



Association for Environmental & Outdoor Education

Winter 2018-2019

Newsletter



Annual Board Meeting & Coastal Cleanup Day

by Steve Morris
AEOE Board CFO

In mid-September your AEOE Board of Directors assembled for their annual in-person meeting with Point Bonita YMCA serving as our host. Located on the coastal bluffs of the Marin Headlands, overlooking the Pacific Ocean, this facility is the ideal place for individuals and groups to connect to nature, each other, and to themselves.

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Dedicated in 1977, Point Bonita YMCA is a branch of the Y of San Francisco and a proud partner of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The campus is nestled within the Marin Headlands, just 10 minutes from the Golden Gate Bridge. The lighthouse at the southwest tip of the Marin Headlands is still active and maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard. This spot, at the "world's end," is ruggedly beautiful and nearby, old military dormitories are used to house students in Point Bonita YMCA's environmental education programs.

Point Bonita's Outdoor Education program is holistic and multidisciplinary, incorporating hands-on learning, team building challenges, community service and adventurous fun. Students participate in hands-on investigations, such as sand crab monitoring, pond studies, and habitat restoration. All of their programs support the Next Generation Science Standards and are tailored to meet the individual needs

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Environmental Educator of the Year Awards

by Katie Andersen
AEOE Board Secretary

The Environmental Educator of the Year Award is presented to one representative from the Northern and Southern California areas annually. This award is given to someone who is still currently teaching in the field and loving it, someone who has contributed to the success of Environmental Education in the state, and leads by example within the field. Nominations are accepted all year and the awards are presented at the fall conferences. Recipients must be active members of AEOE and attend a fall conference.

This year, the Awards Committee had an extremely difficult decision, with some wonderful, dedicated nominees who all are working towards AEOE's mission to advance the impact of

environmental education in California. The Environmental Educators of the Year demonstrate this mission through their work with students in their communities, commitments to lifelong learning, and their dedication to teaching both students and fellow naturalists.

We'd like to congratulate and Nick Bischoff, Lead Trail Guide and Teaching Mentor from Ramblin' Adventure Club and Jane Mattione, Lead Teaching Naturalist from Pathfinder Ranch as the AEOE 2018 Environmental Educators of the Year! As the award winners, both Nate and Jane received a certificate for display, and gift cards to Acorn Naturalists and REI. Their profiles will also be featured on AEOE.org."

AEOE WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE

ALL OF OUR 2018 EE'R OF THE YEAR NOMINEES:

NICK BISCHOFF
JANE MATTIONE
AMANDA PLANTE
MICHAEL SHANAHAN
JOSHUA "BOBCAT" STACY



Nick Bischoff

Northern Environmental Educator of the
Year

Ramblin' Adventure Club
Nominated by Courtney Castaños

Nick treats his students and their parents like they're members of his own family, always taking the extra moment to ask how their day or weekend was, or give them a handshake and a smile. As a program director, I constantly receive letters and phone calls from parents boasting about Nick's kindness, hard work, honesty and enthusiasm. They constantly ask, "Where did you find him?" They invite him to their birthday parties and their kids' baseball games and he shows up, cheers the loudest and thanks them for the invitation.

Nick is passionate about natural and local history and has contributed to the Santa Cruz field of Outdoor Education by developing curriculum that highlights fascinating pieces of our past so that kids can learn the stories behind the different environments they visit. His kids have especially loved learning about the bear cage and old fountain they discovered in a long abandoned zoo in Delaveaga Forest, the sea monster folklore fishermen used to tell about the Monterey submarine canyon, the legend of Mountain Charlie and his wrestle with a grizzly bear in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and the rich Awaswas (Ohlone) history behind the sea shells and Monterey chert found in the shell mounds that rest in the meadows of Twin Gates, near the beds of Scott Creek, and on the cliffs of 4 Mile beach.

Nick is a lifelong learner, constantly searching for lectures and conferences to attend, and the latest environmental education books to read. He also regularly attends teacher training courses in subjects like outdoor leadership, LGBT allyship, classroom management in the outdoors and teambuilding.

Beyond all of this Nick is a committed student of social justice philosophies and practices and works hard to make sure all of his students feel safe and know that they are integral pieces of the group. He strives to be an ally to each and every child and to help teach his students how to love and care for each other.



Jane Mattione

Southern Environmental Educator of the
Year

Pathfinder Ranch
Nominated by Ryan Mayeda

Jane has worked for Pathfinder for 3 years now, plus her work previously at other OE programs. She has been a dedicated member of our community and a big proponent of AEOE. She loves to teach, improve her craft and also help others to improve their teaching skills. As a result, she was asked to attend the BEETLES Leadership Institute to help train the rest of our staff and future staff on BEETLES teaching tools, which we have incorporated into our curriculum with her help. She has also begun the process of implementing a new citizen science program into our curriculum using tablets, which has been a phenomenal addition to our overall program.



She has been in this field as an educator for many years, she has a knack for teaching, and loves working with youth. She constantly promotes conservation awareness with clients and is an amazing educator. Everyone who shadows her classes comes away with something new and cool to use in their own classes. She has a wealth of knowledge and is a dedicated individual in this field.

Beach Clean Up, continued from pg. 1

of participating teachers and students.

This weekend also coincided with the 34th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day, the state's largest annual volunteer event, organized by the California Coastal Commission. Tens of thousands of Californians gathered hundreds of tons of trash at beaches, shorelines, and inland waterways cleaning up over 1,000 sites in 55 of California's 58 counties.

For the second year in a row your board was able to participate in this incredible effort alongside over 50,000 volunteers statewide collecting over 700,000 pounds of trash and over 35,000 pounds of recyclable materials (over 367 tons).

Volunteers also picked up a number of "unusual" items during this year's cleanup. The Winners of the 2018 Most Unusual Item contest are:

- Northern California: A volunteer in Marin County found a painting of a marsh, in a marsh.
- Southern California: A volunteer in Los Angeles County found a Coca-Cola can from 1963.

In honor of Coastal Cleanup Day, the Coastal Commission has launched an effort to show how Californians can contribute to the health of our coast all year long. The Whale Tail Coastal Protection License Plate is a major source of funding for the cleanup, as well as the funding source for thousands of coastal and marine-related educational projects in California.

Book Review:

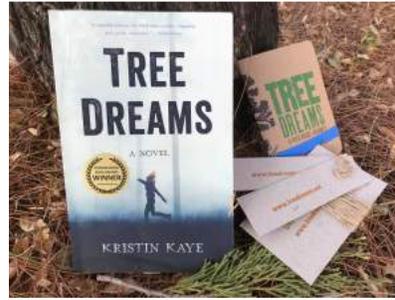
Tree Dreams, by Kristin Kaye

Author Creates Tree Tagging Phenomena (and becomes AEOE's Newest Member!)

by Katie Andersen

Have you ever been wandering through the forest and felt compelled to chat with the trees around you? Do trees have something to communicate with us? With each other? Read *Tree Dreams*, a new novel by Kristin Kaye, and you'll be able to come up with some answers for yourself. While *Tree Dreams* is a work of fiction, the connections between characters Jade, Peter, and the forest are based in reality.

Conflict arrives in a small Northern California timber town when a group of tree-sitting protesters arrive to try and protect the last remaining old-growth stands of redwoods. Jade, who comes from a logging family witnesses a tragedy that has her questioning her own character and her family's way of life. She runs away from her small town, and tries to create a new story for herself. Fate, or her connection to her home forest, has other plans, and she ends up unknowingly joining the group of tree-sitters and returning to her roots. As she lives high up in the trees, her connection with them strengthens, and she feels the need to communicate the messages she receives by writing



down bits of wisdom and tying them to the trees' branches.

Jade's fictional tree-tagging has become a reality, and students all over are creating their own bits of tree wisdom to share with the trees (and those who pass by them.)

Tree Dreams has inspired a companion project, where students can reflect on ways they are connected to the natural world, as Jade demonstrated, and share their own "tree dreams" by adding tags to trees.

Tree Dreams is a great addition to a class library, and a great way to create an action project for your students. (If you're ordering your own copy, use AEOE's Amazon Smile link, and help support our organization: <https://smile.amazon.com> and search "Tree Dreams.") Tree tagging kits and K-8 lesson plans are available at www.treedreams.net. While the book itself is geared towards high school aged students, the tree-tagging project can be done by all ages.

Author Kristin Kaye is dedicated to environmental and outdoor education, as demonstrated by her novel and it's companion project which gets students outside and focused on connections in nature. The tree-tagging project is used in 12 classrooms around the world! She has also recently become a member of the Association for Outdoor and Environmental Education.

EOSM Annual Retreat

by Ryan Mayeda

16 managers from across the state attended EOSM's 3rd annual retreat in Cambria on November 10-11, 2018. Camp Ocean Pines, Camp Sea Lab, Coloma Outdoor Discovery School, Exploring New Horizons, Nature Bridge, Ocean Pines, Pathfinder Ranch, Ramblin Adventures, Camp Sea Lab, Sly Park, Westminster Woods, and YMCA East Bay were represented at this year's retreat with staff in various leadership levels from first time coordinators to program and executive directors. We were lucky enough this year to have two presenters, Jen Ortega from Humboldt State University (and NAAEE) and Tess Fife from Camp Beyond Camp.

Jen provided the attendees with resources on NAAEE's Guidelines for Excellence for Non-Formal Programs, which is a great tool for any program looking at being more intentional with improvements and projects. You can download a free PDF from NAAEE's website (<https://naaee.org/our-work/programs/guidelines-excellence>) and look at similar resources to provide intentional growth opportunities for your program's instructors! Tess Fife is the CEO of Camp Beyond Camp whose mission is to expand student learning outside of their residential

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EOSM, continued from pg. 3

EE experience. She has been working closely with Pathfinder Ranch and a few other programs plus educators to pilot their first set of online classroom curricula this year. Check out their website (<https://campbeyondcamp.com/>) for information and contact Tess if your program might be interested in partnering. Extending student learning is so tricky for many of our programs, so this is a great way for kids to continue that learning back at home and school!



Besides these two presentations, our attendees got a lot from the two round table discussion sessions where we talked about a myriad of topics including the California Outdoor Engagement Coalition (<https://outdoorengagement.berkeley.edu/>),

which is a great organization that is working towards expanding equitable access to the outdoors for all Californians. Request to become a member and see what's going on across the state in terms of job opportunities, local events, and statewide initiatives/bills. As part of the Coalition's collective impact model, a Coalition member reached out to EOSM to collect some data on our various programs, capacities, financial constraints, and how we can increase capacities to serve more students.



Overall, everyone at this year's retreat had a positive experience and left with plenty of ideas to take home to their own programs! If you're a manager or in a leadership position at your program, but not already on the EOSM email lists, feel free to contact the EOSM Coordinator, Ryan Mayeda, at ryan@aeoe.org for details on how to take advantage of these meetings and retreats!

Southern Fall Conference Recap

by Kacey Shaughnessy

Outdoor Education Manager at The Wildlands Conservancy

As the education manager for three desert nature preserves, I was eager to see what the fall AEOE Conference had to offer. I attended with one of my naturalists and we were able to break apart and experience different workshops.

One of my favorite topics that we covered during the conference was equitable inclusion. While I knew that there were certainly issues related to inclusion and access in our preserve, I didn't realize how big some of our barriers are. At our own preserve, we have a high population of Spanish speakers that come out, but we are always challenged with

ways to provide them with the information they need. I learned from the conference that we cannot always assume that because we have literature or media in a person's native language that they are going to be reached in the way that we hope. I did not consider before that education level and geographic location are also related to the accessibility of the information that we want to share.

In addition to access, any organization needs to take into consideration the image and the message that we project to minority populations. Are we an organization that cares about diversity? How do we show that? When an organization has board members and staff that are all caucasian, it does not show that we care about or believe in diversity. When visitors are able to see staff at an organization that look like them, these visitors are more likely to see themselves in that role. This is important because one of the first steps to becoming a more diverse organization is to engage minority communities and make them see themselves in these roles in such a way that they want to become a part of the team.

It doesn't happen overnight. Diversifying an organization's staff and board requires intentionality. Any plans to diversify an organization must be inclusive from the early conceptual stages through implementation. While concepts and changes might sound like a good idea, it is also important that people of color are included in the entire process of reaching out to their communities and that their feedback is taken seriously. Inclusivity should be found within an organization's mission, marketing, and messaging. All engagement with the public should be relevant and culturally competent and programs should be centered on the communities they serve. Programming and outreach aren't the only things to build on though. We need to make sure that organizations wanting to push for diversity are also creating clear and accessible career pathways and opportunities for people within minority groups.

Northern Fall Conference Recap

by Sarah Angulo

Community Education Specialist with the UC California Naturalist Program

Business pants, air conditioned conference rooms, microphones, plastic name tags... these are things that you'd expect to find at any other conference. But an AEOE conference is unlike an other conference. Instead, you'll find sandals, circles on the lawn, talking sticks, and tree cookies. The informal setting of our



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*Northern Conference, continued
from pg. 4*

AEOE conferences set us apart from your typical experience, and helps to create a comfortable, dynamic, and inviting space for educators to take away more than simply information.



Attendees feel safe enough to ask critical questions, build personal connections with others outside of their programs, learn new ways of thinking to integrate into their teaching, and wonder together. This is the atmosphere that truly helps us fulfill our mission of advancing the impact of environmental and outdoor education in California. We each inspire each other to reflect on our own programs, and adjusting from what we learn so that we can continue doing important work in our communities.

Outdoor educators know the importance of hard work, and also the value of play. The inspiration generated from our workshops and speakers creates an energy that carries into the time in between sessions. We have scheduled time to play games, gather 'round for a meal, take out our musical instruments, and make new friends! Ever find yourself wishing for more time to talk to a colleague at one of those "normal" conferences? At an AEOE conference, having all accommodations on-site allows plenty of time to strengthen relationships with like-minded organizations. AEOE conferences have become the one guaranteed place many can count on to reconnect with friends and colleagues from the past.

This year's fall northern conference was no exception. Educators near and far traveled through the foothills to get to Shady Creek Outdoor School, nestled in the trees of the San Juan Ridge just outside of Nevada City, CA. A grand total of 138 educators of all experience levels arrived on a warm weekend amidst the changing colors of the black oaks to an even warmer



welcome from the Shady Creek staff, who were first time hosts of an AEOE conference. For first-timers, this site sure knew how to cater to the uniqueness of an AEOE conference. The staff were



very smooth-sailing weekend.

With the logistics taken care of, we were able to have a fantastic lineup of workshops from our volunteer presenters go off without a hitch! From incorporating games into lessons, strategies for hearing every students' voice, tracking basics, storytelling as a learning tool, a visit to the Shady Creek Raptor Center and so much more, there was something for everyone. Our keynote speaker Renee Wade wow-ed the audience with her knowledge of how the mind works and what it needs in order to learn. An epic dinner accompanied by Shady Creek musicians set us up for a fun filled evening ahead. A congrats to Nick Bischoff for receiving Environmental Educator of the Year award was followed by a traditional open mic. Finally, the festivities wrapped up with more music from the Shady Creek staff.

This year's northern fall conference was the quintessential synthesis of all that makes an AEOE conference so special. So many fantastic educators came together with their knowledge, ideas, creativity, and open minds to teach and learn from each other. Shady Creek welcomed us into their home, showing us the beauty of their site, their traditions, and their family of staff. The feeling created is what keeps people coming back year after year, and is what truly makes an AEOE conference unlike ANY other conference out there. How could you not go home feeling inspired and reinvigorated? I just hope the next conference site will have a GaGa Ball pit for rematch or two....



Photo Credit for all Northern Fall Conference photos included in this article: Nicole Carbone

friendly, accommodating, and... everywhere! Combined with the excellent organization of the AEOE Conference Committee, having site staff available to answer questions on a whim which made for a

Stop, Collaborate, and Listen: EE's Collective Impact Scene

by Leah Callan
Board Member

Have you heard of the California Outdoor Engagement Coalition? What about the Parks Youth Collaborative? ChangeScale? The Environmental Education Collaborative? My Outdoor Ed Friends are Your Outdoor Ed Friends?

Ok, that last one may be an unofficial Facebook group rather than a formal outdoor education organization but some may argue that social media had a pretty large part to play in the creation of many new coalitions, collaboratives, associations, and networks across the state (and world) today. Plus, that Facebook group was in my life way before I had even heard of any of those other organizations so I think it deserves some collective impact kudos here too.

California has been sprouting all sorts of collaboratives, coalitions, and collective impact organizations in outdoor and environmental education over the last decade and since this author is constantly enthralled by the amazing resources, opportunities, and humans connected with these groups we at AEOE thought you might be too. The following is an (entirely uncomprehensive) list of some of these stellar organizations, as well as some useful info and/or resources they offer:

***Disclaimer: Some of these organizations are not new and have been doing spectacular things for way longer than a decade but we still wanted to make sure you had the chance to hear about them!*

Statewide Organizations

California Outdoor Engagement Coalition

outdoorengagement.berkeley.edu

Mission: "To expand equitable access to the outdoors for all Californians through cross-sector partnerships and collective impact."

Members include: AEOE, California Naturalist, BEETLES, California Academy of Sciences

Pro tip: Join their newsletter and applicable listservs- job announcements, events, and more

California Environmental Education Interagency Network (CEEIN)

coastal.ca.gov/publiced/ceein/

About: "The California Environmental Education Interagency Network (CEEIN) is a state government consortium of environmental educators representing departments, boards, and commissions of the California Department of Education, California Environmental Protection Agency, The Resources Agency of California, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture. The primary goals of CEEIN are to develop a unified response to the environmental education needs of California's educators and local governments, and to assist with statewide educational reform movements."

Partners Include: AEOE, California Science Teachers Association (CSTA), and North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)

Pro tip: They have a NEW calendar of environmental education events happening across the state (including AEOE conferences, of course!)

Northern California (Bay Area) Organizations

ChangeScale

changescale.org

Mission: "ChangeScale advances the cohesiveness, effectiveness, and prominence of the environmental education field in the San Francisco and Monterey Bay Areas. Our mission is to ensure that every generation is inspired with the environmental know-how to create healthy communities and a healthy planet."

Founding members include: NatureBridge, Lawrence Hall of Science, Monterey Bay Aquarium

Park Youth Collaborative

parksconservancy.org/programs/park-youth-collaborative/

Mission: "To broaden the reach and enhance the capacity of youth-serving organizations working within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and Presidio to support and engage youth."

About: PYC is a collaborative of individual educators, staff, and organizations working with youth within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Although the GGNRA is unique to the Bay Area this organization is a great model of what's possible for any group of organizations working together in shared parks and public spaces.

Southern California Organizations

Environmental Education Collaborative

enviroedcollaborative.com

Mission: "To develop funding, policy and program resources to support environmental education programs in Riverside and San Bernardino counties."

Pro tip: Their Facebook page is more active than their website, with members sharing information on upcoming events, grants, and job opportunities available in their targeted area.

Tree People

treepeople.org

Mission: "To inspire, engage and support people to take personal responsibility for the urban environment, making it safe, healthy, fun and sustainable and to share our process as a model for the world."

About: This author has heard some describe TreePeople as the 'ChangeScale of southern California.' We know they have their own amazing things going too though! With urban tree plantings, professional development, and more; they seem to be a great resource for outdoor educators in the greater L.A. area.

Do you know of other amazing collaborative organizations or networks working to promote outdoor and environmental education on the local, regional, state, or national level, especially in southern California? Send us an email at newsletter@aeoe.org and let us know!

Letter from the President

by Reed Schneider
AEOE President
Education Director NatureBridge

Dear AEOE Membership,

The AEOE Board of Directors is pleased to announce that after 64 years as a solely volunteer-run organization, AEOE has officially hired Estrella Risinger as the Executive Director of AEOE. Starting part-time in January 2019, Estrella will partner with the AEOE Board of Directors in expanding our program offerings and educational opportunities, and helping to develop industry standards to expand the field of environmental education.

As you know, AEOE's mission is to advance the impact of environmental and outdoor education in California. AEOE supports the advancement of the field of environmental education by providing professional development opportunities for individuals, strengthening institutional members, and working as the California Affiliate of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE).

Estrella brings a wealth of skills and knowledge to AEOE. She started her career in the classroom, with summers spent exploring California and connecting youth to the natural world as an outdoor educator. Estrella currently serves as NatureBridge's National Education Manager and has worked within NatureBridge as an education coordinator, teacher trainer, grant writer, and communications strategist. She brings experience, passion, and first-hand experience to AEOE. Reed Schneider, the AEOE Board Chair and President says "Estrella is a strategic thinker with significant project management experience, a deep understanding of environmental education, and demonstrated commitment and passion for our field. I am excited to have her work with the AEOE Board of Directors to advance outdoor and environmental education across California." Join AEOE in welcoming Estrella in 2019. We are thrilled to have Estrella's leadership and we look forward to introducing her to you all in person at the Statewide Conference at Westminster Woods March 29-31 2019.

Warmest regards,

Reed

Winter 2019 Naturalist's Almanac

by Nathan Taxel
AEOE Board Member
Resource Specialist, OC Parks

1/20 Total Lunar Eclipse

This is the last total lunar eclipse which will be visible from start to finish in California until 2025. Look for the moon to be low in the eastern sky when the eclipse begins at 6:36pm. The moon will move across the sky towards the south as it rises and the eclipse will peak with the earth's shadow covering its entire visible surface at

9:12pm. At this time it will be relatively high in the sky at almost 50° above the horizon. The moon will continue to rise and will be fully in the southern sky when the eclipse ends at 11:48pm.

February- Winter Bird Migration in Full Effect

California is the winter home to hundreds of bird species who spend their summers in the Northwest, Canada, and even Alaska. During the winter months coastal marshes and estuaries team with ducks, geese, sandpipers, rails, and numerous other pelagic bird species. In the central valley majestic Sandhill Cranes can be spotted in vast flocks throughout the winter. Occasionally this time of year, Snowy Owls who spend their summers breeding in the arctic are spotted in Northern California.

2/16-19-Great Backyard Bird Count

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a national citizen science program run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society which gives casual observers the chance to contribute scientifically meaningful bird population data. Visit <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/> for more information and to learn how to participate.

3/20 Vernal (Spring) Equinox

The equinox is exactly halfway between the winter and summer solstice and when day and night are nearly the same length. The vernal equinox is also the official first day of spring. On this day, the earth's axis is tilted neither away or towards the sun, but more or less perpendicular. Here is a cool science and math experiment you can do at noon exactly on the equinox (from www.timeanddate.com)

"Find an empty space such as a park or a parking lot where there are few tall buildings, trees or hills to obstruct the Sun. Find your location's latitude. Subtract this number from 90. This will be the angle you will affix the stick in the ground.

If you are in the Northern Hemisphere, use your compass to find south and point the stick in that direction. If you're in the Southern Hemisphere, point the stick or the ruler to the north. Using the protractor fix the stick in the ground at the angle you just calculated - remember to point it in the direction opposite to the hemisphere you are on.

Wait till Noon and see the shadow of the stick disappear. At Noon, the stick will have no shadow at all!"

March- Grey Whale Migration

Grey Whales travel between 10 and 12 thousand miles every year, making their's the longest mammal migration on the planet. They spend the winter in calving grounds in warm waters of the coast of Mexico's Baja peninsula and travel all the way to the bearing sea between Alaska and Russia to feed during the summer. Starting in March pods of grey whales including recently born calves can be seen of the coast of California. They often travel in relatively shallow near shore waters, making them very easy to spot.

3/22 World Water Day

World Water Day is an annual UN observance day that highlights the importance of freshwater. The day is used to advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. World Water Day is celebrated around the world with a variety of events. For more information, to find an event, or post your event visit <http://worldwaterday.org/>



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Mission: To advance the impact of environmental and outdoor education in California.



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**Winter
2018-2019**

