

From Activism to Outdoor Education

By Ray Pultinas

Our students' daily entrance to school is not only a "material" search, it is a "bodily" search. It is a kind of test, in the early morning. What are our students made of besides flesh and bone: Cloth? Leather? Metal? Electronics? It is not only about what students are carrying or their composition as cultural beings. It is also about being identified, it is about who their bodies say that they are. They approach the scanner, identity card in hand, and swipe. The computer monitor flashes the student's photo identification on a screen. Valid, approved, ok. The machine tells our students that they are who they are supposed to be.

The spark for the idea of the **James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center**, a plan to transform the "grounds" of the DeWitt Clinton High School Campus into an exemplary community school that inspires resiliency, sustainability, and personal responsibility, may have come at the same historic moment that metal detectors first arrived at the entrances of DeWitt Clinton High School in the fall of 2005. Students protested and about 1,500 walked out and marched in protest – and The Witt Seminar, a journalism elective on Activism that I taught for five years, was born.

We were poised to respond to our school's sudden onset of high security, police presence, "captive lunch" and a pervasive "lock down" mentality. We were afraid of the short term effects of an attack on our freedom, yes, but we were also afraid for our future. What kind of students were we to become in this suddenly

hostile environment? We all feared suddenly being thrust into a role in a "school to prison pipeline." I set upon our class to ask ourselves the question, now that we are "supposedly" safe: what can we do? How do we act?

We wrote, we researched, we interviewed and profiled



Cover illustration by Crystal Gonzalez, from "This Is the Way We Go To School" in Magpie Witt Activism, Spring 2007, Volume 83, No. 2

activists, we published and publicized, and we hosted annual Activist Conferences. In 2010, the year our school hit bottom, when the halls never quieted and gangs of students roamed incessantly and fear pervaded our school day, we started the Clinton Garden. It became a necessary sanctuary, a quiet place on a riotous campus, and soon would become our best guide and teacher.

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Environmental Education Advisory Council

Judith Hutton
The New York Botanical Garden
Teacher Training
2900 Southern Boulevard
Bronx, NY 10458

www.eeac-nyc.org

EEAC Newsletter

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 quality environmental education.

Newsletter Deadlines

If you would like to submit an article for the newsletter, please email it as a Microsoft Word attachment to KimE@dep.nyc.gov.

The newsletter deadline is the first Monday of Feb., May, and September. We would love your ideas!

Newsletter Committee

Lynn Cole Kim Estes-Fradis
Joy Garland Editor: Mary Most

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The Environmental Education Advisory Council of New York City, EEAC-NYC, is the only nonprofit organization with the sole purpose of promoting and supporting outstanding environmental education in New York City schools and other centers for learning.

EEAC Officers

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Sarah Pidgeon, Vice Chairperson & Program Chairperson
Judith Hutton, Treasurer and Membership
Vacant, Secretary

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Ray Pultinas, NYC Department of Education
Bonnie Ralston, NYC Dept. of Parks & Recreation
Robert Wallace, New York University
Mike Zamm, T.E.E.P.

Steering Committee Meetings

Please visit the EEAC website at www.eeac-nyc.org for meeting locations or contact an EEAC Steering Committee member. Steering committee meetings are open to anyone interested in learning about environmental education in New York City and sharing information about special programs and projects.

STAY IN TOUCH!

Members, keep up with the latest EEAC news on EEAC-NYC@googlegroups.com
If you would like to join the listserv contact Carol Franken at carolfranken@gmail.com



EEAC NYC



@eeacnyc



CHAIR'S MESSAGE

2019 promises to be a year of growth for EEAC, thanks to the volunteers working tirelessly behind the scenes to strengthen our programs, form new partnerships, and engage our members in meaningful ways.

In the interest of increasing participation in EEAC events by students and new professionals, the EEAC Steering Committee voted in Fall 2018 to reduce the membership rate for students to \$10 per year. We believe that membership in EEAC is the best way to network with environmental education professionals in NYC and by offering this low rate, we hope students will attend events and increase their opportunities in the field. Ideally, some of these new members will also join committees, bring new energy into our events, and develop valuable skills. Becoming active in EEAC is also a great resume builder!

In January, we held a great event in partnership with NYC Department of Education where members and other informal educators learned about the Next Generation Science Standards and how educators can align our programs to them in order to support classroom teachers. Over 100 informal educators attended the symposium. It was empowering to learn how we can partner with the DOE and classroom teachers; I'm excited to see how this partnership develops through upcoming programs.

Thank you so much for your support and please feel free to reach out to learn more and get involved!

River-



Green Schools Catalyst Quarterly

By Karen Alsen, Solar One

Do you follow *Green Schools Catalyst Quarterly*? GSCQ is a peer-reviewed digital magazine dedicated to the advancement of green, healthy and sustainable K-12 schools. GSCQ is available free of charge and includes evidence-based research, practical tools, news, and case studies for K-12 educators, administrators, and students.

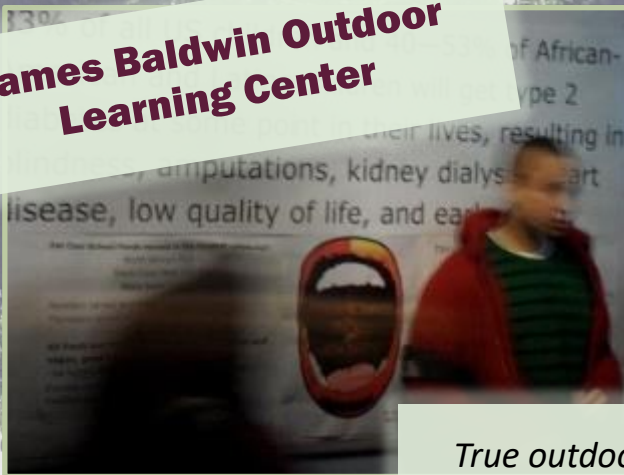
Climate Literacy was the theme of the December 2018 issue, and it featured my article on green careers for NYC HS students, "Paving the Path to Green Careers in New York City".

Free online access is available to all the issues, published by Green Schools National Network: catalyst.greenschoolsnationalnetwork.org/gscatalyst.

In addition to the in-depth quarterly publication, [Green Schools National Network](http://www.greenschoolsnationalnetwork.org) offers networking and professional development resources, and a GreenNotes e-newsletter.



James Baldwin Outdoor Learning Center



True outdoor education requires nature to provide the curriculum.



(From Activism to Outdoor Education, continued from page 1)

It was reported that the Bronx suffered the highest rate of obesity in New York City. Studies still show obesity levels are highest among black and Latino communi-



ties, and low-income and rural communities that lack healthy food choices. Popular films like **Food, Inc** and **Supersize Me** persuaded us that Americans were suffering and dying from a diet of fast food – and we in the Bronx, particularly so.

We asked students to “vote with their mouth”. Working with partners like Coalition for Healthy School Food and Garden to Café, we introduced mindfully prepared and fresh, plant-based options into the school cafeteria.

The garden has expanded many times over. Students from the Environmental Affairs Club and Sustainability classes started **Meg’s Community Garden** in 2016. We planted dozens of fruit trees donated by the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation to establish a fruit orchard and edible forest. In 2017, our students helped build the Sun Club Teens for Food Justice Hydroponic Farm with the intention to grow 25,000 lbs of leafy green vegetables per year to feed hundreds of students in the student cafeteria per day. This past summer, we initiated a summer youth employment program and started a youth market.

In retrospect, starting the Clinton Garden was, simply put, a way to legitimize bringing students outdoors. But as time went on, it was the outdoors that became our guide and now is our teacher. As schooling has be-

come more and more performance driven and high stakes testing has become the norm, we realize that outdoor education is seldom addressed, and can it ever be, from inside a classroom? It is not just school security or accountability to the curriculum that make it harder to bring students outdoors to learn. Even when they’re outdoors, youth are absorbed in virtual realities in a predominantly “plugged-in” culture; they might not experience the mindfulness of being in nature or the benefits of hands-on learning in sustainable natural environments beneficial to health.

With over 25 acres, the DeWitt Clinton High School Campus is poised to provide a unique, enriching, and essential outdoor education in gardening, permaculture, green infrastructure, and food production and preparation. We envision multi-generational, community integrated outdoor learning spaces on our campus. We have a wealth of school grounds that offer the potential of countless sustainable projects.

To learn more or get involved with the project: visit jamesbaldwinoutdoorlearningcenter.org or contact Founder and Director Ray Pultinas at rmaray@jamesbaldwinoutdoorlearningcenter.org

We’ve learned through permaculture practices that true outdoor education requires nature to provide the curriculum. The rain, the sun, the soil, the wind, the seasons give instruction. Elders, students, community members, you and I are fellow pupils, who also learn with and from each other.



TEEP UPDATE

BY MIKE ZAMM,
EEAC-TEEP
SUBCOMMITTEE

REPORT ON TEEP III WORKSHOP AT NYU, 12/13 2018

FORTY-SIX people registered for TEEP (Teacher Environmental Education Preparation) Workshop III and 36 attended. After a series of engaging presentations in the morning session, all of which featured significant audience participation, attendees met in groups in the afternoon to strategize about ways to improve Environmental/Sustainability Education (EE) in three areas: teacher preparation in EE, the sustainability coordinator position in the NYC public schools, and education on climate change.

The morning presentations reviewed:

- 1) progress made in developing a Clearinghouse of information and resources in EE for teachers;
- 2) Next Generation Science Standards which are replete with EE concepts
- 3) Parents Conference on Sustainability held at Teachers College in October
- 4) Efforts of the Coalition for Improving School Sustainability (CFISS) to strengthen the voluntary sustainability coordinator (SC) position in the NYC schools including the proposal to create seven paid, full-time regional SC's, one in each major NYC DOE region, to support the volunteer coordinators
- 5) infusion of EE into the preparation of early childhood teachers and science teachers by professors at NYU
- 6) ongoing development of NYU's Masters Degree Program in Environmental Conservation Education

From the presentations we learned that the Clearinghouse will hopefully be ready for use by September 2019. With respect to the SC position, Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams stands ready to support the presentation of the regional sustainability coordinator proposal to the City Council for possible funding. Also, workshop participants agreed that the NYU EE program could be a model for other colleges of education.

The strategy session in the afternoon produced many suggestions for action in each of the three areas mentioned above. The most practical and potentially effective strategies are described and discussed below.

EDUCATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Organize a citywide event, e.g., a conference on climate change education, for NYC teachers. Demonstrating the prevalence of climate change and related EE in the new science standards would be weaved into the fabric of the event.

For many years, since the "New York Naturally" conferences of the 1980's organized by EEAC and the then NYC Board of Education, there has been a need to convene another EE gathering and what better focus than climate change. Funding for this could be from the City Council, borough presidents, DOE and/or Con Edison.

The key to this happening is the formation of a small but committed group headed by one person who

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is willing to make this a significant focus of his/her work for 6-8 months.

Install a weather station in every NYC public school building.

The station would become the focus of climate studies for students throughout the school system. In schools where such a system has been installed significant scientific study of weather has been accomplished. While this would be a large expense, perhaps in the 25-50 million dollar range for the entire city, it would be a one-time budget item, unless it was phased in through smaller budget items over a period of years.

This would be a perfect idea to present to OneNYC for inclusion in the Mayor's budget as part of a package to continue to address the climate change issue in NYC. The PlanNYC and OneNYC plans to create a more resilient metropolis and a population that acts with climate change in mind will not be successful without a citizenry educated on climate issues and the weather station idea is a unique and powerful way to accomplish that.

Borough presidents and city council persons also have access to capital funds that could fund weather stations in all school buildings. We need to form a committee to explore this idea.

STRENGTHENING THE SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR POSITION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- DOE's Director of Science, Greg Borman, mentioned two items in his strategy committee which have emerged as important recommendations:
 - * Expand the proposed regional sustainability coordinator program from seven to eight DOE regions to incorporate the Affinity schools region.
 - * Utilize the 80 minutes of required staff development on Mondays for the sustainability coordinator (SC) in each school to do EE training with teachers (which might focus on climate change) on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. The SC's would have to be trained in a train the trainer program to do this. Greg Borman stated that many principals would welcome help in providing meaningful staff development during these Monday time periods. The CFISS needs to discuss means of implementing these recommendations.
- Another major recommendation in this area was linking the SC's in each school with the major environmentally related community based organizations (CBO's) in their geographical niche to receive information, technical assistance and training. The DOE Sustainability staff could develop a citywide plan to implement such a program.
- Provide one prep period a day for the SC's to plan their EE work.

TEACHER PREPARATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY (EE) EDUCATION

The infusion of EE into pre-service teacher preparation programs was TEEP's original mission and, while we have partially expanded the mission to include associated areas in EE, it is important that we continue to focus on preparation of pre-service teacher candidates and teachers in service who are seeking to complete their licensing requirements.

(Continued on page 9)

Book Buzz

Review by
Ellen Oshinsky

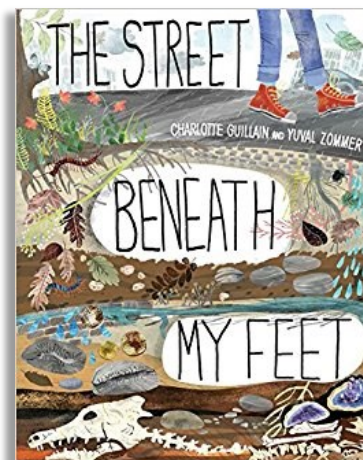
The Street Beneath My Feet

by Charlotte Guillain (Author), Yuval Zommer (Illustrator)

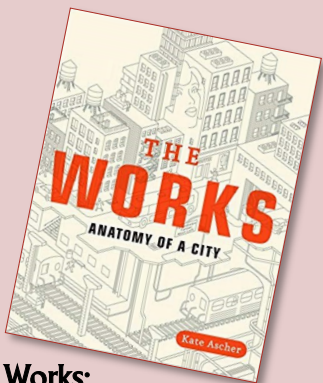
Amazon Link: <https://www.amazon.com/Street-Beneath-My-Feet/dp/1682971368>

Are you looking for a book to teach children about geology, burrowing animals, or the infrastructure of a city underneath the ground? **The Street Beneath My Feet** (2017) is a picture book with pages that accordion out, as the reader unfurls the layers of the earth and discovers what can be found in each layer.

On the first page, a young child is looking down from a busy city street and as the pages go further into the earth, we see labeled illustrations with the pipes for water and the sewer, wires for electricity, and tunnels for trains. In the deeper layers we find the rocks beneath us, including limestone and stalactites. Once readers arrive at the earth's core, they can flip over to the back side of the accordion pages and travel up the layers to the land, where the young child is now in the countryside observing a molehill.



A companion read, explore the city's infrastructure.



The Works:
Anatomy of a City
by Kate Asher

The illustrator creates clear visuals showing the overlap of where the pipes, burrowing animals, and fossils are found, and distinguishing between these elements through different colors and labels. There are so many illustrated details in earth tone colors – bugs, worms, and leaves next to larger pipes and rocks, with short text blurbs. This makes for crowded pages that may present an exciting visual and perhaps cerebral challenge for young children. Consider using this book with a very pointed frame of reference: observe matter found underground with young children, or teach upper elementary students about sedimentary rocks, or to help visualize the earth's core in relation to a New York City sidewalk. This book will intrigue children about the world found underground through its engaging illustrations, unique fold out structure, and makes the connection of geology to a city.



- The most important recommendation was to focus our organizing efforts on CUNY, especially the CUNY schools of education but also other city university colleges and community colleges where prospective teachers may take related courses.

While this may seem obvious, TEEP has tended to focus its efforts on the state level with the State Education Department and has not approached CUNY on a central administrative level concerning the status of EE in its teacher training programs. We should attempt to set up a meeting at the Chancellor or Deputy Chancellor level in the first half of 2019. Some of our political contacts in the City Council, State Legislature, and/or borough presidents' offices could help us in this regard.

Several workshop attendees recommended specific public and private colleges, in some instances with individual contacts, in the NY/Metro area that might be interested in starting or expanding their teacher prep programs in EE. While approaching individual colleges is time consuming and requires the personnel willing to do the leg work, we will examine our capacity and determine how much we can do.

- The idea of reaching out to the NYS Board of Regents, the State Legislature, and/or the governor to gain political support for a campaign to convince the schools of education in the state to adopt more EE was mentioned in one strategy session and has been considered in the past. This could be linked into a revival of the NYS Environmental Literacy Plan. Again, an assessment of our capacity to do this has to be done.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to the recommendations above we should consider the following in the first half of 2019:

A citywide conference on climate change education to be held in fall 2019 or spring 2020;

Installation of a weather station in every NYC school building over a several year period, to study climate change;

Expansion of the regional sustainability coordinator proposal to the eighth NYC DOE region;

Use of at least some of the required 80 minute weekly SD time for SC's to train teachers in EE;

Enlistment of CBO'S to provide information and technical assistance to SC's in their neighborhoods or communities;

Approach CUNY concerning the expansion of TEEP programs in the city university.

These strategies should be discussed at the EEAC steering committee meeting on Wednesday, January 16th, at NYU from 5:30-7 PM and beyond.

Thanks to all for a productive and stimulating workshop which will hopefully help grow EE in NY as we go forward.



Let's Save Water!

Water Conservation

Water is precious
And life is too,
Saving the earth
Starts with you!

Make showers short,
Pick up after your pet,
Shut the faucet
And you're all set!

Reuse your things
And do not litter
Slowerly but surely
We'll save water!

Conserving more water
And continuing this process
Will help us greatly
In reaching our success!

Jiayi
Grade 6
Brooklyn
Bay Academy I.S.98

Poem by
Abhinoor

Water Poem

Easy. Easy.
Turn the faucet.
Easy. Easy.
Watch it flow.
Easy. Easy.
Take for granted
something some
will never know.

Children carry
water buckets
over hills
across the sand
while here
I turn the
knob and
water fills my
hand.

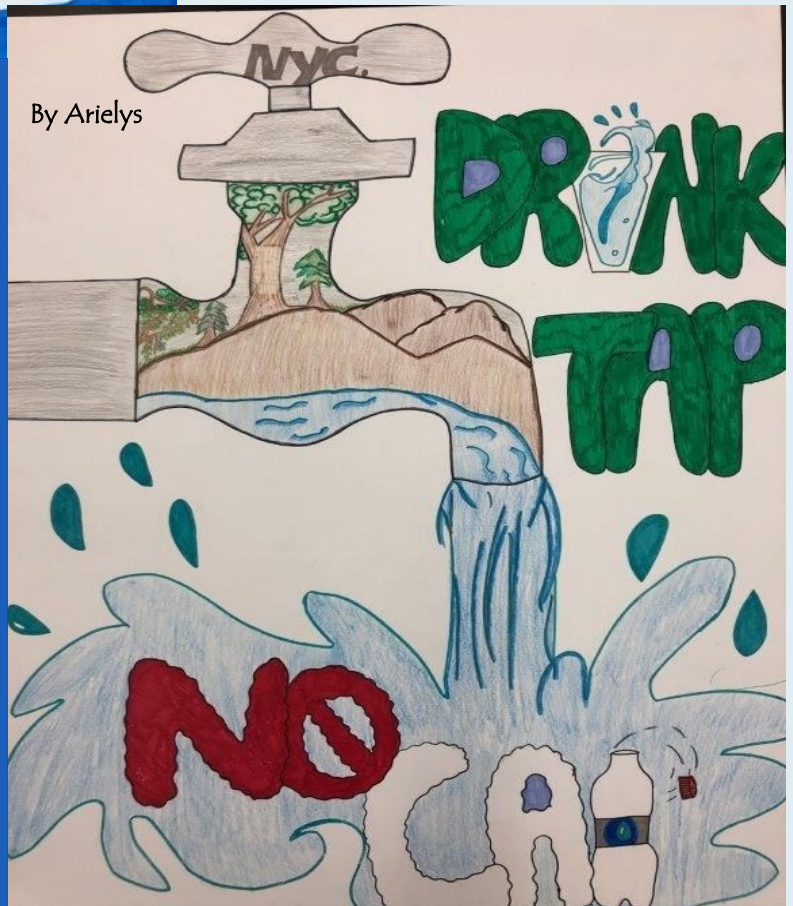
33rd Annual Water Resources Art & Poetry Contest

Each year, the NYC Department of Environmental Protection invites second through twelfth grade students attending public, independent, charter, or parochial schools (or homeschooled) in New York City and East and West of Hudson Watersheds to create original art and compose poetry that reflects an appreciation for our shared water resources.

"This contest is a terrific way for students both in New York City and beyond to express the importance of protecting our environment and our water resources - resources we simply could not live without."

DEP Commissioner Vincent Sapienza

See photos and images of more student work here:
www.flickr.com/photos/nycwater/47892268751/in/photostream/



NYSOEA / EEAC Membership Swap

By Karen Alsen & River DiLeo

EEAC is excited to announce a new partnership with NY State Outdoor Education Association (NYSOEA) that will connect members from both organizations to a wider range of professional development and networking opportunities.

NYSOEA just celebrated its 50th anniversary as the state-wide professional networking organization for outdoor educators, serving members through five regional programs, a high-quality newsletter, and annual conferences. The mission of NYSOEA is to promote interdisciplinary life-long learning in, for, and about the outdoors and seeks to inspire appreciation of the environment by all people.

EEAC has worked closely with NYSOEA in the past but the overlap in our missions and goals created an opportunity for a more formal and ongoing collaboration.

This innovative partnership between EEAC and NYSOEA began with the creation of a shared board/committee position. **Karen Alsen**, Education Director at SolarOne, is stepping into this new role and serves as both the Metro Region representative for NYSOEA and as a Program Committee member for EEAC. Through this shared position, she will be working on programs like networking events and professional development opportunities that will serve members of both organizations.

Benefits of the membership swap for EEAC members include: reduced rates at NYSEOEA events such as winter weekend and the annual conference, and access to NYSOEA's quarterly newsletter PATHWAYS. Similarly, NYSOEA members can attend EEAC events at member rates, receive our newsletter, and join the listserv. EEAC and NYSOEA will be co-sponsoring upcoming events, so stay tuned!

NYSEOEA Winter Weekend

Activities at the NYSOEA weekend, held annually over Presidents Day weekend in February, included hiking, nature art printing, cordage making with foraged materials, soap making, culturally responsive teaching, and a winter fungi walk facilitated by EEAC chair River DeLeo.

NYSOEA Annual Conference: Fall 2019

NYSOEA's 51st annual conference will be held in the metro region this year at Sharpe Reservation in Fishkill, NY, from October 31 to November 3, 2019. The theme for the conference will be *Outdoors is for Everyone: Equity, Access, and Inclusion in Outdoor Education*. EEAC is looking forward to playing a big role in this conference so if you're interested in getting involved with the conference, learning more about NYSOEA, or have suggestions for future member programs, please reach out to Karen at metro_region@nysoea.org.



Making nature art at NYSOEA Winter Weekend



Winter fungi walking tour

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



☐ New member ☐ Renewal Date _____

Name _____

Title _____

Organization or school _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Organization Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone _____

Business phone _____

Email _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

☐ \$30 Individual ☐ \$10 Student

☐ \$75 Organization

☐ \$250 Individual Life

Please make checks payable to "EEAC."

Mail completed form and check to:
Attn: Judith Hutton
The New York Botanical Garden
Teacher Training
2900 Southern Boulevard
Bronx, NY 10458

Members are welcome at EEAC Steering Committee meetings, held every 3rd Wednesday of the month. Check our website for these and other events.

www.eeac-nyc.org

EEAC is a 501-(c)3 organization.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

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