

Introduction to the Ontario EcoSchools Program

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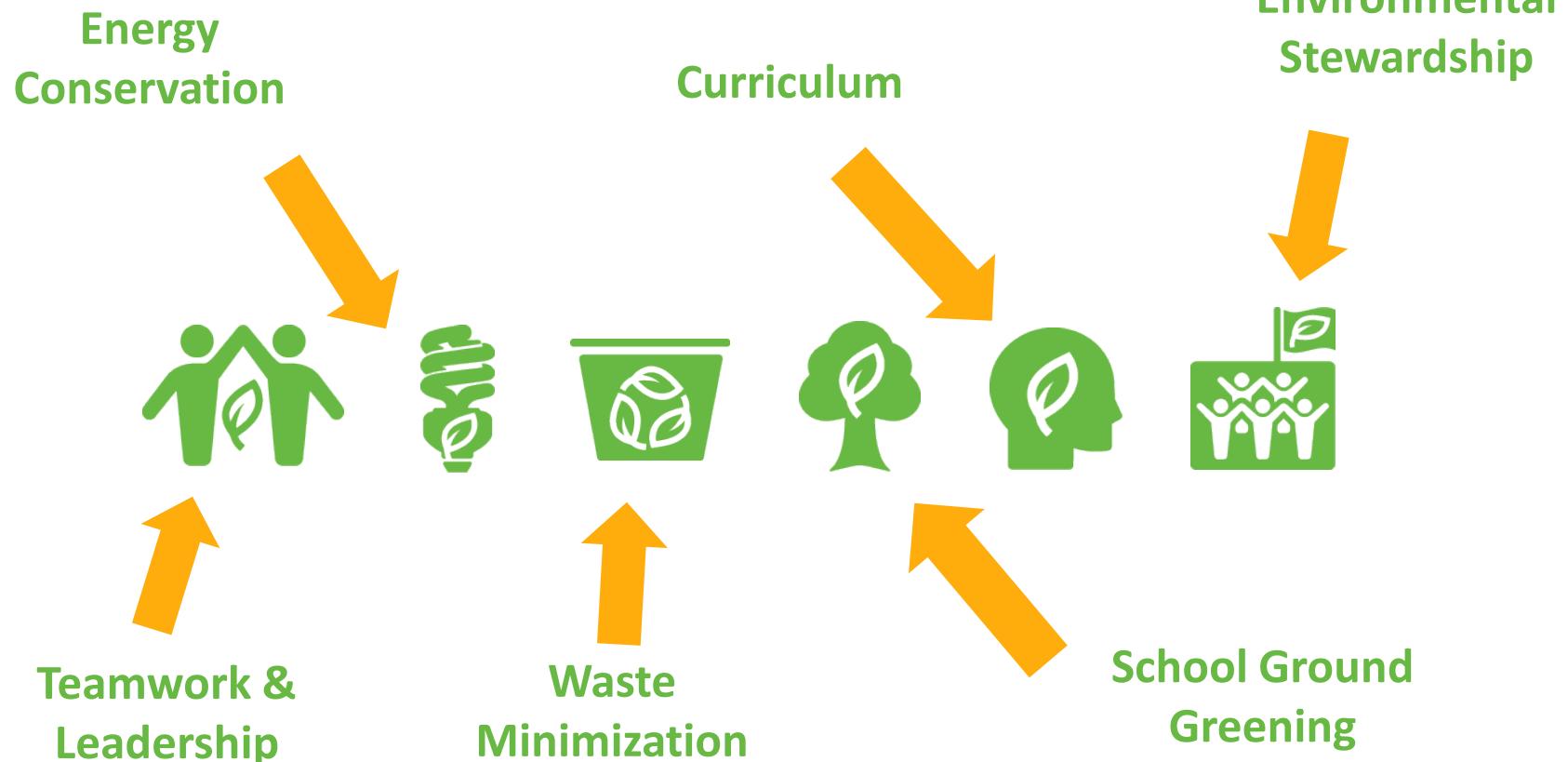
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Ontario EcoSchools is:

- An **environmental education and certification** program for grades K-12
- Helps school communities develop both **ecological literacy** and **environmental practices** to become environmentally responsible citizens and reduce the ecological footprint of schools
- Focused on both **student learning** and **school operations**



The 6 Sections of Ontario EcoSchools



Advantages of the Ontario EcoSchools Program

- The **students** cultivate active citizenship skills and life habits that reinforce their environmental learning.
- The **school community** unites in its conservation efforts and, quite often, what is learned in the school gets brought home and put into action.

Advantages of the Ontario EcoSchools Program

- **Environmental practices** in the school can translate to a reduction of the school's ecological footprint and to a reduction in operating costs.
- **Certification** offers schools an opportunity to be visibly recognized in the community and across the province for their environmental efforts.





Brisbane's Earth Heroes are the students
that plan, carry out and monitor our
school's initiatives.

Teamwork and Leadership

Students have many opportunities to take leadership roles through our green initiatives. For example:

- Older Earth Heroes mentor younger Earth Heroes
- Student ambassadors sit on the EcoSchool Committee
- Earth Heroes teach the student body
- Earth Heroes guide the selection of the school's greening objectives



Energy Conservation

- Earth Heroes monitor classrooms' energy saving practices, including turning lights and other equipment off when not in use.
- Earth Heroes promote participation in Earth Hour at school and at home

Waste Minimization

- Earth Heroes promote and carry out the school's composting program
- Earth Heroes promote the use of G.O.O.S.E. (Good –On-One-Side) paper
- Earth Heroes conduct the school's annual waste audit
- Earth Heroes carry out the Litterless Lunch program...**every Day 1**, beginning in October
- Earth Heroes promote and carry out the school's battery recycling program



School Ground Greening



- Earth Heroes maintain the school's garden
- Earth Heroes staff built a long-range greening plan
- New grounds development is based on green practices, including the use of drought-resistant plants and local species

Curriculum



- Teachers incorporate learning in and about the environment into their teaching
- Current curriculum documents foster forward-thinking about environmental issues and innovative problem-solving

Environmental Stewardship

- Earth Heroes investigate, learn, and then build awareness around environmental campaigns throughout the year in a variety of ways, including :
 - Morning announcements
 - Posters
 - Bulletin boards
 - Assemblies
 - Skits
 - Day-to-day choices and actions that demonstrate their passion and commitment to a green culture!



- Earth Heroes have begun a new campaign focused specifically on environmental stewardship:
Local Species Awareness

Local Species Awareness



The Red eft is the juvenile, terrestrial form of the Eastern Red Spotted Newt

Local Species Awareness



Another species that we would like to learn about and help is the Atlantic salmon of Credit River. Atlantic Salmon were once the most abundant migratory fish in the Credit River. In the late 1800's they disappeared from the Credit River and Lake Ontario, as a result of habitat destruction and overharvesting.¹ We have the opportunity to participate in a large-scale reintroduction of this species by nurturing 100 salmon eggs into young fish (fry) and then releasing them in the spring. However, we need some supplies to make this happen.

¹ "Enjoy the Outdoors." *Fishing*. Credit Valley Conservation, n.d. Web. 29 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.creditvalleyca.ca/enjoy-the-outdoors/activities/fishing/>>.

The Atlantic Salmon Classroom Hatchery Program is one of the education components of the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program (LOASRP). This five-month hands-on lesson on Atlantic salmon and the biodiversity of the Lake Ontario watershed introduces students, parents, and teachers to the Atlantic salmon species, their history in Ontario, and the restoration efforts to bring back a healthy and self-sustaining population to Lake Ontario. Salmon raised in the hatchery become part of the overall number released into the target streams annually. The Classroom Hatchery program creates long-term environmental awareness and engagement among participating students at the schools.

The goals of the program are to:

- engage students in a large-scale, historic restoration effort;
- deliver messages on habitat, stewardship, and biodiversity using Atlantic salmon and the Greenbelt as tangible examples of those concepts;
- foster a sense of ownership and stewardship towards an environment that now has “their” fish; and
- achieve a broader public awareness for the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program as the students take their experiences with the classroom hatcheries back to their families and communities



"Classroom Hatchery Program | Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program." *Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Classroom Hatchery Program*. Bring Back the Salmon, n.d. Web. 15 Oct. 2014.
http://www.bringbackthesalmon.ca/?page_id=59.