



EEAC

FALL 2005

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Teacher Preparation and Environmental Education: Meeting the Challenge in New York State

This "White Paper" is being reprinted in the newsletter to keep EEAC members abreast of major initiatives being undertaken by the organization.

History and Background

In the early 1980's a statewide consortium of organizations worked cooperatively with the State Education Department and The Board of Regents to implement goal #7 of the Regents Action Plan, which states, "each student will acquire knowledge of the ecological consequences of choices in the use of the environment and natural resources." These organizations included the Council on the Environment of New York City (CENYC), the Environment Education Advisory Council (EEAC), the Environmental Action Coalition, the New York State Outdoor Education Association, SUNY Cortland, the New York State Conservation Council, the National Audubon Society, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and nearly 50 other groups.

The coalition helped infuse the State Education Department Syllabus and Curriculum with environmental concepts in most subject areas. The State Education Department also included environmental questions on Regent Examinations. After the coalition's formal work ceased, New York State Standards in Math, Science and Technology, Social Studies, and other areas were eventually infused with concepts that related to a healthy environment and a sustainable society.

During this period, environmental education (EE) continued to spread at the grassroots level through the work of government agencies, other organizations and individuals. A growing body of research supported and continues to support the notion that involving students in a systematic program of environmental education improves learning in science, math, social studies and other curriculum areas.¹

Unfortunately, pre-service teacher training² in schools of education across the state, with a few exceptions, did not and most still do not incorporate environmental subject matter³ into their preparation programs. Teachers in general are not prepared to take advantage of the opportunities being presented to infuse EE into classroom teaching. Teachers are not trained to give students all the tools necessary to do well on Regents

exams, or give themselves additional ways to implement the State Standards.

New licensing requirements, scheduled to go into effect in 2004, will increase the number of science credits to be taken by teachers in preparation at all levels, which expands the opportunity for teachers to use available environmental science courses to satisfy these requirements.

In response to this situation, Teacher Environmental Education Preparation (TEEP) was formed by CENYC, the Wallerstein Collaborative for Urban Environmental Education at New York University and EEAC. TEEP is working in partnership with SUNY Cortland, Brooklyn College, Pace University, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the NYS Education Department, NYC Department of Environmental Protection, the NYS Chapter of National Audubon and several other universities, colleges and organizations. TEEP held five symposia around the state at Pace University in Westchester County, SUNY Cortland, Teachers College, the State Education Department in Albany and New York University to explore strategies for expanding teacher preparation in EE in colleges of education in NY State. A total of 18 colleges and a number of governmental agencies and non-formal organizations have attended at least one of the five colloquia.

Two major strategies for incorporation of EE into teacher preparation have emerged from TEEP meetings and documents. One is the development of a statewide center for environmental education, which would make ee a major focus of teacher preparation throughout NY. Drs. Beth Klein and Gail Tooker of SUNY Cortland, and Mary Leou of NYU, in collaboration with other TEEP participants are preparing a strategy for the center. The second approach is the development of one or more innovations in the teacher certification structure to bring it in line with State Standards.

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UPCOMING EEAC EVENTS.....

Steering Committee Meetings

EEAC Steering Committee meetings are always the third Wednesday of every month (except August).

Upcoming Meeting Information:

Steering Committee meetings are held at New York University, Pless Building, 32 Washington Square Park East and Washington Place in the 5th floor Conference Room. Upcoming meetings will be on September 14, October 19 and November 16.

Newsletter Deadlines

The Newsletter deadlines are the first Monday in April, July, October and January. If possible, please E-mail articles to solocoot@optonline.net and send longer articles as an attachment in Microsoft Word or on a floppy disc in MS Word. Contact the editor at the number below for mailing address for materials.

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The Environmental Education Advisory Council (EEAC) would like to thank the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for supporting the publication of this newsletter. For information about DEP's education resources for students and teachers, visit the DEP Web site: www.nyc.gov/dep or call (718) 595-3506.

GET CONNECTED!

If you are a member of EEAC and want to be part of the information sharing and discussion on the EEAC Listserve contact:

Cfranken@nycboe.net

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

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This newsletter is a publication of the Environmental Education Advisory Council (EEAC), a voluntary organization of educators, classroom teachers, administrators and other professionals in active support of environmental education. It is available free upon request.

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Geocaching...the Sport Where You Are the Search Engine"

by John Pritchard

Twenty-Thousand, two hundred kilometers above the earth, a constellation of 24 NAVSTAR satellites are sending radio signals to earth around the clock. At least five of them are a minimum of 5° above the horizon at anytime of day, every place on earth. In a city park, a couple and their children are searching the woods for a small Tupperware container. They find it hidden in a hollow log. Inside, they find a collection of 99-cent store trinkets and they are overjoyed.

What do these two seemingly unconnected vignettes have to do with each other? They are the technical and practical ingredients of a new high-tech sport called "Geocoaching."

On May 1, 2002, President Clinton removed the Selective Availability (restriction) from these NAVSTAR satellites and allowed their mission to include civilian as well as military purposes. Up to this point, they were used so that ships and ground troops could find their way or location, anywhere in the world. Civilians could use them, but intricate radio electronics were needed to decipher their signals. On May 3, a container of goodies was hidden by someone outside of Portland, Oregon—in celebration of the removing of Selective Availability. By May 6 the cache was visited twice, and logged in the logbook once. Mike Teague was the first to find the container, and built his personal web page to document these containers and their locations that were posted an internet newsgroup. Since the lifting of the ban, we now have hand-help GPS receivers (Global Position System) for hiking and boating as well as cell phones that tell you where you are and tracking systems in automobiles that tell you what corner to turn on your next trip across town. GPS receivers are used to collect data and make maps for any purpose where accurate locations are needed. GPS receivers are not designed to replace compasses, but to enhance their use.

The object of the sport is to find a "cache"—usually a small container that is hidden "in plain sight." These caches are placed in over 160 countries worldwide by fellow players. To find a cache, you must use a GPS receiver (available for as little as \$100). You then go to the official Geocaching site, www.geocaching.com, where by typing in a zip code you will be provided with a list of all of the caches in your area. The coordinates are plugged in and soon you are following the "Go To" arrow to the cache location. It's pretty straightforward until you get to within a hundred feet or so of the cache site. Since the accuracy of the GPS receiver is only good to a few dozen feet, the cacher now has to use his or her ingenuity to find the cache. The rules say it cannot be buried and they cannot be on private property or in high security areas such as airports. Anything else is fair game. And when you find the cache, the prize is the discovery itself... like hitting a home run in a game of softball. All caches contain a log book and a pencil. Everything else is optional. If you take something, you leave something of equal value. The cache is then placed back where it is found and you go off to find the next one. When you get home, you record

your findings on the Geocaching site which then records your information and notifies the cache's owner.

There are restrictions as to where caches may be placed. They are not allowed in National Parks (but are permitted in National Forests). New York State parks are now issuing permits for cache sites. The placement of these caches on public lands is controversial. Some advocates encourage it so that little-used facilities are made more popular, while others disagree and argue that the placement of caches is an intrusion on the environment. This is an argument perhaps best left to the politicians. In the meantime, most cachers follow the rules. The caches are self-policed. No dangerous objects are allowed to be placed in them. They have to be family-friendly as cachers range in age from little kids looking for "treasures" to adults who have rediscovered the joys of hiking. If caches are placed in incorrect locations, the Geocaching administrators will disapprove a site. A number of organizations have been created in recent years to assist cachers in sorting out the regulations.

If you would like to give Geocaching a try, get a GPS receiver and log on to the URL. After you have found your first cache, it may become the only thing you want to do in your spare time! It gets you outside hiking, enjoying the environment and discovering new places that you never knew were there.

Cache on!

Announcing Fall and Spring Journal Classes for Teachers and Other Educators

Fall: Sense of Place: Journals

Spring: Nature Journals

The fall course is being offered in Manhattan at Theodore Roosevelt's Birthplace and other cultural and natural resource sites. (Subject to change.)

In-Service credits offered by After School Professional Development Program of NYC Dept. of Education.

Tuition and registration for NYC teachers is approximately \$175 plus materials fee (usually \$25).

Cost for non-DOE is slightly higher.

For further information on course content and agenda contact Regina McCarthy at naturejournals@aol.com.

New York State Standards and EE

The New York State Standards are replete with environmental concepts on all levels--overall standards, key ideas, performance indicators, sample tasks, and sample problems/activities.

For example, the New York State Education Department (SED) Science Standard #4, in the SED's 1996 Math, Science and Technology (MST) Booklet⁴ states that "students will understand and apply scientific concepts, principles and theories pertaining to the physical setting and living environment, and recognize the historical development of ideas in science."

- The standard has a Living Environment section, which contains key idea #7 - it states, "human decisions and activities have had a profound impact on the physical and living environment."

- On an elementary level, as a performance indicator of idea #7, students are to "identify ways in which humans have changed their environment and the effects of those changes."

- On an intermediate level students should "describe how living things, including humans, depend upon the living and nonliving environment for their survival" and "describe the effects of environmental changes on humans and other populations." This is evident when students "conduct an extended investigation of a local environment affected by human actions, (e.g., a pond, stream, forest, empty lot)."

- On a commencement level, idea #7 asks students to "describe, the range of inter-relationships of humans with the living and non-living environment, explain the impact of technological development and growth in the human population on the living and non-living environment, and explain how individual choices and societal actions can contribute to improving the environment."

- This is evident when students, "as a sample task, compile a case study of a technological development that has significant impact on the environment".

Comprehensive as the environmental infusion is in Standard #4, Living Environment Section Key Idea #7, there is much more environmental study called for in both the Living Environment and Physical Setting sections of Standard 4. MST Standard #5, "Students will apply technological knowledge and skills to design, construct, use and evaluate products and systems to satisfy human and environmental needs," contains numerous environmental references including 6 of 8 sample problems/activities on solid waste, water or energy systems. All of these involve the application of mathematical skills such as graphing, measurement and analysis of spatial design.

The same intensity and frequency of infusion is characteristic of MST Standards 6 and 7, which deal with interconnectedness and interdisciplinary problem solving respectively.

The Social Studies Standards also contain significant environmental content. Social Studies Standard #3 states that: "Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live--local, national and global--including the distribution of people, places and environment over the Earth's surface." Key idea #1 of Standard #3 states that:

"Geography can be divided into six essential elements which can be used to analyze important historic, geographic, economic, and environmental questions and issues. These six elements include: the world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical settings (including natural resources), human systems, environment and society, and the use of geography." (Adapted from The Geography Standards, 1994: Geography for Life.)

The Key Idea Section includes the following performance indicators - Students will:

- "Study about how people live, work, and utilize natural resources" (elementary level)

- "Investigate how people depend on and modify the physical environment" (elementary level)

- "Map information about people, places, and environments (intermediate)"

- "Describe the relationships between people and the connections between people and places" (intermediate)

- "Describe the physical characteristics of the Earth's surface and investigate the continual reshaping of the surface by physical processes and human activities" (commencement)⁵

Throughout all these performance indicators, sample tasks and sample problems/activities in MST and Social Studies, literacy skills are called for and reinforced.

New York State Standards, EE and Teacher Certification

The subject areas that qualify for certification in Middle Childhood or Adolescence are science, chemistry, biology, physics and earth science. For the social sciences there is a social studies certification. There are currently no plans to include environmental science or environmental studies as a subject that qualifies for certification.

There is a contradiction between the comprehensive infusion of EE into the standards, and the lack of environmental education requirements in the teacher certification structure. In order to fully implement the standards, teachers need to have some environmental background but there are no formal EE training requirements or inducements to seek EE training. What are the options available to remedy this situation?

Possible Strategies

- Encourage the 110 teacher education institutions throughout the state to offer a cognate, or a series of courses in an area, in this case environmental studies or science, that relate to a certificate major, e.g. Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Physics, Social Studies and Childhood Education Grades 1 to 6 - Common Branches, but are not directly given in that major. A two course or six credit environmental cognate could be included in a 36 credit package submitted to the state for certification.

- Require an environmental cognate as part of a certifiable course package. This would leave open the choice of course offerings in the environment to the college but require six credits of environmental studies or science.

- Create a certificate in EE program in which the SED would recognize a 9-12 credit "Certificate in Environmental Science (or Studies)" as giving teachers the background to teach environmental science in their schools. Most high schools offer environmental science. The certificate would give teachers who possess it first choice in teaching the course. Elementary and middle school teachers would gain the expertise necessary to instruct their students in this area. Teacher education institutions would attract prospective teaching candidates who are interested in environmental concerns.

- Adopt a separate, complete certification in environmental science and/or studies. Many schools throughout the state already offer environmental science as a way for students to satisfy the science credits required for graduation; in some NYC schools the entire ninth year is devoted to it. A certification in it would generate many teachers who are truly qualified to teach it and who can provide their colleagues who teach courses relevant to the environment, with the information and techniques necessary to apply the standards across the curriculum.

Summary/Conclusion

Although New York State has made significant strides in incorporating environmental concepts into State Education Department syllabi and curricula, on Regents examinations and in the State Standards in Math, Science and Technology, and Social Studies, most teacher preparation programs still do not infuse environmental education (EE) into their teacher preparation programs. There is a contradiction between the infusion of EE into the curricula, exams and standards and the lack of EE requirements in the teacher certification structure.

Possible solutions are:

- Encourage the 110 teacher education institutions throughout the state to recognize a cognate, or a series of courses in an area, in this case environmental studies or science, as applicable to teacher certification in Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Physics, Social Studies or Childhood Education grades 1 to 6 Common Branches.

- Require an environmental cognate as part of a certifiable course package.

- Develop a certificate in EE program in which the SED would recognize a 9-12 credit "Certificate in Environmental Science (or Studies)" as giving teachers the background to teach environmental science in their schools.

- Adopt a separate, complete certification in environmental science and/or studies.

(Footnotes)

¹ See, "Closing the Achievement Gap." Lieberman, Gerald - PhD and Hoody, Linda - MA, State Education and Environment Roundtable: Science Wizards, Poway, CA, 1998.

² We are defining pre-service teacher training as preparation for undergraduates studying to be teachers, for graduate students who are entering the teaching profession for the first time, and for practicing teachers who are returning to school to meet current certification requirements.

³ With respect to environmental subject matter for teachers we are referring to concepts and information related to environmental issues and to pedagogical skills and techniques associated with environmental education.

⁴ Learning Standards for Mathematics, Science and Technology, the University of the State of New York, the State Education Department, Albany, NY March 1996.

⁵ <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/socst/socstands/soc31.html>

Prepared by Mike Zamm, Council on the Environment of NYC (CENYC). Editorial assistance provided by Terry Ippolito, US EPA; Kim Estes-Fradis, NYC DEP; Mary Leou, NYU; Eleanor Miele, Brooklyn College; Lys McLaughlin, CENYC.

Come Join Us for the Remaining 2005 New York Restoration Project Field Walks!

**All walks are from 10am to noon
on the second Saturday of each month:**

**October • Swindler Cove Park
and Sherman Creek Clean-Up**

November 12 • Fall Foliage at Fort Tryon Park

**December 10 • Harlem River Water Quality
at Swindler Cove Park**

Registration highly recommended. Please call New York Restoration Project at 212-333-2552 Monday to Friday to register or for more information.



Elliott and Rose Blaustein in 1986.

Remembering a Dear Friend

This winter so many of us were saddened to hear of the passing of Elliott Blaustein. His contributions to the field of Environmental Education are too numerous to count, and he touched the lives of those who came into contact with him in a profound way. His daughter, Carole Blaustein Barr, has been greatly generous in sharing Elliott's own thoughts from his memoirs. Following are words of introduction and excerpts from Elliott's words read at his funeral.

Thanks to all of the members of EEAC who visited and sent kind words of condolence and support to Rose and the family of Elliott Blaustein following his death on February 4 at age 89. It's hard to think of Rose without Elliott, as it would have been to think of Elliott without Rose. They were a unique couple, devoted to each other, their family and the values they lived. Their partnership included (but was not limited to) teaching and writing in the fields of environmental and science education.

At his funeral, in lieu of eulogies, there were selected readings from Elliott's own memoirs. His own words speak best of the kind of man he was and what was important to him.

Courting

"Rose and I met over a dead cat. Actually, it was in the Comparative Anatomy class. As was my wont, I arrived at the first session early and seated myself where I could comfortably observe the girls as they walked into the room. I had arranged my own beauty parade. When Rose appeared, I elected her Miss America. Gorgeous! 'Wow!' I thought, 'If I could only have a girl like that!'"

"I also met Rose between classes—frequently. She never knew why I would so often be right outside a building when she came

out. Later I admitted that I had gone to the registrar's office at the beginning of each term and asked to her program, which I then copied. With a written record of where Rose would be, how could I miss?"

"All this was going on while Rose was engaged to someone else. Naturally, he objected to my interest in Rose, which must have been fairly obvious. 'Don't be silly,' she told him. 'He's just a kid, and besides I talk to him only because he's so smart and knows biology so well.'"

"Nothing spectacular developed in our relationship while we were both undergraduates, but I always maintained a subtle pressure... Meanwhile Rose was beginning to doubt that she really loved Maurice and she began to feel a greater attraction to me. One beautiful spring day we took a trip to Van Cortlandt Park. I lay on the grass while Rose sat beside me and we both watched a bird in a tree above us. I did not realize it then, but Rose told me later that she fell in love with me at that time."

"Our 45th wedding anniversary has already passed as I am writing this. Evidently, either the civil ceremony or the religious ceremony was effective. Perhaps both were."

"I've done all I can to make things easier for Rose. At no time have I declined to do anything because it is 'women's work.' From the very beginning of our marriage, I have been what is now known as a 'liberated man.' Rose, on her part, has always been a liberated woman. It has been our experience that such a pair can have a marvelous, loving, long-lasting relationship."

Growing Old

"I feel young. I'm 67 years old now, but I feel young. For the past 10 years or so, I haven't been able to throw a ball overhand...but I feel young. I can't close my fist without feeling without feeling the effort and sometimes a little pain. Raymond, our 15-year old grandson, can beat me at arm wrestling, but I feel young."

"I'm skeptical about Ronald Reagan's other qualifications for the presidency, but I think he's the right age. On the other hand, I can't see how youngsters 45 years old or less can be entrusted with the responsibilities that go with being a principal of a school...By the way, college students look much younger than they used to."

"I feel young because I'm always learning as much as I can, because I'm as productive as I can be, because I'm excited about ideas that are new to me and about new discoveries, inventions and developments. I feel young because I love to communicate. I feel young because Rose and I consciously try to make new younger friends. I feel young because my family and other people allow me to help them in whatever way I can. I feel young because Rose helps me feel young. I feel young because I consider that what I do has meaning and value and because I intend being productive until I die. I feel young because I am not afraid of death."

BOOK BUZZ

by Regina McCarthy

I've been reading a lot about birds lately...

Welcome, Brown Bird is the story of two boys in different parts of the world who wait each year for the sound of the wood thrush song. Like *Flute's Journey* by Rebecca Cherry, it addresses the threats to this flute-like sounding bird, the wood thrush. *Welcome, Brown Bird* by Mary Lyn Ray reaches a young audience in a colorful poetic way but can also be used for older students. The boys in this story, not knowing each other, bring the same message to their fathers: do not cut down the woods, the wood thrush lives there. One child lives presumably in the US or Canada and the other Spanish-speaking boy lives where the wood thrush migrates to each fall. The magnificent oils by Peter Sylvada add to the simple beauty of this book as we follow the wood thrush's life in the north, her migration south, life in the Spanish speaking world of the Americas and finally the return migration north.

Although it is listed for ages 3 to 7, I would also use it with older children to support learning about migration and habitat protection.

Another recent publication by Pete Salmonsohn and Steve Kress is called *Saving Birds: Heros Around the World*. Some may be familiar with Steve Kress and his own rescue efforts for the Atlantic Puffin off the coast of Maine. Pete Salmonsohn has been working with Steve Kress in recent years on various education projects and books. (Pete has also been working with our NYC program Operation Explore off and on for the last 20 years. His first involvement was as education director at Taconic Outdoor Education Center and currently he is working with some of these Operation Explore groups now at Audubon's Constitution Marsh Nature Center.)

In their current book together they travel around the world to highlight other "heroes" of the bird world. The birds they focus on are: Black Robins in New Zealand; Quetzels in Mexico; Hornbills in Sarawak; Black-Necked Cranes in China; Lesser Kestrels in Israel and Murres in California.

In many of these situations we are made aware that saving these birds can be a clash between the culture and even the survival of the people that live in these areas. These heroes show how we can work with these peoples to preserve such endangered birds without threatening their cultures or livelihood. This is an important message for our students to be made aware of in an environmental context. The people of these places are just as important as the birds we want to save and they cannot be lost anymore than the species that we need to protect.

The book ends with resources and suggestions for teachers in using this book. I would suggest using this book with grades 4 through 8.

National and International EE News

by John Lancos

NAAEE Publishes Nonformal EE Guidelines

The North American Association for Environmental Education has published the latest in their series of EE guidelines, *Non-formal Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence*, which provides recommendations for developing and administering high quality non-formal EE programs at parks, nature centers and similar venues. This document builds on their *Guidelines for Learning: K-12*, and would have direct applicability to many EEAC members and their organizations. John Lancos of Gateway gave a brief overview of the document at the July Steering Committee meeting.

Educators Take Flight! NYSOEA Annual Conference

The New York State Outdoor Education Association will have its 38th Annual Conference in Ithaca, New York on October 6-9, 2005. Workshops, exhibits, speakers and field trips provide outstanding professional development opportunities for educators. Visits to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, the Finger Lakes and local colleges highlight this year's event. Go to www.nysoea.org or call 607-533-3597 for more information.

It's Not Just Manatees

Educators have long known and taught about the dangers of pleasure boats striking and injuring or killing Manatees, but ship strikes are also a grave danger to endangered North American Right Whales. The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement in its efforts to reduce this hazard along the East Coast. This is a great subject for student research, and you can learn more at www.noaa.gov.



EEAC MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of EEAC is twofold: To advocate for excellence in formal and informal environmental education in New York City and beyond, and to provide an ongoing network and various forums for all committed to environmental education to grow professionally and to share ideas and information.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2005

☐ New Member

☐ Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt. _____ Zip Code _____ - _____

If sustaining Organization, Name of Contact Person _____

Business Phone () _____ Home Phone () _____

Affiliation (for categories other than Sustaining Organization): _____

Title/Position: _____

Address (for categories other than Sustaining Organization): _____

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Please check the appropriate calendar year membership category:

☐ \$ 20 Regular (2005) ☐ \$ 50 Sustaining Organization (2005) ☐ \$200 Individual Life Membership

Please make checks payable to EEAC. Thank you! EEAC is a 501-C-3 organization.

I would like to become involved in a committee.

Please provide me with information about the following committees:

☐ Exhibits ☐ Newsletter ☐ Programs ☐ Technology ☐ EEAC Commemorative Fund
☐ TEEP (Teacher Environmental Education Preparation)

Please complete the application and mail it, with your payment, to:

Jay Holmes, EEAC Treasurer, c/o Education Department, American Museum of Natural History,
Central Park West at 79th Street, New York, NY 10024



4003 14-1002+21211

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