

The California Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education

2016-2017 Annual Report

Fiscal Year July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017



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

This past year our board of directors continued to push ahead projects to strengthen our organization and expand our potential impact in the field. Some of this work included increasing our fundraising effort, strengthening our network, and assessing our organizational structure. AEOE also took on some new projects, most notably laying the groundwork to create and run an Environmental Educator Certification Program for our state.

For years the extent of our fundraising was around our statewide conference in which we seek donations for auctions and through the silent and live auction to raise money for scholarships. We have begun to make more intentional efforts around fundraising including offering conference sponsor packages and making the donation process of individuals much easier. The AEOE 2017 statewide conference welcomed Bay Area Lyme as a **Garibaldi Sponsor** and Acorn Naturalist as a **California Poppy Sponsor**. We added a tab to our website to recognize donors and sponsors and we added a “Donate to AEOE” button to our website. I also want to thank and recognize our amazing board of directors who already donates so much time as volunteers, for their support of putting more than just their talent and time on the table by approving the motion for all board members to make annual financial contributions to the organization.

We have been making gains over the past year to build out our network to increase services for our membership and strengthen the field through better communications between aligned organizations. Several partnerships were formalized this past year including ChangeScale, BEETLES, and with the California Environmental Education Interagency Network (CEEIN.) We also strengthened our relationship with the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) as an affiliate through a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU).

The AEOE State Board of Directors also continued work in looking at our internal structure and at the Spring Conference the board made the decision to actively look into hiring a paid staff member as a way to put real strengths behind advancing environmental education in our state. An Executive Director, will be an important move for AEOE and this next year will see efforts to determine what position is right for our organization and our state, how we will financially support such a position, and what is an appropriate scope of work.

This year we began work on creating and running an Environmental Educator Certification Program (EECP). This will be a multi-year project for our organization and for our state but will ultimately be a valuable tool for frontline educators as well as advancing the field as a whole. AEOE has already held several stakeholder meetings and has been working with NAAEE and the NAAEE Affiliates group to learn from other states that have already launched such a program. In the coming year AEOE will be forming a steering committee and pulling together development teams to keep this important project moving ahead. Expect to hear more about this project as it develops.

As President and board chair, I can look back at 2016-2017 and say with confidence and satisfaction that it was a great year for AEOE. In addition to continuing to have great conferences and a solid financial year, we saw advances around AEOE's approach to fundraising, we strengthened and expanded our network, and we started the process of increasing our capacity by considering staffing our organization. We also continued to take on big exciting projects such as starting an Environmental Educator Certification Program. I look forward to continuing this work in 2017 and 2018 and working with the amazing and talented board of directors.

Sincerely,

Reed Schneider

President

Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education

BOARD MEMBERS

President

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Northern Council Chair-Elect

Vacant

Northern Council Past Chair

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Tom Drake
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COUNCIL MEMBERS

Northern Council

Mariana Diaz - Northern Council Chair

Vacant - Northern Council Chair-Elect

Korena David - Northern Council Past Chair

Kim Laizer- Secretary

Vacant- Outings Coordinator

Members-At-Large

Sara Angulo

Nicole Carbone

Jazzy Dinger

Jymn Meier

Reed Schneider

Robb Stolberg

Southern Council

Nathan Taxel- Southern Council Chair

Southern Council Chair- Angie Kemsley

Amanda Martin - Southern Council Past Chair

Hannah Campbell- Council Secretary

Members-At-Large

Katie Andersen

Helen de la Maza

Tom Drake

Angie Kemsley

Ryan Mayeda

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education Statement of Activities Fiscal Year 2016-17

Revenue

Conferences	68,363
Membership	16,470
Donations & Sponsorship (Joie's Daisies scholarship fund-raising)	8,938
Merchandise	403
Job Postings	2,700
Total revenues	\$96,874

Expenses

Conferences	45,571
Newsletter/Website	4,526
Professional networking (NAAEE, NAI)	1,636
Administration (office supplies, bank fees, insurance, mileage, board meeting costs)	6,488
Publicity/Marketing	395
Sponsorship	2,000
Credit Card Payment Fees	2,264
Professional Services	3,468
Total expenses	\$66,248

Change in net assets \$30,626

Net assets, beginning of fiscal year \$86,628

Net assets, end of fiscal year \$117,254

Notes regarding finances:

- Awarded \$885 in conference scholarships this year.
- Increases in membership due to higher than expected conference attendance.
- Conference revenue increased as a result of statewide event being held at a northern site (YMCA Camp Jones Gulch).
- Overall expenses remained consistent other than increased conference costs due to site fees.

MEMBERSHIP SUMMARY

	2016-17	2015-16
Individual Members	243	259
Student/Intern Members	115	90
Contributing Members	13	15
Life Members	90	83
Institutional Members	72	64
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	533	511

Compared to 2015-16 we have:

- 16 less Individual Members
- +25 more Student/Intern Members
- 2 less Contributing Members
- +7 more Life Members
- +8 more Institutional Members
- + 22 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.

Marketing Committee Report

Tom Drake

Marketing Coordinator

Marketing communications for the AEOE Northern and Southern Environmental Education Fall Conferences 2017 through social media, e-mail and website have been launched with collaboration of various environmental education partners. This year with collaborated with California Environmental Education Interagency Network (CEEIN), as a partner, providing exposure to California state agencies involved in environmental education , exchanging ideas. AEOE will be collaborating with the California Science Teachers Association involving marketing communications. AEOE will have a table at the California Science Teachers Association Conference in Sacramento, Oct. 13-15, 2017.

We continue to use social media by posting announcements about AEOE's Conferences on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as well as information promoting the impact of environmental education in California.

Our goal over the coming years is to increase K-12 educators' participation in AEOE for which we have targeted workshops and marketing communications and to continue to expand our reach in informal education through social media. Anecdotaly we have seen an uptick in K-12 educators' participation at our conferences and workshops. AEOE exhibited at the California Science Teachers Association Conference in Palm Spring, Oct. 21-23 in 2016.

Environmental and Outdoor School Managers Group Report

Ryan Mayeda

Southern EOSM Coordinator

The Coastal Institute in Cambria hosted a meeting on Friday, November 11, 2016 for the Environmental and Outdoor School Managers group (EOSM.) Managers and supervisors from 10 different organizations across the state attended this event, asking various questions and sharing their expertise. We were lucky enough to have Danny Sudman from Green Camps Initiative (GCI) fly out from Texas to speak about his organization and how GCI can help camps across the continent be more sustainable. We went on a tour of the Coastal Institute with Kat Montgomery (Program Director) to see their facilities and new things to add to our own programs, and get Danny's take on ways our programs can practice better sustainability. We discussed everything from switching out light bulbs to sealing cracks in door jams to reusing gray water for irrigation. The discussions were also helpful and allowed us to share suggestions on a variety of topics such as outreach to prospective schools (e.g. talking to local PTA and PTOs), staff professional development (e.g. Finding local experts to give presentations), and staff retention strategies (e.g. promoting a positive community and skill development). We ended with brainstorming ideas for how EOSM and AEOE can further help managers and organizations as a whole. Some ideas included us facilitating more administrator strand workshops during the AEOE conferences for each other, creating a list of professionals and experts to contact for staff training, and several ideas for future EOSM meetings.



CONFERENCE SUMMARIES

Northern Fall Conference

Conference Executive Summary

Program: Northern Fall Conference

Location: Foothill Horizons Outdoor School, Sonora, CA

Date: 10/23-25/2015

Attendees: 144

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

Southern Fall Conference

Conference Executive Summary

Program: AEOE Southern Fall Conference

Location: Arrowhead Ranch

Date: October 14th-17th 2016

Attendees: 79 attendees

Conference theme: Falling Leaves

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

Housing and meals provided: Dorms, Tent Camping, Board Lodge, Saturday Night Dinner.

Speakers and entertainment: No keynote speakers or notable presentations. Entertainment included game night and a talent show.

Workshops Offered: 18 workshops and breakout sessions offered. Examples include: Survival Skills, Intro to AEOE, and Environmental Education as a career.

- The conference got many positive reviews for the site, and for some individual activities, but many of the attendees were disappointed in the lack of diversity in the presentations. Between the two of them Steve Morris and Nathan Taxel presented 8 of the 18 sessions, so lack of presenters was a problem.
- We created an opportunity for environmental educators in southern california to come together, build their skills, and network with others in the field.

Photos from AEOE Regional Fall Conferences



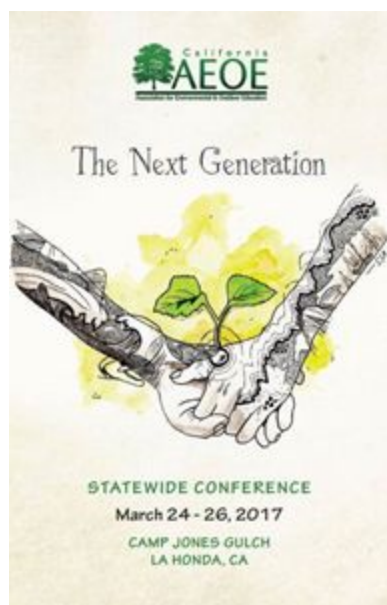
Northern



Southern



Statewide Spring Conference



Executive Summary

Event, date, location: 2017 Statewide Spring Conference, March 24th-26th, YMCA Camp Jones Gulch, La Honda, CA

Theme: The Next Generation

attendees: 311 attendees

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

Opening Speaker: Kevin Beals, co-founder and director of BEETLES

Closing Speaker: Dean Thompson

Keynote Speaker and Featured Presenter: John Muir Laws, naturalist and artist



Saturday Entertainment: Open Mic Night and Banana Slug String Band

Workshop strands, # workshops offered, sample workshop topics:

- 56 workshops
- Five strands: Management, Best Practices, Creativity, Natural History, and K-12
- Break-out sessions for novice, practitioners, Management/EOSM and classroom teachers

Brief evaluation summary: Constituents were pleased with all the speakers (opening, keynote, closing) and felt that all did a great job of being inspiring in our particular political climate. Improvement could be made on reaching out to demographically diverse speakers for the future (POC, women, etc). Also, present Howard Bell award Saturday night instead of Sunday morning.

Strategic plan goals met with this event: Our biggest goal met this year was that we were able to have a breakout session specifically catered to classroom teachers instead of simply outdoor educators and management. A surprise was that more of our attendees identified as “practitioners” instead of “novice” educators which could be a sign of less turn-over in the field of outdoor education.



311 participants, 56 workshops, 3 inspiring speakers, 2 talented bands, and Banana slugs galore. These were just some of the components that made the 2017 Spring Statewide Conference at Camp Jones Gulch incredible. Our conference started with a surprise ice cream social and lovely music by Ghost Train, with band members from our very own outdoor ed community. Kevin Beals did an amazing job during our opening by pumping us up with his inspiring words. Immediately after, participants were able to break out into sessions that reflected their job field such as novice educator, practitioner, management and newly added this year, classroom teacher! After lunch, all were mesmerized by the enthralling presentation from John Muir Laws as he taught us tips and tricks for journaling and inspiring young minds about the beauty of recording their observations. Crafts, Careers and Connections had a great turn out of various talented vendors showcasing their artwork and handmade items. Inside, job seekers roamed the tables of our beloved outdoor education organizations. The room was full of friendly faces, chocolate chip cookies and a few large plush ticks (thank you Lyme Foundation). After an extremely amusing auction hosted by The Little Twins, and an entertaining Talent show hosted by Robin and Alexis, the fun continued in the Redwood Dining Hall with none other than The Banana Slug String Band representing their home campus and keeping the party going late into the night. There were also a few lucky attendees that got to enjoy the special appearance of a rain cloud piñata on the deck. Sunday morning closing ceremony had an incredible turnout and all were moved by the presentation of the Howard Bell Award and Dean Thompson's closing speech. Our conference officially ended with everyone beautifully singing along to "Don't Worry" by Bob Marley.

-Mariana Diaz

AWARD WINNERS

Howard Bell Award

Beneath the beautiful redwoods of Camp Jones Gulch, with an audience of outdoor educators and banana slugs, AEOE presented the Howard Bell Award for achievements in environmental and outdoor education to Steve Van Zandt, Program Manager/Principal of San Mateo County Outdoor Education.

Jymn Meier, who nominated Van Zandt for the award, recalls, "I remember the first time I met Steve Van Zandt. It was at my first AEOE Conference in the early 90's. I was amazed at how many wonderful people I met and interacted with, but left inspired and empowered by Steve's "Keeping the magic alive workshop". He honored the current teaching trends while reminding us that, at its core, our mission is to connect children to nature. I revisited his workshop some 20 years later and he has literally kept the magic alive both within himself and sharing his passion with us all.

Steve has trained hundreds of Naturalists during his time at SMOE. Many have gone on to have long inspired tenures in environmental education. I have personally worked with many of Steve's former interns and all have been incredible. While I believe outdoor educators are amazing in general, it's easy to see the impact of Steve's mentorship."

Steve's contributions to AEOE are monumental. He has led workshops at conferences, directed incredible skits and performed on stage as member of the Banana Slug String Band. The Slugs were awarded The Howard Bell Award as a group in 1997, and 20 years later Steve is honored again for his individual contributions to Outdoor and Environmental Education.

Steve is a graduate of UC Santa Barbara in Environmental Studies/Geography. He received a multiple subject teaching credential from San Francisco State and an Administrative Credential from San Jose State. He worked as a Naturalist at SMOE, Exploring New Horizons Outdoor Schools, Youth Science Institute and as a Co-Director/Intern Coordinator at Hidden Villa. He also was a Co-Manager for the Pigeon Point Youth Hostel. He was a kindergarten, 3rd and 4th grade classroom teacher and a K-7th grade Life Lab/ESL teacher. He is a founding and active member of the Banana Slug String Band. He is returning to SMOE for a 24th year.

Pictured below, Steve Van Zandt (center) holds up the Howard Bell Award perpetual plaque, to which his name will be added. Along with all of the past award winners, the plaque also showcases a piece of the stump, where AEOE founders (including Howard Bell) first laid their money down to create the organization. Steve is surrounded by his son, Colin, and wife



Article

by Katie Andersen with contributions from Jymn Meier. Photo Credit- Tom Drake.

Northern Section Outdoor Educator of the Year By Chris “Yetti” Little

Ian “Ibis” Gledhill began his career in outdoor education as part of Woodleaf Outdoor School’s first ever class of Student Naturalists in 2000. Going to work as a naturalist right after high school might have been daunting for some, but being a naturalist runs in Ibis’s blood. His father roomed with Joseph Cornell (author of “Sharing Nature with Children”) in college, and Ibis’s mentors are outdoor education legends John and Kathe Hendrickson. After working at Woodleaf, Ian went on to explore other outdoor schools before studying environmental interpretation and earning a teaching credential at CSU Humboldt. After two years of teaching middle school science, Ian’s journey in outdoor education came full circle when he was hired as Lead Naturalist at Shady Creek Outdoor School (formerly Woodleaf). Ian’s greatest passion in EE is sharing his love for birding. In 2015 Ian headed up the Birding to Awaken Wonder fundraiser to improve the quality of bird education at Shady Creek.

In December 2014 Ian attended a BEETLES training and has become a regular contributor to their webinars and ongoing professional development efforts. In the summer of

2016 Ian won a scholarship to attend the Cornell University Bird Sleuth Program where he gained valuable skills and resources to continue sharing birding with children. Now the Lead Naturalist, Ian brings his skills and wealth of knowledge together to create curriculum for Shady Creek. Ian's classes not only utilize the best practices of teaching and environmental interpretation, but also align with Next Generation and Common Core Science Standards. Most importantly, he keeps the focus on kids, which helps keep students engaged and having fun. Ian proudly continues Shady Creek's musical tradition, bringing his own flavor and funk to the school. Songs penned by Ian, like "Trash Island" and "Solar Superhero," are student favorites each week. Sixteen years after the Student Naturalist program began, Ian is now mentoring the next generation of Student Naturalists, inspiring them to find their own path in EE.



Ian "Ibis" Gledhill (center, wearing a green shirt) receives his OE'er of the Year Award from Chris "Yeti" Little and Shannon Cueva.

Southern Section Outdoor Educator of the Year By Gregory Lewis

Joselito Robles has been a valued and exceptional member of Thousand Pines for three years. During this time he has led science lessons, counseled students through challenges, and continually added to and improved our program. While a good employee will do the job well, a great employee will always raise the bar not only for others but for himself.

Joselito consistently finds new ways to connect the students to the outdoors, to

science thinking, and to himself. He has led his groups as “houses” of Hogwarts, encouraging students to step outside their comfort zones and grow as people. In moments of scrambling, he has been called on to assist with program needs beyond the scope of his normal duties. And he’s the only outdoor educator I know of that’s had a camp song written about him.

He has worked for Spring Hill, a summer program, leading service projects and being a leader among the staff there. He has worked for winter and weekend programs in Crestline, including shops and a rock wall. He has taken his experiences and skills from across the country and around the world to help him make the experiences of others as good as they can get.



Joselito Robles, Southern Section Outdoor Educator of the Year, 2017.

PARTNER REPORT

North American Association for Environmental Education 2017 NAAEE Conference Summary by Tracey Weiss, AEOE Vice President

In October of 2016, the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) hosted its annual national conference in Madison, Wisconsin. AEOE Board Members, Reed Schneider and Tracey Weiss, with support of scholarship support from the EPA EE360 grant, had the opportunity to attend and represent the California Affiliate.

The conference started with workshops directed towards building capacity for the State Affiliate system. Reviewing organizational surveys, AEOE is in the top third of affiliates as it relates to capacity and programs provided. While we have opportunity for further growth throughout the State, we took the opportunity to learn from other State leaders to investigate building capacity and opportunity for all of us involved with the implementation of information and non-formal education in California.

Throughout the week the leadership of AEOE reflected how California would benefit from the creation of an individual certified environmental educator program. Currently, only 13 states have certification programs and with the rich diversity of partners and opportunities within California, now seemed like the ideal time to begin an analysis regarding the need and opportunity for such a program. How could a certification benefit educators within California?

- Create new access points for employment for individuals that may not be able to afford a four-year degree.
- Unify the skills and knowledge of pedagogy for anyone who teaches in an environmental or outdoor setting. Docents, naturalists and interpreters could all benefit!
- Bring a legitimacy to our field, helping to recognize expertise of individuals teaching in field.
-
- Reciprocity among other states and help to strengthen the legitimacy of a career in environmental education.

This inspirational week helped to highlight the great work being done by the countless volunteers within California. The opportunity to engage with the rich professional network throughout the Nation and California could not be beat. At the end of the week, new partnerships were developed and dedication towards advancing outdoor and environmental education here in California was renewed.

SOCIAL MEDIA



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