



## Special Issue of Australian Journal of Environmental Education:

### **Wilding Pedagogies: Theorising, practicing, and imagining towards a changing, decolonising, and reconciling world**

**Guest Editors:** Michael Paulsen, Linda Wilhelmsson, Sean Blenkinsop, Bob Jickling, and Amy Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles

#### **Call for Proposals**

In recent years, there has been a growing discussion around the urgent need to decolonise, reconceptualise, reorient, change, and even reconcile relations with the more-than-human world (Abram, 1996; Haraway 2016; Whyte, 2021). These calls have come from myriad frameworks and orientations. Posthuman, ecofeminist, Indigenous, the arts and creativities, radical geographical, and critical cultural studies to name but a few. Many of these discussions imply the need for substantive change not just at the levels of personal behaviour and individual responsibility but at the cultural level as well, including: its assumptions, values, ontologies, epistemologies, politics (Biesta, 2021; Nelson, 2020; Paulsen, 2022).

If these conversations are correct and the change needed to have a chance at responding to the unrelenting ecological, social and cultural challenges, pressing in upon many earthly beings then it is our assertion, as the guest editors for this special issue, that education, but not just any education, must be at the heart of the response. For cultural change is an educational undertaking (Blenkinsop, et. al., 2022).

However, what is also clear is that this is not an undertaking for the *status quo* generic colonial European forms that tend to dominate public educations as enacted around the globe (Jickling et. al, 2018). In response we have seen grassroots and emerging educational responses, some aimed at re-wilding, some at cultural change, some at shifting from scientism to other knowledges such Indigenous sciences (Whyte, 2018, 2020, 2021), some arising from diverse communities, and still others focused on particular lands and territories (Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles et al, 2020; Green & Dymont, 2018; Irwin, 2021; Paulsen et al, 2022; Quay, 2021; Rousell and Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, 2023; Sobel, 2017).

It is our contention that for substantive change to happen it is important to grow alliances, understandings, and cross-pollinations while at the same time deepening theoretical and philosophical underpinnings and expanding pedagogical and creative practices between, amongst, and beyond these often isolated and presumptively distinct environmental education offerings. The aim then for this special issue is to do some of this challenging and necessary expanding and coming together work.

The call is inspired, though not limited, by the Wild Pedagogies Conference held in Sweden from August 20-25, 2023, which brought together 35 scholars and students to engage primarily with one of the recent responses to this challenge of cultural change, Wild Pedagogies (Jickling et. al., 2018). With a focus on just one of the six touchstones “nature as co-teacher” (Blenkinsop & Beeman, 2010), the gathering was filled with explorations, discussions, critical examinations, and pedagogical experiences that sought to think into strategies and models for ‘wilding’ education in a local, mountainous, outdoor Nordic context. Yet, it also became clear that without expanding these discussions critically, theoretically, pedagogically and creatively, beyond the single touchstone, outside the Nordic context, and even beyond the most radical edge of the

practices of environmental education the chance for eco-social-cultural change that was capturing the imaginations and perhaps even driving the actions of the educator participants was doomed to fail.

In light of all this, the Australian Journal of Environmental Education invites submissions that speak to those desires to respond to the world in rich, meaningful, and substantive ways. Submissions will likely explore, critically examine, philosophically challenge, imaginatively engage, practically and creatively embody how the theory and practice of environmental education can be re/imagined, re/conceptualised, re/created, re/turned – re/approached in “wilding” ways.

Ways that release some of the colonial, control-based, individualised, anthropocentric, patriarchal, Western (minority), anti-environmental aspects of the conventional, techno-bureaucratic mainstream education systems (Monbiot, 2014; Aikens, 2021) and at the same time haunt environmental education (Jickling & Sterling, 2017).

Key questions that follow are: What does it mean to open wild, regenerative, lifeful, life-friendly, and/or re-wilded educational spaces, moments, and imaginaries with/as/are nature and/or the more-than-human living world as co-teacher? How can it be done? Where and when? With whom? With what aims? Why do it or not do it? With what consequences and at what risks? What critical reflections does it initiate or call for? How can wild, lifeful, life-friendly, rewilding or similar conceptualisations be understood beyond colonial, modernistic and eco-destructive frameworks?

We welcome papers that:

- critically analyse and consider practical and creative examples that embrace wild imaginaries, perceive nature as a co-teacher, recognise the inherent rights to be heard, and responded to, of all people and natural beings, and/or are busily challenging established educational assumptions, ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies, norms, and practices in whatever ways make sense for their particular ecological, social and/or cultural systems;
- critically discuss the possibilities and obstacles of more radical and creative educational strategies that open up teaching, pedagogy, methodology, and education to meaningful interaction with the more-than-human world;
- examine and explore human relationships with and learning from the more-than-human world, recognising human’s inherent place within the more-than-human. Endeavors that may foster life-friendly attunement, practical and creative applications that might expand, make more fluid, the way humans are and can be within the living world;
- seek to critically question up to and including all the assumptions of environmental education including understandings of wild, education, schooling and/or culture. This may also include, but is not limited to, works that challenge and perhaps ecologise theories of knowledge, questions of being and ethics/values certainly;
- Trouble the uncomfortable and complicated juxtaposition of re-wilding education with anthropogenic climate change. Contributions might include research on re-conceptualising climate change and climate change education applying re-wilding, non-Western (majority), and/or Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, axiologies, theories, methodologies, creative practices, and pedagogies; and,
- examine practice-based and creative work, translations of wild pedagogies or other change-focused offerings into actual lived pedagogies. Again, this might include but is not limited to examples of nature as co-teacher, the challenges of working within whatever system or one’s classroom setting whilst desire to ecologise education, deschooling and change culture, the joys of integrating community and holding space for deep relationality, or the search for practices that support mutual flourishing.

By addressing these issues and creating this special issue we seek to name the importance of actively and critically pushing the boundaries of conventional education, to encourage dialogue and creative

re/imagining, to posit environmental educators as activists and creatives in the heart of this undertaking of cultural change, to better understand the work – theoretically, methodologically, and pedagogically – that still needs doing, and to celebrate the wilding that already exists and is still ongoing.

#### Timeline:

- Call for papers: February 2024
- Abstract proposals due: 15th April 2024 (accepted proposals notified in May)
- Manuscripts due: 16th September 2024
- Publication of Special Issue: Volume 41 - Issue 1 (2025) Manuscripts published on FirstView ASAP.

Send abstract proposals to Michael Paulsen ([mpaulsen@sdu.dk](mailto:mpaulsen@sdu.dk)). Abstract proposals include the title with a 300 word abstract, plus references.

#### References:

- Abram, D. (1996). *The spell of the sensuous: Perception and language in a more-than-human world*. Pantheon Books.
- Aikens, K. (2021). Imagining a wilder policy future through interstitial tactics. *Policy Futures in Education*, 19(3), 269–290.
- Biesta, Gert (2021). *World-centred education: A view for the present*. Routledge.
- Blenkinsop, S., & Beeman, C. (2010). The world as co-teacher: Learning to work with a peerless colleague. *The Trumpeter*, 26(3), 27–39.
- Blenkinsop, S., Morse, M., & Jickling, B. (2022). Wild pedagogies: Opportunities and challenges for practice. In Paulsen, M., Jagodzinski & Hawke, S. M. (Eds.). (2022). *Pedagogy in the Anthropocene: Re-wilding education for a new earth*. Springer Nature., 33-51.
- Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, A., Lasczik, A., Wilks, J., Logan, M., Turner, A., & Boyd, W. (2020). *Touchstones for Deterritorialising Socioecological Learning: The Anthropocene, Posthumanism and Common Worlds as Creative Milieux*. London, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Green, M., & Dymont, J. (2018). Wilding pedagogy in an unexpected landscape: Reflections and possibilities in initial teacher education. *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education*, 21(3), 277–292.
- Haraway, D. J. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.
- Irwin, R. (2021). Rewilding policy futures: Maori whakapapa and the ecology of the subject. *Policy Futures in Education*, 19(3), 307–323.
- Jickling, B., & Sterling, S. (Eds.). (2017). *Post-sustainability and environmental education: Remaking education for the future*. Springer.
- Jickling, B., Blenkinsop, S., Timmerman, N., De Dannan Sitka-Sage, M. (Eds.) (2018). *Wild pedagogies: Touchstones for re-negotiating education and the environment in the Anthropocene*. Palgrave.
- Monbiot, G. (2014). *Feral: Rewilding the land, the sea, and human life*. University of Chicago Press.
- Nelson, E. S. (2020). *Daoism and environmental philosophy: Nourishing life*. Routledge.
- Paulsen, M. (2022). Oceanic and Tethysian Being-in-the-world: An Essay on the Human Self and World Understanding in the Anthropocene. *Visions for Sustainability*, (18), 107-123.

- Paulsen, M. (2023). Outdoor Environmental Education in the Anthropocene: Beyond In/Out. In *Outdoor Environmental Education in the Contemporary World* (pp. 95-108). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Paulsen, M., Jagodzinski & Hawke, S. M. (Eds.). (2022). *Pedagogy in the Anthropocene: Re-wilding education for a new earth*. Springer Nature.
- Quay, J. (2021). Wild and willful pedagogies: Education policy and practice to embrace the spirits of a more-than-human world. *Policy Futures in Education*, 19(3), 291–306.
- Rousell, D., & Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles, A. (2022). *Posthuman research playspaces: Climate child imaginaries*. Taylor & Francis.
- Sobel, D. (2017). Outdoor school for all: Reconnecting children to nature. *EarthEd: Rethinking education on a changing planet*, 23-33.
- Whyte, K. P. (2018). Indigenous science (fiction) for the Anthropocene: Ancestral dystopias and fantasies of climate change crises. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 1(1-2), 224-242. doi:10.1177/2514848618777621
- Whyte, K. P. (2020). Against Crisis Epistemology. In B. Hokowhitu, A. Moreton-Robinson, L. Tuhiwai-Smith, C. Andersen, & S. Larkin (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies* (pp. 52-64): Routledge.
- Whyte, K. P. (2021). Time as Kinship. In J. Cohen & S. Foote (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Environmental Humanities* (pp. 39-55). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

#### **Guest Editors:**

**Michael Paulsen:** Associate Professor in Pedagogy and head of CUHRE (Centre for Understanding Human Relationship with the Environment), at the University of Southern Denmark. Author and editor of several books and special issues. He holds a Ph.D. in Social Philosophy. Currently he is working on a pedagogical theory of life-friendly education situated in the Anthropocene. Together with Linda Wilhelmsson, he co-organised the international Wild Pedagogies conference Nature as Co-teacher, in Enaforsholm, August 2023. See <https://portal.findresearcher.sdu.dk/en/persons/mpaulsen>

**Linda Wilhelmsson:** Senior Lecturer in Education at Mid Sweden University, holds a Ph. D in Education. In her dissertation, she focused on questions of democracy and student influence in teaching practices. She is the research leader for Critical Perspectives in Educational Research (KUF) and a member of the Editorial Board for Educational Science Studies at Mid Sweden University. Linda Co-organised the Wild Pedagogies conference together with Michael. Currently, she is working on a project “Locally relevant education for sustainable development, a didactic practical school research project in sparsely populated areas” and writings about Bildung and Eco-Democracy in Educational Settings. Linda is also a member of the Eco-Research Group at Simon Fraser University in BC, Canada. See [Linda Wilhelmsson | miun.se](https://www.miun.se/en/people/linda-wilhelmsson)

**Sean Blenkinsop:** Professor in the faculty of education at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. His research explores teacher education, school change, and the challenges of justice and the environmental crisis in a rapidly changing world. He has, for the last 15 years, also been involved in creating and researching three innovative public elementary schools in British Columbia that are focused on being much more community, place, and nature-based in both pedagogy and curriculum. Important strands in this work include ideas related to nature as co-teacher, questions of equity, teacher as activist, cultural change, and eco-social justice. His two most recent books are: *Ecoportraiture: The Art of Research when Nature Matters* published by Peter Lang in 2022; and, *Education as Practice of Eco-social-cultural change* published by Palgrave-McMillan in 2023.

**Bob Jickling:** Professor Emeritus at Lakehead University and has interests in environmental philosophy; environmental, experiential, and outdoor education; and philosophy of education. In his most recent book, *Wild Pedagogies: Touchstones for Re-Negotiating Education and the Environment in the Anthropocene* he and others of the Crex Crex Collective attempt to find openings for radical re-visioning of education. As a longtime wilderness traveler, much of his inspiration is derived from the landscape of his home in Canada's Yukon.

**Amy Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles:** Professor of Education and Sustainability at Southern Cross University (SCU). She is the Executive Dean of SCU's Faculty of Education, as well as the Research Leader of the 'Sustainability, Environment, and the Arts in Education' (SEAE) Research Centre. Professor Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles's research centres on climate change, childhoodnature, posthuman philosophy, and child-framed research methodologies. She is particularly focused on the pivot points between education, science, and philosophy. She has led over 40 national/international research projects, and is presently the lead researcher on a 2024 Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery grant on climate change education on/with Country. She has published more than 150 publications with her latest book entitled 'Posthuman Research Playspaces: Climate Child Imaginaries' (with Rousell, Routledge).