



ESA Ecology and Education Summit

The Ecological Society of America held an Ecology and Education Summit October 13-15 in Washington DC. The meeting was unique in that it brought together not just educators and scientists, but also architects, community organizers, health professionals, artists, economists, gamers and more to talk about environmental literacy in a broader context.

Panel discussions included:

Learning about Complexity and Change: New Foundations for Environmental Literacy
Turning the Tide: Building a Green Society through Learning and Doing
Seeing Our World Inside and Out: Harnessing new Technologies
Fostering Lifelong Learning Skills
Expanding Funding, Strengthening Policy

One message that was repeated throughout the conference was “resonance and connection.” Better science education requires people to feel connected to and interdependent with their environment. Social/environmental justice was also a common theme; intricately tied to resonance and connection.

The expected outcome for this conference is a decadal action plan. Many of the actions will be aimed at making connections between human and environmental systems and sharing best practices. For example, standards have been established for earth science, atmospheric science, climate, and ocean literacy. Efforts have even been made to bridge all of these standards by identifying over-arching key concepts for environmental literacy (e.g., life, including human life, influences and is influenced by the environment). One action suggested at the ESA conference is to take these standards one step further by connecting them to human dimensions such as economics, public participation and social justice. Watch the Station’s Environmental Literacy web page for more information as it becomes available.

The Importance of Civic Engagement

Environmental literacy goes beyond traditional concepts of environmental education by encouraging civic engagement, not just knowledge and skills. Participation, whether for environmental literacy, financial literacy, political literacy (in this election month), is key to understanding interactions and interrelationships of environmental and human systems.



Will Allen, founder of Growing Power, Inc., was a keynote speaker at the ESA meeting. Growing Power, Inc. a once small, now internationally-recognized non-profit, uses the theme of sustainable food systems as a spring board to address issues of environmental sustainability, social justice, education reform and more. If you ever think one person can’t make a difference in the lives of thousands, take a look at Will Allen and his work at www.growingpower.org.

Thanks to everyone who responded to the K-12 education survey!

More than 11,500 direct and indirect contacts with K-12 students have been recorded for the Northern Research Station during the 2009-2010 school year.

Our scientists supported development of lesson plans and inquiry-based activities relating to forest ecology, bird biology and ecology, soil assessments, non-timber forest products, invasive species, and more. All of these efforts help translate science results into tools for students and educators to use.

Thank you!



Funding Opportunities

The FY11 Call for More Kids in the Woods proposals is available on the web at <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/mkiw>. This year, \$500,000 will be available for traditional MKIW projects and an additional \$500,000 will be available for the development of Children's Forests.

Earth Force and the Staples Foundation for Learning are excited to announce the Staples Urban Environment Challenge (UEC), a nationwide contest focused on identifying and addressing issues around climate change in ten urban cities including Atlanta, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Las Vegas, New York City, San Diego and Seattle! As part of the Staples Urban Environment Challenge, young people will have the chance to submit their climate action project stories to compete with other students in their region and each regional winner will receive a \$1,000 technology supplies package. All entries will be judged by Staples employees in the Spring of 2011. Learn more at: www.earthforce.org/section/programs/uec

The WO Conservation Education staff is looking for schools now to participate in a national Forest Service partnership with GreenSchools! , a service learning program developed in partnership with Project Learning Tree, the American Forest Foundation and the Corporation for National and Community Service. GreenSchools! "provides a blueprint for educators, students, environmental and health advocates, school board members, parents and interested community members to teach, learn, and engage together in creating a more green and healthy learning environment at their school." This student-led program uses energy, water, waste and recycling, school site and environmental quality investigations to walk green teams through the process of making their schools more sustainable. The Forest Service Conservation Education staff is offering all of the equipment, professional development and support needed to get this program off the ground at no cost to the school. Do you know a school that might be interested? Please contact Barbara McGuinness at bmcguinness@fs.fed.us.

Program Partnership Updates

Our partnership with **Tyler Arboretum** near Newtown Square has expanded to reach 460 fourth- and fifth-grade students this school year. Each participating classroom will receive two classroom visits and a field tour, where they will participate in hands-on activities relating to forest gaps and regeneration, wildlife habitat, effects of deer on eastern forests, tree planting, and watersheds. This program is in its second year.

In Wisconsin, our **Forest For Every Classroom** replication is in the planning stage. Dates have been set for 11 professional development days for teachers during the 2011-2012 school year, and all of our partners are now on board. We are excited to have added the state's Department of Public Instruction to the planning committee. Jeremy Solin, Director for Wisconsin's K-12 Forestry Education Program (LEAF), notes "this is the largest collaborative teacher environmental education professional development effort in Wisconsin."



The NRS Environmental Literacy Program is a component of the Northern Science, Technology and Applied Results (NorthSTAR) unit. Our vision is to create an enduring impact on peoples' values and attitudes towards nature and their role in conserving natural resources for current and future generations.