

The California Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education

2014-2015 Annual Report

Fiscal Year July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015



Our Mission

The Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education supports and inspires educators in their quest for the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential to help all learners understand, appreciate and care for their environment. As an integral part of achieving our mission, we encourage direct experience outdoors.

Vision Statement

Through regular participation in environmental and outdoor education, learners will gain the knowledge, skills and inspiration to help them understand, respect and care for themselves, their communities and their environment. These values will be reflected in a world where:

- All people in our diverse society have equal access to environmental and outdoor education.
- A variety of environmental and outdoor education opportunities are consistently provided through schools, community groups, government and non-profit agencies, and all students attend a residential outdoor science school at least once.
- Environmental education is integrated throughout the traditional school curriculum.
- At every level of education, teachers and students go outdoors to explore, appreciate and care for the natural world on school grounds, throughout local communities and into natural areas.
- Learners have a strong connection to their natural environments, whether wilderness, rural or urban, resulting in a deep and nurturing sense of place.
- First-hand experience and environmental service learning projects develop critical thinkers who make sound environmental decisions and actively move our society toward sustainable practices.
- Recognition and support of educators and programs providing environmental and outdoor education is an integral part of California's educational system and society.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The 2014-2015 fiscal year saw AEOE continue work done last year such as efforts in board development; AEOE worked at advancing policy and advocacy in the state by participating in the task force for the blueprint for environmental literacy; experience a changing of the guard for our coffers with a new treasurer; and began working with other organizations and potential partners as we continue to strengthen the field of outdoor and environmental education in California.

Board growth and development

Our board of directors has been developing over the last several years. We have grown the board both in size and experience and have worked to include voices from across the field. Our board represents a mix of formal and non-formal education, from the classroom to zoos, nature centers, state parks, and residential outdoor science schools. There is also a range of experience from veterans in the field to new visionaries.

This year we made an intentional effort to give our board more freedom to be able to maintain an eye on the broader landscape of environmental education in California. One way we did this was through strengthening our committees to allow our board to not have to participate in the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Policy and Advocacy

Advocating for the advancement and the increased implementation/exposure/access/presence of environmental and outdoor education throughout our State.

Tracey Weiss, one of our board members represented AEOE by serving on behalf of the State Superintendent to assist in the development of California's creation of the Blueprint of Environmental Literacy. Across the United States over 29 States currently have Environmental Literacy plans to help advance access and understanding of the world around us. Tracey was assigned to the Expanding the Reach of Environmental Education subcommittee who worked to provide recommendations to increase access for ALL students throughout the State of California. Environmental Education is imperative for a well-rounded education and a critical thinking as we move into the 21st century. California's Blueprint provides critical support and a needed framework to support K-12 formal and informal educators in making this happen. Tracey and the rest of the Blueprint Taskforce's hard work were realized in the fall of 2015 with the release of the [Blueprint for Environmental Literacy](#).

Additionally, AEOE provided critical support and analysis regarding Assembly Bill 1603. This bill worked to provide a pathway for Environmental Education grants for underserved students and schools to access informal hands-on learning. AEOE Board Member, Tracey Weiss testified in before the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife to support AB 1603 (Assemblyman Stone), a bill to support more funding for environmental education in California. The bill did not make it out of the Assembly Appropriations committee, but we hope to work with State legislatures should the opportunity present itself again in the future.

Finances

We said thank you and goodbye to our longtime board member and treasurer Zayanne Thompson. Steve Morris took over as treasurer for the board and work to continue efforts to streamline the organization's finances. This includes moving our accounting to QuickBooks, developing our online registration and donation systems and solidifying our financial policies and practices.

Partnerships

This past year we began looking for and working with some new partners that will help to expand the reach of environmental education throughout California. It is our hope that by unifying efforts and resources we can create more efficiency and and impact across our field. As we move into the new fiscal year this will remain one of our top priorities and we look forward to reaching out to new partners and engaging old stakeholders to further advance California Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education.

- *Reed Schneider*,
President, Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education



Your 2014-2015 AEOE Board Of Directors

BOARD MEMBERS

President

Reed Schneider
NatureBridge
reed@aeoe.org

Vice President

Tracey Weiss
Exploring New Horizons
tracey@aeoe.org

Secretary

Katie Andersen
Cuyamaca Outdoor School (SDCOE)
katie@aeoe.org

Treasurer

Zayanne G. Thompson/Steve Morris
YMCA Camp Surf
steve@aeoe.org

Northern Council Chair

Desiree Gant
WOLF School
desiree@aeoe.org

Northern Council Chair-Elect

Korena David
Foothill Horizons (Stanislaus County Office of Ed.)
korena@aeoe.org

Northern Council Past Chair

John Oliver
Walden West (Santa Clara County Office of Ed.)
john@aeoe.org

Southern Council Chair

Andrea Haley
Divisadero Middle School
andrea@aeoe.org

Southern Council Chair-Elect

Amanda Martin
San Diego Children's Discovery Museum
amanda@aeoe.org

Southern Council Past Chair

Angie Kemsley
Cuyamaca Outdoor School (SDCOE), San Diego Zoo
Global
angie@aeoe.org

Conference Coordinator

Robb Stolberg
Walden West (Santa Clara County Office of Ed.)
robb@aeoe.org

Membership Coordinator

Helen de la Maza
California Regional Environmental Education
Community (CREEC)
helen@aeoe.org

Members-At-Large

Heather Butler
WOLF School
Michael Charnofsky
East Bay Parks & Recreation
michael@aeoe.org
Tom Drake
Henry J. Kaiser High School
tom@aeoe.org
Steve Morris
YMCA Camp Surf
steve@aeoe.org

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Northern Council

Desiree Gant- Northern Council Chair

Korena David- Northern Council Chair-Elect

John Oliver- Northern Council Past Chair

Kim Laizer- Secretary

Members-At-Large

Heather Butler

Michael Charnofsky

Shannon Cueva

Jymn Mierre

Jenny O'Connell

Reed Schneider

Robb Stolberg

Tracey Weiss

Southern Council

Andrea Haley- Southern Council Chair

Amanda Martin- Southern Council Chair-Elect

Angie Kemsley- Southern Council Past Chair

Lauren Oliver- Council Secretary

Outings Coordinator- Vacant

Members-At-Large

Katie Andersen

Helen de la Maza

Tom Drake

Steve Morris

Zayanne G. Thompson

Angie Ziobro

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education Statement of Activities Fiscal Year 2014-15

Revenue

Conferences	46,490
Membership	11,955
Joie's Daisies (scholarship fund-raising)	2,307
Merchandise	362
Job Postings	<u>1,960</u>
Total revenues	\$63,074

Expenses

❖ Conferences	36,886	
Newsletter/Website		5,426
Professional networking (NAAEE, NAI)	1,921	
Administration (office supplies, bank fees, insurance, mileage, in-person meeting costs)	5,131	
Credit Card Payment Fees	3,486	
➤ Professional Services	<u>1,799</u>	
Total expenses	\$54,649	
▪ Change in net assets	\$8,425	
Net assets, beginning of fiscal year	\$61,135	
Net assets, end of fiscal year	\$69,560	

Notes regarding finances:

- ❖ Awarded \$2000 in conference scholarships this year
- Costs have decreased significantly from previous years as we are in the fourth year of improving services to our members working with Bicycle Theory to improve the website and membership registration system.
- First year in the last 3 to produce a positive variance as we have completed the initial setup and processing for our website and online registration system.

MEMBERSHIP SUMMARY

AEOE Members as of June 30, 2015

476 total members:

- 80 Life Members
- 68 Institutional Members
- 217 Individual Annual Members
- 100 Student/Intern Annual Members
- 11 Contributing Members

Compared to last year, we have:

- + 16 more members overall
- +1 more Life Member
- +16 more Institutional Members
- +7 more Individual Annual Members
- 6 less Student/Annual Members
- 2 less Contributing Members

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

On April 17, 2015, during a bi-annual in-person meeting, the AEOE Board decided to create standing committees to better serve the needs of our membership and focus the talents of our board members to where they can serve best. The committees will focus on specific areas and goals, and report back to the board, creating a more efficiently run organization. Also, committees are open to any member who wants to be involved with a specific activity. Committees are as follows:

- Finance
- Governance
- Conference
- Membership
- Professional Development
- Media & Marketing
- Expansion (an Ad/Hoc Committee)
- Although not an official committee, we continue to support regional meetings for the Environmental Outdoor School Managers (EOSM) group as well.
- The Northern and Southern Councils will continue to serve in their current roles, planning conferences in their region and informing the board on general membership concerns.

CONFERENCE SUMMARIES

Northern Fall Conference- Little Basin, October 17-19, 2015

Attendees: 100

From the words of Randy Widera (2014 Howard Bell Award winner), we as a collective are the ones who can help create change. As the speaker at our opening ceremony, Randy spoke about how saving our public lands for over 150 years was not the work of one individual with one seed but of a community of seeds who came together. This really resonated with me as this is how I think of AEOE as a whole. As the California Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education, AEOE continues to bring us together as community to share, learn, and grow from one another. After each conference we return to our small sectors re-inspired and re-invigorated to continue to reach our goals, whatever those may be. Mark Hylkema, California State Park Archaeologist for the Santa Cruz District, built on this topic of community through his talk on Native Ohlone Culture. This land has truly been someone's land for a long time, and it continues to be something we try to understand and protect.

With over 100 attendees, we had a variety of interests and workshops to choose from. From administrative workshops geared toward helping staff to "Cooking in Nature" with Ken Clarkson from the Reikes Center, this weekend was truly about collaboration and community. Congratulations to Emilie "Dipper" Lygren from Pigeon Point, Northern Section Environmental Educator of the Year, who truly embodies this spirit as she shared her coyote story and poem at the campfire! Here is my 60 seconds of gratitude from the weekend (thanks to Shannon Cueva and her workshop on "Building Community Within Your Staff"). From the moment people stepped out of their vehicles (mostly in the darkness), they had smiles on their faces and asked if they could help. It was cool that we had such a community where everyone tried to help out in some way, even after traveling for many miles. A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who volunteered and helped out! We couldn't have done this without you!

Excerpt from the December 2014 AEOE Newsletter. Text by Desiree Gant Northern Council Chair and Conference Chair



Participants at a workshop at the 2014 Northern Fall Conference.

Southern Fall Conference- Pathfinder Ranch October 24-26, 2014

Thank you Pathfinder Ranch for giving the Southern AEOE members a place to play during our Fall Conference! The weather was perfect all weekend long and the wind rustling through the leaves helped usher in the fall. The weekend was a great success and reminded me of why I love helping with this volunteer organization. So many people put in extra time and effort to make the weekend possible. A great big thank you to all of the members who came to this event, and an even bigger thank you to the many people who gave of themselves in order for this conference to happen.

One aspect of the weekend that I really enjoyed was the diversity of workshops that the presenters put together. I was able to spend some time with the animals of Pathfinder Ranch, learn more about teaching sustainability and strengthen my poetry writing abilities all in the same day! There was a great talk on how to include students of all levels of mobility, how to incorporate Common Core into our lessons and even a presentation on solar power.

It is always nice to gather together with like-minded folks and this weekend was no exception. Great conversations could be heard all around the campus as members were discussing the workshops they had gone to, the struggles they are facing at their own sites, and the joy that comes from being an educator. I am sad that the weekend went by so quickly.

Excerpt from the December 2014 AEOE Newsletter. Text by Andrea Haley, Southern Council Chair and Conference Chair



Participants at the 2014 Southern Fall Conference.

Statewide Spring Conference- Walker Creek Ranch, April 18-20, 2015

Attendees: 286

Workshops: 66, plus breakout sessions on Saturday morning

Reflections from the 2015 Statewide Conference

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 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!

Excerpt from the May 2015 AEOE Newsletter. Text by Desiree Gant, Conference Chair and Northern Council Chair

Spring Conference Executive Summary

Date: April 17-19, Walker Creek Ranch, Petaluma, Marin County

- # attendees: 286

- Speakers and entertainment:

Friday band - Oatmeal Cookie

Saturday Band - Coffis Brothers & the Mountain Men

Keynote - Banana Slug String Band

- Workshop strands (6): Leadership, Diversity & Inclusivity, Science & Sustainability, Mad Teaching Skills, Administration & Professional Learning, and Hodgepodge

- # workshops offered : 66, plus Saturday morning breakout sessions for new naturalists, advanced naturalists/supervisors

- Howard Bell Award - Bill Andrews, CA Dep. of Education

- We received very much praise for an excellent conference

- Several long-time members said that this was the best they had attended.

AWARD WINNERS

Howard Bell Award

Bill Andrews, Executive Director of the California Environmental Education Foundation

In 2011, Bill served as Director of California Environmental Education Foundation's (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!

Excerpt from the May 2015 AEOE Newsletter. Text by Helen de la Maza.

Northern Section Environmental Educator of the Year

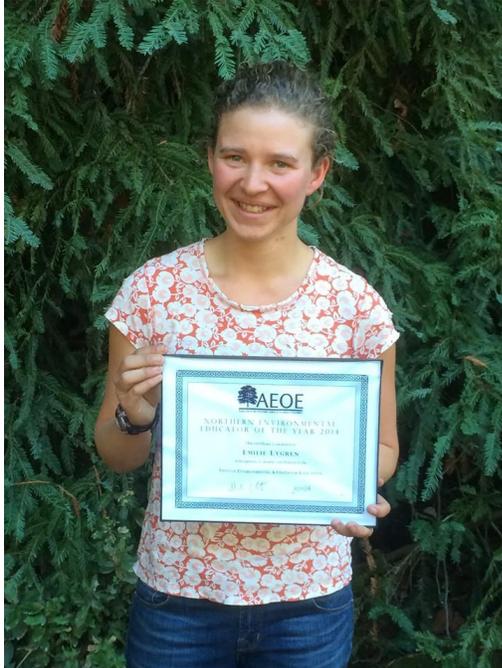
Congratulations to Emilie "Dipper" Lygren, the 2014 Northern Section Environmental Educator of the Year. She has been an active member of AEOE for several years, has led numerous workshops, organized the Pescadero Valley Conference, and has taken an active role in testing and implementing curriculum for the BEETLES Project. She started in the EE field as an intern at San Mateo Outdoor Education (SMOE), then did a year with Exploring New Horizons (ENH) Loma Mar. She returned to SMOE as a Mentor Naturalist, and is currently an instructor at ENH Pigeon Point. Here are some examples of the glowing things people had to say about Emilie in her nomination: "Emilie is creating and helping to spread the next evolution of environmental education. She has innovated and tested key strategies to incorporate nature journaling into the outdoor curriculum. She has given us a way to use poetry in our field experiences that move well beyond cookie cutter haiku and cinquain to forms that encourage deep reflection, introspection, and personal connection. These tools help students draw meaning and greater richness from their experiences."

- John Muir Laws on Emilie Lygren "A mud-soaked Emilie emerges from the forest. Trailing behind her are her mud ducklings, each with a huge grin plastered on his or her face, and poetry flowing from their lips. 'I wonder where lizards go in the rain. It reminds me of peace.' This is my most vivid image of Dipper as a naturalist, and it captures the essence of what makes her such an amazing educator. She seamlessly blends care-free fun, meaningful learning, and lasting connections in each lesson. If it means muddying up a white rain jacket, that's okay with her too."

- Christina "Kiwi" Chung "There is something about Emilie's presence that is so intense, so authentic, so thoughtful, so inclusive, and so playful that it makes you know that where you are is the right place to be. Yet part of her compelling presence is that she constantly shines the spotlight away from herself. She shines it on the natural world and on students, on ideas, on art, and she shines it on her co-workers. I love knowing that when Emilie takes on a task, it's going to be well done. She's going to dedicate time and energy to it along with an open mindedness, and she's going to check in with others collaboratively. Emilie cares so deeply about people, ideas, nature, and projects, and that care comes through in all she does. She has a profound

generosity of spirit, mind and heart, which makes her an amazing poet, friend, musician, writer, curriculum designer, and environmental educator.”

Excerpt from December 2014 AEOE Newsletter. Text by Kevin Beals.



Northern Council Environmental Educator of the Year, Emilie Lygren

Southern Section Environmental Educator of the Year

There were no nominees from the Southern Section for an Environmental Educator of the Year. To nominate someone for the current year, visit <https://aeoe.org/about/awards>

TRIPS AND OUTINGS SUMMARY

This year, while the Southern Council planned trips to the Eastern Sierras in the fall and Black Canyon for canoeing in the spring, and the Northern Council planned a snowshoe get-together, all of our trips had to be cancelled due to lack of participation. Trips in the southern region were also put on hold due to a vacancy in the Outings Coordinator position. If you have enjoyed AEOE trips in the past, think about joining your regional council to help plan and coordinate these events.

The Professional Development Committee is tasked with revamping our outings to add a more meaningful experience that only AEOE members can benefit from.

PARTNER REPORTS

North American Association for Environmental Education

John Oliver and Robb Stolberg attended the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Conference in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada Oct. 8-11, 2014. This was the 43rd annual conference. Wednesday the 8th was the affiliate workshop, where leaders from the over-50 affiliates of NAAEE gather to discuss challenges and successes from the different states, provinces and regions. AEOE has been the affiliate for CA since 1999. The following 3 days were filled with workshops, keynotes and networking events.