



Celebrating Diversity in EE

Editorial by Karen Garland, Georgia Conservancy

Thinking about environmental education and underserved communities is an opportunity to challenge our assumptions about nature, culture, and science, and our assumptions about the life experiences of people of different backgrounds and culture. — Bonnie Sachatello-Sawyer and Shamu Fenyvesi

You are planning to attend your favorite conference, and as you study the program, you see a presentation on "diversity." Quickly now, what is your immediate reaction? Do you put two pencil checks next to the time for "yes," one pencil check for "maybe," or just pass it by, knowing there are sure to be other events or presentations at this conference that will be more intriguing?

The United States is in the midst of a transition from a predominately Caucasian population to a society composed of a more diverse racial and ethnic population. These demographic changes have critical implications for the field of environmental education (EE). According to the EPA's 1996



Assessment of Environmental Education and the work of educators in the field, environmental education programs have largely failed to meet the needs of these communities.

The growth of Hispanic, African-American, Asian-

American, and Native American populations has diversified the racial makeup of our schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods, creating awareness that require us to address the needs of our ever-growing multiracial and multicultural society. The study also reported that urban and low-income communities were part of this underserved audience.

Childhood hunger is another concern that is closely linked to environmental issues including deforestation, water scarcity, global warming, the depletion of topsoil, and ecological imbalance of pests and predators, as well as political and social issues relating to the imbalance of power. Yet, as environmental educators, we have not often looked at hunger as an important topic for our curriculum. —Kristin Poppo

It has been well documented that young people who participate in EE programs develop leadership skills, gain respect for the natural environment, better relate to their community, and improve their academic performance.

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These opportunities should not be denied to anyone based on race, economic class, or gender.



Unfortunately, even though Georgia is home to hundreds of high-quality environmental education programs, many of these meaningful outdoor study experiences remain beyond the reach of the overwhelming majority of the state's underserved and at-risk youth. A variety of possible factors contributing to this inequity range from a lack of funds for materials and transportation to the fact that environmental issues have been secondary to the more important socioeconomic issues of these communities.

Despite these factors, all people should have access to relevant and meaningful educational programs. Considering the demographic changes in Georgia, and our evolving understanding of many of our environmental issues being connected to social issues, the importance of informed and active citizens in every community underscores the need for environmental education to reach these groups.

As environmental educators, many of us have taken the traditional EE path, which has focused on ecology, environmental issue investigation, and the citizen action skills needed to understand issues, not realizing that biodiversity and cultural diversity are inextricably linked. Many times we have also placed too much emphasis on concepts such as wilderness

preservation, rather than on quality of life issues.

For these reasons many EE programs do not meet the needs of the racial minority, low-income, or urban communities, for whom neighborhood air quality may be a priority over distant wildlife habitat. This emerging awareness of human health and social problems resulting from environmental degradation has pointed to expanding the role of environmental education to include all communities.

To believe that our EE programs, largely grounded in Western science, are the only ways to teach, and learn, is to miss the richness of other culture's views of nature. To solve our multi-dimensional ecological issues today, we are going to need multi-dimensional solutions. Rather



than referring to the environment as solely being about habitat preservation, nature exploration, and natural resource protection, we should define it more holistically to include, "where we live, work, learn, play, and pray."

How can we greater inspire children of ALL racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds to become involved in outdoor and environmental education? How can we best make EE pertinent to the lives of ALL children, so that not only are they invested as stewards of the Earth, they see environmental education as a viable career option? How can we reach out to college students interested in making a difference and recruit more diverse teaching staffs as role models for the culturally diverse populations of students we serve?

In the ensuing period since the first National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit,

held in 1991, the field of environmental education has become more aware of the systemic and cultural issues that have been preventing it from reaching its fundamental mission. Therefore in 2002 the North American Association of Environmental Education (NAAEE) Board of Directors adopted a position statement on diversity and accepted a set of recommended actions for both diversifying NAAEE and helping to diversify the field of environmental education. The position statement recognized the integral connections between environmental concerns and wider questions of social needs, welfare, and economic opportunity.

As environmental educators, we know that diverse ecosystems are healthier, creating a powerful synergy not available to monoculture systems. This same concept of diversity should apply to the communities where we live, the organizations we are part of, and the teaching that we do. By drawing on your strengths and visions as environmental educators, your challenge will be to reevaluate your goals and missions in light of the multicultural context in which we all live and work. Education can be an effective tool to secure change and achieve a more just and sustainable society. However, nobody expects education to do it single-handedly. It will take all Georgians working together to achieve this goal.

Ten Suggestions For Providing EE for Underserved Communities

1. It's All About Relationships

Break down barriers through rapport, trust building, and teamwork. EE programs need to be planned with the community you want to serve, not for them. Start the process by listening and asking questions. What do they care about? What do they see in their community?

2. Do Your Homework

Understand the value systems and social norms in the community that you serve.

3. Build Bridges and Honor Diversity

Talk openly about cultural differences, as it may help develop cross-cultural understanding. You can use one blackboard for traditional cultural knowledge and another for Western science and help participants translate between the two.

4. Collectively Dream for Children

Everyone has hopes and dreams for their children. They are our

future. The sharing of our dreams for them can offer a chance for everyone involved in program planning process to find common ground.

5. Tear Up the Templates

Every community has a different culture in which they live, work, and understand nature. Assumptions, or applying a little "programming experience" from "another similar underserved community," can have unintended consequences. Whenever planning a program start from scratch.

6. Team Teach Early and Often

In every community, there are already great educational programs in place. Cooperatively teach with local education leaders, fully participate in their activities, and always demonstrate respect for work that is already going on.

7. Can You Get There?

Think about access issues and comfort level with outdoor activities. What to you may be

recreation, is to someone else difficult work, or just plain scary.

8. Wilderness or Asthma

Think of broader content connections for EE that are relevant to those communities such as EE and health, EE and literacy. Be conscious about your assumptions about nature and EE.

9. There are Many Trails

Allow your students different ways of expressing what they know.

10. Sit Down, Deliver, and Do Not Abandon

Underserved communities are used to broken promises. By never promising anything that you can't deliver, you can be a respectful agent for positive change.

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<http://www.clearingmagazine.org/Underserved.pdf>

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Environmental Justice

Litter Patrol and Swat-a-Litterbug Activity

By Sheri Henshaw, Keep Bartow Beautiful

Even the youngest student can learn about environmental justice. The best way to get started teaching about caring for our planet is to teach them to be responsible for cleaning up after themselves. Through the Litter Patrol and the Swat-a-Litterbug Program, students learn that this simple act is so important to a law-abiding society that laws have been made to enforce it. In this program, created by Keep Bartow Beautiful and Bartow County Environmental Code Enforcement, students learn about Bubba, the Bartow Beetle (can be changed to any locale).

Program materials and supplies for students may be ordered from:

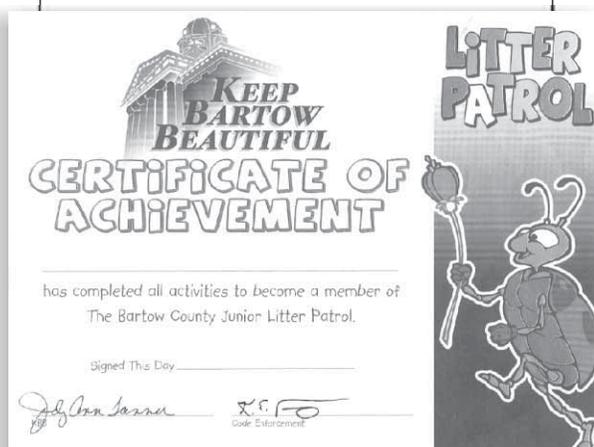
- Arco Ideas and Design, Inc. (770-386-2799/ www.arcoideas.com, this includes Bubba certificates, bookmarks, and activity sheets.)
- Swat-a-Litterbug Bags, activity books, and stickers can be ordered from Keep America Beautiful, Inc., (1-888-776-7763).
- Jumping bugs, bugs that expand in water can be ordered from Oriental Trading, 1-800-228-2269/ www.orientaltrading.com.
- Keep Bartow Beautiful created a CD telling the story of Bubba. 770-387-5167/ henshaws@bartowga.org.

Materials: One per student: 2 pages of copy paper, with comic strip blocks laid out on it, 9 per page. Pencil, crayons, or markers. Optional-Litter Patrol badge, car litterbag, bookmark, follow-up activity sheet, visiting local law enforcement official.

Background: Littered areas create health and safety issues, destroy the beauty of an area, and encourage criminal activities by making communities look neglected and abandoned. Litter pick-up costs the state of Georgia over \$11 million dollars annually to pick up along state highways and interstates. In addition, most cities

and counties spend hundreds of thousands annually to pick up litter along city and county roadways. Anti-littering laws are in effect in Georgia, and officers enforce those laws by giving out tickets to people who litter. Major offenders can receive major fines, and even go to jail.

Bubba, the beetle/litterbug, is so named because, according to a study done by Keep America Beautiful, Inc., most littering is done by young males ages 16-24, otherwise known as “Bubbas” for their desire to toss fast food items, drink bottles and cans, and cigarette butts out of their vehicles while driving.



Procedures:

1. Ask students what they know about litter. Have they seen it? Have they ever littered themselves? Explain to your students that you are going to tell them a story about a little “litterbug” named Bubba. Show them a sample newspaper comic strip, telling them they will draw the pictures in the boxes on their paper as you tell a story. They will have to draw quickly!
2. Story-Bubba was a bad bug. He liked to litter. Litter is misplaced waste, such as bottles, cans, and notebook papers that have not been placed in a trashcan. **Draw Bubba Bug.** Bubba littered in town. **Draw a town.** Bubba littered in town because the stores and houses did not belong to

him, so he didn't care. Draw litter in the town. Bubba littered at school.

Draw School. He littered at school because Mr. Squeaky-Clean, the janitor, would have to clean it up. It was his job, not Bubba's, to keep the school clean. **Draw litter around the school.** Bubba littered at the park.

Draw a park with trees and playground. Bubba littered at the park because he saw other people littering there. Bubba threw his trash on the ground right beside the park trashcan. **Draw trashcan with trash beside it.** Officer Ford was in the park. He saw Bubba. **Draw Officer.**

He told Bubba to pick up his litter. “Why should I,” asked Bubba? **Draw Bubba asking a question.** “Because litter costs you,” said Officer Ford. “It can make you sick because it can carry germs and be a feeding ground for rats and mice.” **Draw mouse in trash.** “It can injure you if you step on a broken can or bottle that should be in the trashcan.” **Draw broken bottle.** “Litter can make a pretty place ugly real fast, costing a lot of money to get it cleaned up.”

Draw flowers covered in litter. “If everyone cleaned up after themselves we could use this money for other things.” **Draw money.** “All boys and girls need to join my Litter Patrol and learn how to Swat-a-Litterbug,” said Officer Ford. Draw Officer Ford.

“How can I do this,” asked Bubba? **Draw Bubba.** “By picking up your litter and putting it in the trashcan.”

Draw Bubba putting trash in can.

Now Bubba is a better Beetle. **Draw Bubba with flower.** Bubba has joined the Litter Patrol. **Draw Bubba with badge.** And he wants you to help!

3. Ask the students if they want to help Bubba. Ask them to rise and take the Litter Patrol Pledge. (If you have a local litter or code enforcement officer, you could have them tell

about their job, and then have them give the pledge to the students.)

Pledge: I, (repeat your own name), will remember what I have learned in the Litter Patrol Program. I will remember to always put trash in its' proper place, and teach others to do the same.

4. Students then receive a badge and a car litterbag.

Extension: Follow up with a take-home activity sheet, which includes the

following: Monday-Pick up one piece of litter per day. Tuesday-Put a litterbag in your car and use it. Wednesday-Teach someone the proper way to dispose of litter. Thursday-Make sure your trashcans have lids on them, so the trash stays inside. Friday-Have a cleanup!

Students that complete all five activities mail in their sheets to us, or the teacher collects them. They then receive a letter from Bubba, a signed certificate, and a surprise gift. (Bugs from Oriental Trading.)

Keep America Beautiful has many great activities, including Swat-a-Litterbug, in the Waste In Place Curriculum. Contact www.kab.org or visit their great new education site, Clean Sweep U.S.A.- A "Keep America Beautiful" Community, at www.kab.org/cleansweepusa. Also, many Keep Georgia Beautiful Affiliates have free litterbags and other materials they have developed for the classroom. To find an affiliate near you, go to www.keepgeorgiabeautiful.org.

2004 Award Winning Georgia Environmental Educators

By Leslie Poythress, Gray Elementary School

Excellence in environmental education... That's what comes to mind when the Environmental Education Alliance recognizes its annual award winners. This year's winners were acknowledged at the March 2004 conference at Unicoi State Park.

The Dr. Eugene Odum Outstanding Lifetime Service Award was presented to one of the founders of EEA and 29 nature centers across the United States, Dr. Frank McCamey. His passion for the environment is evident, as he has spent over 70 years educating others about the wonders of our natural world. An active supporter of environmental education (EE) in Georgia, Dr. McCamey is well deserving of this prestigious award.

For the first time, the EEA Outstanding Service Award was divided into three categories. The award recognizes individuals who have contributed in significant and meaningful ways to the advancement of the field of EE through dedicated and exemplary teaching, research, and/or public service.

- Laurie Fowler of the University of Georgia's Institute of Ecology received the award in the area of research. Ms. Fowler has worked

extensively in EE through her research, policy work, and public service throughout the state.

- The winner of the award in teaching, Dr. Sally Pamplin, has worked with teachers, students, and her community to facilitate their learning through direct instruction. Dr. Pamplin has been an instrumental force at Shakerag Elementary School as their Curriculum Support Teacher and has done a tremendous job infusing EE into all subject areas.
- Kim Bailey, recognized for her exemplary service, is coordinator of EEAinGeorgia.org as part of her work with the Department of Natural Resources. Through Ms. Bailey's work with Georgia Learning Connections, teachers across the state can access effective EE lessons written by educators themselves.

Additional awards were given to two of EEA's initiatives.

- Mary Terry of Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve is well deserving of the Monarchs Across Georgia Service Award. Ms. Terry has created rich learning experiences involving Monarchs for students and teachers at Arabia. Kim Kilgore of Arrowhead Environmental Education Center



Frank McCamey, Decatur, Georgia

and Karen Garland of the Georgia Conservancy also shared the Monarchs Across Georgia Facilitator of the Year award.

- Melissa Caspary, master's student in Conservation Ecology & Sustainable Development at the University of Georgia, was awarded the Outdoor Classroom Service Award. Ms. Caspary has guided the D.C. Barrow Elementary School in Athens in their quest to have a unique outdoor environment. Her planning, commitment, research, and vision have helped to make their dreams a reality.

Each of the award winners has shared their love for the environment with others. They will continue to provide support, encouragement, and their knowledge to citizens throughout Georgia.

Save the Date!

Cryptogram

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Environmental Education Alliance (EEA) of Georgia Strategic Plan Draft — August 2005

“Good plans shape good decisions. That's why good planning helps make elusive dreams come true” Lester R. Bittel

The following is the latest draft of our organization's (1) vision statement; (2) mission statement; and (3) strategic plan. This draft is a product of several meetings and discussions between and among EEA Board and Advisory Team members.

Prior to moving it forward for approval at the next EEA Board meeting in August, we invite your comments and suggestions. Deadline for comments is Wednesday, August 10.

Please direct all correspondence via e-mail to Richard Osorio (rosorio@uga.edu) and Mary Terry (mjterry@co.dekalb.ga.us). All remarks should be in an attached Word or RTF document and employ, if possible, the Word editor tools designed to assist in editing documents.

Please note that this document is deliberately brief and broad in scope. Our belief is that a strategic plan is but a guide, providing general parameters and direction for the next 3-5 years. On a more measurable level, it is up to the Board to design and implement a detailed annual work plan that aligns with the goals and strategies noted below.

Thank you for your contribution to this important task. We look forward to receiving your comments.

For your convenience, this document will also be posted on the EEA website at www.eealliance.org.

1. Vision Statement

For Georgia citizens to understand the relationships between natural and social systems and to take responsible actions for a healthy and sustainable environment

2. Mission Statement

To strengthen the quality and availability of environmental education in Georgia

3. Goals

A. Strive for organizational excellence through the following strategies.

- Actively recruit, support, and sustain a diverse Board of leaders.
- Implement and uphold organizational practices that foster a culture of respect, honesty, integrity, and value to our members and partner organizations.
- Create meaningful learning experiences to increase personal and professional growth for all members.
- Adhere to strict fiscal responsibility to the organization

by conducting business in a transparent, legal, and ethical manner.

- Promote frequent and effective communication to members, partners, donors, and the general public through a variety of media, including newsletters and the EEA website.

B. To build and maintain the capacity to support environmental education in Georgia through the following strategies:

- Integration of environmental education (EE) into Georgia Department of Education state curriculum standards;
- Inclusion of EE in preservice and inservice teacher training;
- Research on the impact of EE in formal, nonformal, and informal education (including student achievement and teacher quality);
- Increased use of EE resources by the formal, nonformal, and informal education communities;
- Increased content knowledge and skill level in EE for all educators;
- Increased access to EE professional development for all educators;
- Establishment of standards and requirements for professional environmental educators; and
- Inclusion of diverse and multicultural populations.

2005 Outdoor Classroom Symposium

Teaching Outside the Box
Friday, October 14, 2005

Join the adventure and discover the wonders of teaching outdoors at the Outdoor Classroom Symposium at Frey Elementary School in Cobb County. The Outdoor Classroom Council (OCC) will offer educators from around the state creative ways to uncover the treasures of their outdoor learning centers.

This year there are three ways to receive 1 PLU!

- Thursday night workshop, Flying WILD with Project WILD and the Friday symposium;
- Friday symposium and the Saturday, POW! The Planning of Wetlands Workshop
- Thursday night workshop, Flying WILD with Project WILD and the Saturday workshop, POW! The Planning of Wetlands Workshop

Meet our special guest, Tim Grant, author of several books and editor of the international publication, Green Teacher Magazine (www.greenteacher.com), as he shares the surprising strength of the school grounds greening movement! He will also describe why most administrators are going to be more accepting of outdoor classrooms and environmental education in general in the coming years.



Check www.eealliance.org after August 16th for registration and symposium information.

Time to renew your EEA membership? Check your mailing label for your membership expiration date.

EEA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Become a Member Today!

Fill out this form and mail it along with a check made out to "EEA" to P.O. Box 286, Mansfield, GA 30055.

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 and the Outdoor Classroom Symposium at a discounted rate.

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail 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.*

Please check the category of your affiliation so that we may serve you better:

- Community Outreach Private and/or Non-Profit
 Government Agency Business and Industry
 Environmental Education Center
 Formal Post Secondary Education
 Formal Education, Pre-k through 6
 Formal Education, 7 through 12

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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.

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The Link is published four times annually. EEA member contributions are encouraged. Deadlines for articles and news of interest are:

Issue	Deadline
Fall 2005	September 1
Winter 2006	December 1
Spring 2006	March 1
Summer 2006	June 1

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