



The Dragonfly

EEA'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER **SPRING 2022**

INCREASED EXPOSURE TO NATURE REDUCES ELEMENTARY STUDENTS' ANXIETY

A nature-based guidance program was effective at reducing anxiety among third grade students

Anxiety tends to have short- and long-term detrimental effects on children's physical and mental development. Previous studies have shown that time in nature can be an effective treatment for anxiety. Such studies, however, have generally involved adults. This study investigated the effect of nature-based guidance lessons on anxiety and connection to nature among elementary students. It was based, in part, on the understanding that increasing nature connection for children while at school could address equity issues relating to access to nature.

Four third-grade classes participated in the study. The classes were randomly assigned to control and experimental conditions. Both groups participated in a series of six guidance lessons from the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) guidance curriculum being implemented at the school. The lessons were exactly the same for students in both groups, except that the experimental group received the lessons outdoors. Students in both groups completed assessments before and after participating in weekly guidance lessons over a period of six weeks. Two assessment measures were used: The Beck Anxiety Inventory for Youth (BAI-Y), a general measure of childhood anxiety; and the Connection to Nature Index (CNI), measuring connection to nature.

(Reference on page 4.)

Translating Research into Practice

What did the research conclude?

When the exact same PATHS lessons were offered in the classroom and outdoors for one period a week, the students who learned outside were calmer and less stressed. (PATHS is a social-emotional learning program designed to reduce aggression and behavior problems in students).

What is the take-away? How can we alter our teaching to take these findings into account?

- Taking students outdoors to learn for one class period per week can reduce anxiety
- Children for whom poverty adds stressors may have fewer out-of-school opportunities to spend time in nature, and may particularly benefit from outdoor learning at school

**Environmental
Education
Alliance
of Georgia**



UPCOMING EVENTS

Hike GA

April 1st - 30th

eealliance.org/hike-ga-challenge.html

Monarchs Across Georgia

Plant Sale at Jim Miller Park

April 15th & 16th, 10am - 4pm

www.eealliance.org/mag-events.html

City Nature Challenge

April 29th - May 2nd

citynaturechallenge.org

Outdoor Learning Symposium

June 24th

www.eealliance.org/2022-outdoor-learning-symposium.html

Monarchs Across Georgia

Educator workshop

June 27th - 28th

www.eealliance.org/mag-events

Greensleeves Book Club News

[Click here to learn more!](#)

• EEA events

• Partner Organizations' events

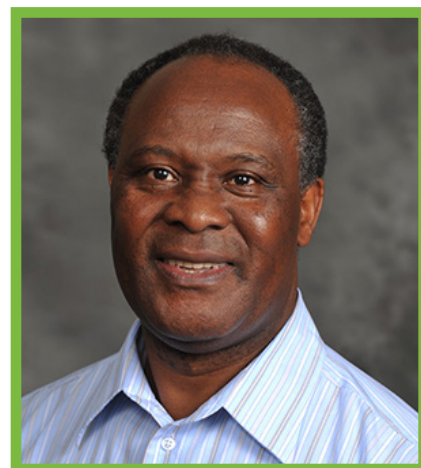
FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Greetings Friends!

When I became the President of the Board of the Environmental Education Alliance (EEA) during the middle of the pandemic, we weren't sure whether the nature centers and environmental education providers in our alliance would survive. Meanwhile, K-12 educators had just finished a crazy year of in-person, virtual, and hybrid teaching that left them exhausted and zoomed out.

Those hard times led EEA to reach out to everyone in our Alliance and ask how we could best support them. After learning about your needs through roundtable meetings and surveys, EEA responded with:

- free EEA memberships during the pandemic,
- unlimited virtual conference scholarships,
- curated teaching resources for virtual and in-person learning,
- an Outdoor Learning Toolkit to help get kids outside during COVID and beyond,
- expanded professional development opportunities, and
- advocating for the field of environmental education and outdoor learning.



Zipangani Vokhiwa
EEA President 2021-2022

I was honored to testify on your behalf before the Senate Study Committee on Outdoor Learning last fall. In recounting my personal experiences as a Professor of Environmental Science, I told about engaging my students in Mercer On Mission projects and taking Teachers on Fulbright Award for a four (4) weeks of field research in my home country of Malawi. Whether my class is out at Heritage Park or Sweetwater Creek State Park; visiting the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or Cryolife it is because "seeing is believing" and nothing is more powerful than real-world hands-on investigations, observations, and service-learning.



I also spoke to the Senators about the variety of environmental educators in our state, and how vital your role is in making sure every Georgia child has outdoor experiences that spark curiosity, inspire a love of nature, and unlock learning potential. There is an adage which states that "It takes The Whole Village to Raise a Child." Our Child, the EEA, has to be "RAISED" by all of us through our involvement. EEA volunteers run programs such as Monarchs Across Georgia (MAG), Higher Ed Partnerships, the ATEEG certification program, and the Annual Conference. Through these efforts, our "Village" collectively strives to

- Connect Children with Nature,
- Promote Environmental Justice,
- Empower Stewardship and Community Engagement,
- Cultivate Environment Literacy, Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving, and finally
- Restore our Earth, since there is only one Earth upon which we all depend.

As a 21-year-long member of EEA, I cannot remember when our alliance has been through a rougher patch than the pandemic but things are looking up. I hope to see you in person this summer at the [Outdoor Learning Symposium](#) in Marietta on June 24 or the [Monarchs Across Georgia Plant Sale](#) April 15-16 and [MAG Pollinator Garden Workshop](#) in Savannah June 27-28. Order your t-shirt and take the [HIKE Georgia challenge](#) wherever you are, to raise money for EEA during April. Meet us at Unicoi State Park for EEA's exciting [30th year anniversary Conference](#) this September. Come to the [Children & Nature Network Conference](#) that EEA is co-hosting May 9-12 in Atlanta. [Join EEA, donate, or volunteer!](#) Together, we are all "Raising our EEA Child" in support of environmental education and outdoor learning across the state.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zipangani Vokhiwa". The signature is stylized and fluid.

MEMBER UPDATES



EEA's new Strategic Plan 2022-2025

WHAT IS EEA?

EEA is the backbone organization for environmental ed and outdoor learning in Georgia, bringing together organizations, educators, scientists, and communities to advance the field.

VISION

EEA envisions a world where every child grows up to be a problem-solver who is connected to nature, knowledgeable about the environment, and empowered to create a more just and sustainable future.

MISSION

EEA's mission is to support, amplify, and champion the work of educators and outdoor learning providers; build partnerships; promote excellence through research-informed practices, demonstrate collective impact, and advance the field.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Children cannot be expected to protect the planet before they have a chance to explore and enjoy nature. And learning about human impacts on the earth can cause students to become distressed or disengaged. But educators can leverage the power of environmental and outdoor education to spark curiosity, engage children in real-world investigations, and foster problem-solving skills. These transformative learning experiences and nature connections can empower children to tackle the environmental challenges of their generation, bringing us closer to a world where people and nature thrive.

GOAL #1

To drive excellence and spark innovation in the field of environmental education and outdoor learning.

GOAL #2

To demonstrate the value and collective impact of, mobilize support for, and increase investment in the field.

GOAL #3

To advance equity and inclusion in nature experiences, environmental education, and outdoor learning.

E/OE Credential Short Courses

EEA is excited to launch a series of online, self-paced professional learning courses for teachers, non-formal educators, school leadership, site designers, and policy-makers. Take individual courses to build skills in the field of environmental and outdoor education (e/oe), or "stack" a set of five courses to earn an e/oeCredential Specialist certificate. Each course requires 4 – 8 hours to complete. E/OE 101 is a pre-requisite (or co-requisite) for all courses. The cost is \$50 for members or \$75 for non-members with scholarships available. Registration Opens April 1. Empower yourself! [Learn more here.](#)



E/OE 101

Research-informed practices



Zero Heroes

Lessons on waste prevention



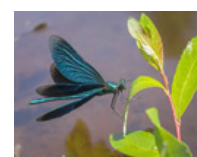
JEDI Heart

Justice and equity in personal discovery



E/OE Resources

Curating excellence in teaching materials



E/OE Methods

Outdoor Learning instructional strategies

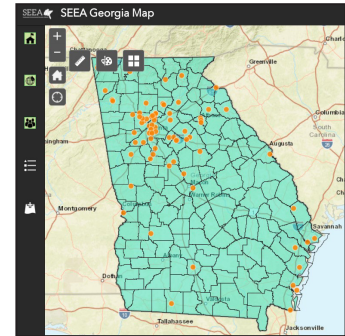
MEMBER UPDATES

EE Landscape Analysis: Interactive Tools for Georgia

Did your organization complete a questionnaire from EEA last year about environmental education and outdoor learning?

The results of the statewide survey are in and the findings are very interesting!

Check out this interactive [Map and Dashboard](#) and the [Georgia Analysis](#) report on EEA's web site. Or use this [Zoom link](#) to join us for a **briefing on Tuesday, March 29th at noon**. And if you didn't participate last year, you can still [put your organization on the map](#). New surveys from ee providers are being accepted through the end of March, and schools will be surveyed next fall.



New ATEEG Certification Cohort Met in Person during March for Core Course 1

EEA's educator certification program – Advanced Training for Environmental Education in Georgia – began a new cohort in March at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center. Candidates for certification, which include non-formal educators and teachers, complete three core courses and an independent project in order to earn recognition in ATEEG's nationally- accredited program. Interested in joining the next cohort? Contact ATEEG@eealliance.org



ATEEG 2022 cohort: From left to right top row: John Nash, Christine Walkey, Cynthia Watts-Skinner, Ann Marie Brezina, LeAnn Rutledge, Clark Meyer, and Connie Vogel-Brown. Bottom row left to right: Julie Shutters and Kimberly Clements.

Hike GA Challenge!

EEA is encouraging all Georgians (and our friends elsewhere) to join the Hike GA Challenge! The Challenge is simple: hike, walk, jog, bike, run, paddle, or otherwise move your body and explore the great outdoors during the month of April. Set your own goals and complete the Challenge wherever you like! Registration is only \$30 and includes a cool Hike GA t-shirt. Sign up before the end of March to make sure your shirt will arrive in the mail by Earth Day.

Learn more at www.eealliance.org/hike-ga-challenge.html or [REGISTER NOW](#) to get your t-shirt!



(Reference for page 1.)

Ríán, S. W., & Coll, K. M. (2021). Increased Exposure to Nature Reduces Elementary Students' Anxiety. *Ecopyschology*. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1089/eco.2020.0070>

This eeRESEARCH summary was reprinted with permission from the original publisher NAAEE. View the original summary on the NAAEE website. <https://naaee.org/eepr/research/library/increased-exposure-nature-reduces>

CORNERSTONES



Darryl Haddock
EEA Board 2020-23

Chair of the Environmental Stewardship & Community Engagement Opportunities

As environmental education director for the West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, Darryl coordinates educational programs, community outreach, and citizen science research. During his 20 years as an environmental scientist in both public and private sectors, Darryl has been recognized as a fellow and emerging leader by organizations including Toyota Together Green and National Audubon Society and was selected as Proctor Creek Ambassador by U.S. EPA's Urban Waters Movement. He is a Project WET trainer, Adopt-A-Stream coordinator, an NAI interpretive guide, and is working toward ATEEG certification. Darryl has a bachelor's in geography from Jacksonville University and a master's in geoscience from Georgia State University.

How long have you been working in the field of environmental education?

About 20 years starting as an informal Environmental Educator volunteering to facilitate adopt A Stream and Project WET activities with Mays High school science students sometime around 1994 or 1995.

Tell us about your current position and some of your key roles and responsibilities.

I was comfortable as an EE facilitator but my role changed when WAWA received the EPA EJ Small grant and I started engaging community members in the Proctor Creek watershed on their lived experiences with flooding and other environmental stressors. I was somewhat out of my element as I perceived my role as a traditional scientist with the objective view science is often seen from. I began to evolve with mentoring from NaTaki Osborn Jelks and Yomi Noibi as to the transformative opportunities scientists can have as change agents and we embraced our Mission as an environmental justice focused organization. But I still love facilitating EE programs when possible!

What are some intriguing highlights of your past work in environmental education?

Working with Petey Giroux in her role as Project WET facilitator and Environmental Educator. I was an awkward scientist trying to become comfortable as an informal educator; Petey made it seem so easy! She was a great friend and mentor!

Who are some current leaders in environmental education that you look up to?

Petey Giroux is a past leader who I learned so much from, Tom Howick and Christie Hill are currently active and were great coaches, Tony Coppage and several of the folks he's trained (Ayinde Summers and Joy Smith) in Experiential Education and challenge coursework were also instrumental in my development.

With regards to fellow members' contributions to making environmental education the best it can be in Georgia, what are you most proud of?

The leadership of Karen Wood and the statewide impact our programs are continuing to make.

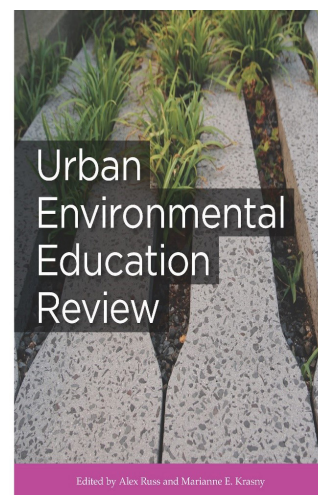
How do you connect with the outdoors? What are your favorite outdoor activities?

Hiking, I am a passionate scuba diver but have not been diving in about a decade, I love kayaking and need to buy a single. I've borrowed a double and it is too large to really take out by myself. But I have enjoyed taking my family out for paddles during the pandemic! I also love biking but also do seem to have the time to hit places like the BeltLine.

Tell us about your favorite places in Georgia to visit.

Sapelo Island and Jekyll Island on the coast are two of my favorite places to visit! Cascade Springs is my favorite local spot and I have a secret lake that is a private lake for radio-controlled speed boats that I often just park near to unwind and enjoy.


Recommended Resource



Urban environmental educators are often faced with overcoming socioeconomic, environmental, and social challenges when teaching. Despite this, many environmental educators have demonstrated success in their ventures, taking clear advantage of nature that is right outside their doorstep, often in innovative and creative ways.

The book, *Urban Environmental Education Review*, edited by Alex Russ and Marianne E. Krasny, is a useful read if you want to learn more about the role of urban environmental education in fostering environmental sustainability, and if you are looking for real-life examples that might work well for your particular setting and space. This book covers several theoretical frameworks on the successful planning and implementation of environmental education (EE) projects. Each of its chapters, organized into five sections, presents examples of urban EE projects around the world. Teachers and nonformal environmental educators will find these case studies both inspiring and reproducible. Selected chapters are currently publicly available to read online at: <https://naaee.org/eepr/resources/urban-ee-essays>


FYI...



READ THE LATEST OR SUSCRIBE TO
The Chrysalis
Emerging news from Monarchs Across Georgia

The Chrysalis newsletter is published online twice a year. Each edition features articles related to the monarch butterfly and other pollinators including research, citizen science opportunities, trips and events, and habitat restoration.

www.eealliance.org/monarchs-across-ga



INSIDE out!
 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
 MAY 9-12, 2022
 ATLANTA, GA

EEA will co-host the conference this year!

Members who are interested in volunteering may email info@eealliance.org



COUNCIL OF OUTDOOR LEARNING

OUTDOOR LEARNING SYMPOSIUM

June 24, 2022
 Life University
 Marietta, Georgia

www.eealliance.org/2022-outdoor-learning-symposium.html



SAVE THE DATE
 9.29.22 – 10.1.22

10TH ANNUAL SEEA CONFERENCE AND RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

UNICOI STATE PARK & LODGE
 HELEN, GA

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 Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance

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