

# Annual Report 2015-2016



## *An overview of activities and accomplishments of ICEC April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016*

### Changes continue for ICEC

#### **LZ Retires, New Executive Director on Board**

In spring 2015, then executive director, Linda Zaletel announced her retirement effective the end of May 2015. In June the board welcomed Linette Bernard as our new Executive Director! Linette's organizational skills are tops and she is very savvy about the Internet, Facebook, and is very familiar with non-profit organizations. At the July 2015 ExCom meeting, Linda was appointed to fill H. Olsen's position on ExCom and was quickly asked to be chair!



Linda Zaletel, ExCom Chair, and Linette Bernard, Executive Director, at the March 2016 Environment Day on the Hill.

#### **The state of ICEC**

All programs and organizations go through cycles. The current cycle is uncomfortable, but will not last. ICEC membership numbers are the lowest in years - plus or minus 110. Several affiliates of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) have expressed similar frustrations of lower membership numbers, less participation on boards and committees. This will not deter our ExCom from continuing to look at the best ways to serve the membership. How can you help? Put in your application for nomination to ExCom, share your ideas, time, and talent with us through work with a committee. Interested? Contact an ExCom member or executive director at [execicec@gmail.com](mailto:execicec@gmail.com)!

Please do not let the negative income for FY16 worry you too much... ICEC purchased an LCD projector, sent the executive director to the Midwest EE Conference in Madison, and sent 'save the date' postcards to every school building in the state for Winter Workshop 2016 BEFORE we had a clear understanding of how the new Iowa Science Standards were being rolled out to educators across the state and the workshop focus and dates shifted. Without those three 'purchases' ICEC would have been on budget. (See more about WW2016 below.)

#### **Winter Workshop 2016**

Originally, Winter Workshop 2016 was scheduled for February 5-6, the traditional Friday / Saturday arrangement. Once Workshop Co-chairs Jean Eells and Phyllis Anderson realized that ICEC workshop participants from 2015 were ahead of many classroom teachers on learning about the Next Generation Science Standards, and the state of Iowa only adopting in August 2015 the performance expectations of the NGSS as the new Iowa Science Standards, they realized that many teachers were not ready for the planned workshop. Hit the brakes. A slight change of plans and a REAP-CEP application submitted in November 2015 to support conservation educators and natural resource professionals updating their outreach skills using proven science methods. This change in audience also did a one-year change of format. Winter Workshop 2016 was held February 4-5, a Thursday and Friday, to better accommodate our natural resource professionals. The theme of

WW2016 was *Contemporary Environmental Issues and New Iowa Science Standards: Transforming Conservation Outreach*.

Keynote speakers were Rick Bednarek, Bob Libra, and Stephanie Shepherd. After each presentation we will focus on one of the dimensions of the new Iowa Science Standards and have participants identify how that dimension helped sculpt the research. We introduced the learning progressions associated with that dimension and had small work teams collaborate to see how they might utilize that dimension in a commonly delivered non-formal program. The participants worked in small groups to incorporate all three dimensions into one of the programs they offer.

Eighty Iowa conservation educators became more confident and knowledgeable about how to support Iowa educators as they adapt to the new Iowa Core Science Standards. Collectively, these conservation educators impact thousands of Iowans by fostering curiosity and scientific thinking through improved educational skills.

Comments from participants included:

- I have tried to specifically use the language that introduces these science practices. I have talked

about models wherever possible. I have included time for observation. I encouraged students to ask questions and have tried to allow them to think through and find answers.

- The simplest way I can describe it. Instead of talking first and exploring second, we'll explore first and talk second to fill in anything they didn't get on their own.
- It is forcing me to reevaluate many programs. Are they as good as they can be? I'm guessing most need to be tweaked.

The success of WW2016 is due to the partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, the Iowa Department of Natural Resource, and grant funding from the Resources Enhancement and Protection - Conservation Education Program.



Winter Workshop 2017 will return to the Friday / Saturday format on February 3-4, 2017.

### **"WILD / KinderNature" REAP-CEP Grant**

As restructuring within Iowa DNR occurred in 2015, ICEC has assumed a larger role in this grant. ICEC is working closely with the Project WILD Coordinator for the DNR to provide resources to our Project WILD - Aquatic WILD (PW-AW) and Growing Up WILD (GUW) training partners. These partners have played an integral role in developing workable, perhaps even improved, systems for development and delivery of the training for the resources. Invitations to ongoing communications (direct email) have been shared for both GUW and PW-AW trainers and trainees!

The major accomplishment has been the redesign and launch of the KinderNature.org website on August 26, 2015! The website was recreated through a contract with Blue Lake Websites with input from Missy King Smith, Linda Zaletel, Linette Bernard, and Barb Gigar. KinderNature is a great resource for early care and education professionals and parents along with being a resource for Growing Up WILD trainings.



### **Conservation Teachers of the Year - 2015**

This award is given annually in partnership with the Iowa Soil Conservation Awards Program.

**Andy Bean from Albert City – Truesdale School, is the K-8 recipient!**

Andy Bean is a teacher of young people, with a personal conviction and an ethic that involves every aspect of rural conservation, especially treating the soil with respect and being responsible citizens. In Andy's view, the soil is for growing food and feeding the world, but is also held in reserve for her children, grandchildren, and literally forever because there is no practical way to replace the soil. Andy involves her students in the rural community, and takes the students on field trips to study terraces, waterways, filter-strips, and no-till farming.

**Susan Fritzell from Marshalltown High School, is the 7-12 recipient!**

In the hi-tech world we all live in, Susan believes that it's not possible to teach students about the natural world unless you are out in it and exposed to it. She frequently takes students on field trips to sample water, measure trees, and study soil types. Susan does everything she can to make teaching and learning fun at the same time. Each year her students enter in the State Envirothon competition. From these experiences, students begin to appreciate good land-use decision, grow to value the environment, and their individual actions impact their surroundings.

## ICEC-IAN Award Winners 2015

Aldo Leopold Environmental Education Award for Lifetime Achievement in EE Excellence and Leadership

### Larry Reis

Larry Reis has served as a naturalist and natural resource manager for more than 30 years with Winneshiek County. Larry holds a bachelor's degree from Luther College and a master's degree from the University of Northern Iowa. Over the course of his career, it is estimated that Larry has given 7,500+ programs reaching over 200,000 people. He has done all this while also maintaining various roles as WCCB's natural resource manager, interim director, and maintenance technician. Larry started and developed WCCB's education program, oversaw the building of the Lake Meyer Nature Center as well as its exhibits, and established many hiking trails, and single-handedly restored the 160-acre Lake Meyer Park from an overgrazed honeysuckle/buckthorn patch to a shining example of a diverse ecosystem. Larry is an author, outdoorsman, photographer, birder, Hunter Education instructor, and naturalist in the classic sense! There is hardly a question related to the natural history or resources in Iowa that he cannot answer in detail. Larry has also embraced technology and finds a way to incorporate it into programs without losing the hands-on and experiential aspects that make his programs so memorable, engaging, and fun.

Bohumil Shimek Environmental Educator Award for Outstanding Efforts by an Environmental Educator

### Julie Schnedler with Mediapolis Community School

Julie Schnedler is a 6th grade science teacher at Mediapolis Middle School. She has made outdoor education a central part of her curriculum. In 2009, Julie made headlines by restoring bobwhite quail populations on a county wildlife preserve. "Operation: Save the Quail" won the Disney Planet Challenge competition's grand prize and earned her entire 6th grade class of 60+ students an all-expense-paid trip to Disneyland. This year, her class returned to the site of "Operation: Save the Quail" only this time to save the pollinators. Students spent many hours researching the decline of pollinators. In the field, they learned more from ISU researchers, saw pollinators up-close, planted seeds and learned how pollinator and quail habitat overlap. The project gained national attention from Pheasants Forever. Julie has gone out of her way to secure STEM grants allowing her to offer electricity and wind energy units in her classroom. She dedicates most of her summers to learning more or teaching environmental education outside the school. Julie also spearheaded an effort to create an outdoor classroom. She created a task force of teachers, students and parents. Students in drafting classes, industrial arts and environmental science were all involved. Local landscaping and masonry companies donated time and materials. Today, the outdoor classroom is not just a teacher resource, it's a community attraction. She annually incorporates hands-on, experiential field projects into her curriculum.

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## Fiscal Year Profit and Loss

April 1, 2015 - March 31, 2016

provided by Kuda Tax and Accounting

<b>Income</b>		
Holt Scholarship		344.00
FOSTERING NETWRK REAP CEP GRANT		1,400.00
Membership Dues		3,350.00
Merchandise Sales		143.00
PROJECT WILD/KIND REAP CEP GRANT		10,160.00
Project WILD / Kinder Income		3,365.00
WS2015 REAP CEP Grant		1,217.57
Winter Workshop 2016 INCOME		
Auction	530.00	
Lodging	940.00	
Registration	4,870.80	
WW2016 REAP CEP Grant	9,275.00	
Total WINTER SOLSTICE 2015 INCOME		<u>15,615.80</u>
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>47,445.37</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
Administration		
Insurance Expense	1,677.00	
Marketing	694.87	
Mileage	845.13	
Office Supplies	736.91	
Postage	64.39	
Printing/Copying	5.35	
Travel	1,272.33	
Total Administration		5,290.63
Contracted Services		
Accountant	2,400.00	
Administrative Assistant	10,500.00	
Total Contracted Services		12,900.00
Fostering Networking REAP-CEP Exp		2,000.00
MEEC General Expense		46.12
Member Services		
Plaques	339.75	
Scholarships	200.00	
Total Member Services		539.75
Organizational Memberships / Conference		
Iowa Academy of Science	125.00	
Iowa Environmental Council	100.00	
Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation	100.00	
NAAEE	200.00	
NAEYC	60.00	
REAP Alliance	250.00	
Total Organizational Memberships		835.00
PayPal Fee		81.03
Professional Development		688.33
PROJECT WILD/KINDER NATURE		
General	206.13	
Labor	4,890.00	
Trainers	650.00	
Website	2,870.44	
Total PROJECT WILD/KINDER NATURE		8,616.57
Training Expense / Book Fund		3,219.00
WINTER SOLSTICE 2015 REAP CEP		2,000.00
WW 2016 Expense		
REAP-CEP General	6,441.15	
REAP-CEP Scholarship	1,000.00	
WW Lodging	1,440.00	
WW Food	4,693.16	
Total WW 2016		<u>13,574.31</u>
<b>Total Expense</b>		<b>49,790.74</b>
Net Ordinary Income		-2,345.37
Net Other Income		<u>196.15</u>
<b>Net Income</b>		<b><u>-2,149.22</u></b>

### **Chris Holt Youth EE Award for an Outstanding EE Program for Youth or Conducted by Youth (PreK-12) eXtreme Adventures and eXtreme Kids, Louisa County Conservation**

eXtreme Adventures is for 6th-8th graders and eXtreme Kids is for kids in 3rd-5th grades. Both aim to get kids into the outdoors with “extreme” recreation opportunities. Extreme is simply a mindset that goes back to the excitement factor. The focus is hinged on how they can use adventures to make the participants more capable, confident, and well-rounded for their future while instilling a deep respect for their natural environment. Extreme is a way to create excitement within an age group that is hard to reach due to busy schedules and lack of enthusiasm for typical programming. Extreme is not about putting the participants in an unsafe situation but rather about creating an environment of eagerness and exhilaration. Extreme is simply a mindset that targets the excitement factor. The program allowed the participants to challenge themselves while instilling a sense of self-confidence. The exposure to a new and challenging activity got participants excited when they were able to accomplish the task. This resulted in their self-confidence going through the roof. Each adventure the students are a part of, remains with them as an exciting memory. What better way to encourage our youth to protect our environment than by giving them a reason to protect it.

### **“Ding” Darling Environmental Education Award Wapsie Valley Archery Coaches: Angie Auel**

The NASP motto is “Changing lives one arrow at a time” and Iowa coaches are doing just that! Under the direction of Angie Auel, the Wapsie Valley Archery team has had a lot of success with a first place and two third place state trophies over the past three years. Seven individuals also placed in the top ten at state. Wapsie Valley Archery has taken 98 archers to nationals in the past three years. To do this, Angie Auel and the team have raised over \$35,000! Pretty impressive numbers for a small team from Iowa! The coaches have made a huge impact on Iowa kids and with the guidance of Angie Auel, the group will aim straight and true for years to come.

### **Outstanding County Conservation Board EE Program (2 or less interpreters)**

#### **Marshall County Conservation Board**

Marshall County Conservation’s Education Program is the poster child for doing a lot with a little. While the first inclination is to look at total numbers, a closer look shows an innovative and creative program based on the hard work of one 3/4 time naturalist and an impressive number of partnerships and volunteers. 9,400 people were at 184 events in the last fiscal year. 140 volunteers were coordinated by the naturalist. Grimes Farm & Conservation Center, MCCB’s interpretive facility, provides visitors with connections to the seasons, wildlife, and land through habitat dioramas, interactive exhibits, and over 200 taxidermy mounts. During 2014-2015, there were 3,434 visitors from 33 states and eight countries. The Marshall County Conservation Board EE program strives for

quality and creativity to meet its goals. Strong community connections in the county toward EE is a great asset to the effectiveness of the program. Diane Hall brings 29 years of experience with Marshall CCB and only through that long-term, stable and consistent work could a CCB Education Program be able to accomplish so much with so little staff. The Awards Committee felt like Diane’s can-do attitude deserved recognition. It can only be imagined the heights the program could achieve if Diane were full-time and had an additional naturalist!

### **Outstanding County Conservation Board EE Program (3 or more Interpreters)**

#### **Polk County Conservation Board**

Polk County Conservation naturalists have given 1,504 programs to 31,661 participants! However, they have spent 38,685 contact hours with participants. While school programs make up the majority of their programs, they also offer youth, family, and senior programming. Naturalists offer unique programs that include hosting weekly music events, an environmental book club, eco-bus tours, blogs and an ‘Ask the Naturalist’ news column. They also have a huge social media presence with over 2,300 Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest followers. Naturalists partner with numerous other agencies to increase their outreach potential. They recently received a REAP/CEP grant for \$18,387 to offer pollinator programming.

### **Outstanding Interpretive Print Media Award Johnson County Conservation Board**

This fall, Johnson County Conservation staff worked to overhaul their Conservation Connections newsletter, which had not been revised since its original printing in 2001. They had three main goals in their redesign: reach new readers, promote their work while inspiring positivity in the reader and boost event attendance. These goals were achieved. The newsletter is read by 2,597 subscribers. Congratulation to Johnson County for updating this vital resource.

### **Outstanding Volunteer**

#### **Mike Meetz**

It is apparent that Mike Meetz cares about our landscape. Mike owns 40 acres of farm land in Story County that he has worked hard to restore to native prairie and wetlands. Over the past 16 years, Mike has donated several hundred pounds of seed to Story County’s Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) program to restore prairie in the county. Meetz’s prairie has been the site of several youth hunts for waterfowl and pheasants. Every summer he allows SCC to bring van loads of summer campers to his farm to wade in his wetland, scoop with nets, and learn about wetland ecology. Mike is a very active Story County Conservation volunteer. In 1996, Mike worked with a SCC committee to create the Master Conservationist Program and was instrumental in teaching the early years of the programs. Mike has helped SCC as a guide at Halloween Hikes, leading bird watching hikes for 3rd grade field trips, helped with trail improvement workdays, and assisted the IRVM program with several prescribed burns.