Sustaining a Changing World at the 2011 EEA Annual Conference
Friday, March 11 at the Kennesaw State University Continuing Education Center

Sustainability is the capacity to endure. For our changing world to endure, our natural environment, economy, and communities must be in balance. Therefore, you don’t want to miss an exciting array of professional development and networking opportunities at the 2011 EEA Annual Conference!

This year’s conference aims to provide participants a baseline of information for working and living in our rapidly changing world. They will also be motivated, energized, and inspired to help shape this world to be one in which citizens, businesses, and governmental groups practice environmental stewardship in order to leave a smaller ecological footprint.

Environmental Strand
It is a well known that we can make a difference through our actions. A presentation in this strand will inform attendees about how citizens, businesses, and governmental agencies practice environmental stewardship, as they strive for a more sustainable world.

Economy Strand
Teaching and communicating about the environment requires people to creatively share their experiences and knowledge. A presentation in this strand will inform attendees about how economics affects a sustainable business plan. It will also take into account pitfalls, successes, and the future of sustainable economies in Georgia.

Community Strand
The cultivation of an environmentally conscious person can transpire through local, regional, or statewide partnerships that help people develop knowledge, skills, and behaviors. A presentation in this strand will inform participants about community issues involving sustainability, including partnerships or programs leading to more environmentally conscious communities.

You won’t want to miss this stimulating conference, which will include over 25 exceptional sessions, an inspirational keynote speaker during Friday’s lunch, excellent local and organic meals, and a Friday night social complete with dinner, drinks, and a bluegrass band! Everyone is also invited to attend the 9th Annual Silent Auction, which helps raise money for the EEA scholarship program.

Registration:
ALL registration information (fees, deadlines, directions, lodging, and fees increases) are available until February 11, 2011. Prices increase after that date, so be sure to register early! www.eealliance.org
- Scholarships are available! Visit www.eealliance.org to apply by January 18, 2011.
- Lodging is available. Please visit the EEA website for details.
- On-site registration and check-in begins at 8:00am on Friday, March 11.
- Friday evening social and awards ceremony will take place from 5:30pm-8:30pm. Join us to celebrate all the exciting contributions made in environmental education around the state.
A Roaring Good Time at this Year’s Symposium

“Get Outdoors! Teaching Locally, Connecting Globally,” this year’s Outdoor Classroom Symposium theme, hosted by Zoo Atlanta, was a huge success with 179 participants and over 25 exhibitors. Formal and non-formal educators, state agencies, and private organizations all gathered together to support outdoor education.

Karen Moncrief from Kinchafounee Primary School won the 2010 Outdoor Classroom Service Award for her hard work and dedication to her school’s outdoor learning center. The Council also awarded honorable mentions to Brendon Barclay, Brockett Elementary School volunteer and the Science Committee at Moore Elementary School.

Presentations sampled a variety of topics ranging from teaching biodiversity outdoors to finding funds for an outdoor garden. Lunch included a showing of the film, “A Simple Question: the Story of STRAW,” an inspiring film that chronicled students’ efforts to save an endangered species. The day ended with several behind the scene tours of the zoo and a visit to GardenHood. Everyone left energized and eager to implement new ideas!

The Outdoor Classroom Council would like to thank Zoo Atlanta, Captain Planet Foundation, EcoFocus Film Festival, GreenCo, and GardenHood for supporting this year’s event.

A Movement is Afoot

By Paul McClendon, EEA Executive Director

A nonprofit organization is, at its core, simply a group of passionate people that come together to strive toward a shared vision. Last summer, an impressive group of EEA stakeholders came together and discussed such a vision. We arrived at the conclusion that we need to foster a statewide culture of environmental literacy and stewardship.

Suffice it to say, this is no small task upon which we embark. Culture is not easily changed. Especially when you consider the professional difficulties we face. Government agencies are strapped. Non-profits are having a hard time raising funds. Budgets are getting cut and many of our colleagues are searching for jobs.

The thing is, our message has never been as vital as it is now. The only way that culture will change is there develops a general discomfort in the status quo. People must recognize that the current system is not working. This is happening now. It is becoming increasingly difficult to deny the effects of global climate change or argue for the longevity of the fossil fuel supply. People are realizing that things are not as they should be. They will seek a new plan... Folks, a movement is afoot!

Innovation is occurring. Visionaries are seeing opportunity where they once only saw challenge. However, the people need someone to reveal this ray of hope. In order to achieve true cultural change, the people will need someone to show them a new plan and present them with a glimpse of what the world could be. This is the job of environmental educators. I am excited to see where 2011 will lead us!

Please Give to Our First Annual Fund Campaign

This is an exciting time for the Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia (EEA). We have an exciting vision, but we need your help to make it a reality. Please be a part of our very first Annual Fund Campaign. Your donation will help the EEA continue to serve the environmental education community for years to come. Visit www.eealliance.org for more information.
The EEA Annual Conference to Host the Soulful Landscape Saturday Workshop

March 12, 2011 9:00am-12:00pm
Cobb County Water System Training Center
662 S. Cobb Drive Marietta, GA

To make an impact in the world, we must be able to make connections between different schools of thought and have the ability to communicate our thoughts effectively. The Soulful Landscape workshop bridges a curriculum in environmental science and cultural history to the arts. It will shift the way students think and feel about themselves and the places that have meaning in their lives. Whether participants consider themselves writers or not, this workshop will give them the tools and inspiration they need to find and express their stories of place.

The workshop begins with inspiration for the creative writer within, in the form of a “place-based” presentation of songs, stories, poems, and visual arts. Participants are encouraged to see the connection between themselves and the places that have meaning in their lives. The facilitator will then guide everyone through a series of writing exercises designed to uncover their stories of connection. Opportunities for group sharing and instructor feedback are provided, as time allows. Previous participants have called this demonstration “empowering” and “life-changing.”

Why a Soulful Landscape Workshop?
- It teaches an integrative writing skill that connects people and place;
- It empowers students to articulate their thoughts through creative self-expression; and
- It explores the role of the arts in land stewardship.

EEA Conference Keynote Speaker to Entertain and Inspire

Erica Wheeler is an award-winning singer/songwriter, an accomplished speaker, and a dynamic workshop facilitator. She brings her gift for connecting people and place to both her music and her inspiring Soulful Landscape program.

Bridging her background in environmental studies with her career in the performing arts, Erica has presented at conferences, events, and learning centers across the country, from Yosemite National Park to the Walden Woods Institute, helping thousands of people restore their connection to place.

Her work has been featured in Yes!, Orion, and Yankee magazines. Her most recent CD, Good Summer Rain, was sponsored in part by the Trust for Public Land, a national land conservation organization. The CD won first place at the 2008 National Association for Interpretation Media Award for “Best Interpretive Music.”

As a singer/songwriter, for close to two decades Erica has been a prominent voice on the touring circuit. Armed with an acoustic guitar and a richly expressive voice, Erica draws on the traditions of folk, country, and bluegrass. Her poetic, vivid songwriting takes concert goers on a journey through the American landscape and the lives lived there. She is also known for her colorful stories and entertaining stage patter. To find out more please visit www.ericawheeler.com

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Need PLU credit for participating in the conference? Be sure to check the line on the registration form if you are interested in receiving 1 PLU for attending the conference. Information on PLU paperwork will also be at the registration desk. If you have any questions, contact Karen Garland at plu@eealliance.org.
Outdoor Classroom Council Gets a New Name and Logo

COUNCIL OF OUTDOOR LEARNING

It was announced at this year’s annual Outdoor Classroom Symposium that after more than a decade the Outdoor Classroom Council was going through a transformation. The 14-year old committee would now be known as the “Council of Outdoor Learning” or “COOL” for short.

The change is part of the group’s efforts to increase understanding of the impact that outdoor education can make in schools throughout the state. Teaching and learning does not necessarily require a formal outdoor classroom. All that is needed is for an educator to understand the importance of outdoor learning, open the door, and take their lessons outside with their students! As part of the announcement, the council also unveiled a new logo that they believe reflects the “vibrancy and diversity” of the organization.

This is a very exciting time for environmental education and its connection to outdoor learning. The council’s commitment to building greater awareness will enable them to expand their efforts and further strengthen education across the state. This commitment includes the new Outdoor Learning Grant, year-round training opportunities, connections to mentors, and other exciting projects still in the planning stages. However, the group will still continue to offer its quality annual symposium.

With a greater understanding, more educators and schools will be aware of the support and resources that are available to help them more confident and better connected to teaching outdoors. For more information visit www.eealliance.org.

My Journey into Environmental Education

By Cynthia Bohannon-Brown

Before my Advanced Training in Environmental Education in Georgia (ATEEG) certification coursework, I was content with simply enjoying nature without bothering with such small details as proper identification of plants and animals. However, as I thought seriously about becoming an environmental educator, I knew that I needed a firmer grasp on key skills and concepts. I believe that those of us who are destined to teach environmental education (EE) need effective continuing education programs to build our common knowledge base, while providing pathways to deeper professional growth. Therefore, when the ATEEG certification program was introduced, I jumped at the chance to be among the first in the state to work towards this certification.

Through my experience, I found that preparing competent and effective environmental educators, who will guide citizens to be more environmentally literate, was at the heart of each ATEEG course. The three 3-day workshops focused on “Foundations of Environmental Education,” “Fostering Learning,” and “Assessment and Evaluation.” During these sessions, I found that the activities were perfectly balanced between hands-on fieldwork and critical conversations that included perspectives from informal and formal educators, as well as the facilitators.

In addition to learning from my peers, I felt lucky to have volunteer facilitators that included EE professionals from around Georgia. Each instructor represented the best in their field and was personally invested in our collective success. With Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center as our backdrop, we were surrounded by the most ideal atmosphere in which to study and to commune with nature.

As I begin my final project, I will continue my work with children in Clayton County Public Schools. Having completed the coursework for my ATEEG Environmental Educator certification, I will be able to guide my students through experiences that inform them about the natural world in which they live.

Editor’s Note: For more information and a list of upcoming workshops about the ATEEG Certification Program visit www.eealliance.org.
Thrilling Events for EEA Members!

In addition to the spring conference and the fall symposium, EEA also hosts several exciting events for members throughout the year. Expand your outdoor horizons, network with other environmental educators, and share teaching ideas by attending one or more of these special events in 2011! Further details are posted at www.eealliance.org under “Member Services.”

EEA Membership Palisades River Float at the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Sandy Springs, Georgia
Choose either: Friday, May 20, 2011 OR Saturday, May 21, 2011 – FREE to EEA Members!

EEA members + one adult guest per member are invited to a leisurely float on the Chattahoochee River with National Park Service guide, Jerry Hightower. This trip will be suitable for beginners, but you must have basic canoeing or kayaking skills and experience paddling on a river in order to attend. Canoes, rafts, paddles, and life jackets will be provided at no charge (bring your own canoe if you like). A $3 parking fee is required if you don’t have an annual pass. Space is limited, so reservations are required by calling 678-538-1200. For more information, contact Jerry Hightower at 770-678-0338 (cell), 678-538-1245 (office), or jerry_hightower@nps.gov.

Save the dates for the following EEA members-only events too!

June 25, 2011: Tree Climbing at Blackburn Park in Atlanta ~ Take outdoor learning higher with our Tree Climbers International partners, as we enjoy an inspiring day of recreational tree climbing, outdoor learning, and fun from the tree tops! www.treeclimbing.com

September 24, 2011: Naturalist Rally at Stone Mountain Park ~ Join us for a day of exploring all aspects of nature. EEA is assembling a wide variety of field trips within the Stone Mountain Park’s Natural District. Explore the area during a paddle on the lake, a short or long hike, or on a butterfly or mushroom walk. Kid-friendly sessions will be available too. www.stonemountainpark.org

EEA Gives Back with a Saturday Service Project: East of Eden Farm

By Sam Burton, Owner of East of Eden Farm
What if the propaganda is wrong? What if local and sustainable really can feed the world? That’s what we’re trying to demonstrate at East of Eden Farms. Don’t let the name fool you; we live in an ordinary neighborhood, with ordinary neighbors, and an ordinary Home Owners Association. But we grow all of our own vegetables and the overwhelming majority of our fruit. Once our trees are mature, we’ll have that mission accomplished too!

Our purpose has three streams: 1) Develop and practice a self-sufficient lifestyle. 2) Provide the best tasting produce in North Georgia. 3) Help others create their own “edible suburb.”

We’re looking forward to you getting your hands dirty with us as we prepare our raised beds and containers for spring plantings. Because our garden is also our laboratory, you’ll get an up close look at what has and has not worked in our setting. You’ll be especially excited about our top secret, all-natural fertilizer that’s produced right here in the ’bubs. After giving you a chance to wash your hands, we’ll take the short drive to our second site, where we have sheep, goats, chickens, and a miniature cow and donkeys.

I guarantee you’ll try and figure out how you can do this in your neighborhood, too. We’re excited about your visit and will have the coffee pot on!

Conference Scholarships Available

During these difficult financial times it is easy to shrug your shoulders and lament that you just cannot afford to attend the 2011 EEA Conference. But WAIT – you may be able to attend after all! Every year EEA awards scholarships to Georgia educators who demonstrate a financial need and all scholarships cover 100 percent of the registration fee. (Lodging and transportation cost are not covered.)

You must submit your application online (www.eealliance.org) by January 18. What have you got to lose? This may be your ticket to attend the EE event of the year – a chance to learn new things, network with other like-minded educators and get energized for another year of commitment to the environment.
Is it time to renew your EEA membership?

EEA MEMBERSHIP FORM

We don’t want to lose you! Become a member today or this may be your last newsletter.

Fill out this form and mail it along with a check made out to “EEA” to
The Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia
P. O. Box 170458, Atlanta, GA 30317-0458

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

• Quarterly Newsletter – Provides educational resources, legislative updates, notice of workshops and events, grant opportunities, and much more.

• Annual Spring Conference and Fall Symposium – Held at different sites throughout Georgia with guest speakers, workshops and field trips. A great opportunity to meet people and share.

• Sharing and Exchanging Resources – The opportunity to find and exchange ideas with member organizations.

• Discount to Events – Attend the annual conference, the Outdoor Classroom Symposium and other EEA sponsored events at a discounted rate.

Name ____________________________________________
Affiliation _________________________________________
Address __________________________________________
_________________________________________________
Phone _____________________________________________
Fax _______________________________________________
Email address _____________________________________

Membership Category: ___Individual $25
                   ___Organizational* $100
                   ___Corporate* $150

*Please Note: organizations and businesses can list up to five representatives to receive EEA mailings and information.

EEA Board of Directors Call for Nominations

Do you know someone who wants to become involved in the leadership of EEA through hands-on involvement? Or maybe that person is you? If so, then a position on the EEA Board of Directors could be just what you are looking for! The board is particularly looking for individuals whose skill set includes marketing, communications, or fundraising. Nominations are being accepted January 1 through February 24, 2011.

If you are nominating someone, please have nominees complete a “Prospective Board Member Application” and submit it by email to boardnominations@eealliance.org. An email will be sent upon receipt of application. Applications and job descriptions can be found on our website at www.eealliance.org. Self-nominations are also accepted.

For more information about the election process contact Jennifer McCoy at boardnominations@eealliance.org

Environmental Education of Georgia Awards Ceremony Call for Award Nominations

On Friday, March 11, 2011 the Environmental Education Alliance (EEA) of Georgia and its conference supporters will recognize and honor exceptional contributions to environmental education at an awards dinner at the Kennesaw State University Continuing Education Center.

Nominations must be submitted electronically in a Word, RTF, or PDF document by January 19, 2011 to awards@eealliance.org. Please visit www.eealliance.org for the 2011 nomination process, eligibility, submission instructions, and EEA award categories.
EEA Website Gets a New Look!
By Sharon Smith

With our new website we will be able to provide our members enhanced services and features that are currently unavailable. For example, now you will be able to join EEA or renew your membership online using a credit card. You will also receive instant access to the members’ only section of the website and receive an email receipt.

Registering for events, such as the annual spring conference, will be a snap! Current members, upon login, will not need to fill in their personal information, unless updates or corrections are needed. The registration form will automatically display the member or nonmember price, depending on current status of membership. The list goes on and on...

There are so many new features to share there isn’t room to tell you all about them. It is a very exciting time, so be on the lookout for more information on when the new website will be launched. Our URL (www.eealliance.org) will not change and until the new site is live, our current website will still be active. If you have any questions or concerns how the new site may affect your membership, please contact webmaster@eealliance.org.

Outdoor Classroom Council Completes Service Project in Grant Park
By Robby Astrove
Thanks to all the service project volunteers and symposium participants who helped install the learning orchard in Grant Park. The results were impressive and the site looks amazing...thanks to you! We planted 12 fruit trees and over 50 native shrubs, herbs, and wildflowers including milkweed, joe-pye weed, and the beautiful Georgia aster, which all have high pollinator/wildlife values. Be on the look out for another service project at the EEA conference as we continue our legacy of hands-on outdoor learning and community service.

Deadline Approaching for 2011 EEA Dragonfly Grants

The Environmental Education Alliance (EEA) of Georgia is proud to offer mini-grant awards for up to $1,000 for Environmental Education /Performing and Visual Arts Projects in honor of environmental educator, Petey Giroux (1945-2008). Petey was a master at using the performing and visual arts to support her teaching; bringing much joy and enthusiasm to her work. By offering these grants to any Georgia educator of K-12th grade students (including those in public and private schools, home schools, scout troops, religious groups, community organizations, 4-H Clubs, etc.), we honor Petey’s life of service and her legacy of environmental education through the arts.

Grant guidelines (rubric used to judge applications) and applications are available at www.eealliance.org. The deadline for applications is January 18, 2011.
EEA is a self-governed, non-profit organization that promotes communication and education among professionals in the field of environmental education in Georgia. EEA is an affiliate of the North American Association for Environmental Education.