

# December appreciations & updates

## Greetings!

The longer nights and colder days are upon us. The change in weather doesn't stop us from exploring the outdoors, but it does make us appreciate warm layers and mugs of hot beverages. Having time to hunker down gives me an opportunity to think about all the many people and places I am grateful for. The AEOE community comes to top of mind. I appreciate the dedication, spirit, kindness, thoughtfulness, and generosity of the many amazing individuals and organizations throughout our state that work to connect young people to all the benefits of learning outdoors. From the towering majesty of ancient redwoods and granite peaks to the scuttle and sway of resilient tidepool critters, we sure are lucky to have access to the breathtaking beauty that is California. Unfortunately, that is not the case for everyone that calls this state home. AEOE works to advance the impact of environmental and outdoor education, supporting all of you—the existing champions—and seeking ways we can reach out to and lift up folks that have not yet had the opportunity to benefit from meaningful learning experiences outdoors. Because we all deserve to learn and play in the natural world. Here's hoping you get to spend some time in the coming weeks connecting to people you love in places that are meaningful to you.



In gratitude,  
*Estrella Risinger*  
AEOE Executive Director

## Strengthening our impact through Giving Tuesday

AEOE works to advance the impact of environmental and outdoor education throughout California. Our strength is built on the collective voice of environmental and outdoor education professionals around the state, and our small but dedicated team relies on your support to sustain the work we do. Please consider making a donation this #GivingTuesday, December 3, to help advance our mission through [our website](#) or by sending us a check (our address is below). All contributions, from \$5 to \$500 make a difference. Thanks for your support!

## Fall Conference Highlights



*EE perspectives panel*

### Northern Section Conference – November 1-3, 2019

Our fall northern conference at Sly Park Environmental Education Center was a great success! We had 138 total participants, including a number of young children, one of whom became our newest lifetime member! (Thanks, Tali Miller, and to the whole Miller family for all your support!)

Conference highlights:

- Keynote Speaker: Rob Wade, Plumas County Office of Ed.
- Welcome and blessing: Kimberly Shining Star Petree



Hand-on learning!

- Plenary session: Perspectives Panel: Underrepresented Voices in EE (resources on equity and inclusion [can be found here](#))
  - Silent auction, which raised more than \$400!
- Many thanks to Nicole "Newt" Carbone and Robb "Big Brown Bat" Stolberg, our amazing conference team, along with everyone at Sly Park for an amazing weekend.

## Southern Section Conference – November 15-17, 2019

We had a terrific conference at Pathfinder Ranch!

Conference highlights:

- Keynote speaker: Peter Kindfield, Hilltop Education Connections
- Astronomy night
- Workshop topics ranged from climate change data interpretation to hiking through an equity and inclusion lens



Many thanks to Angie Kemsley, Conference Chair, and Kelly Prendiville, Registrar and Workshop Coordinator, as well as the Pathfinder team for hosting a great conference!

## Congratulations to our Environmental Educators of the Year!

Several outstanding educators were nominated this year. Congrats to all of you for the recognition and deep appreciation for all the great work you do.

### Nominees:

Amber Atkinson – Camp KEEP By the Sea  
Anesti Vega – U.S. Expeditions and Exploration  
Blossom Shores – Portola Middle School  
Heather Farrell – Thousand Oaks High School  
Nancy Bruce – Circle J-Norris Ranch

### Huge congratulations to this year's winners:

Northern Section: Michael "Rhododendron" Shanahan – Shady Creek Outdoor School  
Southern Section: Katie Andersen – Cuyamaca Outdoor School

Read more about [Katie](#) and [Rhody](#)!

## Save the date for the statewide spring conference!

**Dates:** Friday, May 1 - Sunday, May 3, 2020  
**Location:** SCICON Outdoor School in Springville, CA  
**Conference Theme:** Perspectives

A flyer for the conference can be found [in this folder](#). Please consider passing posting them at your site or passing them along to your friends! Early registration and workshop proposal applications will open in January. Stay tuned!

### **Calling all volunteers!**

We need volunteers to make our conference a success! To volunteer for the spring statewide conference, please contact Angela Kemsley ([angie@aeoe.org](mailto:angie@aeoe.org)), AEOE Board Member and Conference Chair.

*AEOE is proud to be named Outstanding Affiliate of the Year!*

Did you know that AEOE is the California affiliate of the North American Association for Environmental Education? This fall, we received the distinguished honor of being recognized as the *Outstanding Affiliate of the Year*. You can read more about this great honor on this [blog post](#) or this [press release](#).

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