



Evolving Models for Watershed and Great Lakes Education

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Latornell Conservation Symposium

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UPPER THAMES RIVER
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



at Lakes
Student Conferences (GLS



Great Lakes Student Conference Retrospective

Primary Project Goal:

- To identify emerging issues, gather information, conduct research, and review the outcomes of the Great Lakes Student Conference (GLSC) model.

Objectives:

- Collect feedback and insights from conservation authorities, environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS), school boards, and teachers involved in GLSC model activities.
- Research emerging issues and opportunities for future programming.

Primary Report Goal:

- To make recommendations that will optimize future Great Lakes educational programming.





Map data: Esri, Province of Ontario, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, NRCan, Parks Canada, Sources: NRCan, Esri Canada, and Canadian Community Maps contributors., Esri Canada



Retrospective Report: Key Findings

Delivery Partners

- **PROS:** Partnerships, springboard events, enduring programs & materials, increased information sharing
- **OPPORTUNITIES:** longer events, multiple points of contact with students, indigenous integration & partnership
- **NEEDS:** increased funding & lead-up planning time

School Boards

- **PROS:** enriched learning experience, strengthened partnerships
- **OPPORTUNITIES:** Aligning with Ministry of Ed 'Student Achievement Plan', Literacy and Math curriculum, Inquiry, and Engineering Design Process, Transition/Pathway Programs /Pathway Programs
- **NEEDS:** EDI and accessibility priority during

Retrospective Report: Key Findings

Teachers

- **PROS:** broadened perspectives, increased local knowledge, curriculum connections, materials & tools for future use, real-world connections
- **OPPORTUNITIES:** conference as kick-off or backbone of unit learning, connections with CAs & community partners, pre- and post-learning

Students

- **PROS:** diversity of speakers and activities, increased knowledge of Great Lakes issues, motivation and opportunities to take action, co-op and career opportunities, cooperate collaborate with peers, treated like adults
- **OPPORTUNITIES:** more hooks to build interest, less sitting & more action, hear from youth, build hope, opportunities to be apart of





Exploring Alternative Frameworks

- Prioritize Indigenous partnerships, perspectives and the Two-Eyed Seeing approach as a holistic framework for future Great Lakes and Watershed Learning experiences
 - inviting Indigenous partners into the process from the beginning and
 - fostering relationship-building and assessing how partnerships can benefit Indigenous communities
- Prioritize a framework with multiple touchpoints (learning, reflection, action), or one that embeds learning into students' academic journey through multiple forms of engagement (problem solving, stewardship, partnerships)





Exploring Alternative Frameworks: Workshop

Indigenous Partnerships

Tia Kennedy, Oneida Nation of the Thames and Walpole Island First Nation

Whole School/Divisional Approach

Melissa Levi, St Clair Region Conservation Authority

SHSM Plus & Conference 'As' Approach

John Mesman, South Nation Conservation Authority

Community Action and Problem-Solving Approach

Karlee Flear, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

Youth Corps & Training Programs

Betsy McClure, Kettle Creek Conservation Authority & Kerry Kennedy, Lake Huron Coastal Centre

Exploring Alternative Frameworks: Workshop

Whole School/Divisional Approach

STRENGTHS: Builds school-wide culture, cross-grade collaboration & student leadership, encourages interdisciplinary programming, adaptable to both elementary/secondary, supports

OPPORTUNITIES: target small schools or cohorts for piloting, build conservation authority capacity to co-lead multi-visit, cross-curricular programs, themed years/grades

SHSM Plus & Conference 'As' Approach

STRENGTHS: customizable activities, speakers, training, strong alignment with SHSM programs/Ministry of Ed certifications, built-in career exploration, students benefit from collaboration across boards & disciplines

OPPORTUNITIES: conference 'as': data collection/challenges/intro/summative, broaden access to include non-SHSM students, engage teachers through co-design & PD, provide pre- & post- learning to strengthen outcomes



Exploring Alternative Frameworks: Workshop

Community Action and Problem-Solving

STRENGTHS: high impact & authentic learning connected to local issues, well-structured implementation model, strong alignment with curriculum/21st century competencies/graduate expectations, well suited intermediate-high school

OPPORTUNITIES: integrate with conference-style events as pre- or post-learning, bring in additional local partners

Youth Corps & Training Programs

STRENGTHS: meaningful land-based learning tied to stewardship/conservation, appeals to diverse learning styles/career interests, meets SHSM & HS volunteer requirements, can be adapted – certifications, co-op, teacher PD

OPPORTUNITIES: tiered versions of the program (1-





Great Lakes Learning & Watershed Learning Needs

TEACHERS:

- increased local knowledge & teacher training
- learning packages, easy-to-use lessons, resources
- funded opportunities for Great Lakes, watershed and lakeshore experiences
- place and/or project-based learning as frames, tools & support for action-based learning
- empowering participation in local community action initiatives
- address climate/eco anxiety in youth
- recognize/adapt for classrooms have new Canadians and multi-language learners

PARTNERS:

- move beyond the one-day experience, maximize student involvement
- time/space/funding to build relationships with Indigenous partners and co-design programs
- resource sharing through regional network and/or digital platform
- track impact and showcase how programs contribute to climate resilience, community stewardship and student success well-being



Lake Erie Stewardship and Student Summit Project

- Western Lake Erie Basin Collaboration
- Great Lakes Learning & Stewardship (500 students)
- Student Summit (100 students)
- Connect, Share, Care
- Partner StoryMap & Student StoryMap
- Indigenous Partner & Student Involvement



I thank you!

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