

PROTECTING THE FUTURE OF OUR PLANET ONE SCHOOLYARD AT A TIME

"Biodiversity boosts ecosystem productivity, where each species, no matter how small, has an important role to play." – Global Issues



VISION

The goal of *BIODIVERSITY IN THE SCHOOLYARD* is to develop an educational program that teaches the importance of biodiversity and offers practical means for teachers and students to follow in order to increase biodiversity in schoolyards.

A SEED WAS PLANTED

The journey of a small group of dedicated people began in 2010, the International Year of Biodiversity. They met to join forces and develop a *BIODIVERSITY IN THE SCHOOLYARD* table, a compilation of elementary level themes, activities and resources, as a first step in developing their "hands-on" program. Roland Chiasson of the *Cape Jourmain Nature Centre*, Serge LaRoche of the *Pays de Cocagne Sustainable Development Group*, with the support of Michelle Austin of *Francophone South School District* and funding from the *NB Wildlife Trust Fund* then took the next step, that of transforming the table into a forum.

On October 29th, 2011, in collaboration with members of the *Sustainability Education Alliance of New Brunswick*, the group organized a consultation session inviting educators from South-East New Brunswick. The objective was to develop a system of criteria to identify, create and share activities addressing the question of biodiversity in schoolyards. As a result, a working group was formed, the initial content of the program was determined and the decision was made to concentrate its efforts on a complete working model for 2 of the 15 activities listed in the table.

CONDITIONS FOR GROWTH

In discussing the ideal setting for this initiative to take root, the group decided upon three essential criteria. Activities in the forum:

- 1) Must be related to the NB francophone study program
- 2) Must be focused on biodiversity
- 3) Must include an interactive hands-on element

As a result, a first version of the *BIODIVERSITY IN THE SCHOOLYARD* resource kit has been developed. The resource allows educators to undertake stimulating activities with students in order to better understand the importance and the role of biodiversity in their natural environment.

Each activity has its own lesson plan describing the objectives, the preparation, the layout and descriptive links necessary to complete the activity. The materials are available electronically therefore making them easily accessible and simple to print. The finalized activity resources are now available for download on the *Pays de Cocagne Sustainable Development Group* website (www.ecopaysdecocagne.ca).



THE JOURNEY CONTINUES...

Members of the Professional Development Team of *Sustainability Education Alliance of New Brunswick* have agreed to carry the project in order to continue exchanging ideas. With the help of educators from across the province, the committee will continue the work of developing a bilingual program of action that promotes biodiversity in schools and educational facilities throughout New Brunswick.