire news](#) — Cameron Smith, *The Toronto Star*, March 31, 2007

“So, when they [students] are confronted with predictions of species dying, of drought, starvation, devastation of forests, rising oceans, disease and the end of life as we have known it, and there is nothing available to offer context and a measure of hope, then there is, [Professor] Simalchik says, cognitive dissonance. What’s required is context. If students were able to develop a constantly expanding awareness of how ecosystems operate, they would be able to deal with the horror stories. With an understanding of how systems work, there comes an appreciation for our capacity to change the future. The world is not without hope. Professor Tom Puk at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay has been training teachers to include ecological literacy in courses as disparate as science, history, health, geology, economics, language, arts and mathematics.”

[Boreal forest part of our Canadian identity; Boreal forest part of our Canadian identity Northern region so vast we tend to take it for granted](#) – Cameron Smith, *The Toronto Star*, March 24, 2007

“I think we forget, sometimes, what a treasure the boreal forest is. And now that spring has arrived and birds are returning, it’s a good time to celebrate it once again. In Canada, it covers 520 million hectares and has more intact forest than anywhere else on Earth. Every year, up to 3 billion birds breed there. Roughly 26 million are waterfowl, 7 million are shorebirds, and the remainder are landbirds. Most of the landbirds are songbirds, and most of them – as many as 2 billion – are warblers. These are awesome numbers, even more so when you realize that 60 per cent of all the landbirds in Canada, and 96 per cent of all the waterfowl in North America, breed in the boreal. As Peter Blancher and Jeffrey Wells say in two landmark studies (found in the Bird Studies Canada library at [www.bsc-eoc.org](http://www.bsc-eoc.org)): “The vastness of the boreal forest region makes it one of the few remaining places on Earth where entire ecosystems function. ... (I)t is vital to the abundance of bird life.” I see the boreal as inextricably linked to a Canadian sense of identity. But, because the forest is so big, I think Canadians take it for granted, as if the wilderness could never end no matter what we do to it.”

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We are the Company for Education Communications. We specialize in developing, producing and evaluating school resources and award programs. Working in conjunction with Departments/Ministries of Education, school district/boards, associations, teachers and subject specialists across the country; we provide free, curriculum-based educational resources to Canadian classrooms.

The opinions, conclusions and other information expressed in the preceding content do not necessarily reflect the views of and are not endorsed by CoEd Communications.

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