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ICEC April 2025 News and Updates

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Member Newsletter April 2025

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From the Chair

Hello everyone!

I've been enjoying these early signs of another Iowa spring and I'm hoping you've also had a chance to get out and explore the sights, sounds, and smells of spring! My favorite springtime features include listening to spring frog calls, seeing the bright stars on a crisp evening, and catching sight of spring ephemerals at my nearby state park.

So often these experiences are even better when we get to explore them alongside family, friends, and colleagues. The opportunity to share in an unexpected delight and learn something new from each other enhances and improves our time spent outdoors!

Similarly, as I begin my time as the ICEC Chair, I am reminded that much of what makes ICEC a wonderful organization are those we share it with. As I look back on another exciting ICEC Winter Workshop, say thank you to those ICEC ExCom members who have completed their terms on the committee, and welcome new and returning members to the committee, I am excited for the opportunities ahead of us. And while - like so many other organizations - the road ahead of ICEC and the members we serve is not without challenges, I'm grateful to be facing these challenges alongside so many passionate and committed individuals.

As the ICEC board continues implementing the work from our 2024 Strategic Planning, I also look to each of you to help us strengthen and grow this organization for the future. Encourage another friend or colleague to join the organization. Share your thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns with me and/or an ExCom member. Let's continue to make ICEC fun, creative, and collaborative! It's better when we explore together!

Tiffany Morgan
ExCom Chair, Iowa Conservation Education Coalition

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IAN-ICEC Awards Announced

Congratulations to the winners of the 2024 IAN-ICEC Awards for Excellence in Environmental Education! These awards recognize the best of environmental education in Iowa from across the state, representing outstanding programs and individual contributions in the field of conservation and environmental education. Congratulations to all who were recognized for their great work. **Learn more about the awards here**.

Download full award bios here!

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Nominations open 2025 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 here. Nominations need to be submitted by June 6, 2025, to **Sadi Hawk**, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship—Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality.

Read about past awardees here!

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PEEPs

ICYMI: Here are the recordings of the eeLandscape Analysis results

The Plains Environmental Education Partners (PEEPs) shared the results of the EE landscape analysis conducted across Kansas and the region, sharing key findings like that, "teachers and administrators identified the top barriers to taking students outside to learn include logistics, such as scheduling, time, distance, staging, and clean up and student behavior." If you missed the live sessions, you can watch the recordings below:

Recording for Teachers & Administrators
Recording for Environmental Education Providers

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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
  - **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
  - **Book search** for PK-2 and parents / educators
  - **Growing Up WILD Workshops and Courses**
- **Authentic Iowa Data Resources**

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NAAEE Resources

Have you checked out eePRO to see all the fabulous resources and opportunities? **Bookmark this page and visit when needing inspiration.** Also check out the **Youth Outdoor Policy Playbook** and the **Environmental Education and Civic Engagement**

NAAEE 2025 seeks compelling proposals for our 54th Annual Conference (November 3–6) and 22nd Research

Symposium (October 30), taking place virtually. Proposals due May 16, 2025.

- **Learn more and submit proposals**
- **Volunteer to review proposals**

#Outside for 5

As a teacher, YOU inspire, guide, and empower your students every day, and nature can be a powerful partner in helping YOU do that. Whether it's a forest, a city park, or just outside your school building, nature offers endless opportunities to enhance your teaching and support your students' learning and well-being.

During the month of April, we invite you to sign up to learn more about how to:

- Incorporate an outdoor lesson or activity at least 5 minutes a day, 5 days a week, or any meaningful amount of time.
- Use your current school curriculum and apply it to outdoor activities.
- Connect with other educators and professionals who engage in outdoor learning experiences.

We know you juggle a lot in your day, so we are here to provide YOU with the tools, inspiration, and support to bring the benefits of nature into YOUR classroom! Sign up today to receive FREE resources and inspiration to help you take learning outside—whether it's 5 minutes a day or whatever works for you! Learn more and sign up at **www.outsidefor5.com**.

Natural Start Alliance

The latest issue of the **International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education** is now available! The Journal publishes scholarly works pertinent to the education of all young children from birth to eight years. The journal shares important ideas, conceptualizations, and frameworks, as well as effective practices and policies in early childhood environmental education. In order to reach an extensive global audience, all articles are available electronically at no cost.

Professional Development

Apr 7: Roots & Sky Nature-Based Learning: **Resourced Teachers: a basic needs assessment practice (PDLS)**
Apr 8–May 15: Association for Nature-Based Education: **Nature-Based Teacher Certification (online)**
Apr 14: Roots & Sky Nature-Based Learning: **Nature for All: Embracing accessibility & inclusion for children with disabilities (PDLS)**
Upcoming Online: Forest School Teacher Institute: **Online Course Descriptions**

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Student Scholarships and Research

Iowa Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society

The Iowa Chapter SWCS is offering two memorial student scholarships. **Learn more here**.

Project Dragonfly

Apply now for 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**. Miami University's **Project Dragonfly** is accepting applications for 2025 Earth Expeditions graduate courses that offer extraordinary experiences at global field sites in 15 countries throughout Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Americas.

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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.**

Midwest Environmental Education Conference

Midwest Environmental Education Conference is in Illinois for 2025 hosted by the Environmental Education Association of Illinois. **Learn more here**.

University of Northern Iowa

The University of Northern Iowa MA Science Education graduate program is the only online program in Iowa for K-12 teachers that integrates theory, application, and content, plus allows you to update pedagogy, add endorsement areas or update content knowledge in your specialty area. 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**)

Climate Generation

Register for the Teach Climate Network 20th Summer Institute on July 14-15, plus one regionally focused day on July

16 or 17, 2025. **Learn more here**. Scholarships available.

Iowa Water Center
The Iowa Water Conference is 9-10 September 2025 at the FFA Enrichment Center at DMACC-Ankeny. The Call for Presentations for the 2025 Iowa Water Conference closes 30 April 2025. Organizers invite submissions aligned with these conference focus area: Water and Agriculture, Water and Health, Stormwater / Urban Water, Water Quantity, Water Science Communication, and Water and Recreation. **Learn more here**.

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. **Learn more at their website**.

CLEAN Professional Development Calendar is a central location for PD opportunities in climate and energy education. **Learn more here**.

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Resources and Links

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)

- Engaging Institutional Leadership for Nature-Based Strategies - Nature Everywhere Communities, April 9, 2025, 3:00 - 4:00 pm CDT. **Visit this link to Learn more and to register for this free webinar**
- Making the Case for Children & Nature - **Research Digest: Screen time and green time**
- **Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots: Young changemakers and the power of community mapping**
- **Learn about Nature Everywhere Communities!** Be sure to check out the 2024 Nature Everywhere communities in Iowa - Cedar Rapids and Dubuque!
- **Cedar Rapids joins national Nature Everywhere Communities** (CBS2Iowa report)
- Outdoor preschool could be good for the mind — and the gut. While it's commonly understood that learning and playing outside has mental, physical, and academic benefits for children, a recent study points to a less-expected benefit: gut health. "We only know a fraction of what being outside does for kids," study author Amber Fyfe-Johnson said. **Seattle Times**.
- **Cross-sector leaders launch national effort to advance nature-based play and learning in early childhood** - A C&NN February 2025 feature
- A recommended spring selection of articles from Richard Louv:
  12 ways to make sure your kids get Vitamin N this spring From "wildsnapping" to backyard camping, there are plenty of ways to get outdoors in spring!
  There is no practical alternative to hope For these students, framing our environmental future through a lens of hope — rather than despair — made a lasting impact.
  Children's connection to nature should be a human right This essay, later expanded upon in Louv's book "The Nature Principle," asks: "Does a child have a right to a walk in the woods?"
  Six ways nature in our lives can reduce the violence in our world While we can't always end violence, time in nature helps make our lives gentler in these six ways.
  What's nature? Scientists and poets struggle to find the answer Is it "a wilderness of sweets"? Something more? Something less?
  Dear Virginia: On writing Although 11-year-old Virginia came to Richard Louv for writing advice, he was the one who walked away with a valuable lesson.

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!

National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)

- ICYMI: Connecting Veterans with the Outdoors Webinar Recording - One in four veterans struggles with the transition to civilian life, but nature can help. In 2024-2025, NEEF and the USDA Forest Service funded 10 grants to connect veterans with nature's mental and physical health benefits. These grants support organizations nationwide working to improve veterans' lives through job training, nature-based therapy, and environmental education. Learn more about some of this year's awardees making a difference and discover resources to support veterans in your community. **Watch here**.
- How STEM Education Supports Career Opportunities in Rural Communities - Where you live can impact the opportunities you have to pursue a career in STEM. NEEF explores the data behind why students from rural communities are less likely to enroll in STEM degree programs and what is being done to build career pathways for these communities through NEEF's Greening STEM program. **Learn more here**.

Project GNBee Update: How you can help this season

What is Project GNBee? Ground-nesting bees make up 65% of all bee species. They are valuable but vulnerable, and are found across nearly all landscapes and habitats. While previous bee conservation efforts have focused on enhancing floral resources, less attention has been given to preserving nesting habitats. We have developed a community science project to locate, research, and conserve ground-nesting bee aggregations. Your participation can help us better understand and protect these vital nesting sites. If you are new to this project and would like to help, you can start by making an observation on iNat from your local nesting aggregation, or any new sites you encounter. For instructions on how to join and make observations **please visit here**. The coming weeks would be a perfect time to do this as new bees emerge from the ground! For additional information on the project, please the links below:

- **Website**
- **iNaturalist Project**
- **Instagram Page**

The Aldo Leopold Foundation

The foundation has a new resource to use while studying A Sand County Almanac, Learning with the Land: Activities Based on A Sand County Almanac in the **Learning Hub** on **aldoleopold.org**.

Walking Softer

The Walking Softer Education program is a free, hands-on and solutions-oriented sustainability program for high school students in classroom, club, or after-school settings that includes NGSS-aligned learning activities, and resources and funding for student-led community projects. **Learn more here**.

Fragment, a recommended environmental education novel

The theme of this book provides room for many discussion threads for young adults. One reviewer said: "*Fragment* succeeds on multiple fronts. On one level, it's a fascinating work of idea-fiction that tells a tale of first contact between humans and whales. It also spins an absorbing thriller yarn in which a motley group of humans and a lone, heroic whale join forces to face an unprecedented threat. On a third level, the book offers important insights into the gravest ecological reality of our time, climate change." - *Resilience Magazine*
Download the 2.2 MB PDF here.

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Other News

Keep Iowa Beautiful (**KIB website**) invites Iowans (individuals, organizations, coworkers, service club, scout groups, etc.) to participate in **Pick-Up Iowa**, a KIB statewide cleanup initiative, from April 1-June 30, 2025, supporting the **Greatest American Cleanup**—the nation's largest community improvement program.

Oregon Public Broadcasting - **People of Color Outdoors cultivates community by leading outside gatherings**

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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
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exec@iowaee.org

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Iowa PBS

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