

World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE)

<https://www.wfae.net/>

Purpose and Structure

The WFAE is:

“An international association of affiliated organizations and individuals who share a common concern for the state of the world’s soundscapes. Our members represent a multi-disciplinary spectrum of individuals engaged in the study of the social, cultural, and ecological aspects of the sonic environment across the world.

“The WFAE works in collaboration with its world-wide network of affiliated organizations to produce and promote research, education, events, conferences and publications revolving around the interdisciplinary field of acoustic ecology.”¹

“Currently, seven World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE) Affiliate Organizations represent the interests of individuals and carry out activities in our network according to local, cultural, and national affinities.”²

The affiliate organizations under the WFAE umbrella are:

- *Australian Forum for Acoustic Ecology (AFAE)*
- *Canadian Association for Sound Ecology/
Association canadienne pour l'écologie sonore (CASE/ACÉS)*
- *Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology (SAES/FSAE)*
- *Hellenic Society for Acoustic Ecology (EEAO/HSAE)*
- *Japanese Association for Sound Ecology (JASE)*
- *Midwest Society for Acoustic Ecology (MSAE)*
- *UK and Ireland Soundscape Community (UKISC)*

Formation in 1993

The WFAE was founded in August of 1993 at *The Tuning of the World: The First International Conference on Acoustic Ecology*, in Banff, Alberta, the timing of which also marked Murray Schafer’s 60th birthday.³ Regarding Schafer’s contributions to the field of acoustic ecology, conference director Timothy Buell wrote:

What better title for our gathering than *The Tuning of the World*? Murray is one of those rare composers who can articulate his vision not only through his music but through the written word as well. To *The Tuning of the World*, we can add Murray’s other landmark writings on the soundscape and on music education, which teach us not only what to listen for but also how to listen.⁴

In his list of acknowledgements for the many individuals responsible in making such a historic event possible at The Banff Centre, Buell concluded,

Finally, a personal note of gratitude to R. Murray Schafer. It is because of his pathbreaking work in founding the World Soundscape Project that we are all here to explore ways of “tuning” the world. I know you all join with me in wishing Murray the best on his 60th birthday.⁵

“World Listening Day” and the *World Listening Project*

<https://www.worldlisteningproject.org/>

Another global sound ecology venture/organization which honours Murray Schafer’s birthday—although this time on an ongoing annual basis—is “**World Listening Day**” organized by the **World Listening Project (WLP)**:

Each year a new World Listening Day theme is created by an artist or researcher to encourage local communities to design and execute their programming on July 18, the birthdate of R. Murray Schafer, and to share documentation or digital artifacts created on that day.⁶

Founded in 2008, the World Listening Project states its mission as follows (invoking a Schafer maxim in the process):

The World Listening Project (WLP)’s goal is to educate and raise awareness of our sonic environment both as a source of information and aesthetic enjoyment. Listening is basic to the health and survival of all life on Earth. Listening is a complex way to know and understand our world. In some human societies listening is under-valued and under-used. As a result, individuals and societies succumb to a range of negative impacts that include psychological and cultural disconnection, and misunderstanding, with measurable outcomes including hearing loss and destruction of natural habitats. “When we stop listening, noise happens,” said R. Murray Schafer (b. Sarnia, Ontario, Canada 18 July 1933, d. 14 August 2021).⁷

¹ <https://www.wfae.net/>

² <https://www.wfae.net/affiliate-membership.html>

³ Conference dates were Sunday, August 8th through Saturday, August 14th, 1993, opening three weeks after Schafer’s 60th birthday on Sunday, July 18th.

⁴ “The Tuning of the World”: *The First International Conference on Acoustic Ecology*, official conference booklet, (Banff, Alberta: The Banff Centre/The U. of Calgary, 1993, 60 pages), 4.

⁵ “The Tuning of the World,” official conference booklet, p. 7.

⁶ <https://www.worldlisteningproject.org/about-us/>

⁷ <https://www.worldlisteningproject.org/about-us/>