



Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia

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The Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia

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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.

EEA Conference Scholarship Opportunities

Need financial help getting to the EEA Conference this year? Apply for a scholarship for one or two days. **Scholarship deadline has been extended to Feb 13th.**

The goal of the Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia (EEA) scholarship program is to broaden participation in the EEA annual conference to those who would be unable to attend without financial assistance. EEA encourages anyone to apply for a scholarship, however, preference will be given to presenters, first-time attendees and those promoting diversity in environmental education across the state through their profession, community affiliations, region of the state, culture and/or age group.

Scholarships cover one day registration/meals up to full conference registration (including meals) and a one-year membership to EEA. Personal travel, lodging, and fee-based field trips or workshops are NOT covered by the scholarship and are the responsibility of the scholarship recipient.

Scholarship recipients will be expected to: volunteer for up to 2 hours at the conference and write an article about your conference experience for the EEA Newsletter. For more information and application forms see the EEA Conference website at www.eealliance.org

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING
TO TALK ABOUT?
SEND US YOUR NEWS,
TEACHING STORIES AND TIPS!



The Link is published three times per year. The deadline for the Spring 2009 issue is: March 31, 2009

Send your articles to:
annie.quinting@sccpss.com

Register Now for the 2009 EEA Conference! “Learning From the Land: then, now and in the future” March 13-14, 2009

The 2009 Annual Conference will be held March 13-14 at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center. Registration information can be found at www.eealliance.org. **Please note that the conference has been shortened to two days.** We hope that this will result in a more affordable conference for our attendees and help with any travel restrictions that attendees may face. The same wonderful offerings, including a Friday night Social, silent auction, awards ceremony, field trips, and of course informative presentations will be available to all attendees. Join us this year for a great conference and interactive socializing!

This year's theme is: **Learning from the Land...then, now and in the future...**

Agriculture: Agricultural practices have defined the history, social structures and land features of many areas of Georgia. This strand will focus on agricultural education and its connection to Georgia and its people, current agricultural practices and research and trends in environmentally-sound agricultural practices.

Land Management: Land management is a framework to help us look after the environment with a balance between caring for our land, water, plants and animals and the needs of humans. This strand will focus on current research and management of Georgia's natural environments and their components--including, but not limited to, trends in research regarding climate change, water, air, wildlife, plants and land issues.

Place-based Education: You don't need large tracts of land to conduct important, relevant environmental education programs. Place-based education integrates cultural studies, nature studies, real-world problem solving, intern-

ships and entrepreneurial opportunities, and induction into community processes. This strand will focus on environmental education teaching and learning strategies that increase awareness, knowledge and informed responses to environmental topics and issues that impact Georgia citizens.

Located in Tifton, the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center (TCCC) is ready to provide everything you need to have a fun-filled, educational experience. Tifton, known as the “Friendly City”, is a community located in South Georgia that truly exemplifies southern hospitality. Spend some time in Tifton antiquing, dining at fine restaurants, and exploring variety of natural, cultural, and historical resources. For more information about Tifton and TCCC, visit: <http://www.caes.uga.edu/campus/tifton/conferences/>

Registration and lodging information can be found at www.eealliance.org. **Early Bird Registration Deadline is February 28th!**

Friday night's keynote speaker **Janisse Ray** includes in her bio, below her email address, the following watershed address: *little ten mile creek @ ten mile creek @ altamaha river @ atlantic ocean*. She has written three books - *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, a memoir



about growing up on a junkyard in the ruined longleaf pine ecosystem, *Wild Card Quilt: Taking a Chance on Home*, about rural community, and *Pinhook: Finding Wholeness in a Fragmented Land*, the story of a 750,000-acre wildland corridor between south Georgia and north Florida. She lectures widely on nature, community, organic agriculture, native plants, sustainability and the politics of wholeness. As an organizer and activist, she works to create sustainable communities, local food systems, a stable global climate, intact ecosystems, clean rivers, life-enhancing economies, and participatory democracy. She is a founding board member of Altamaha Riverkeeper and is on the board of the Environmental Leadership Center of Warren Wilson College and Satilla Riverkeeper.

Janisse attempts to live a simple, sustainable life on a family farm in southern Georgia with her husband, Raven Waters. She has a college-age son, Silas. She is a gardener, tender of farm animals, hospice and Red Cross volunteer, slow-food cook, and a beginning filmmaker. She does yoga and trapeze, including a spring 2008 show called "Water Body." Her current writing projects include a collection of poetry, weekly columns on the environment, revisions on a novel, and a nonfiction book about how Americans live.

On Saturday, learn how to bring the National Farm to School movement to your school. Our speaker, **Emily Jackson**, founded and currently directs the Growing Minds Farm to School program for the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP). These programs connect schools with local farms to promote serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing health and nutrition education opportunities that will last a lifetime, and supporting local small farmers. Activities involve food, farm and nutrition integration into lesson plans, cooking in the classroom, gardening, taste testing, and field trips to farms.

Emily helped position ASAP nationally in the farm to school movement and is now the Southeast Regional Lead for the National Farm to School Network. She coordinates farm to school training and technical assistance, advocacy and policy work and seeks to establish a network in a six state region.

Emily sits on several advisory boards and has had the opportunity to speak both regionally and nationally. She is a former K-6 educator and farmer. Emily lives on a farm with her husband, 2 cats, 5 chickens and a dog.

This year's field trip offerings include a variety of place-based learning opportunities for attendees. Go to the annual conference page on www.eelliance.org for more information. Sign up when you register to learn more about the wonders of Georgia at:
Reed Bingham State Park
Sweet Grass Dairy

Jones Environmental Research Center
Worth County Primary School Outdoor Classroom (field trip includes optional service learning project)
NESPAL
Grand Bay Wildlife Management Area and Wetland Education Center
Canoe the Flint River
Flint RiverQuarium and Chehaw Park

EE Certification – Program Update!

Since 2007, the Advanced Training for Environmental Education committee has been working hard to design and develop a new Environmental Education Certification program for educators in Georgia. We conducted stakeholder surveys in 2007 to understand the needs and wants of such a program in Georgia. Based on the survey results and support from the EEA board, the committee has moved forward in investigating other state EE certification programs, meeting with North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) staff about having an accredited program, understanding what professional educators need to know, and formalizing a partnership with the University of Georgia as the certifying agent for this program.

This past spring, the Environmental Education Alliance (EEA) of Georgia received one of the nine NAAEE grants in 2008 to jump start the EE certification program. This grant enabled the committee to hold a retreat for the purpose of moving toward finalizing the program of study for Georgia's certification program and to begin writing the outlines for the courses.

For the past year the committee has been reviewing models that other state programs are currently using. Using those models as guides, the committee created an Action Plan to steer the development of the three core courses that comprise the certifications program (Foundations of Environmental Education, Fostering Learning, and Assessment); specialization workshops, and units of teaching. Using the Backward Design Model for instructional design, the committee laid out the goals, objectives and assessment tools for each course, and the course outlines. We also held brainstorming sessions on the "nuts and bolts" of the program to guide the committee as we move forward.

The ATEE committee will be meeting again in January to flesh out the operational details of the program: who will be the instructors, where will the workshops be held and when, how website materials will be developed, how past EE certification participants may be grandfathered in, registration forms, PLUs, etc....

We are all very excited about the progress we are

making and cannot wait to officially unveil it to all of you. As we get closer we will continue to send out updates. We know many of you wish we could go faster but we are trying to do it right. Thanks so much to the ATEE committee for volunteering their time to make this program a reality.

Considering the term "Earth Community"

Each of us recognizes the power of the spoken word and the preconceptions associated with using the term "the environment." Have you ever considered using alternative language, language with positive associations that serve to include human beings in the system? Earth Community sounds complete and conveys connections. Would this term allow for greater opportunity and inclusion in our messaging? Simply put, can this language serve to bridge the disassociation between man and nature?

While attending the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) conference this fall, I noted several sessions devoted to this notion of unity and beliefs. In fact NAAEE created an entire conference strand devoted to "engaging body, mind and spirit into EE through social attitudes and stewardship." One of the sessions I attended was an open forum discussion regarding the use of language and the conflicting assumptions environmental educators encounter when facilitating scientific and nature programming. We discussed this issue in both philosophy and policy, noting that humans are often not considered part of the natural world by the participants we teach. In discussing the human aspect of our perception of nature, we focused on imagery. Consider, especially those of us that work to help people learn to understand and appreciate the landscape, what images do we hang on our walls? Many of us are drawn to pristine nature images, often images without people. Where are the people? Are we, environmental educators, ourselves excluding the human from the earth system that is central to what we do and who we are? How can we serve to help reconnect the concept of people being part of the planet when we are not embracing the connection ourselves? We do live here too and are part of the Earth Community. Is this part of our problem?

When I returned to the office after this conference, I looked around and found that there was truth to the observation. In my office, there is a clear preference towards images of the natural world that don't include humans. I asked my colleagues why they choose certain images and then shared my observations and asked what they thought

about the exclusion of people in the imagery they selected. Some agreed that there was an underlying separation. Some asserted that images with people made it harder for them to imagine themselves in the setting. Others felt if given the choice, they would choose images with people because that would be more interesting. I was excited that people were talking about and considering their beliefs and attitudes about our planet. If nothing else, Earth Community generates discussion. Examining and reflecting on our assumptions and bias is a healthy exercise for all educators. I encourage each of you to consider Earth Community and articulate your point of view with colleagues, students, and family.

[Editor's note: this is an excellent observation--why do we disconnect ourselves from the ecosystems we are trying to save? We should be fundamentally involved in the world we endeavor to protect, not objectively detached from it. "Earth Community" implies a close relationship to the home we all share...let's think about other associative expressions that help convey the message that we're all invested in an inter-dependent environment, and we need to be ever aware of the effects of our interactions with the natural systems that surround us. How about "Global Family", or "All-inclusive Eco-system", ...keep the thought processes going....Let's keep the message current and vibrant and stimulate a dialog that engages everyone, whether they think they're environmentalists or not.]

