



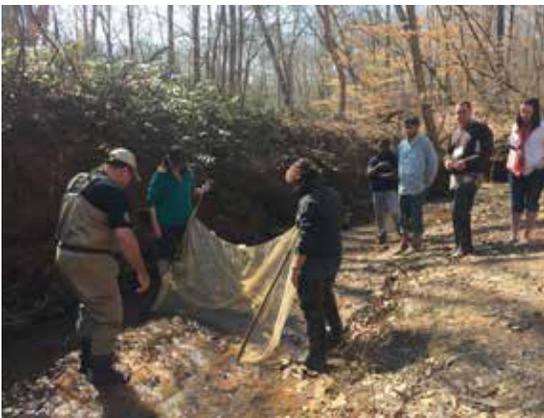
2018 EEA Annual Conference March 2-4 • Unicoi State Park, Helen

Environmental educators in Georgia are a diverse group, but we share the same goal of increasing environmental literacy and passion amongst the audiences we serve. We provide services to non-profits, nature centers, government agencies, and schools - teaching about clouds and rocks, and everything in between. We hail from the mountains and the coast; from Athens and Zebulon.

Whether you've been a member of EEA since its inception in 1992 or just recently joined us, we welcome you to our annual conference for a weekend of learning, exploration, networking, and fun. We hope that you'll join us at beautiful **Unicoi State Park**, March 2-4, for our 2018 conference, *Bird's Eye View: Soaring Beyond the Backyard*.

Bird's Eye View refers to the way we view our environment: with an overarching eye towards the relationship between ecology, culture, and sustainability. *Soaring Beyond the Backyard* is a way for us to take the knowledge of our local issues and apply them to national and global themes. Of course, we still value practical tips on how to bring effective EE into the classroom in order to make a lasting impact. And in the course of improving ourselves as educators, one of the most valuable tools we can acquire is the help and support of our peers. The EEA Conference aims to help you achieve those goals.

Starting Friday, March 2, we have a wide range of activities and events. The research symposium features the latest work from professionals and students in both ecology and education. Monarchs Across Georgia will be hosting a Monarchs in the Classroom Curriculum Workshop; ideal if you are interested in starting a garden on your campus or



learning more about the importance of pollinators. For only \$25, participants will receive a curriculum guide (your choice of grades K-2, 3-5, or Middle School) and a variety of other helpful resources. There are also several field trip options, from a stream ecology workshop to a tour of a biodynamic farm, and a guided painting lesson if you're feeling Zen. Friday evening will see our competitive sides, as teams compete during our Environ-MENTAL trivia night!

Continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

2017 OLS Recap	3
Manatee Dive Trip	3
Green Ribbon School	4
Poster Contest	6
MAG Service Award	7
Member Spotlight: Warren Lee	8
ATEEG Courses	9
Cornerstones: Ruth Mead	10
Join the EEA Board of Directors	12



Annual Conference... Continued from cover



On Saturday, prepare for some intense learning during our day of concurrent sessions. We are fortunate to have a variety of speakers and presentations, including a movie screening, learning how to improve your social media presence, and incorporating aquaponics in your classroom. Sessions are identified by grade level served, so educators of all types should be able to find plenty of resources to choose from. We will also be hearing from our keynote speaker, Jenna Mobley, who was the recipient of the EPA's Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators. She will be discussing with us "Embracing the Unknown of the Outdoors." On Saturday evening, we will gather for our annual banquet and awards ceremony, honoring exemplary educators and organizations from across the state.

Sunday brings a lighthearted end to conference with Family Fun Day! We encourage all attendees to bring their families to participate in these hands-on sessions. It'll be a fun and educational for the kids and a way for conference goers to see these activities modeled. Presenters include EEA leadership and membership organizations, so you will literally be learning from the best environmental educators in Georgia! In an effort to give back to our host community, this event will be open to the public.

We've got a few brand new additions to our conference this year, including a custom mobile app! We are excited to become more environmentally friendly by eliminating paper programs and evaluations. The app will also provide an enhanced networking experience. You will be able to view attendee profiles prior to the conference, digitally request a business card from a new acquaintance, and continue discussions once conference is over. We'll also be hosting a book swap! Bring your gently used EE related books and trade it for something new! Of course, we are excited to bring back EEA conference traditions such as the Buzzard Hike and silent auction.



A full 3-day registration for conference is \$195 for EEA members, which includes all concurrent sessions, research symposium, Family Fun Day, socials, and meals. Some field trips and the Monarchs in the Classroom Curriculum Workshop require an extra fee. Single day registrations are available. Non-members add a \$25 annual membership fee. Lodging is available on site at the Unicoi Lodge. Room reservations will be accepted until Friday, February 9, 2018. Reservations made after that date will be accepted on a space and rate-available basis. For more information or to register, visit eealliance.org.

Featuring Keynote Speaker

JENNA MOBLEY

**"Embracing the Unknown of
the Outdoors"**

**Recipient of the EPA
Presidential Innovation Award
for Environmental Education**



We hope you will join us in the beautiful north Georgia mountains for the 2018 EEA Conference!

Thank You for a Wonderful Outdoor Learning Symposium!

THE OUTDOOR LEARNING SYMPOSIUM, held on Friday, October 20, 2017, brought nearly 100 environmental educators from across the state together for an amazing day of networking and sharing lessons, ideas, and encouragement for taking students outside. EEA would like to thank everyone who contributed to making the 2017 Outdoor Learning Symposium a great success. Thank you to the Council of Outdoor Learning for organizing OLS, the wonderful presenters and exhibitors, all of the volunteers who helped leading up to and during the Symposium, and the Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy for hosting the event. Thank you also to our generous lunch sponsors: Taiyo Ramen, Saltyard, Watershed on Peachtree, Nuts for Pate, the Turnip Truck, and the Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy.

The [Council of Outdoor Learning](#) (COOL) coordinates the annual Outdoor Learning Symposium each fall and works throughout the year to educate and implement outdoor learning areas in schools and the community. Committee members are primarily tasked with coordinating food arrangements, registration, presenters, and promotion of OLS and providing support to schools and teachers pursuing outdoor learning. If you are interested in volunteering with the COOL committee or helping to plan the 2018 Outdoor Learning Symposium, please email cool@eealliance.org.

Upcoming EEA Member Trip

Manatee Dive Trip in Crystal River, Florida

February 20th – 23rd, 2018

Registration deadline: February 1st

Crystal River, located on Florida's Nature Coast, is home to about 500 manatees in the winter. The water in the springs is 72 degrees year-round. Because we are diving in February, we will wear full wetsuits to stay warm. This trip is snorkeling (or skin diving) only. You do not need SCUBA gear for this diving experience. Participants will have an opportunity to talk to manatee educators and researchers, see the manatee program and native birds at Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park, snorkel with wild manatees in Crystal River, do a drift dive in 1,000-foot visibility down Rainbow River, tour the ceremonial mound and museum at Crystal River Archeological State Park, go on a sunset boat ride on the Withlacoochee River, eat some great seafood, and shop for manatee gifts and kayak gear. This will be the 53rd Manatee Dive Trip that Sonya Wood Mahler has led!

We can take up to 15 people on the trip. The minimum age for participants is 14 years old. The registration fee of \$60.00/person is due February 1st. [Email Sonya Wood Mahler](#) for payment details.

The registration fee covers entrance fee at Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park and boat ride on the Withlacoochee River. You are responsible for these additional expenses:

- 1) Guided boat ride on Crystal River: \$68.00/person includes snorkel gear and full wetsuit
- 2) Rainbow River guided boat tour: \$10.00/person
- 3) Parking fee at Crystal River Archeological State Park: \$3.00/vehicle
- 4) Four nights lodging at Best Western Crystal River Resort: \$79.00-104.00/night (or other motel or campground)
- 5) Tuesday supper, Wednesday lunch and supper, Thursday lunch and supper, Friday lunch and supper

Once your registration fee is received, we will send you a health information form to complete and sign. It is important that you fill out this form honestly and completely. Let us know if you have specific heart or lung problems, or specific allergies. You do not have to be an excellent swimmer or have diving experience, but you should have enough upper body strength to climb a short ladder back into the boat. If you have never snorkeled, see if a local dive shop will rent you fins, mask, and snorkel to practice in their pool or at the local YMCA. This will help you be more comfortable with the gear when we get to Crystal River.

For full trip details and to register, email sonyawoodmahler@yahoo.com or text Sonya at 270-584-4742.



Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*). Image credit: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

U.S. Secretary of Education Names Kinchafoonee Primary School 2017 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School

by Ashli Solinger
Lee County Board of Education
EEA Store Chair

ON MAY 4, 2017, The U.S. Department of Education announced that Kinchafoonee Primary School in Leesburg, Georgia is among the 2017 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools award honorees.

Kinchafoonee Primary School (KPS) was nominated by the Georgia Department of Education. The school sits on approximately 29 acres, with over 60 percent of its land dedicated to environmentally beneficial purposes. The property includes 8.5 acres of designated wetlands with a newly renovated nature trail that runs through this ecological gem. The wetlands are a habitat for many species and provide students with opportunities for exploring and learning in a natural setting.

To create a culture focused on reducing environmental impact and costs, the Lee County School System employs an energy specialist who gathers and analyzes data and proposes programs and policies to help the members of the KPS population to be good stewards of the environment, as well as to minimize costs.

Recycling, reducing, and reusing items have also been a focus for KPS. Recycling efforts have overflowed the boundaries of KPS and spread throughout the school system as well as the community. Through participation in the Pepsi Recycle Rally, students have gained a great deal of awareness of the impact that recycling can have on our planet. Over 91,000 plastic bottles have been recycled through KPS this year that would have otherwise gone into landfills. KPS was ninth in the nation in the 2017 Pepsi Recycle Rally. KPS students also participate in an annual reading for recycling program that supports both environmental education and the importance of sustainability.

To support the health and wellness of students and staff, KPS uses a Coordinated School Health approach. The school has a full-time nurse and a full time counselor along with two dedicated PE coaches. KPS holds family events that focus on physical fitness and wellbeing, such as quarterly walk/run events, Family Fitness night, and a field day called "P.E. Extravaganza." Students enjoy 30 minutes of recess per day and physical education class 3 times a week. The school partners with local mental, dental, and eye health providers to support the wellbeing of students and their caregivers. In addition, the school has implemented a program called *The 7 Mindsets* to support the social and emotional growth of students and staff. KPS also partners with a local church to provide economically disadvantaged students with nutritious snacks to supplement their meals over the weekend.

Continued on page 5



Green Ribbon School... Continued from page 4



Students played a role in developing the butterfly garden, now part of the Rosalynn Carter Butterfly Trail, which was developed using grant funds from Monarchs Across Georgia. This opportunity expanded the outdoor classroom for KPS students. In the outdoor learning areas, students learn about the animal welfare education program, planting native plants, and feeding birds, bees, and butterflies. They also learn about outdoor environments, such as pollinator gardens, onsite wetlands, animal habitats, and monarch butterfly habitat. Engaging, hands on activities involving the world around them are used to prepare KPS students with 21st century skills by incorporating STEAM activities into daily lessons and classroom practices.

KPS takes a comprehensive approach to creating a "green" environment. KPS policies and practices of efficient and safe use of resources ensure that money is used to support student learning and growth rather than on unnecessary and excessive operating costs. Wellness practices that address physical and mental well-being are in place for students and staff. This ensures that teaching and learning are occurring at high levels without physical or mental barriers impeding success.

"We are thrilled that Kinchafoonee Primary School has been named as a 2017 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School. The administration and staff at Kinchafoonee Primary School feel that students learn best and are most engaged when they have ownership over what they are doing. Outdoor learning experiences create the opportunity for open-ended questions, exploration, inquiry and investigation into the world around them and their role in taking care of it." ~ Assistant Principal Pam Willis

"KPS is honored to have this award from the U.S. Department of Education. Kinchafoonee and a school in Savannah are the only schools south of Atlanta that have ever earned this distinction. I am so proud of our students, teachers, and our parents. Together we have made a significant impact on our environment. Our little ones have become environmental stewards and the power of their lifelong influence is boundless!" ~ Principal Dr. Trina Muse

Across the country, 45 schools, nine districts, and nine postsecondary institutions are being honored for their innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, improve health and wellness, and ensure effective sustainability education. The honorees were named from a pool of candidates nominated by 28 states and the Department of Defense Department of Education Activity. The selectees include 39 public schools, including five magnet schools and one charter school, as well as six nonpublic schools. Forty-four percent of the 2017 honorees serve a disadvantaged student body and 14 percent are rural. The postsecondary honorees include three career and technical and community colleges.



"NATURE AT NIGHT"

Poster Contest's 28th Year Highlights Georgia's Wildlife Diversity

Cora Keber, State Botanical Garden of Georgia
Linda May, DNR Wildlife Resources Division

Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division. Originally released December 7, 2017.

Teachers and students across the state are invited to honor Georgia's wildlife and students' artistic interests by participating in the 28th annual Give Wildlife a Chance Poster Contest.

The goal of the competition, open to grades K–5, is to generate a greater knowledge and appreciation of Georgia's diverse and increasingly threatened nongame wildlife and their habitats. Nongame species (those not legally hunted or fished for) vary from rare animals and plants such as Barbour's map turtle and dwarf trillium to common species such as the Carolina chickadee and tulip poplar.

This popular art contest is sponsored by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the State Botanical Garden of Georgia and The Environmental Resources Network (TERN), official friends group of DNR's Nongame Conservation Section. The theme for the 2017–18 school year is "Nature at Night." The topic highlights the various adaptive behaviors of wildlife as well as their interactions with plants.

Depending on when wild animals are most active, they are considered diurnal, crepuscular or nocturnal. Diurnal wildlife (including the chipmunk, green anole and most songbirds) usually are awake during the day but asleep at night. Crepuscular animals (like the big brown bat, common nighthawk and fireflies) are most active at twilight but may be awake during the night, too. Nocturnal animals (such as the southern flying squirrel and most owls and frogs) typically are active at night but asleep during the day.

Some native plants cater to nocturnal insects to ensure pollination. For example, yucca flowers produce most of their sweet-smelling nectar at night to attract the yucca moth. Sundrops, a type of evening primrose, keep their flowers open at night so hummingbird moths, green lacewings and other pollinators can visit.

After creating artwork based on this year's theme and within contest rules, participants will enter their drawings and paintings at the local school level. Top school-level entries then proceed to the state contest at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia in Athens. First-, second- and third-place winners are chosen there for four divisions: kindergarten, first and second grade, third and fourth grade, and fifth grade. The deadline for schools to submit state-level entries is April 13, 2018.

The top 12 state-level winners' artwork will be showcased on DNR Wildlife Resources Division social media sites and displayed at the State Botanical Garden in Athens May 8–16. The State Botanical Garden offers a fascinating variety of plants as well as opportunities to view wildlife in the fields and forests. Admission is free, although donations are accepted. For directions, operating hours and a garden map, visit <http://botgarden.uga.edu>.

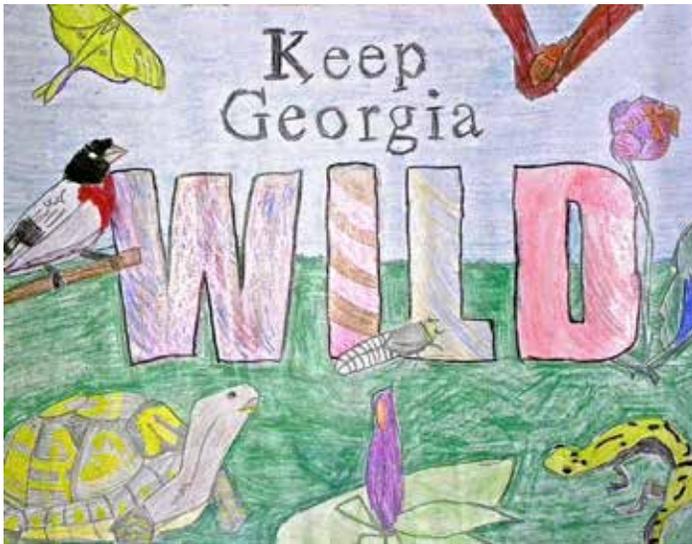
As a special perk for supporting this contest, each state-level winner's teacher and one parent will receive a free bald eagle license plate, courtesy of TERN! For contest rules, awards, entry forms and other information, visit www.georgiawildlife.com/PosterContest.



2017 Give Wildlife a Chance Poster Contest
Suri Nguyen, age 6, Jackson Elementary School of the Arts, Jonesboro

Continued on page 7

Poster Contest... Continued from page 6



2017 Give Wildlife a Chance Poster Contest

Sophia Horne, age 7, grade 1, South Effingham Elementary, Guyton

The Nongame Conservation Section, part of Georgia DNR's Wildlife Resources Division, is charged with conserving nongame wildlife, including native plants and natural habitats. Only a deep concern and commitment to these natural resources will ensure their existence for future generations. The Nongame Conservation Section depends primarily on fundraisers such as sales and annual renewals of the eagle and hummingbird license plates and the Give Wildlife a Chance state income tax checkoff.

Learn more at www.georgiawildlife.com or call Nongame Conservation Section offices in Social Circle (770-761-3035), Forsyth (478-994-1438) or Brunswick (912-264-7218).

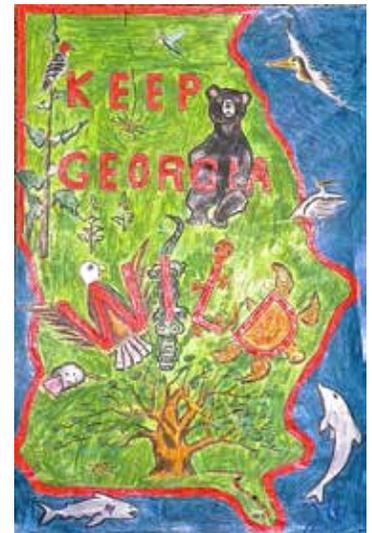
Give Wildlife A Chance Poster Contest

- **Theme:** "Nature at Night"

- **Emphasis:** Generate a greater knowledge and appreciation of Georgia's diverse and increasingly threatened nongame wildlife and their habitats.
- **Teacher instructions:** Have students design artwork that includes nongame wildlife and/or native plants. Hold a school-level contest. First-place winners in each age division progress to the state-level contest.
- **Deadline for state-level contest entries:** April 13, 2018.
- **Top 12 state-level winners' artwork** will be showcased on Wildlife Resources Division social media sites and displayed at the State Botanical Garden in Athens May 8–16, 2018.
- **Details:** www.georgiawildlife.com/PosterContest

Contacts

- Cora Keber, State Botanical Garden of Georgia (706) 542-6158; ckeber@uga.edu
- Linda May, DNR Wildlife Resources Division (706) 557-3226; linda.may@dnr.ga.gov



2017 Give Wildlife a Chance Poster Contest - Zarabia Brown, age 12, Spencer Elementary, Savannah

2017 Monarchs Across Georgia Service Award



Jackie Sherry, recipient of the 2016 MAG Service Award

Do you know someone in Georgia who deserves to be recognized for their service and dedication to monarch education, conservation, and/or habitat restoration? If so, be sure to nominate them for the [Monarchs Across Georgia Service Award](#). The application and a judging rubric are available online. Along with the prestige of winning the award, a donation to the Monarch Butterfly fund is made in the winner's name. **The nomination deadline is February 5, 2018.**

FRESH FACES, FRESH IDEAS

Member Spotlight on a Newer EEA Member

by Sonya Wood Mahler
EEA Member Services Chair

*It was a treat to interview one of my colleagues and a shiny new member of EEA. **Warren Lee** is a kindergarten educator at The Garden School of Marietta and is working to expand the gardens and orchards there.*

How did you find EEA?

I had just moved back to Georgia, my home state, after six years in Vermont and a year in Massachusetts, and I was searching for the next step after graduate school. A job I had set up fell through, and I began substitute teaching at a school I used to attend. I found that I really enjoyed teaching, and because I had long since held the belief that a lack of environmental education was one of the biggest environmental problems we face, it was a natural fit. So I started looking for jobs, and it was EEA that provided the platform for finding work. I recognized that it was an organization I needed and wanted to be involved with if this was going to be my niche. When I began work as an educator at The Garden School of Marietta, I joined EEA and participated in the 2017 Outdoor Learning Symposium.

What is your day to day job and what have you done in the past?

The Garden School in Marietta, Georgia has a strong dedication to environmental stewardship and attempts to have many of its classes outside, not just those focused on the environment. Students are outdoors for Spanish, math, water coloring, etc. I am a kindergarten teacher trying to incorporate environmental connection and awareness every time we are outside, which on warm days can be 4 hours. I am also helping design the gardens and develop them into a space where we can hold classes. The goal is to provide a lot of our own food for the school's snacks and lunches. In previous jobs, I've worked at camps teaching nature classes, pioneering classes (how to survive using the materials and food found in nature), plant identification, and tracking.



Tell us your favorite thing about being an environmental educator.

I get such joy and find such wonderment when I am outside and in nature. I think my favorite part about being an environmental educator is watching others find those same feelings. The wonderment is one of the reasons I love working with kids. They constantly remind me of the wonder that is around, and in places I would not have thought to look for it. I also enjoy fostering that connection to the environment. I think that connecting people, especially at an early age, with the environment is one of the best ways to get them invested. People need to be invested in order to take an active role in saving what we are losing. I have found joy and wonder to be a powerful tool in nurturing this connection.

Continued on page 9

Member Spotlight... Continued from page 8

Can you share a favorite quote from a kid?

"COOOOL!" That is my favorite quote. When a kid takes an active interest in something enough to say "Cool," you are doing well. "That's awesome" is also a pretty good one. Any of those moments though, they make the job worth it.

What do you do for relaxation, travel, and fun?

Spend time outside. I love being on the water, paddling, but I also equally enjoy hiking and simply being in the woods. Farming is also a part of my background, and will be an even bigger part of my future. I think the ability to grow your own food is an incredibly powerful thing and another wonderful way to connect people to the environment, so I spend a lot of time planning my farm and reading about sustainable farming practices. That has been a big part of my relaxation and fun of late. I also drink a lot of tea.

Do you have a favorite outdoor place in Georgia?

The woods. There were many reasons for moving back south, but one of the big ones was that I missed the Appalachian Mountains - so anywhere in the North Georgia mountains. I grew up camping around Ellijay with my brother and his dad, so that has a nostalgic connection, but really anywhere in the woods.

What is a suggestion for how EEA can better help its members?

I am still getting to know what all EEA has to offer, so it may be already happening and I just need to be more involved or aware, but I think one of the biggest resources we have is each other. I would love to see the organization promoting or hosting events where environmental educators get to come together, specifically outside of the symposium and conference. These could be small dinners or movie viewings or a lecture series once a month that build the Georgia EE community. I think those things in my experience of professional organizations are really beneficial.



Become a Certified Environmental Educator with ATEEG

Whether you're new to the field of environmental education or simply looking to reinvigorate your current teaching, [Advanced Training for Environmental Education in Georgia \(ATEEG\)](#) can provide the foundation, resources, and network to take your career to the next level. Open to formal and non-formal educators across the state, the program helps participants of all backgrounds better measure the success of their programs, expand their knowledge of instructional techniques, and get to know other educators working in the field.

A nationally-accredited professional certification program based on the [North American Association for Environmental Education \(NAAEE\)](#) Guidelines for Excellence, ATEEG certification consists of three core courses, 30 hours of specialization workshops, and an independent study project. Each participant is matched with a professional mentor to guide them through the process of designing, implementing, and evaluating their final project. Participants have three years from the start of their first core course to complete the requirements for certification. Register for these upcoming course and learn more at www.eealliance.org/ateeg.

The following courses will be held at the Charlie Elliott Conference Center in Mansfield, GA and begin at 1:00 p.m. on Friday adjourning at noon on Sunday.

Core Course 2 (Fostering Learning) - March 23-25, 2018 - To increase understanding of how to implement environmental education programs that foster learning. **Register by March 12, 2018.**

Core Course 3 (Assessment and Evaluation) - June 8-10, 2018 - Increase skills and knowledge associated with program evaluation including identifying outcomes, data collection methods, and data analysis and interpretation. **Register by May 25, 2018.**

Celebrating 25 Years of EEA

by Sonya Wood Mahler
EEA Member Services Chair



Ruth Mead, Education Director at Phinizy Center for Water Sciences at the Phinizy Swamp & Nature Park in Augusta, Georgia.

How long have you been involved in environmental education?

I graduated with a degree in Forest Management from North Carolina State University in 1981 and spent the next ten years working as a field forester for a paper company. At some point along the way my husband, who is a chemical engineer, got a job transfer and I left my job and moved with him. In 1999 we were relocated to the Augusta area. By 2000 I had discovered Phinizy Swamp Nature Park and began volunteering with their education department. At that time we had one educator, and she needed a lot of help. By 2001 they hired me – a good move for me, as I was already volunteering on most every field trip as well as helping develop the field trip sessions. So a short answer would be – over 17 years. Over 80,000 students have been through our programs at Phinizy Swamp!

What kind of EE work do you do day to day and what have you done in the past?

My EE work has always been in non-formal education. I like to think of my job as connecting students to nature. When I started at Phinizy Swamp, most of our programs were for K-5th grade. Around 2004 we made a conscious effort to make middle and high school students our focus audience. We were very successful and since that move, over 50 % of our yearly audience is middle school and higher. In 2008 with a partnership with Augusta University's Environmental Science class for non-science majors, we added undergraduate students to our target audience. We now have regular field trips with Augusta University and South Carolina State University and occasional field trips with Paine College, Georgia Military College, and a few others.

In 2013 we jumped into life-long learners by offering a GA Master Naturalist course. This spring I will facilitate our 6th GA Master Naturalist course bringing over 100 life-long learners through our program at Phinizy. From the Master Naturalist courses, I was asked to bring in more adult education classes, so I started with one of my favorite hobbies – Field Ornithology. I had taken several years of field ornithology at Pensacola Junior College shortly after leaving my forestry job, and I designed the Phinizy classes after my experience as a student. We now offer three classes a year – *Basic Field Ornithology* in the fall, *Waterfowl* in January and February after the cold weather has brought the ducks in, and *Spring Breeding*. With these classes, we have started a good number of folks off to a lifetime of birding. After the ornithology classes did so well, I started another series I call *Forest Communities*. It has become a popular series and allows me to get back to my love of forestry. We offer three classes a year – *Forest Communities: Basic Dendrology* in the fall, *Forest Communities: Winter Dendrology* in the winter, and *Forest Communities: Flowers of the Forest* in the spring.

Continued on page 11

Cornerstones... Continued from page 10

When did you first become involved with EEA?

The first EEA conference I attended was in Savannah, and I think it was 2003. At that time I was new to EE so every workshop I took was exciting and helpful (and they still are!). I have missed several years of going to the conference but have been to over ten of them.

What roles have you taken in your service to EEA?

I keep up my membership and help at both the EEA Annual Conference and Outdoor Learning Symposium. I supported Aaliyah Ross's roll on the EEA board and made it possible for her to be away from work in order to serve on the board.

What is a fond memory you have of the early years of EEA?

My fondest memories of EEA have been at the annual conferences. It's a great experience spending time with old and new EE friends and it feels like a family to which I belong. My first conference in Savannah was a great memory. I really didn't know anyone so meeting so many new friends was wonderful. One of the EE members that first helped me out was Jeannie Brown. She introduced me to the Buzzard Hike – so off I went looking for answers around the squares of Savannah. I got lost and ended up at a brewpub where I ran into several other EEA members and got back on track (after a beer of course). The next several years I made sure to go on the Buzzard Hike with Jeannie. Another great memory was one of the conferences at Unicoi. Several of us took the hike up to Ruby Anna Falls and when we got there a heavy snow fell – it was magical. Maybe one of the most moving moments was when Petey Giroux released the owl. I don't think any of us who were there could ever look back on that moment without a tear in our eye.

What would you like to share about the history of EEA and its members?

From what I have seen about EEA and its members is there is an incredible amount of passion. Everyone has been so wonderful at sharing, at teaching, at listening, at helping us all move environmental education forward. The EEA Conference and Outdoor Learning Symposium have been a great source for sharing, renewing, inspiring, comprehending, and enjoying. From the longest serving members to the newbies – the passion for environmental education moves on.

Who are some leaders in the field who have served as mentors for you?

Anyone who ever did anything with Petey Giroux had to be inspired. She got me excited about a lot of things but really made Project WET come alive for me. There are other folks who I always look up to as well like Jerry Hightower, Richard Osorio, Susan Meyers, Malcolm Hodges, and Tara Muenz. I have learned from everyone!

What about this organization makes you most proud?

Environmental literacy is so vital in the world today. With our current population projections I see no other way to sustain the planet we love then to connect with our natural communities and learn how to live as part of the community. I see us in EE as leaders for a better future.

What do you want to do next?

I love my job in environmental education. My next move is to retire and volunteer and immerse myself in life-long learning classes.



Join the EEA Board of Directors

Each winter, the Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia accepts nominations to its [Board of Directors](#). This open process helps the Nomination Committee accomplish its mission to promote cultural, geographical, and organizational diversity in EEA's leadership.

For Term beginning July 1, 2018, we are specifically seeking chairs/co-chairs for the following committees: Annual Conference, PR/Newsletter, Member Services, Regional Director Central GA, Regional Director North GA, Regional Director West GA, and Fundraising.

The application for Board terms beginning July 1, 2018 is now open. You must be a current member of EEA to apply. Visit the [Board Nomination page](#) of EEA's website for more information and to submit a nomination. **Nominations are due April 15, 2018.**

Questions about the board nomination process? Contact the [Nominations Committee Chairs](#).



2017 EEA Board Retreat



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



Shop at Kroger and Amazon, Earn Money for EEA!

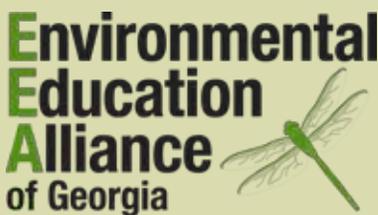
You can now support EEA by shopping at Kroger and on Amazon. Help EEA earn up to \$8000 per quarter by signing up for both of these programs below:

[Register your Kroger Plus Card](#)

[Select EEA as your charitable organization on AmazonSmile.](#)

Search for "Environmental Educational Alliance Inc."

We'd love to hear from you! For comments and article suggestions or submissions, please email news@eealliance.org.



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2017-18 Board Officers

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Treasurer Paul Coote
Secretary Jackie Sherry

2017-18 Board of Directors

Jasmine Darland	Kathleen Lemley	Ashli Solinger
Joseph Daugherty	Liz Lubrani	Melanie Sparrow
Mitzi Deaton	Sonya Wood Mahler	Liz Swafford
Melanie Furr	Jennifer McCoy	James Vaught
Jerry Hightower	Sharon McCullough	Mary Winder
Lauren Johnson	Hannah Penn	
Mallore Lanier	Franke Smith	

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