



Annual Report 2016-2017

An Overview of Activities and Accomplishments of ICEC April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017

Linette Bernard Resigns, Alicia Vasto Hired

After starting with ICEC in June 2015, Executive Director Linette Bernard resigned from the post effective October 2016. Linette has been an incredible asset to ICEC and we are grateful for all she has done! ICEC's Executive Committee then had the task of hiring the organization's first full-time Executive Director. After an exhaustive search, ICEC welcomed Alicia Vasto to the position in December 2016. Alicia's organizational and communication skills, along with her passion for environmental education, make her an excellent fit for ICEC.



New Director, Alicia Vasto

The State of ICEC

With the hiring of a first full-time director in ICEC's almost 60-year history, ICEC is looking to grow and enhance our impact on environmental education in Iowa. This involves growing our membership, expanding the services and programs we provide, and diversifying our network. If you would like to be more involved with ICEC as we work toward our goals, consider joining our Executive Committee! All ICEC members are eligible for nomination. Nomination applications for the 2018-2020 term are due October 25, 2017. Visit our www.iowaee.org or email execicec@gmail.com for more information.

ICEC's expanded focus includes reevaluating our membership and donor structure. By visiting our website, you can see an added donation page. Donations may be more appropriate for ICEC supporters that are not environmental educators themselves but want to support ICEC's mission and the development of conservation-minded future generations. Both membership dues and donations go towards supporting ICEC and making our organization sustainable! Thank you for your continued membership and financial support.

Iowa Conservation Education Coalition
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Urbandale, IA 50323
www.iowaee.org

ICEC's purpose is to support and promote conservation and environmental education in the state of Iowa.

Winter Workshop 2017: Spreading Our Wings with Science Standards

The foundations of this year's Winter Workshop started well before the workshop took place. Over the summer of 2016, work groups composed of county naturalists and teachers were held across the state in coordination with the local AEAs. These groups came together to align programs to the new Iowa Core Science Standards. Approximately 50 educators were engaged in these workdays. Working with a diversity of educators and AEA science consultants allowed unique collaboration opportunities and unexpected insights. Workday debriefs were very valuable as they gave workshop co-chairs Jean Eells and Phyllis Anderson the chance to refine the process and worksheets after each individual workday. What was learned through this process was critical to shaping the Winter Workshop agenda. The aligned programs are now available for viewing and use on ICEC's website.

The theme of the 2017 Winter Workshop was *Spreading Our Wings with Science Standards*. The workshop was held February 3-4, 2017 at Springbrook Conservation Education Center. The workshop engaged approximately 75 participants. Collectively, these conservation educators impact thousands of Iowans by fostering curiosity and

scientific thinking through improved education.

Supported by a REAP-CEP grant, workshop co-chairs Jean and Phyllis introduced educators to the components of the new Iowa Core Science Standards and phenomena and storylines as essential features of lessons and programs. Based on the work of the 2016 summer workdays, workshop attendees learned how they could align their programs to the standards using phenomena and storylines.



Jennifer Hopwood presents at the Winter Workshop.

Keynote speakers Dr. Karen Oberhauser, Jennifer Hopwood, and Benjamin Vogt focused on a different aspects of native Iowa pollinators and native plants. Dr. Oberhauser presented her research on monarchs at the University of Minnesota; Jennifer Hopwood gave an overview on the importance of native pollinators and her work on pollinator conservation with the Xerces Society; and Benjamin Vogt gave suggestions for pollinator-friendly native plants and sustainable gardening techniques based on his work as the owner of Monarch Gardens.

The next Winter Workshop will be held in 2019. We are forgoing the Winter Workshop in 2018, as ICEC is partnering with Prairie Rivers of Iowa to bring you the Outdoor Learning Environments Conference on March 2-3, 2018 at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden. Stay tuned for more information. We hope to see you there!



Break out groups work at the Winter Workshop.

First ICEC Alumni Reunion Held

During the Winter Workshop, ICEC held its first Alumni Reunion! The reunion brought together friends of ICEC from years past to reconnect and share insights about their time in environmental education. It was a very special event that we hope to hold more regularly. If you know of folks that should be added to our alumni contact list, please email execicec@gmail.com!



Some of our fantastic alumni reunited at Springbrook CEC!

ICEC Supports REAP and REAP-CEP

REAP stands for Resource Enhancement and Protection. It is a program in the State of Iowa that invests in, as its name implies, the enhancement and protection of the state's natural and cultural resources. Iowa is blessed with a diverse array of natural and cultural resources, and REAP is likewise diverse and far reaching. Depending on the individual programs, REAP provides money for projects through state agency budgets or in the form of grants.

REAP is funded from the state's Environment First Fund (Iowa gaming receipts) and from the sale of the natural resource license plate. The program is authorized to receive \$20 million per year until 2021, but the state legislature sets the amount of REAP funding every year. This year REAP was appropriated \$12 million. When you add license plate and interest income, its total budget is about \$12.5 million.

REAP funds go into eight different programs based upon a percentages that are specified in the law.



The first \$350,000 each year goes to the Conservation Education Program (CEP)!

Project WILD and KinderNature REAP-CEP Grant Finalized

As a result of restructuring within Iowa DNR in 2015, ICEC assumed a larger role in Project WILD. ICEC has worked closely with the Project WILD Coordinator from 2015 to present to provide resources to our Project WILD - Aquatic WILD and Growing Up WILD 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. Despite the grant for this project closing in 2017, ICEC will continue to manage the funds for Project WILD and Growing Up WILD in Iowa, providing a nonprofit partner that protects the funding for these vital programs.

Another part of the grant project was the redesign and update of the KinderNature website. KinderNature continues to be a great resource for early care and education professionals and parents, along with being a resource for Growing Up WILD trainings. Visit the website at www.kindernature.org.



2016 IAN/ICEC Environmental Education Awards

The Iowa Conservation Education Coalition (ICEC) and the Iowa Association of Naturalists (IAN) are proud to announce this year's recipients of the Conservation and Environmental Education Excellence Awards Program!

Aldo Leopold Environmental Education Award *-For Lifetime Achievement in EE Excellence and Leadership-*

Miriam Patton

Miriam Patton was the second Naturalist for the Palo Alto County Conservation Board where she has been educating youth and adults for 31 years. She has provided countless programs to thousands of individuals through the years. Quality environmental education programs are reflected by the tremendous support she has received over the years from board members, staff and the public. The list of her accomplishments are numerous, including her 25 year dedication as Chair to the Iowa Association of Naturalists Professional Development Program. Miriam also seeks out new members of IAN to introduce them to current members, creating networking opportunities. Thank you Miriam, for your lifetime dedication to environmental education and to IAN.

Bohumil Shimek Environmental Educator Award *-For Outstanding Efforts by an Environmental Educator-*

Becky Horton

Becky Horton was nominated for her "Zombie

Archery Class," which has been held for the last two years at the Wapsi Environmental Education Center. It ties in well with their Halloween Hike, which happens the same day. Participants young and old learn how to shoot National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) equipment, archery safety, and then shoot at some great targets. Along with the artwork for the targets (by Emily Santiago), the program puts a new spin on archery, and everyone likes Zombies! They have had at least 20 to 30 visitors (family groups) each time the event has been held, and it will be held again next year.

Chris Holt Youth Environmental Education Award *-For an Outstanding EE Program for Youth or Conducted by Youth (Preschool-Grade 12)-*

Justin Kinney

There is a new high school physical education program in Ridge View High School. Justin Kinney is the teacher that implements a wide variety of outdoor activities for his senior class. Students receive a Hunter Safety Education Certificate, firearm handling and training, archery, kayaking, fur harvesting, tomahawking and knifing, orienteering, and wild game processing. Students clean and cook a variety of wild game, including venison, dove, and fish. A special feature of the program, and favorite of students, is air rifle shooting. The course culminates in a six day expedition to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, where the students will practice their skills in water safety, navigation, fishing, fire

starting, and basic survival. This class takes a lot of planning, networking, and financial contributions. It is offered free of charge to students

Outstanding Volunteer

Kaleb Kaster

Kaleb Kaster is a high school student in Harlan and has been volunteering his time for the past two years for Shelby County Conservation. Growing up, he attended naturalist Christina Roelofs summer camps every year until he was too old to attend. After that, Kaleb volunteered his time to assist with the summer camps. He has even turned down paying jobs to help Christina. Kaleb has also assisted with public canoeing programs and takes time to find and donate night crawlers to help feed the program's education animals. Kaleb has been such a wonderful volunteer, he will continue to be Christina's summer help in 2017.

Ding Darling Environmental Education Award

-For Outstanding EE Program or Event which Informs and Educates the General Public-

Quad City Pollinator Conference Planning Group

The Quad City Pollinator Conference Planning Group is this year's winner of the "Ding" Darling Environmental Education Award. The Quad City Pollinator Conference Planning Group consists of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nahant Marsh Education Center, Rock Island County Soil & Water Conservation District, and Scott County Conservation Board. The Quad Cities Pollinator Conference was first held in 2015 to address both causes and solutions to the problem of disappearing pollinators in the Midwest. This year,

38 businesses and organizations sponsored the event, which saw over 275 people in attendance on Thursday and 120 on Friday for the pollinator habitat tours. Attendees came from 11 states: Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin. A video contest was held for middle and high school students, asking them to answer the question, "Why are pollinators important?" Nearly 70 submissions were received. The grand-prize winner, Shraesht Dacha, from Bettendorf Middle School, was awarded \$1,000 for his school to fund pollinator projects and activities. Both of the runner-up awardees, Vincent Freiburg from Rock Island High School, and Andrew Ericksen and Isaac Blandin from St. Joseph Catholic School, received \$500 for each of their schools. Additionally, the "Busy Bee" award was presented to Bettendorf Middle School teacher, Kevin Roling, who showed great initiative towards helping pollinators; having his entire class work on creating videos. Kevin was awarded a seed pack from Cardno, valued at \$100.

Sylvan Runkel Environmental Education School Award

-For Outstanding Whole-School EE Program-

Nevada Central Elementary Multi-Age Teachers and Story County Conservation

The Nevada Central Elementary Multi-Age Teachers and the Story County Conservation have a long history together. Each year, efforts are made to coordinate the curriculum with the art teacher, media specialist, and music teachers. Students are organized into classes of 20-25 students, ages six to nine and eight to 11 years old.

This past year, Story County Conservation, along with Nevada's ten multi-age classrooms and teachers, planted a pollinator garden. Leading up to the planting, a Naturalist educated the students about pollinators and their importance. During the winter, a Naturalist and an educator from Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge brought in small greenhouses for the classrooms and the students planted prairie seeds. Then in May, all 240 students helped to plant the pollinator garden. The pollinator garden is located on church grounds, next to sports fields a few blocks from the school. A sign was placed explaining the project and students also created QR Codes for some of the different plants. Many students also said on an evaluation that they helped their parents start a new garden at home, or helped in an existing garden they had. As this information is reinforced each year the garden is used, it will continue to benefit the community. .

Outstanding Interpretative Print Media Award
E Resources Group, Women Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN), and Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication at Iowa State University

E Resources Group, Women Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN), and Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication at Iowa State University have worked closely together to create 10 publications with women land owners. Their goal was to produce publications to successfully get conservation information in women's hands. Since 2007, these three groups have held numerous meetings for women land owners across 10 states to discover what this audience

wanted to know about conservation. Topics for the meetings spanned a range of conservation topics, such as soil health, hunting and wildlife, the Farm Bill programs, and wetlands. Their 10 publications of interpretive brochures and booklets occurred at the direction of Jean Eells of E Resources Group, with grant funding to WFAN through a variety of sources and communication expertise from Iowa State graduate students supervised by Michael Dahlstrom of Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication.

Ada Hayden Conservation Education Award
-For Outstanding Efforts to Educate About Preservation, Land Management, or Natural Resource Conservation -

Polk County Conservation

Polk County Conservation received a REAP-CEP grant to work with 10 religious organizations to install native pollinator gardens at their place of worship. In addition to providing the garden designs and native plants, they educated congregations about pollinators and steps they could take at home to help pollinators. Congregations were chosen as the target audience because they have land to provide habitat for pollinators and they care about what happens at their place of worship. Three different pollinator education programs were created for adults, teens, and younger kids to focus on who pollinators are, why they are important, and what steps they can take to help pollinators. Polk County Conservation conducted 16 pollinator education programs with 12 congregations for a total of 380 people. After the education programs, the pollinator gardens were prepped and planted

by congregation members in the months of May and June. Each pollinator garden was approximately 300 square feet and included over 200 plants. There are 18 different species of native perennial plants that will provide a variety of blooms from spring until fall, so there is always a nectar and food source for pollinators. Polk County Conservation will continue to be in contact with each congregation to provide future education programs or support for their native pollinator garden.

Outstanding Environmental Education Program (2 or less full-time equivalent naturalists)

-For Excellence in EE Programming by an Agency or Institution-

Henry County Conservation

Henry County Conservation Environmental Education Program has come a long ways over the years. In 2004 they had 400 residents participating in programs. In January of 2005, a naturalist, Cari Nicely, was hired and participation numbers increased to 1,520. The program has continued to grow each year and through November 23, 2016, 15,446 people have taken part in 591 environmental education programs provided by the Henry County Conservation Department's naturalist and ranger-naturalist. The environmental education budget is \$3,750.00 annually. Henry Counties EE program has even improved New London fourth grade Iowa Assessment in Science by 14 percent! Cari has a wide variety of programs ranging from a mentoring program with Mount Pleasant High School to a two day pioneer field trip event for all fifth graders in the county!

Outstanding Environmental Education Program (3 or more full-time equivalent naturalists)

-For Excellence in EE Programming by an Agency or Institution-

Nahant Marsh Education Center

Founded in 2000, Nahant Marsh is a unique urban wetland that offers the community recreational, educational, volunteer, and research experiences. The educational staff at Nahant Marsh has grown over the last several years to meet the needs of the community- from one Naturalist in 2010 to 4 full-time and 1 part-time Naturalist today. The education staff at Nahant Marsh has been able to significantly increase their impact on the community over the last several years. In 2012, Nahant Marsh's educational program served around 7,500 people. This year, they have already served around 17,000 people though on-site and outreach programs.

The Nahant Education staff has been instrumental in creating new educational opportunities for people of all ages. The staff works closely with several urban schools and after-school programs in the Quad City area, providing students with what is usually their first experience in nature. These programs have introduced a new audience of people to Nahant Marsh, and more importantly, to Iowa's ecosystems and all they have to offer.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. -Margaret Mead

Congratulations to our 2016-2017 Conservation Teachers of the Year!

With the co-sponsorship of the Iowa State Soil Conservation Committee and the Conservation Districts of Iowa, ICEC annually awards two outstanding teachers who are creating awareness of soil conservation and water quality in their classrooms. The awards are presented during the Annual Conference for Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners.

Sue Sparrow Meggers— Interstate 35 Community Schools

As an elementary teacher, Sue inspires reverence of soil and tells her students that “soil is the mother of all living things.” In 2010, Sue led her students as they raised funds for a 3-acre prairie at their school, which the students continue to maintain and monitor. She helped the students develop a vermicomposting program which was recognized by eCybermission, a national science competition. Sue is an inspiration to her students, and teaches them to appreciate soil as a unique and precious resource.

Louis Beck— Union Community School

As a middle and high school agriculture instructor at Union Community School, FFA chapter advisor, and a 3rd generation farmer, Louis exemplifies a strong soil and water conservation ethic. Louis and his wife, Pat, transitioned their 400-acre corn and soybean farm to no till in 2007 and have many conservation practices on their land including cover crops, grassed waterways, contouring, and terraces. Louis offers his extensive knowledge and passion for agriculture and conservation to his students and FFA members. Black Hawk and Tama Counties are lucky to have such a great educator like Louis to help inspire students to become stewards of Iowa’s soil and water.

ICEC Executive Committee

Emily Klein, Co-Chair Poweshiek County Conservation	Barb Gigar Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Beth Martin, Co-Chair Jefferson Elementary School	Karess Knudtson Environmental Educator, Dickinson County
Terrie Hoefler, Secretary Saving Our Avian Resources	Adam Puderbaugh Des Moines Public Schools
Lisa Ralls, Treasurer Winnebago County Conservation	Mike Todd Ames High School
	Kate Bussanmas, Ex Officio Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

Budget April 1, 2016— March 31, 2017

General Income

Donations	\$1,271.00
Membership Dues	\$3,340.00
Misc Income	\$106.00
Winter Workshop 2017	\$5,976.00

Restricted Income

REAP-CEP 15-11 Grant	\$350.00
REAP-CEP 16-17 Grant	\$8,979.14
REAP-CEP 17-10 Grant	\$28,156.50
WILD Resources	\$15,022.50
Scholarship Fund	\$551.00

Total Income **\$63,752.14**

General Expense

Administration	\$5,611.29
Contract Services	\$18,620.44
MEEC	\$84.48
Member Services	\$393.00
Memberships	\$635.00
PayPal	\$241.88
Winter Workshop 2017	\$5,827.25

Program/Grant Expense

REAP-CEP 16-17 Grant	\$6,000.00
REAP-CEP 17-10 Grant	\$16,508.91
WILD Resources	\$17,638.56

Total Expense **\$71,561.21**

Net FY17 **\$(7,809.07)**