



Institute for **Outdoor Learning**

## **Climate Change and Biodiversity Position Statement**

18 December 2019

**The scientific community is now in agreement that there is a process of climate change happening as a result of human activity.**

This human-influenced climate change has been caused by burning coal, oil and gas, deforestation, using fertilisers containing nitrogen and increasing livestock farming. These activities release carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide which act like greenhouse glass preventing the sun's heat leaking back into space and increasing the global temperature. The international community, in the Paris Agreement, has recognized the need to stop the temperature increase from going beyond 1.5°C.

See the UN Paris Agreement <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/what-is-the-paris-agreement>

### **How does climate change affect the earth?**

The global sea level is rising as a result of the polar ice melting and water warms expands, a combination of these causing coastal flooding. The weather patterns are changing with extreme weather events becoming more severe and frequent. The people living in developing countries who have the least resources are most affected. Climate change is not exclusively a human problem, plants are unable to adapt quickly enough, fish cannot survive in the warmer waters, many animals will have to move to new locations.

See The State of Nature Report 2019 <https://www.outdoor-learning-research.org/Evidence/ArtMID/659/ArticleID/42/State-of-Nature-Report-2019>

### **Loss of biodiversity is just as catastrophic as climate change**

Nature and its vital contributions to people, which together embody biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are deteriorating worldwide. The biosphere, upon which humanity as a whole depends, is being altered to an unparalleled degree across all spatial scales. Biodiversity – the diversity within

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species, between species and of ecosystems – is declining faster than at any time in human history.

See the IPBES Global Assessment Summary for Policymakers

<https://ipbes.net/news/global-assessment-summary-policymakers-final-version-now-available>

## **What responsibility do Outdoor Learning Professionals have to sustain our climate and biodiversity?**

The Outdoor Learning Professional is ideally placed to influence and educate those we come into contact with, children and adults, about climate change and biodiversity threats, impact and possible solutions.

As a professional a certain level of competency and accuracy is expected, you can only deliver this if you are up to date with the latest scientific advice and can use this creatively to make a positive difference.

Section 4 of the ***IOL Code of Professional Conduct (Members responsibility for Sustainable Outdoor Practice and Care of the Environment)*** requires:

- 4.1 Members should conserve the natural environment, endorsing the principles of sustainable use and minimum impact.
- 4.2 Members should be sensitive to the impact of their operation on the local community and cultural setting within which they work and minimise any adverse effects.
- 4.3 Members should seek to develop their own, and others', understanding of the environment and the behaviours that can adversely affect it.

## **Outdoor Learning Professionals should therefore:**

1. Acknowledge that there is a consensus among scientists trained in climate science that climate change and loss of biodiversity is occurring.
2. Ensure that their professional training and CPD equips them to provide accurate information, education and advice on climate change and biodiversity. IOL members should not speak beyond their particular expertise and training.
3. Consider climate change and biodiversity in professional decision-making, maximising opportunities to reduce emissions and harm affecting their clients, the public and the environment. If the failure to appropriately address climate-change is widespread within the sector, the collective impact of these professional decisions may be still greater.

## **At a minimum, the Institute calls on the outdoor learning community to be able to:**

- Identify and explain greenhouse gas emissions
- Explain how climate change impacts on the environment

- Describe threats to biodiversity at a global and local level
- Be aware of the impact of outdoor activities on climate change and biodiversity
- Be prepared for questions about climate change and how you operate
- Encourage engagement in pro-climate and pro-biodiversity behaviours
- Follow the principles of sustainable use and minimum impact to the natural environment

## Resources

The Institute signposts to a wide variety of resources available from the Climate Change and Biodiversity Position Statement web page.

<https://www.outdoor-learning.org/Good-Practice/Good-Practice/Climate-Change>

The searchable Horizons magazine archive holds many articles highlighting viewpoints and practical tools for increasing awareness and action to support biodiversity and helpful climate change.

<https://www.outdoor-learning.org/Good-Practice/Good-Practice/Statements-of-Good-Practice>

## About the Institute

The Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL) champions safe activities and effective learning in the outdoors. We are a professional membership institute working towards an application for a Royal Charter.

Our members include paid and voluntary instructors, leaders, managers, teachers and researchers who design, facilitate and evaluate purposeful outdoor learning experiences.

- We support our members by providing professional recognition, a clear voice to policy makers, communities of practice, research hubs, occupational standards, guidance on practice, and sector quality assurance.
- Our mission is to increase participation in outdoor learning and to recognise and improve the quality of outdoor learning provision in the UK.

The Institute is a registered charity governed by a voluntary Board of Trustees elected by a membership network representing more than 5,000 skilled practitioners, educators and managers. We are driven by a vision of Outdoor Learning as a highly valued form of development, education and employment in UK society.



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