EEA Annual Conference—Register Today!

With the EEA Annual Conference just about a month away, we encourage you to register today. We will return to Rock Eagle to learn and gather with your EE colleagues. We are excited to have Janisse Ray as our keynote speaker this year at the EEA Conference. Janisse is writer, naturalist and activist Janisse Ray is author of five books of literary nonfiction and a collection of nature poetry. She holds an MFA from the University of Montana, as has been awarded two honorary doctorates -- LaGrange College, Georgia, 2014 and Unity College, Maine, 2007. She is a Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellow and has been a visiting professor and scholar at a number of universities, most recently the University of Montana as the William Kittredge Distinguished Visiting Writer.

Make sure you are ready to shop this year’s CONFERENCE SILENT AUCTION where you will find delicious “sips”, one-of-a-kind items and other great steals. The SILENT AUCTION will close after the morning session on Saturday.

The funds raised from these ventures go to provide scholarships and grants to the environmental educators throughout the state. Come prepared- we will take cash, check or credit card. See you there!

There are several registration options:

$100 Full time registration for current members Includes all sessions Friday and Saturday, Friday lunch, Friday awards dinner, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

$85 Full time registration for current student members Includes all sessions Friday and Saturday, Friday lunch, Friday awards dinner, and Saturday breakfast and lunch

$60 Friday only registration for current members Includes all sessions Friday, Friday lunch, and Friday awards dinner

$50 Saturday only registration for current members Includes all sessions Saturday, Saturday breakfast and lunch

$37 Friday night lodging Based on double occupancy. Includes linens. Room assignments will be made on a first-come, first-served basis on March 20. New and traditional cabins available. Lodging must be reserved with registration.

Please visit www.eealliance.org/annual-conference to register today!

Janisse Ray, writer, naturalist, activist

Great ways to support EEA during the 2015 Conference

This year we will have several vendors bringing their skilled arts and products to supplement the teacher resources at the EEA STORE. Jewelry, cards, EEA logoed items, plants, books, soaps, candles just to name a few… The EEA STORE will be open all day on Friday.
EEA has a history of over 20 years serving the EE community in Georgia. Conferences remain an intimate setting to meet and work with professionals in the field, while gaining skills and contacts to deepen your programs. Below we hear from two 2014 Annual Conference attendees. Laura Stachler, then a Naturalist at the Chattahoochee Nature Center and now Outreach Coordinator at Georgia Forest Watch, attended her first EEA Conference last year. Tom Howick, Education Director at the Chattahoochee Nature Center, has been involved with EEA for several years. Each felt strongly about how important the collaboration of educators throughout the state rejuvenated their enthusiasm for EE.

The keynote speaker was by far the best part of the conference. She was incredibly inspirational and a fantastic motivator. I loved to see representatives from each of the organizations get up and do a quick intro of what their organization does, has to offer the EE community and why they are a part of EEA, what they’ve gotten out of the partnership or wish to, etc. I gathered lots of information myself while perusing the tables. I thought it was well worth my time and a great networking opportunity. Again, putting faces with names was great and reinforced some existing relationships I had already begun to build.

-Laura Stachler

It was nice to come back and participate in this EEA Conference this year at Rock Eagle after taking some time away from this annual meeting. My favorite thing to do is to connect with new EE folks and reconnect with old friends who have been doing this work for years. I really enjoyed Diane Davies passionate and through keynote address about the history of EE in the State of Georgia and particularly the evolution of Rock Eagle 4-H Center. I picked up some create ideas to share with the naturalists I work with and to improve our programs at The Chattahoochee Nature Center from this year’s diverse range of presentations given by other professionals in EE. I look forward to future meetings with EEA.

-Tom Howick

"My favorite thing to do is to connect with new EE folks and reconnect with old friends who have been doing this work for years. " -Tom
TAKE A CHANCE ON ME—ATEEG

By Megan Sheehan
Keep North Fulton Beautiful

Let’s talk about ATEEG, which is the Advanced Training in Environmental Education of Georgia program. ATEEG is hard. You might have already come to this conclusion when you saw the words “advanced training”. Usually anything that has those words in the title clues me in that I should either steer clear, or think very, very hard before becoming involved. But I want to be upfront about this program and intentional in saying that it is not for the mildly environmental person. It is not for the feel-good nature person. This program is for the person out there who feels deeply about current environmental issues. It is for the person who believes whole-heartedly that educating our youth to become better stewards of this planet might just save it. It is for the person who would say their passion lies somewhere on the nature side of things. If that sounds like you, then just know that ATEEG is hard, but it is so worth it.

When I first learned about ATEEG, I was an education intern working at the Georgia Aquarium. I had been going back and forth between my two passions, educating children, and science and research. I was torn between if I should give up my love for science to pursue my love for teaching, or vice versa. Fortunately, my mentor knew about ATEEG and encouraged me to sign up and go through the program so that I could make my future career decision fully informed about what environmental education was.

Pulling into the very remote Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center last summer to attend the first course, I found myself in a remote wilderness of Georgia with little to no cell service, and suddenly surrounded by 15 people I’ve never met before. Now the introvert in me was panicking, but I slowly opened up to these strangers over the course of three days as we struggled over tough environmental issues and read through countless articles about the history of environmental education. I discovered that these people were just like me. For the first time in my life, I was surrounded by people whose hearts were broken over the same issues as mine was. We all were struggling to make sense of current environmental issues and discussing methods for fixing them. We laughed, debated, discovered, hiked, played, read, and researched together. We grew close within just a few short days. This surprised me.

I showed up expecting to learn something about the environmental education field and how to become a professional environmental educator. I left with friendships, new professional connections, and more information than I could fit in my brain. ATEEG helped me bridge the gap I was experiencing between my love for educating children and research. Lucky for me, the very last course, Core Course 3, teaches you how to evaluate your educational programs; doing research to make environmental education more effective and prove it’s worth. I don’t want to be dramatic here, but I can honestly say that this course has changed my life. It helped me attain my first job, gave me a better glimpse into the complexity of environmental issues, and further proved my understanding of the importance of environmental education.

UPCOMING ATEEG COURSES AND DATES

Core Course 1 - “Foundations of Environmental Education”, the first of three courses an educator can take to receive a Certificate in Environmental Education, focuses on the concepts of environmental literacy, the history of environmental education, and environmental education research.

Core Course 2 - “Fostering Learning” focuses on the concepts of instructional methods, environmental education materials and resources, best practices, and curriculum planning.

Core Course 3 – “Evaluation and Assessment” increases participant’s skills and knowledge associated with the program evaluation process that includes identifying outcomes, data collection methods, and data analysis and interpretation.

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GARDENS FOR POLLINATORS ARE FUNDED: BUTTERFLIES AND BEES WILL BENEFIT

Six $1,000.00 Grants Awarded to Organizations for the Creation or Enhancement of Pollinator Habitat

Monarchs Across Georgia is proud to announce the recipients of the 2014-15 Pollinator Habitat Grants.

Academe of the Oaks High School, Decatur
Cherokee Charter Academy, Canton
Eatonton Main Street, Eatonton
Fernbank Science Center, Atlanta
Global Growers Network, Avondale Estates
Thunderbolt Tree Commission, Thunderbolt

Each of these organizations will receive $1,000.00 to either create or enhance an existing garden for butterflies, bees, hummingbirds and other pollinators. By providing all of the habitat components (host and nectar plants in three seasons, water source, basking areas and shelter) and practicing pollinator-friendly conservation techniques, each habitat, when complete, will qualify for and be awarded the Monarchs Across Georgia Pollinator Habitat Certification. To learn more about how you can create a haven for pollinators, visit our website http://www.eealliance.org/pollinator-habitat-certification-program.

In its third year of this grant program, Monarchs Across Georgia has now funded sixteen projects and has over one hundred certified habitats. Grant monies are derived from the profits made on Monarchs Across Georgia’s plant sales and from the financial support of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service through their Partners for Fish and Wildlife program.

Monarchs Across Georgia is a committee of the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia. Our mission is to inspire the present and future caretakers of the natural environment through education about monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

If you would like more information about Pollinator Grants, contact Grant Administrator, Susan Meyers at 404-388-8228 or maggrant@eealliance.org.
POLLINATOR HABITAT GRANT EXAMPLES

Follow the colorful signage at Smoke Rise Elementary Charter, Stone Mountain

Make others aware of what you are trying to accomplish.
Vaughan Elementary, Powder Springs

Locate your project where people will notice it.
East Paulding High School, Dallas

Start small and build on what you have.
Sol C. Johnson High School, Savannah
Myers Elementary, Gainesville

MONARCHS ACROSS GEORGIA PROUD TO ANNOUNCE A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ROSALYNN CARTER BUTTERFLY TRAIL

The Rosalynn Carter Butterfly Trail was established in April 2013 as a result of Mrs. Carter’s desire to bring awareness about the conservation of butterflies and their habitats and because of her love of nature. There are eleven public butterfly gardens located in Plains that constitute the Trail but you can join! The Trail continues to grow and includes public, private and school gardens scattered across the United States, Canada and Japan. The Rosalynn Butterfly Trail is one of the off-site student programs of the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Education Program, a partnership between the Georgia Department of Education, Sumter County Schools and the National Park Service.

If you are already a Monarchs Across Georgia (MAG) certified Pollinator Habitat, we encourage you to add your name to the growing list of Trail members. Even if your garden is not certified by MAG but you are providing nectar plants (flowers) as an adult butterfly food source and host plants, such as milkweed or parsley, on which butterflies lay their eggs, you can complete the online application at http://www.jimmycarter.info/Carterbutterflytrail.htm.

There is no fee to join the Trail but after receiving your e-mail confirmation, you can order an 8”X11” metal sign with the Trail’s logo and verbiage by contacting Annette Wise in the Georgia Department of Education, Plains Field Office at plainsed@jimmycarter.info. The cost of the sign is $25.00 which includes postage.

To learn more about these programs, visit the links below.

MAG Pollinator Habitat Certification http://www.eealliance.org/pollinator-habitat-certification-program
MAG Resources http://www.eealliance.org/resources
Apply yourself or nominate someone you know to represent and serve on the EEA Board of Directors. Be part of a dynamic team that shares your passion for Environmental Education.

Each winter, the Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia accepts nominations to the Board of Directors. This open process helps the Nomination Committee accomplish its mission to promote cultural, geographical, and organizational diversity in EEA’s leadership.

The application period for Board terms beginning July 1, 2015 is now open. You must be a current member of EEA to apply. To be considered, please submit your application no later than April 15, 2015. Visit our website for more information and nomination forms.