

OUTDOORS

2010 SPRING NEWSLETTER



Happy Spring Everyone.

Hopefully all of you are enjoying the early spring weather that we have received. The COEEA board had been busy behind the scenes. We have unofficially received our non-profit status which was many years in the making. We have been working behind the scenes as well to fill a vacated membership chair.

There were many requests for information on this year's conference. It was decided last year that we would not put on a conference in 2010. We hosted two conferences last year, our annual spring conference in March as well as the NEEEA conference in September. Instead of overtaxing the calendar, we are focusing on our upcoming 2010 Annual Meeting which will be held this fall. Stay tuned for more information.

COEEA also recently sponsored Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP) workshops on April 8, 26, and 28, as well as at the SENEME conference on April 30. We have a steering committee that is working hard on the ELP. If you would like more information on the ELP or are interested in helping in the ELP process, please contact me at the e-mail below.

Becky Newman
COEEA President
president@coeea.org

New Membership Benefits to be Unveiled This Fall

Among the many new items that COEEA has been busy working on is a revamped membership program for both individuals and environmental organizations in Connecticut. Our new benefits are designed to provide COEEA members with more of what is needed by our members. For individuals, more information on environmental organizations in Connecticut, as well as highlights of Connecticut's awesome natural history resources. For organizations, expanded information on grants, a free job board, organization profiles and additional opportunities to promote goals and missions to Connecticut's teachers, environmental professionals and families.

We are also adding a new COEEA award. Our 2010 annual meeting will include the inaugural award for Connecticut Environmental Organization of the Year. In addition to our other annual awards which honor classroom and outdoor educators, environmental administrators and inclusive educators, this award will recognize the top environmental organizations in our state.

Look for information on our upcoming annual meeting and the unveiling of our new membership benefits coming this fall. For questions, please contact me at communications@coeea.org.

Lisa Monachelli
Communications Chair

**Connecticut Outdoor & Environmental
Education Association, Inc.**

CONTENTS:

President's Message
New Membership
Highlights
Page 1

Environmental Literacy
Plan, Wiki & NEEEA
News
Page 2-3

Upcoming Events
Pages 4-5

Educational Resources
and Opportunities
Page 6

Grant Opportunities
Page 7

News From Around
The State
Pages 8-9

Mission

*To support Connecticut's
outdoor and environmental
educators as they promote
responsible environmental
stewardship.*

Outdoors

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www.coeea.org



The Environmental Literacy Plan Grows

Hopefully most of you have heard about the Environmental Literacy Plan- ELP-taking shape in Connecticut. A steering committee made up of a dozen people and organizations has begun the process to design and develop a plan that will help guide programs, education connections, citizens and municipalities toward environmental stewardship. If you or your organization has not done so already, go to www.coeea.org to sign on as a supporter of the ELP. It is critical that we get as much broad-based support as possible to make the ELP a success. To date, the framework of the plan has been designed and key issues are being addressed. There are eight guiding elements that must be addressed in an ELP as stated by the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). These are Content Standards, Instructional Opportunities, High School Graduation, Professional Development, Implementation and Funding, Reporting to Public and Research and addressing School Facilities. Each plays a role in creating an informed, environmentally literate citizen in Connecticut. To help meet the many avenues to achieving or providing opportunities to build environmental literacy, Connecticut has framed the plan to address these eight elements in three different arenas, Education Systems, Community and Government.

To provide the input for making this plan reflective of the member organizations and groups involved in environmental education and its activities held several open ELP workshops. These were open invitations to members of COEEA and others in the state to learn more about the ELP and add thoughts and ideas on how to improve the plan. Members of town, organizations, centers, schools and business were asked to take part in a workshop and become part of the development processes.

*If you were unable to attend a workshop, but want to be part of the network go to www.coeea.org. You may download copies of the **Case for Support** and sign on to the network of people supporting the development of the ELP.*

The health of Connecticut's future depends on its citizens being environmentally literate and able to make informed choices about issues such as sustainability of resources, air quality and land development.

Wild about the Wiki

If you are an educator or coordinator for a nature center or environmental center, you may have received an invitation to become part of the Affiliates and Partners Wiki site. If you have not please contact partnerships@coeea.org and ask to be sent the link.

What is the Wiki all about? Well, it is a way to network with environmental educators directly to pose questions on activities within centers, policy, get feedback on questions and seek information that is pertinent to your needs.

Why does COEEA have a Wiki? We would like to serve your needs as informal educators more effectively. This means we would like to offer trainings that are suited to the informal environmental aspect of education and we need to find out what those interests may be. Being part of the Wiki will allow us to quickly ask for feedback on meeting dates and topics so that we can schedule conferences and workshops to best suit your schedules.

How can it help my center or programs? You can put your questions for feedback on the site and seek help in finding partners for projects, new ideas for programs and locate contacts for speakers. An earlier survey conducted by COEEA found that the highest need was a way to promote programs and centers. The Wiki will offer you a way to share new programs that others may book or schedule for their sites, put together combined opportunities within regions or areas and find out what is working at other sites and where they may have the same challenges.

So, if you got the invitation earlier but have not signed on, please know the invitation is open forever. If you want me to re-invite you just drop me a line at partnerships@coeea.org and we can set it up. Or if you did not see the invitation or did not receive it let me know and we can correct the problem. This is the easiest way to keep in touch with others in our field. Hope to see you on the Wiki soon.



NEEEA Has a New Look

At the NEEEA conferences this past fall, designs for a new logo were unveiled. Feedback was given and ideas shared. Now the new logo has emerged.

As a COEEA member you are also a member of this regional group. NEEEA has been functioning for 40+ years in New England as a way for the states to network together. The ELP project is the latest focus of the states and members are sharing resources and designs as plans develop. Common workshops for all members to come together and share ideas while learning about national developments are arranged and grants are being sought to support all states in their efforts.

This is one way NEEEA is working for you. With this new logo, so begins the start of a new alliance. Currently, NEEEA is redesigning committees and visions to reflect the needs of the 21st Century Educator. The growth of technology and demands on every one's time has required new approaches to meetings and conferences. Ideas and goals are currently being reviewed to see what is needed for a regional conference. Other needs such as publications, resources and trainings will be coming out soon and we will keep you posted. We are always looking for your input and welcome comments and questions. If you want more information on NEEEA please contact us at neeearep@coeea.org or neeeamember@coeea.org

UPCOMING EVENTS



GREEN EARTH SERIES

A Series of Free Lectures about Environmental Topics

GREEN FOODS AND HEALTHY DIET

Speakers: Trina Muro, Patient Services Manager, Food and Nutrition Services, & Jeff Schack, Executive Chef, Norwalk Hospital
Saturday June 5, 2:30 PM

For more information, visit www.earthplace.org

Attention Groups and Organizations:

You are now able to post your events on Connecticut's *No Child Left Inside* website at www.nochildleftinside.org.

Submit an Event for the No Child Left Inside Events Calendar

To help promote the numerous events across that state that support the mission of *No Child Left Inside*® the CT Department of Environmental Protection has launched a new element to the *No Child Left Inside*® website.

1. Go to "[Submit an Event](#)" on the [No Child Left Inside](#)® website
2. Enter Event Information
3. Hit submit

Please note that events submitted will be posted within 5 working days.

Thank you in advance for helping to promote the mission of *No Child Left Inside*®.

Astronomy Nights

Friday May 21 **7:00-8:30 p.m.**
Our Moon

Stamford Museum
& Nature Center



Friday June 25 **7:00-8:30 p.m.**
Looking Back at Earth: a View from Above

7:00- observatory open house & presentation; 8:00- telescope viewing (weather permitting)

Visit www.stamfordmuseum.org for more information.

Farmers' Markets Reopen for Season!

Buy local! The 2010 Spring Farmer's Market Season is underway in Connecticut. There are numerous markets throughout the State of Connecticut. For more information, visit www.buyctgrown.com

Earth Day Celebrations Continue!

Every day should be Earth Day! If you missed an event this year or want to continue the celebration, there are a few events still to be held:

Bethany/Orange/Woodbridge Earth Day (Bethany)

Sponsored by Bethany Clean Energy Task Force

Saturday May 22 Noon-4:00 p.m.

Bethany Town Hall, 40 Peck Rd., Bethany, CT

The 4th annual event celebrates the 40th anniversary of International Earth Day with an emphasis on our children. Cyril the Sorcerer will provide magic with an Earth Day theme. Many children's games and activities. In addition, a farmers market, alternative energy car show and lots more.

Westport Eco-Fest

Sponsored by Green Village Initiative

Sunday May 30 3:00-7:00 p.m.

Levitt Pavilion, Westport, CT

Organized by students at Staples High School, the Eco-Fest will feature live music from a dozen different bands, free food and information about various environmental issues. Displays will also include high school research projects, a bicycle-powered smoothie blender and a vegetable oil powered bus, made by Staples students.

Naugatuck Earth Day on the Green (Naugatuck)

Sponsored by Immanuel and Salem Lutheran Churches, Naugatuck, CT

Sunday June 6 Noon-4:00 p.m.

Naugatuck Town Green, Church Street, Naugatuck, CT

Join us for the fifth annual Naugatuck Earth Day on the Green scheduled for Sunday, June 6th, from 12-4. This rain or shine event will take place the same day as the Duck Race, so we will see plenty of families. Vendor space is still open and there is no charge to vendor or visitor participants. Organic chili and nachos for sale and live music.

EDUCATION RESOURCES and OPPORTUNITIES

Web Site Resources for Environmental Education

library.fws.gov/deo/resource.list.pdf

Includes websites in the categories of general environmental education, education standards and terms, electronic newswires and listserves, non-government organization (NGO) information, Fish and Wildlife information, government organization information and more. An extremely vast free listing designed to be a one-stop shop for educators.

Free NASA Space Shuttle Artifacts

NASA is offering a second round of free space artifacts to museums attended by the public and free libraries serving all residents of a community, district, state, or region. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is helping NASA reach out to eligible institutions that might be interested in acquiring one of the 2,500 free objects from the space shuttle, Hubble Space Telescope, or the Apollo, Mercury or Gemini programs.

Museums and libraries must first be determined as eligible by contacting a representative of their State Agency for Surplus Property in their state. Once they are determined to be eligible, institutions will receive a log-on and password so they can view available artifacts at the Web site <http://gsaccess.gov/NASAWel.htm>.

The artifacts are free, but eligible recipients must cover shipping and special handling fees. For the latest information about NASA shuttle transition and artifacts, visit <http://www.nasa.gov/transition>

Connecticut's NEW Climate Change website!



Visit www.ctclimatechange.com to find out information On Earth Day activities, ways to reduce your carbon footprint, municipal climate information and more!
Lots of great free resources for homeowners, teachers and students.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Foundation Center (information on-going)

The mission of the Foundation Center is to foster public understanding of the foundation field by collecting, organizing, analyzing, and disseminating information on foundations, corporate giving, and related subjects. Information for grant seekers and grant makers. Subscribe to the "Philanthropy News Digest" for weekly grant updates. foundationcenter.org/

Conservation Maven (information on-going)

Billed as an "online hub for the conservation community," this website has many features including a conservation funding board where you can search through grant profiles for environmental education, wildlife, restoration, land conservation and more.

www.conservationmaven.com/funding-board/

Nickelodeon's Big Green Grants Program (information on-going)

This program provides resources to schools and community-based organizations to support environmentally friendly projects that educate and inspire kids to take care of the environment, be active, live healthily, and engage in community service. Each Green Grant will provide up to \$5,000. Applications are accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis throughout the year.

www.nick.com/minisites/biggreen/grants/index.jhtml

NEA Foundation Grants (June 1, 2010)

With \$150,000 in new grant funding designated for projects that integrate green-related topics and experiences into the classroom, the NEA Foundation is growing its Learning & Leadership and Student Achievement grants program for individuals and teams of educators. Public school educators are eligible to apply for individual grants worth up to \$5,000 for the development and implementation of ideas, techniques, and approaches for teaching "green" concepts.

www.neafoundation.org/pages/educators/grant-programs/nea-foundation-green-grants/

Wal-mart State Giving Program (August 20, 2010)

Lists education, health and environmental sustainability as three areas of focus. Large scale grants (minimum of \$25,000). Open to tax-exempt organizations only. Check eligibility guidelines online.

walmartstores.com/CommunityGiving/8169.aspx

Melinda Gray Ardia Environmental Foundation (pre-proposals due by September 20, 2010)

The Foundation supports curricula that empower and encourage students to become involved in solving environmental and social problems as informed decision makers through the emphasis and application of basic ecological principles. Any organization is eligible. www.mgaef.org/grants.html

Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education (October 15, 2010)

The Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Grant Program gives small monetary grants to schools, nature centers, and other non-profit and not-for-profit places of learning in the United States, including houses of worship, with a site available for a stewardship project. Project goals should focus on enhancement and development of an appreciation for nature using native plants. Projects must emphasize involvement of students and volunteers in all phases of development, and increase the educational value of the site. Cash awards range from \$100-\$500.

www.for-wild.com/seedmony.htm

NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

The Sweetest Season of the Year at New Pond Farm

By Mike Murray, Farm Manager

The melodic trilling call of the red-winged blackbird signals the start of the maple sugaring season. At New Pond Farm, this familiar bird of the summer, returning to the north from a winter spent in southern climes, is first heard calling by mid-February! A true harbinger of spring, the return of this familiar summer bird was the cue for the earliest maple farmers of this region to begin to tap the trees for a season of maple sugaring. Even when spring still seems a long way off to us, the trees of Connecticut are beginning to emerge from their dormant winter state to prepare for the warm days ahead. The short four to six week season produces the entirely natural sweetener known as maple syrup. It is collected from nature and enjoyed without additives of any kind. Most popular partnered with pancakes; maple syrup is packed with important minerals and is lower in calorie count than cane sugar. This healthy choice is also used as a treat on ice cream, in warm tea or coffee, and in any recipe calling for sugar.

Of course, the time-honored tradition of tapping trees for sap has not escaped the penetrating eye of modern science. Many maple producers take advantage of advances in technology to fine tune their product. Forty years ago, the system of connecting trees with tubing and main lines eliminated the need for farmers to collect buckets from every tree. In larger operations, new techniques like reverse osmosis are used to remove huge quantities of water from the raw sap resulting in a shorter boiling time to reach syrup. During the cooking process, barometric pressure, sap temperature and fuel powered heat can now be controlled electronically instead of spitting wood, stoking the fire and observing the viscosity of the product with a wide ladle in the hopes of finding the telltale sheeting action indicating the syrup is ready to draw off.

But, even with all of the changes of modern day science, the maple sugaring season is still, and always will be, dictated by nature. It remains dependent on the nature of our winter, as well as the natural events of the entire year.

Shared with the early colonists by Native Americans, it one of the few traditions we have today that did not originate in Europe. Connecticut was able to produce 13,000 gallons of syrup in 2009. Remember, though, that about 41 gallons of sap are needed to make one gallon of syrup. So, Connecticut collected 533,000 gallons of sap last year! Both the Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) and the Black Maple (*Acer nigrum*) are frequently used in Connecticut.

The maple syrup story is easier to tell if we begin in our upcoming season, summer – when the Sugar Maple tree is covered with healthy green leaves. Each leaf, green with chlorophyll, is a busy little food factory making food for the tree using water, minerals, carbon dioxide and sunlight. As fall approaches and daylight hours shorten, the tree is triggered to begin preparations for winter. In a clever adaptation for survival, the tree sends signals to cut off water supply to the leaves, which are too fragile to withstand the cold of winter. The twigs, branches and trunk and some of the roots hold the sugar reserves in nodules for the winter months. With the water supply cut off, the leaves begin to lose their green chlorophyll food factories, and what we see left behind are the stunning colors of fall – red, yellow, gold and orange.

While small amounts of sap sometimes move from October through April, the tree is only dormant for a few short months, and begins to actively “awaken” in the chilly month of February. The largest flow normally occurs during February, March and sometimes into April. This is the moment we’ve been waiting for all year! Although sap production in trees is well understood, the dynamics of its movements are still being researched. Scientists currently feel that much of sap flow is controlled by pressure. The cold winter nights, when the temperature falls below freezing, create negative pressures within the tree (like suction) from nearly frozen sap and the associated gases dissolving in the sap. The tree can now absorb water from the surrounding soil thereby increasing the amount of sap within the tree. If we are lucky and the morning sun warms the trees above the freezing temperature, the sap begins to thaw and gases within the sap expand creating an internal positive pressure. Twigs are the first to warm enough to create this pressure, followed by the trunk and then the roots. The cycle can only be repeated if the temperature again drops below freezing later in the evening. A

maple farmer is happiest with days around 40 degrees Fahrenheit and nights of 32 degrees Fahrenheit. This allows sap to “run” into the bucket during the day, and recreate suction during the night. In many maple trees, internal pressures during the day can reach 40 pounds per square inch or more. To protect the tree from harm, a maple farmer must be careful not to tap a tree is too young (the tree must be at least 40 years old and ten inches in diameter), and not to take more than 10% of the sap from that tree. Injuring the tree is not only poor stewardship, it is also unwise for production – it would take at least 40 years to replace it! A single tap can yield ten gallons of sap during a good season. The tree usually heals the tap scars in one growing season, although it is best to continually move the location of taps from year to year.

Collected sap must now be boiled down into syrup. The only involvement from the maple farmer is to filter the sap, removing minerals that precipitate out called sugar sand, and to keep boiling the sap until it reaches 219 degrees Fahrenheit (depending on barometric pressure). After the cold laborious collecting, and hours of intensive boiling, the syrup is finally produced – averaging 40 gallons of sap needed to produce one gallon of syrup! Sap from the maple tree has a sugar content of 2-4 percent. The final product (after boiling off some 39 gallons of water) should have a sugar content of 66 percent. The maple syrup can then be bottled or boiled down further into maple cream or maple sugar candy or granulated maple sugar.

Alas, the sweetness doesn’t last forever – by the end of March, the sap collecting season is usually done. When the nights begin to stay warm (above 35 degrees Fahrenheit) the suction is not created each evening. Instead, the sap is finally able to complete its journey into the branches where that sugar reserve gives the buds a burst of energy to begin new leaves. This is the time when the sap begins to turn whitish instead of clear, and has a bitter taste – we call it “buddy sap” and we leave it all for the buds to enjoy!

Although the 2010 Maple Syrup Season is over, pure Connecticut produced maple syrup is available from producers all year. Visit www.ctmaple.org for a list of sugarhouses and producers.

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