



## In Search of a Land Ethic

By Karen Garland,  
Georgia Conservancy

Before Europeans arrived, small herds of woodland bison inhabited almost all of Georgia, except the southwestern and coastal parts of the state. By 1819 all bison east of the Mississippi River were gone forever.

*"Aldo Leopold's land ethics is more relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century than when conceived in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup>. Solving global environmental challenges will require ecologically literate leader-citizens who embrace this ethic."*

—Dick Bartlett, Former Chairman, National Environmental Education & Training Foundation

Georgia history offers a stark warning: poor environmental management leads to species extinction. Intense farming and reckless extraction of natural resources following European colonization destroyed virtually all of our state's original forest. Unregulated hunting and habitat destruction decimated many species of larger birds and mammals, irreversibly wiping out some forever. The introduction of many exotic species has had negative impacts on many of our state's native species.

It is almost unbelievable that the most common bird in North America, the passenger pigeon, numbering in the billions, was slaughtered to extinction so it could be sold at city markets. On September 1, 1914 the last known passenger pigeon died in the Cincinnati Zoo. Farmers protecting their crops wiped out the Carolina parakeet, with the last known wild species being sighted in Florida in 1904. Habitat destruction and senseless target shooting also helped drive these two species to extinction. These birds are now known only from drawings, written descriptions, and taxidermied displays in a few museums.

Why is this important? Georgia is home to more than 4,000 species of native or naturalized vascular plants and vertebrate animals. At least 10 percent of these species are in danger of extinction. The chief factor in the loss of biodiversity in Georgia is habitat loss and degradation. It is estimated that Georgia loses on average hundreds of acres of greenspace to development each day. Therefore, we are faced with a moral environmental responsibility.

Published in 1949 as the finale to *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold's "Land Ethic" redefined a relationship between people and nature and set the stage for the modern conservation movement. He believed that people needed to recognize their place in the environmental community and take responsibility for protecting and caring for it. Leopold stated the basic principle of his land ethic as, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

Why is a land ethic important? Paraphrasing Leopold, who first pioneered the term, it becomes a "mode of guidance" for humans to operate as members of the greater ecological community. It means that humans accept membership in that larger community of nonhuman elements - of soils, of water, of animals, of plants - and that we must, in good conscience, always weigh the consequences of our individual and collective decisions as humans upon the rest of the community. "That land is a community is the basic concept off ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics."



How do we place cultural and moral values on our nonhuman environment? A land relationship cannot be strictly economic, entailing privileges with no obligations. Practicing sustainability is one key that provides for the needs of the current world population without damaging the ability of future generations to provide for themselves through ecological integrity. A community willing to adjust its laws and regulations to reflect a land ethic will pass on the legacy they have inherited.

However, Leopold's land ethic reflected the social realities of his time and place. Georgia's demographics are changing, as are our environmental concerns. How do we encourage the land ethic within diverse human communities, with varied traditions and varied relationships to land? As with Leopold, developing a land ethic is a lifelong journey, with each individual's personal definition and commitment evolving through life experiences, knowledge gained and moral attitude.

We have an obligation and duty to maintain the intrinsic value of natural systems. After all, we certainly do not love our soil if we send large amounts of it down the river. Leopold would not object to sustainable agriculture or all the necessities of modern technology. Adopting a sense of stewardship with an ecological conscience would change humans from being the conqueror of the land-community to an ordinary member of it.

If you seek the foundations of Aldo Leopold's land ethic, look about. After all, that's what he did. "Look about" in the mountain coves and waterfalls of North Georgia, in the rock outcrops and vernal pools of the Piedmont, in the salt marshes and blackwater rivers of the coastal plain, and above all, in your own backyards or schoolyards, where you can develop a strong sense of place and community. A personal commitment to a place leads to a feeling for other places and forms of life, as it brings together knowledge, emotions, values, and actions. A strong motivation to care for the land, Leopold explained, grows out of a close personal connection to the land. "*We can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in.*"

## How to Instill a Land Ethic

Children are never too young to learn environmental respect and stewardship, which will help define their land ethic. Aldo Leopold wrote, "*There are two dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other, that heat comes from the furnace.*" Since an understanding of the natural resources is vital, one goal of education should be universal environmental literacy. A focal point could be Barry Commoner's four universal laws of ecology:

- Everything is connected to everything else.
- Everything must go somewhere.
- Nature knows best.
- There is no such thing as a free lunch.

### Definitions

- Environmental Ethics—is the part of the environmental philosophy, which considers the ethical relationship between human beings and the nature environment. It includes the influence of a large range of disciplines including, law, sociology, economics, ecology, and geography.
- Land Ethics—is a perspective on environmental ethics. It argues that the next step in the evolution of ethics is its expansion to include nonhuman members of the biotic community, collectively referred to as "the land."



## Take Education Outdoors: The 2010 Outdoor Classroom Symposium

Please save the date for Georgia's 14th annual Outdoor Classroom Symposium to be held Friday, November 5, 2010, at Zoo Atlanta! The theme of "Get Outdoors! Teaching Locally, Connecting Globally" will feature hands-on sessions on how to create outdoor teaching spaces, teach outdoors, and use local resources to make connections to the larger world.

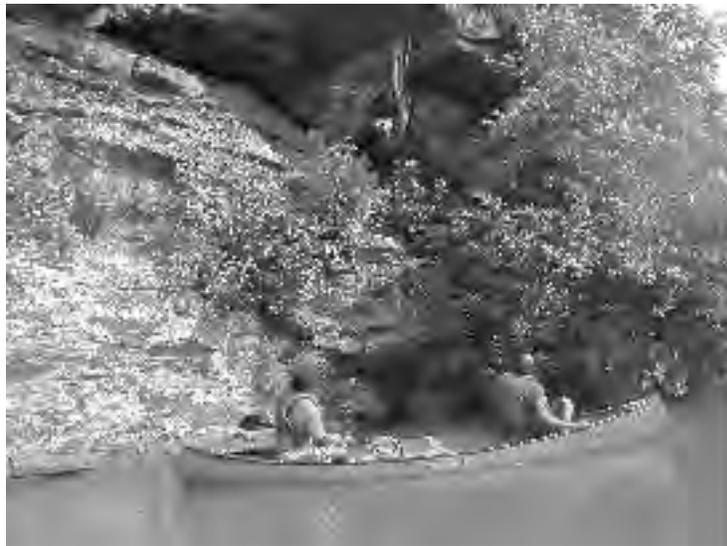
New this year, three speakers will give presentations in Zoo Atlanta's auditorium. They include Daron Joffe AKA "Farmer D" of Farmer D Organics; Jerry Hightower, Outdoor Educator extraordinaire from the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area; and Dr. Joe Mendelson, Curator of Herpetology at Zoo Atlanta. Other highlights will include "make and take" classes, informative exhibits prepared by program providers and outdoor classroom experts, presentations of the Outdoor Classroom and Monarchs Across Georgia Service Awards, and behind the scenes tours of the zoo, including an opportunity to sign up to feed the elephants. The day will be filled with endless opportunities for networking and inspiration!



Educators may also choose to extend their learning and earn a professional learning unit (1 PLU) by participating in a post-symposium workshop to be held 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM at the Zoo on Saturday, November 6. The "Our Shared Forests" workshop will introduce educators to a multi-cultural, environmental education project featuring standards-based curriculum units on ethnobotany, migratory birds and sustainable forests as well as family science night kits.

Additional details and symposium registration information can be found at [www.eealliance.org](http://www.eealliance.org).

## Member Trips Cool Off on the Chattahoochee



On Saturday, June 12, a diverse group of environmental educators and their guests canoed down the Chattahoochee River in Roswell. It was hot, but dangling their feet in the 52 F water helped them cool off!

High Meadows teacher, Chris Robie, opened the event with a simple, yet effective activity to visually describe a watershed. She had them cup their hands to represent a watershed with rivers/stream, make dots with transparency markers to represent pollution sources and sprinkle "rain" on the watershed to see where the pollution ended up.

Stopping along the river, EEA board member and Adopt-A-Stream coordinator, Tara Muenz, taught the group the importance of biological and chemical testing. You can learn more about water quality monitoring by visiting the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream website at [www.georgiaadoptastream.org](http://www.georgiaadoptastream.org).

A big thank you goes to Joey Giunta, EEA board member and fearless, informative guide, and to the other Chattahoochee Nature Center staff for taking great care of the paddlers!

SAVE THE DATE to join in on the fall fun member trip! The next EEA Member Services event, scheduled for Saturday, October 16, 2010, is a "Plant a Pollinator Pot" workshop from 1-4pm at Stone Mountain Memorial Park. Designed for EEA members and their families, the day will include games, crafts, door prizes, snacks and useful materials to take home (one set per family). The cost is \$18 per family -- an incredibly reduced rate! Visit [www.eealliance.org](http://www.eealliance.org) for details and a registration form. Space is limited to 20 EEA members and their families ~ first come, first served with a registration deadline of October 8. Hope to see you there!

# The Petey Giroux Dragonfly Grant Gears up for 2011



The Environmental Education Alliance (EEA) of Georgia is pleased to offer a mini-grant award for up to \$1,000 for Environmental Education /Performing and Visual Arts Projects in memory of environmental educator, Petey Giroux (1945-2008). Petey was a master at using the power of the performing and visual arts to support her teaching; bringing much joy and enthusiasm to her work. We honor Petey's life of service and her legacy of environmental education through the arts by presenting this grant to a 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.

Funded projects must be completed by July 30, 2011. Recipients will be asked to give a brief presentation about their project at the annual EEA Conference on March 11, 2011. Scholarship funding for registration to this conference is included in this grant for one presenter. Mini-grant proposals will only be accepted from current members of EEA, with a deadline to apply January 18, 2011. For more information on Petey Giroux or to become a member and apply for this grant visit [www.eealliance.org](http://www.eealliance.org).

# Monarchs In Mexico

Two \$1000.00 Scholarships Available for the 2011 Monarchs in Mexico trips!

*Would you like to join Monarchs Across Georgia for the experience of a lifetime amongst the millions of Monarch butterflies in Mexico?*

Trips are scheduled February 5-12 or February 12-19, 2011.

The fee for the trip is \$1500.00 (double occupancy) and does not include airfare. For the complete itinerary and details, visit [www.monarchsacrossga.org](http://www.monarchsacrossga.org).

*Would you be willing to devote some of your expertise, time and/or networking connections to benefit Monarchs Across Georgia?*

If so, you could be awarded a \$1000.00 scholarship!

*Who can apply?*

Anyone currently employed in Georgia as a classroom teacher or an informal educator can apply for a scholarship. Education must be over 75% of your job responsibility. Written approval from your school district or employer must also accompany the application.

*How do I apply?*

Scholarship and trip applications are accessible at [www.monarchsacrossga.org](http://www.monarchsacrossga.org). Simply complete the scholarship application, the 2011 Monarchs in Mexico trip application, and write a Plan of Action that includes a timeline explaining how you will promote, contribute, write grants or find partners for *Monarchs Across Georgia*. A rubric is also available on-line to guide you through the process. Scholarship applications are being accepted until October 15, 2010 and all applicants will be notified by October 30, 2010.



## Save the dates....

- Save the date for Georgia's first Summit on Children and the Outdoors hosted by the Georgia No Child Left Inside Coalition taking place Saturday, October 23, 2010 from 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM at the Georgia Wildlife Federation's headquarters in Covington. Panelists, roundtables, lunch and a resource fair~ plus, day-long outdoor activities for children! Cost: \$10/adults; Children are free. More details and registration information available mid-August at [www.georgiancli.org](http://www.georgiancli.org).
- Attend the North American Association of Environmental Education's (NAAEE) annual conference, September 29 - October 2, 2010 in Buffalo, New York. For more information visit [www.naaee.org](http://www.naaee.org).
- Save the date for the Georgia Association of Marine Education (GAME) conference October 23 - 25, 2010 at St. Simons Island. For more information visit [www.gamarine-ed.org](http://www.gamarine-ed.org).
- Registration is now open for the 2011 Georgia Envirothon. The Georgia Envirothon provides high school students in Georgia with hands on, science based training in natural resource and ecology topics in a challenging and competitive atmosphere.
- The first ATEEG Core Course 1 held on June 18-20 was a great success. Eleven students from around the state representing many different aspects of the environmental education field attended. For more information on the Advanced Training in Environmental Education course visit [www.eealliance.org](http://www.eealliance.org).
- Join us the Environmental Educational Alliance, Monarchs Across Georgia, Georgia Outdoor Classroom and Georgia No Child Left Inside Coalition on Facebook for updates and information.



## EEA Welcomes New Executive Director

We are pleased to announce that Paul McClendon has been hired as the first executive director for EEA. When they set out to fill the executive director position, the board of directors knew they needed to find someone with the right mix of business and environmental education-related experience.

Enter Paul McClendon. The board was immediately impressed by the combination of Paul's nonprofit experience, environmental spirit and fundraising background. For the last several years, he has been raising two sons, co-founded the Oakhurst Cooperative Preschool, served on the board of directors for the Oakhurst Community Garden Project and currently co-chairs the annual fund committee at the Waldorf School. He has also worked at the State Botanical Gardens of Georgia and the Chattahoochee Nature Center where his interest in the nonprofit sector and nonprofit leadership was sparked, leading him to complete his MPA in Nonprofit Management from Georgia State University.

We are thrilled to welcome Paul and excited to begin this new chapter. Now more than ever, people are interested in issues of sustainability, environmental education, and outdoor learning. We look forward to Paul's leadership as we all work together to get Georgian's engaged throughout the state.

# 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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.*

# The Mexico Book Project Needs Your Help

For the last seven years, Monarchs Across Georgia (MAG) has traveled to Michoacan in an effort to generate awareness and understanding between two cultures through the study of Monarch butterflies. We have always felt it was important to include a look at the Mexican educational system, which differs greatly from the American system.

Through the years MAG has developed a special relationship with Scholastic Mexico to bring elementary-level books written in Spanish to students who are taking care of monarch butterflies in Mexico. We would like to ask for your support to reach our goal of \$2,500 this year by making a tax-deductible donation to EEA designating it to the "Mexico Book Project."

As a reference, books generally cost about \$5.00 in American currency. In appreciation for your donation, a bookplate with your name (or one designated by you) will be attached to the inside cover. We will also recognize donors by publishing their names on our website at [www.monarchsacrossga.org](http://www.monarchsacrossga.org). Receipts will be provided upon request. The deadline for these tax-deductible donations is January 10, 2011.



Mail checks made out to "EEA" to:

Mexico Book Project  
Trecia Neal  
2433 Kingscliff Drive  
Atlanta, GA 30345

# New Curricula Engages Young People

As the Obama administration turns its attention to expanding access to quality preschool education, a new Shanker Institute report shows that the value of preschool programs in stimulating children's cognitive development can be significantly improved if programs are aligned with new research about how children learn in the academic areas of oral language, literacy, math, and science.

The good news...Project Learning Tree and Project WILD have separately developed early childhood guides that are designed to stimulate young children in exciting ways while connecting them to nature and many of its wonders.

Project Learning Tree's Environmental Experience for Early Childhood, is a complete sensory experience, and early encounters with the natural world have been positively linked with the development of children's imaginations and their senses of wonder and curiosity. Anyone who has taken a PLT educator workshop can purchase it for \$15.00. Please contact [Carla@gfagrow.org](mailto:Carla@gfagrow.org) for further information.

Project Wild's Growing up WILD: Exploring Nature with Young Children, provides an early foundation for developing positive impressions about the natural world and lifelong social and academic skills through engaging wildlife-based educational activities. The curriculum is available for purchase at [www.projectwild.org](http://www.projectwild.org) or contact [Mary.Terry@dnr.state.ga.us](mailto:Mary.Terry@dnr.state.ga.us) for more details.

# Save the Date for the 2011 Annual EEA Conference: Sustaining a Changing World: Environment, Economy, Community



Sustainability is the capacity to endure. For our changing world to endure, our natural environment, economy, and communities must be in balance. The 2011 conference theme will explore the environmental education community's need to provide an education that prepares our students of all ages to work and live in a rapidly changing world. Also, to shape our world to be one in which citizens, business and government practice environmental stewardship and leave smaller ecological footprints.

Submit a presentation proposal for the 2011 conference. Information and presenter application can be found at [www.eealliance.org](http://www.eealliance.org). Call for proposals deadline is September 14, 2010.

Need financial assistance to attend? The 2011 scholarship application is available at [www.eealliance.org](http://www.eealliance.org). Deadline to apply is January 7, 2011.

## EEA to Honor Environmental Educators and Teachers at Two Events: Call for 2010 Nominations

On Friday, November 5, the Georgia Outdoor Classroom Council and Monarchs Across Georgia, both initiatives of EEA, will recognize and honor exceptional contributions to outdoor education, conservation and/or habitat restoration in the state of Georgia at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Outdoor Classroom Symposium at Zoo Atlanta. You can participate in this process by nominating and submitting the names of deserving recipients for recognition.



### Outdoor Classroom Council Service Award

- ◆ Schools, other educational institutions, parents, principals and community volunteers who have contributed in significant and meaningful ways to the design, development, maintenance or use of outdoor classrooms on school or other educational campus locations are eligible to be nominated.
- ◆ Nomination forms can be found at [www.eealliance.org](http://www.eealliance.org). Completed forms are due by October 8 to [awards@eealliance.org](mailto:awards@eealliance.org).
- ◆ The winning recipient will receive a registration scholarship to attend the 2010 Outdoor Classroom Symposium on Friday, November 5, 2010 at Zoo Atlanta. They will also win \$150.00 to be used to enhance their outdoor classroom at their school or educational institution.

### Monarchs Across Georgia Service Award

- ◆ Nominations are accepted for an individual or organization whose efforts in the area of monarch education, conservation and/or habitat restoration have made a significant impact in the state of Georgia in October, 2009 - September, 2010.
- ◆ Nomination form can be found at [www.monarchsacrossga.org](http://www.monarchsacrossga.org). Completed forms are due by October 1 to [n.thompson@stonemountainpark.org](mailto:n.thompson@stonemountainpark.org).
- ◆ The winning recipient will receive a registration scholarship to attend the 2010 Outdoor Classroom Symposium on Friday, November 5, 2010 at Zoo Atlanta.

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 luncheon at the Kennesaw State University Continuing Education Center. You can participate in this process by nominating deserving recipients for recognition in four EEA award categories.

- ◆ Dr. Eugene Odum Lifetime Achievement Award
- ◆ Outstanding Service to Environmental Education by an Individual
- ◆ Outstanding Service to Environmental Education by an Organization
- ◆ PK-16 Formal Educator of the Year Award

Nominations forms and further details can be found at [www.eealliance.org](http://www.eealliance.org). Completed forms are due by January 19, 2011 to [awards@eealliance.org](mailto:awards@eealliance.org).



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.



#### Newsletter Committee

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For comments,  
article suggestions or  
submission guidelines,  
please email  
[newsletter@eealliance.org](mailto:newsletter@eealliance.org).

#### Deadlines:

December 1, 2010  
March 25, 2011  
August 1, 2011  
December 1, 2011

*Photo: Susan Myers*