

National Environmental Education Advisory Council

Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8

Denver, Colorado

April 10-11, 2014

Executive Summary

Attendees:

Ryan Robison, EPA, Environmental Education (EE) Chief of Staff Javier Araujo, EPA, NEEAC, Designated Federal Officer Wendy Dew, EPA, Region 8, Environmental Education and Outreach Ben Bents, EPA, Region 8, Facilitator NEEAC Members- Kelly Keena, Chair Richard Gonzales, Co-Chair Angie Chen Cara Gizzi Caroline Lewis Edna Negrón-Martínez Mark Kraus Kiki Corry Kenneth John Gembel Scott Frazier Ann Stephens
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Goals of the Meeting:

- to develop/ finalize 2014 Final Recommendations
- determine next steps for writing and communication
- review drafting group reports
- to reconnect

NEEAC Progress to Date:

The members discussed current progress to date including discussions on past recommendations, work progress of the current NEEAC and focusing on EPA Administrator as the primary audience for the final recommendations.

Bob Perciasepe, Deputy Administrator of EPA address to NEEAC:

The address focused on the importance of the work NEEAC does and the importance of environmental education at EPA. The impact of EPA's relatively small budget compared to other federal agencies on national environmental education efforts was highlighted. It was stressed that EPA must work closely with other federal agencies to best utilize all federal resources.

Questions and Answers-

?- In terms of who has money, DOE has money. Looking at underserved populations, examples like Clean Diesel Program, we could use the savings from these programs to fund EE field trips not sports programs. We should close that loop.

Reply- We need to be more expansive by using urban field trips. Tie EE grants to in-kind services from other federal agencies. Could even be an undeveloped area owned by GSA that could be utilized for an EE trip.

?- Environmental Literacy gap is centered on our elected officials, their lack of knowledge is preventing progress. Could a certification program be created for elected officials?

Reply- The pathway to the elected officials is through their constituents, if they make it a priority. Our program is setup to reach kids and young adults and that is the future.

Updates of the EPA Office of Environmental Education:

The Office of EE at EPA has suffered huge reparative turn-over in the last 5 years which has greatly impacted EE at EPA. The Office is hiring new people and is committed to improving EE at EPA.

Drafting Group Reports:

The drafting groups reported out in presentation format the draft recommendations for discussion.

Highlights of report outs-

The presentations focused on:

- Trends in EE
- EE in Action
- Audiences and Outcomes
- Research and Policy
- Environmental Education Across EPA

-An informal survey of EPA Regional Environmental Education (EE) coordinators, numerous state EE coordinators, other EPA staff, and the affected EE community, provided significant insight into some of the initiatives needed to develop a successful EE program within the agency. There is a perceived need to coordinate EE throughout the agency, provide guidance to each of the regional offices while still allowing these offices to react to regional needs, and to provide a standard grant application process, all in an effort to better comply with the Environmental Education Act of 1990.

-The group identified three major societal and cultural trends that could help advance environmental education. The group also identified three major societal and cultural trends that present challenges to advancing environmental education.

-While environmental education used to be the stuff of nature centers and high school biology, nowadays, there are educational components with environmental themes at sporting events, within industries, and in heretofore unexpected other realms. With humankind's growing green lens, EE surfaces in diverse initiatives in formal/informal settings.

-EE audiences have broadened significantly, yet there are still some troubling gaps.

-Environmental education has been enhanced over the years by expert's opinions, novel ideas, new initiatives and learning strategies to address citizenry literacy. Most recently, there is great interest in the Environmental Literacy definition.

Climate Change Discussion:

The members discussed how to incorporate Climate Change into the final recommendations. Some of the comments included:

- Climate change must be a theme throughout internal policy and in grant criteria
- Climate change should be a pillar
- The climate change topic will always be contentious, science cannot answer everything
- Ecophobia occurs if the problem is too big, must have solutions
- EE is a structure for teaching about issues such as climate change
- Create a separate section of the outline for issues and add climate change to it
- Frame climate change as a societal trend, grounding climate change as a trend
- Present as systems thinking, we have grown awareness but not scholarship to promote stewardship
- Climate change should be integrated from beginning to end in the report
- Climate change is not the only topic of interest, so we should incorporate it into a more comprehensive approach
- The role of NEAAC is to present comprehensive recommendations
- Climate change should be in the introduction to create context for addressing EE through multiple pillars

Final recommendations:

The NEEAC members went through a variety of exercises to pare down what the final recommendations would be. The following are the final recommendations the group agreed on.

Leadership

1. Reauthorize the Act
2. National Policy and Literacy
3. Communication and Messaging
4. International
5. Champion

Grants

- 1. Other Funding Sources
- 2. Grant Process

Community

- 1. Professional Development and Training for Tribal Youth
- 2. Professional Development and Training for Underserved

Environmental Issues

- 1. Current Issues and Urgencies

Draft Outline for Recommendations:

The group walked through a draft outline and logic model for the final recommendations. They created a timeline and assignments for creating the final draft report.

Communication Plan for Final Report:

The NEEAC members participated in a brainstorming exercise to develop some ideas for a communications strategy for the final report.

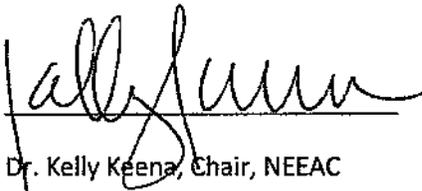
Some ideas included:

Info graphics Social Media Multimedia RSS Feeds Press release	Logic model with links Websites NEEF features Face-to-face meetings Webinars
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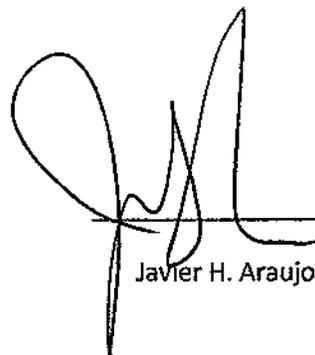
Public Comment Period:

No public comments were received.

Submitted by:


 Dr. Kelly Keena, Chair, NEEAC

5-20-2014


 Javier H. Araujo, NEEAC, EPA, DFO

5-20-2014