2015 Annual Report

North American Association for Environmental Education

Education We Need for the World We Want
For more than four decades, NAAEE has served as the professional association, champion, and backbone organization for the field of environmental education. Our members and supporters include EE professionals working in formal and nonformal education—including university professors, preschool educators, K–12 teachers and administrators, zoos, aquariums, museums, community centers, nature centers, and more, as well as those working in government agencies, foundations, and corporations. We work with our partners to create a more environmentally informed, committed, and active citizenry.

Vision
A sustainable future for all where environmental and social responsibility drive individual and institutional choices

Mission
We bring the brightest minds together to advance environmental literacy and civic engagement through the power of education.

"Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education."
—MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Education We Need for the World We Want.

naaee.org
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Publications

The Guidelines for Excellence Trainers’ Bureau: In 2015, under the leadership of Dr. Bora Simmons from the National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education (NPEEE), NAAEE conducted more than 25 workshops focusing on the Guidelines for Excellence. These trainings, serving more than a thousand formal and nonformal educators, were designed to help organizations and environmental education professionals use the Guidelines to advance their work.

Building Community: Through the EECapacity project, NAAEE has been working diligently on developing a new addition to the Guidelines for Excellence series focused on community engagement. In 2015, a team of experts developed a draft framework. Look for this new resource in early 2017.

Crosswalks to National Standards: NAAEE also published a series of crosswalks that illustrate the links between the Guidelines for Learning (K–12) and various sets of standards (e.g., Next Generation Science Standards, C3, and Global Competency). These crosswalks, along with those developed for the Common Core State Standards, allow us to conduct a gap analysis and consider how the Guidelines for Learning (K–12) might be updated to better meet current nationally available standards. These resources are available at www.naaee.org/eepro.
Technology

Following a discovery phase for the redesign of NAAEE’s technology platform, work began on building a new website in 2015. NAAEE partnered with experts at Weirdesign and Tamarack Media to ensure a user-friendly and well-designed site. As part of this redesign, NAAEE is creating a professional development and learning site called eePRO, the “go to” hub for information about EE and professional development opportunities in North America and beyond. eePRO will feature a number of special interest groups where users can join and discuss key issues related to EE, from research and evaluation, to the processes of behavior change, to the opportunities and benefits of connecting people with nature.

NAAEE’s newsletters—eeJOBS and eeNEWS—will be housed on eePRO, in addition to other features such as grant opportunities, events, and professional development tools. Users will create a profile to share resources, participate in blog discussions, and interact with other users. The new website will include all the webpages from the previous site in a better organized menu system, which will include a search function. With support from EECapacity, NAAEE will launch the new www.naaee.org website in early 2016.
E-STEM

Underwriters Laboratories (UL)

In October 2014, NAAEE launched the UL Innovative Education Award (ULIEA), in partnership with the renowned safety science company Underwriters Laboratories (UL). This work began with a research study conducted in 2013 and 2014, which led to the design of the ULIEA, a first-of-its-kind initiative investing $250,000 annually in environmental and STEM education by supporting the critical work being conducted by non-profit organizations across the US and Canada that engage youth in STEM through environmental education.

In 2015, NAAEE continued this work, overseeing the marketing and application process for the first ULIEA competition, along with research partner New Knowledge. Over 120 applications were submitted from 32 states, DC, and three Canadian provinces. NAAEE and New Knowledge facilitated the judging and review process. Five award winners and six runners-up were selected and announced via press release and the ULIEA website.

The awards winners shared a broad mission of diversity and inclusion, representing programs aimed at encouraging young women in STEM education, urban students in environmental sustainability, zero-waste standards, rural students and teachers in outdoor education, and First Nations communities integrating environmental education with indigenous cultures. Additionally, NAAEE worked with UL to organize the first ULIEA awards summit, gathering representatives from the five award-winning organizations along with UL, New Knowledge, and NAAEE staff, kicking off a year-long partnership among participants.

With the conclusion of the first year of the ULIEA, UL agreed to engage NAAEE to facilitate a second year of the competition. NAAEE launched year two of the ULIEA at the annual NAAEE Conference in October 2015.

“Continuing this year, the UL Innovative Education Awards reinforces the value of prioritizing STEM learning and environmental education for the next generation of young leaders who will directly face these challenges. And, with our program partners at NAAEE, we will select and invest in those who best exemplify this commitment to innovation and creativity. This also represents an ideal opportunity for our own employees to serve as mentors for helping to bring these programs to fruition.”

—CARA GIZZI, DIRECTOR, PUBLIC SAFETY EDUCATION & OUTREACH, UNDERWRITERS LABORATORIES

Students with 2015 Tier 2 winners, Cafeteria Culture, participate in a rally at NYC City Hall to reduce plastic bag pollution (July 2015).
California Water Service

NAAEE’s ongoing partnership with California Water Service (Cal Water) continued in 2015 with the completion of the first-ever Cal Water H₂O Challenge. Designed based upon research conducted in 2012 and 2013, and the previously drafted Blueprint for E-STEM Success, the Cal Water H₂O Challenge is a project-based, environmentally-focused competition for California classrooms within Cal Water service areas. NAAEE helped design and launch the program in 2014.

In 2015, NAAEE oversaw the marketing, application, submission, and judging process for the first Cal Water H₂O Challenge competition. Registrations were received from more than 60 California classrooms impacting over 1,800 students. In April of 2015, NAAEE had the pleasure of announcing the grand prize winner of the competition—Ms. Kelli Voss and Ms. Sara Greenberg’s fifth grade class from Shasta Elementary School in Chico, California. NAAEE also announced second, third, and fourth place winners, distributed grants to the winning classrooms, and hosted an announcement ceremony and a celebratory camping trip on the Channel Islands with NatureBridge for the grand prize winning class.

After a successful first year, NAAEE launched the second annual Cal Water H₂O Challenge in November of 2015, thanks to continued engagement with the California Water Service.

The entries in last year’s competition set an impressive benchmark. We were encouraged by the ingenuity and enthusiasm students demonstrated. They put into practice real-life applications and coordinated efforts to save water during one of the worst droughts we have endured as a state.

—MARTIN A. KROPENICKI, PRESIDENT AND CEO, CALIFORNIA WATER SERVICE

We hope in the future, it could help all of California save water. Right now, we’re in the middle of a drought. That’s why we’re doing native plants. If we can get the whole community together, it will probably help a lot.

—MAYA SELNES, FIFTH GRADE H₂O CHALLENGE PARTICIPANT

from Roberts, Elizabeth. “Pittman students third in statewide contest.” The Record, April 19, 2015.
Annual Conference & Research Symposium

More than 1,000 environmental education professionals from around the world gathered in San Diego, California for NAAEE’s 44th Annual NAAEE Conference and 12th Annual Research Symposium. The conference theme—Building a Stronger and More Inclusive Movement—reflected NAAEE's ongoing commitment to enriching and expanding our work and workforce, along with other strategies for strengthening the field and achieving greater collective impact.

NAAEE is always working to improve the conference—from welcoming newcomers to enhancing access through technology. For example, NAAEE dedicated 15 percent of concurrent sessions within each strand to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, and selected presentations were identified with a special icon to draw attention to this effort. In addition, seven of the new eePRO Groups met for the first time during brown bag lunch sessions, providing new opportunities for discussion and networking. Expanded use of the conference mobile app gave attendees the opportunity to navigate the conference schedule via phones and tablets, which allowed NAAEE to conserve resources by printing fewer programs.

Keynote Speakers
In keeping with our focus on inclusion, a distinguished group of keynote speakers compelled attendees to examine the ways we define leadership and empower individuals. Speakers included Stephen Pemberton, Walgreen’s trailblazing Chief Diversity Officer and Divisional Vice President, and strategic communications expert Andy Goodman, of the Goodman Center.

A panel discussion, “EE and Social Movements: Connecting the Dots”, included Harry Boyte, Senior Scholar in Public Work Philosophy at Augsburg College; Hahrie Han, Associate Professor of Political Science at UC Santa Barbara; wildlife biologist, essayist, and poet J. Drew Lanham; Jackie Ogden, Vice President of Animals, Science and Environment, Walt Disney Parks and Resorts; and moderator Allison Chin, an environmental and social justice activist and the first person of color to serve as president of the Sierra Club Board of Directors.

The closing panel, “Game Changers Under 25: What Can We Learn?”, included singer, songwriter, actor, and Native Children’s Survival Youth Ambassador Ta’Kaiya Blaney; Outdoor Outreach instructor Vincent Culliver; journalist, political organizer, social activist, and full-time student David Ricardo Flores Gonzales; Charles Orgbon III, creator of the youth-driven movement Greening Forward; and moderator Juan D. Martinez, Director of Leadership Development and the Natural Leaders Network for the Children & Nature Network.

2015 Award Winners
Kay Antunez
WALTER E. JESKE AWARD

Judy Braus
BOARD CHAIR AWARD

Randi Fisher
DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Nancy Gillis
K–12 EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Maine Environmental Education Award
OUTSTANDING AFFILIATE ORGANIZATION

Alan Reid
OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH IN EE

Joshua York
OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO EE AS AN INDIVIDUAL, LOCAL LEVEL

Lisa Bardwell
OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO EE AS AN INDIVIDUAL, REGIONAL LEVEL

S.C.R.A.P. Gallery
OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO EE AS AN ORGANIZATION, LOCAL LEVEL

Prairie Science Class
OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO EE AS AN ORGANIZATION, REGIONAL LEVEL

Agrium, Inc.
OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO EE AS AN ORGANIZATION, INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

Rue Mapp
ROSA PARKS AND GRACE LEE BOGGS
OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

Darryl Ramos-Young and Anne Umali
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S AWARD
Research Symposium
NAAEE’s Research Symposium brought together the largest gathering of new and seasoned researchers in its 12-year history. With more than 175 participants, the symposium explored the current state and future directions of environmental education research, and sought to advance the use of practices proven to be effective. Keynote speakers Nicole Ardoin, assistant professor in the Stanford University Graduate School of Education and Woods Institute for the Environment, and Joe Heimlich, principal researcher at the Lifelong Learning Group and professor emeritus at the Ohio State University, facilitated a rich discussion on the importance of environmental learning in the course of everyday life.
Affiliate Network

One of NAAEE’s most powerful assets is its Affiliate Network. Together, NAAEE and the Affiliate Network represent the leadership of the environmental education community, with a joint mission to advance environmental literacy and improve practice throughout North America. This Network was designed to share best practice and create a stronger and more unified voice for EE at all levels.

In 2015, NAAEE greatly boosted its capacity to support and leverage the Affiliate Network by creating a new staff position—Director of Policy and Affiliate Relations. This position will not only help strengthen the power of the network, it will also work to increase advocacy efforts and identify partnership opportunities. NAAEE has already increased its presence with individual state Affiliate organizations, attending planning retreats and providing keynotes and presentations at Affiliate conferences and board meetings.
Working with the Affiliate Steering Committee, NAAEE developed a Memorandum of Understanding between individual Affiliate organizations and NAAEE as a tool for formalizing commitments for sharing resources, creating cohesive messaging and branding, and collaborative fundraising and membership acquisition. While NAAEE and the Affiliate Network share a common mission to advance EE, the Affiliates are a very diverse group of organizations, with different strengths, financial support, and overall reach and impact. The MOU template was adapted to the specific structure and function of each Affiliate organization, and the MOUs will be distributed and signed throughout 2016 and 2017.

NAAEE’s 2015 conference in San Diego provided tremendous opportunities for networking and planning among the Affiliates. NAAEE built on momentum generated at the conference by hosting a retreat for the Affiliate Network Steering Committee in November 2015. During the retreat, Steering Committee members defined and prioritized strategies and opportunities for collaboration over the next year, with a focus on communication, branding, and leveraging existing
EECapacity

Since 2011, NAAEE has partnered with Cornell University and a consortium of national and local partners on an exciting training initiative called EECapacity (Expanding Capacity in Environmental Education). EECapacity is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Environmental Education through a cooperative agreement with Cornell University to support professional development, strengthen the field, and share innovative practices from across the country and around the globe.

NAAEE’s contributions to EECapacity include developing and managing the project website and online resource center, co-managing the State Consortium project, conducting professional development activities online and during the annual conference, promoting preservice education, strengthening efforts to establish and accredit state certification programs, and developing a new set of guidelines for working with communities, as part of the Guidelines for Excellence series for environmental professionals.

Through EECapacity, NAAEE made significant progress on the development of the new professional development hub, eePRO, in preparation for the January 2016 launch of the new NAAEE website. Special interest groups were established, seven of which held their first meetings at the 2015 NAAEE Annual Conference.

When we started working with EECapacity a few years ago, none of the participants from our community partners identified themselves as environmental educators. Since then, we have built relationships, worked on other projects, plotted and planned, and now [we’re] about to award one of them our annual Outstanding Environmental Educator Award.

—BARBARA GARRITY, NEW MEXICO STATE CAPACITY LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBER; EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF NEW MEXICO
New this year, the State Consortium program turned its focus to the development of ten innovative models for increasing the reach of and diversity within state EE networks and building leadership and capacity to deliver high quality environmental education to broader audiences. Managed by teams representing the state Affiliate, partner organizations that can help broaden the base for EE within the state, and at least one young professional with demonstrated leadership qualities, these projects are being designed as models for other state and regional networks seeking to achieve similar goals. While widely varied in their approaches, the projects all involve cultivating meaningful partnerships, mentoring emerging leaders, crossing boundaries, and energizing new ways of looking at environmental education.

This project is creating the framework for us to build authentic working relationships with partners we should have (but have never) reached out to before within our state...those relationships will lead to great things in our future...going well beyond the scope of this project—for that potential I am equally excited! Thanks for believing in our work and supporting us when we do take risks and try new things!!!

—OLIVIA GRISET, MAINE STATE CAPACITY LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBER; PRESIDENT, MAINE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
Natural Start Alliance

The Natural Start Alliance—NAAEE’s project to advance early childhood environmental education—expanded significantly in 2015, buoyed by national press, increasing participation in its Nature-Based Preschool National Conference, and word of mouth. The Alliance now includes more than 200 organizations.

Natural Start is advancing research in early childhood environmental education, advocating for policies that get young children outdoors playing and learning in nature, providing and promoting opportunities for educators to develop skills in early childhood environmental education, and building a professional network of educators who specialize in both early childhood and environmental education.

Some of Natural Start’s key activities in 2015 include:

• Publishing the third volume of the International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education

• Hosting a summit of early childhood education leaders to advance the use of outdoor learning environments in childcare settings

• Securing funding to significantly expand professional development opportunities in early childhood environmental education across the United States

• Convening the third Nature-Based Preschool National Conference in partnership with the Association of Nature Center Administrators Annual Summit, drawing a record number of participants from 23 states

www.naturalstart.org

Natural Start experienced a significant increase in traffic after a story in the New York Times cited the Natural Start Alliance as a key resource in the nature-based preschool movement. Natural Start also appeared in Forbes in 2015.
Environmental Issues Forum

In 2014, NAAEE launched the Environmental Issues Forums program in partnership with the Kettering Foundation, which is designed to engage adults and students in meaningful, productive discussions about complex environmental issues. NAAEE's work on this project is part of the Kettering Foundation's National Issues Forums (NIF)—a nonpartisan, nationwide network of locally sponsored public issues forums. NIF is rooted in the simple notion that democracy requires an ongoing, deliberative public dialogue. People need to come together to reason and talk to deliberate about common problems. Their philosophy is to understand together, decide together, and act together.

As part of the partnership, NAAEE is developing a series of discussion guides focused on complex environmental issues. The first one will focus on climate change and help participants talk about the tradeoffs associated with possible actions for the future. NAAEE is also exploring guides focused on water and energy issues. In addition, NAAEE is working to train moderators who can lead forums and help promote civil discourse.
Policy to Support EE

NAAEE is a non-partisan organization that works with its Affiliates and partners to develop strategies for advancing key initiatives that support environmental education policy. In 2015, NAAEE convened a group of thought leaders in the field to examine opportunities and strategies to increase collective impact as EE advocates. Under NAAEE’s leadership and coordination, the group laid out a preliminary structure and set of advocacy priorities for collaborative focus in the coming months and years. The comprehensive proposal lays out a policy agenda for advancing EE through early childhood education, K–12 public schools, higher education, and community-based education. This plan will guide collaborative efforts at the federal and state levels, and establish shared priorities for policy work within the EE community.

Thanks in large part to many years of policy work on the part of NAAEE, its Affiliates, and numerous partners (including environmental education providers, conservation organizations, businesses, sportsman’s groups, health care workers, school administrators, and others), 2015 yielded important successes for federal EE programs. In a historic win, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed with language making environmental education eligible for federal education funding for the first time. NAAEE’s press release following the legislation's passing was picked up online by 173 media outlets with a combined audience potential of 99.8 million. Additionally, support increased for grant programs at EPA and NOAA, which are vital to providing meaningful EE programs across the United States.
eeWORKS

The goal of eeWORKS (formerly called Anecdotes to Evidence) is to demonstrate the impact and value of environmental education to a variety of stakeholders, identify research gaps, and create a stronger communication strategy for the field. Ultimately, the initiative is designed to improve environmental education programs and attract more resources and support from a variety of stakeholders. The project is guided by NAAEE and Stanford University, in partnership with collaborators from multiple sectors in the environmental education field.

In 2015, the Stanford research team completed a systematic analysis of peer-reviewed literature focusing on the impact of EE for K–12 students and submitted a journal article based on the results to the Journal of Environmental Education. The article is currently under peer review.

At the same time, NAAEE, working with several communications experts, conducted a comprehensive review of the research that Stanford collected and the grey literature to collect anecdotal feedback and inspiring stories that exemplify outcomes of EE on K–12 students. NAAEE began developing draft communication tools for key audiences on this theme, including K–12 teachers, administrators, state and federal departments of education, policymakers, education funders, and nonformal educators who can use these materials to secure resources and bolster support for their programming.

At the end of 2015, Stanford and NAAEE convened an expert advisory council to discuss progress on the project. Attendees represented several universities, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Start Alliance, Children & Nature Network, World Wildlife Fund, Bureau of Land Management, Rhode Island EE Association, Roger Williams Park Zoo, and Western National Parks Association. Advisors considered progress to date and provided guidance on additional themes related to the role of EE in achieving conservation outcomes, bolstering community resiliency in the face of climate change, and connecting people to nature. NAAEE will continue to engage and consult with these expert advisors as well as foster and maintain collaborations with other organizations to help support this overall initiative.

What We Know About Connecting People and Nature

In December 2015, NAAEE helped facilitate a meeting for Disney focused on what is known about connecting kids to nature and its benefits for young people. Discussions were held about the research and opportunities for Disney to use the research to help inform their practice.
The Global Environmental Education Partnership

NAAEE continued to expand its international reach and influence. In 2015, NAAEE became a lead partner in the Global Environmental Education Partnership (GEEP). The GEEP was launched in 2014 by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Taiwan Environmental Protection Administration. NAAEE was asked to join soon after as the Secretariat.

The mission of the GEEP is to create a vibrant learning network designed to build capacity in member countries to strengthen and institutionalize environmental education, focusing on policy, professional development, evaluation, and best practices.

This past year, through a grant from the International Environmental Partnership (a partnership between the Taiwan Environmental Protection Administration and the U.S. EPA), NAAEE has helped finalize the mission of the GEEP, create an advisory group, and partner with eighteen countries.

Following a successful trip to Gothenburg, Sweden to attend the World Environmental Education Congress and debut the GEEP to world environmental education leaders in June 2015, NAAEE convened a GEEP delegate meeting as part of the 2015 NAAEE conference in San Diego, California. Delegates at this meeting, including a representative from the United Nations Environment Programme, shared their needs and the potential gaps that the GEEP can fill moving forward.

NAAEE also launched the GEEP’s website, which provides interested environmental education practitioners with information on the initiative, as well as country profiles that showcase what’s happening with environmental education around the world.

www.thegeep.org
The work of environmental education has never been more important.

We can’t have healthy communities without a healthy environment and without providing access for all to the best education opportunities possible. Education is what leads to informed and committed citizens who care about making the world a better place and who take an active civic role in creating positive change.

Judy Braus
Executive Director

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. ... There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature — the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.

—RACHEL CARSON,
SILENT SPRING

People are not going to care about animal conservation unless they think that animals are worthwhile.

—DAVID ATTENBOROUGH

Your must give to the river the kindness you would give to any brother.

—CHIEF SEATTLE

The illiterate of the future will not be the person who cannot read. It will be the person who does not know how to learn.

—ALVIN TOFFLER
NAAEE Team

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Executive Director  

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**Judy Braus**  
Executive Director  

**Lizabeth Fogel**  
Lizabeth Fogel  

**Jason Morris**  
Flisa Stevenson

Unity is strength... when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved.  
—MATTIE STEPANEK
Partners & Supporters

Collaboration is key to achieving our mission. Thanks to all our partners for their continuing support, passion, and confidence in our work.
Financials


Statement of Activities

Support and Revenue

Government grants          $1,233,810
Private grants/contributions $796,640
Fee for service and other   $443,112
Conference income           $374,315
Conference sponsorships     $82,020
Membership dues             $67,313
Investment income           $1,114
Total revenues              $2,998,324

Expenses

Program services            $2,389,648
Management and general      $319,127
Fundraising                 $50,373
Total expenses              $2,759,148

Addition to unrestricted net assets  $217,511
Addition to temporarily unrestricted net assets $21,665

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Cash                        $885,991
Accounts receivable         $589,961
Unconditional promises to give $195,568
Investments                 $7,653
Prepaid expenses and deposits $23,553
Inventory                   $10,061
Total assets                $1,712,787

Liabilities

Accounts payable            $117,259
Deferred revenue            $220,108
Accrued payroll liabilities $47,078

Net assets

Unrestricted                $781,151
Temporarily restricted      $547,191
Total liabilities and net assets $1,712,787

*Audited statements available upon request
Demonstrate Your Commitment

A strong commitment to environmental education is what helps create a more sustainable world for tomorrow, and your support ensures that we can continue to grow the field. When you make a gift to NAAEE, you help support a promise for the future.

There are many ways to give:

- Become a member
- Become a monthly supporter
- Make a one-time cash gift
- Support our scholarship fund
- Shop at Amazon Smile, and Amazon will donate a percentage of your purchase to NAAEE (smile.amazon.com)
- Give a gift membership to an education or conservation professional
- Make a charitable gift of stocks, bonds, or mutual funds
- Honor a loved one with a tribute gift
- Make an estate planning gift through trusts, wills, and other instruments

For more information and to contribute, visit:

www.naaee.org/donate

Follow NAAEE as we share the latest in EE through our social networks: