



# Why Georgia Needs an Environmental Literacy Plan

By Karen Garland, Georgia Conservancy



Environmental education fosters learning that can transform how we think, make decisions, and lead our lives. Therefore, Georgia, along with many of its

economic, aesthetic, and ethical considerations.

- The confidence and motivation to exercise rights and responsibilities as a member of a community.

*Why Does Georgia Need an Environmental Literacy Plan?*

There are several bills that have been introduced to the United States Senate and Congress that are likely to include new language and funding that supports environmental education. One of these bills, No Child Left Inside (NCLI), currently includes \$500 million to equip teachers with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to integrate the environment into their curricula. The legislation represents a critical opportunity to give American students the knowledge that they will need to make informed personal decisions and act as responsible citizens as they face environmental challenges that previous generations never imagined. However, only states with qualifying Environmental Literacy Plans (ELP) will be eligible for a percentage of this funding.



The need for comprehensive environmental education has never been greater. Consumption of natural resources, air and water pollution, and the impacts of climate change are among the many complex challenges that threaten human health, economic development, and national security.

The future of Georgia's well-being depends on its citizens being environmentally literate and able to make informed choices about balancing the economy that provides our livelihoods and the natural resources on which we depend. Solving this critical challenge requires us to understand different points of view, analyze problems, balance competing needs, and take informed action.

sister states and conservation organizations, are working with their state department of education to develop K-12 Environmental Literacy Plans (ELP) to prepare today's youth to become tomorrow's stewards of the environment.

*What is environmental literacy?*

- A fundamental understanding of the systems of the natural world and the interactions between the living and non-living environments.
- The ability to make responsible decisions based on scientific,

The United States House of Representatives approved the NCLI Act in September 2008, on a bipartisan vote of 293 to 109. Because

# 2010 Environmental Education Alliance Award Winners

## Environmental Education Alliance's Outstanding Service to EE, Individual

*Karen Garland, Georgia Conservancy*

Karen's contributions to environmental education are ones filled with service, commitment, and a passion to teach others. Her commitment extends well past her job into several volunteer arenas from co-chairing the Outdoor Classroom Council, serving on the North American Association of Environmental Educators Advocacy Committee and EEA advisory board, writing and editing the EEA newsletter, serving on the Monarchs Across Georgia steering committee, and volunteering as a Georgia master gardener. She has also been instrumental in writing and publishing two, K - 12 curricula for educators that spotlight Georgia's unique and diverse flora, fauna, and aquatic habitats. Combine the curricula with Karen's enthusiasm for what she is teaching and you can't help but get excited about Georgia's environment, which leads to a desire to want to protect it.

## Outstanding Service to Environmental Education by an Organization

*Athens-Clarke County Recycling Division*

The ACC Recycling Division's public education efforts include radio, print, speaking engagements, tours of the recycling facility and many formal outreach programs.

One of the cornerstones of their formal environmental education program is the ACC



Green School Program, a partnership that began in 2005 with two schools and grown to 12 schools, reaching 15,000 students since inception. The Recycling Division also conducts hundreds of outreach programs and recycling facility tours each year reaching thousands of residents. Outreach programs include the Green Life Expo, mascot and truck appearances, compost workshops, business and industry recycling roundtables, reuse (craft/gift) programs, greening our government workshop, and hundreds of general recycling presentations to local groups.

## Outstanding Pre-K-16 Formal Educator

*Catherine Padgett, Ford Elementary School*

Fifteen years ago, Catherine Padgett's vision turned an unused corner of the school into an extensive outdoor learning center. Her dream that began in a 4-foot by 4-foot area has expanded to cover over 10-acres that have become an integral part of student learning. Her passion has inspired her school to develop a service-based community garden. She brought together community and parental support for the original project and continues to inspire others with her vision. Her love of nature and confidence in its power to teach has never wavered. Catherine leads by empowering peers, community, and students to make a difference in their environment.

# The EEA Dragonfly Grant Recipients Soar

*By Laura Aikens, City of Roswell*

In some cultures the dragonfly symbolizes renewal and the power of life. Therefore, it is fitting that the grant program in honor of Petey Giroux would be named the Dragonfly Grant and be awarded to projects that connect students to the natural world through the arts. At this year's EEA Conference, the first recipients of the Dragonfly Grant were honored at the annual awards luncheon.

Teachers Kristi Harvey and Greg Bailey from Eastbrook Middle School attended the conference to receive this award. Their project, entitled "Build It and They Will Swim," focuses on the Conasauga River in Northwest Georgia and the abiotic factors of the watershed.

Students will use a dichotomous key to identify and dissect fish to understand the internal and external anatomy and create a food web of the fresh water aquatic biome. Students will use the Japanese art form of Gyotaku (fish printing) to create the chains and webs. The culminating event will be the creation of a large diorama of the river

using clay fired and glazed representations of biotic factors in the river which will be displayed permanently in the new building they will be moving into next year.

Mr. Bailey, who spoke at the conference, gave an update on the status of the school's project and the impact this project has on his students. Mr. Bailey also thanked EEA and spoke of a project he had worked on many years ago with Petey and the hope that this project would make her proud.

The Dragonfly Grant is made possible by donations throughout the year to fund a project chosen each winter. To make a donation, visit [www.ealliance.org](http://www.ealliance.org).



# Georgia Educators Experience Monarch Migration Magic in Mexico

By Kim Bailey, [eeingeorgia.org](http://eeingeorgia.org)

In February 2010, 22 educators from Georgia and six other participants journeyed to the mountains of central Mexico to witness one of the world's most impressive natural phenomena – the overwintering sanctuaries of the monarch butterfly. Millions and millions of these butterflies from the central and eastern Canadian provinces and the eastern and midwestern United States fly in masses south to Mexico each fall. They travel to the same mountains, often to the same trees, their ancestors left the previous spring. Though monarchs are not considered an endangered species, their migration is recognized as an “endangered biological phenomenon.”

For the last seven years, EEA's *Monarchs Across Georgia* steering committee has coordinated these “Monarchs in Mexico” trips. Whether the 2010 participants had been teaching about monarch butterflies for years or were just beginning, they all knew the trip was going to be an experience of a lifetime. Prior to the trip, educators found creative ways to engage their students and make the trip educational and meaningful for them as well.

*“When the sun came out and the Monarchs were in flight against the blue sky, I just turned off my camera and observed the magic!”*

During the trip, participants made observations at the Sierra Chincua and Cerro Pelon butterfly colonies. These reports were shared with the teacher's own students as well as students across the nation through the Journey North online citizen science project, which tracks wildlife migration and seasonal change.

Besides witnessing the magic of millions of butterflies clustered in the forest, highlights from the trip included learning about local conservation efforts, touring the tree nursery at La Cruz Habitat Protection Project, exploring the region's cultural heritage, visiting with students at a local school, and delivering books to them donated through Monarchs Across Georgia's Mexico Book Project.

*“Visiting the school was one of those moments I will never forget. It was unbelievably special.”*

Upon returning from Mexico, the educators have been busy using their experiences to enhance students' understanding of the natural world, our built environment, and the many interrelationships that exist between them. As spring arrives, many teachers are also planning to plant milkweed (the host plant of the monarch butterfly) on their school grounds to help create needed habitats and even more opportunities for environmental education.

Please visit [www.monarchsacrossga.org](http://www.monarchsacrossga.org) for additional details about the “2011 Monarchs in Mexico” trip, as well as what you can do to help improve butterfly and pollinator habitats at your home, organization, or school.

*“A marvelous trip with a variety of activities, historical background, scientific adventures, authentic cuisine, and cultural immersion.”*



# 2010 Annual Conference a Success!

By Naomi Thompson, Stone Mountain Memorial Association



This year's conference was filled with building a more environmentally literate citizenry. From information on coyotes or insects to learning of successful programs on inquiry based ecology projects, everyone had numerous opportunities for professional growth and development.



For such a serious conference theme, there was plenty of fun. Everyone certainly enjoyed the food and cookie breaks, the time to talk amongst themselves in hopes of

winning a door prize, and the chance to cheer on peers who won awards. We laughed at the appearance of the "buzzard" and greeted rarely seen friends with loud "hurrahs."



Attendees were enthusiastic about the five vendors spread throughout our faithful exhibitors with relevant books, bags or cleaning products. Many exclaimed over the exciting collection of items for the silent auction. Certainly the off-site dinner spots offered additional entertainment and better drinks.



Too many cookies and ice cream bars were eaten at the Friday social, while loud shouts of '2', '2', '2', '2' from the games section drowned out the more social talk of those coloring EEA bandannas.

with the stories and information



Everyone was quite appreciative and inspired that opening keynote, Darryl Haddock, shared of his work in Atlanta. Our afternoon keynote group of Ruth Mead, Susan Boyd, and Sydney Peden made everyone feel it was possible for them to start or maintain partnerships in this field. It is important to give a voice to

our peers, to their different experiences and backgrounds, and their ideas.

We had beautiful weather Saturday for field trips or eating lunch outside. The pollinator garden service project was completed by enthusiastic volunteers. Dr. Mildred McClain made an important call to action for us to help communities gain the ability to combat contamination in their neighborhoods and understand its effect on youth behavior.



There were numerous opportunities to pick up skills, knowledge, enthusiasm, and ideas to keep attendees excited about the job they do as environmental educators. A conference can be a tiring event as you try to absorb all the information and network with like-minded individuals. To paraphrase our ending keynote speaker, Dr. Mildred McClain, "We are all tired, but go buy some steel-toed boots and get ready!"



The 2010 conference committee thanks everyone involved in the planning, running, attending and sponsoring of the conference. We do all this for you; and we couldn't do all this without you.





# EEA Service Project Blooms with Hope

By Susan Meyers, Stone Mountain Memorial Association



University (KSU) and EEA's 2010 Conference service project have in common? Butterflies!

The *Butterfly Project* was initiated by the Holocaust Museum Houston in 2001 to honor the 1.5 million Jewish children who perished in the Holocaust. Its goal was to collect 1.5 million hand-crafted butterflies, one for each child victim. Although the goal was achieved in 2008, just three years after the project was moved to KSU, students and families continue to create butterfly art to memorialize these victims.

On Saturday, March 20, clear skies and warm sunshine beckoned volunteers outside to plant a garden for butterflies and other pollinators at the KSU Center, the location of the 2010 EEA Conference. Armed with rakes

and shovels, the soil was amended; plants were installed, watered and mulched. Adding pieces of Stone Mountain granite for basking and a dish of wet sand for "puddling," the garden was complete.

and shovels, the soil was amended; plants were installed, watered and mulched. Adding pieces of Stone Mountain granite for basking and a dish of wet sand for "puddling," the garden was complete.



Monarchs Across Georgia designed the garden and awarded KSU certification as a Pollinator Habitat. The KSU Foundation provided the funding for the

project. We thank the volunteers who created this beautiful garden, perfect for pollinators and for those who want to learn more about them.



For more information about Pollinator Habitat Certification and the KSU plant list, visit the Creating Habitats section at [www.monarchsacrossga.org](http://www.monarchsacrossga.org).

the bill was not introduced in the Senate before the end of the session, the legislation (S. 866 and H.R. 2054) was re-introduced in the new Congress on April 22, 2009 to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (formerly known as No Child Left Behind) regarding environmental education, and for other purposes.



Regardless of the status of the federal legislation, this is a timely concern. In our media-rich world, children are exposed daily to environmental news stories that range from global climate change to natural disasters to local fish kills. We need to ensure that our children have the critical thinking skills and content knowledge to process and assess this information effectively.

An Environmental Literacy Plan for Georgia will be the stepping-stone for our state's future. This future depends on our collective ability to apply an integrated approach to teaching and helping students understand the interrelated elements of sustainable environmental systems – from ecological, economical, and community perspectives. It is critical that every Georgian understands how our community, economy, and the environment are connected and mutually dependent.

It is imperative that we act now to prepare today's students and tomorrow's policy makers with the proper knowledge and skills to make critical decisions regarding our global and local resources.



## Member Services Events - Yet Another Perk of EEA Membership!

By Linda May, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

On January 23, 19 EEA members met at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center in Mansfield for a "Bird Nesting Basics" class. This free event was the first of its kind offered exclusively to EEA members.

Thanks to the hard work of EEA's newly-formed Member Services committee, participants learned about bird natural history, backyard/schoolyard habitat tips, and laws related to wild birds. Bluebird box construction was a big highlight, thanks to volunteers from the Gwinnett Woodworkers Association who created the kits from donated cedar and guided the class through easy-to-follow steps.

Grant funds from TERN (The Environmental Resource Network) allowed participants to add beautiful copper portal protectors to their nest boxes (to keep away pesky squirrels), as well as take home info-packed habitat resource guides. To top off the event and to promote further networking, attendees enjoyed a eco-friendly lunch.

Join in the networking fun! The next EEA membership trip, canoeing down the Chattahoochee River, is scheduled June 12 from 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm. This trip will start at the Chattahoochee Nature Center (CNC) in Roswell and will be guided by CNC naturalists. Canoes, safety gear, and a short paddling lesson are included. The cost is \$10 for EEA members. Maximum of 20 people.

Payment by check (payable to "EEA") must be mailed no later than June 1 to:

Linda May, GA DNR-  
WRD  
2065 US Hwy. 278, SE  
Social Circle, GA  
30025

You can also pay by credit card (Visa or MC) by calling Linda at 770-918-6792.

# EE Certification Now a Reality in Georgia

By Joey Guinta, Clean Air Campaign

The Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia (EEA) will begin offering advanced training for environmental educators this summer. EEA is committed to advancing the field of environmental education and providing environmental educators with quality professional development programs. At this year's annual conference the Advanced Training for Environmental Educators in Georgia certification program was announced. Implementing this program moves environmental education to a higher professional level in our state.

The ATEEG program creates a baseline of knowledge and skills for educators in the EE field across the state. Completing the ATEEG program encourages individual professional growth, provides for multiple networking opportunities, and distinguishes them from other professionals in the field.

The ATEEG program consists of three parts and participants have three years to complete the program.

- Part one is three separate 3-day classes covering the core courses: Foundations of EE, Fostering Learning, and Assessment & Evaluation. Two PLU credits are available for each core course. These 2010 courses will be held at the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center in Mansfield, Georgia.
  - June 18-20, 2010 - Foundations of Environmental Education
  - August 13-15, 2010 - Fostering Learning
  - September 17-19, 2010 - Assessment and Evaluation
- Part two is 30 hours of specialization workshops. Specialization workshops are existing professional

development opportunities offered throughout the year across the state to advance content knowledge and skills, and can be started after your first core course.

- Part three is an independent study, a culminating project that applies the coursework to a "work" setting. Projects should be related to workplace and reflect the "Six Themes of Environmental Education."

The registration cost for the complete ATEEG certification program (3 core courses and all meals and breaks) is \$630 (\$210 per course) for current EEA members and \$680 (\$260 per course) for non-members. The total lodging cost (double occupancy at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center) is approximately \$225 (\$75 per course). Triple and quad occupancy options available.

The certification program comes after years of planning by EEA board members. In partnership with the University of Georgia, Georgia's certification is endorsed by the North American Alliance of Environmental Education (NAAEE). Kris Irwin, a member of the EEA Board of Directors and co-chair of the ATEEG committee said, "The committee has worked hard to get to this point. By following a systematic instructional design process, we have created a quality environmental education certification curriculum and program management strategy. Because the entire ATEEG committee is comprised of volunteers, and EEA is a volunteer organization, we are very proud of our accomplishments."

If you participated in the previous program for environmental education certification offered in Georgia, and wish to receive credit for courses taken, contact EEA later this summer.

## In the News...

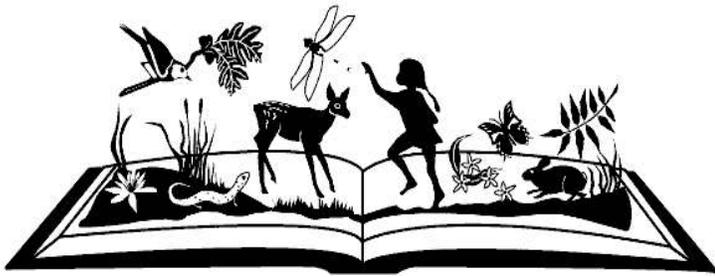
- The No Child Left Inside Act is now listed as one of four key pieces of legislation in the reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) on the Education and Labor Committee website.

- A historic moment, President Obama's budget includes environmental literacy in the U.S. Department of Education budget for the very first time.
- The U.S. Department of Education has issued its "Blueprint for Reform" for ESEA

and it includes environmental education on pages 25 and 28.

- Your congressmen and women need to hear your voice of support for this groundbreaking legislation. The bill has co-sponsors in the House and Senate but needs

more bipartisan support across the board. Currently Congressman John Lewis is the only co-sponsor from Georgia. For talking points and contact information for your senator or congressman please visit <http://www.cbf.org/Page.aspx?pid=687>.



**Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia**

P.O. Box 286  
Mansfield, GA 30055

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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**

Karen Garland, Georgia Conservancy  
Joey Guinta, Clean Air Campaign

For comments, article suggestions  
or submissions please email  
[newsletter@ealliance.org](mailto:newsletter@ealliance.org).

### **Deadlines:**

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

*Photo of green anole by Linda May*

