ICEC News and Updates April 2024

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Member Newsletter April 2024

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A look back at 2023

A wise man once said, "Change is the only constant." So while ICEC continues with some signature programs, we are always looking to give each event a refresh -- change!

Our 2023 Winter Workshop and Annual Meeting were held in February at Drake University in Des Moines. ICEC thanked ExCom member Barb Gigar for her two terms of service at the Annual Membership meeting.

Right after Winter Workshop, we welcomed two part-time Green Iowa AmeriCorps members that helped with program outreach for this volunteer-led organization. Our thanks to the Holthues Trust for their support.

Then, we learned that our grant application to the National Envirothon Conservation Foundation to help expand student team participation in the Iowa Envirothon program was funded for the 2024 competition year! ICEC ExCom members helped with the 2023 Regional and Iowa Envirothon.

ICEC continues to work with a group of plains and mountain states via a group dubbed PEEPs or the Plains Environmental Education Partnership. You can read more about the PEEPs project in this report.

The ExCom continued to grow the groups' expertise by adding ex-officio members from the Departments of Education and Natural Resources plus the Conservation Districts of Iowa.

2023 was the year for the Midwest Environmental Education Conference. The Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education hosted the conference in Onalaska, WI. With a conference title of To Hinųkwaseja: Restoring connections to land and each other, highlighted the increasing importance of place-based relationships to a sustainable future.

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Welcome to new, returning ExCom Members

ICEC is grateful to have such passionate individuals willing to share their time and talents on the executive committee. As we sent off two-term member Lilly Jensen with much appreciation for her energy and leadership, we welcomed Tiffany Morgan and Ted Neal back for their second term. ICEC also welcomed new ExCom members Jared McGovern and Jim Pifer.

ExCom and Ex-officio members at Winter Workshop 2024. Standing L-R: Kean Roberts, Gus Elliott, Samuel Taylor, Clark Porter, Jared McGovern, Tiffany Morgan, Tony Vorwald, Jim Pifer, Chris Like, Louis Beck, Jerry Neppel. Seated L-R: Peg Steffen, Linette Bernard, Lilly Jensen, Ted Neal, Heather Gamm. Not present: Kyla Burns, David Conrads, Carlee Sabus, and Megan Wisecup.

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Awards

2024 Conservation Teacher of the Year

Annually, ICEC and the Iowa Soil Conservation Awards Program, presents two awards to outstanding teachers who are creating awareness of soil conservation and water quality in their classrooms. The Iowa Soil Conservation Awards Program, co-sponsored by the Iowa State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) and the Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI), is presented to two educators (one K-8, other 9-12) during the Annual

Conference for Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners.
Download the award application from the ICEC website here.

Nominations need to be submitted by June 9, 2023, to Sadi Hawk, (**sadi.hawk@iowaagriculture.gov**) Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship—Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality.

Read about past Iowa Conservation Teachers of the Year!

IAN-ICEC Award

The 2023 IAN-ICEC awards have been presented at various professional development events across the state this winter. **Download this PDF to learn about the 2023 winners**. Consider nominating deserving colleagues for one of these awards.

Learn more about these awards on the ICEC website.

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Iowa Science Phenomena Event

Join us for an Iowa Science Phenomena Event in Ida Grove!

The **Iowa Science Phenomena website** from Iowa PBS offers a growing collection of local standards-aligned phenomena, unique and relevant to the students and teachers of Iowa. You are invited to contribute to this collection by joining this one-day regional workshop!

Details:
When: April 27, 2024, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. General Public Event; 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Educator-Only Workshop
Where: **Moorehead Park**, Ida County

General Public Event: Begin the day by joining outdoor experts and Iowa PBS for an adventure through **Moorehead Park**! Choose one of two guided hikes through the park to experience the beauty of spring in northwest Iowa as you identify unique natural phenomena. Before the tour we will offer valuable tips and tricks to help improve your own amateur nature photography skills to help you capture these phenomena with your own phone or camera.

Educator-Only Workshop: In the afternoon, bring your laptop and enjoy a provided lunch for an educators-only workshop. This casual workshop, facilitated by science education experts, will allow you to:

- Review and select phenomena captured in the morning hike;
- Practice strategies to align that selected phenomena to Iowa science standards;
- Work alongside other educators to design standards-aligned classroom resources featuring the unique natural aspect of northwest Iowa;
- Have an opportunity to share your created resources with Iowa teachers and students through publication on the Iowa Science Phenomena website!

Please note: attending this morning hike session is encouraged, but not required in order to participate in the afternoon session.

This event is free, but space in the educator-only workshop is limited so reserve your spot today!
Registration Form
Questions? Contact **iowaphenomena@iowapbs.org**

Funded by the Resource Enhancement and Protection Conservation Education Program (REAP CEP)

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Iowa Envirothon

Registered teams have completed the regional testing process and the top 15 teams are eligible to attend the Iowa Envirothon Competition.

The Iowa Envirothon competition will be on Monday, April 29 at Jester Park, Grimes, IA. Volunteers are needed to help move student teams about the competition and to help with various aspects of the day. If interested in volunteering (this is a good way to learn about Iowa Envirothon), please email Carlee Sabus at **carlee@cdiowa.org**.

Envirothon is an environmental and natural resource conservation problem-solving, team-building, and leadership experience and competition for 9th – 12th grade students across the U.S. In Iowa, the Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) manage this competition, with support from ICEC.

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Game Jam 2024 Update

Video submissions of student team's games have been submitted prior to the March 31, 2024 deadline and are currently being reviewed by the Game Jam judges! A Game Jam celebration will be planned soon. Watch the ICEC website for details. Registered Game Jam teachers will be emailed directly.

- Games will be judged and winners selected in April 2024.
- Winners will be selected for the following categories:
  - Grades 3-5, analog; Grades 3-5, digital
  - Grades 6-8, analog; Grades 6-8, digital
  - Grades 9-12, analog; Grades 9-12, digital
- All topics will be combined for judging.

Educational Game Jams provide opportunities for students to develop games around a theme. They can inspire curiosity, creativity, collaboration, optimism, and problem-solving skills at any grade level.

Contact ICEC for additional questions!

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PEEPs

Calling Iowa PreK-12 teachers and administrators!

PreK-12 Teacher and Administrator Survey!

To be fully equipped to care for our environment and our communities, all residents of Iowa need access to conservation/environmental and outdoor learning opportunities. However, we know that not everyone has access to these transformative learning experiences.

In 2023, ICEC in partnership with the Plains Environmental Education Partnership embarked on a brand new undertaking — a landscape analysis of conservation/environmental (CE/EE) and outdoor learning efforts in six Plains and Rocky Mountain states. This project was the result of a collective desire to gain an enhanced understanding of the environmental and outdoor learning opportunities in our region who are working towards similar goals.

To understand the landscape of conservation/environmental education (CE/EE) and outdoor learning in the Region and in Iowa, we are working together to survey both CE/EE and outdoor learning providers, as well as PreK-12 schools, teachers, and administrators. Data was collected from CE/EE and outdoor learning providers in the summer and fall of 2023 and from teachers and administrators during the spring of 2024 to better understand what, if any, environmental/conservation education was taking place within and outside the

classroom. This data will be used to develop invaluable tools for looking at the field as a whole. These tools will visualize the outcomes of the analysis and can be used to build or strengthen environmental education programs and networks across the region and beyond.

When completed, the landscape analysis will provide:

- a comprehensive look at organizational reach and environmental and outdoor learning program offerings
- a better understanding of the staffing, structure, and funding of conservation/environmental and outdoor learning organizations and how that affects reach and sustainability
- a comprehensive look at what conservation/environmental education is (or is not) happening in schools
- a better understanding of the needs and priorities of teachers and administrators
- strategies for scaling programs for a broader, more equitable reach
- state and regional findings to inform future planning efforts

The survey for Teachers and Administrators will be open until April 22, 2024.

PreK-12 Teacher and Administrator Survey!

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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.
- **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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Student Scholarships and Research

Project Dragonfly
Apply now for 2024 courses through Miami University's Project Dragonfly for graduate courses and master's degrees that offer extraordinary experiences through zoos and botanical gardens. Click here to learn about their **Advanced Inquiry Program**, **Global Field Program**, and **Earth Expeditions.** Graduate tuition for all programs is greatly reduced because of support from Miami University. NEW for 2024 Applicants: To help make a Miami education more accessible and affordable, the Miami University Graduate School will waive the $50 application fee for those who attend **an Information Session** preceding the fee payment step of the application process.

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**.

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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.**

University of Northern Iowa

The *University of Northern Iowa MA Science Education graduate program* for K-12 teachers with online and hybrid options. Next start date is June 2024. Learn more at **online.uni.edu/science-education**. If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Del Carlo, UNI Science Education Graduate Coordinator (**sciedgradcoord@uni.edu**)

PLT, WET, and WILD

For the first time in 25 years, Project Learning Tree, Project WET, and Project WILD are coming together May 13-17, 2024 for a joint conference in San Antonio, TX! **Learn more at the conference webpage**.

Conservation Outcomes Webinar Series | Natural Resources Conservation Service (**usda.gov**)

Emerging Findings on the Effects of Cover Crops on Grassland Birds

As the use of cover crops to improve soil health and reduce water quality concerns on working cropland has increased in recent years, questions have emerged regarding the value of cover crops to wildlife. For example, do cover crops provide needed habitat for grassland birds, a group that has experienced widespread population decline in recent decades? What is the value of cover crop fields to grassland birds during the winter, spring migration, and breeding periods compared to cropland fields without cover crops or areas of perennial cover?

On April 25 at 2:00 p.m. Eastern, Dr. Adam Janke of Iowa State University and Dr. David Buehler of the University of Tennessee will provide answers to these questions and more during our free, one-hour Conservation Outcomes Webinar. This webinar will share findings from recent studies examining bird use of cover crops in Iowa and Tennessee conducted in partnership with USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project. Findings may be used to support on-the-ground cropland management decisions informed by a better understanding of the potential roll of cover crops in grassland bird conservation efforts.

Registration is not required. **Access instructions are available on the Conservation Outcomes Webinar Series webpage** along with a calendar of upcoming webinars through 2024.

Children & Nature Network - Just Grow! Gardening with Kids

April 26, 1:00-2:00 p.m. CT, Online, Free! **For more information and to register, visit their site!**

Children & Nature Network - 2024 Nature Everywhere Conference

May 28-31, 2024 in Madison, Wisconsin

Join colleagues from a broad range of sectors on the shores of Lake Monona to connect, learn and lead. The conference will be held at Monona Terrace, an iconic feature of Madison's downtown skyline, filled with natural light and offering rooftop gathering spaces complete with native plantings, pollinator gardens and incredible lake views. **Conference info**.

Iowa Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society summer meeting will be Friday, June 7, Lewis, IA. Details under development. Contact Jerry Neppel for further information, 515-450-2325 or **jbiej@msn.com**.

Outdoor Education, Learning, and Leading

In this two-day course, participants will train in a variety of curriculum options that they can bring into their K-12 classrooms. Teachers will experience Project WILD, Wet, and Aquatic and receive curriculum guides they can utilize in their own programs. Teachers will also be trained as hunter education instructors and learn outdoor lessons in orienteering, topography mapping, archery and atlatls, and seeing connections to content areas. This course is open to all educators, but we anticipate that Ag, CTE, Physical Education, and science teachers will be best positioned to implement the learning in their own programs. The majority of this course will occur outside

so please dress for the weather. Lunch will be provided on both days. This course meets Saturday June 15 and Saturday, June 29, both from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 **p.m.at** Fairbank Gun Club, 3094 260th St, Fairbank, IA. Fees associated with this course include participant only registration and lunch ($20) OR License Renewal credit and lunch ($55). Register for all courses through the AEALearning website: **https://aealearning.truenorthlogic.com/**.

Climate Generation's Summer Institute for Climate Change Education is a three day climate change education conference structured to allow time for learning and networking. During the first two virtual days, July 15-16, 2024, hosted by Climate Generation, educators can select from keynote presentations and concurrent workshops. During the third day (regional cohort day July 17, 18, 0r 19), educators will attend a cohort workshop facilitated and hosted by a regional cohort leader to focus on place-based climate change education and the need for ongoing support throughout the year. Cohort days may be in-person or online, depending on educator and cohort leader needs in that region. Each group of 20-50 educators will explore local impacts, actionable solutions, connections to local experts, and planning and networking. $250 registration. Scholarships available. **Register Now!**

Soil and Water Conservation Society 79th International Annual Conference
July 21-24, 2024, Myrtle Beach, SC - Learn more at the conference site. **http://www.swcs.org/24ac**

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. Registration and prepayment are required. **Register here!**

- June 17-18, 2024 - Patterns of Nature
- July 22-23, 2024 - Habitats and Adaptations

NAEE - NatStart24 - Charting Our Future
July 31-August 5, 2024
Registration now open! Join online from anywhere or in person in Portland, Oregon, for the 2024 Nature-Based Early Learning Conference. This a hybrid conference includes lived-streamed plenaries, a virtual workshop, and access to 50+ on-demand sessions. **Learn more here**.

Iowa Water Center
2024 Iowa Water Conference: Life Depends on Water. Water Depends on You.
Save the date - This year's conference will be September 10-11, 2024, with a pre-conference tour on September 9, 2024. **Check this portal for updates**. Registration opens in July.

NAEE - Conference 2024: Building Bridges
November 6-9, 2024
NAAEE seeks compelling presentations for the 53rd Annual Conference and 21st Annual Research Symposium, to be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, November 5–9! NAAEE is looking for expertise from around the world and encourages all to consider submitting proposals that speak to the overall theme, "Building Bridges." Learn more and submit a proposal by April 26 at **conference.naaee.org**.

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 the 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.

The NAAEE campaign Outside for 5 encourages 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

Iowa Bumble Bee Atlas
A new statewide project is looking for Iowa volunteers to help researchers track and monitor the state's at-risk bumble bees. The Iowa Bumble Bee Atlas is a collaboration between the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, Iowa State University, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources that aims to understand native bumble bee distributions and their habitat needs throughout the state.
Read the full Iowa DNR press release here.
Learn more from the **Iowa Bumble Bee Atlas site**!

Ground Nesting Bees Community Science Project
The Entomology Department at Cornell University has a group of researchers seeking to promote local community-driven research and conservation for aggregations of ground-nesting bees. To accomplish this aim, they have built a community science project, "Project GNBee", focused on mapping aggregations of diverse ground-nesting bees. The researchers said that citizen science help is integral to this project's continued success.
Check out the website
Find the project on iNaturalist
Instagram
Download a flyer for sharing!

Project Learning Tree
Digital Tools to Connect Your Students to Wildlife - **Learn more!**
New PLT Resources, check them out!
Save these resources for learning about **Native American Heritage**!

Iowa PBS Phenomena Project
Iowa Science Phenomena is a website and service dedicated to supporting classrooms through a curated collection of user-generated, Iowa-focused science phenomena. Explore **videos** highlighting Iowa master teachers modeling phenomena-based strategies and practices in their classroom as well as elementary, middle and high school students sharing their experiences learning with Iowa-based phenomena. Explore these videos and learn how you can use and contribute to the **Iowa Science Phenomena website** today!

IDALS-Division of Soil Conservation & Water Quality and Conservation Districts of Iowa
April 2–May 5 is Soil and Water Conservation Week. The theme is May the Forest Be with You, Always. Check with your local Iowa soil and water conservation districts for a list of planned activities or events. The Iowa celebration is in conjunction with **Stewardship Week**, sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts

Soil and Water Conservation Society
Emerging Leaders Program, **Student Event Planning Resource** (Download this tool to help with your next event!)
Emerging Leaders Program - Share this program with those in your network in the first five years of their career. Applications for the 2024-2025 program will open this summer!

Community Commons
Community Commons is a robust online platform that supports change-makers working to advance equitable community health and well-being. For over a decade, this group has connected those driving change to the best tools, resources, data, and stories to support this work. Explore the **Community Indicator Library**!

Children & Nature Network (C&NN)
Leveling the Playing Field: Nature play for gender equity
Check out this week's C&NN **Stat Sheet**, complete with references!

C&NN Founders' Council has released a report, "Trends and emerging ideas influencing the children and nature movement." **Download the report here (PDF).**

National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)
Forest Classrooms inspire next generation of environmental stewards. **Read about this NEEF and US Forest Service partner project.**
Learn about **past projects here**!

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

Reclaiming nature: Breaking barriers for Black athletes in winter sports - This article, along with the powerful accompanying video, examines the barriers to winter sports that many Black participants experience. Organizations like Hoods to Woods and Brown Girl Outdoor World offer supportive communities to help Black, Indigenous and other People of Color enjoy the benefits of outdoor winter recreation. Zeb Powell, the first Black snowboarder to win a gold medal in X Games history, reflects on the movement: "It's a crazy energy I've never seen on the mountain... We can lean on each other to talk about how to grow the sport our way." ABC News. **Read more and watch the video**

Miami University - Project Dragonfly - **Jennifer Redmond Receives Jerry Liguori Scholarship for Raptor Conservation.** Jennifer learned about raptors working at University of Iowa Wildlife Camp.

Edutopia articles

- **Self-Guided Learning in Outdoor Play Areas; Pre-K teachers can create outdoor play areas that serve as an extension of the classroom and foster social and emotional learning**
- **Making Learning More Playful**

Cornell Lab, K-12 Education - Taking Your Students Outside

- View this recording of a panel discussion by experienced teachers who have embraced outdoor learning. You'll discover tips, tricks, and tools that make taking it outside more practical, effective, and fun.
- Check out these tips for leading groups outdoors from our resident teacher advisor.
- Read this blog on why its great to teach outside.

Minnesota Public Radio **story from January 2024 talks about outdoor learning in a camp setting.** Sound familiar? Minnesota House and Senate had legislation introduced last year. HF3321 and SF3355 were both referred to committee after being introduced. Nothing more has happened.

NPR: **Inside the weird and delightful origins of the jungle gym,** which turned 100

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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

Executive Committee Members

Louis Beck, Chair
Retired, FFA / Agriculture Education

Tiffany Morgan, Vice-Chair, Secretary
Iowa PBS

Heather Gamm, Treasurer
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Kyla Burns
Johnston High School

Dave Conrads
UI WILD, University of Iowa College of Education

Jared McGovern
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Kean Roberts
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Peg Steffen
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Sam Taylor
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