



## Spend some time with EEA this year! EEA's 2018-19 Calendar of Events

The Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia has been serving environmental educators throughout the state since 1992, and the 2018-19 year will be another great one filled with fun, learning, and inspiration for your classroom. EEA supports environmental educators through conferences, workshops, member events, access to information and networking, and so much more. Please join us at our upcoming events!

### Monthly Field Excursions for EEA Members • Various dates and locations

EEA is pleased to announce [monthly opportunities](#) for our members to visit different regions of the state, immerse themselves in the outdoors, and get to know other educators and EEA board members. Enjoy paddling, camping, a gray bat emergence, and more. ([read more on page 7](#))

### Monarchs Across Georgia "Pollinator Symposium"

**Saturday, September 22, 2018 • Monastery of the Holy Spirit, Conyers**

[Join Monarchs Across Georgia](#) for a day of speakers, nature walks, exhibitors, and demonstrations. Topics will include roadsides and pollinators, the Urban Honey Bee Project, and more. ([read more on page 7](#))

### 2018 Outdoor Learning Symposium

**Friday and Saturday, October 19-20, 2018 • The Garden School, Marietta**

[OLS](#) is an annual fall event intended for teachers, PTA, youth leaders, non-formal educators, camp counselors, and any interested individuals, providing opportunities for networking, exciting outdoor teaching ideas, and strategies for taking students outside.

### 2019 EEA Annual Conference • March 8-10, 2019 • Historic Downtown Albany

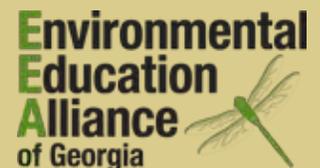
What better place to experience outdoor and backyard education than South Georgia! Get a regional glimpse into "Farm to Table" living with an environmental education perspective at the [EEA Annual Conference](#).

### Advanced Training for Environmental Education in Georgia (ATEEG) 2019 Courses Various dates • Charlie Elliott Conference Center, Mansfield

Take your teaching to the next level by becoming a certified environmental educator with [ATEEG](#)! Whether you're new to the field or simply looking to reinvigorate your current teaching, ATEEG can provide the foundation, resources, and network to take your career to the next level. Dates to be announced.

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# The Steppe of Mongolia

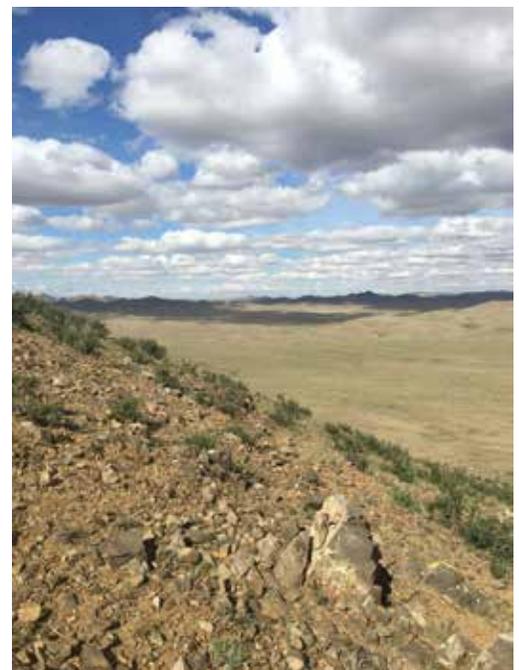
## *A Global Field Program Experience*

by Mallore Lanier  
Flint RiverQuarium  
EEA South GA Regional Director  
and Annual Conference Co-Chair

THIS PAST JUNE, I was fortunate enough to travel to the Steppe of Mongolia for my Master's Program. The focus of this class on paper was the Steppe Ecology, Civic Media, and endangered animals of Mongolia, but, in person, the class was so much more.

The program that I am enrolled in, the Global Field Program, is run through the University of Miami in Ohio and funded through Project Dragonfly. The concept of the program is what drew me in initially. They focus on inquiry-driven education, environmental stewardship, and understanding global conservation efforts from the community viewpoint. The summer Earth Expedition courses, like what I took in Mongolia, are a large part of how those goals are accomplished.

I personally cannot explain how I chose Mongolia as the place I wanted to travel for this past summer's course. Most people, when I told them I was going, asked "why?" and "where is that again?" And, while I cannot provide an explanation as to what drew me to the course, I am very grateful that I did pick this sparsely populated country to travel to and explore. This class and trip is in no way a vacation (another hard concept to explain), as you are up with the sun, working, studying, hiking, and falling asleep way past when the sun has left the sky. Which, in Mongolia, is a long day when the sun is up by 5 AM and sets at 9 PM in the summer! Our days were filled with studying the local ecology and botany, assisting local researchers in their data collections, creating inquiries and studies of our own, exploring the landscapes and searching for wildlife to "ooo" and "ahh" over. While we were never successful in finding a Pallas Cat (*Otocolobus manul*), we were able to find foxes, marmots, gerbils, pikas, ground squirrels, Steppe eagles, buzzards, cranes, plovers, magpies, and domesticated camels, cows, horses, sheep, and goats. And all of these discoveries happened within the first five days! For the second half of the trip, we stayed at Khustai National Park and spent our days studying and searching for takhi, or the Przewalski's horse (*Equus ferus przewalskii*), population located in the park.



*Continued on page 3*

*The Steppe of Mongolia... Continued from page 2*

Another portion of the course included working with Mongolian teenagers interested in biology and science and incorporating what they know into a radio presentation. As you can imagine, television is not as common in Mongolia as here in the States, so the best broadcast communication is through radio. We met these students and worked with them and practiced interviewing techniques- having them interview us on what we had learned and studied during our time there. While searching the Steppe for wildlife and identifying plants was amazing, being in the presence and getting to work with the local biologists and these students was equally a highlight of the trip. It is hard to describe the perseverance, dedication, and joy that these people have studying the country they love. Getting to work alongside and learn from them was easily the best part of the whole experience.



Needless to say, I am now a big promoter of traveling to Mongolia, and I am already planning my return visit. It may not have beaches, fancy accommodations, or Wi-Fi, but it does have vast beauty, untouched wilderness, and welcoming and joyous people who would love to show you their beautiful home. If you have any questions, or want to see more photos, find me at the next conference and I will be happy to tell you all about this life-changing experience!



# FLUENCY IN NATURE

## A Guide Shares Tips for a Successful Bilingual Camping Trip

by Emily Binford

Originally published in the Children & Nature Network blog, [The New Nature Movement](#), May 29, 2018.

This fall, I taught nature lessons from our new Ecologist School Curriculum at TA Brown Elementary School. Mid-semester, we took a group of their families out to McKinney Falls State Park to camp, fish, hike, and enjoy some Texas beauty. It was my first time leading a camping trip for Families in Nature, and I learned just what it takes to lead a successful camping trip.

I'd like to share a few tips based on that experience.

### Remember what it means to lead.

As the leader, you set the tone of the trip with your attitude. If you are relaxed and enthusiastic, your families will be too. If you express a sense of wonder about the world ("Come look at this bug!"), so will your families. Remember to always check in with everyone to make sure they are comfortable. Ask if there is anything you can do to make the trip more enjoyable for them. Sometimes, your campers' needs can be very simple and unexpected—especially true with the younger campers.

On this trip, one of the young girls was anxiously cleaning the dirt off the bottoms of her shoes. Her aunt was telling her not to bother because she was just going to get dirty again. But she said, "I don't want to be dirty and get my house dirty!" I told her, "It's okay to be dirty when you're camping! When you get home, you can take a shower and get clean." Then, I showed her my sandy feet and said, "See, it's fun to get dirty sometimes!" She smiled and, to my amazement, visibly relaxed. Later that day, I saw her sitting in the dirt playing with some blades of grass, perfectly content.

I was actually very surprised that this tactic worked! It was amazing to me that all she needed was permission to be dirty and she would be okay with it. Sometimes, all children (and adults!) need is the permission from the leader to feel comfortable.

### Plan to be flexible.

Every leader is different, but in my opinion, having a schedule that is too packed can take away from a camping experience. We live in a world where every hour of our day is planned. Part of the beauty of camping is the ability to step away from our routine overscheduling and simply be present in the physical world. That being said, I think it's great to have a loose schedule with a few activities planned to keep everyone entertained.

In any situation, you definitely have to get a sense of the group. For our full day on Saturday, we had two activities—playing in the water after breakfast and fishing after lunch. A couple of families wanted to go on hikes together on their own. I respected that and made sure everyone had my cell number in case they needed me.

Our volunteer, Adam, taught all the families how fish, including how to bait the hook with our worms, then cast the line. One of the girls, a 6-year-old, had never been fishing before. She was a little nervous about it at the beginning, but once she got a hold of the process, she became so focused. She pulled fish after fish out of the water, hitting 9 total by the end of the afternoon! It warmed my heart to hear her mom tell her, "We'll buy a rod for you when we get back! Now that I know that you like it, we can do it all the time!"



*Continued on page 5*

*Fluency in Nature... Continued from page 4*

For first time campers, the activities that we do during our trips can be very formative, and it is an absolute joy to be a part of that.

Having good options for fun outdoor activities is a must, and you can let your families decide what they are most interested in doing!

**Take care of your volunteers.**

I was fortunate enough to have two amazing volunteers, Adam and Claudia, during this trip. Without them, the trip wouldn't have been nearly as fun or successful. Adam taught the families how to fish and look for fossils, and Claudia led some families on a "color hike" with paint swatches to entertain the kids, along with so much more throughout the trip.



I was nervous that my volunteers would feel overworked or underappreciated. So I put a lot of effort into gauging how they were doing. It is probably a testament to Adam and Claudia, but they were joyful the entire time. It was fulfilling for me to work alongside the both of them, and I felt our bond grow over the common goal to help these families learn about the outdoors and have a good time.

One of my favorite moments of the trip was making sandwiches for Adam and Claudia. It was a simple sandwich, but delicious after a long morning.

There was something very special about taking care of my volunteers in that way, and I think it created a sort of bond that carried through the rest of the trip.

I later had a realization that volunteers are there for a different reason other than just there to camp. Volunteers want to make an impact by helping families learn new outdoor skills and enjoy their time in nature. And ultimately, as leaders, we are there for the same reason. This shared purpose is very fulfilling, and if you can help your volunteers be more useful for that common goal, they will be happy.

**Speak Spanish—even if it's not perfect.**

We live in Texas, home to millions of native Spanish speakers. When you lead a trip for Texas families, you are bound to have participants who are not as comfortable speaking English, or maybe don't speak it at all! It can be intimidating to speak Spanish if you are not fluent, but your effort to connect on that level can make all the difference.

If you can muster, "como está?" or "necesita algo?" or "que delicioso!" when you try their food at the potluck, you will make Spanish speakers feel more welcome. If you can learn a little Spanish and be willing to speak it with an imperfect accent, you will make your Spanish-speaking guests feel more comfortable speaking English imperfectly. It is incredibly community-building to make an effort to speak a person's native language.



It's not only those that don't speak English well that you will bond with, but also Spanish speakers that have grown up speaking English. One of our families was 100% bilingual, and when the mom heard me speak in Spanish to one of our families on the phone, she wanted to engage with me about it and ask where I had learned. We had never met before this trip, but we could build a relationship based on this mutual respect.

Having a bilingual trip, where everyone flows in and out of Spanish and English depending on the topic, is an incredible cultural experience. Texas is truly a bilingual state, and it's amazing to have a campout that reflects that. Just by maintaining a bilingual environment, you help encourage native English speakers to get out of their comfort zone and practice their Spanish. This helps build strong communities across language barriers and helps everyone feel more comfortable and connected to one another. ♦

# FRESH FACES, FRESH IDEAS

## Member Spotlight on a Newer EEA Member

by Sonya Wood Mahler  
EEA Member Services Chair

Meet **Catherine Reuter**, who stumbled across the EEA website while hunting for environmental education resources for the Walton County Soil and Water Conservation District. She then joined as a member in 2016.

For the last couple of years, Catherine worked as Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Walton County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD). Every day in her job was different as she took advantage of any opportunity or partnership to promote natural resource stewardship education in Walton County for youth and adults. Her activities included teaching lessons in elementary school gardens, coordinating volunteers for river cleanups, leading inmates as they worked in the Walton County Jail Garden, and doing soil conservation outreach at the local farmers' market.



The Walton County Soil & Water Conservation District received EEA's 2017 Petey Giroux Dragonfly Grant for EE & the Arts. Walton County Cooperative Extension's garden trailer is filled with tools and equipment for community groups to use free of charge. It was once an unassuming white trailer moving around the county to help with school garden workdays and park beautification projects. Thanks to the creativity and hard work of Catherine Reuter and the teachers and art students of Monroe Area High School, the newly-painted trailer is now a colorful lesson about soil conservation on wheels!

In March of this year, Catherine began a new position as Field Manager for the Oxford Organic Farm, at Oxford College of Emory University near Covington. The farm focuses on diversified vegetable production, selling produce to the university and the public. During the school year, more than a dozen undergraduate student workers supply the farm labor. As they pick tomatoes or hoe beans, there is constant informal education around organic farming philosophies and techniques - the importance of crop rotation, pollinators, composting, etc. The farm is also growing its elementary-age field trip program. Catherine and her colleagues lead these student visitors through sessions covering topics like beneficial creatures and their life cycles, harvesting (and tasting!) seasonal produce, and honey bee husbandry.

Catherine loves guiding students of all ages to notice more about the world around them. She says that there are so many awesome natural activities and partnerships carried on right under our noses if we just take the time to look.



Every time she hears a student say "I love worms!" she feels a little bit better about the world.

For fun and relaxation, Catherine loves traditional arts and handicrafts like printmaking and weaving. Reading, trail running with her dogs, and hunting wild mushrooms are also favorite activities. The woods and public trails that abut her family property in Oconee County make up her favorite outdoor place in Georgia. She has seen those woods in all seasons and eagerly anticipates the changes as each year marches along. She tells me that it is always a thrill to spot the newest wildflower or catch a cove full of red maples in the height of their fall color.

Catherine believes that EEA is doing an awesome job building a network of educators and helping us share ideas and resources, and she thanks EEA for all that this organization does! ♦

# Unplugged & Outdoors with EEA

## Upcoming Member Trips

### Get outdoors on a field trip with fellow EEA members!

EEA is excited to provide opportunities for our members to visit different regions of the state, immerse themselves in the outdoors, and get to know other environmental educators and EEA board members. We've scouted some of the best natural spots in the Southeast to visit. Here are two trips that are right around the corner:



#### **Saturday, August 25th & Sunday, August 26th** **Kayak Trip on Nickajack Lake to See Gray Bats**

Jasper, Tennessee

Paddle across the lake to Nickajack Cave to see 30,000 gray bats emerge. Paddle under a full moon back to Shellmound Campground.



#### **Friday, November 2nd, 9:00am-3:00pm** **Kayak Trip on Satilla River**

Waycross, Georgia

Paddle downstream, shuttle back, and then join us for the annual Georgia Association of Marine Education (GAME) conference through November 4th.

The registration deadline for each trip is ten days prior to the trip. Minimum age is 14 years old. Each field trip requires a \$20.00 registration fee. This fee includes guide service. You are responsible for your own meals, lodging, and entrance fees. For kayak trips, single sea kayaks are available to rent for \$25 a day or \$40 for two days. Rental includes kayak, life vest, paddle, and dry bag. Please request a kayak when you register for the trip.

For more information and registration details, visit the [EEA Member Field Excursions webpage](#).

# MONARCHS ACROSS GEORGIA



**SAVE THE DATE**

**Saturday 9/22/18**

## **Pollinator Symposium**

**Cost \$50 EEA member /\$75 non-member**

#### **Topics:**

Jaret Daniels, PhD - Roadsides and Pollinators  
Jennifer Leavey, PhD - Urban Honey Bee Project  
Tim Spira, PhD - Bees, Butterflies, Birds and more

#### **Location:**

Monastery of the Holy Spirit  
2625 Highway 212 SW  
Conyers, Georgia 30094  
[www.eealliance.org/mag](http://www.eealliance.org/mag)

save the date



OCTOBER  
19-20, 2018

The Council of Outdoor Learning Presents  
**THE OUTDOOR LEARNING SYMPOSIUM**  
The Garden School • Marietta, Georgia

[eealliance.org/outdoor-learning-symposium](http://eealliance.org/outdoor-learning-symposium)



SAVE THE  
DATE

March 8-10<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**EEA Annual Conference**

**From the Garden to the Table**

**Location:**

**Historic Downtown Albany, Georgia**

**Hosted by the Flint RiverQuarium  
Environmental Education Center and  
Thronateeska Heritage Center**



Find us on Facebook and Twitter for pictures, program updates, upcoming events, articles of interest, grant opportunities, and more!



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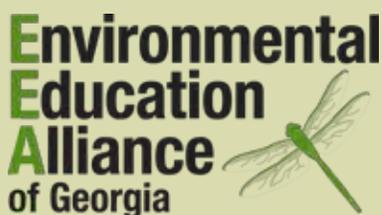
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**We'd love to hear from you!** For comments and article suggestions or submissions, please email [news@eealliance.org](mailto:news@eealliance.org).



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The Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia's mission is to promote communication and enrichment among professionals in the field of environmental education through partnerships, initiatives, and access to knowledge and experiences.

For board member bios, roles and committees, and contact information, visit the [Board of Directors page](#) of the EEA website.