

Robert R. Janes Award for Social Responsibility

KERRY WOOD NATURE CENTRE AND HISTORIC FORT NORMANDEAU



The Kerry Wood Nature Centre and Historic Fort Normandeau has situated itself as a hub of environmental education, sustainability, and engagement with nature for the Red Deer community. Located at the entrance to the Gaetz Lakes Sanctuary beside the Red Deer River, the Centre educates and engages with Red Deer residents to promote sustainability through the integration of environmental responsibility into every aspect of the site's operations.

In an effort to balance ecological and fiscal responsibility, the Centre refers to two key questions before making any major decision:

- 1 Will this reduce our ecological footprint?**
- 2 Will this save us money?**

One of the Centre's key initiatives was to move the Kerry Wood Nature Centre towards the use of solar power as its primary source of electricity. As part of its commitment to modelling environmental responsibility, the Centre tracks on its website the ways in which power is collected and how much the initiative is saving the site in terms of CO₂ emissions and costs, providing a practical, understandable model to its community of the ecological and financial benefits of relying on renewable energy.

To complement its institutional efforts, the Centre works closely with other organizations in order to engage and strengthen relationships with the diverse population of Red Deer. The Centre's partnership with Central Alberta Refuges Effort (CARE) supports new Canadians by providing space for English language classes and family programming. The Centre, with CARE, also offers overnight camping workshops to demonstrate the impact of our natural environment on our customs, culture, and community, and encourage an appreciation of nature in a safe and accessible way. A long standing collaboration with the City of Red Deer's Sustainable Initiatives Department encourages the two organizations to share resources, collaborate on projects, and cross-promote events to wider audiences. Engaging the public through these innovative programs and partnerships instills a true appreciation of Alberta's natural heritage, and fosters an understanding of the importance of environmentally sustainable activities.

Through its interpretation and preservation of the natural and cultural history of Red Deer and its dedication to prioritizing and exploring innovative solutions related to environmental sustainability, the Kerry Wood Nature Centre and Historic Fort Normandeau demonstrates a true commitment to affecting real change. By reducing their impact on the natural environment and providing inclusive programs, the Centre helps to create a vibrant, and sustainable, community.