ICEC News and Updates April 2023

Iowa Conservation Education Coalition <exec@iowaee.org>
Reply-To: Iowa Conservation Education Coalition <exec@iowaee.org>
To: exec@iowaee.org

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Member Newsletter August 2023

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Winter Workshop 2024

Climate-Smart Agriculture: Rethinking Iowa's Land, Water, and Food Production

Tama Hall, Hawkeye Community College, Waterloo, Iowa

Save the date - February 3, 2024

Our Winter Workshop promises to be an exciting and enriching experience, in which we bridge the gap between food production and conservation through education. Each year, we bring together like-minded individuals who share a common goal: to nurture a culture of conservation and environmental stewardship within our communities. **We want people like you to join us.** This event will provide a fantastic opportunity to collaborate, exchange ideas, and develop innovative strategies to inspire and educate others about the importance of safeguarding our precious natural resources.

Featured Speaker: Shaffer Ridgeway - He is a District Conservationist with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in Black Hawk County working with farmers to improve their farming operations and the environment by conserving soil and improving water quality. He and his wife are also entrepreneurs, operating *Southern Goods and Grazin' Cattle*, producing fresh fruits, vegetables, and meat for local markets.

Watch for more details and a Call for Presentations soon!

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ICEC Leadership

Share your passion and leadership on ICEC ExCom! The call for nominations will go out in September with paperwork due back to ICEC by the end of October. Learn more about ICEC and the Executive Committee on our website. **https://iowaee.org/about/icec-executive-committee/**

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Conservation Teacher of the Year

ICEC sponsors the Conservation Teacher of the Year Award as part of the Iowa Soil Conservation Awards Program. ICEC honors two outstanding teachers (one K-8 and one 9-12) who are creating awareness of soil conservation and water quality in their classrooms. The 2023 awardees are:

- Stacey Snyder (Waterloo Community Schools), K-8 Teacher

- Renee Borglum (Waverly-Shell Rock High School), 9-12 Teacher

Read about the 2023 Conservation Teachers of the Year! **https://iowaee.org/awards-scholarships/soil-conservation-teacher-of-the-year/**

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2023 Midwest EE Conference

To Hinųkwaseja: Restoring connections to land and each other

November 2-4, 2023 - La Crosse, Wisconsin

Place and Land (with a capital 'P' and 'L') have always been relevant to environmental education. This year, our conference will highlight the increasing importance of place-based relationships to a sustainable future. This requires particular attention to justice for Indigenous people. The theme serves as a call to support communities that must fight against displacement. Likewise, we must address the linkages between such displacement and environmental degradation. Hinųkwaseja is the Ho-Chunk name for the settlement at La Crosse. With this language, we show gratitude to our meeting Place.

- Full Conference Registration (3 days, includes lunch Friday and Saturday) $260.00 + Fees
- One day Conference (Thursday OR Friday, includes lunch) $145.00 + Fees
- Thursday Night Social Event $20.00 + Fees

Registration Link

Conference Website

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PEEPs

The Plains Environmental Education Partnership (PEEPs) is a collaborative of regional state conservation education / environmental education (CE/EE) organizations with the goal of collectively building capacity to advance CE/EE across the region. We work together to strengthen and support educators in classrooms and in settings outside of the classroom to deliver high quality, non-biased CE/EE. To advance this work, PEEPs and CO (Colorado) are conducting an inventory of CE/EE programs and service providers.

The states engaged in this collaboration include:

- Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education
- Iowa Conservation Education Coalition
- Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education
- Missouri Environmental Education Association
- Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environmental Education
- Wyoming Alliance for Environmental Education

The inventory is divided into four organizational questions plus a set of questions for each program or type of program the organization wants to highlight. The more folks / agencies that respond to both the organizational questions and program questions, the more ICEC can "show off" all that we collectively do to enhance conservation and environmental education across the state!

What is the PEEPs group hoping to get out of all the responses? All of the information gathered will be used to build interactive tools, maps, and dashboards that will be shared publicly so everyone--classroom teachers, conservation educators, public officials, funders--can see what's being done and what more is needed to support environmental literacy in our communities, counties, state, and region. These tools will help all of us identify gaps and opportunities for programming, identify the highest need communities, and explore strategic partnerships and alliances.

This project has been possible with funding from the Pisces Foundation secured on behalf of the region by the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education.

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WILD AmeriCorps

ICEC hosted two AmeriCorps members this spring and early summer! Their terms of service are just about complete!

Maggie Voyles

During these last few months as an AmeriCorps member with ICEC, I have grown as a scientist, educator, and leader. I have been able to connect with educators in my local community of southeast Iowa, reaching over 100 students in Wapello County through hands-on environmental learning experiences. I have had a wonderful time working with the staff at Pioneer Ridge Nature Center, the Fairfield Public Library, and the Ottumwa Public Library this summer.

Additionally, I have had the chance to dedicate time to developing a Citizen Science Algae Monitoring Guide and program, combining my interests in aquatic ecology, environmental education, and community outreach. I am excited to complete this project and distribute it to those who are interested in my final weeks with ICEC.

It has been a pleasure collaborating with the other three AmeriCorps members serving with ICEC--Ellie, Ijeoma,

and Edwin--as we all have valuable and diverse ideas and skill sets to bring to our efforts. Finally, I would like to give a shout-out to Barb Gigar and Peg Steffen for being supportive and encouraging supervisors and helping to make our time with ICEC enriching and exciting.

Ellie Miglin

As a Green Iowa AmeriCorps member hosted by ICEC, I have had a fulfilling and enriching summer. Primarily, I focused on event planning where I successfully organized various activities to promote environmental awareness and sustainability. Collaborating with a dedicated team of two other AmeriCorps members - Ijeoma and Edwin - who made events even more fun and engaging.

Moreover, during my time with ICEC, I have acquired valuable skills in grant writing. This newfound expertise is allowing me to secure funding for free Project WILD, Aquatic WILD, and Growing Up WILD training for teachers of low income schools in Johnson County.

Overall, my time as a Green Iowa AmeriCorps member with ICEC was marked by meaningful contributions to the community, teamwork, and personal growth through learning essential grant writing skills.

I am excited to start my senior year of college with a greater connection to Iowa City's parks and conservationist community!

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Game Jam

The Iowa Game Jam for the 2022-2023 school year was a collaborative effort between ICEC, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Project WILD, and AmeriCorps members. Funding support came from the Holthues Trust. Using resources from last year's University of Iowa graduate students and additions from this year's AmeriCorps members, the topics were ***water pollution, endangered species, invasive species, and renewable energy***. Elementary and middle school students' from around Iowa developed games that help to teach others about environmental issues in Iowa. Twenty-two teams submitted game descriptions and 4-minute videos for judging in grades 3 to middle school. Judges represented the Iowa Conservation Education Coalition and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Our congratulations go to these teams for their creative games! Thanks goes to their teachers and others that helped in the process.

1st place – 3rd grade

- Endangered Species Matching Game – Cedar River Academy at Taylor (Kacidee, Giovanna, Aire)

1st Place – 5th grade

- Birdyland – Edgewood-Colesburg Elementary School (Arianna, Kathryn, Sienna)
- Water Player – Edgewood-Colesburg Elementary School (Miles, Noah, Paul)

2nd Place – 5th grade

- Infestation – Edgewood-Colesburg Elementary School (Connor, Aidden, Ryan)
- Endangered – Edgewood-Colesburg Elementary School (Collin, Holden, Conner)

3rd Place – 5th grade

- Waterball – Edgewood-Colesburg Elementary School (Dagny, Janett, Caleb, Jenna)
- Endangered Animals – Edgewood-Colesburg Elementary School (Cruz, Alivia, Eden)

Honorable Mention – 5th grade

- Wheel of Ospreys – Edgewood-Colesburg Elementary School (Clayton, Maddox, Grady O)
- Wildlife Cornhole – Edgewood-Colesburg Elementary School (Max, Maci, Bentley)
- Sorry for Endangering your Habitat – Cedar River Academy at Taylor Elementary (Aariah and Aleigha)

First Place Middle School

- Conservation Digital Game – BCLUW Middle School (Ethan, Garett, Tommy, Olin)

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ICEC Resources

Check out these resources available on the ICEC website!

- **Calendar of events** and courses from ICEC, co-sponsored by ICEC, our partner organizations, and others.
- **Equity and Inclusion in Environmental Education** - Visit this page for links to the on-demand videos from Winter Workshop 2021
- **WILD Resources**
    - **Monthly email** to support Project WILD and Aquatic WILD (**sign up here**)
    - **Book search** for PK-12 and parents / educators
    - **Project WILD and Aquatic WILD Workshops and Courses**
- **KinderNature** includes on the homepage weekly tips in "Max's Corner" and highlighted activity from the activity bank in KinderNature
    - **Monthly email** to support Growing Up WILD (**sign up here**)
    - **Book search** for PK-2 and parents / educators
    - **Growing Up WILD Workshops and Courses**
- **Authentic Iowa Data Resources**

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Professional Development

Project WILD
Check out these Iowa Project WILD Online Training Modules, available with or without re-certification credit to receive the new Project WILD and Aquatic WILD guides! The goal of Project WILD is to develop awareness, knowledge, skills, and commitment resulting in informed decisions, responsible behavior, and constructive actions concerning wildlife and the environment. Each online module includes an overview of the guide and resources for **Aquatic WILD** and **Project WILD**; you may order a copy of the guide upon completion of the activities included in the "modules" on this site. **Click here to learn about re-certification credit** through Iowa AEAs for Project WILD / Aquatic WILD. **Email the state coordinator for more info on the credit option.**

DOE Regional Science Training
The Iowa Department of Education, in conjunction with the Iowa DNR and the Iowa Space Grant Consortium are offering three regional professional learning opportunities this fall. Each venue will host grade-specific immersion experiences for informal educators, teachers, district administrators, and preservice teachers. The afternoon will host a variety of experiences to fit anyone's needs as an educator. Dates for each location are as follows:

- **September 25, 2023 at the University of Iowa**
- **October 3, 2023 at Iowa State University**
- **October 19, 2023 at Buena Vista University.**

There is no registration fee for attending and lunch will be provided at each site. We are limiting each site to the

first 120 participants and spots for afternoon sessions may also be limited, so sign up early!! A detailed agenda will be sent to you closer to the event.

To register, use this link: **REGISTRATION**.

Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS)

The SWCS **Emerging Leaders Program** is an immersive, interdisciplinary leadership experience for early career professionals (in the first five years of their career in the conservation field). Participants will learn about

leadership styles, complete the Conservation Events Planning Workshop, gain professional skills in virtual communications, basic graphic design, event planning, resume building, and creating community.
Apply by August 16, space is limited.

North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)
NAAEE 2023: Together We Thrive - Registration is open for the 2023 virtual conference. **Register here**.

Blank Park Zoo
Check out these teacher workshops from the Blank Park Zoo! These academic year workshops run 4:00 to 9:30 p.m. on Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday. Each class cost is $50.00 to help cover materials and meals, payable to Blank Park Zoo online; plus AEA credit fees (information regarding AEA registration will be sent to participants prior to each class). Workshops held in either the Events Center or Discovery Center Conference rooms at the zoo.

- October 6 & 7, 2023 – **Conservation: People and Animals**
- November 17 & 18, 2023 – **Lamarck, and Wallace, and Darwin – Oh, My!**
- January 19 & 20, 2024 – **Biomimicry and Inspiration**
- February 16 & 17, 2024 – **Nature-Centered Science for PreK-2**
- March 22 & 23, 2024 – Art and Science

National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)
Climate Change and Mental Health: Educating for Resilience
Presented by the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) and the USDA Forest Service, our upcoming webinar, featuring US Deputy Surgeon General, Rear Admiral (RADM) Denise Hinton, will examine the mental health impacts of climate change and the role of healthcare professionals, educators, and community leaders in addressing climate emotions with youth populations. **Sign up** for "Climate Change and Mental Health: Educating for Resilience" on **Thursday, August 10, from 1 - 2:30 p.m. ET.**

Harbinger Consultancy offers high-quality, hands-on and inspiring skill-building courses. These courses are geared toward the needs of small towns, rural communities, neighborhoods, and those organizations that partner with or serve these areas. **Check out Fall 2023 and Winter 2024 offerings**.

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Resources from NAAEE

Have you checked out **eePRO** to see all the fabulous resources and opportunities?
Bookmark this page and visit when needing inspiration.

NAAEE has launched a pledge campaign called **Outside for 5** encouraging teachers and educators to engage in outdoor learning for at least five minutes a day, five days a week, or any meaningful amount of time. **Learn more at the Outside for 5 website**.

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Resources and Links

Project Learning Tree
A Guide to Learning about the Edible Parts of Plants - check this out!
17 Creative STEM Activities using Sticks - check this out for your classroom!

Upper Iowa University Noyce Grant

Please share this information with aspiring science teachers in high school or early in their college career. Upper Iowa University was awarded a grant by the National Science Foundation and the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholar Program. The "Mentoring Awesome Science Teacher Education Recruits" (MASTER) project will prepare 15 UIU All Science majors to teach science in high-poverty, high-need, and rural schools in Iowa. **Learn more on the UIU website**.

Children & Nature Network (C&CN)
Back to School with Nature: Supporting Social Emotional Learning and Academic Outcomes
Webinar - September 7, 2023, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.
Summer may be over but that doesn't mean that nature needs to stay outdoors as kids head back to school. In this event José G. González, Cathy Jordan, Ph.D. and Sheila Williams Ridge, Ed.D. will discuss how nature impacts mental health, social emotional learning and cognitive function in support of academic outcomes. **Register today**.

Green Schoolyards Toolkit is available with information rolled out at the June 2023 Inside Out Conference. Information available to help with planning, advocacy, funding, and more. If your community is considering a building renovation or new construction, please use these materials to design green schoolyards that meet both the school needs, but also the community.

Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN)
Nature Everywhere - Through Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN), the Children & Nature Network and the National League of Cities have seen cities across the U.S. succeed in creating equitable access to nature while achieving complementary goals for climate resilience, public health, academic outcomes, youth leadership development, reducing disparities and more. Building on that success, the Children & Nature Network recently launched a process to advance **Nature Everywhere in 100 communities by 2025**. Cities, towns, and communities are invited to apply. Selected communities will receive support during a two-year commitment where local teams develop citywide Nature Everywhere visions and implementation plans. The process begins with an in-person Vision Lab that brings together local teams from across the country to learn about successful nature-connection and community engagement strategies. Vision Labs are followed by two years of technical assistance, training, resources, seed grants and opportunities to apply for catalytic implementation grants. Learn more.

- **Nature Everywhere**
- **2023 Request for Applications**
- **FAQ**
- **Introduction to Nature Everywhere**: Watch Recording
- **Designing Community Strategies and Building Cross-Sector Teams**: Informational webinar on August 10, 1:00 p.m. CT

How Cities Around the World are Turning to School Grounds to Address Climate Change - an article from the National League of Cities. We just missed the webinar mentioned, but maybe by the time you read this, a summary may be available!

National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) - July 26 was the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). **Check this link for an NEEF conversation with the Director of the Washington, DC Office of Disability Rights for his perspective on accessibility in the outdoors.**

Climate Literacy & Energy Awareness Network (CLEAN)

- **Browse the CLEAN Collection by NGSS Topic** - CLEAN supports teaching and learning about climate and energy with 850+ free peer-reviewed, scientifically accurate, and classroom-ready resources.
- **Explore the CLEAN Collection of climate and energy learning** - Accurate education about climate and energy topics has never been more important, and it can be challenging to locate reliable, vetted educational materials to use in your classroom.

- **How does energy affect wildlife?** - This activity asks students to consider impacts to wildlife from different types of electricity generation.

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Other News

Early Childhood: How to bring more nature into preschools, Hechinger Report, June 1, 2023
For preschoolers after the pandemic, more states say: Learn outdoors, Hechinger Report, May 19, 2023
Why transforming concrete schoolyards into parks could make for healthier cities, NPR All Things Considered, June 15, 2023
Nature Preschools in the United States: 2022 Survey, Natural Start Alliance, May 30, 2023

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The Iowa Conservation Education Coalition (ICEC) is a 501(c)3 Iowa non-profit first organized in 1958! We have a long-standing tradition of providing professional development to formal and non-formal educators in conservation and environmental education. ICEC is the unifying voice for conservation and environmental education in Iowa.

ICEC needs you! **If you need to renew your membership, visit our website**. Memberships expire on December 31 and should be renewed by January 31. Your membership supports excellence in conservation education through networking with formal and non-formal educators and their support services, and conservation professionals!

Remember to visit the **ICEC Facebook page**, like it, and share it! The more you comment on a page's post, the more that page will show in your news feed!

Sincerely,
Linette Bernard, Project Coordinator
Iowa Conservation Education Coalition
exec@iowaee.org

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Retired, FFA / Agriculture Education

Clark Porter, Vice-Chair
Environmental Specialist, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship; Farmer

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