



eeac

NEWSLETTER

FALL 1989

A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

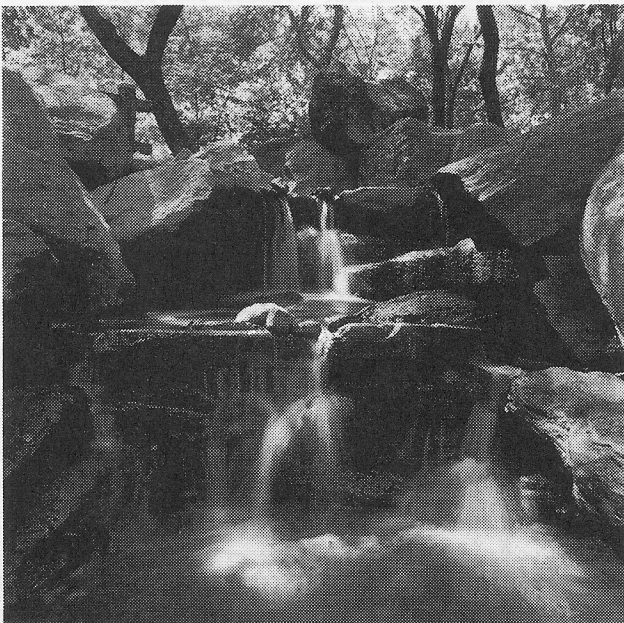
N.Y.C. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 8-9



STEVE DELANEY/EPA



NYC DEP



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NYC DEPT. OF SANITATION

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

A voluntary organization in support of Environmental Education for New York

STATEWIDE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The infusion of environmental concepts into the New York State Education Department Syllabi is moving along nicely. From feedback EEAC'ers have been getting it does appear that local districts on a primary and secondary level are taking the syllabi seriously.

To extend and deepen the effort Lys McLaughlin, Nancy Wolf, and I met with the three Regents that were contacted in 1983-84 at the beginning of the infusion drive. Strategies to include ee concepts in tests, in pre-service and in-service education courses for teachers, and in textbooks were discussed. A number of letters will be written and meetings held to begin implementing those strategies.

As with the infusion effort, we will need the support of all EEAC members. We will need to strengthen the policy committee (formerly the legislative committee) again so that many EEAC'ers can be called on to write letters and attend meetings to make this attempt as participatory as possible. Call Mike Zamm (212)566-0990 or Nancy Wolf (212)677-1601 if you wish to join the policy committee or in some way become involved. Thank you.

Mike Zamm

BULLETIN!!!

As we go to press we have just received word that the administration of the NYC Board of Education has wisely decided that the Gateway Environmental Study Center will continue as a program of the central Board in partnership with the National Park Service. It has decided against trying to turn the Center's management over to one of the 32 elementary school districts.

Thanks are due to the Federal and New York State legislators, the New York City Council members and officials, and the many individuals and leaders of agencies and groups -- particularly the Educators for Gateway -- who sent Board officials written arguments as to why the Gateway Center should be directed by the central Board.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

c/o Prospect Park Environmental Center
The Tennis House
Prospect Park
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215



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

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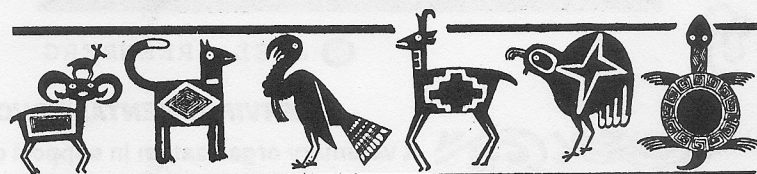
Elaine Alberts, P.S. 120Q
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Nancy A. Wolf, Environmental Action Coalition
Herb Yellin, American Cetacean Society
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*Affiliations for identification purposes only

Kim Estes-Fradis, Newsletter Editor

Please send material (articles, drawings, letter, program information) for inclusion in the EEAC newsletter to:

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New York, N.Y. 10025



EEAC MEMBERS URGED TO HELP WITH OPEN SPACE SURVEY

EEAC wants to find out how (and whether) New York City schools are using nearby natural areas and open spaces. If you are a classroom teacher or school administrator, you can help --- and please do.

To do so, complete the following EEAC Open Spaces Survey and mail your responses to:



EEAC
c/o Prospect Park Environmental Center
The Tennis House, Prospect Park
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215.

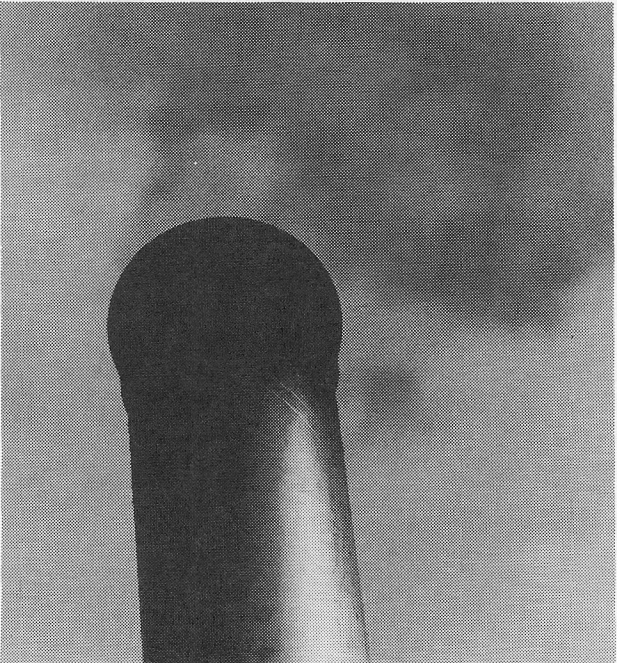
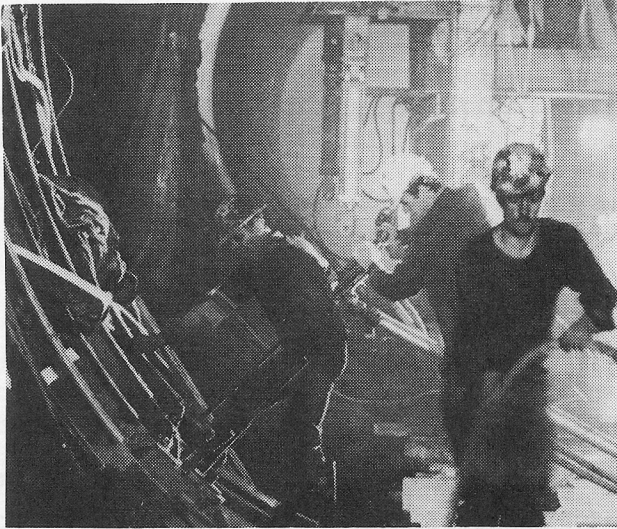
Your answers will be used to assess how EEAC can encourage open space use.

Your name _____, position _____, school _____, school address _____, Borough _____, zip _____, school telephone _____, and district # _____.

1. What natural areas or open spaces in, around or near your school are available to you? Please specify (school grounds, managed landscaped areas, atrium or courtyard, roof, nearby parks, beaches, neighboring properties, community gardens, cemeteries, vacant lots, woods, marshes).
2. Are any of these areas utilized for school-related activities now, or in the past? How?
3. How many classes _____, teachers _____, students _____ are involved? How often are these areas used?
4. What role does the school administration take in the utilization of these places?
5. Identify any problems or concerns related to this use.
6. What improvements or suggestions would you make to better utilize the area?
7. How can EEAC be of assistance to you in helping you get the most from a natural area-workshops, materials, courses?
8. Additional comments

A pilot mailing of the questionnaire has been sent to 20 schools near parks in Brooklyn, and responses received so far say, among other things, that the schools would like workshops to help teachers use the parks better and to integrate park field trips into the curriculum.

The questionnaire was written by EEAC members Lenore Miller and Dennis Bader. Lenore is an EEAC Steering Committee member and teacher who leads classes in active use of a natural area near P.S. 54 in Staten Island. Dennis is a leader in The Training Student Organizers program at the Council on The Environment of New York City.



A CONFERENCE TO BANISH ENVIRONMENTAL BLAHS

By Sam Holmes

On Sept. 8 and 9 EEAC will join the N.Y.C. Department of Environmental Protection in presenting Blueprint for Action, an unusual kind of conference at Manhattan's Vista Hotel. It will bring together 500 leaders of communities, government, business and environmental education.

I need the Blueprint for Action conference more than anybody, because frankly I have been suffering from the Environmental Blahs -- a condition you get from looking at too many environmental problems at once, with too little understanding of how to solve them, and with the fear that nothing you do will make much difference anyhow.

Somewhere in a cardboard box I have a photograph showing children in gas masks marching out of Union Square carrying placards against air pollution. That was Earth Day 1970, nearly 20 years ago --- but how much better is the air now, with ozone making summer jogging unhealthy and acid rain spoiling lakes and forests?

Enough negativism. I recognize that this is an important hour for change. Environmental news makes the front page of the New York Times almost every week, and at least three New York City groups are urging this year's political candidates to consider environmental issues. Energy is building up for new Federal, State and City laws to restore and preserve the environment.

So we should be using this energy to push for permanent extensions of environmental education that will continue the understanding of coming generations beyond the clamor of the present hours. Blueprint for Action should help me and others to find point of personal focus and the knowledge we need to pursue a direction.

The British essayist Mas Beerbohm said that there are two kinds of people in the world: hosts and guests. Harvey Schultz's good concept for Blueprint for Action give the educators of New York a chance to play both roles. We can be hosts because we will no longer be talking just to ourselves, but can tell our story to community leaders, government leaders and business people.

But we'll be guests and learners as we follow 13 subject matter experts on field trips --- to a landfill, to recycling centers, to sewage treatment plants and the like -- and then attend their workshops for a basic grounding on the city's most important environmental issues. At the workshops we educators can learn first-hand how community, government and business leaders look at the problems. On some of the issues, maybe we can move toward a new consensus.

As guests we will also listen with great attention as keynote speaker Robert F. Wagner, Jr. gives us his vision of the future on environmental education in New York City.

Back to our role as hosts, we can show community, government and business leaders how environmental education currently works in New York City, with leadership being provided mainly by two groups:

1. Dedicated individuals within the city school system who act on their own initiative and then get the support of principals, superintendents, community schools boards or the central Board.

(continued on next page)

Key to photographs

Opposite page - from the top

- Building Water Tunnel Three (DEP)
- Steve Delaney (EPA)
- Steve Delaney (EPA)

This page - from the top

- Hudson River, Riverside Park
- Lady-fern, Cunningham Park
- Plumb Beach, Gateway National Recreation Area

All of these photographs are by Joel Greenberg © from Urban Wilderness: Nature in New York City. The text is by Jean Gardner with a foreward by Bill Moyers. Published by Earth Environmental Group, this book is available at fine bookstores and by contacting E.E.G., 265 Water Street, New York, N.Y. 10038, (212) 285-0979.



A CONFERENCE (continued)

2. Sixty plus organizations outside the school system which provide environmental teacher training and field trips for children -- the city's ten nature centers, its botanical gardens, zoos, parks, museums, universities and independent environmental programs.

We don't like to toot our own horn, but -- Tah Dah! --- we can show them how for five years leaders from the Environmental Education Advisory Council have worked with the New York State Department of Education to successfully infuse important environmental concepts into the state curriculum syllabi for sciences and social studies.

As hosts we can also bring the news of opportunities that lie ahead, such as Senator Quentin Burdick's bill that would provide \$15,000,000 a year (through the EPA) for environmental education.

We may even beat the drum a bit for our EEAC resolution asking the Board of Education to establish a city-wide policy for environmental education and to implement it by appointing an Environmental Education Coordinator.

As a host, I get nervous and hope there won't be any nasty rows at the dinner table. I hope that unsupported charges of greed or bumbling bureaucracy will be minimal, and that there will be little damnation of the faceless "they" who purportedly cause environmental problems; "they" are frequently "us".

Finally, as hosts and guests I pray we always keep in our minds the message of the originator of EEAC, Dr. Eugene Ezersky, at our 1985 New York, Naturally! conference.

"The most immediate ecological priority," Gene said, "must be that of saving a whole generation of children who are presently growing up in the poverty areas of our cities.. It is equally important to save the family of a man who resides in the streets of hopelessness as it is to save the striped bass in the Hudson."

I hope that during the conference we can discover ways toward neighborhood, housing and school improvement which will bring job training, jobs and environmental quality to those who now are on the outside looking in at the lives of the affluent.

CANDIDATES URGED TO CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT

As the fall elections approach, candidates for 43 New York City offices are being urged to consider environmental issues by a number of groups, and several have stressed the need for environmental education. Materials prepared by these organizations could be useful to teachers who want to show students the relationship between environmental problems and the political process.

One of the organizations is an ad hoc group called Environment '89, which created a "platform" with a total of 50 policy recommendations in seven areas - parks and open space, clean air, clean water, energy, solid waste, development and environmental education. This group will not endorse any candidates, but is working to acquaint them with the issues.

EEAC Chairman Sam Holmes worked on development of the Environmental Education section, and a majority of the EEAC Steering Committee voted to support the platform by being listed as one of the 18 founding members of Environment '89. Since then, more than 200 groups have endorsed the platform. To get a copy, write to: Environment '89, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Ave. N.Y.C. 10025 or phone (212)316-7564.

The New York League of Conservation Voters has sent a list of 25 environmental questions to all mayoral candidates and 24 to all others. The League is also doing research into the environmental activities and voting records of the candidates. Using responses to the questionnaires and other data, the League will evaluate the candidates, with the aim of endorsing those who show the greatest promise of doing good for the environment. For more information, write to the League at P.O. Box 4146, Grand Central Station, N.Y.C. 10163

The Sierra Club has also circulated a questionnaire to N.Y.C. candidates, and another group, The Public Environment has created a seven section "Agenda to Enhance New York City's Environment" and has sent it to the candidates. For a copy of the Agenda write to The Public Environment, 230 East 88 St., New York, N.Y. 10128, or call (212)722-1631.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

EEAC is a special group of educators, youth leaders, environmental professionals and active individuals whose common aim is to encourage environmental education in the N.Y.C. Region.

We are an organization that works on "synergy." Through us, members are able to pool their ideas and knowledge, speak with a single voice to influence educational policy, and, as individuals, share many pleasurable and interesting activities.

The main goal of EEAC's coming together is the education of today's young people. The future stewardship of our environment, an immensely important task, depends on their being informed and, as much as possible, experienced in environmental matters. We stress that young people should develop an appreciation both of nature in the wild and of the richness of urban and semi-urban environments, as well as an awareness of environmental problems to be solved.

By exchanging our knowledge, we at EEAC make each other better educators. By advising and influencing where we can, we may make education better as a whole.

" BUT CONNECT..." ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

CUT HERE — CUT HERE — CUT HERE —

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

_____ New Member _____ Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Affiliation: _____

Title/Position: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Your \$10.00 dues payment covers the cost of membership in EEAC for a calendar year.

A membership entitles you to receive EEAC Newsletters, program information mailings, and conference announcements.

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

Bernard Kirschenbaum
12 Gregory Road
Springfield, N.J. 07081

Please make all checks payable to E.E.A.C.



EEAC EXPANDS SCIENCE FAIR AWARDS

Ten New York City students received awards from EEAC this spring for Science Fair projects which showed an awareness of environmental problems.

The wide range of winners included such projects as a study of the beneficial uses of earthworms, a survey of attitudes toward recycling, and a sophisticated sampling of the air off the Brooklyn shoreline to see if coliforms from the harbor are carried into the air. (some are.) All of the winners have been invited to display their projects at the Blueprint for Action conference which EEAC is co-sponsoring Sept. 8 & 9 with the NYC Department of Environmental Protection.

Last year EEAC provided just one award -- to a high school project that made it to the city-wide finals. This year teams of EEAC judges evaluated not only city-wide high school winners, but went to the borough-wide fairs in all five boroughs, in order to make awards to students at the 7th and 8th grade levels.

Borough winners were presented with signed copies of The Urban Naturalist by Steven D. Garber, and the city-wide prize was a U.S. Savings Bond worth \$50 at maturity.

EEAC SPOTLIGHTS...

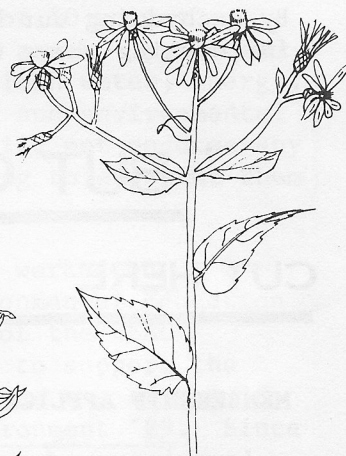
Con Edison, for once again, generously printing this issue of our newsletter; Tessa Huxley for Battery Park City tour; Ken Kowald for receiving the annual Parks Council Award for Service to the Community and for being "profiled" in Newsday; Prospect Park Environmental Center and Talbert Spence for being featured in "Natural Science Center News" and to Don Riepe, Tom Fox and the Prospect Park Environmental Center for receiving the Audubon Society Awards.



Milkweed



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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
ADVISORY COUNCIL (EEAC)

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