

EEA Strategic Plan – November 2011

I. Introduction

A. History

Georgia's Environmental Education Alliance (EEA) was established in 1992 to serve as a professional education and networking association for environmental educators throughout Georgia. As an affiliate of the North American Association for Environmental Education, EEA works to promote environmental education by providing opportunities for member organizations, schools, and the general public to get involved through the annual EEA conference, Outdoor Learning Symposium, Butterfly Symposium and other events. EEA's initiatives include Advanced Training in EE (ATEEG), Council of Outdoor Learning, Monarchs Across Georgia, State EE Awards, Using the Environment as an Integrating Context (EIC) for Learning, and EEinGeorgia.org.

B. Vision Statement

The Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia's vision is a statewide culture of environmental literacy and stewardship.

Mission Statement

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.

II The Strategic Planning Process

A. Background

The EEA has reevaluated its strategic plan three times since its inception as the organization has grown and sought to expand and better serve environmental educators in the state of Georgia. (1995, 2005, 2010).

B. Definition of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a perpetual process that an organization can initiate in order to identify techniques that help achieve specific goals for the future. The process of strategic planning includes defining a mission statement, establishing a vision, sorting key issues (roadblocks), exploring initiatives (pathways), and formulating an action plan. In order to be fully utilized, a strategic plan must be continuously re-examined, at least on an annual basis, and requires the appropriate administrative structure to insure successful implementation.

III. Committee and Committee Structure and Committee Descriptions

The committee and committee structure evolved as an effective means for both directing and involving not only the board, but the entire EEA membership in the strategic planning process. The job of the committees is to direct the issues and initiatives into an

action plan and time line.

A. Operational Board Committees

1. **Current Issues Committee** - This committee actively advances current and emerging EE issues through stakeholder engagement and partnerships, advocacy, and outreach; including work on the state environmental literacy plan. **2011-2012 Chair: Robby Astrove**
2. **Fundraising Committee** - This committee develops and implements fundraising strategies to support the infrastructure and programs of EEA including individual giving campaigns, grants, and corporate donations. **2011-2012 Chair: Ginny Elliott**
3. **Public Relations and Newsletter Committee** - This committee looks for opportunities to market our membership, and expand opportunities to get our exhibit to events in order to recruit members. This committee also works to produce four e-newsletters, which can include regular columns on EE issues, curriculum reviews, legislative actions, EE activities for students, etc. **2011-2012 Chair: Joey Giunta**
4. **Strategic Planning Committee** - This committee reviews the current mission, goals, and strategic plan and makes recommendations to the Board for future planning based on research and membership feedback. **2011-2012 Chair: Stacy Smith**
5. **Website and Database Management Committee** - This committee (WDB) is responsible for the maintenance of and improvement to the website and membership database. WDB maintains the current membership database and contact lists, coordinates with and provides training and support to each committee to meet their website needs, oversees online event registration, and serves as a liaison to MemberClicks. **2011-2012 Chair: Sharon Smith**
6. **Volunteer Management Committee** - This committee works to recruit, train, and coordinate volunteers for EEA. **2011-2012 Chair: Melanie Biersmith**

B. Programmatic Board Committees

7. **ATEEG Committee** - This committee develops and implements the Advanced Training for Environmental Educators for the EEA membership. This committee will plan to share sessions at the conference. **2011-2012 Chairs: Kris Irwin & Venetia Butler**
8. **EEA Annual Conference Committee** - This committee plans the annual conference. Responsibilities include developing themes, identifying host sites, scheduling keynote speakers, panelists and concurrent session presenters, working with the host site staff, and communicating with board members regarding their conference duties. Committee establishes a checklist and guide for conference planning that can be shared with new conference committee members. **2011-2012 Chair: Sharon Smith**

9. **Council of Outdoor Learning (COOL) Committee** - This committee develops and 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. **2011-2012 Chair: Eli Dickerson**
10. **Member Services Committee** - This committee works on strengthening benefits and responsibilities for members and expanding the membership base through membership drives and public events. **2011-2012 Chair: Tara Muenz**
11. **Monarchs Across Georgia (MAG) Steering Committee** - This committee works together with teachers, students, families, communities, businesses and others to study Monarch butterflies and restore butterfly habitat across the state. Its mission is to inspire future caretakers of the natural environment by educating about monarch butterflies and other pollinators. **2011-2012 Chair: Kim Sutherland**
12. **EEA Store Committee** - This committee oversees the purchasing, pricing, inventory and selling of items in the EEA Store, including setup at EEA events such as the Annual Conference and the Outdoor Learning Symposium. **2011-2012 Chair: Linda May**

C. **Other Board Committees**

13. **Executive Committee** - Officers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. This committee oversees board meetings, Executive Director position, annual retreat, budget, and also serves as Nominating Committee. **2011-2012 Chair: Jennifer McCoy**
14. **Advisory Board** - This committee recruits, with guidance from Executive Committee, retiring board members to help organize service awards/recognitions, provide organizational background and context, and review and select recipients of the Petey Giroux Dragonfly Grant. **2011-2012 Chair: Karen Garland**

Each committee is led by a board member who recruits committee members from the general membership. These committees establish the action plan for strategic planning in their respective areas.

IV. **The Strategic Plan**

A. Vision Statement

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B. Mission Statement

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C. Goals

GOAL ONE: To increase the content knowledge, skill level, and confidence of active and potential environmental educators through professional development and continuing education.

Objective A: To develop deeper understanding and knowledge of the goals, practice, history, and research related to the field of environmental education through continued support of the ATEEG program.

Strategies:

1. Annually review core course materials to identify items to be removed and replaced with more current information and research materials
2. Review core course agendas to assure that participants have time to thoroughly explore environmental issues, to comprehend details of the issue(s), and to compare and contrast their own perspectives with those of others.
3. Require ATEEG participants to view a current EE program and evaluate the outcomes for improvement of future programs or events.
4. Require ATEEG participants to evaluate the ATEEG course, so improvements can continue to be made to the program and ATEEG leaders are practicing what is expected of participants.

Objective B: Provide a variety of opportunities for high level professional development through the EEA Annual Conference, Outdoor Learning Symposium, Butterfly Symposium, and Monarchs Across Georgia.

Strategies:

1. Strengthen the knowledge and diversity of learning styles for each of the conference and initiative offerings by maintaining strong communication and collaboration within the committees.
2. Increase participation in the professional development activities through shared approaches for recruitment.

GOAL TWO: To facilitate communication, networking, and the building of partnerships among stakeholders.

Objective A. Build membership, increase current member retention and involvement.

Strategies:

1. Improve membership services with formal membership renewal and acknowledgement process.
2. Continue to bring members together socially and professionally, focusing on developing meetings for under-served areas of the state.
3. Conduct membership drive. Especially focusing on college students, PTAs, and teacher groups. Utilize conference & symposium to drive membership.

Objective B. Increase networking among organizations.

Strategies:

1. Provide support for existing organizations offering similar programs (green schools, schoolyard habitat, environmental education advocacy, curriculum enrichment, teacher training). Work with PR committee to represent EEA at existing events (i.e., festivals, eco-conferences, etc.).
2. Work to connect resources across agencies through mentoring and resource sharing.
3. Provide forums for discussions.
4. Build relationships with private foundations.

Objective C. Improve communication with the general public.

Strategies

1. Increase the number of people receiving The Link and include value added and time relevant pieces to improve content.
2. Grow awareness of EEA as a brand in order to increase fundraising opportunities and raise the prestige of environmental education as a profession.
3. Increase use of electronic media: Grow number of Facebook fans and make weekly posts to related articles. Schedule monthly "EEA News Update" emails. Maintain the website with up-to-date information on an ongoing basis.
4. Create "issues" fact sheets/talking points describing Environmental Education issues, solutions, and EEA actions.

GOAL THREE: To advocate for the increased practice of environmental education.

Objective A. Develop EEA's voice and visibility as the environmental education leader in Georgia.

Strategies:

1. Establish a framework for the Current Issues Committee to implement an organizational response to emerging issues.
2. Create PR plan for how-to make EEA relevant to a broad spectrum of the population.

Objective B. Raise the profile of EE as a profession.

Strategies:

1. Ensure ATEEG Program is fully supported with proper PR, funding, participant recognition.
2. Actively recruit volunteers to increase EEA's capacity to serve our constituents.
3. Ensure operational procedures are in place to support EEA's efforts to communicate our successes.

Objective C. Facilitate an increase in the frequency of individuals who self-identify as Environmental Educators.

Strategies:

1. Develop programs that generate interest with a broader base, thereby increasing attendance at our events.
2. Establish partnerships with organizations that share our values.
3. Reinstate our higher education efforts, creating active EEA groups at local colleges and universities.

GOAL FOUR: To promote the development and use of effective, research-based environmental education pedagogy

Objective A. Advance the content and pedagogical knowledge of environmental educators in Georgia

Strategies

1. Encourage professional development through the Advanced Training for Environmental Education in Georgia (ATEEG) Program.
2. Facilitate networking, communication, and partnerships among active and potential environmental educators in Georgia.
3. Consistently communicate EEA's current issue policies and action strategies to Georgia educators, with a special focus on raising awareness of these issues among faculty, staff, and students at Georgia's institutions of higher learning.

GOAL FIVE: To support values of diversity in environmental education.

Objective A: Increase the diversity of EEA's membership and leadership within a culture of inclusivity.

Strategies:

1. Develop a diversity definition and policy.
2. Continue to increase diversity within EEA Board, management, and staff.
3. Engage interest and increase relevance for individuals and organizations throughout all regions of Georgia.
4. Strengthen the culture of inclusivity within EEA and all of its programs, products, and services.

GOAL SIX: To highlight emerging trends in environmental education and stewardship.

Objective A. Establish priority list of causes EEA Board should focus on for the next 3-5 years.

Strategies:

1. Current Issues committee identifies action items annually.
2. Current Issues Committee determines how best to serve those issues based on Board's feedback.
3. Create position statements for each issue to communicate ideas and issues to our membership.

Objective B. Keep members informed and up to date of issues in EE

Strategies:

1. Develop a strong Public Relations plan, including the use of social media, website, newsletter, and events.
2. Choose a theme and sessions for signature events that highlight relevant, topical issues in EE.