EVALUATON REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

ANTICIPATED USE AND PERCEIVED BENEFITS

There was a universal embracing of the YouthSafe Manitoba (YSM) schools resource package by virtually all 200 plus participants who attended one of the six workshops held around Manitoba the first week of May 2004. Almost all 163 teachers, administrators, trustees and service providers who completed written evaluation forms, regardless of context, said or suggested that they would use the resources to increase their effectiveness, efficiency, and economy of effort in and peace of mind related to managing the risks associated with field trips and/or outdoor pursuits.

Dozens of teachers and administrators commented on the quality and/or comprehensiveness of the content of the CD-ROM and/or print copy (hard copy of all the CD-ROM elements). Many noted appreciation of the fact that the YSM package is highly research-based. Respondents found the level of information provided appropriate for their applications; complete, yet well-organized and manageable. In short, the content made sense and was accessible and attainable.

Improved Effectiveness:

Most noted specifically, or strongly inferred, that use of the resource would increase the quality of planning and/or administration of trips and lead to safer trips for students. Several noted reductions in exposure to potential legal liability. Where respondents identified particular elements of the package they valued, the most oft-noted items included checklists, forms and the *Safety First! Guidelines for Off-site Activities for Manitoba Schools*.

Improved Efficiency:

Many participants, both administrators and teachers, noted that they found the format of the resource very user-friendly. They praised its layout, organization, and the versatility the CD-ROM Word documents offered in adapting checklists, planning tools, instructional materials and/or forms. Many suggested, directly or indirectly, that they would experience significant increases in their efficiency (i.e., save time, streamline paperwork) in planning and/or supporting trips by using the tools and resources in the YSM package.

Improved Economies:
Several referred to the economies to be gained by using the research-based YSM resource package to review and/or modify their policies, procedures, forms, and checklists, saving significant quantities of time and money researching out all the alternatives. Teachers and administrators also referred to the economies to be gained by avoiding having every teacher re-invent the wheel in researching out and/or drafting from scratch, items like safety plans, gear lists and instructional/learning materials.

Improved Peace of Mind:
Many teachers and administrators also specifically noted increased confidence in their field trip planning and risk management, and increased peace of mind for all involved that safety issues have been attended to. Several noted the value of YSM providing support for ongoing outdoor pursuits and educational field trip experiences for students; things they believe in and want very much to retain in their divisions/districts and/or schools.

TRAINING WORKSHOP REVIEW

Satisfaction With Content and Process:
Participants generally reported a very high degree of satisfaction with the training workshop they participated in. They appreciated the time spent in the variety of hands-on exercises, discussions and presentations included. They liked being able to apply a specific trip to the content in each section (e.g., finding the relevant *Safety First! Guidelines*, first aid capacity requirements, gear list, elements of the safety plan).

Suggestions For Improvement:
Many participants offered no suggestions for improvement of their workshop, or said they liked it as is. The most common suggestion that did emerge was for more YSM training opportunities provided for their colleagues and/or relevant others. Additionally, many wanted more time allotted for the workshops. These respondents thought the additional time could be spent interacting with the resource (e.g., planning a trip in detail, discussing issues and interacting with colleagues). Many wanted to be able to take the training copies of the resources home with them.

THE BOTTOM LINE – WHAT PEOPLE WOULD TELL THEIR SUPERINTENDENT

The final question on each evaluation form asked respondents what the researchers consider one of the acid tests for a resource and workshop of this nature, “What would you tell your superintendent about YSM?” Feedback from participants across the spectrum was consistent with data secured re: other elements of this evaluation study. Almost all of the respondents used the opportunity presented here to share their reflections of the YSM package as a **high quality, relevant and/or much needed resource** in their division/district. Additionally, most directly or indirectly suggested that their division/district **use YSM in the development or revision of their field trip policies/procedures and/or that it be written into these documents**. Several specifically noted a need to write the *Safety First! Guidelines* into their policy to support field trips and outdoor pursuits. Finally, many participants noted a need for their superintendent, other administrators, teachers, etc. to **receive training in YSM**.

CONCLUSIONS

In sum, the Y*outhSafe Manitoba: Field Trip Safety for Schools* resource has been very warmly received by virtually all educators and service providers who attended a training workshop. Because of the consistent, positive, overlapping themes dominant across the verbal and written data sets, the researcher is confident concluding that there were no significant differences in overall value of the resource and satisfaction with the workshops emerging here in responses between/among:

- teachers, administrators (superintendents and principals), trustees or service providers,
- participants from different sizes or categories of school jurisdictions,
- participants from different regions of the province,
- those involved in different contexts (e.g., grades, subjects),
- those with different levels of experience,
- those who chose to attend vs. those sent to a workshop by their employer, or
- those already familiar with the resource vs. those seeing it for the first time.

The resource is perceived by almost all who have worked with it in a workshop to improve their effectiveness, efficiency, and/or economy in tasks associated with risk assessment and risk management of field trips and/or outdoor pursuits. Many feel a greater degree of personal and professional confidence that they now know and can meet the standard of care required in this functional area, and that their trips will be safer as a result.

The findings in Manitoba with respect to the desire to have YSM integrated into their policies and to have colleagues and others trained in it were stronger than was articulated by a similar number of teachers and administrators participating in YSM workshops in Alberta. This may be related to: the proven track record of the resource in Alberta, increased confidence Manitobans had because of the additional time they had to review and work with the resource over their winter pilot, and the mixed character of the audiences (teachers, administrators, trustees and service providers). Also, all but one of the Alberta workshops were shorter in duration (typically 3-3 _ hours in length) versus Manitoba's 5 _ hours workshops.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School divisions/districts should secure a site-license for YSM so their staff may take advantage of this resource. The overwhelmingly positive regard for this resource by the diverse audience of informed evaluators reported herein provides strong evidence of YouthSafe Manitoba as an appropriate and relevant reference for all schools in Manitoba (K-S4) who provide off-site activities, outdoor pursuits and/or travel excursions.
2. Divisions are encouraged to review the resource, particularly the *Safety First! Guidelines*, and *Policy Development Resource* with an eye to using these materials to revise relevant divisional/district policies and/or procedures.
3. Divisions/districts are encouraged to arrange for training of their staff to maximize effectiveness, efficiency, economy of effort and peace of mind in field trip planning, leadership, instruction, modeling and administration.
4. School divisions/districts, administrators and teachers are encouraged to continue to support or reinstate outdoor education/outdoor pursuits programs and to act to address real risks while minimizing the impact of unfounded fears of physical and legal risks.

5. YouthSafe Outdoors is encouraged to provide a train-the-trainer program to encourage and support local long-term internal training capacity in the province.
6. YouthSafe Outdoors is encouraged to conduct ongoing research and updates of evolving guidelines, trip leadership and instruction resources, etc. and provide these to end-users at fair market value.
7. YouthSafe Outdoors is encouraged to make available hard (print) copies of the resource for users who prefer a printed copy alone or in addition to an electronic/CD-ROM copy.