



California AEOE

Association for Environmental & Outdoor Education

May 2015 Newsletter Water Issue

2015 AEOE Statewide Conference Reflections



Kati Stieler

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Wow! What an amazing weekend! I am truly honored to be a part of such a rich, dynamic, loving and ultimately giving community. I really don't know where to start and how to express what the conference weekend has revitalized in my soul. From start to finish, the conference brought me so much joy and happiness. Within the first hour of registration, 50 of the most awesome people I know had already shown up, and then they kept on coming! From George Stratman and his most beautiful welcome speech, to our morning breakout sessions where some of our best seasoned naturalists were able to meet and greet with people who have just joined our tribe, to the Banana Slug String Band offering the most engaging keynote, to honoring Bill Andrews for his years of service and support for Environmental Education, AEOE has got to be the greatest organization to be a part of.

I have to thank everyone who was able to make it out to the conference. You are the reason why these conferences exist, and you are the ones who keep AEOE running, thank you! To the presenters,

exhibitors and donors, thank you for helping to make this year's conference one of the most dynamic and engaging. To everyone who volunteered, from the AEOE Board Members, to the wrist band checkers and clean-up crew, we couldn't have done it without you! To the bands and skit night participants, thank you for bringing the party and laughs! To Walker Creek Site Staff and Volunteers, thank you for welcoming us and making us feel right at home. If I am forgetting anyone, I appreciate you too.

I honestly tried my best to introduce myself to everyone, but I know there were a few people I missed. I am looking forward to the challenge for the upcoming Fall and Spring Statewide Conferences, as I pass the torch to Korena David as Northern Chair. I am hoping that if people gained anything from the weekend, it is that being an Environmental Educator is a career, and you can make it work! We are in this together, and we can only grow stronger through our love and support of one another. Thank you again everyone and I can't wait to see you again!

Desiree Gant,
AEOE Northern Council Chair



John Oliver



From the AEOE Southern Chair



“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.” -Albert Einstein

That is how I feel. It's not until we look deep into nature that we begin to understand everything better. A person can't understand their place in the world until they look deep into it. Over the past two years, aside from volunteering with AEOE, I have been participating in a teacher intern program and teaching full time. At times I have felt super stretched and the only peace I could find in those stretchy moments was the peace that comes from looking into nature. A few of my teacher preparation classes focused on meta-cognition, essentially, thinking about what you're thinking about. When we take the time to step outside into nature we are given that space to think about what's going on in our minds. It is as if we are receiving a mental-detox

from the noise, the stress, and the commitments that pull us away from who we are. That is why I will never be able to replace my outdoor time with the television, or my Sunday strolls with a Facebook perusing. Those moments I spend looking deep into nature are the same moments that I am looking into myself. I am thinking about what I am thinking about. I am pulling myself back together and beginning to prepare for another round of “who wants to try and take my inner peace today?” Working in the field of education comes with great rewards. We are given the ability every day to invite newbies into the deeper understanding that is gained through nature. We are able to reach children of every age and every ability level because understanding everything better is an unending journey, an endless pit of possibility. As I end my time as Chair of the Southern Council, I am very excited to help our new Chair, Amanda Martin, settle in. She has some great ideas for the Spring Conference at Camp Hess Kramer in Malibu, as well as an amazing work ethic. I know that I leave my position in good hands. Amanda would like you to know that for next year's Spring Conference, you are encouraged to bring your swimsuit, surf board, talent to the stage, and an open mind ready to share and learn best practices. Help us recruit new participants across the industry now.

I am so thankful to have served the Southern AEOE's!

Andrea Haley, AEOE Southern Council Chair

Save the Dates!

Northern Fall Conference
October 23-25
Foothill Horizons Outdoor School
Sonora, CA

Southern Fall Conference
November 6-8
Camp Edwards,
Angelus Oaks, CA

AEOE Statewide Spring Conference
April 29-May 1 2016
Camp Hess Kramer, Malibu, CA



Joie's Daisies Scholarship Highlights

This page contains excerpts from some recipients of the Joie's Daisies scholarships in 2015. The scholarships were used toward attendance at the 2015 AEOE statewide conference. Submissions have been edited to meet space requirements.

Thoughts on Shady Creek

By: Bayshta Aguila, Shady Creek Outdoor School

I wish I knew. I wish I knew if this is all what is meant to be. I question what feels endlessly. I sit here and I look up to the stars, asking for answers. There is so much to this life I don't understand. Yet, I have never been so sure of something in all my life. I love you; I love you and I barely know you. I can only hope you have realized my heart is full of love pouring out for you. I wake up to the thought of you and I go to sleep with my heart with you. Where the mind wanders the body soon follows. If that's true I have no doubts. Like this night I've sat for what seemed endless and questioned. I sometimes wonder if the impression you have left on my heart is the same I have left on yours.

I see a green field. It's just you and I. I run to you, and you patiently wait. I then stop and look at you. I take in your beauty and all that you possess. In this moment my heart is at peace. I have made it home to you. It is then that I never let you go. I have missed you Shady Creek.

Starfish Photograph

By: Elizabeth Gordon, Shady Creek Outdoor School



An Indirect Path

By: Erin Sliney, Whiskeytown Environmental School

The path that led me to outdoor education was by no means direct, but once I no longer feared remembering what types of oak we would be walking by or the many verses of boom-chicka-boom, I had no doubt that I had arrived in the right place. To me, environmental education satisfies my soul's many cravings: to breathe fresh air in a natural environment; to work together with other passionate individuals; to constantly be challenged to think quickly and critically; and most importantly, to instill into the members of the next generation a sense of wonder about the natural environment and the knowledge and skills that will allow them to treat our mother with respect. For me, being a naturalist is not just a job, but my life's work. I feel compelled from within to continue to further myself as an outdoor educator, and can't even help telling my disc golf friends about the many adaptations of the manzanita.

Educational Opportunities

By: Natalie Bonnepart, South Valley YMCA

With this opportunity to attend the conference I know I will learn so many important and effective environmental education lessons, as well as be exposed to plenty of talented and experienced educators. AEOE would help set a stable foundation in my steps towards a career I am passionate about. If I want to develop my skills in Outdoor education, which I do more than anything at the moment, I know the AEOE conference in 2015 is where I need to be!

Joie's Daisies Scholarships began in 1999 when a group of naturalists at the Northern Fall AEOE Conference decided that they wanted to do something in Joie Armstrong's memory. They hoped to help naturalists new to the field. Joie Armstrong worked passionately as a naturalist at the Yosemite Institute. In July, 1999, the AEOE community was shocked and deeply saddened by the news of her tragic death.

AEOE is one group that has taken on the job of keeping the next generation of Joie's daisies alive, metaphorically speaking.



2015 Howard Bell Award Winner Bill Andrews



Congratulations to this year's Howard Bell Award Winner, Bill Andrews.

In 2011, Bill served as Director of CEEF's first teacher institute on "Best Practices of Environmental Education and Stewardship." For the past three years, he has provided leadership on the development of a California State Plan for Environmental Literacy. In 2009 and 2010, he consulted for The Forest Foundation on the development and field testing of a Fire Safe curriculum; developed test questions on microbes for West Ed; and evaluated grant proposals for National Audubon.

Bill Andrews is currently the Executive Director of the California Environmental Education Foundation. He considers this "semi-retirement," but his continued dedication to championing environmental education is visible in everything he does, from romping in nature with his grandchildren to serving on statewide committees to foster environmental literacy in California students.

Bill began his education career by teaching for 11 years as a high school science and mathematics teacher. He then joined the California Department of Education (CDE) as an environmental education consultant where he spent 19 years serving the community. During his tenure at CDE he founded

the California Regional Environmental Education Community network (CREEC) and worked tirelessly to support it, Environmental Education Providers, teachers, and students. He also was the Codirector of the Education and the Environment; Strategic Initiatives for Enhancing Education in California project and document published in 2002 by the California Department of Education.

Once Bill retired from CDE, he became a science and environmental education consultant. In the last several years his consulting has ranged from developing and field testing a Fire Safe curriculum for The Forest Foundation to developing test questions on microbes for West Ed and evaluating grant proposals for National Audubon. In 2011 and 2013, Bill served as Director and Executive Director, respectively, of CEEF's teacher institute on "Best Practices of Environmental Education and Stewardship." At the state level, Bill has provided leadership on the development of a California Blueprint for Environmental Literacy (BEL), and was appointed to the State Superintendent's BEL Task Force in 2013.

Bill, thank you for dedicating decades of your life to championing environmental education in California!

Helen de la Maza

Call for Environmental Educator of the Year Nominations

The Environmental Educator of the Year Award was created to honor current educators who have contributed to the success of environmental education in the state. This year it could be someone on YOUR staff!!

Nominations are accepted all year for a separate winner for each section, with awards being

presented at both sections' fall conferences. The recipient must be an active member of AEOE and attend their fall conference. Nominate someone who inspires YOU! Nominations can be made online at:

Northern: <http://www.jotform.us/form/32391430116141>
Southern: <http://www.jotform.us/form/32390884632156>



Echoes from the Past



As AEOE's 60th year comes to a close, we take a moment to honor Camp Clear Creek, <https://outdoored-laUSD-ca.schoolloop.com/ClearCreek>, which is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year. Below is an article written by Clear Creek's founder, founding father of AEOE and namesake of our most prestigious award, Mr. Howard Bell.

Clear Creek History

Written by Howard M. Bell, 1955

In 1924 the Los Angeles City Board of Education authorized the establishment of a site for a mountain outdoor education program. This first camp site was called Clear Creek Forestry Center and is located in the Angeles Crest area of the Angeles National Forest. It consists of approximately 200 acres of chaparral covered hillsides and canyons, and is leased free from the Federal Forest Service.

During the first 31 years buildings and other facilities have been gradually developed until, at the present time, 40 to 80 campers may be accommodated in safe and healthful comfort. In passing, it may be noted that most of the buildings and facilities have been constructed from salvage materials at very little cost.

It is estimated conservatively that more than 50,000 boys and girls have made use of the camp since its inception. For many years, groups using the center came chiefly from agricultural classes. The objective was to provide opportunities for learning forestry methods by direct contact with the natural environment.

Successively the instructional emphasis passed from forestry to nature study, to recreational camping, and finally to the present program of outdoor education. Approximately 40 classroom groups are accommodated each year during school weeks and about 1800 campers during week-ends and vacation periods.

Camp Clear Creek has the distinction of being the oldest continuously operated school camp in America.

Jymn "Scooby" Meier, AEOE Historian



Special Edition: Water in California

From the Editor: Water issues are not a new problem and have been an important component of Environmental Education in California for many years. However, national media coverage has been prevalent over the past few months and public interest in water issues in our state is at an all-time high. With that in mind, there is a special “Water in California” portion in this newsletter where we feature photography, poetry, writing, and organizations who focus on water conservation and education.



“Water, water, water...There is no chortage of water in the desert but exactly the right amount, a perfect ratio of water to rock, water to sand, insuring that wide free open, generous spacing among plants and animals, homes and towns and cities, which makes the arid West so different from any other part of the nation. There is no lack of water here unless you try to establish a city where no city should be.” -Edward Abbey



Water Conservation in California



Water was needed to produce that nice athletic shirt and pair of shorts that you purchased at the REI used gear sale. Water was used to produce the staff schedule you just received...even in the ink. We don't always think about the water usage behind our consumption. Most of the students who come to our programs don't see the hidden water usage in the products they buy and use either. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor (<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Home/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?CA>), about 67% of Californians are experiencing Extreme to Exceptional Drought. Exceptional is the most extreme type of drought. With all of this in mind, water should be at the forefront of our discussions on conservation, and something we conserve every minute of every day.

Do you know how much water is required to make a loaf of bread, a car, a pair of jeans? Want to take a test to find out? Check out this website <http://www.sciencebug.org/gallons.html>

Pathfinder Ranch, <http://pathfinderranch.com>, takes water conservation and conservation in general, very seriously. We have implemented several initiatives to reduce water usage and waste.

- We buried our drip system irrigation pipes and placed mulch over our garden beds.
- Our drip systems are on timers, and we use non-potable well water for irrigation.
- The trees and plants around main campus that need irrigation have circular mounds around them to trap this water and precipitation so it doesn't run off.
- We built walls on the south side of a few garden beds to promote shade tolerant produce plants during the summer that don't require as much water.
- We built an herb spiral that collects water at the bottom in a catch basin, and a pump recirculates the water back to the top.

- We installed new toilet handles in the office that use less water to flush liquid waste.
- We installed low flow shower heads in every bathroom, and reduced the amount of water used for every flush.
- We take any leftover water from our dromedary bags after hikes over to the farm and garden instead of dumping them on the ground.
- We take the leftover water from pitchers at meals to mop the floors.
- We are in the planning phase of implementing gray water systems for staff housing, which will be used to irrigate the fields and trees around campus.
- We are in the process of updating all of the water conservation signs that are posted by every sink, toilet, and shower.

Water conservation education is critical, especially for us at OE/EE programs in California. We have an important job to educate students and adults who come to visit us. There are plenty of water education opportunities that you can take advantage of. The first one that comes to mind is Project WET. Find a facilitator near you to come and help with a professional development workshop for staff. Another idea is to contact your local municipal water district. Most districts have an education coordinator, and they might be able to help with grants, materials, and lessons on water conservation. The Environmental Education Initiative has plenty of curricula to share. Look online for ways to get some of those water education materials.

I wish you the best of luck in your research and learning! All the hard work of compiling research and curriculum is well worth it! Our program at Pathfinder Ranch is flourishing, and we've made significant strides to improve our water-related classes, staff development, facilities, and are saving money at the same time!



Ryan Mayeda
Outdoor Education Director, Pathfinder Ranch
www.pathfinderranch.com

Water in Literature: Poetry

Erik and the Whale Skull

By: Jolene Brink

This much is true. The jaw too, on shore.
Flakes of krill salt baking into bone.

He could crawl inside the skull on the sand,
follow curves where the brain used to be.

I still like to follow him back into the sea.
A later September storm. Grandmothers

sinking into prehistoric dreams.
We don't remember who found it first.

The waves still purple the morning after.
We watched him peer inside.

There were things we couldn't say.
How it rolled through the markets

at night. The chipped bone dust
on our cheeks in the morning.

Who ever trusted the sea?
Something died and sank deep.

Where It Goes Dry

By: Jolene Brink

Enough remembering who built this city
who carved these edges
a stone fence at the bottom of a dry creek bed
traces of shifted boundaries where it escaped
the yard cracked yellow weeds plastic toys
everything is waiting to be adjusted
last century was a disruption
we encouraged we imprinted
sidewalks start and end without
warning junco on a telephone pole
cardboard soaking on the pavement
I play a game called disassembly it goes
backwards from the beginning
the highway turns to mud metal & plastic
dissolve it's easy
nothing goes back together the same way
but sometimes the edges soften
nobody sees the city disappear

Author Bio: Jolene Brink is an M.F.A. in creative writing student at the University of Montana. Her poems have appeared in Belleville Park Pages, Postroad, and elsewhere. Her first chapbook, *Peregrine*, is forthcoming from Red Bird.

“Joys come from simple and natural things; mist over meadows, sunlight on leaves, the path of the moon over water.
Even rain and wind and storm clouds bring joy.”

Sigurd Olson, Author of Listening Point



When the Rivers Run Dry



The glorious Santa Ynez River was gone. Its wide riverbed, formerly a no-man's land of marshes and swiftly-flowing tributaries had been reduced to a few struggling pools within a maze of willow thickets and gravel. Two years of drought had taken its toll, and the meager trickles we had seen flowing between the river remnants this spring had dried up. A lot of frogs and crayfish were undoubtedly anxious about their future, and I had to admit, it didn't look good.

While I had been complaining about the constant rain last week in upstate New York, temperatures climbed into the 100s here in Southern California, and relief in the form of rainstorms was at least three months away. On a July afternoon, my companion Kitty and I hiked down to the Santa Ynez riverbed to search for a swimming hole we had stumbled across during spring explorations.

Beneath the ominous shadows of turkey vultures, we navigated the labyrinth of willow stands and dry river channels, seeking our oasis. Sand and pebbles shifted beneath our feet, and I wondered how long before the stones would once again feel the soothing passage of the river's flow.

Finding the fragment of river where the swimming hole awaited was a bit of a challenge. The Santa Ynez riverbed was so wide and flat that it wasn't obvious where the meandering river was supposed to lie. Even at a regular rate of flow, I might have accused the watercourse of hiding itself. Thankfully, our memories held true, and we found the right paths to a beautiful pool of still water, lined with reeds and shaded by slouching willows. It was a hundred meters long, fed by secretions from the water table, as there was no longer any surface flow. And its mere existence felt like a godsend on a hot summer's afternoon.

Of course, the water took a bit of getting used to. The temperature was fine, but when I grew tired of swimming and tried to stand, in most places my toes would plunge through two feet of mud and muck before reaching the gravel bottom. Plumes of silt trailed in my wake, muddying the waters as I waded down the channel, seeking other residents of this isolated refuge.

A scarlet dragonfly winged by, executing its biplane maneuvers while nipping insects carefully from the surface of the pool. Nearby, its potential nemesis stirred – an oversized carp, nearly two feet long and fat as a torpedo, which roiled the waters with its passage. More oversized shadows drifted through the murky water. I felt slightly uneasy swimming in the same tub with gangs of these thick-scaled creatures, but I'm sure their fears outweighed my own. They attempted to slip past me sedately at first, with quiet dignity, but the passage of each group would always end in a panicked rush, as none of them wanted to be the last fish left behind with the scary human.

We were lucky to have this place, and to share it with so many aquatic creatures during the heat of midday. But not until we explored the downstream edge of the pool did we discover that the riparian refuge owed its existence to a beaver. A two-foot high dam of reeds and willow branches held back the water and had allowed the surface level to rise, which explained why the swimming hole still existed rather than shrinking to the size of a puddle like so many other sites in the Santa Ynez riverbed.

The MVP of the river community was sleeping off the night's labor in its lair; a dark, underwater tunnel led from the dam to the beaver's hideout beneath the riverbank. Constructing a dam served the rodent's own interest, making its primary food of willow bark more accessible, but in doing so the beaver also raised the water table in the vicinity, keeping both the land-locked carp and the shoreline reeds alive. For the frogs and crayfish, it made the dream of surviving until next winter a distinct possibility. For East Coast humans such as Kitty and myself, it gave sanctuary to our memories of summertime swimming holes and allowed them a home in the material world. Not bad for a soggy rodent with webbed toes and an overbite.

*Excerpt from: OFF THE MAP: VOLUME 3
(forthcoming in 2017)*

www.facebook.com/offthemaponline

Bryan "Rain" Snyder



Water Health: Cleaning Recipes

Being conscious about water use is one way to help with the current water crisis in California. Water is linked to much that we do, and cleaning with harmful chemicals is detrimental to ecosystems and your health. Use these recipes to keep yourself, your ecosystem, and your wallet healthy by using simple ingredients that are less toxic than their retail counterparts.

When purchasing products, look for one of these certifications to ensure that you aren't unknowingly purchasing harmful items:



Green Seal certification: all products with this certification meet multiple requirements for health and environmental safety.



U.S. EPA Safer Choice (formerly Design for the Environment): Every ingredient in products with this certification have been tested for safety.

Multi-Use Cleaner

¼ cup white vinegar
1 ½ teaspoons liquid dish soap
3-6 drops of Orange or Lemon essential oil

Combine vinegar and essential oil in a 16 oz. spray bottle. Fill with water, then add soap, cover and shake to combine.

Produce Cleaner

Baking soda
Microfiber cloth

Sprinkle baking soda on a wet microfiber cloth, scrub produce lightly and rinse with cool water.

Drain Cleaner

Commercial drain cleaners are some of the most toxic chemicals available over the counter. They are harmful to you as well as to water health in California. Utilize this recipe/tool to clear your drains in a more environmentally responsible way.

1 box baking soda
1 cup white vinegar
1 drain snake

Pour baking soda in and around drain opening. Next, pour the cup of white vinegar over the baking soda. Flush with very hot water. Use the drain snake to remove remaining clogs. Repeat if needed.

Oven Cleaner

Some commercial oven cleaners are so toxic that they advise you to leave the home while they work. Use this recipe to clean your oven safely and effectively.

1 box of baking soda
1 spray bottle of water

Spray water over the bottom of the oven until the entire surface is wet. Sprinkle a 1/2 inch coating of baking soda over the water. Spray water over baking soda until it is wet. Let sit for 2-3 hours and then wipe up.

Line your oven with aluminum foil to limit cleaning in the future.

Recipes and information adapted from: Hennepin County Green Cleaning Recipes, http://www.hennepin.us/~media/hennepinus/residents/recycling/documents/green_cleaning_recipes.pdf



Building Sustainable Camp Communities



The education model at the Catalina Environmental Leadership Program (CELP) adapts the principles of sustainability to give perspective on the interconnectedness of how natural and human systems function. Richard Murphy, Ph.D., Director of Science and Education at Ocean Futures Society, developed the four principles of sustainability that guide this and other Ambassador of the Environment programs to encourage participants to apply lessons back to their home communities.

- **Everything runs on energy**
- **There's no waste in nature**
- **Biodiversity is Good**
- **Everything is Connected**

When you apply these principles to natural communities you can begin to see how a sustainable system functions. Each organism fills a niche to contribute to the community. Consider an example from the marine ecosystem. Sea cucumbers eat organic material from the ocean floor to absorb nutrients for itself and poop out nutrient rich sand that will cycle back through the system. Lesson: There is no waste in nature

So what do we do with these lessons? Camps are in a unique position to apply these lessons into their community. Consider the Garden Project at CIC that diverts an average of 20,000 lbs of waste a year from the landfill. Fungus, bacteria and insects convert this

“waste” into the valuable resource of compost which is used to provide nutrients for the demonstration garden.

By engaging camp guests to actively participate with this initiative, CIC extends the lesson from the kelp forest to the garden and back into the communities of the thousands of guests that come to camp.

Inspired by the programs at Catalina Island Camps, Green Camps Initiative is leading the sustainable camps movement by providing outreach education and resources to access the benefits of sustainable development and educational programming. The Green Camps Certification program was launched this year to guide any camp to develop a green team, conservation policies, and complete audit surveys which will result in a sustainable growth model unique to each camp.



No single mold of sustainability will fit the diverse needs of the camp community. Instead, camps can use the resources and support of GCI to implement systems that work for their unique program.



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