Environmental Educators of North Carolina (EENC) is North Carolina’s affiliate of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), an integrated network of professionals in the field of environmental education with membership throughout North America and in more than 55 countries.

EENC’s mission is to promote excellence in professional development and facilitate networking opportunities, inspiring educators to create an environmentally literate citizenry.

EENC’s vision is to connect diverse professionals and organizations to each other and to high quality environmental education materials and programs, demonstrating leadership in North Carolina and beyond.

EENC is an entirely volunteer run, membership-based organization. To meet the needs of smaller groups throughout the state, North Carolina is organized into three sections—Western, Central, and Eastern. Committee & section meetings and retreats occur throughout the year and culminate at the statewide annual conference.

www.eenc.org
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OFFICERS

PRESIDENT .............................................................................. Dee Rudolph
North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher
PRESIDENT-ELECT ..................................................................... Shelby Gull Laird
Division of Water Resources
PAST PRESIDENT ...................................................................... Diane Silver
North Carolina Cooperative Extension
SECRETARY ................................................................................ Lara Overby
Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools
TREASURER ................................................................................ Sandra Weitzel
North Carolina Division of Soil and Water Conservation

SECTION COORDINATORS

CENTRAL SECTION ....................................................................... Mickey Jo Sorrell
Morehead Planetarium & Science Center
EASTERN SECTION ....................................................................... Sarah Phillips
North Carolina Coastal Federation
WESTERN SECTION ....................................................................... Kelly Hoke
North Carolina State Parks

COMMITTEE CHAIRS & CO-CHAIRS

COMMUNICATION ......................................................................... Elizabeth Burk, Mud Pie Planet
EDUCATION ................................................................................. GayLynn Samsonoff, Randy Senzig
Wake County Public Schools
MEMBERSHIP ................................................................................ Pat Curley, Onslow County Schools
Abbie Emory, Agape Center of EE
PARTNERSHIP .............................................................................. Sean Higgins, North Carolina State Parks
POLICY ......................................................................................... Tom Shepherd, High Point Parks and Recreation
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ...................................................... Sandy Ruble, North Carolina Cooperative Extension
REGIONAL MEETINGS

The Central Section held its annual Green Crafting Party on December 6 at Blue Jay Point. This much-anticipated event brings holiday cheer and networking together as members create gifts made from items saved from the landfill.

The Western Section held a retreat on May 2-3 in Hot Springs. Despite a rainy weekend, members toured and enjoyed lunch on a local organic farm and had a pleasant evening at Silvermine Campground.

NAAEE CONFERENCE

Winning the bid to host North American Association for Environmental Education’s 40th annual conference in 2008 meant lots of preparation for this international conference in 2009.

EENC set the bar for host-state organizations by starting the planning process early. We contracted Lois Nixon, 2007 EENC President, to serve as State Co-Chair. The development and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between EENC and NAAEE and a detailed list of Conference Committee descriptions allowed us to move forward quickly in all of our responsibilities.

The Conference Executive Committee moved forward by choosing the conference theme and session strands, discussing threads, prioritizing keynote speakers and identifying potential sponsors.

(See EENC CONFERENCE, pages 6-7)
THE YEAR in REVIEW: ADVOCATING

ADVOCATING for ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

EENC continued to keep up-to-date on No Child Left Inside legislation (NCLI). Members were encouraged through emails and presentations to contact legislators in support of legislation that was on Congress’ agenda. EENC provided information to North Carolina citizens regarding NCLI through a number of presentations. Members and other organizations interested in both state and national No Child Left Inside legislation received email updates.

As an advocate for the profession of environmental education, EENC worked diligently to keep the Office of Environmental Education (OEE) intact and not have it cut from the state budget. As a co-founder of the NC Environmental Education Certification Program, EENC wanted to ensure the ability of this office to continue to administer the program. In addition to OEE’s many responsibilities, we also understand the credibility a state-run environmental education office brings to the profession of environmental education.

EENC sent letters, emails, and made phone calls to state legislators. We provided current information and talking points on our website and encouraged EENC members and members of the DENR managed EE-listserve to contact their legislators of the General Assembly to keep OEE funding.
In 2009, new paths of partnerships helped EENC advance the efforts its members. EENC supported the NC Children and Nature Coalition (NCCAN) and helped grow this new organization dedicated to getting kids outdoors. The EENC/NCCAN partnership was the driving force behind drafting the North Carolina Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights and Governor Perdue declaring April 2010 as Children and Nature Awareness Month.

A major goal for EENC in 2009 was to enhance communication and collaboration with the North Carolina Office of Environmental Education (OEE). A result of this goal is that EENC now provides input on major OEE working groups including the Environmental Education Advisory Council, the Environmental Education Certification Advisory and Working/Review Committees, and the North Carolina Environmental Literacy Plan committee.

OEE also consulted EENC when developing the 2009 Environmental Education Plan for North Carolina. Communication and partnership between EENC and the Department of Public Instruction grew through meetings with Dr. June Atkinson. EENC continues to help in the development of the state Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP) and incorporating EE in Science and Social Studies standards.
MEMBERSHIP

EENC had 361 members in 2009, including 19 organizational members. EENC made many changes in 2009 in order to better serve our membership. In order to make information easier for our members to obtain, EENC hired a web master who created an updated look and a web site redesign. We look forward towards having a working member database on the website for better networking and support. We began using social networking tools such as Facebook and LinkedIn in order to bring members together. Our newsletter went electronic in 2009 and prepared to unveil its new design at the beginning of 2010. In addition, several changes and updates to our membership records are making us more efficient, enabling us to better serve members in the future.

EENC STUDENT CHAPTER

We were delighted to welcome graduate and undergraduate students at The University of North Carolina Wilmington as they created the first student chapter of the Environmental Educators of North Carolina. Drs. Jeff Hill (Department of Environmental Studies) and Rich Huber (Watson School of Education), co-faculty sponsors of the organization, have developed the chartering documents and are looking forward towards its approval. We hope UNCW’s student chapter will become a model for other universities across the state and allow EENC to reach a larger audience.
The 19th Annual EENC Conference, entitled *Green Spaces in Urban Places*, took place in downtown Raleigh November 5-8, 2009, at both the Sheraton Hotel and Silver LEED Raleigh Convention Center. Much of our population lives in an urban environment. The conference location gave participants a new perspective on urban issues and how they relate to environmental education.

In order to meet the professional needs of our entire membership base, presentations were made within the scope of three conference tracks: formal educators, Certified Environmental Educators and EE Newcomers. Demonstrating our commitment to excellence in environmental education, each of our workshops, sessions and field experiences met criteria found in NAAEE’s Guidelines for the Preparation and Professional Development of Environmental Educators.

The quality of keynote speakers Ms. Akiima Price and Dr. June Atkinson were highlights for many conference attendees, bringing in participants who came particularly to hear them speak. On Friday night during our annual auction, Ms. Akiima Price spoke about urban kids in nature. Akiima Price, Chief of Education and Programs for New York Restoration Project, has spent her career connecting low income residents with the natural environment through restoration and the creation and implementation of innovative programs in New York City and Washington D.C. Her knowledge of bringing nature to underserved urban communities was both inspiring and helpful to our members, many of whom face similar challenges. Dr. June Atkinson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, spoke during the Saturday night awards banquet and honored EENC in assisting with the presentation of its annual awards. Overseeing more than 1.46 million students in almost 2,500 public schools, Dr. Atkinson’s views on the need and importance of environmental education was insightful and encouraging.

Each year EENC commits to minimizing the negative impacts and increasing the positive impacts of our annual conferences to the local environment and community. During the 2009 annual conference we took steps to decrease the amount of solid waste, reduce energy and water consumption, and minimize harmful emissions from vehicular transportation associated with the event. In addition, we opted for vegetarian meals when possible in order to reduce our ecologic footprint. We gave our time and energy to the people of Raleigh through community service projects at Anderson Point Park and Durant Nature Park.

Our unique theme and offerings brought a total of 98 conference attendees, remarkable considering the severe budget cuts and weak economy in 2009.

The conference was successful in providing environmental educators the experiences, tools, and perspective to bring quality environmental education programs and lessons to audiences in both urban and natural environments.
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5
In informal networking.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6

FULL-DAY MOBILE WORKSHOPS
- Seagrove Pottery
- Field and Farm: Prairie Ridge Ecostation
- River and Stream: Neuse River Canoe
- Urban Wetlands and Diverse Audiences

HALF-DAY MOBILE WORKSHOP
- Solid Waste Management

SESSIONS
- Environmental Grant Writing
- Mountain Top Removal Film
- School Yard All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory
- Exploring the Future of Energy
- Green Initiatives at the RCC

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT I
EENC gives back to the City of Raleigh by weeding and mulching the Butterfly Garden at Durant Nature Park

SECTION MEETINGS
- Meeting with Sections
- Networking Dinner Groups or Foodie Tour of Raleigh with Taste of Carolina Tours
- Dessert & Wine Reception at NC Museum of Natural Sciences with Keynote Speaker Ms. Akiima Price

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

FULL-DAY WORKSHOPS
- Waldo & the Green Growth Toolbox
- Interpretation for Young Children
- Winter Tree ID

HALF-DAY SESSIONS
- Toxic-Free NC, Integrated Pest Management
- The Diverse World of EE

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT II
EENC gives back to the City of Raleigh by helping plant trees at Anderson Point Park

BRAINSTORMING & NETWORKING SESSION
- Meeting to discuss upcoming events, how EENC can better assist members and plans to host the NAAEE Conference in 2011
- Dinner and Awards Ceremony at Marbles Museum with Keynote Speaker Dr. June Atkinson

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8

MORNING SESSIONS
- Renewable Energy Resources
- Birding Field Experience
- Wiley Elementary’s Natural Learning Garden
- J.R. Raulston Arboretum
Each year the Environmental Educators of North Carolina publicly recognizes environmental educators, EENC members, organizations, and partners for their valuable contributions to EENC, the North Carolina community, and to the field of environmental education. Our 2009 award winners were announced on Saturday, November 7, during the Awards Banquet at Marbles Museum in Raleigh.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR:
SARAH PALMER

Nationally Board-certified teacher Sarah Palmer of Wiley International Magnet School received Environmental Educator of the Year award for her contributions to her students, school, and profession. Ms. Palmer has been using environmental education in her lessons for the better part of two decades but redoubled her efforts a few years ago when told that she and her colleagues were the last generation for whom an intimate connection to nature would be a common experience. Since then, she has led the way for all members of the Wiley community to be more responsible environmental citizens.

She created various curriculum activities and units, including a Project Bright Ideas unit on ecosystems. Ms. Palmer wrote and received six grants totaling more than $5,000, coordinated donations and discounts worth more than $2,000 and generated volunteer support in order to create several outdoor teaching spaces on school grounds. These opportunities to connect students with nature and conduct authentic scientific experiments include a native plant garden featuring edible and medicinal plants, an area for composting, a rain garden, a weather station, and a soil demonstration area.

In addition to her work at Wiley, Palmer collaborates with educators around the country to develop curricula and research projects. We congratulate Ms. Palmer in challenging young minds and exemplifying excellence in environmental education.

OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION:
NORTH CAROLINA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

The North Carolina Envirothon received Outstanding Environmental Organization through their collaborative work with teachers and environmental professionals to engage middle and high school students in actively learning about ecology, natural resources management, and current environmental issues. The Envirothon encourages teachers and students to go outdoors to learn about the natural world around them and challenges them to think critically about how to balance the quality of life with the quality of the environment. The Envirothon connects resource professionals to students in order to share their expertise and passion in soils, land use planning, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and many other diverse environmental fields.

For the past 18 years, the Envirothon has greatly broadened the outreach and capacity of environmental education to educators and young people across the state with support from the Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts and NCDENR Division of Soil & Water Conservation. North Carolina hosted the 1994 and 2009 Canon Envirothon—the largest environmental competition between 50 U.S. states and 8 Canadian provinces—raising the visibility of our state’s dedication and credibility in the field of environmental education. North Carolina state champion teams consistently earn a prestigious 2nd and 3rd Place finish at the Canon Envirothon, establishing North Carolina as a formidable competitor at the international level.

NC Envirothon nurtures teams to excel by quality programming, training, and awarding incentives such as college scholarships to top-scoring teams. However, the impact NC Envirothon makes on students is not just on excelling in competition. Many Envirothon alumni have pursued natural science degrees in college and now work in natural resources management, sustainability, and environmental law and policy. No matter their career path, former participants agree that the Envirothon was a worthwhile experience that they’ll always remember.

OUTSTANDING PARTNERSHIP AWARD:
IN YOUR HEAD ADVERTISING

In Your Head Advertising received Outstanding Partnership award for the contributions of time and work on the organization’s website and communications. Its principal, Matt Besch reduced his rates by half and contributed at least 40 unpaid hours to EENC to ensure EENC’s website would be competitive and comprehensive.

Besch, a graduate of Kansas State University, received his undergraduate degree from Kansas State University (journalism/public relations) and a master’s (education) from Wichita State University. He currently resides in Beaufort with his wife Allison, an educator at the North Carolina Maritime Museum, and young son, Eli. EENC was fortunate to find a partner who understands and supports the environmental and educational mission of organization.

EENC’s internet presence has become increasingly
important, as the organization gears up to host the 2011 conference of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). This conference, slated for October 11-16, 2011, will bring 1,200 of the world’s environmental educators to North Carolina for a professional development conference highlighting the best of our state’s natural and cultural resources.

OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD:
SHELBY GULL LAIRD & RENEE STRNAD

Shelby Gull Laird, Ph.D. candidate in the Forestry and Environmental Resources Department at NCSU, received an award for Outstanding Service for her leadership in the organization and by furthering the mission of EENC. Over the past eight years, Laird has had the opportunity to promote environmental education in two related roles. For four years, she taught earth/environmental science at Garner Magnet High School. Subsequent to that, she developed the highly regarded “It’s Our Water” professional development program, working with the nonprofit North Carolina based Environmental Education Fund.

Laird has served as EENC’s policy chair and holds the 2009 seat for President-elect. She has been instrumental in creating EENC’s successful bid to host the 2011 conference of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). This conference, calendared for October 11-16, 2011, will bring 1,200 of the world’s environmental educators to North Carolina for a professional development conference highlighting the best of our state’s natural and cultural resources.

Renee Strnad, Environmental Educator for Extension Forestry, received an award for Outstanding Service through her continued support of EENC’s annual conference and environmental educators across the state. Strnad is a 1997 graduate of Kansas State University with a dual Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Biology and Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences. She’s been with NC State University since 2000, and has been involved in environmental education since 1997.

Strnad was recognized for her efforts to support EENC’s annual conference, assisting with conference logistics and providing professional development opportunities for members. In addition to being the state coordinator for Project Learning Tree, Strnad supports 4-H natural resource programs statewide. She is also a liaison between the College of Natural Resources at NC State University and environmental educators, sharing relevant information between the two groups.

OUTSTANDING NEWCOMER AWARD
SARAH FULLER

Sarah Fuller, 7th grade science teacher for Archdale-Trinity Middle School was awarded Outstanding Newcomer for the contributions she’s made to EENC within the last four years. A member since 2005, Fuller joined the Board in 2009 as Central Section Co-Chair and willingly stepped into the role of Membership Co-Chair when the Board lost one of its members. She sorted out years of membership data and has dedicated her time to streamlining the membership process, record keeping, and conference registration.

Although this award recognizes her as a newcomer to EENC, she’s been involved in environmental education for the past decade. She earned her B.A. from SUNY-Potsdam in Elementary Education, with an emphasis in ecology, and earned an M.A. from UNC-Greensboro in Middle School Science. Fuller has been successful in securing a number of grants. Some support environmental projects initiated by the Archdale-Trinity’s Environmental Club, like rain gardens in the community. Other grants provide necessary funding for water testing materials and technology used by all the students.
TREASURER’S REPORT

ASSETS

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For each Board of Directors Meeting, a brief overview of the major topics is listed below. To obtain the full agenda or minutes of any meeting, please e-mail our secretary.

**JANUARY 31—RALEIGH, NC**  
**WILLIAM B. UMSSTEAD PARK**

Transitional meeting between 2008 and 2009 board members; annual strategic plan review; preliminary conference planning; budget planning and approval.

**MAY 30—BROWNS SUMMIT, NC**  
**HAW RIVER STATE PARK**

Changes in accounting and investments; policy updates; website updates; strengthening partnerships; reports from board training at NC conservation Network retreat; EENC and NAAEE conference planning updates.

**AUGUST 14-15—RALEIGH, NC**  
**SHERATON**

Annual Conference planning meeting; updates from OEE; contract for 2011 NAAEE Local Host co-chair and memorandum of understanding with NAAEE; educational display boards; membership records and recognition.

**DECEMBER 12—RALEIGH, NC**  
**BLUE JAY POINT PARK**

2009 conference wrap-up; conference policies; 2011 NAAEE conference planning report; grant submissions; membership updates.
Help support environmental educators and the work they do by making a contribution to EENC or becoming actively involved in the organization. Monetary donations are essential for both running the organization and its annual conference. Donations can be made online on our website through Google checkout.

Would you like to help in other ways? Donate your time by becoming more involved with the organization. EENC is an all-volunteer organization run by environmental educators for environmental educators. Take ownership of your professional organization by participating in conference or section event planning, serving on EENC’s Board of Directors or joining one of six standing committees: Communications, Education, Membership, Partnership, Policy, and Resource Development. Please visit our website to contact section coordinators or committee chairs to volunteer your time and expertise.

EENC would like to thank the following organizations for donating their support and staff time for their employees to sit on the Board of Directors.

Agape Center for EE
Division of Water Resources
High Point Parks and Recreation
Morehead Planetarium & Science Center
Mud Pie Planet
NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher
NC Coastal Federation

NC Cooperative Extension Service
NC Division of Parks and Recreation
NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation
Onslow County Learning Center
Randolph County Schools
Wake County Public Schools
Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System

EENC would like to thank our sponsors for the 2009 Annual Conference

$3000–$5999
JADE SPONSOR
Progress Energy
Progress Energy Foundation

$600–$1499
VIVID GREEN SPONSOR
Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation

$0–$599
SPRING GREEN SPONSORS
Great Outdoor Provision Company

EENC MEMBERS
Lois Nixon • Sandy Ruble • Dingo Brown

A special thanks to the numerous members and organizations who donated items for the silent and live auctions.