

President's Message

Happy New Year, EEAI members! I sincerely hope that you all had a wonderfully festive and non-stressful holiday season and ended 2011 on a high note! It sure was a great year for the organization! Some of the highlights:

- 32 new members since the 2010 conference
- 158 current members
- 68 attendees to the 2011 annual conference at Turkey Run AND conference finances tipped into the black... always a nice bonus!
- Attendance to an NAAEE Affiliate Leadership Summit focused on strategic planning
- Donation of our first affiliate basket to the NAAEE auction – our basket fetched \$55!
- Completion of the first draft of K-12 Guidelines for the Indiana Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP)
- Incorporation of the Indiana Environmental Education Council and the Environmental Literacy Plan working group into EEAI
- Construction of a new EEAI website... to be unveiled SOON!
- Editing of the EEAI bylaws... to be reviewed and approved in 2012.

And 2012 is going to be a busy and productive year as well. We are planning to:

- Write a strategic plan and a fundraising plan for the organization
- Apply (again) for an EPA grant, and potentially additional grants, to fund our ELP efforts
- Organize the 2012 EEAI Annual Conference around the theme of Environmental Literacy to help move that initiative forward. The structure of the conference will differ slightly from those of recent years
 - Friday, October 5 - Pre-Conference Activities
 - Saturday, October 6 - Main Conference Day
 - Sunday, October 7 - Challenge Course Activities focused on Team Building
 - Don't worry, we'll maintain your favorite conference elements – the hospitality suite, the EE songwriting contest, the awards banquet, and the general camaraderie that comes with sharing time with like-minded and passionate people!
- Broaden stakeholder involvement in EEAI through work on the ELP
- Highlight an event in each of Indiana's eight regions.

I'm so excited to see our organization grow and our mission engage new partners our reputation spread! There's so much to be done to ensure that all Hoosiers have an opportunity to learn about and experience the natural environment... because that's the first step to stewardship. And widespread stewardship is what it will take to preserve our wild places, to improve living conditions for wildlife and for human life, and to give future generations a source of sustenance and serenity.

That's why we belong to this wonderful organization, right? So now, let's make it our collective mission to bring even more Hoosiers into the family! Let's see our village grow! Please see page 8 for a list of committees and working groups to see if there's a place you'd like to contribute some of your time and energy and ideas. We'd love to have you! And I'd love to hear your ideas as well! Send them my way... jansneddon@gmail.com.

So here's to a wonderful and productive 2012! Cheers!

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www.eeai.org



One Man's Perspective: An Inconvenient Truth *by Sam Carman*

Minnesota Project Learning Tree State Coordinator Laura Duffey recently published an article, "Top Ten Tips for Teaching Outside." The article was precipitated by a study done by Cynthia C. Gardner, assistant professor in the Department of Teacher Education at Lander University in Greenwood, South Carolina, titled, "Why Some Teachers are not using the Schoolyard Environment." Gardner taught at a school in South Carolina that had three designated outdoor teaching areas (a pine forest, pond, and wetland), yet observed very few teachers using those spaces. To find out why, Gardner distributed 50 surveys to K-5. She received 35 responses (although a small study, a 70% response rate is impressive). She found that most reported using one of the outdoor areas 1 to 5 times per year, but only one teacher used the outdoors more than 5 times per year. When asked to identify barriers to teaching outside, teachers from all grade levels cited the curriculum standards and lack of time as primary barriers. This is consistent with every study I've seen, including the formal assessment of Indiana educators that was done last year.

But there was another question on the survey that is much more revealing. When asked of the importance of incorporating natural areas into the curriculum, only 40% said it was important. And I suspect some of those responses were based on guilt — after all, who could feel good about saying that the natural environment is not important? (Well, apparently 60% of the surveyed teachers, I guess!)

Duffy's article goes on to outline tips for teaching outside that were gathered from classroom teachers—ten from the elementary level, ten from the middle level, and ten from the high school levels. All of these teachers were considered adept and experienced outdoor educators. While the tips are good and would be valuable for any teacher planning to take a class outdoors, I must go back to that survey question from Gardner's study about the importance of teaching outdoors. If most of the teachers do not consider it important, what is the likelihood that any number of tips will lure them outdoors? And what about those perceived barriers most teachers cite as the reasons they don't take students outdoors? Is the emphasis on standards and testing really to blame, or simply a convenient excuse not to leave the familiarity and comfort of the classroom to trek outdoors?

Believe me, I don't have much nice to say about the current trend to domesticate our children by testing them into submission. But ask any of the educators who routinely take their students outdoors and they will tell you that while high-stakes testing has put added pressures on both teachers and students, academic standards can still be addressed using the outdoor — IF a teacher believes that getting kids outdoors is important. I'm afraid the truth of the matter, as inconvenient and disheartening as it may be, is that most teachers just don't believe environmental education or getting kids outdoors is important enough to be a priority. So how do we convince them?

Views expressed are those of the author and are not endorsed or reviewed by EEAI.

Indiana's Environmental Literacy Plan and 2012 Conference Update – Volunteers Needed!

The Environmental Literacy Plan working group and other interested citizens will convene on Friday, January 20, 2012 from 10:00 – 12:00 at the Natural Resources Education Center (NREC) in Indianapolis to go over updates on the Environmental Literacy Plan progress and plan for 2012. The meeting will also be available live via webinar. At this meeting, the attendees will form committees, one of which will plan for the 2012 EEAI annual conference. The 2012 conference will focus on Indiana's Environmental Literacy Plan and will be held October 5-7 at Jameson Camp in Indianapolis.

Please contact Kara Salazar at salazark@iupui.edu to join the ELP working group or the 2012 conference planning committee, and to learn more about the January 20, 2012 meeting!

News from the Regions

Region 4

Greencastle High School teacher and long-time EEAI member John Garner and some of his students turned part of the high school parking lot into what appeared to be a yard sale this fall. Four couches and other furniture, clothing, tires, toys and many other household items were available for all to browse. Of course, these items may have been a bit soggy since they were pulled out of a 2 1/2 mile stretch of Big Walnut Creek during John's Environmental Science Club's clean-up effort. In addition to the items gracing the parking island, the clean-up effort netted about 50 large bags of trash. To see a photo of the "yard sale" and read more, go to <http://www.bannergraphic.com/story/1788108.html>.

EE is at the Heart of this GEEK

As the new person coordinating the regional chairs for EEAI, I will take some of the regional space to introduce myself. With that said, I hope that the next issue of CREED has so much regional news that there is no room for my comments. Here goes on a little background on EEAI's vice president, Bernadette de Leon...

When people hear that I manage a school technology office at Indiana University – Bloomington (IUB), they wonder what interest a geek could possibly have in outdoor environmental education. I have to admit that I was not exposed to many wild places living on the north side of Evansville. However, there were several small wood lots and fallow fields in my neighborhood. On further reflection, I remember the huge cemetery at the end of our road as well as a magical stream that ran along the back side of my family's two-acre lot. Just as Richard Louv describes in "Last Child in the Woods," these were the places that I learned to love nature (though I knew little of the science related to the wild things I observed).

As most children, I had an innate curiosity as I played in these natural areas near my home, and the simple beauty of nature drew me into learning. After my mother responded positively to my first attempt at flower arranging, I routinely gathered wildflower bouquets for her from my neighbor's field. I will never forget the day that one bunch of flowers seemed to spit seeds at us – randomly hitting a sibling, the ceiling and/or the walls. Only after a couple of hours of observing these intermittent events did I realize that a beak-like seed head was bursting as the water from the vase caused the pods to swell. After a few minutes of thought, I guessed that the plant was shooting its seeds as far away as possible during what the stem "sensed" was

the best time for germination – the wet season. About thirty years later, as I was working on my Biology degree, I learned that the unusual plant was American cranesbill (*Geranium maculatum*) and that my childhood hypothesis about its seed dispersal method was correct.

In a strange career path, my Environmental Science and Biology degrees kept pulling me towards computers, and when I went to work for the US Fish and Wildlife Service, it was as a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist who managed the servers and computers at the agency's Indiana office. I had the joy and privilege of working with 13 biologists on all their projects. Though I worked during the day on the digital side, I volunteered at night to help collect data on bats and owls. Imagine spending an evening with the world's foremost expert on the Indiana Bat and getting her observations on the species as she pulled them from the mist nets. What fun for someone who does not enjoy much fresh air during the day!

Thus, there are several take-home messages from this retrospection – which you probably already practice. First, encourage children to explore/discover the natural world, regardless of how small their particular patches may be. In fact, challenge them to find nature in their world, whether it be the crack in the sidewalk or a small urban tree. Second, remember that even though some grow up to have desk jobs, they can remain interested in what the natural world has to offer. In fact, those who sit behind a computer often crave nature. For example, I listen to live African wild sounds from a web cam (<http://www.wildearth.tv/petes-pond-mashatu-botswana-africa-waterhole-wildlive-webcam-live>) just so I can have some natural sounds in my office. Finally, the children who do grow up to be geeks can help educate via the internet, so collaborate with the geeks in your life to share the magic of nature with others. This is one geek who is willing to work with you to bring the world-wide WEB back to the natural phenomenon after which it was named.

If your events or activities do not appear on this page, be sure that you let your Regional Chairperson know about what's happening! See page 8 for a list of all EEAI Regional Chairs and their contact information.

It's News to Us!

Our CREED newsletter is intended to be a compilation of news by, about and for our members (that's YOU!) Lots of great EE is going on out there, but no one will know about it unless you're willing to share. So PLEASE send submissions for the newsletter to an EEAI Board member, your EEAI regional chairperson, or to the CREED editor (Sue Speichert, suespeichert@aol.com). Deadlines are March 1, June 1, September 1 and December 1.



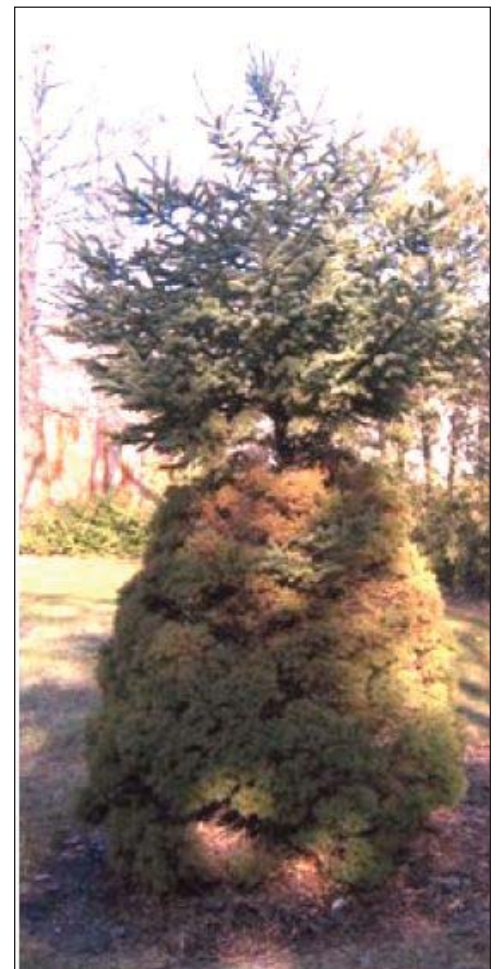
How many times have you been out in the woods or driving down the highway and said, “Look at that tree! Gosh, I wish I had a camera!” It could be that the tree has almost completely swallowed a sign or other object; or perhaps it has the most misshapen trunk you’ve ever seen; maybe its exposed roots make it appear as if it will run away at any moment; or perhaps it has been intentionally shaped to resemble something other than a tree. Or maybe more than one tree that have grown inseparably together. For whatever reason, this tree just stands out as.....different!

For Arbor Day 2000 a search was begun for the WEIRDEST trees in the state. We update the results of that search every 4 years, to coincide with presidential election years. I’ve heard rumors that some national political campaigns are underway, so that must mean it’s time for the 2012 Weird Tree Search! These trees can be any species and of any size. They can be located in the city, in the forest, in your back yard – anywhere – as long as the tree is still there. People of all ages are encouraged to submit entries.

Here’s all you need to do: take a couple of photographs of the tree, being sure to capture its uniqueness. The photos can be taken with any type of camera (this is not a photography contest!). Send these non-returnable photographs to Sam Carman, Division of Forestry, 402 W. Washington, Rm. W296, Indianapolis, IN 46204. Digital photos

should be emailed to scarman@dnr.in.gov. Along with the photos, be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and specific location of the tree, including county. Based upon your photos, district foresters will narrow down the field to the “weirdest” tree for each county, and these will be included in the Divisions of Forestry’s website publication “Invasion of the Weird Trees.”

To view our current “Invasion,” go to www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/fo-InvasionWeirdTrees_2008.pdf. Entry deadline for this year’s search is April 30; so put on your hiking boots, get your camera, and WATCH FOR THE WEIRD!



Indiana Envirothon — A Statewide High School EE Competition

by Brad Rody

Indiana Envirothon is a competitive learning event for high school-aged students sponsored by the Canon Corporation. This event tests the student's knowledge of environmental resources including soils/land use, aquatics, forestry, wildlife and a current environmental issue. Teams of five students, representing a school or organization, compete by answering questions and by studying resource problems in each of the five environmental areas.

Before the competitions, students study predetermined resources, with their advisors, to develop a greater understanding the environment. At the regional competitions held across the state, students test their knowledge under the supervision of environmental instructors. Those teams going on to the State competition use teamwork to develop a written creative solution to an environmental problem which they are given prior to the contest as well as deliver an oral presentation of

create teamwork, deeper investigation into our environment using real life problems as well as research and oral presentation skills. All skills which will help them for life decisions ahead and hopefully create an interest in pursuing an environmentally oriented career.

For more information about the Indiana Envirothon, go to http://www.iaswcd.org/district_tools/envirothon.html where you can find a list of officers, locations of regional and the state competition. If you think that you would be interested in helping advise a team in your area, volunteer at one of the regional or state competition or just talk with someone further about Indiana Envirothon, please contact any of the officers listed.

this solution to a board of judges. These competitions are great learning experiences which



Students participate in a previous year's competition of the Indiana Envirothon.

Photo courtesy Canon Corporation

CREED Editorial Staff – A Changing of the Guard

Welcome to Sue Speichert, our new CREED Editor! Sue's background qualifies her as a very capable editor of EEAI's quarterly newsletter. She spent several years at the helm of a consumer magazine on water gardening and has written two books on the same subject with her late husband, Greg Speichert. The EEAI Board is thrilled to have Sue on board!

A HUGE THANK YOU to Sam Carman for his editing prowess for the past two years! We are so grateful for his taking on the CREED after our dear Niki moved on!!!! And we thank you for your continued contributions to the newsletter! I can't use enough exclamation points to convey my appreciation of Sam's efforts!!! Thanks, Sam!!!

— *jan sneddon*



Jan Sneddon presents the EEAI President's Award to Kara Salazar, Outreach Coordinator, Center for Earth and Environmental Science, IUPUI. Congratulations, Kara!

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When I heard Arne Duncan announce that the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools initiative was going to recognize schools that save energy, have environmentally sustainable learning spaces, protect health, foster wellness, and offer environmental education to boost academic achievement and community engagement – I thought I had died and gone to heaven! What I am doing is working! Our administrators are listening to our requests!!!! It gave me hope for Indiana!!

On the US Department of Education website (www2.ed.gov/programs/green-ribbon-schools) it says “Through Green Ribbon Schools, the Department of Education will recognize schools that take exemplary steps toward reducing their environmental impact and achieving energy efficiencies.” The USDOE will honor schools that have

- Reduced or eliminated greenhouse gas emissions, using an energy audit or emissions inventory and reduction plan, cost-effective energy efficiency improvements and on-site renewable energy and/or purchase of green power;
- Improved water quality, efficiency, and conservation;
- Reduced solid waste production, through increased recycling, reduced consumption, and improved management, reduction, or elimination of hazardous waste streams; and
- Expanded use of alternative transportation to, during and from school, through active promotion of existing locally-available options and implementation of enabling projects and policies.”

Fantastic!!

It also recognizes schools that “take exemplary steps toward enhancing environmental health of facilities and wellness among all school occupants.”

Unbelievable!!

It says it will also acknowledge an “integrated school environmental health program based on an operations and facility-wide environmental management system that considers student and staff health and safety in all practices related to design, construction, renovation, operations, and



maintenance of schools and grounds; and high standards of nutrition, fitness and outdoor time for both students and staff.”

Incredible!!

Thirdly it identifies schools that “take exemplary steps toward producing environmentally literate graduates through an integrated, standards-driven approach that bolsters academic achievement.” Schools that are utilizing “project-based, place-based, and interdisciplinary learning about the key relationships between dynamic environmental, energy and human systems; the development of community and civic engagement skills applied to real world sustainability and environmental problem solving, including the development of community sustainability partnerships with other schools and entities; and use of the environment and sustainability as an integrating theme to develop 21st century green workforce preparedness skills.”

Yowza!!!!

The Green Ribbon School philosophy sounds unbelievable since it is mentoring students, teachers, staff, and the community about lessening impact which then lessens green house gasses which then lessens climate change which then....

So Board member Jabin Burnworth asked the Indiana Department of Education if they would be one of the pilot states in the Green Ribbon Schools. He received a response back from them stating that “Indiana does not plan to participate in the U.S. DOE's Green Ribbon Award program. Our efforts currently are focused on reform implementation and district support — which we believe will help increase district level efficiency; develop, recognize and reward great educators; and ensure students' college and career preparedness” – it made me ill.

I don't even want to think about the opportunity that



The Green Ribbon Schools project focuses on four “cornerstones,” each with its own icon, activities list, and suggested resources: natural classrooms, health and fitness, nature adventure, and eco campus.

passed by us to educate about a healthy environment!

So what is wrong with this opportunity for schools to think about environmental impact and energy efficiency? Why is this

opportunity not so amazing that the DOE would take up this possible gateway to being better environmentally literate and responsible citizens? According to the Missouri Department of Education website, "The award confers no federal funds, Green Ribbon Schools winners will be invited to participate in national and local recognition ceremonies, similar to those conducted for the national Blue Ribbon Schools award program. The recognition may also inspire further green efforts nationally and locally and increase staff, parent and community support." Is it really too political to think about environmental literacy?

Brandon Pitcher, from Fortune Management, Inc and 5 Kingdoms Development, LLC, based out of Kokomo was asked by Indiana Living Green what has been the most



significant setback or "bad news" regarding the environment in 2011. He responded by saying, "The worst thing is continued lack of education and disengagement of so many. Sustainability affects

everything we do as humans and affects all living species. We still have not taken that necessary leap that turns our communities, cities, and businesses into something that regenerates nature, produces no wastes or emissions and seeks full employment strategies for all."

This Green Ribbon School initiative was an opportunity for all of us to increase our Hoosier environmental literacy and we as citizens of our fair state dropped the ball to get our Department of Education to grant environmental literacy to our students...

And Jabin Burnworth replied "Major Bummer."

What can you do? Call Tony Bennett the DOE superintendent and your local reps to state that you would like them to join the Green Ribbon Schools next year!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

From the Published Results for Bottle Ecosystems from St. Anne's School in Laguna Niguel, CA on the website for Green Ribbon Schools

<http://www.greenribbonschools.org/activity-detail.php?id=963>



Students who joined our ECO-CLUB this year created Bottle Eco-Columns from recycled 2 liter bottles. Each column was separated into the 5 parts listed below:

- 1) An aquatic section complete with water plants and fish
- 2) A decomposition section that drained into the aquatic section
- 3) A terrestrial section with a pea plant
- 4-5) A Precipitation and atmosphere section

Then, once completed, students presented their Eco-columns to all 4th grade classes in a lesson/lab activity that they designed themselves on Ecosystems focusing on some of the following 4th grade science terms:

- 1) Abiotic and biotic factors
- 2) ecosystem
- 3) producers and consumers
- 4) Food Chain/web
- 5) Pollution and water conservation

GET INVOLVED IN EEAI!

Want to be active in raising the profile of Environmental Education in Indiana? Join a committee!!!!

New EEAI Committee Structure

Note: We will change the organizations bylaws this winter to reflect these changes, but are adopting this new structure now to better serve the organization. Further changes may occur as organizational planning continues.

Communication: website, listserv, CREED, publicity, marketing and history

Chairs: Sarah O'Hara (seohara@hotmail.com) and Matt Jones (matt.jones@IN.nacdn.net)

Activities: programs and activities outside of the EEAI annual conference

Chair: Bernadette de Leon (bernie.deleon@gmail.com)

Conference: planning and administration of annual conference

Chairs 2012: Kara Salazar (salazark@iupui.edu) and Jennifer Amstutz (Jennifer.Amstutz@nwcs.k12.in.us)

Chairs 2013: Krista Daniels (krista@elkhartcountyparks.org) and Tom Enright (parks@middleburyin.com)

Membership: management of membership

Chair: Jabin Burnworth (jabinburnworth@gmail.com)

Finance: funding, annual budget, audits

Chair: Brad Rody (brody@dnr.in.gov)

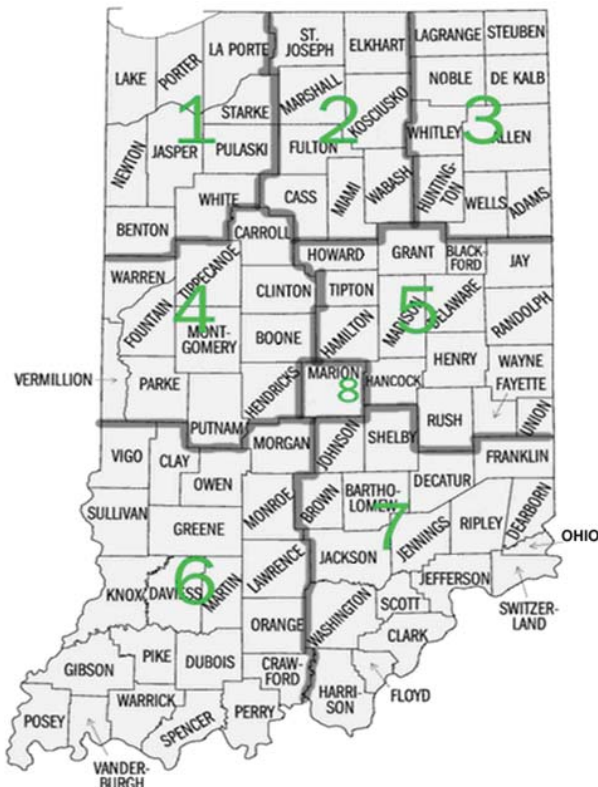
Nominations/awards: manages nomination of board members and award recipients

Chair: Paul McAfee (pmcafee@toast.net)

Key Member: Warren Gartner (WGartner@dnr.in.gov)

Another way to be involved — attend quarterly Board meetings to participate in discussions governing EEAI. Contact any of our board members (see page one) for more information.

Map of Regions



Regional Chairs

To improve networking and communications within our organization, EEAI members are organized into regions with each region having a Chair. If you have any questions, suggestions, events to report, lesson plans to share, or anything else you feel would be beneficial for other members to know, please pass it along to your Regional Chair. Here's who to contact and how to contact them:

Region 1: Niki Schmutte, natureniki@csinet.net

Region 2: Brad Rody, brody@dnr.IN.gov

Region 3: Paul Steury, pauls@goshen.edu

Region 4: Sam Carman, scarman@dnr.IN.gov

Region 5: Megan Bowman, gutierrez_megan@hotmail.com

Region 6: Carissa Lovett, carissa.lovett@terrehaute.in.gov

Region 7: Donna Stanley, donna_stanley@fws.gov

Region 8: Ann Niednagel, ann.niednagel@gmail.com

Active communications within regions can greatly increase the benefits you receive from being an EEAI member. PLEASE take advantage of it!