

The California Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education

2015-2016 Annual Report

Fiscal Year July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016



Our Mission

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

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 nonprofit 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

It is my pleasure to present the 2015-2016 AEOE Annual Report to the AEOE Board of Directors, all members, and any and all interested parties.

The 2015-2016 fiscal year was a constructive one in many areas for our organization. As you will read later in this report we experienced financial growth, expanded participation in our Environmental Outdoor School Managers group, hosted successful regional and statewide conferences, our signature events, and saw our membership numbers increase.

This past year saw the North American Association for Environmental Education's (NAAEE) national conference held in our own state and many members of our board of directors was able to attend this inspiring and informative conference held in beautiful San Diego. Special thanks to YMCA Camp Surf who hosted much of the board to keep our costs low.

The California Department of Education released the Blueprint for Environmental Literacy in 2015. AEOE, as a statewide organization, has been looking strategically at where we might be able to either support parts of the Blueprint or be able to fill any gaps in the environmental literacy landscape in California. The NAAEE conference provided the opportunity to work closely with members of the NAAEE affiliates group to assess the scope of work appropriate for an organization such as AEOE as well as the path that we might take to achieve such goals. AEOE would like to recognize and thank in particular Katie Navin with the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education and Ashley Hoffman with the Kentucky Association for Environmental Education for their support and encouragement. As a result of such meetings AEOE has chosen to focus its resources in three main areas; Connect, Educate, and Advance. Much of the work that AEOE has been doing for years can be better organized in these main branches and there are also new opportunities to engage in. Please look for more information on our website, aeoe.org. AEOE also revised our mission statement to one that is more concise and representative of our new future. AEOE's new mission is *to advance the impact of environmental and outdoor education in California*.

AEOE also continued work with other key partners such as the California Environmental Education Foundation (CEEf). AEOE and CEEf entered into a more formal arrangement and continued exploring what collaboration on a project might look like.

As we look to 2016-2017, AEOE is excited for the work ahead. The restructuring,

systems-thinking, and visioning that was done in the past few years has set us up for some potentially big moves for AEOE while still staying true to our roots. We will be calling on you for your help and support in the ongoing cause of advancing environmental education in our state.

Sincerely,

Reed Schneider, President,
Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education



The California Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education's Board of Directors- 2015-2016

Front Row: Katie Andersen, Korena David, Helen de la Maza. Second Row: Angie Kemsley, Tracey Weiss, Steve Morris, Reed Schneider, Robb Stolberg, Mariana Diaz, Tom Drake. Third Row: Michael Charnofsky, Amanda Martin, John Oliver. Not Pictured: Desiree Gant, Andrea Haley, Nathan Taxel

BOARD MEMBERS

<p>President Reed Schneider NatureBridge, Yosemite reed@aeoe.org</p> <p>Vice President Tracey Weiss Exploring New Horizons tracey@aeoe.org</p> <p>Secretary Katie Andersen Cuyamaca Outdoor School (San Diego County Office of Ed.) katie@aeoe.org</p> <p>Treasurer Steve Morris YMCA Camp Surf steve@aeoe.org</p> <p>Northern Council Chair Korena David Foothill Horizons (Stanislaus County Office of Ed.) korena@aeoe.org</p> <p>Northern Council Chair-Elect Mariana Diaz NatureBridge, Yosemite mariana@aeoe.org</p> <p>Northern Council Past Chair Desiree Gant WOLF School desiree@aeoe.org</p>	<p>Southern Council Chair Amanda Martin San Diego Children's Discovery Museum amanda@aeoe.org</p> <p>Southern Council Chair-Elect Nathan Taxel (as of April 29, 2016) Ocean Institute nathan@aeoe.org</p> <p>Southern Council Past Chair Andrea Haley Divisadero Middle School andrea@aeoe.org</p> <p>Conference Coordinator Robb Stolberg Walden West (Santa Clara County Office of Ed.) robb@aeoe.org</p> <p>Membership Coordinator Helen de la Maza California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC) helen@aeoe.org</p> <p>Members-At-Large Michael Charnofsky East Bay Parks & Recreation michael@aeoe.org Tom Drake Henry J. Kaiser High School tom@aeoe.org Angie Kemsley Cuyamaca Outdoor School (SDCOE), San Diego Zoo Global angie@aeoe.org John Oliver Walden West (Santa Clara County Office of Ed.) john@aeoe.org</p>
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COUNCIL MEMBERS

Northern Council

Korena David - Northern Council Chair

Mariana Diaz- Northern Council Chair-Elect

Desiree Gant - Northern Council Past Chair

Kim Laizer- Secretary

Outings Coordinator- Bethany Thomas

Members-At-Large

Shannon Cueva

Jazzy Dinger

Paul Lindeman

Claire Maguire

Jymn Mierre

Robb Stolberg

John Oliver

Southern Council

Amanda Martin- Southern Council Chair

Andrea Haley- Southern Council Past Chair

Lauren Oliver- Council Secretary

Southern Council Chair-Elect-Nathan Taxel (as of April 29, 2016)

Members-At-Large

Katie Andersen

Helen de la Maza

Tom Drake

Angie Kemsley

Ryan Mayeda

Steve Morris

Angie Ziobro

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education Statement of Activities Fiscal Year 2015-16

Revenue

Conferences	50,656
Membership	13,225
Joie's Daisies (scholarship fund-raising)	3,391
Merchandise	335
Job Postings	<u>3,675</u>
Total revenues	\$71,339

Expenses

Conferences	32,913	
Newsletter/Website		5,085
Professional networking (NAAEE, NAI)	2,067	
Administration (office supplies, bank fees, insurance, mileage, board meeting costs)	5,736	
Publicity/Marketing	1,943	
Credit Card Payment Fees	2,191	
Professional Services	<u>4,336</u>	
Total expenses	\$54,271	

Change in net assets \$17,068

Net assets, beginning of fiscal year	\$69,560
Net assets, end of fiscal year	\$86,628

Notes regarding finances:

- Awarded \$800 in conference scholarships this year
- Increases in both membership revenue and job postings partially due to a 30% increase in fees for institutional members and non-member postings.
- Conference revenue increased due to improved attendance numbers.
- Overall expenses remained consistent with last year due to a decrease in conference costs offset by an increase in publicity and marketing expenses.

MEMBERSHIP SUMMARY

Individual Members - 259
Student/Intern Members - 90
Contributing Members - 15
Life Members - 83
Institutional Members - 64

2015-16 Total: **511**

Compared to 2014-15, we have:

+42 more Individual Members
-10 less Student/Intern Annual Members
+4 more Contributing Members
+3 more Life Members
-4 less Institutional Members
+35 more members overall

COMMITTEE SUMMARIES

Committees 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



Executive Summary

Program: Northern Fall Conference

Date: 10/23-25/2015

Location: Foothill Horizons Outdoor School, Sonora, CA

Theme: Nurturing the Wild

Cost: \$40 early registration, \$60 regular & walk-in registration

Activities: Welcome speaker, Archeologist, Barbara Bailin. Night hike, morning birding, recreation block hike to Indigeny Reserve, open mic campfires, naturalist of the year award, closing ceremony.

Entertainment/Speakers (paid): \$0

Attendance: 118

What a joy it was to spend time learning, sharing, laughing and singing with so many of you! I want to appreciate folks for their significant contributions to the conference. Thanks to everyone who drove from far and near to attend. Thanks to the 20 plus presenters who shared their knowledge and love of subjects ranging from Insects and Geology to Autism and Questioning Techniques. Thanks to all of the attendees who volunteered to help with registration, meals or clean up. Thanks for entertaining us with your songs, stories and skits at the campfires. Lastly, a big thanks to our food donation coordinators and our workshop coordinator.

There were two particularly meaningful moments for me during the conference. The first was being gifted showy milkweed starts by our welcome speaker, Barbara Balen, Archaeologist and Ethno Botanist. Her generous gift of these plants, started from seeds found at an old Me-wuk habitation site, help me tie our mission of connecting students to nature

with a much older human connection to nature. The second was Scooby's willingness to share his personal story of how Outdoor Education has changed and shaped his life. His connection to the site was an added gem to his touching and inspirational story. Thank you Scooby for sharing your time, knowledge and love with thousands of students, cabin leaders and naturalists!

For me the biggest reward of any AEOE conference is becoming more in touch with the naturalist community that I feel so blessed to be part of. It is truly tremendous to be part of a group of people who value children, the mysteries of nature, and the connection between the two so much. I hope that you are drawing strength and inspiration from our community and the naturalists whose footsteps we follow. It sure doesn't hurt to have Rachel Carson, John Muir, Aldo Leopold and others on our team! Thanks for doing what you do and for being part of our organization.

-Korena David, Northern Council Chair

Excerpt From the AEOE NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2015

Southern Fall Conference



2015 Southern Fall Conference Participants at High Trails Outdoor Science School's Camp Edwards.

Conference Executive Summary

Event, date, location: 2015 Southern Fall Conference, November 6-8, 2016, High Trails Outdoor Science School- Camp Edwards

attendees: 77 attendees

Housing and meals provided: camping and dormitory; Saturday night dinner and Sunday breakfast potluck

Speakers and entertainment: no special speakers; High Trails staff led an indoor campfire Saturday night; open game night Friday and Saturday night

Workshop strands, # workshops offered, sample workshop topics: 15 workshops

Brief evaluation summary: The weekend was a success with more participants than the Southern region has seen in recent years. Workshops were diverse from professional development to games to astronomy as well as breakout sessions for managers, practitioners, and novice educators in the field. Additional activities included an afternoon hike to the lake and beer brewing 101 on Saturday afternoon. Sunday morning potluck breakfast in conjunction with the Southern Council meeting had a high turn out with great feedback for the council.

Strategic plan goals met with this event: Connecting professionals across multiple industries and serving constituents in all levels of their career.

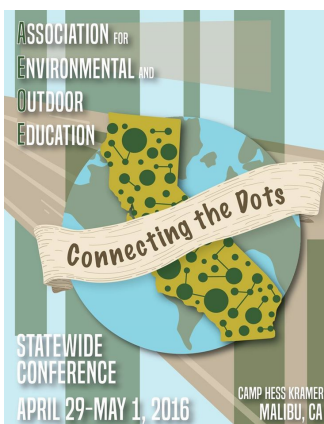
On the chilly evening of November 6, 2015 in the mountains of San Bernardino National Park, folks from all over Southern CA and abroad began arriving at High Trails Outdoor Science School (HTOSS) at their Edwards site for the annual Southern Fall Conference. The weekend progressed with nearly 80 members participating in over 15 workshop options including but not limited to Team Building, Questioning Strategies, Discipline, Art, Solar, and much more! The brave ventured off before sunrise enduring temperatures in the low 30s in search of unique birds, the curious took a stroll to Jenks Lake, and many were ready to win both Friday and Saturday during Game Night. Other activities included a breakfast potluck social with a huge variety of goodies; solar viewing both Friday night and Saturday afternoon (awesome solar flares!); and a fantastic Open Mic Night hosted by the HTOSS crew (thank you to all the performers.)

Breakout sessions Saturday were productive; offering novice educators a chance to discuss topics such as ways to maintain student attention, retain information, and be consistent with discipline, practitioners in the field shared avenues to help transition into offseason or new careers within the field as well as how and where to gain new materials and resources; advanced educators learned how to get involved with the AEOE professional group, Environmental and Outdoor School Managers (EOSM), and discussed the applications of the newly published CA Blueprint for Environmental Literacy. With about 30 attendees at the Southern Council meeting, our energy and momentum will only grow!

-Amanda Martin, Southern Council Chair

Excerpt From the AEOE NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2015

Statewide Spring Conference



Executive Summary

Event, date, location: 2016 Statewide Spring Conference, April 29-May 1, 2016, Camp Hess Kramer, Malibu, CA

attendees: 275 attendees

Housing and meals provided: camping, dormitory, semi private housing and private housing; 5 meals plus ice cream social on Friday night

Speakers and entertainment: Opening Speaker: Dr. Gerald

Lieberman, NGSS expert; **Keynote Speaker:** Chris Duffy, comedian and Host of “You’re The Expert” podcast; **Featured Presenter:** Elet Hall, Bay Area Lyme Foundation Ambassador and American Ninja Warrior

Saturday Entertainment: Open Mic Night and Send Medicine

Workshop strands, # workshops offered, sample workshop topics: 65+ workshops in six strands such as Administration, Best Practices, Natural History, and K-12 as well as break-out sessions for novice, practitioners, and Management/EOSM

Brief evaluation summary: Constituents were pleased with the diversity in workshops, the value of Dr. Lieberman’s expertise in NGSS, the inspirations from Chris Duffy as the keynote speaker, and the meals and setting at Camp Hess Kramer. The weekend was full of activities and offered all guests great value.

Strategic plan goals met with this event: Able to bring in multiple industries and broad topics through speakers, workshops, and breakout sessions to help constituents connect with each other.

On the beautiful weekend of April 29 - May 1, 2016, nearly 300 environmental and outdoor educators across the state and beyond attended the annual California Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (AEOE) Statewide Conference at Camp Hess Kramer (CHK) along the coast of Malibu, CA. The weekend promised a multitude of opportunities for educators, interpreters, administrators, and more from outdoor schools, nature centers, museums, K-12, and universities to name a few to “Connect the Dots.” Old friends reunited and new friends were welcomed with open arms to this remarkable and treasured community, hopefully igniting a tradition to stay connected for many years to come.

As Friday night advanced, CHK’s infamous ice cream social welcomed everyone with a sweet tooth in addition to game night, a night hike, and even an informal workshop. The energy of everyone, new and old, was infectious! I watched as people struggled with which workshop to sign up for, deciding which evening activity to participate in, and being simply excited to take on this weekend’s affairs.

To kick off the conference Saturday morning, as the featured Opening Speaker, the world renown Dr. Gerald Lieberman emphasized the importance of how “now is the time” to truly connect the dots with each other. “I [Dr. Jerry Lieberman] have never seen



the opportunity as great as it is now. In part because there are so many connections [with Next Generation Science Standards, Blueprint for Environmental Literacy, Environmental Concepts and Principles, and the Environmental Education Initiative].” As Conference Chair, I was enthused someone of his caliber agreed with what I’ve been emphasizing as Southern Chair the last couple years and was willing to advocate this message to our AEOE community too. “...[t]his is an opportunity for all of us whether we’re working in a formal system, or non-formal or informal structure, to work together to actually give students the opportunity to learn in and about the environment.”

And so, the conference ensued with 65+ workshops in six strands such as Administration, Best Practices, Natural History, and K-12 as well as

break-out sessions for novice (thank you BEETLES for helping to grow these budding environmental educators), practitioners (thank you Angie Kemsley and her Cuyamaca Outdoor School staff for helping with the numerous discussion topics), and Management/EOSM (thank you Ryan Mayeda and others who led the session) career levels. To continue the momentum and help everyone understand “connecting the dots” holistically, the acclaimed Keynote Speaker, Chris Duffy, humored us with his personal paths and experiences that led him to his current success from being a former 5th grade teacher turned nationally touring standup comedian and improviser to now the creator and host of You’re the Expert, a new public radio show on Boston’s WBUR. He reassured us that all of our interests and passions in life, however disconnected as they may seem, are in fact, not—“...they all connect because they’re you. Don’t think of that as something that is distraction from your job but instead is something that enhances your job as teacher.” I couldn’t agree more! Many of us left that afternoon feeling confident and assured all would work out, and what a perfect time and place to continue expanding our horizons professionally and personally!



Saturday evening presented the professional Happy Hour networking soiree where participants were able to learn about nearly 20 organizations and options for their future career or educational goals. The buzz over snacks and drinks was constant amongst love for the Craft Fair as well as a special Silent Auction. The night rounded out with Open Mic Night where participants showed off their talents from poetry reading to song and dance with an exciting Live Auction mixed in between acts. Finally, the live band, Send Medicine, closed the night out with their psychedelic beats.

When Sunday morning rolled around, those who were able to brave the early hours enjoyed Birding

or a parkour workout with Elet Hall of American Ninja Warrior, ambassador that weekend for Bay Area Lyme Foundation. By noon at the Closing Ceremony, participants were asked to reflect on their journey that weekend, to imagine each workshop and each conversation they’ve had as a dot in that journey, and if they were to connect those dots, what do they see? Ideally, those dots created a web—a web showing how truly everything and everyone is connected. Someone deserving of recognition for her success in connecting many dots in this community was Kim Laizer, AEOE’s 2016 Howard Bell Award honoree.

My hope and wish for this conference was for you all to have been successful in connecting the dots and strengthening the dots that already existed. For those of you who couldn’t make it, continue to strive to connect the dots however you can within your community and beyond. By being an AEOE member, you are part of an intricate web connected through diverse organizations and by educators and others in all roles. Visit aeoe.org to learn more and to access conference workshop documents. To view photos and a conference summary video, follow us on Facebook @caeoe. I’d also like to thank those who purchased merchandise or bid on any auction items; we raised about \$2,500 for Joie’s Daisies Scholarship Fund! As an entirely volunteer-run organization, we truly could not operate without the dedicated help of its members and supporters. See you next time!

-Amanda Martin, Conference Chair

Excerpt from the AEOE NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2016

AWARD WINNERS

Howard Bell Award Kim Laizer



AEOE President, Reed Schneider, happily honors Kim Laizer, the 2016 Howard Bell Award Winner.

The Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education is proud to bestow the honor of the Howard Bell Award for 2016 to Kim Laizer, Education Director, NatureBridge, Yosemite. Those members who have attended past conferences will recognize Kim's smiling face, as she has been an active AEOE Northern Council member, and council secretary, for some time. Kim was nominated for the Howard Bell Award by four different individuals, Mindy Wiper, Jacqueline Ruggieri, Nick Carter and Pete Devine.

Kim is no stranger to accolades, winning the Matthew Baxter Award as well as the AEOE Northern Council's Environmental Educator of the Year in 2002.

"Kim is an exemplary human in the field of outdoor education. She has made a respectable career out of what can sometimes be an itinerant experience. Kim is truly passionate about teaching, you can see it in the corner of her eyes and the way she holds herself while instructing others either in how to teach or teaching a group herself," says Mindy Wiper, of NatureBridge, Yosemite.

"Kim always takes pride and perseverance in her job, and consistently pushes herself and others to excel and transform, not only by role-modeling it herself, but by verbally communicating in a light and fun way how to be your best."

Kim is a proud Humboldt State University alumnae, and has worked for various outdoor education programs through the years; teaching at the San Joaquin Outdoor Education program, serving as a ranger for the National Park Service at Glacier National Park, as a Yosemite Institute Field Instructor, Mentor Teacher, then the Education Coordinator and now the Education Director at NatureBridge Yosemite.

Along with her full time job, Kim has dedicated herself to further the field of outdoor education for groups who may not traditionally become involved in environmental and outdoor education. She has served as a founder as well as the coordinator for the Joie's Daisies scholarship fund, which provides scholarships to AEOE conferences to those who cannot afford the cost. She began an Educator Development Program, which is designed to give educators from communities underrepresented in the field of environmental education the opportunity to further develop the skills, knowledge, and experience required to be highly effective environmental educators, in order to further diversify staff at NatureBridge, Yosemite. She heads the Armstrong Scholars program, which provides an opportunity for young women to backpack in Yosemite's wilderness. Kim has also served as AEOE's Northern Council secretary since 2006.

Pete Divine states, "I consider Kim's contributions to YI/NBridge to be of statewide significance because of the size of the program, the organization's powerful presence in Yosemite NP, and because so many of the people she's influenced have gone on to considerable professional achievements in environmental education."

Thank you, Kim, and congratulations on your outstanding achievements in the field of environmental and outdoor education.

-Katie Andersen, AEOE Board Secretary

Northern Section Outdoor Educator of the Year Sean Hoppes



Northern Section Environmental Educator of the Year, Sean Hoppes with George Stratman, Ranch Manager of Walker Creek Ranch.

Congratulations to Sean Hoppes, the 2015 Northern Section Environmental Educator of the Year. Here is what Abigail Gordon, who nominated Sean, had to say:

Sean is an invaluable member of the Walker Creek Ranch team. He is an incredible combination of teacher, mentor, and community leader. Since joining the team at Walker Creek Ranch he has proven to be a hard-working and conscientious staff member who well understands the importance of community. Well versed and studious, Sean is one of our most knowledgeable staff members. Not only does he possess a vast understanding of the local and global ecology, he is also remarkable in his ability to help students explore their surroundings and in assisting them to make connections and discoveries during their stay. Indeed he consistently seeks ways to enhance the student experience and to this end has fully embraced the BEETLES (Lawrence Hall of Science) approach to his instruction, as well as working to incorporate and bring to life the Next Generation Science Standards.

Sean is keenly aware of the importance of community at the Outdoor School and works daily to touch base with other staff and to help them feel included and appreciated. He organizes birding expeditions on a weekly basis, hosts dinners in the Naturalist Lodge, and happily engages fellow staff in a variety of off duty activities (ping pong, nature walks, etc.). He is eager to mentor staff and assist them in their instructional knowledge and techniques—in this regard he is a welcome mentor both socially and professionally for the entire staff. Sean is often lovingly referred to as the “Older Brother” by both our intern and permanent naturalist staff.

As the garden naturalist Sean has been a vital force in establishing the Garden Intern position and making this a viable training and experience program which has brought the garden program to new heights. During his tenure the Garden has grown from year to year as an educational highlight for the students we serve. That it is also a production garden that augments the food served in the dining hall to students and conference guests further attests to his fine work and dedication.

Sean began his environmental education experience at the San Francisco Zoo where his father worked and he was often invited to assist. In finding his passion in environmental education Sean went on to study at UCLA and ultimately came to Walker Creek as an Intern and later a Naturalist and Garden Naturalist.

Sean is a part of the Global Explorers program. In this program he helps high school age students understand the environment, the environmental challenges facing the world and ultimately (in the words of the organization’s mission) helping people discover the potential that lies within themselves and the world.

The Walker Creek Ranch staff describe Sean as a mentor, friend, inspiration, and compassionate teacher of children (and staff). His further reaching impacts are also clear, be it teaching a workshop at an AEOE conference, trekking the world with students, or just being a friend. Sean’s impact on the larger field of Environmental Education has been strong and will continue to resonate in the larger community long after he has hung up his hiking boots. As such, I cannot think of a more deserving person to be honored as Northern California’s Outdoor Educator of the Year

- Excerpt From the AEOE NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2015

**Southern Section Outdoor Educator of the Year
Amy Ecklund**



Congratulations to Amy Ecklund, the 2015 Southern Section Environmental Educator of the Year. Here is what Gregory Lewis and Jeremy Rice, who nominated Amy, had to say:

I could list many attributes of Amy Ecklund as an instructor: she is caring, ambitious, and energetic. Amy connects with her students on a personal level that has her receiving mail from them weeks after they attend. But Amy also connects the students directly to the natural world they are surrounded in. Under her direction they drink in not only the scenery but the science behind it and the care needed to sustain it.

Each year Amy has new elements to her teaching “tool bag” and a new twist to her style. (Except the bandana. She always has a bandana.) She attends workshops during the year, and her summer experiences enhance the school year for her and her students. Yes, Amy cares for the environment, for nature, and for the natural world. But she cares for the students -not just meaning “she wants good things for them,” but meaning “she is actively involved in their lives” when they are with her.

Amy is a great mix of teacher and student, of naturalist and scholar, and of friend and employee. It’s a pleasure to work with her and watch her succeed every day. Every week at Thousand Pines our students are excited for their first week, and Amy continually shows the same excitement they do. She has worked for at least four camps across the country and has brought her experience at all of them to us. Her knowledge of botany, geology, and ecology are great wellsprings to her students so they can quench their thirst for information.

Not only does she teach students about science but her knowledge of team building practices has ripened into wisdom of group dynamics, letting her guide and direct her students to new, stronger, fuller relationships with each other as well as a deeper understanding of themselves.

She doesn’t just act as an instructor and leader for the students, she also leads and instructs our staff by teaching at our company workshops, leading activities, having new staff “shadow” her as training, and by setting an example of excellence.

Our company has nine values we use to guide our actions including integrity, teamwork, initiative, and of course fun. Amy is perpetually a living example of these values in her everyday life. She can be asked to lead a new activity with little preparation and still

succeed. She can be relied on to complete jobs with both a big-picture mentality and a detail-oriented result; and she is always willing, able, and engaged in the team by helping, supporting, and encouraging others.

Amy is an outstanding outdoor educator, and she has had a positive impact on many young lives. Her laugh is loud and infectious, her bandanas are skirting the description of “out of control,” and her attitude is positive towards students, staff, and teachers. She is a valued member of our team and we are so glad that her work is being recognized.

- Excerpt From the AEOE NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2015

PARTNER REPORTS

North American Association for Environmental Education
October 15-18, 2015
San Diego, California



Pictured: several members of the AEOE Board of Directors at the 2015 NAAEE conference in San Diego.

AEOE is the California affiliate of the North American Association for Environmental Education. Due to the close proximity of the 2015 NAAEE Conference to where many AEOE Board Members reside, the Board was able to send a record number of members to this international conference. Two members, Reed Schneider and Angie Kemsley were accepted poster presenters. AEOE is the California affiliate of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE.)

On October 15-18, 2015 almost 1,500 environmental educators came together for the 44th annual National Association of Environmental Education (NAAEE) conference, held in San Diego, CA. Not only was San Diego well represented, but there were people from all over the United States, North America, and even countries like Belize and Japan were represented. As the state-affiliate of NAAEE, AEOE was admirably represented by eleven

board members who participated in the over 175 workshops offered throughout the four day conference.

NAAEE is not only a continent-wide networking organization for those involved in the field of environmental education (EE), but they also have a hand in professional development and fostering conversation through EECapacity (see www.eecapacity.net), collaborating on



the creation of environmental literacy plans, promoting and leading research in progressive EE strategies, and creating guidelines for excellence within the field. The theme of this year's conference was "celebrating diversity in environmental education." This theme was truly highlighted by the variety of participants, workshops, and activities offered at the conference. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday were host to workshops on everything from teambuilding to EPA policy guidelines to how to make registration simpler for

participants. One of the main themes within the teaching techniques string, and a topic of interest for many AEOE members, seemed to be citizen science. There were multiple citizen science workshops presented every day including Watershed Wikis and Intelligent River Tools from Groundwork Denver and Earth Force, H2O to Go, from FAU Pine Jog Environmental Center, trail cameras with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, climate change threat assessments with the World Wildlife Fund, monarch monitoring with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and creating equity in EE through citizen science, from the National Science Teachers Association and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It was not only educational, but also inspirational to see how citizen science is empowering students throughout the United States. Everyone walked away with many valuable new resources.

Also of note this year were the four keynote sessions scattered throughout the weekend. Stephen Pemberton, the Chief Diversity Officer and Divisional Vice President for Walgreens, spoke during the opening ceremony about growing up lost in the foster system until he found himself through books and nature. Friday there was a keynote panel comprised of four leaders within the field of EE discussing how to "connect the dots" between EE and social movements. Sunday the keynote panel consisted of NAAEE's "Game Changers Under 25," a group of young people under the age of 25 showing great promise within the field. Perhaps the most inspirational keynote was Andy Goodman who moved to California many decades ago to become a screenwriter and during his time in Hollywood worked on everything from "Dinosaurs" (which he loved) to "The Nanny" (which he hated). After retiring from Hollywood, Mr. Goodman co-founded The Goodman Center, an organization dedicated to teaching public interest professionals how to reach more people and have a greater impact through storytelling. If you are interested in learning more about his work check out his monthly journal, free-range Thinking, at www.thegoodmancenter.com/resources/newsletters. Interested in participating in one of these conferences yourself? The 2016 NAAEE conference will be hosted in Madison, WI. You can find more information about any of these programs as well as experience the conference vicariously through photos at www.naaee.net.

California Science Teachers Association

Tom Drake represented AEOE at the California Science Teachers Association's annual conference in September of 2015. Tom was able to connect AEOE with science teachers statewide.

CSTA Quantitative numbers:

- Gave out 164 brochures to mostly teachers.
- From our raffle got 83 new prospective member contacts
- Sent 83 introductory e-mails after the CSTA Conference to the prospective member contacts.
- Two teachers won a fall conference raffle, one from the north and one from the south.
- Our booth was free of charge at CSTA and open and manned by Tom on Friday and Saturday.
- Made contact with CEEIN and received an invitation for AEOE to join, a division of the California Dept. of Education.



Tom Drake, AEOE Board Member, representing AEOE at the California Science Teachers Association's annual conference. AEOE is also a member of the CSTA.

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