

Environmental Education CONNECTIONS

Summer 2009



No Child Left Inside Act Update

As many environmental educators and concerned citizens are aware, the No Child Left Inside Act (H.R. 3036 and S. 1981) passed in the U.S. House of Representatives last September. This huge victory is proof that Americans both want and need environmental education in their schools.



Unfortunately, the victory of the Act passing in the House was short lived. Because

there is a new Congress, the bill must now pass the House again, and pass the Senate.

On April 26, 2009, Earth Day, the No Child Left Inside Act was introduced into both the Senate and the House by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and Congressman John Sarbanes (D-MD). The bi-partisan legislation, if passed, would make the first environmental education legislation to pass Congress in more than 25 years.

The bill authorizes new funding for states to provide high-quality, environmental instruction. Funds would support outdoor learning activities both at school and in non-formal environmental education centers, teacher professional development, and the creation of state environmental literacy plans.



“Environmental education must be a part of the formal pre-K-12 education system if we are to fully prepare students to become lifelong stewards of our natural resources and

compete in a green economy,” Congressman Sarbanes said.

Why should Nebraskan’s support this legislation? According to the Nebraska Conservation and Environment Literacy and Awareness Survey, 98% of respondents think environmental education should be taught in schools. And, yet, only 47% said schools in their community have environmental education.

According to the same survey, 89% of respondents thought the condition of the environment will play a role in the nation’s economic future. To be ready for the environmental challenges which currently face the nation – and will face the nation in the future – we must begin educating our citizens now.

“Passing the No Child Left Inside Act is a key step in improving the quality of our children’s education and preparing them for the complex challenges of the future workforce,” Senator Reed said.

What can you do? Co-sponsors of the bill are bi-partisan in both the House and Senate. However, none of Nebraska’s Congressmen or Senators have signed-on.

Write your Senator and Congressman to tell them that you support this legislation and that you hope they will, too.

EE Connections is mailed free of charge to persons who have participated in a Project WILD, Project WET, Project Learning Tree, Leopold Education Project, or Food, Land, and People, workshop in Nebraska, and NACEE Members.

Layout is done by the Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environment Education.

EE IN THE NEWS

Adventure Awaits with the Nebraska Great Parks Pursuit!

After a successful inaugural year in 2008, the Great Park Pursuit will return with more sites and outdoor adventures from May 1 to September 8, 2009.



The Nebraska Recreation and Park Association along with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission partnered to develop the program with the goal of encouraging a healthier lifestyle for participants

while increasing awareness of Nebraska's nature rich outdoor recreation opportunities. This year's program will be sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services.

The program, adopted from a similar outdoor initiative started by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, revolves around a challenge to visit park sites throughout Nebraska. Participants follow clues to collect nature based impressions from posts hidden in each of the selected parks. Prizes and entry into drawings are based on the number of tracings collected. While participants become registered for a free two-night cabin stay at a Nebraska State Park of their choice with just one visit, the more sites participants visit the more opportunities they have to win.

In 2008 the Tesarek family of Plattsmouth was one of thirty-four teams to visit all ten selected parks. Participation in the Great Park Pursuit was a highlight of the family's vacation. Karen Tesarek explained, "When we got back to the van, our 13-year-old, Andrea, said 'Finding the places was the most fun part of the whole vacation.' I thought that was really something because, in addition to doing the Great Park Pursuit, we had also taken them to the Black Hills, Wind Cave and Mount Rushmore, but she liked the Pursuit the best."

Engaging youth in the natural world outside their door is an important component of the program. Of the 1854 participants from last summer, 900 were children with an average age of 8. Since today's recreation time is too often spent in front of a screen, the Great Park Pursuit provides an opportunity which allows participants to feel comfortable in natural environments.

To build on the success of the 464 teams registered last year, which represented 122 Nebraska communities and 8 states, the 2009 Great Park Pursuit will offer more opportunities to participate. National trends show people are recreating closer to home. Expanding to fifteen park sites across Nebraska for this year's program provides more close to home opportunities. In addition, this year's sites include a mix of local, state and federal parkland. The variety of sites selected highlights the great natural resources of Nebraska while raising awareness of locations that offer educational, historical and entertainment opportunities. The Great Park Pursuit 2009 sites include Pioneers Park in Lincoln, Indian Cave State Park, Platte River State Park, Walnut Creek Lake and Recreation Area in Papillion, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail – National Park Service, Garden Area in Omaha, Scenic Park in South Sioux City, Cowboy Trail near Norfolk, Calamus State Recreation Area, Bessey Ranger District of the Nebraska National Forest near Halsey, Fort Robinson State Park, Central Park in Alliance, Ash Hollow State Historic Park, Kelley Park in McCook, Stolley Park in Grand Island, and Pawnee Park in Columbus.



"Start your Journey today – Explore Nebraska Parks!" To register and for program updates, please visit www.negpp.org.

EE IN THE NEWS

Omaha named North American Host City for the United Nations World Environment Day

Omaha has been chosen by the The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the host city for the North American celebrations of World Environment Day 2009. This year's theme is "UNite to Combat Climate Change." During the period between Earth Day (April 22) and World Environment Day (June 5), events throughout the community will highlight resources, initiatives and methods that promote low carbon economies and lifestyles, such as improved energy efficiency, alternative energy sources, forest conservation and eco-friendly consumption.



For more information on World Environment Day, the series of events in the Omaha area, or how to get involved, visit: www.omahaenvironmentday.com.

Study Finds EE Programs Lead to Cleaner Air

A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Study finds that environmental education programs lead to cleaner air. A first of its kind study funded by EPA shows that environmental education programs are an effective tool in helping to improve air quality in North America. "This study shows a valuable connection between better environmental education and cleaner air in our communities," said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. "With the right information, people can make a real difference in the places where they live, work, play and learn."

Nearly half of the surveyed institutions hosting education programs reported an improvement in air quality at their facilities due to actions taken by students, including doing service-learning projects and fostering community partnerships. Examples include decreased levels of carbon

monoxide and mold, and enactment of a policy that decreased car or bus idling. An additional 43 percent of the surveyed programs reported some kind of action was taken to improve the environment. Some examples include:

- East Valley Middle School (Wash.) where students monitored school indoor air quality and worked with school administrators to implement structural changes resulting in improved carbon dioxide, air flow, particulate levels, odors and mold.
- Exeter High School (N.H.) students studied air quality issues and monitored car pooling and bus idling in the school drop-off area, leading to a no-idling policy and installation of no-idling signs.



Information on the study is available at: www.epa.gov/education/R082

Environmental Education Funding Increases by 44 Percent in FY 2009

On Wednesday, March 11, 2009, President Obama signed the FY 2009 omnibus appropriations bill (H.R. 1105) which included record funding levels for environmental education and climate change education for the current fiscal year (10/1/08 through 9/30/09). EPA's Office of Environmental Education was funded at \$9 million, the same level as FY 2008, while NOAA's Office of Education received about a 20 percent increase in funding, with key programs coming in at about \$20 million in FY 2009. Climate change education received an 18 percent boost at NASA, now funded at \$10 million, while first time funding for climate change education was established at the National Science Foundation at \$10 million.

Ultimately, federal support for environmental education and climate change education increased by 44 percent in FY2009, a testament to the importance of environmental literacy, connecting children with nature, and preparing Americans of all ages to combat climate change and support a new clean energy future.

EE IN THE NEWS

Dinosaurs Coming to Nebraska!

Coming soon... A forest adventure unlike any other... DinoQuest! Join Fontenelle Nature Association in Bellevue, Nebraska as they welcome dinosaurs into the forest! Search for creatures of the ancient past as you stroll along the Riverview Boardwalk at Fontenelle Forest Nature Center. Natural



history will come to life with more than thirty captivating creatures above, beside and below you. The dinosaurs' amazing lifelike features will blend into a woodland landscape to take you on an amazing journey back in time. Join us for dino digs, paleontology programs and prehistoric parties! The dinosaurs will be in the forest from August 1 through October 31. For more information, visit www.fontenelleforest.org.

Celebrate Spring with Project BudBurst

Join thousands of others in gathering valuable environmental information with Project BudBurst. Project BudBurst is a national field campaign for educators, students, families, and other volunteers designed to engage the public in making careful observations of the phenophases such as first leafing, first flower, and first fruit ripening of a diversity of trees, shrubs, flowers, and grasses in their local area. Participants contribute to a better understanding of how changing climates impact plant species. For the 2009 field campaign, a number of new features have been added to the Web site: <http://www.budburst.org>

Going to Green Educators' Toolkit

The PBS Going to Green Educators' Toolkit contains 19 units of integrated curriculum including thematic, multidisciplinary lesson plans, real-life case studies on video, readings with discussion questions, activities, reproducibles, and other resources.

For more information, or to purchase a "Going Green" tool kit, search "going green" at <http://teacher.shop.pbs.org>.

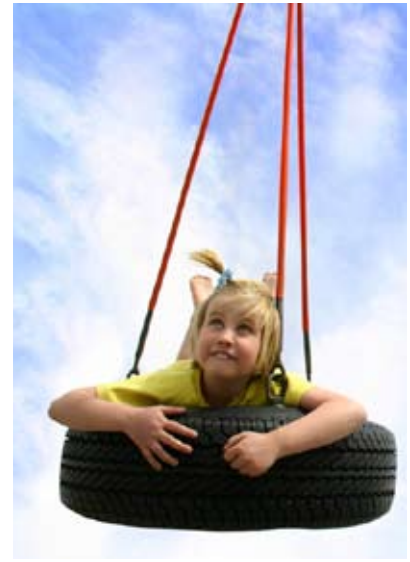
National Leopold Education Project Conference

Pheasants Forever (PF) has announced its Leopold Education Project's (LEP) 2009 National Conference will be taking place at the Aldo Leopold Legacy Center in Baraboo, Wisconsin this June 25-27. LEP is a national network of educators who work to connect youth and adults to land stewardship and wildlife habitat conservation practices.

While using educational materials based on Aldo Leopold's A Sand County Almanac, this national conference aims to create an awareness of the current state of human and ecological communities' coexistence.

"This year's conference theme focuses on connecting families and their larger communities with the great outdoors. At its most basic fundamental level, respect for the land starts with the family. However, a community wide respect and passion for our land and natural resources is absolutely critical as we build toward a landscape-level view of the world around us," explained Janine Kohn, PF's National Education Specialist and National LEP Coordinator.

More information on the specifics of the conference can be found at <http://www.aldoleopold.org>, or contact Janine Kohn at (651) 209-4971 or via e-mail at JKohn@pheasantsforever.org.



EE IN THE NEWS

How Mother Nature Flowered the Fields

This new book, *How Mother Nature Flowered the Fields*, by Tom Schwartz, is acclaimed by the Superintendent of schools in Brevard County, Florida, and highly recommended by the Midwest Book Review for its important message to our youth about the preservation of humans and their environment, originality, entertainment value, and informational content. Through the format of a fairytale style presentation, young readers are provided with some very “real world” information about environmental issues and Earth’s interdependent ecosystems. Ideal for family, preschool, and community library collections. <http://www.reagentpress.com/tomschwartz.htm>

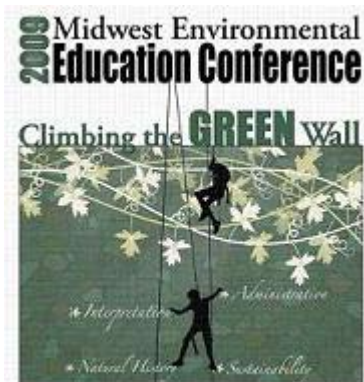
Learning Science in Informal Environments

The newly released National Research Council (NRC) report, *Learning Science in Informal Environments: People, Places, and Pursuits*, notes that “tens of millions of Americans, young and old, choose to learn about science in informal ways.” The report stresses the need for professional development among educators in the field in light of the range of science learning in informal settings. For more information, visit: www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12190

Midwest Environmental Education Conference (MEEC)

You are invited to the 2009 Midwest Environmental Education Conference (MEEC) “Climbing the Green Wall” to be held at the I Hotel and Conference Center in Champaign, Illinois, October 14-17, 2009.

Everyone has ‘walls’ or barriers to climb in their profession, whether those barriers are with Administration, Interpretation, Natural History or Sustainability; this



conference will give you the knowledge to climb over those walls to maximize your potential in the field of EE!

For more information, visit www.eeai.net/annual_conf.htm

Connecting Math to the Environment

Facing the Future is pleased to announce the release of *Real World Math: Engaging Students through Global Issues*. This two-part math resource engages students in learning foundational algebra and geometry through real-world data on global issues. The teacher’s guide and corresponding student workbook contain 15 lessons on topics such as climate change, population, and financial literacy. Each lesson in the teacher’s guide includes:



A complete lesson plan including an activity-based ‘hook’ to engage students, masters for student lesson handouts, masters for practice worksheets. All lessons were inspired, researched, designed, reviewed, and pilot tested by educators in the field.

Built into each lesson are: real-world data, contextual math problems, step-by-step instructions, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards alignment, activity-based lesson ‘hooks’ that grab students’ interest, critical thinking, bonus and extension problems, action project ideas, and additional resources

The corresponding *Real World Math* student workbook includes lesson handouts, supplemental worksheets, and topical background readings that directly connect with the lessons in the teacher’s guide.

Learn more about this resource and download sample lessons – visit www.facingthefuture.org

EE IN THE NEWS

NPPD to sponsor two, teacher courses this summer

Peru State College June 8-11 event; UNK June 15-July 31

Columbus, Neb. – In an energy-hungry world, lifestyles and the standard of living will directly depend upon the availability of electricity, whether generated by wind, nuclear, coal or other fuel sources. And students across Nebraska have questions about important energy issues.



To help Nebraska teachers address these issues, the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) will sponsor two courses this summer. The first, “Energizing the Future”, is an annual one-week, one-credit, hands-on workshop for middle school and high school teachers at Peru State College June 8-11.

“Energy, Environment and Education, 899P3,” is three-credit, online graduate course through the University of Nebraska – Kearney. The entire course will run from June 15 – July 31, and will include a one-week, hands-on workshop on the UNK campus July 13-17 to complement the online instruction.

Nebraska teachers who enroll for either course may be eligible for paid tuition, fees, materials, on-campus housing, and round trip travel costs. NPPD will pay these costs for the first 25 teachers who apply for the Peru workshop and the first 15 for the UNK course, as long as they are certified teachers, instructing in a Nebraska school.

Both educational opportunities include power plant tours and feature guest speakers who will address Nebraska’s power industry and the national and global issues that impact it. Teachers will discuss energy facts, dispel the myths, and

take a first-hand look at nuclear, fossil, and alternative energy operations, as well as power supply, transmission and distribution of electricity. Other topics will include energy efficiency, radioactivity, energy-related environmental issues, and careers in the energy industry.

Teachers interested in attending the Peru workshop should enroll online at www.nppd.com/EnergyEducation. Teachers interested in UNK’s graduate course must enroll via <http://webeasi.unk.edu>. Questions can be directed to Luscher at dllusch@nppd.com or 308-236-2230.

Educational Bird Banding Station

Want to give your students an amazing opportunity to see live animals while learning about real-world science? Panhandle educators are invited to bring their students to an area bird banding station! Trained educators will introduce students to the banding station, while a permitted bird bander handles birds captured harmlessly in mist nets. Participants will have the opportunity to observe scientific data collection first hand, in addition to learning about bird adaptations, conservation issues, bird behaviors, habitat requirements, and migration patterns. Best of all, students will have opportunities to see LIVE birds in the hand!

Programs are approximately 2 hours. Targeted for grades 3rd and up, but all grades are welcome. This year there will be two stations operating in western Nebraska. The dates and locations are as followed: Wildcat Hills Nature Center Banding Station (Gering, NE): August 31 – October 2 and Chadron State Park Banding Station (Chadron, NE): August 24 – October 2. This program is targeted for teachers with in the ESU #13 area. Travel scholarships may be available.

For more information or to schedule a date, please contact Amanda Keep at amanda.keep@rmbo.org or 308-220-0052.



EE IN THE NEWS

Panhandle Eco-Extravaganza about Prairies (PEEP)

The PEEP program incorporates hands-on, minds-on activities about the shortgrass prairie and ponderosa pine ecosystems in the Nebraska panhandle. This program is unique to Nebraska as it brings together agricultural and conservation groups to deliver 3 hours of fun, action packed activities related to native prairie and ponderosa pine habitats for students in the 4th and 5th grades.



We are pleased to offer the PEEP program free of charge! The PEEP program with last approximately 3 hours at each school and is limited to two weeks in the northwest panhandle in 2009. Dates and locations of this event are as followed: October 26-29 and November 2-5 with 2009 Locations include Sioux Co, Chadron, Crawford, Hay Springs, Rushville, Gordon, Alliance, Morrill, Mitchell, and Hemingford. This program is targeted for teachers with in the ESU #13 area. Travel scholarships may be available.

For more information about this program or to schedule a date, please contact Amanda Keep at amanda.keep@rmbo.org or at 308-220-0052.

Nature Words Removed From Children's Dictionary

In order to make room for modern words like MP3 player, chatroom, and database, the latest edition of the Oxford Junior Dictionary removed many nature-related words (including dandelion) as a result of the changing landscape. So BlackBerry takes the place of blackberry, and so on. Read more in this Next Nature article [Children's dictionary dumps 'nature' words:](http://www.nextnature.net/?p=3110)



<http://www.nextnature.net/?p=3110>

State of the Birds Report available to the Public

Birds are a priceless part of America's heritage. They are beautiful, they are economically important—and they reflect the health of our environment. The first ever U.S. State of the Birds report is now available to the public. The report is an analysis of 40 years of data compiled by biologists and citizens.

This report reveals troubling declines of bird populations during the past 4 decades—a warning signal of the failing health of our ecosystems. At the same time, we see heartening evidence that strategic land management and conservation action can reverse declines of birds. This report calls attention to the collective efforts needed to protect nature's resources for the benefit of people and wildlife. Read more and view an excellent summary video at the State of the Birds website: www.stateofthebirds.org.



Summer Sustainability Seminar for Educators - June 22-24, 2009, Berkeley, California

The Center for Ecoliteracy is now offering "Smart by Nature: Schooling for Sustainability," professional development seminar to individuals and teams of K-12 educators, parents, and others interested in schooling for sustainability. Topics will include: food and its connection to health, academics, and the environment; the integration of ecological teaching across the curriculum; and the campus as a system and ways in which schools are incorporating building design, energy use, and waste practices in their schooling for sustainability efforts. Participants also will receive guidance and support for designing project-based learning activities for the classroom, service-learning, and informal learning environments. For more information, visit www.ecoliteracy.org/seminars/sfs-seminar.html

EE IN THE NEWS

Why Frogs Call and Why We Should Listen

Humans have delighted in the calls of frogs since the beginning of recorded history. Yet, we are only now starting to understand what they are saying to one another. This new 30-minute documentary, *Why Frogs Call and Why We Should Listen*, from Ravenswood Media, shows over 20 species of frogs in a wide variety of habitats, croaking, mating, and fending off rivals. The DVD includes USGS range maps of frogs and a curated list of the video clips from the Web site.

For more information, visit www.midwestfrogs.com/videocallingfrogs.htm

Great Outdoors Month Proclamations

On March 2nd key environmental and recreation community leaders sent a letter to President Obama requesting that he declare June "Great Outdoors Month." Presidential proclamations for June as Great Outdoors Month is a tradition stretching back to 1997 that inspires families and individuals to get outdoors, volunteer at parks and lead healthier, more active lives. Great Outdoors Month has brought attention to important events such as National Trails Day, National Boating and Fishing Week, the Great American Backyard Campout, National Get Outdoors Day, and other events in June.



In addition to the letter sent to the President, letters will also be sent to all 50 Governors asking that they declare June "Great Outdoors Month" in their individual states. Last year, 40 Governors took advantage of the chance to encourage their constituents to reconnect with nature and enjoy the great outdoors. While these proclamations make June "THE" month to get outdoors, we certainly hope that people will continue to participate in outdoor recreation long after Great Outdoors Month ends.

Read the 2009 Presidential and Governor's Proclamations for Great Outdoors Month:
<http://www.funoutdoors.com/node/view/2068>

Summer Institute for Teachers July & August, 2009 ~ Millbrook, New York

Join scientists and educators from the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies for a week of hands-on ecology designed to help you teach about the ecosystems we depend upon. The Ecosystem Literacy Initiative Institute for Middle and High School Teachers will be held on July 13-18, 2009. The Institute for Elementary School Teachers will be held on August 17-21, 2009. For more information, visit www.ecostudies.org/teachersummer.html

Teacher Research Summer Internships

The Department of Energy's Office of Science is funding teacher research internships through the DOE Academies Creating Teacher Scientists (DOE ACTS) program. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) teacher research program is an eight-week program over three summers that will allow teachers to work at NREL in a mentored research experience. This program is designed for classroom teachers and faculty at Community Colleges who teach science, math, or technology in grades 6-14. For more information, visit www.scied.science.doe.gov/scied/ACTS/about.htm

Register Your Nestbox

Help scientists at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology study how bird families are affected by climate change by registering your nestbox. The NestWatch project collects this information for all species of nesting birds in North America. NestWatch participants visit nests once or twice per week and report what they see during each visit. Not an expert ornithologist? That OK! This is a simple project perfect for classrooms learning about lifecycles or families looking for a fun, education activity to do together! For more information, visit www.RegisterYourNestbox.org



Pennies for the Planet

Pennies for the Planet is an opportunity for kids to get involved in conservation locally, to learn



more about threatened species and habitat, and to raise money to support three critical national conservation programs: Project Puffin and the Seabird Restoration Project off the Maine coast, Four Holes Swamp/ Francis Beidler Forest in South Carolina, and Wyoming's

sagebrush "sea". This year's Pennies for the Planet campaign is made possible by support from TogetherGreen, an Audubon initiative in alliance with Toyota. Visit the Web site or email pennies@togethergreen.org for more information. For more information, visit www.penniesfortheplanet.org

Or, interested in doing something locally? Have your students collect pennies for a local environmental organization like the Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environment Education (www.nacee.org), Nebraska Audubon (www.audubon.org/chapter/ne), or Bluebirds Across Nebraska (www.bbne.org).

NAAEE Seeks Photos for "EE Year in Review"

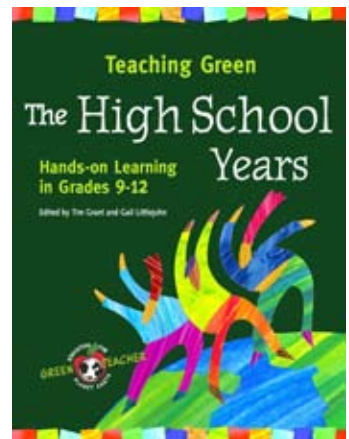
We're nearly half way through 2009 and it's time to start looking backward at what we've already accomplished, and forward at how we will celebrate our successes at the NAAEE conference. We're compiling an "EE Year in Review" show - with photos you submit and the ones we take at the conference - to send to all conference participants on DVD. Please share the highlights of your EE programs, your local award winners, how you have reached new and diverse audiences, with visual images in a 300 dpi format on a CD ROM. Please include credit to the photographer for each image you send.

Deadline for submission: August 15, 2009.

Submissions should be sent to:
Dr. Joe Baust, NAAEE "EE Year in Review"
Murray State University
3201 Alexander Hall
Murray, KY 42071

New book: Teaching Green - The High School Years

Green Teacher is pleased to announce the publication of the last of its series of Teaching Green books. This 240-page resource is for anyone working with young people in grades 9-12, whether in schools or in nonformal educational settings. It offers 50 teaching strategies that promote learning about natural systems and foster critical thinking about environmental issues. It contains new approaches to learning, strategies for learning to live sustainably, and numerous activities that promote interdisciplinary learning.



For more details or to order copies, visit: www.greenteacher.com

2009 National Stewardship Week: Dig It!: The Secrets of Soil Science

Soil is a dirty topic, but everyone needs to learn more about it! The 2009 Stewardship theme: "Dig It! The Secrets of Soil." Stewardship Week will be officially celebrated April 26 to May 3, 2009, but citizens and classrooms are encouraged to celebrate throughout the year.



FREE RESOURCES

An Audio Guide to Urban Birds: By Students, For Students

Want to learn more about the birds in your community? This project can help! Written and narrated by high school students from Boston, Massachusetts, the Urban Bird Sounds Project features recordings and descriptions of birds, tips for remembering their songs and calls, and short quizzes to test your skills. To learn more, download audio, try the quizzes, or order a free copy, visit the Web site. For more information, visit: www.urbanbirdsounds.org/Site/Urban_Bird_Sounds_Project.html



Polar Regions: Climate Change DVD for you classroom

The University of Colorado CIRES Education and Outreach group is offering this free educational DVD about climate change and its effects on polar regions. Polar Visions is an exciting, visually stunning film by Ryan Vachon, about the causes and effects of climate change in polar regions. The film contains seven stand-alone segments appropriate for use in all kinds of science classrooms and informal settings from the middle level through college, and was developed to align with the National Science Education Standards across all science subjects.

To obtain copies and standards alignment information, email Tina Arthur at tina.arthur@colorado.edu with your: Full Name, Work Title, Employer/Program, Grade Level(s), # of copies requested, Email Address, Full mailing Address

An Inconvenient Truth DVD Classroom Companion Guide

A series of lessons designed for science classrooms as a companion to the documentary An Inconvenient Truth, this guide provides easy-to-understand lesson plans for grades 9-12. Each lesson provides a list of materials and objectives and is aligned with National Science Standards.

To download the free 59-page curriculum guide, visit: www.climatecrisis.net.

Trail Tails Special Issues

Teaching about prairies, wetlands, mammals, or dishing? The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission has free Trail Tails issues available for free. The magazine-style publications are geared for students in grades 3-5 and provide students with easy-to-understand information. For more information or to receive copies, contact Jeanine Lackey at jeanine.lackey@nebraska.gov.

Bird Information and Activities

Teaching about birds? Looking for fun activities to do with your students? Interested in free materials? Visit the International Migratory Bird Day website (<http://birdday.org/imbd2009.php>) for both background information and activities dealing with birds, migration, and how humans and birds interact. For activities, click on "Shop IMBD," then on "Free Materials."

Environmental Protection Agency Free Materials for Teachers

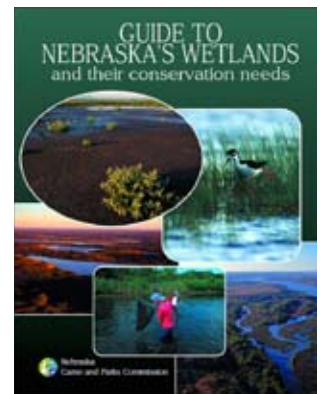
The U.S. EPA has a wealth of information and activities provided free for teachers. Topics include Air, Water, Health, Global Warming, Solid Waste, and Wetlands. Simply visit <http://epa.gov/teachers/order-publications.htm>.

Wetlands of Nebraska DVD

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission has free copies of "Wetlands of Nebraska" DVD which highlights the different kinds of wetlands located in Nebraska and their importance. To receive a free copy of the DVD, contact Ted LaGrange at Ted.Lagrange@nebraska.gov or (402) 471-0641.

Also available for download free is the [Guide to Nebraska's Wetlands and Their Conservation Needs](#).

This 31-page guide helps readers understand the different types, locations, and conservation needs of Nebraska's wetlands. To download the guide, visit: www.ngpc.state.ne.us/wildlife/programs/wetlands/wetlands-guide.pdf.



EE GRANTS

Funding Opportunities

Among all the challenges environmental education faces, often funding is the single largest. Below are a list of *some* of the grant available for environmental education.

NEA Learning & Leadership and Student Achievement Grants

Deadlines: June 1, October 15, February 1

The Learning & Leadership Grants provide opportunities for educators to engage in high-quality professional development. The grant amount is \$2,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for groups engaged in collegial study.

The Student Achievement Grants provide grants of \$5,000 to help students improve academic achievement by engaging in critical thinking and problem solving. For more information, visit: www.neafoundation.org/grants.htm

Classroom Earth Professional Development

Deadline: June 12

Want to learn how to teach about the environment in your subject area? Classroom Earth will award 20 professional development grants to high school teachers across the country. Recipients will take two online courses in environmental education offered by the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point. These highly-praised courses will help teachers incorporate environmental topics to create interactive, science-based, and informative lessons for their high school classrooms. Through the courses, teachers can earn graduate-level credits. For more information, visit: www.classroomearth.org.

Captain Planet Foundation

Deadlines: June 30, Sept. 30, & December 31

Captain Planet Foundation awards encourage children worldwide to solve environmental problems in their communities. Awards are between \$250 and \$2,500 for schools and nonprofit organizations that develop innovative environmental projects for youth that promote cooperation, planning, and problem-solving skills. For more information, visit www.captainplanetfdn.org.



Inspired by Bulbs! Educational Grant Opportunity

Deadline: July 3

Submit a description of a project that features a flowering bulb planting effort with children or youth, at a school or other organization, and you may be selected as one of 10 to receive a grant of \$250 in bulbs. For more information, visit: www.thebulbproject.com.

Nebraska Environmental Trust General and Recognition Grants

Deadline: September 8

The Nebraska Environmental Trust general and recognition grants for the 2010 cycle. Funding categories include: Habitat , Surface and Ground Water , Waste Management , Air Quality, and Soil Management For more information, visit www.environmentaltrust.org.

NAS Mini-Grants

Deadline: October 31

The Nebraska Academy of Sciences has a grant program offering mini-grants of \$200 to \$2000 for travel and equipment. These grants are available to K-12 teachers as well as college and university students and professors. For more information download the NAS Information and Application forms at www.neacadsci.org/nats/index.htm

Do Something Weekly Grants

Deadline: weekly

Did you recently create a sustainable community action project, program or organization or have a great idea for helping your community? Do you need \$500 to further the growth and success of your program or turn your idea into reality? If you answered, "YES!", you are eligible to apply for a Do Something Grant. Over the course of 2009, 52 \$500 Do Something Grants will be awarded. For more information, visit www.dosomething.org/

NACEE UPDATE

Letter from the President

Happy Spring NACEE! So far spring has been busy and beautiful and I hope that all of you are enjoying it! The past week or so I've been watching the blue birds at my next box building their nest. Fishing and education programs are also picking up which makes for many great days outside.

Of course other exciting things are happening this spring in the world of environmental education here in Nebraska and nationally. On Earth Day 2009, Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and Congressman John Sarbanes (D-MD) introduced versions of the historic No Child Left Inside Act (NCLI) to the Senate and House. The bi-partisan legislation, if passed, would mark the first environmental education legislation to pass Congress in more than 25 years. The bill authorizes new funding for states to provide high-quality, environmental instruction. Funds would support outdoor learning activities both at school and in non-formal environmental education centers, teacher professional development, and the creation of state environmental literacy plans. Please contact your local senator or congressman and encourage them to support this legislation!

Here in Nebraska, NACEE's annual conference Location, Location, Location: Exploring Nature in Your Neighborhood is happening May 29th & 30th in Kearney. This conference will have great presentations on service learning, community initiatives to get families outdoors, natural history presentations and wonderful field trips. Prior to the conference is an Environmental Education Guidelines workshop that is free to those who register. We would love to see you at the workshop and conference so register soon!

Recently, I attended a Community Forum on Nature Play sponsored by the group Metropolitan Omaha Resources for Exploring (MORE) Nature. The introductory talks and small group discussion that followed allowed for Omaha community leaders, educators and natural resource professionals the opportunity to discuss how we can get people outside. I was excited to see both of the Omaha mayoral candidates at the event and

hope that they and the rest of us will do more to foster the love of outdoor play in our communities. See you outside!

— Andrea Faas, NACEE President

Join the NACEE listserve

The NACEE listserve is dedicated to enhancing conservation and environment education in Nebraska. Use the listserve to announce your environmentally related workshops and events. Or, e-mail the listserve to seek help or advice on a new environmental education project. By joining the listserve, you will also receive NACEE updates, announcements of workshops and events across the state, and network with other educators across the state.



To join the listserve:

Send a message to: listserv@unl.edu. Type in the Message section: subscribe NACEE; do not put anything in the subject field. If you have an automatic signature file, YOU MUST TURN IT OFF. The only thing in the message body should be "subscribe NACEE" (with no quotes).

To unsubscribe from the listserv, follow the same procedure, but substitute "unsubscribe NACEE" for "subscribe NACEE."

NACEE is on Facebook!

Join NACEE on our Facebook page... If you are on Facebook, simply search for "NACEE" and it should come up. Open the page and click on "become a fan" to have it added to your page.

Whenever something is posted on the page you should see it on your home page or wall. You can also write on the wall or post photos of NACEE events!

EE WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

WORKSHOPS

May 28

Project WET

Location: DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge

Time: 9-3pm

Contact: Christina Hoyt, (402) 472-5049 or choyt@unl.edu

May 30

Nature Explore Workshop: Learning with Nature and Using Your Outdoor Classroom

Location: Broken Bow, NE

Contact: Tara Hild, (402)467-6112 x101 or tarah@dimensionsfoundation.org



June 8-11

NPPD Energy Education Class for Teachers: "Energizing the Future"

Location: Peru State College, Peru, NE

Contact: Diana Luscher at dllusch@nppd.com or (308) 236-2230

June 12-13

Hands-on Herpetology

Location: Lake McConaughy – Eagle Viewing Center, Ogallala, NE

Time: TBA

Cost: \$25

Contact: Jeanine Lackey, jeanine.lackey@nebraska.gov or (402) 471-5571

June 15-July 31

NPPD Energy Education Class for Teachers: "Energy, Environment and Education"

Location: University of Nebraska – Kearney, Kearney, NE

Contact: Diana Luscher at dllusch@nppd.com or (308) 236-2230

June 29

Project WILD

Location: ESU 8, 302 Main Street, Neligh, NE

Time: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Contact: Jamie Bachmann (402) 370-3374

June 30

Project WILD

Location: Community Center, Loup City, NE

Time: 9:00am – 3:00pm

Contact: Jeanine Lackey, jeanine.lackey@nebraska.gov or (402) 471-5571

July 23

Project WILD

Location: North Platte Community College, South Campus, North Platte, NE

Time: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Contact: Jeanine Lackey, jeanine.lackey@nebraska.gov or (402) 471-5571

September 18

Nature Explore Workshop: Learning with Nature and Using Your Outdoor Classroom

Location: Norfolk, NE

Contact: Tara Hild, (402)467-6112 x101 or tarah@dimensionsfoundation.org

October 2-4

Becoming and Outdoors Woman

Location: Halsey, NE

"Becoming an Outdoors-Woman" is a unique opportunity for women to learn skills associated with a variety of outdoor recreation activities.

Contact: For more information or to register go to: <http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/wildlife/programs/bow/bow.asp>

October 3

Women at the Spring Workshop

Location: Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, Denton, NE

Time: 3:00-9:00 p.m.

The Women at the Spring workshop series is designed to connect women to nature, specifically the prairie, through the arts.

Cost: \$50/person/workshop. All materials will be provided, including lunch. Limited to 25 participants.

Contact: Deb Hauswald, 402-797-2301; scp@audubon.org

October 9

Project WILD

Location: Camp Fontanelle, Nickerson, NE

Time: TBA

Contact: Jeanine Lackey, jeanine.lackey@nebraska.gov or (402) 471-5571



EE WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

EVENTS

May 27

Family Fishing Night

Location: Pawnee Lake, Lincoln

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901

Meet at the white Urban Fisheries Trailer where rods, reels, bait and instructions are available. All participants ages 16 or older need a 2009 fishing license. Sponsored by Nebraska's Youth Fishing Program.

June 2

Family Fishing Night

Location: Prairie View Lake, Bennington, NE

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901

*See May 27 event for more details.

June 6

Saturday Bird Walk & Brunch

Location: Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, Denton, NE

Time: 8:30 -11:30am

Join Kevin Poague, our resident birding expert, to explore the pond, prairie, and woodland habitats. Josef Kren will band bird to give up-close views of birds and to discuss the merits of banding. After the walk, enjoy a light brunch and conversation. Cost: Register by June 4. \$12/ person. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Contact: SCPAC, (402) 797-2301



June 7

Weekend Wildflower Walk

Location: Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, Denton, NE

Time: 1:30 -3:00pm

As part of Nebraska Wildflower Week, an afternoon wildflower identification walk will be led by Kay Kottas, Ph.D.

Cost: \$6/adult, \$4/each child 12 and under. Appropriate for age 8 and older; children must be accompanied by an adult.

Contact: SCPAC, (402) 797-2301

June 9

Family Fishing Night

Location: Holmes Lake, Lincoln

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901

*See May 27 event for more details.

June 13

Firefly Picnic

Location: Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, Denton, NE

Time: 7:30 -9:30pm

Participants are invited to pack a snack and bring a blanket to sit on while they enjoy a beautiful sunset. Later, a walk along trails will uncover the magic of firefly habits and habitats. Designed for children 3 through 8 years accompanied by an adult.

Cost: Sign up by June 9. \$6 each adult/child team. Extra team members \$2 each.

Contact: SCPAC, (402) 797-2301

June 17

Family Fishing Night

Location: Halleck Park Lake, Papillion, NE

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901

*See May 27 event for more details.

June 24

Family Fishing Night

Location: Bowling Lake, Lincoln, NE

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901

*See May 27 event for more details.



June 27

Bike to Boyer 2009: Family Fun Ride & Pancake Breakfast

Location: Fort Calhoun Fire Station, Fort Calhoun, NE

Time: Breakfast begins at 7:00am, bike ride begins at 8:30am

Contact: DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, (712)642-5403

This is a bike ride from the fire station in Fort Calhoun to the Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge just south of Fort Calhoun. Bring the family and have fun! Longer rides for more experienced riders are also available.

EE WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

June 27

Firefly Picnic

Location: Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, Denton, NE

Time: 7:30 -9:30pm

Participants are invited to pack a "light" snack and bring a blanket to sit on while they enjoy a beautiful prairie sunset. Later, a walk along trails will uncover the magic of firefly habits and habitats. Designed for children 3 through 8 years accompanied by an adult.

Cost: Sign up by June 9. \$6 each adult/child team. Extra team members \$2 each.

Contact: SCPAC, (402) 797-2301

June 27

Family Fishing Day/Carp-O-Rama

Location: Pawnee Lake, Lincoln

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901

Meet at the white Urban Fisheries Trailer where rods, reels, bait and instructions are available. All participants ages 16+ need a 2009 fishing license. Sponsored by Nebraska's Youth Fishing Program.

June 27



Missouri River Clean-up

Location: Sioux City, IA

Time: 8am – 3pm

Meet at the boat ramp on the Iowa side, I 29 exit 149 (Hamilton Ave), turn left and follow the signs.

Contact: Vicki Richmond, Vicki@riverrelief.org or 816-812-5166

July 7



Family Fishing Night

Location: Zorinsky Lake, Omaha

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901

*See May 27 event for more details.

July 14

Family Fishing Night

Location: Holmes Lake, Lincoln

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901

*See May 27 event for more details.

July 22

Family Fishing Night

Location: Standing Bear Lake, Omaha, NE

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901

*See May 27 event for more details.

July 25

NABA Butterfly Count

Location: Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, Denton, NE

Time: 9:00am – 12:30pm

Take part in the 34th annual butterfly count sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association. All participants will begin with an informative hour-long slide show at Pioneers Park Nature Center. Groups will then disperse with count leaders to Pioneers Park Nature Center, Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, or Nine-Mile Prairie. A butterfly expert will accompany each group. The count involves extensive walking.

Cost: To register, contact Pioneers Park Nature Center, 441-7895 before the July 12 deadline. \$5/adult, \$2/each child 12 and under; children must be accompanied by an adult.

Contact: SCPAC, (402) 797-2301

July 29

Family Fishing Night

Location: Wildwood Lake, Lincoln, NE

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901

*See May 27 event for more details.

August 4

Family Fishing Night

Location: Walnut Creek Lake, Papillion, NE

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901

*See May 27 event for more details.

EE WORKSHOPS & EVENTS



August 8 Nature Night Watch

Location: Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, Denton, NE
Time: 9:00pm - midnight
Venture out into Spring Creek Prairie's special habitats with camp chairs, insect repellent, and red-tipped flashlights to sit quietly and await potential nighttime visitors as they go about their nocturnal activities.
Cost: \$10/adult, \$7/each child 12 and under. Recommended for children at least 8 years old; children must be accompanied by an adult.
Contact: SCPAC, (402) 797-2301

August 11 Family Fishing Night

Location: Holmes Lake, Lincoln, NE
Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm
Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901
*See May 27 event for more details.

August 19 Family Fishing Night

Location: Wehrspann Lake, Omaha, NE
Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm
Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901
*See May 27 event for more details.

August 26 Family Fishing Night

Location: Bowling Lake, Lincoln, NE
Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm
Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901
*See May 27 event for more details.

August 29 Dragonfly and Damselfly Count

Location: Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, Denton, NE
Time: 9:30 -11:30am
Take part in a new citizen science program that will help establish a baseline count of dragonflies and damselflies for future monitoring. The program will begin with a half-hour introductory slide show. Field time for the count is about 1 1/2 hours. Participants are encouraged to wear sunscreen and a hat and bring water. Those who wish may bring a lunch and join the final tally and observations after the count.
Cost: \$5/adult, \$3/child under 12. Recommended for children 8 and older; children must be accompanied by an adult.
Contact: SCPAC, (402) 797-2301



September 1 Family Fishing Night

Location: Standing Bear Lake, Omaha, NE
Time: 5:00pm – 7:00pm
Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901
*See May 27 event for more details.

September 8 Family Fishing Night

Location: Holmes Lake, Lincoln, NE
Time: 5:00pm – 7:00pm
Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901
*See May 27 event for more details.



September 16 Family Fishing Night

Location: Halleck Park Lake, Papillion, NE
Time: 5:00pm – 7:00pm
Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901
*See May 27 event for more details.

EE WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

September 23

Family Fishing Night

Location: Bowling Lake, Lincoln, NE

Time: 5:00pm – 7:00pm

Contact: Andrea Faas, andrea.faas@nebraska.gov or (402) 332-3901

*See May 27 event for more details.



September 26

Twilight on the Tallgrass

Location: Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, Denton, NE
Time: 4:00-9:00 p.m.

Local photographer Michael Forsberg will be the main speaker at our annual prairie festival, timed to celebrate the maturing grasses and the blooming of the fall wildflowers. Two prairie discovery trails will open for people to walk along and interact with authors, biologists, photographers, writers, artists, and other professionals who gain insight and energy from the prairie. Live music, performances, and tours will all be part of the evening's activities. Great for the whole family. Admission charged. Contact: SCPAC, (402) 797-2301

CONFERENCES

May 29 & 30

NACEE Annual Conference

Location, Location, Location:
Exploring Nature in Your Neighborhood
Kearney, NE
www.nacee.org

October 7 - 10

North American Association for Environmental Education Annual Conference

The Power of Partnerships:
Creative Leadership in Environmental Education
Portland, Oregon
www.naaee.org

October 8-10

Nebraska Association of Teachers of Science

Location: Camp Calvin Crest, Fremont, NE
For more information, visit www.neacadsci.org/nats/index.htm

SUMMER CAMPS

**Nature Discovery Day Camps
Fontenelle Forest, Bellevue**

June – August, Registration begins February 1
Toddlers – 8th graders
www.fontelleforest.org
Contact: Deb Woracek, dworacek@fontelleforest.org



**Widerness Nature Camp
Pioneers Park Nature Center,
Lincoln, NE**

June — July, Registration begins March 1

Toddlers — 13+ years old
www.lincoln.ne.gov, keyword: nature

Contact: Nancy Furman, 402-441-7895 or nfurman@lincoln.ne.gov



Are you planning or hosting an environmentally oriented workshop, festival, conference, or event?

Let the *EE Connections* newsletter, and the NACEE website, advertise for you. E-mail event details including title, date, time, location, and contact information to Lindsay Rogers at lindsayannrogers@yahoo.com.

Environmental Education

CONNECTIONS

Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
P.O. Box 30370
Lincoln, NE 68203-0370

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Environmental Education CONNECTIONS

