



KACEE News

North American Association
For Environmental Education Affiliate

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

Fall Conference Looks to Lessons of the Land

This year, KACEE members and others interested in learning more about environmental education travel to southeast Kansas to explore "EE in the Balance: **Lessons of the Land.**" Southeast Kansas has experienced devastating land practices in the past, but now land restoration is providing a new beginning. What can we learn from this transformation? Join us for fascinating presentations and field investigations and find out!

Our keynote speaker this year is Dr. Deborah (Bora) Simmons from Northern Illinois University. Bora is a professor of Teaching and Learning at Northern Illinois University, where she teaches outdoor education courses to undergraduate and graduate students. She has directed the National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education since the North American Association for Environmental Education initiated it in 1993. She is a recipient of the Walter Jeske Award and the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Environmental Education Research, and has taught environmental education in Namibia, China, and Thailand.



Concurrent sessions this year will run in two tracks. Lessons of the Land features reading and literature, geography, mapping, landscape restoration, and Leopold Education Project activities. Excellence in EE: Best Practices for the Environmental Educators features issues surrounding the EE profession, developing new EE programs, connecting with fellow environmental educators, and more!

Plus, we'll have field investigations to the Southeast Kansas Nature Center at Schermerhorn Park, Ford Farm Wetlands, and mined land restoration areas of the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks. Add in some great food, music from 3 Old Hippies, and a little magic, and it's a conference you won't want to miss! Registration information will be coming soon, and check KACEE's website often for schedule updates.

- ◇ Contact Shari L. Wilson, Conference Manager for more information: swilson@kacee.org or 913-287-6879.
- ◇ Conference registration fees are the same as last year, \$70 for KACEE members and \$45 for member educators with an educator scholarship.

Eighth Annual Kansas Environmental Education Conference

Conference dates, location, hotel

Friday and Saturday, November 3 and 4, 2006. We will be meeting at Pittsburg State University on Friday and Holiday Inn Express on Saturday.

Conference Hotel is the Holiday Inn Express, Pittsburg. Ask for the conference rate.

Where is Pittsburg? Pittsburg is located in southeast Kansas, in the beautiful Cherokee Lowlands and Ozark Plateau regions of the state. Pittsburg is only 125 miles from the Kansas City area, 140 miles from Lawrence, 170 miles from Topeka, and 165 miles from Wichita! There's lots to see and do along the way!

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News

Online EE Community Tips Toolbox

In our last newsletter, we focused on logging in to the Online EE Community and how to tell if your membership is up to date. This month, we focus on how Organizational Members can update their contacts, programs, and calendar items.



--Log in to the Online community using your user name and password.

--On the left side of your screen, you will see a blue box with the heading "Update your listings." The general procedure is the same, whether you are updating your contacts, programs, or calendar items.

--Click on "Contacts." The list of contact(s) for your organization will appear. From here, you may delete, edit, or add contact information.

--Click on "Programs." If you have previously entered programs for your organization, the list will appear. From here, you may delete, edit, or add programs.

--Click on "Calendar Items." If you previously entered calendar items for your organization, the list will appear. From here, you may delete, edit, or add programs.

--When you delete a contact, program, or calendar item, a screen allowing you to confirm the deletion will appear. When you edit a contact, program, or calendar item, be sure to click "change" at the bottom of the screen. If you add a contact, program, or calendar item, click "create" at the bottom to lock in your information.

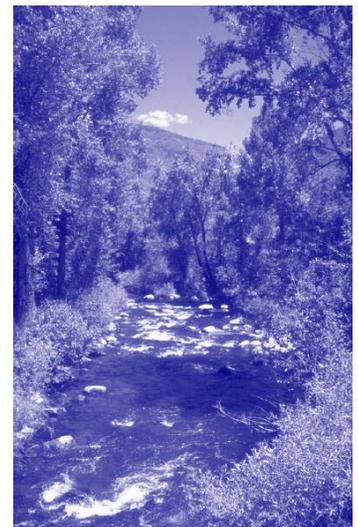
--It's a good idea to jot a note on your calendar to update your Online EE Community information once a month. That way, when people check for EE resources and happenings, your information is always up to date and they will be able to find you, your programs, and your events!



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

2006 Kansas Environmental Education Conference Pre-Conference Workshop *Discover A Watershed!*

Plans are well underway for the 2006 Pre-Conference Workshop! The workshop will be held on Thursday, November 2, 2006. The theme of this year's workshop is Discover A Watershed! Participants will learn more about watersheds, explore activities and ideas for educating others about the importance of watersheds, receive some new Project WET materials, and spend some time at (and possibly on) a river! The fee will once again be only \$35 – lunch included, and a graduate credit (an additional \$55) will be available for those also attending the conference. You are invited to join us and to "Discover A Watershed!" For more information, check out www.kacee.org or contact Beth Carreno at bcarreno@kacee.org or 785-233-4721.



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

KACEE's Executive Director Receives Environmental Excellence Award

Article by: Kate Grover

KACEE was recently honored by EPA Region 7 when Executive Director, Laura Downey, was awarded the *EPA Region 7 Educator's Environmental Excellence Award*. Laura was nominated by KACEE Board Members John Strickler and Kate Grover. What makes this award particularly prestigious is that it recognizes one outstanding environmental educator within the four state Region of Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska.

Specifically, the award acknowledges the accomplishments and successes that the individual awardee has attained in the field of environmental education including accomplishments, attitude, dedication and improvements made by the nominee in the field of environmental education.

Laura's work and dedication to environmental education has been evident throughout her career beginning in the Chicago Public Schools, in her current service to KACEE, and into the future. In addition to her position as Director of KACEE, Laura participates with other Non-profit education and science organizations where her participation and involvement has continued, and amplified, the recognition and respect that KACEE receives nationally and throughout North America.

When presenting the award Kate Grover expressed that it has been a privilege to work with Laura as a member of the Board of Directors. The award was presented on June 2, 2006 at a gathering hosted by Joe and Sherry Downey to celebrate the recent completion of Laura's Doctor of Education Degree from the Kansas State University's College of Education in Curriculum & Instruction – Math, Science and Technology.

In his nomination letter, John Strickler expressed that, "Laura's greatest impact has been her effective management of KACEE as a non-profit organization that not only delivers effective EE programs, but also serves as a facilitator in networking and helping other organizations to strengthen EE efforts. Laura Downey has had a significant, positive impact on the EE community in Kansas, the Region and the nation, and is most deserving of this award."

For those of you who know Laura, she is a very professional, poised, and outspoken advocate for, and a leader in, Environmental Education. "It was amazing to see her rendered speechless by the presentation of this award. It is well deserved and I believe there is no one in the four State Region who has had a positive and progressive impact on EE," said Kate. Laura does an exemplary job of supporting EE through teaching others how to think critically, not what to think, about science, EE and the world around them. Congratulations Laura! KACEE is lucky to have you!



Left to Right: Kate Grover, Past President of KACEE, Laura Downey, and John Strickler, KACEE Fund Development Chair



Topeka Environmental Education Workshop

KACEE partnered with the USD 501 Outdoor Environmental Education program to offer an educator workshop. Participants received programming in Project WET and WET in the City, Project Learning Tree and PLT Secondary, and Project WILD. A streamside field trip provided some fun stream assessment experience. Thank you so much to Jeff Severin (pictured) and Cheri Miller who shared their time and skills with the group! Thanks also go to the City of Topeka Water Division for providing our wonderful workshop location and a great field trip of the drinking water facility. If you would like to host a workshop in your area please contact Beth Carreno at bcarreno@kacee.org or 785-233-4721.

News

Master Mud Builders

Article by: Cheri Miller

You might be wondering what is so difficult about making a mud pie that there would be an award. There are actually many secrets to successfully building with mud. Several students and adults have taken the challenge of becoming master mud builders by designing farms, pioneer villages, new home developments, and even bridge expansions. Many have succeeded; however, even more have met with tragedy when rain starts in fall.

During the past three months, Wyandotte County Conservation District employees, Cheri Miller and Amy Freemire, have presented the challenge to many classrooms and individuals of building a farm, a housing development, a pioneer settlement, or a bridge expansion on their plot of land. Their land, a large box of soil, each have unique challenges to overcome or build around (i.e. livestock, homes roads, trees, driveways, and fences). The common obstacle on each land is a body of water, either a pond or stream to incorporate into the design. Each group of builders and developers work together designing plans around their water source, while at the same time protecting the water from filling with silt or other pollutants. Sometimes there might even be a protected species, such as the Topeka shiner, in the water placing even more restrictions on where and how they build.



After completing the build-site, each group of builders and developers have the opportunity to explain their plans and then take a tour of all the new developments in the area. The question is hanging over everyone: "Will their land survive the rainstorm that is about to fall?" Most hold strong until the heavy rainstorms come, then the bridges fall in, homes sink, Farmer Fred's chickens end up in streams, or the neighbor's car becomes the new fish house at the bottom of your pond.

After the excitement of experiencing a flood the planning begins of how to recover from this natural disaster or how to survive the next rainstorm; building an ark is not an option either. Now is when we bring out the extra ground coverings: grass, (buffalo of course) flowers, and trees. The builders are able to look at the prairie and notice how little the rain affected it versus the housing development with all the roads and driveways. Otherwise known as, yes, big vocabulary words: impervious surface.



Next more erosion control practices (another vocabulary lesson) shared. These include silt fences, a.k.a. those trash-bag looking fences, and erosion control blankets. Yes you read it right, blankets made of straw, and or geo-textiles for the soil. Using these new we pick a

development which suffered heavily from the rain and put up silt fences supported by straw around the water source, and plant more vegetation around the waters edge creating a buffer.

After adding all these new practices and vocabulary words the rain comes again. Holding our breath will the house survive? Yes, it stands strong and the soil stays snug in place thanks to the long roots of our native plants and the erosion control blankets of straw. Cheers from everyone for a job well done.

The developers now receive their *Master Mud Builder Award*, a small plot of soil and native grass seed (a cup of dirt to some), which can be taken home and planted. Those awards can then be shared with their families and friends, hopefully encouraging more people to take the challenge and become a *Master Mud Builder*



KACEE Workshop Highlights

June was a busy month! It was a whirlwind of wonderful workshops! We were in Colby for an early childhood Project WET workshop. Kids are drawn to water; this workshop explored some activities and ideas for day care providers and preschool teachers (pictured) to allow our youngest learners to explore this resource!

And then on to Wichita for the jam-packed Wichita Water Workshop, which included an activity and resource fair; a tour of the WATER Center; and a behind the scenes look at the zoo and its water needs. Thank you to Libby Albers, Tonya Bronleewe, and Kay Drennen for making this workshop happen. And special thanks to Chaille Hay, Schanee' Anderson, and the rest of the staff at the Sedgwick County Zoo. No matter how old you are, there is something spectacular about petting an elephant!

News

Nature's Way of Healing!

Article by: Roland Stein



As many parents and teachers already know the number of children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is skyrocketing; there was an increase 33% from 1997 to 2002. Scientists have yet to come up with an explanation for the trend. Still, the disorder is real. Children with the disorder have trouble paying attention, listening, following directions and focusing on tasks.

In an on-going study by Human-Environment Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois, researchers have discovered that children, as young as five, showed a significant reduction in ADHD symptoms when they engaged with nature. Their after-school or weekend activities and their setting were studied. Those in settings that included landscaped areas, grassy backyards, farmlands, or parks when compared to those in indoor playgrounds or paved recreational areas showed a greater reduction, 54 out of 56 cases, of ADHD symptoms. The only instances where symptoms did increase were in the artificial environments. It appears this engagement with nature buffers children against life stresses which could aggravate ADHD. It is not totally clear why exposure to the "green" world would have such a powerful influence on brain functions related to ADHD. One theory is that during an earlier an earlier hunting and gathering such as climbing, swimming, chasing small animals or gathering plants for food, which immersed most of their sensory receptors. As recently as in the 1950's most youngsters played unorganized sports, such as baseball, built forts in wood lots, or caught all sorts of "critters" by hand. Their play was closely integrated with nature. That has changed! Now children are watching TV, playing on computers, playing sports under adult guidance and rules, and have to be "organized" to undertake any task they wish to engage in. Many of these activities do not provide any "energy release" or "creative thinking" opportunities. It has been shown that many of these "modern-day" activities lead to what is termed "directed-attention fatigue." In simple terms, this disorder may lie within societies that have disengaged children from nature and imposed upon them an artificial environment from which they did not evolve.

It appears a visit to a "green" area would be ideal treatment for this ailment. It has no serious side effects and it's free. Doesn't the "green" area sound like a great idea to you? Let the healing begin!

Hesston Certified as a Community Wildlife Habitat



Leading a nationwide trend in community concern for habitat loss, the community of Hesston, Kansas, was officially designated a *Community Wildlife Habitat*, the first in Kansas, and only the eighteenth in the country to receive such an honor. This honor took place in a ceremony on August 8th at the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains in Hesston.

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) commends the dedicated residents of Hesston and the Prairie Pocket Gardens Community Wildlife Habitat team for coming together for a common purpose - to create a community where people and wildlife can flourish. The knowledge and inspiration that this project has generated will lead Hesston residents to continue to create a mosaic of wildlife habitat with native plants throughout the community.

Funding was provided by a grant from the ASC Foundation of Saint Louis, MO. "It's very exciting to be part of this project that is so good for the people, wildlife, and environment of Hesston. This is a goal that usually takes 2 - 5 years to reach but, with the help of the Habitat Team, the Hesston community, NWF representatives and the ASC Foundation, we have accomplished Community Wildlife Habitat certification in one year," said Project Director, Allison Hamm, Dyck Arboretum Grant Coordinator.

The City of Hesston is in Harvey County, Kansas 30 miles north of Wichita, with a population of over 3500. An area once covered with prairie, it now faces continuing habitat loss and fragmentation. The Prairie Pocket Project creates a mosaic of wildlife friendly landscapes throughout the Hesston community. Each of Hesston's 50 individual certified habitats, provides the four essential elements for wildlife to thrive: food, water, shelter and places to raise young. Habitats have also been certified at local schools, businesses and community locations, such as the city golf course, an intergenerational child care center, and a retirement community. The project has focused on use of native plants and water conservation, resulting in an oasis for diverse species of local and migratory birds, butterflies, insect pollinators.

To date, only seventeen other communities have been recognized with Community Wildlife Habitat certification. Since 1973, NWF has provided millions of people with the basic guidelines for making their landscapes more wildlife-friendly. There are over 68,000 certified habitats nationwide, 572 in Kansas and 65 in Harvey County.

Resources

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

New Film Explores Playas - The Most Important Wetlands You've Never Heard of



You may have never heard of, nor seen, a playa wetland. Unknown to most, playas are the most abundant and ecologically important wetlands in the Southern High Plains, recharging aquifers, and sustaining wildlife and agricultural economies. Yet despite these benefits, playas remain critically threatened and are fading from the landscape faster than people can even learn they exist.

In an effort to raise awareness and conservation of these vital wetlands, the Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) - a partnership of conservation groups, landowners, and natural resource agencies - has produced a new film about the wetlands, *The Playas - Reflections of Life on the Plains*, which is now available on DVD or VHS.

The 28-minute film illustrates the values of playas to wildlife, water and people, threats to the wetlands and how people are working to conserve them. The film features sweeping aerial footage of playas captured by hot air balloon and interviews with playa experts, biologists, landowners and community leaders throughout the six-state playa lakes region.

Playas are shallow, seasonal wetlands found throughout the Southern High Plains. They are the primary source of recharge for the Ogallala Aquifer, and support millions of birds and other wildlife. There are more than 60,000 playas in the short grass prairie regions of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas - making them the most abundant wetland type in the region.

The film will be available starting July 1 in either DVD or VHS format. Contact Debbie Slobe of the PLJV at Debbie.slobe@pljv.org to request a copy. There is no charge for the film except for shipping. For more information about playas, visit the PLJV web site: www.pljv.org/film.html.

National Public Lands Day



Participate in National Public Lands Day on September 30, 2006 and help build upon the magnificent and lasting legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps for the greater enjoyment and enrichment of all

Americans. National Public Lands Day (NPLD) provides an opportunity for volunteers across the nation to work together in improving our public lands. Visit <http://www.publiclandsday.org/> to find a site near you.

New KAWS Internet Map Services Available



"The Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams, Inc. (KAWS) has worked with the state Data Access and Support Center (DASC), Lawrence, to make Geographic Information System (GIS) digital mapping layers available to all its members and others needing this type of information," said John Bond, KAWS chapter coordinator. "Many of the

GIS layers that have previously only been available to individuals with expensive software and huge GIS databases will now be available to anyone with a relatively new computer and access to the Internet. You can say it is a free planning tool."

Available digital layers include up-to-date aerial photography, transportation - highways and roads, GAP analysis data, Kansas Department of Health and Environment water quality information, topography, river and stream systems, riparian area inventory, soil map units, wetland inventories, river basins, hydrological unit codes, and many more. In information technology, gap analysis is the study of the differences between two different information systems or applications, often for the purpose of determining how to get from one state to a new state. A gap is sometimes spoken of as "the space between where we are and where we want to be." Gap analysis is undertaken as a means of bridging that space. KAWS hopes to help landowners and decision-makers bridge the gaps that exist with their wetland, stream and riparian areas from existing conditions to created, enhanced, or restored conditions.

The site is still under construction but most of the layers are currently available for use. Entering <http://maps.kansasgis.org/kaws/map.cfm> in your Internet browser will access the site. KAWS asks that interested people try using the site and notify the organization if additional user-friendly enhancements can be made, if additional digital layers are needed, or other changes or additions. If you would like more information on KAWS, please contact us at 785-463-5804, 620-241-3636, or visit us on the web at www.kaws.org.

GreenWorks!

The next round of GreenWorks! proposals are due next month, on September 29, 2006. Please share this information with your network of facilitators and teachers and encourage them to submit proposals. The proposal is relatively painless and it is a great opportunity for grant writers with limited experience. Encourage the grant applicants to emphasize the service-learning and community connections within the proposal. For more information and download the grant application go to http://www.plt.org/cms/pages/21_22_18.htm.

Resources

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

Cheyenne Bottoms Herps

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Sternberg Museum of Natural History, Fort Hays State University, are pleased to announce publication of

Amphibians, Turtles, and Reptiles of Cheyenne Bottoms Second (Revised) Edition

by Joseph T. Collins & Suzanne L. Collins with photographs by Suzanne L. Collins



Cheyenne Bottoms, a nearly 27,500-acre wetlands situated in a relatively dry 41,000-acre lowland in central Kansas, sports a small but fascinating herpetofauna composed of 28 species-one salamander, eight frogs & toads, five turtles, two lizards, and twelve snakes. This delightful guide to the amphibians, turtles, and reptiles of the Bottoms is spiced with humorous anecdotes and asides that provide a sometimes whimsical, sometimes somber, view of these creatures, as well as solid information about their natural history along with the most up-to-date taxonomy backed by scientific evidence. The book is profusely illustrated with 36 images (33 of them in color) by co-author Suzanne L. Collins, a noted wildlife photographer.

Sponsors of this elegant and informative little book include the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Manhattan, Kansas), Sternberg Museum of Natural History, Fort Hays State University (Hays, Kansas), Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (Pratt), Westar Energy (Topeka), Kansas Herpetological Society (Topeka), Touchstone Energy (Washington, D. C.), and The Center for North American Herpetology (Lawrence, Kansas).

Single copies of the 84-page book are available *FREE* by writing to the Sternberg Museum of Natural History, Fort Hays State University, 3000 Sternberg Drive, Hays, Kansas 67601-2006. Please include a self-addressed 7x10-inch envelope with \$2.07 U.S. postage attached.

President's Environmental Youth Award and Educators Environmental Excellence Award

The President's Environmental Youth Awards (PEYA--is a national award) and the Educators Environmental Excellence Award is a Region 7 award. The deadline for PEYA nominations is **October 31, 2006** and the deadline for the Educators award is **December 31, 2006**. These programs recognize the efforts and endeavors of students and educators in environmental education.

Presidential Environmental Youth Awards --Today's Youth Protecting Tomorrow's Environment

Each year the PEYA program honors a wide variety of environmental projects developed by young individuals, school classes (K-12), summer camps, public interest groups, and youth organizations to promote environmental awareness. Your project or one you are sponsoring-could be an award winner. An electronic version of an application can be viewed or downloaded in portable document format at EPA's PEYA Web site at <http://epa.gov/enviroed/awards.html>. Past projects have included building nature trails, reversing the decline of endangered species, starting recycling programs, restoring native habitats, creating schoolyard habitats, and many other creative sustainable efforts. To learn more about past award winning projects, please visit the PEYA Web site.

Educators Environmental Excellence Award

This program recognizes outstanding environmental educators in the region's four states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. An electronic version of an application can be viewed at EPA's Teachers Web site at http://epa.gov/region07/education_resources/teachers/enviroexc.htm. If you have questions, or need additional information about these awards programs, please contact Denise D. Morrison at morrison.denise@epa.gov or at (913) 551-7402.

Two Great Resources from U.S. Geological Survey



"Biology: U.S. Geological Survey" provides research results, photos, projects, and other resources for studies in biology, biodiversity, and ecology. Learn about butterflies and moths of North America, bat research, invasive species, environmental contaminants' effects on plants and animals, redwood research, surf scoters, sea otters, reptiles and amphibians of southern California, the desert tortoise, habitat conservation, and genetic diversity across different species groups. For more information, visit <http://education.usgs.gov/common/>

"Geology at the U.S. Geological Survey" offers resource collections and maps for studying earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and other natural disasters, as well as rocks and minerals, plate tectonics, earth's interior, fossils, coastal wetlands, deserts, the carbon cycle, climate change, and the solar system. Learn about the San Andreas fault system, the life cycle of a mineral deposit, fire ecology research, big floods in the U.S., and more. For more information, visit <http://education.usgs.gov/common/secondary.htm#geology>



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KACEE Membership & Request for Information

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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 an educator scholarship in my community
 - Attending a workshop: PLT PLT Secondary WET WILD WILD Aquatic Investigating Your Environment
 - Other (please specify): _____
- Becoming a project facilitator
 - Presenting at a workshop or conference
 - Becoming a school or district liaison
 - Becoming a corporate sponsor



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