

Arkansas Environmental Education Association's
2022 Conference

EE: A Common Ground for Learning

DeGray Lake Resort State Park
July 26-27, 2022



Conference Details

Tuesday, July 26

Morning Pre-Conference Workshops	
9:30 - 11:30 am	<p>Field to Fork: Educating Through a Culinary Experience <i>Wil Hafner, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission</i> <i>JJ Gladden, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission</i></p> <p>There are many avenues to recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters and anglers. One avenue that Wil Hafner and JJ Gladden choose to use is cooking fish and wild game to promote hunting and angling as a palatable and sustainable food source. This workshop is intended for educators who could use cooking as a way to promote the outdoors. In this course, Wil and JJ will cover how they use cooking in presentations, how to set up a cooking demonstration, as well as demonstrating a few easy fish and wild game recipes that could be taken back to the classroom.</p> <p><i>Target audience: educators of 9-12, Higher Education, Adults, Family/Community, Non-formal Educators.</i></p>
9:30 - 11:30 am	<p>Finding Adventure in Your Own Backyard and Beyond <i>Nick McDaniel, Director of the Subiaco Outdoor Adventure Program, Subiaco Academy</i></p> <p>Finding Adventure in Your Own Backyard and Beyond is for people looking to find adventure close to home by themselves, with their families, with youth groups, or for institutions. Participants will learn skills and tactics to identify assets each of us hold as individuals and leaders, our community, and surrounding areas, and how to set these assets in motion to “get out!” By the end of the session you will: Identify resources you and your community hold, create a rough trip plan, and share resources such as apps, organizations, and literature to help get outside in your backyard and beyond!</p> <p><i>Target audience: educators of 9-12, Higher Education, Adults, Family/Community, Non-formal Educators</i> <i>Lunch</i></p>

Lunch	
11:30 am - 1:30 pm	Enjoy lunch on your own - picnic in the park or order at the lodge restaurant.
Afternoon Pre-Conference Workshops	
1:30 - 4:30 pm	<p>Field Investigations and More - an Overview of the North American Conservation Education Toolkit <i>Tabbi Kinion, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission</i></p> <p>The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has invested in creating a Conservation Education toolkit for teachers and non-formal educators. In March 2022, four updated resources were released to support teaching field investigations, systems thinking, and sustainability. Participants will receive copies of these resources (that are based on the 5E learning model and aligned with NGSS and other national learning standards) and get into how to use these with your audiences.</p> <p><i>Target audience: educators of 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Non-formal Educators</i></p>
1:30 - 4:30 pm	<p>Phenomenal Parents and Students: Using Science Phenomena Kits to Support Parental Engagement <i>Dr. Dennis Plyler, Hot Springs Head Start</i> <i>Michelle Gomez, Hot Springs Head Start</i></p> <p>Scientific phenomena are occurrences that can cause a child to wonder and ask questions. Examples could include, “How do plants grow?” Or, “How does sunlight affect the Earth?” During this training, participants will learn how to use “Phenomena Kits” to actively explore science phenomena with their students. Sample lesson plans demonstrate alignment with Next Generation Science Standards. In addition, participants will discover literacy strategies that support the understanding of science phenomena.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants will increase their understanding of how exploring science phenomena can foster a child’s curiosity and lay a foundation for future learning. 2. Participants will increase their understanding of how active exploration of science phenomena can be used to support student engagement and participation at home and school. <p><i>Target audience: educators of Pre-K, K-2, 3-5</i></p>
Self-Paced Exploration	
4:30 - 6:00 pm	<p>In His Footsteps - Reconnecting with Aldo Leopold & EE Marc Hirrel, Leopold Education Project, Arkansas Suzanne Hirrel, Leopold Education Project, Arkansas</p>

	<p>Through a self-guided walk on lodge grounds, participants will experience the influence of Aldo Leopold on environmental education. Stations set-up along the trail will connect Leopold's writings and conservation philosophy to Projects Learning Tree, WET, and WILD. The walk is designed for free moments during the meeting on both Tuesday and Wednesday. Examples of activities that exhibit connectivity across EE curricula will be highlighted.</p> <p>Lodging Check In Check into your hotel room, yurt, or campsite; explore the park; and have dinner in the lodge restaurant.</p>
Conference Welcome, Networking with Exhibitors, & Owl Prowl	
6:00 - 9:00 pm	<p>Conference Welcome and Networking with Exhibitors We will be in person! Get to know other educators from around the state. Visit with exhibitors showcasing resources and programs. Start bidding on silent auction items. Play an easy game. Relax and enjoy with a few snacks and drinks.</p>
9:00 - 9:45 pm	<p>Owl Prowl <i>David Armstrong, Arkansas State Parks</i> <i>Kayla Gomance, Arkansas State Parks</i></p> <p>Join park interpreters for a night hike along the Island Trail. Meeting place will be in the lodge lobby. It's a great way to enjoy the outdoors in the summer.</p>

Wednesday, July 27

7:30 - 8:30 am	Registration and Coffee with Exhibitors
8:30 - 9:30 am	Welcome and Keynote
<i>Main Conference room</i>	<p>F.I.N.D.I.N.G Common Ground for Learning</p> <p>Dr. Gregory Pilewski, Ed.D. Superintendent, North Little Rock School District</p>
9:30 - 9:40 am	Break
9:40 am	Concurrent Sessions
Session 1A <i>DeGray Room</i>	<p>Creating Multicultural Community Connections <i>Schelly Corry, Director, JB & Johnelle Hunt Family Ozark Highlands Nature Center</i> <i>Samantha Best, Outdoor Interpretation Specialist, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art</i></p> <p>Successful outdoor spaces are a reflection of understanding the</p>

	<p>environment they are placed within, balancing function with beauty, and most importantly, creating a feeling of inclusivity and community. As communities change and grow, all people should feel welcome to learn and explore “the great outdoors.” Arkansas, with its distinct biodiversity and focus on outdoor preservation and recreation, is in a unique spot to become a model for this kind of thinking. With changing demographics comes the opportunity to think creatively and holistically about how we interpret and program the landscape in ways that are accessible to all.</p> <p>Join Schelly Corry and Samantha Best for a lively discussion exploring the ways that each institution has worked through challenges and solutions to encourage more participation by the community, especially the growing LatinX community.</p> <p><i>Target audience: Adults, Family/Community, Non-formal Educators</i></p>
<p>Session 1B Egret Room</p>	<p>Native Plants Gardens at Schools <i>Jackie Scott, Middle School Teacher, Mann Magnet School</i></p> <p>Native plant gardens can be an effective tool in a school setting. This session will cover how to establish native plant gardens. Participants will find ways to plan their space, how to help keep students/group members accountable, establish goals for their space, and many other things. Participants will be able to ask questions and see how they can effectively establish a space at their school or space.</p> <p><i>Target audience: educators of 6-8, 9-12</i></p>
<p>10:40 - 10:45 am</p>	<p>Move between sessions</p>
<p>10:45 am</p>	<p>Concurrent Sessions</p>
<p>Session 2A DeGray Room</p>	<p>Universal Design: Making Environmental Education Inclusive and Accessible <i>Melanie Thornton, Coordinator of Access and Equity Outreach, University of Arkansas</i></p> <p>Universal design in education is defined by Frank Bowe as “...the preparation of curriculum, materials and environments so that they may be used appropriately and with ease, by a variety of people.” The universal design principles and philosophical approach support designers in creating more usable and equitable educational materials and experiences. We’ll review these principles and explore an approach that can inform environmental education to make EE experiences more accessible and inclusive for students with disabilities.</p> <p><i>Target audience: educators of 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Higher Education, Adults, Family/Community, Non-formal Educators</i></p>
<p>Session 2B Egret Room</p>	<p>First River: How Arkansas Saved a National Treasure <i>Roslyn Imrie, Board Member, Ozark Society Foundation and Chair of</i></p>

	<p><i>the OSF Youth Grant Committee</i></p> <p>2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the Buffalo National River (BNR) and 60th anniversary of the Ozark Society. In recognition of this milestone, a documentary film, "First River: How Arkansas Saved a National Treasure" was produced along with accompanying lesson plans. The documentary provides a history of the formation of the BNR, what has occurred since the BNR was formed in 1972, and challenges that may face the BNR in the future. Join Roslyn Imrie for an overview of the lesson plans and how they could be used in your educational setting.</p> <p><i>Target audience: educators of 6-8, 9-12, Higher Education, Adults, Family/Community, Non-formal Educators</i></p>
11:45am - 1:00 pm	Awards Luncheon
<i>Main Conference Room</i>	The Awards Luncheon will highlight three educators who have made professional and personal impacts to the field of environmental and outdoor education in Arkansas.
1:05 pm	Concurrent Sessions
Session 3A <i>DeGray Room</i>	<p>Student-Centered Instruction Strategies - Laying the Foundation <i>Sim Barrow, Environmental Science Coordinator, Fayetteville Public Schools</i> <i>Brady Carmen, School Support Specialist, Fayetteville Public Schools</i></p> <p>Shifting the focus from what instructors can teach to what their students can learn breathes new life into outdoor education programs. This session will lay the foundation for shifting your instructional strategies. This is part one of a two part session, but you do not have to attend both sessions to gain useful information.</p> <p><i>Target audience: educators of K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Non-formal Educators</i></p>
Session 3B <i>Egret Room</i>	<p>Outreach & Grant Opportunities with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture <i>Krissy Kimbro, Urban & Community Forestry Coordinator, Arkansas Department of Agriculture - Forestry Division</i> <i>Erica Benoit, Farm to School Coordinator, AR Department of Ag</i></p> <p>This session will highlight education and outreach programs of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture such as Shade Trees for Schools, Farm to School, and Firewise programs. It will also cover the grant opportunities for your school or organization.</p> <p><i>Target audience: educators of PreK-K, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Higher education, Adults, Family & Community, Non-formal Educators</i></p>
2:05 - 2:10 pm	Move between sessions

2:10 pm	Concurrent Sessions
<p>Session 4A DeGray Room</p>	<p>Student-Centered Instruction Strategies - Putting it Into Practice <i>Sim Barrow, Environmental Science Coordinator, Fayetteville Public Schools</i> <i>Brady Carmen, School Support Specialist, Fayetteville Public Schools</i></p> <p>Shifting the focus from what instructors can teach to what their students can learn breathes new life into outdoor education programs. This session will share practical tips on how to reach your audience by asking better questions, connecting content to meaning, and providing more culturally-relevant instruction. This session is part two of two. You do not have to attend the first session, but it is helpful.</p> <p><i>Target audience: educators of K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Non-formal Educators</i></p>
<p>Session 4B Egret Room</p>	<p>Exploring EE Opportunities on the Horizon <i>Alexandra Olson, Environmental Education Coordinator/Environmental Justice Liaison, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6</i> <i>Sophia Stephenson, Executive Director, AEEA</i></p> <p>Around the country organizations are looking at micro-credentialing programs as a way to ensure high-quality professional development in environmental and outdoor learning. This will be an exploratory conversation on environmental education micro-credentials in Arkansas.</p> <p>Alexandra will discuss the EPA's environmental education grant program and the President's Environmental Youth Award program.</p> <p><i>Target audience: educators of PreK-K, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Higher education, Non-formal Educators</i></p>
<p>3:10 - 3:40 pm</p>	<p>Break</p>
3:40 pm	Concurrent Sessions
<p>Session 5A DeGray Room</p>	<p>Fishing Rocks <i>Schelly Corry, Director, JB & Johnelle Hunt Family Ozark Highlands Nature Center</i></p> <p>Sedimentary, Igneous, and Metamorphic. Did you know that geology is important to fish? and fisherman! Surprisingly, fisherman don't look for plants when looking for a good fishing spot...they look for, you guessed it! Rocks! Come learn through hands-on activities the geology of a healthy river habitat for fish and fisherman.</p> <p><i>Target audience: educators of 6-8, 9-12, Non-formal Educators</i></p>
<p>Session 5B Egret Room</p>	<p>The Zero Garbage Challenge <i>Rose Brown, Executive Director, Ozark Natural Science Center and Founder, Zero Garbage Challenge</i></p>

	<p>Join Rose Brown, founder of the Zero Garbage Challenge, to learn how you can reduce your personal and household waste, and how you can share waste-reduction tips as an educator. This is an interactive session including a presentation about Rose's sustainability projects, ideas for alternatives to disposable products, and break-out groups where you will immediately begin assessing and re-imagining your own relationship to the consumer cycle, as well as practicing methods for teaching others your new skills.</p> <p><i>Target audience: educators of 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, Higher Education, Adults, Family/Community, Non-formal Educators</i></p>
4:45 - 5:00 pm	Closing

Presenter Bios

Sim Barrow is the Environmental Science Coordinator, Fayetteville School District. He leads off-site environmental education experiences with elementary and secondary students in the Fayetteville School District. He has a Master's in Entomology and a Bachelor's in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology. Sim has been an environmental educator in both a nonformal and formal setting since 2014. Sim may be reached at sim.barrow@g.fayar.net

Erica Benoit is an Arkansas native, though she spent the last few years in Washington State earning her Master of Environmental Studies degree. While there, she also worked for the Sustainability in Prisons Project providing environmental education and nature access to incarcerated individuals in Washington State prisons. Erica graduated from Hendrix College in 2017 with a Bachelor in Environmental Studies & Spanish and then served as an AmeriCorps VISTA service member at the Arkansas Children's Research Institute, where she helped to lay the foundation for farm to school in Arkansas. Since returning to Arkansas, Erica joined the Farm to School Team at the Arkansas Department of Agriculture first as their State School Garden Manager before transitioning into her current role of Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator. She can be reached at erica.benoit@agriculture.arkansas.gov.

Samantha Best is the Outdoor Interpretation Specialist at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Samantha may be reached at samantha.best@crystalbridges.org

Rose Brown is the Executive Director of the Ozark Natural Science Center. Rose is an Ozark native and has also lived in NY, France, TN, and VA. In Virginia, she worked for several environmental nonprofits, including StreamWatch and The Nature Conservancy. Since returning to NWA in 2018, Rose has worked for Crystal Bridges Museum, co-founded a forest school, and now works as the Executive Director of Ozark Natural Science Center. Rose began living without garbage in 2009 when she founded the Zero Garbage Challenge. She provides information, workshops and presentations to the community about household waste reduction and other sustainability topics. Rose may be reached at rose.brown@onsc.us

Brady Carmen is a School Support Specialist with Fayetteville Public Schools. Brady has been a teacher for more than 10 years. His current role is to support students in core instruction through one-on-one and small group instruction. Brady is a sustainability, school garden and bike education champion for the Fayetteville School District. Brady may be reached at brady.carman@g.fayar.net

Schelly Corry is the Director of the AGFC JB & Johnelle Hunt Family Ozark Highlands Nature Center Before joining Arkansas Game and Fish Commission in Springdale. Schelly was vice president of the US Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama where she worked directly with NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, U.S. Army at Redstone Arsenal, the FBI and many other local partners. Schelly's career began over 27 years ago, and includes work in team leadership, hiring, capital campaigns, strategic planning, natural sciences, environmental education and conservation, live animal care and display, science museum exhibit design, and interpretation. Schelly is a lifelong learner and loves to gain new skills and experiences. She has a BAS in Biology and Education from Dallas Baptist University, a Graduate Certificate in Free-Choice Learning (Museum Studies) from Oregon State University, and two Montessori teaching degrees in early childhood and elementary education. She is a Certified Crucial Conversations Trainer and holds many other professional certifications. As a leader, Schelly believes you can have fun and work hard at the same time. She is a "glass half-full" kinda gal. She is passionate about growing new leaders and mentoring upcoming professionals in the field. Schelly may be reached at schelly.corry@agfc.ar.gov

JJ Gladden is the Fishing Education Program Coordinator for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Growing up in Montgomery County, Gladden spent many days outside working cattle on his family farm. When his work was done, Gladden could be found wading creeks or hunting game. This childhood has led him to a career in education. Although he may typically be teaching how to fish, one major component of becoming an angler is cleaning and cooking your catch. JJ enjoys promoting the endless ways of cooking your hard earned catch. JJ may be reached at JJ.Gladden@agfc.ar.gov

Michelle Gomez serves as the STEAM Mentor for Hot Springs Head Start. Michelle may be reached at steammentor@csarkansas.org

Wil Hafner is AGFC Facilities Manager at the Potlatch Cooks Lake Nature Center in Cascoe. Wil started with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission in 2011 as an intern in education and has been on full time since 2014. Hafner is an avid outdoorsman who loves to hunt and fish but his true passion is sharing his trips and adventures through a culinary experience. Hafner has been presenting fish and wild game processing and cooking classes for the last 5 years as a way to promote hunting and fishing in the Natural State. Wil be reached at williammay.hafner@agfc.ar.gov

Marc Hirrel is retired from the Biology Dept. at UCA. While at UCA, he designed a course in Conservation Education and became a state coordinator for the Leopold Education Project over 20 years ago. On retiring, he and his wife Suzanne founded an outdoor education company, LEP-ArkansasLLC. Marc may be reached at march@uca.edu

Suzanne Hirrel retired after 33 year with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, but she did not retire from education or service. She is the Co-State Coordinator for the Leopold

Education Project, co-founder of Arkansas LEP LLC, and a facilitator for Project Learning Tree and Project WET. She serves on the boards & volunteers for Keep Little Rock Beautiful, the Arkansas Recycling Coalition, and the American Indian Center of Arkansas.

Roslyn Imrie is an Ozark Society Foundation Board member and Chair of the OSF Youth Grant Committee. Roslyn grew up at the headwaters of the Buffalo River in an off-grid log cabin. She went to college in California and Vermont, graduating in 2010 with a BA in Ozark Ecology and Creative Writing from Goddard College. Her career has led her to lead environmental education at Northwest Arkansas nonprofits such as the Ozark Natural Science Center and the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks. Roslyn may be reached at osfoundationgrants@gmail.com

Krissy Kimbro is the Urban & Community Forestry Coordinator for the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Forestry Division. Krissy's forestry roots began in her native Texas, where she received her Bachelor of Science in Forestry degree from Stephen F. Austin State University in 1999. She began her forestry career with Weyerhaeuser, but then branched out, becoming a licensed paramedic and later earning a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from the University of Central Arkansas. While teaching in public and private school for 11 years, she grew concerned about the increasing number of children growing up with limited exposure to the out-of-doors and to environmental stewardship, which prompted her to become trained in Project WET and Project WILD and to become a Project Learning Tree facilitator. Her career cycled back to forestry when she joined the Forestry Division in 2019 as a county forester. Krissy lives in Arkadelphia, serves on the Arkansas Urban Forestry Council and on the state's steering committee for Project Learning Tree, and is incredibly proud that her three girls love camping and spending time outdoors.

Tabbi Kinion has been the Education Division Chief at AGFC since July of 2018 and is a former AEEA board member. Before coming to Arkansas, she spent 13 years training educators as the Statewide Education Coordinator for Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Tabbi may be reached at tabbi.kinion@agfc.ar.gov

Nick McDaniel is Director of Subiaco Outdoor Adventure Program at Subiaco Academy. Nick has built Subiaco Academy's outdoor program over the last two years establishing an Outdoor Adventure PE class, an outdoor recreation focused after school program, and leads weekend trips across Northwestern Arkansas and the Arkansas River Valley. Through this process, Nick has found success and gained skills in acquiring and allocating resources, developing relationships and support with community members, and found various outlets for information on local locations and avenues for adventure. Nick may be reached at nmcdaniel@subi.org

Alexandra Olson is an environmental education coordinator/environmental justice liaison for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6. She is a member of the EPA Tribal Science Council. Previously, she worked as a project officer/tribal liaison, environmental consultant, and forestry technician. Alexandra graduated from Occidental College with a Bachelor of Arts in Geology. Alexandra can be reached at olson.alexandra@epa.gov.

Dr. Gregory Pilewski is currently the Superintendent of North Little Rock School District. He began his career as a classroom social studies teacher working in schools in Maryland, Ohio, and in London, England. Dr. Pilewski was the Harford County Public Schools First Year Teacher of the Year recipient,

being selected among 800 new teachers also in 1998. He has worked as a professional development trainer, Director of Curriculum, Director of Humanities, Director of Curriculum Innovation and Design, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and Deputy Superintendent. He earned a bachelor's degree in secondary education in the area of social studies from Clarion University of Pennsylvania, a master's degree in curriculum, instruction, and administration from McDaniel College, and a doctoral degree in education from Northcentral University with an emphasis in organizational leadership. His full bio can be read at <https://www.nlrsd.org/page/our-superintendent> and he can be reached at pilewskig@nlrsd.org.

Dr. Dennis Plyler is the STEAM Consultant at the Hot Springs Head Start. Dr. Plyler resides in Hot Springs and his teaching experience includes chemistry and computer networking. Dennis may be reached at education@csarkansas.org

Jackie Scott is a teacher at Mann Magnet in the Little Rock School District. Jackie teaches lab science and Physical Science and coaches the school's soccer team. Jackie holds a BS in Interdisciplinary Studies (Areas of study Biology, Education, Psychology), a MEd in Middle School education, and a MEd in Gifted, Talented, and Creative education. She also teaches the botany course at the Halberg Ecology camp in the summer. Jackie is an award winning educator. Awards include 2020 LRSD Middle School Teacher of the Year, 2021 AEEA Formal Educator of the Year, as well as other awards. Jackie be may be reached at jacqueline.scott@lrsd.org

Sophia Stephenson is Executive Director of the Arkansas Environmental Education Association. Sophia has been involved with environmental education for almost two decades, working at nature centers, an educational farm, and a local government department where the focus was solid waste management and resource conservation. Sophia is trained as a workshop facilitator in both Project WET and Project Learning Tree. She serves as the Arkansas State Coordinator for Project WET and on the Arkansas PLT Steering Committee. She is also active with the North American Association for Environmental Education's Affiliate Network. She enjoys gardening, hiking, biking, and traveling with her family. She can be reached at director@arkansasee.org.

Melanie Thornton is the Coordinator of Access and Equity Outreach at the University of Arkansas - Partners for Inclusive Communities. Melanie provides professional development and technical assistance on topics related to disability, diversity, digital access, leadership, and design. She is very interested in working with organizations to create more accessible environments and to position disability as an aspect of diversity. She brings a variety of professional experiences, including working as a park interpreter at Toltec Mounds Archeological State Park. Melanie may be reached at mthornt@uark.edu

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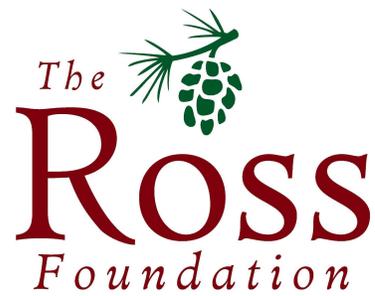
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