



Mr. Jeff Bradshaw
President
Canadian Camping Association
3584 Commerce Court
Burlington, Ontario
L7N 3L7

Dear Mr. Bradshaw,

The purpose of this presentation is to request your assistance in helping the Outdoor Council of Canada (OCC) to achieve our mission to promote and enable accessible education and recreation in the outdoor environment.

The OCC is a nationally incorporated, non-profit, practitioner-owned organization that encourages, promotes and facilitates safety-oriented outdoor education and recreation.

The OCC provides high quality education in wilderness leadership training for entry level and developing outdoor professionals. The organization advocates for the outdoor industry and brings practitioners together for networking and professional development.

Our goal is to nurture the long-standing Canadian tradition of connection and involvement with the natural world in practical and accessible ways. We are concerned that the decreasing involvement of Canadians in outdoor activities is a contributing factor to these important issues:

- Connection to the natural world and the understanding of our impact and dependence on it is declining.
- Low physical activity level results in increased absenteeism from work, lowered productivity, and increased health care costs.
- Support for our natural heritage and use of our national park system and other wilderness areas is waning.

Experiential education in natural environments provides unique and valuable learning opportunities. The OCC believes that the preparation and training of competent outdoor leaders across Canada will aid in reversing these trends. The

foundation course for entry-level outdoor leaders in this initiative is the Leadership Level 1 program.

About the Leadership Level 1 Program

The OCC is committed to making affordable, accessible and appropriate training and certification available for entry-level outdoor leaders.

The 2-day Leadership Level 1 (LL1) course will prepare new leaders to deliver a high quality experience to a group in straightforward outdoor terrain. The course provides a comprehensive introduction to the role of the new leader throughout the preparation, execution and debriefing of an outdoor activity. Major topics include: personal motivation, pre-event planning for quality and safety, team building, environmental responsibility, group management, emergency response and event debriefing.

Graduates of this program are designated as Leadership Level 1 (Hiking; or Water) leaders. To promote access and affordability, as additional activities are added (eg. winter, navigation or overnight programs) those with the LL1 certificate will be able to add these activities to their certification without retaking the leadership portion of the course, upon demonstrating activity specific competence. More experienced leaders looking to refresh and upgrade their skills will also find the LL1 course a great learning experience.

Successful graduates of the LL1 program will receive a one-year membership in the OCC and their certification level will be listed on the OCC National Outdoor Leader Certification database. The only requirement to maintain certification is a current membership in the OCC.

The Leadership Level 1 Camp Initiative

In the process of developing and testing the LL1 course, feedback from summer camps and outdoor education sites indicated that this could be a very useful and time efficient way of taking staff training to a higher level. However, these same sources indicated that for many organizations there could be a serious financial barrier to implementing the LL1 course for their staff and volunteers.

A one year membership for an individual in the OCC is \$20.00 and cost per person for course materials, certification and administration is an additional \$30.00. With many camps relying on donated funds and perpetually operating on tight budgets, even this relatively small cost is prohibitive.

The OCC believes that camps are one of the primary sites that are critical to the advancement of our mission to promote and enable accessible education and recreation in the outdoor environment.

For this reason, The National Board of the OCC has authorized an initiative to waive the first year membership fee and the per person administrative cost of the Leadership Level 1 course for the first 500 camp leaders that wish to take the course. In addition, many LL1 Instructors have agreed to volunteer their services to teach the course to camp leaders. We hope that this initiative will make the LL1 course available to a broad spectrum of camp leaders across Canada.

Camps that wish to take advantage of this initiative are invited to indicate their interest by going to the OCC website (www.outdoorcouncil.ca) and submitting the application form found under 'Leadership Level 1 Camp Initiative'.