

The National Environmental Education Act of 1990

The National Environmental Education Act solidified a federal commitment to EE. Responsibility for implementing the Act rests with the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**, which maintains an environmental education office to oversee several initiatives:

- A training program for education professionals
- An EE grants program
- An internship and fellowship program for students and teachers
- An EE awards program
- A federal task force and a national EE advisory council

■ For more information, visit the Web site of the EPA's Office of Environmental Education at [http:// www.epa.gov/enviroed](http://www.epa.gov/enviroed).

The Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP)

The Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP) is the national training program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Environmental Education established through the National EE Act of 1990. A consortium of national partner organizations implements EETAP under the leadership of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. EETAP provides:

- Specialized professional development opportunities for education professionals.
- Improved access to EE information and resources through the Internet
 - EE-Link-a comprehensive website for locating EE materials, grants, and more (NAAEE)
 - Searchable databases of EE resources
 - NAAEE-EE bi-weekly electronic newsletter
- EETAP States Program & Demonstration Community Project
- Education and outreach to increase understanding of and use of EE as a tool for improving student learner among education professionals.

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Standards Project

In 1993 NAAEE, the main professional organization for environmental educators, launched the *National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education*, also known as the "standards project." The project produced four interrelated documents:

- **Environmental Education Materials: Guidelines for Excellence.** This resource presents straightforward recommendations to help educators develop and select quality EE materials for use in their educational programs.
- **The Environmental Education Collection - A Review of Resources for Educators, Volume 1-3.** The series utilizes criteria from the Guidelines for Excellence mentioned above to review a wide variety of educational materials.
- **EE learner guidelines**, which suggest appropriate expectations for what learners should know and be able to do by grades k-4, 5-8, and 9-12.
- **Guidelines for the Initial Preparation of Environmental Educators**, offering recommendations about basic knowledge and abilities educators need to provide high-quality EE. These recommendations cover pre-service k-12 teacher education and EE courses, formal and nonformal education.

To obtain copies of the above publications, contact:

NAAEE Publications
410 Tarvin Rd.

Rock Spring, GA 30739
Phone: (706) 764-2926

Fax: (706) 764-2094

Web site: <http://www.naaee.org>

Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education

The Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education (PCEE) is a ten-year project that should significantly advance and enhance EE within the state of Pennsylvania in the years ahead. This unique partnership of 13 state agencies and organizations was officially formed by executive order of the governor in December of 1996. Its charge is to ensure that the citizens of Pennsylvania have access to quality environmental education.

Goals of the PCEE are to:

- Disseminate EE information and materials
- Facilitate partnerships for the purpose of providing EE
- Assist in professional development in EE

The PCEE Web site at <http://www.pcee.org> is your “one-stop shopping” for EE information for Pennsylvania. The Web site includes:

- EE Events Calendar
- EE Facilities Directory
- The Essentials of EE Modules
- Higher Education Activities
- Pennsylvania EE Resource Directory
- PCEE Newsletter
- EE and the Media
- EE funding opportunities
- PCEE Research
- Job opportunities

The Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership

The Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership (PBP) was created in 2000 in response to a recommendation made by the Pennsylvania 21st Century Environment Commission that a broad-based public-private partnership be formed to promote activities on conserving native species and their communities. One of PBP's strategies to achieve its mission is to educate both stakeholders and the public on how biodiversity sustains the Commonwealth's economic and environmental health and ensures quality of life for all citizens. An Education Task Force is one of the seven task forces that make up PBP.

PBP is currently involved in two major projects involving biodiversity education in Pennsylvania. The first project, a review of educational materials presently available on Pennsylvania biodiversity, was part of a baseline assessment of the present state of biodiversity in Pennsylvania. A summary of this report is included in *Biodiversity in Pennsylvania – Snapshot 2002*.

PBP, in conjunction with partner organizations, is also involved in developing teacher-training materials on biodiversity with support from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Education Grants Program. This project includes a concept list on biodiversity which is linked to the Pennsylvania academic standards; continued development of the educational resource list on biodiversity, which will be included in the Biodiversity Resource Button on the PCEE Web site; development of a teacher training module on biodiversity; and teacher training workshops on biodiversity. For more information on the PBP, visit their Web site at: www.pabiodiversity.org.

EE Inclusion in Teacher Preparation (EEITP) project

EEITP is a state partnership formed in 2001 of government agencies, non-government organizations, and business and industry. The goal of this project is to institutionalize environmental education teaching pedagogy and the Pennsylvania's Environment and Ecology standards into 20 (approximately one fifth) teacher preparation programs in Pennsylvania. Components of this project include:

- An EE inclusion in teacher preparation grants program
- Professional development workshops
- Materials which faculty may immediately implement into their classrooms
- A higher education work group for networking and project assessment
- Faculty conference scholarships
- Technical assistance

State Requirements

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) academic standards for environment and ecology specify learner outcomes at various grade levels. State curriculum requirements require that school districts meet these standards according to grade levels. Each district will be responsible for developing assessment tools for the standards and scores will be submitted to the PDE Office of Assessment.

- How do the PDE state standards for environment and ecology differ from those included in the NAAEE standards project?

One difference is that Pennsylvania standards are a mandatory requirement that school districts must meet, while the NAAEE standards are voluntary guidelines for both formal and nonformal environmental educators.

Issues and Challenges Facing the Field of Environmental Education

- What are some of the issues and challenges you face when implementing environmental education into your professional practice?

The National EE Advisory Council (1996) compiled a list of eight major issues and challenges facing the field of EE:

- EE is not a priority across the country
- State, local, and tribal EE efforts need greater resources and support
- Resources are limited, and no one educational sector can support the entire field
- Professional development for teachers and nonformal educators needs greater support and improvement
- EE is not well integrated into education reform and improvement
- Important audiences are not being reached
- Evaluation, quality assurance and access to materials and information on programs are limited.
- More well-trained environmental professionals are needed