

Spring 2007



# KACEE News

North American Association  
For Environmental Education Affiliate

KACEE promotes and provides quality, non-biased and science-based environmental education for all Kansans

## Celebrating Environmental Education



Kevin Willmott  
Photo by: Hank Ernst

Each year in Kansas, educators from across the state demonstrate leadership and excellence in providing quality, hands-on, science-based conservation and environmental education that teaches our children about the richness, diversity and importance of our Kansas natural resources. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, about 170 EE supporters from around the state gathered at the Kansas History Museum in Topeka to join in recognizing those who make a difference for Kansas and our children. The 2007 recipients of the Kansas Excellence in Conservation and Environmental Education awards included: John K. Strickler Award...Roland Stein, retiree of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks; KACEE Award for PreK-16 Education...Dr. Valerie Wright, Konza Prairie Biological Station; KACEE Award for Community/Non-Profit (Organization)...Kansas Accredited Zoo Educators; KACEE Award for Community/Non-Profit (Individual)...Linda Phipps, Southeast Kansas Nature Center at Schermerhorn Park; and KACEE Award for Government, The WATER Center.

The evening included drinks and Hors d' Oeuvres with musical entertainment provided by the Highland Park High School Orchestra. Kevin Willmott, renowned Kansas film maker, provided opening remarks, encouraging us all to support that which makes Kansas rich and then helped to present this year's awards. Following the awards presentation, a live and

silent auction took place, helping to raise more than \$7000 to support conservation and environmental education in the state.

"This was an opportunity for us to come together to honor and celebrate all the hard work and accomplishments of those who make a difference in environmental education" said Laura Downey, Executive Director. "It took the combined efforts of a hard working committee, community supporters and our sponsors to make this event such a success and a strong foundation upon which to build for next year's event!"

We would like to thank all our committee members and volunteers, as well as our event sponsors, Westar Energy/Westar Energy Green Team and The Coleman Company. We also wish to thank those who purchased tables and invited friends to help us in this celebration. For more information about this event or the upcoming 2008 Excellence in Conservation and Environmental Education Awards, please contact: Shari Wilson ([swilson@kacee.org](mailto:swilson@kacee.org)) or Laura Downey ([ldowney@kacee.org](mailto:ldowney@kacee.org)).



Highland Park High School  
Orchestra  
Photo by: Hank Ernst

### A big thank you to our table sponsors at this year's Excellence in Conservation and Environmental Education Awards Ceremony

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	Topeka Public Schools
	Westar Energy

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# News

## Online EE Community Tips Toolbox

KACEE is in the process of evaluating its methods of providing information to members. With increasing costs of postage and printing as well as the desire to use less paper, we would like to know our members' thoughts on the subject. To weigh in, please take a look at the following options and tell us your opinion. There are several ways to respond: by going to [www.kacee.org](http://www.kacee.org) and clicking on "I'm a KACEE Member, Here's What I Think!"; by e-mailing your opinion to Shari Wilson at [swilson@kacee.org](mailto:swilson@kacee.org); by faxing your thoughts to 913-287-6879; or by giving Shari a call at 913-287-6879.

1. I prefer to receive information (such as newsletters, conference and workshop registrations, and awards nomination forms) only by e-mail
2. I would like to receive a postcard letting me know that this new information is available on the KACEE website
3. I prefer to receive this information through regular mail



We appreciate your time to let us know how we can best serve you.

## Electronic newsletter format is available now!

To take advantage of this option, follow these easy steps:

- Go to [www.kacee.org](http://www.kacee.org) and click on Online EE Community.
- Click on [log in](#) on the lower left-hand side of the screen.
- Enter your login and password.
- Click on Membership Profile on the left side of the screen.
- After making any necessary updates, scroll down to the bottom of the screen to Mail/Email Preference. Click on the box that says "I prefer to receive KACEE News and other communications in an electronic format."
- Log out and you're finished!

Note: Student members, associate members, and organizational contacts other than the primary contact already receive KACEE News in electronic format as part of their membership benefits.

--Organizational Members: If you haven't logged in to update your programs, events, and contact information lately, now might be a good time. We don't want anyone to miss out on what you are doing!

--If you have questions, contact Shari Wilson at [swilson@kacee.org](mailto:swilson@kacee.org) or 913-287-6879 or Melissa Arthur at [marthur@kacee.org](mailto:marthur@kacee.org) or 785-597-5452.



The Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education publishes KACEE News quarterly to communicate with environmental educators. KACEE News is a medium of information exchange on a wide range of Environmental Education topics. Inclusion of an item in KACEE News does not indicate an endorsement of an organization's stance on environmental issues.

# News

## Liftoff for Leopold in Kansas!



The Leopold Education Project (LEP) is an innovative, interdisciplinary, conservation and environmental education activity guide based on the classic writings of the renowned conservationist, Aldo Leopold. With sponsorship from Kansas Chapters of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, KACEE worked with a team of educators to develop the Kansas Edition of the LEP Activity Guide, which includes Kansas-specific background information and resources to connect Kansas learners with local ecosystems. These activities are correlated to the Kansas State Core Curricular Standards for grades 6-12 as well as to complementary activities in PLT, WET, WET in the City, WILD and WILD Aquatic.

The first LEP workshop using the new Kansas-specific materials took place February 23 at Cindy and Steve Ford's farm near Pittsburg. Twenty-six educators, including teachers from 12 southeast Kansas school districts and environmental education facilitators from across the state, participated. The workshop was facilitated by Cindy Ford and Sarah McCoy, and funded through an "NCLB Exploring the Natural World" grant with additional support from KACEE and Kansas Chapters of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever.

Facilitators engaged participants in a variety of hands-on activities based on passages from Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*. Lessons included everything from bird courtship behaviors to tree identification to reading a "game scene" for evidence of wildlife. The participants then worked in small groups to select and facilitate LEP activities for their peers. The wide variety of possibilities within the activity guide was evident as enthusiastic educators demonstrated how LEP incorporates science, math, art, and literature to help connect students with their environment.

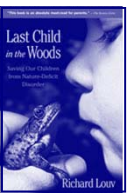
A post-workshop survey indicated that workshop participants used the LEP materials in their classrooms with meaningful results:

- \* "When they worked in small groups on the art and the poem, they seem to be very calm and actually had conversations about family experiences, fishing, canoeing, going to the lake, experiences at their grandparents, or with a friend and how much fun it was. It stirred emotions about the time they had in nature and others seemed to have missed those experiences and wanted to have the opportunity to do that sometime. Groups worked very well together and seemed to share across those "barriers" of social class, gender, intelligence levels." - 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher
- \* "I think it (the LEP) makes them (the students) more observant and aware of the out of doors and what is going on in the natural world around them - outside of people and the city." - High School Teacher

Feedback from the survey and workshop evaluations will be incorporated into the final editing and formatting of the LEP Kansas Edition, which will go to print later this year. LEP workshops are currently being scheduled state-wide. Contact Melissa Arthur at [marthur@kacee.org](mailto:marthur@kacee.org) for more information about facilitating, hosting, sponsoring, or participating in a workshop near you.

## Last Child in the Woods Book Review

Article by: Rex Buchanan, *Kansas Alumni Magazine* (v. 105, no. 1, 2007, pp. 62-63)



The next time you talk to an outdoors type, ask how they got interested in the natural world. They probably won't mention a class they took in school, or book that they read. More likely they'll say their love of the outdoors came from less structured experiences--playing along a creek or exploring nearby woods. But with today's packed schedules, and fewer safe places available outside, we may be raising kids who prefer computers and video games to tadpoles and treehouses. That's the contention of San Diego Union-Tribune columnist and KU grad Richard Louv in his latest book, *Last Child in the Woods*. Louv examines the nature-deprived upbringing of many kids (he even gives it a name—"nature-deficit disorder"), a problem he believes contributes to, among other things, obesity and short attention spans.

Louv offers some prescriptions for the problem, including changing school curricula and designing housing developments so that there's space for kids to roam. He contemplates a mass movement back to the rural Great Plains. I read all this one Saturday in the fall, in between bouts of clearing brush in a pasture. Toward evening, I built a small fire to keep warm, and glanced up from Louv's book to watch the day's last sunlight bouncing red off the clouds. South-bound geese honked overhead. Exactly the kind of experience Louv wants kids to have. Missing these experiences may not be quite as alarming as Louv says. But a life with them is much richer, it seems to me. Learn the flowers, advised poet Gary Snyder. We're never too old, but there's no better time than when you're a kid.

Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, Algonquin Books, 2005, 334 p.

# News

Copy of the Governor's Earth Day Proclamation that was presented after the Second Annual Capitol Earth Day Festival on Friday, April 20, 2007. Framed versions of this proclamation are planned to be placed on the 3rd and 5th Floors of Curtis Office Bldg.

## Kansas Environmental Education Conference Presentation Proposals Available Online!

Concurrent session proposals are now being accepted for this year's Kansas Environmental Education Conference, which will be held in Hays on 2-3 November. Proposals may be filled out and submitted online for the first time this year. If you or someone you know has an example of best practices in environmental education, a classroom unit that you'd like to share, or another hands-on activity to share, please consider making a presentation at our conference. It is a wonderful opportunity to show others the excellent work of Kansas environmental education professionals, and it's a good way to polish presentation skills and interact with your colleagues. Guidelines for presentation proposals, along with the proposal form itself, are available at [www.kacee.org](http://www.kacee.org). The deadline for proposals is Friday, 25 May, but the program committee will consider extending this deadline for those needing more time. Please contact Shari Wilson at [swilson@kacee.org](mailto:swilson@kacee.org) if you have questions or need additional information.



# News

## European Union Fellowship Increases Understanding of Global Issues

by Shari L. Wilson, [swilson@kacee.org](mailto:swilson@kacee.org)

Through a fellowship with the European Union Visitors Program, last December I was fortunate to spend five days visiting European Union agencies in Brussels, Belgium. My primary areas of study were the Natura 2000 program, energy, climate change, education about the environment, and management of parks and natural resource areas. The program, which encompassed more than 30 meetings in five days, went far beyond my expectations. I am still incorporating what I have learned into my daily work, and continually seek ways to share the information with my colleagues and the public.

The Natura 2000 program was of great interest to me. Natura 2000 is a network of protected sites that represent areas of highest value for natural habitats and threatened and endangered plant and animal species. The goal is that eventually there will be a Europe-wide network of connected corridors where habitat is protected. It was interesting for me to hear about the complexities involved in getting this program implemented within the EU member states, including figuring out how to make designation of natural sites a priority for government.

The visit to Het Zwin near the resort town of Knokke was a highlight of my program. Het Zwin is one of the premiere natural parks along the North Sea coast of Europe, and is well-known for birding opportunities. (In Belgium, "natural parks" are the equivalent of our national parks.) Sea water from the North Sea continually refreshes the creek and salt marshes, attracting thousands of birds each year. The opportunity to talk with the natural park managers was invaluable. They deal with many of the same sorts of issues as park and wildlife area managers in Kansas. Encroaching development, such as luxury condominiums, is always a challenge, as is managing the desires of different types of park users.

One of my most valuable meetings was with Karin Zaunberger, Administrator in the Unit for Management of Natural Resources in the Directorate-General for Research. She and her colleagues spent considerable time with me discussing education strategies for the general public with regard to environmental issues. Changing people's habits is a difficult thing to do, and it is something we all struggle with. We had a good exchange of ideas on this topic, and they were interested in programs such as Project Learning Tree and Project WET and the way we use these programs in Kansas.

My meetings on climate change were fascinating. In Europe, caps on carbon emissions and carbon trading have been in place within the original EU countries for about two years. The EU has begun working with west coast states in the U.S. as well as Canadian provinces to share ideas and programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and educate the public. I learned a great deal from Vicky Pollard, Administrator in the Unit for Climate Strategy, about the efforts underway to bring the new EU countries into the reduced emissions program. Because these eastern European countries are far behind western Europe with regard to environmental controls, it will take several years -- and a lot of money -- to bring their technology up to date.

The European Union Visitors Program is open to 16 U.S. citizens per year. Applications are accepted before March 1<sup>st</sup> each year, and participants are selected by a committee chaired jointly by a Member of the European Parliament and a Member of the European Commission. The purpose of the program is for young leaders in non-EU countries to visit Europe to gain a first-hand appreciation of the EU's goals, policies and peoples and to increase mutual understanding between professionals from non-EU countries and their EU counterparts. Programs are tailored for participants, and cover areas ranging from ecology to arts to law and beyond. I was honored to be selected for this program and look forward to more opportunities to share my experiences with others. For more information on the European Union Visitors Program, and to fill out an application, go to <http://www.eurunion.org/delegati/ppd/euvs.htm>.



l to r: Wouter Mortier, Adjunct Director, Nature Department, Flemish Park Ministry; Koen Marechal, East Coast Conservation Officer, Agency for Nature and Forests, Flemish Government; Shari Wilson, KACEE; Chris Steineger, Kansas State Senator; Jean-Claude Watry, EUVP Program Organizer, standing at the Het Zwin overlook



Birds enjoy the brackish waters of Het Zwin, a nature park on the east coast of Belgium.

# Resources

\*\*\*\*\*KACEE does not necessarily recommend or endorse items and programs on these pages\*\*\*\*\*

## "Alien Invasions - Plants on the Move"



"Alien Invasions - Plants on the Move" weed curriculum for grades K-12 is now online. Developed by BLM staff and a host of experts, this curriculum has been pilot tested in schools throughout Oregon and now is ready to go. So if you know any educators who might want to use this, or if you need information for your organization's education/outreach activities, check it out! Please visit [http://www.weedinvasion.org/weeds/weed\\_home.php](http://www.weedinvasion.org/weeds/weed_home.php)

## Outdoor Events Planned For Kids Throughout Kansas



The Kansas Wildscape Foundation would like to announce its Annual Outdoor Kansas for Kids (O.K. Kids) Event near you! Events start as soon as April 13<sup>th</sup> and continue through the summer and fall all across Kansas.

The O.K. Kids Program expects to attract over 15,000 participants from all over the state in 2007. Our program focuses on encouraging children to leave their sedentary lifestyle, at least for one day to become active and catch a breath of fresh air by experiencing Kansas outdoors.

Wildscape and program partners, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and the Kansas Recreation and Parks Association, plan to have thousands of kids hiking, fishing, and bird watching to name a few events. Events are open to the public. Free O.K. Kids tee shirts will be given to each child, thanks to Duckwall-Alco's support. The programs founding sponsor, Bass Pro Shops, will provide free gifts to each child participating as well as the opportunity to win some great prizes. In addition to the prizes, the kids have the opportunity to enter a picture drawing contest sponsored by Capitol Federal Savings. The theme for the picture is a favorite outdoor scene or activity.

"One of the programs Wildscape is most proud of is O.K. Kids," Said Mike Vineyard, a member of the Wildscape board of directors. "What a great way to get outside and have fun while learning something new and spending time with your friends and family!" Wildscape encourages families and individuals to not only get outdoors and attend one of our events, but to enjoy the great outdoors year round.

Events run from early spring until fall. For details about O.K. Kids events and contests as well as other Wildscape projects, log on to [www.kansaswildscape.org](http://www.kansaswildscape.org) or contact Rebecca Reichenbach at Kansas Wildscape toll free at 1-866-655-4377 or [rebeccar@sunflower.com](mailto:rebeccar@sunflower.com) for additional information.

## State Conservation Commission Launches New Website



The State Conservation Commission (SCC) has launched a new website, [www.scc.ks.gov](http://www.scc.ks.gov), offering streamlined access to the expanded content. The new site significantly increases the amount of information now available electronically regarding the SCC and its programs. The site also contains links to numerous conservation resources.

On the home page online visitors can quickly skim "What's New," be introduced to "Financial Assistance," and view a list of upcoming "Meetings & Events". In addition, users can explore the various menu options or check out the "Links" located at the top of the page. Numerous agencies and organizations website links are available. The "Conservation Education Links" have awesome websites for educators, youth leaders, and students.

The new website showcases the activities of conservation and watershed districts, underlining the key role they play in implementing state programs locally. Contact information for each district is also available.

The intent of the online information is to assist in promoting the wise use of Kansas natural resources. Frequent updates and new resources periodically being added will merit recurring visits.

The SCC works with the 105 local conservation districts and the 88 organized watershed districts, as well as state and federal entities to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, conserve water, reduce flood potential, and provide local water supply.

## Participate in International Polar Year Activities

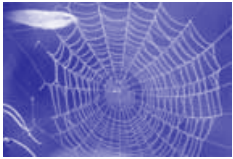


The International Polar Year involves more than 200 projects focused on evidence of changes in snow and ice in the Arctic and Antarctic. This large scientific program is organized through the International Council for Science and the World Meteorological Organization, and takes place from March 2007 to March 2009 (in order to cover both the Arctic and Antarctic comprehensively and equally, IPY takes place over two full annual cycles). Thousands of scientists from more than 60 countries will study a wide range of physical, biological, and social research topics. Educators can be involved through conducting classroom activities, following the research online, participating in blogs and communicating with scientists in the field. For more information on the International Polar Year, go to [www.ipy.org](http://www.ipy.org).

# Resources

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## Children & Nature Movement Update



The grass roots Children and Nature Movement continues to grow and expand. Twenty-two regions have now launched or are considering launching a Children & Nature Campaign. From Louisville to Seattle, communities are coming together to raise awareness and map-out plans for action. Shifts in policy are also underway with several groups working together to propose children and nature amendments to the No Child Left Behind Act.

Recent movement gatherings include the December conference on children and nature hosted by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and the C&NN planning session held in January to inform the drafting of a C&NN Action Guide for regional leaders and community collaboratives. C&NN Chairman, Rich Louv, continues to speak as author and a spokesman for the movement with over 20 speaking engagements in February and March alone.

As the movement grows, so do the resources and support for movement leaders. This month C&NN publishes two key tools for communicating the need, reasons, urgency and scientific foundations for taking action to re-connect children & nature: 1) a report listing the first of 20 premier research studies on the benefits of connecting children to nature, and 2) a selection of conference resources, including exclusive video excerpts, from the 2006 Dialogue on Children and Nature co-convened by the Conservation Fund, the National Conservation Training Center and Rich Louv. These resources will help provide scientific information, common language and a shared vision to support advocacy, innovation, and local leadership.

**Research Report:** Parents and grandparents, friends, family, teachers, physicians and concerned citizens-people want to do what is right and best for children. With that in mind, C&NN has set out to compile a **premier set of research studies** to help us all understand the connection between nature and the healthy development of children. The conclusion of these studies is clear: nature experience improves children's health, happiness, academic achievement, and general well being. To read more visit, [http://www.cnaturenet.org/02\\_rsrch\\_studies/02\\_resrch\\_intro.html](http://www.cnaturenet.org/02_rsrch_studies/02_resrch_intro.html).

**Leadership Report and Resources :** C&NN publishes a Leadership Report on the National Dialogue on Children and Nature with **video and PowerPoint presentations**. View video excerpts or presentations by Secretary of the Interior, Dirk Kempthorne, Richard Louv, Larry Selzer, Stephen Kellert, Kathy Baughman McLeod, Charles Jordan and others as they speak out on the children and nature connection. To read more please visit, [http://www.cnaturenet.org/03\\_lead\\_rprt/conf\\_hm.html](http://www.cnaturenet.org/03_lead_rprt/conf_hm.html).

## Great Resources for Educators!!

**Earth and Space Science** provides activities, animations, and lessons on astronomy, the solar system, and earth's structure, processes, and history. Topics include earthquakes, faults, tectonic plates, soil liquefaction, Antarctica, convection currents in water, continental drift, extremophiles, auroras, subduction, Curie point, ozone, climate change, earth's magnetic field, and seasons. For more information on Earth and Space Science, visit [http://free.ed.gov/resource.cfm?resource\\_id=1857](http://free.ed.gov/resource.cfm?resource_id=1857)

**Global Climate Change** is an introduction to the world of scientific research on climate change. Learn about physical processes underlying the earth's climate, data on how the climate is changing and the role of human activity, and questions and uncertainties that researchers continue to explore. The site is organized in four parts: the atmosphere, hydrosphere (oceans and water), cryosphere (snow and ice), and biosphere (living organisms). For more information on Global Climate Change, visit [http://free.ed.gov/resource.cfm?resource\\_id=1865](http://free.ed.gov/resource.cfm?resource_id=1865)

**Learning About Fossil Fuels** features lessons on coal, oil, and natural gas. Learn how coal is formed and used, and about technologies for cleaning up coal. Find out how oil is squeezed out of the earth and how natural gas is extracted from the ground and sea. For more information on Learning about Fossil Fuels, visit [http://free.ed.gov/resource.cfm?resource\\_id=1862](http://free.ed.gov/resource.cfm?resource_id=1862)

**Milestones in the History of Energy and Its Uses** features a timeline of energy developments and uses since the 1700s. Learn about biomass, coal, electricity, geothermal, natural gas, nuclear power, oil, solar power, wind turbines, and transportation. See biographies of individuals who contributed to energy and science. Read a history of energy in the U.S. from 1635-2000. For more information on Milestones in the History of Energy and its Uses, visit [http://www.free.ed.gov/resource.cfm?resource\\_id=1868](http://www.free.ed.gov/resource.cfm?resource_id=1868)

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[jamtower@kacee.org](mailto:jamtower@kacee.org)

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# KACEE Membership & Request for Information

Organizational Membership (\$50/year)     Individual Membership (\$20/year)

Student Membership (Grade 9-Undergraduate) \$10/year

Additional donation to support quality, non-biased, science-based environmental education in Kansas \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/School/Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are joining as an individual member or primary contact for an Organizational membership, how would you like to receive your KACEE newsletter and Communications:     Paper     Electronic

(NOTE: Student members and Organizational member contacts will receive KACEE news via e-mail only)

Organizational members may list up to two additional contacts at no extra charge (please list on a separate sheet). For more than two additional contacts, please include \$10 per additional contact (beyond two additional contacts included with organizational membership)

I am interested in the following:

Assisting and/or hosting a workshop in my area

Serving on a committee or working with a project

Providing educator scholarship in my community

Attending a workshop:     PLT     PLT Secondary     WET     WILD

Investigating Your Environment

Becoming a project facilitator

Presenting at a workshop or conference

Becoming a school or district liaison

Becoming a corporate sponsor

WILD Aquatic     WET In the City     Leopold Education Project

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_



Please return completed form to:

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