

Storytelling Best Practices for Outdoor Education

A Camp Kawartha Environment Centre Seasonal Field Guide

Background

Camp Kawartha Environment Centre (CKEC) staff recognize a need to secure their valuable **oral stories and place-based environmental knowledge**. They require a resource that fosters **environmental literacy** while preserving staff narratives.

Purpose

To develop a tailored and highly localized field guide for CKEC, based on land-based stories and experiences shared by the staff.

Research Questions

1. What makes a **good story**?
2. What are effective **methods** of environmental education across all ages?
3. What **strategies** are educators deploying?
4. What species are present around the Trent Nature Areas?
5. How can CKEC educators incorporate their experience with the land into the final field guide?

Methodology

Literature Review

Semi-Structured Informal Interviews with CKEC Staff

- Connected with core staff members who intend to use this resource.
- Interviews occurred in Sept and Oct of 2024 as 1 on 1 short hikes on site.
- Organized interview notes to visualize overlap between the species and themes educators shared. This list forms the inspiration for the field guide ensuring staff narratives remain the focus.

Interview Findings

Story Themes

Resilience →	White Cedar
Patience →	Flying Squirrel
Animal Tracking →	White-Tailed Deer
Curiosity →	Black-Capped Chickadee
Animal Behaviours →	Ermine
Environmental History →	Apple Tree

Iconic Species

CKEC educators share their experiences with iconic species on the land and how those interactions form story themes for the final field guide.

Summary of Literature Review



Field Guide Example

The field guide includes over a **dozen stories**, images, photos, science-based fun facts, interactive features, a map and **seasonal organization**. Each story species name is translated into **four languages**: English, Latin, French and Anishinaabemowin.

Site Location



Credits: Eve Lockhart

The CKEC:

- Located South of the Trent Symons Campus.
- In the Trent Nature Area.
- A sustainable building.
- Hosts workshops, forest school, class trips and more!

Conclusion

Encouraging a hopeful and empathetic mindset among young people through **environmental literacy** and this **field guide** ensures they are better prepared to steward the land and face the future with **courage and clarity**.

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