



# YEAR 2 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## THIRD ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

### UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – STEVENS POINT



#### Introduction

The Third Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP3) is a consortium of nine organizations<sup>1</sup> that deliver environmental education (EE) training to teachers and other education professionals. EE prepares citizens to make informed, intelligent decisions that protect human health and environmental quality. Through workshops, courses, and other carefully tailored strategies, EETAP3 is building a cadre of educators who are knowledgeable about the environment and have the skills needed to help children and adults understand complex environmental issues. It is helping education professionals work effectively with diverse audiences and make their organizations and programs more inclusive. EETAP3 is ensuring that EE programs and resources are of high quality and present multiple perspectives on environmental issues in an unbiased manner. U.S. EPA's Division of Environmental Education and consortium partners fund the project; the budget for Year 2 was \$2.36 million. Of this amount, the Federal share was \$1.62 million while partners contributed \$0.74 million. The University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point (UW–SP) serves as the managing partner.

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<sup>1</sup> EETAP partners include the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Council for Environmental Education, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (National Conservation Training Center), National Audubon Society, North American Association for Environmental Education, American Forest Foundation/Project Learning Tree, Project WET, University of Oregon, and University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

EETAP3's Year 2 work plan detailed 12 activities designed to achieve a more environmentally literate public over the five-year period of the project. The consortium made significant progress toward Year 2 project objectives. In all, 442,648 education professionals and an estimated 4,973,975 individuals across the country benefited from EETAP3 Year 2 activities. These figures reflect attendance at EETAP3-supported workshops and user visits to EE-Link, along with the learners reached by these educators.

#### Why Program is Unique

This summary covers the second year (October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007) of a projected five-year program. However, much of EETAP3's work builds on the efforts of EETAPs 1 and 2 (1995-2005) and the first year of EETAP3. This continuity has enabled meaningful progress on several strategic initiatives that require years to fully develop.

One such example is the national *Guidelines for Excellence in Environmental Education*, which has been called the single most important event in the field of EE in the last decade. These voluntary standards describe quality EE resources and programs, identify what learners should know and be able to do as the result of K-12 EE programs, and articulate the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective environmental educator. The *Guidelines* were drafted, reviewed, and approved during EETAP 1, and dissemination and training programs were established. During EETAP2, the *Guidelines* formed the basis of

programs to certify professional environmental educators, develop on-line EE courses, and review EE resources for quality. Efforts to distribute the *Guidelines* more widely and to train additional educators and leaders to use the *Guidelines* were expanded during this time.

EETAP 3 continues to build on these efforts. In Year 2, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) approved NAAEE's Standards for the Initial Preparation of Environmental Educators, the culmination of a six-year effort. Teacher education programs across the country will now have to meet these EE standards in order to attain or retain NCATE accreditation. This notable accomplishment is a catalyst for further development of EE programs for thousands of pre-service teachers. EETAP3 is also bringing professional certification to more states and creating a national program to accredit state certification programs. An active Trainer's Bureau continues to promote acceptance and use of the *Guidelines*. Taken together, these long-term efforts are ensuring that educators have the resources, knowledge, and skills needed to deliver quality instruction about the environment.

## Highlights of Major Accomplishments

EETAP3 divides its activities into three areas: Professional Development, Advancing Environmental Education, and Reaching Diverse Audiences. Highlighted here are major accomplishments in each of these areas.

### Professional Development

Helping education professionals develop their abilities to teach fairly and effectively about complex environmental issues is a priority for EETAP3. The consortium delivered professional development through in person and online workshops and courses to more than 3,000 education professionals and EE leaders working in schools and other settings.

### Online Instruction

During the past year, EETAP3 partner University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UW-SP) added a third course to its highly popular online EE instruction program. UW-SP offered *Leadership Development in Natural Resources: Strategic Planning and Implementation* for the first time in spring 2007. The new course provides instruction in developing strategic planning and implementation models for formal and nonformal EE programs and organizations. UW-SP and cooperating universities also offered 11 sections of the *Fundamentals of Environmental Education (FEE)* course and 3 sections of *Applied Environmental Education and Program Evaluation*. Faculty members from eight additional universities offered FEE for the first time during Year 2. These on-line courses have helped 501 educators incorporate EE into their work, thus advancing student academic achievement and increased environmental literacy. The demand for these courses remains high, and participant evaluations of the courses were positive.

### Guidelines Training

EETAP3 established a Guidelines Trainers' Bureau of regional representatives who actively disseminate the National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education's *Guidelines for*



*Excellence* and encourage their use through an "Adopt the Guidelines" campaign. When an organization "adopts" the *Guidelines*, it agrees to apply the criteria for high quality EE to its programs, curricula, and

education resources. In Year 2, eight organizations formally adopted the *Guidelines* while the Guidelines Trainers' Bureau added 12 new members. Trainers' Bureau members

conducted 18 workshops and presentations in 17 states and Canada, reaching 652 education professionals. The workshops and other presentations focus on how to use the *Guidelines* to achieve quality EE practice.

### EE Training Networks

A total of 1,537 formal educators, pre-service teachers, and nonformal educators increased their abilities to incorporate environmental topics into their instruction using tested and award-winning materials developed by American Forest Foundation (Project Learning Tree), the Council for Environmental Education (Project WILD and Flying WILD), Project WET,



and the National Audubon Society. These EETAP3 partners exceeded their Year 2 targets by 37%. Year 2 activities also included leadership training for the PLT, WET, CEE, and NAS network members. EETAP3

*Participants in the Corpus Christi Flying WILD workshop enjoyed learning how to teach about birds and bird conservation at the Texas State Aquarium as new City Partner, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, joined the Flying WILD City Partner network.*

provided training-of-trainer opportunities and information on the *Guidelines for Excellence* at leadership conferences for 320 EE leaders. As part of their leadership development efforts, PLT and CEE each helped four states develop action plans to better enable the states to implement high quality EE programs.

## **Advancing Environmental Education**

EETAP3 is helping to ensure EE resources and programs are of high quality, support student academic achievement, and increase environmental literacy. The consortium is also increasing access to information about EE and related areas for educators. More than 5,463 education professionals enhanced their skills as environmental educators through in person training and 437,600 individuals accessed information online using the Internet (eelink.net).

### Disseminating Standards Correlations

AFF, CEE, and WET provided funding to 13 states to complete 22 correlations of their award-winning EE programs to state and national academic standards. These correlations assist teachers in using EE to meet learning standards for students while increasing the environmental literacy of our future leaders and decision makers. They also raise educators' awareness of high quality, academically relevant EE resources. Partners' existing networks promote and distribute the correlations at professional development workshops for formal and nonformal educators. The correlations are also available online. Year 2 evaluations indicate that over 50% of trained educators know how to access the correlations online, know how to use the correlations to achieve state standards, and plan to do so.

### Building State Capacity for EE

Through funding provided by EETAP3, five states are working to ensure that their current and emerging leaders are well versed in the components of quality EE. NAAEE and its Affiliates have established training programs to ensure that EE leaders and educators in these states can implement EE that is fair, balanced, and scientifically accurate. In Year 2, 1,321



Affiliate Workshop Participants, 2007 NAAEE Conference

educators benefited from this training, in turn affecting 1,357,420 adults and children. The NAAEE conference and newsletter continue to provide important venues for Affiliates to share their experiences in building their capacity to deliver a broad array of high quality EE programs that meet the needs of their states.

### Online Review of Resources

Using the *Guidelines for Excellence*, EETAP3 is supporting development of an online review program for EE curriculum materials and resources. The program both conducts reviews and provides access to reviewed materials through an online resource database shared with states. In Year 2, two Affiliates—Idaho and Utah—joined Colorado in offering state resource review programs. Idaho and Utah offered training workshops to 22 individuals, resulting in 15 submissions of EE resources and Colorado had 12 resources submitted. NAAEE continues to promote the national program in its online and print newsletters and offer training at its annual conference. Fourteen resources were reviewed in Year 2. In Year 3, partners are pursuing a revised strategy to encourage more submissions of EE resources and curriculum.

### Pre-service Education

To ensure that pre-service teachers are highly qualified to teach about the environment and environmental issues NAAEE has written EE standards for college and university education programs under EETAP3, based on the existing *Guidelines for Excellence*. The National Council

for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) approved the new standards in fall 2007; these standards will influence the preparation of every future teacher attending 632 NCATE-accredited colleges and universities, with an additional 78 seeking accreditation. NAAEE established a Pre-Service Task Force to guide its work in recruiting and training EE professionals to review the program reports that universities will begin submitting in 2009.

### EE Certification

By establishing certification programs at the state level, EETAP3 is increasing the number of highly qualified environmental educators. Again based on the *Guidelines for Excellence*, certification creates accountability for the knowledge and skills expected of individual environmental educators. Three pilot states—Kentucky, Texas, and Utah—continued to build their programs and certified 43 educators this year. Seven other states expressed interest in developing certification programs. NAAEE's Certification Advisory Council researched the structure and legal ramifications of other accreditation programs and developed a checklist for determining completeness of certification program applications. The Council also established an Accreditation Review Panel to review applications for state certification programs and ensure quality and reciprocity among state programs.

### Technology Tools for EE

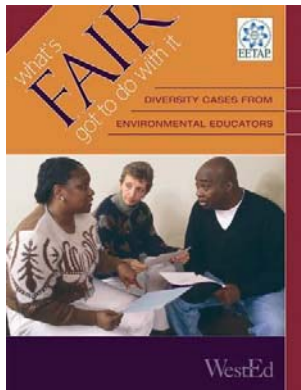
EETAP3 supports EE-Link (an Internet portal for EE information), EE-News (an on-line newsletter sent to more than 6,500 education professionals twice a month), and resource databases for states. The EE-Link Web site provides a broad spectrum of EE information and resources including lesson plans for teachers, publications, programs, organizations, and more. Traffic on the site has more than doubled in a two-year period; in Year 2, some monthly averages exceeded 10,000 visits per day. EE-Link is fast becoming the primary channel for reaching individuals new to EE.

NAAEE Technology Services continues to refine technology options available to state Affiliates. Promotion of the available tools at the 2006 NAAEE conference led to unprecedented demand from state Affiliates of NAAEE that NAAEE is still working to fulfill. NAAEE hosts 15 state and organizational management systems on its two platforms and is developing systems for two more state Affiliates.

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## Reaching Diverse Audiences

Another EETAP3 priority is helping education professionals develop the knowledge



and skills needed to work more effectively with audiences traditionally underserved by EE. These audiences are wide-ranging, including African and Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and conservation practitioners.

## Delivering Culturally Relevant Environmental Education

During Year 2, four organizations (from Minnesota, Virginia, New Mexico, and Nevada) joined an 18-month pilot initiative designed to help organizations become more inclusive. The organizations met in 2007 to develop blueprints for transforming their programs to include traditionally underserved audiences in their service areas. UW-SP and Intercambios, a bi-national, bicultural consulting group, serve as the facilitators, mentors, and recorders of this process. Intercambios also facilitated one-day EE and diversity workshops in Idaho and New England. Three new installments featuring information to help environmental educators and EE organizations become more inclusive

were posted on the NAAEE Web site; the pages received 16,000 visits during the year.

## EE Training for Tribal Communities

A three-part effort supports educational professionals working in culturally diverse tribal communities across the U.S. One component of the program builds on the success of Project WET's Native Waters program, which forges relationships among tribal community educators and Project WET state coordinators and facilitators. Workshops introduced 72 tribal educators to Project WET and Project Learning Tree curriculum. Evaluations indicated that the Native communities appreciate EE training and that teaching activities can be modified easily for their cultural context. Programs where state coordinators have the funding and time to follow up with tribal educators were most successful.

## Conservation Education Toolkit

EETAP3 is also helping to enable conservation practitioners to use high-quality EE as part of an effective strategy to reach their conservation goals. NAS is developing a Conservation Education Toolkit to provide the resources, training tools, and research to help conservation managers better understand the value of education as a conservation tool. Members of the development team presented the Toolkit draft and solicited feedback at the NAAEE and Association of Zoos and Aquariums annual conferences. The Toolkit will be completed in Year 3 and a training program will be developed.

## CONCLUSION

EETAP's work as highlighted above is helping to develop an environmentally literate public whose behaviors foster improved environmental quality and a healthy environment. This work is continuing in Year 3. For more information about EETAP visit: [www.eetap.org](http://www.eetap.org)