

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

EPA

Moderator: Jennifer Bowman
November 27, 2012
3:00 p.m. ET

Operator: Good afternoon. My name is (Keena) and I will be your conference operator today. At this time, I would like to welcome everyone to the Environmental Education Stakeholder Conference Call. All lines are placed on mute to prevent any background noise.

After the speaker's remarks, all lines will be opened in order for you to ask question. If you should need any assistance during the call, please press star zero and the operator will come back online to assist you. Thank you.

Jennifer Bowman, you may begin your conference.

Jennifer Bowman: Thank you, operator. I'm going to turn the call over to Dale Perry.

Dale Perry: Hi. This is Dale Perry. I'm the acting deputy director for the office of environmental education here at EPA. Thank you for joining in to our second call, and we appreciate your patience since we had to cancel our last call because of Hurricane Sandy. So, hopefully all of you faired well during that.

We actually have actually have a pretty full house here in the room here in Washington D.C. in headquarters. We were fortunate today to have the folks from Cornell University and the EE capacity program visiting with us. We have a – we have a great sort of folks here in the room and a lot of people on the line. So, we will just go ahead and get started.

The agenda, for those of you who are online on Adobe Connect is posted online, but briefly, we have some announcements, highlights and summary from the NAAEE, by Judy Braus. And then we'll have our discussion about the EE summit question that we posed at our White House summit in April. Finally, some time for our round robin announcements at the end and next

steps where we talk about our next call and what the discussion topic should be for that next call.

So, just a few announcements here from EPA headquarters, in terms of dates of things that are coming up that are important, we do have an open request for proposals for grants right now that closes on December 12th, so please keep that date in mind. That was also, we should just point out that that date was extended, it did close earlier than that, but we extended the date for that RSP because of Hurricane Sandy, to give people a little bit longer opportunity to reply. So again, the RSP closes December 12th.

Also, we have our PEYA student awards, the President's Environmental Youth Awards. That application process is also open right now. That closes December 31st, so please share that with any students or youth you know who are doing great things in environmental education.

Third, our Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators, or PIAEE or the teacher award program is also open right now, and that is open until January 31st, so please tell all of your environmental educators out there that we have a great way of recognizing them here at EPA as well as our students.

So, the RFP, December 12th, PEYA December 31st, Teacher Award (PIAEE) January 31st, and finally, I would just like to announce, there is a federal register notice that is out right now. We are ceding our federal advisory committee, which is the National Environmental Education Advisory Council – National Environmental Education Advisory Council or NEEAC. They are meeting December 13th and 14th here in Washington D.C.

Again, there is a federal register notice up for that meeting, and public are welcome certainly to attend and there is a period where they can provide comments as well. So, we are excited to be ceding our NEEAC. That is all in terms of announcements from EPA. So, I will turn it over to Judy Braus, the Executive Director of NAAEE. So, she will give us some update on the amazing conference at EPA with that in October in Oakland.

Judy Braus: Thanks, Dale, and I'm really thrilled to be here and have a chance to talk about the 2012 conference that was held in Oakland, California. And I hope that many of you on the call were there. If not, I hope to see you in Baltimore next year, but we had almost 1,200 people at the conference, and there were a lot of really exciting things that happened.

I just want to give you a high-level overview, especially for those of you who might not, A, have ever attended a conference, or B, were not in Oakland. So, before the conference actually started, we had our 9th annual research symposium. We had about 140 researchers from around the world, talking about their current research projects with great key notes by (Paul Hertz).

We had a number of workshops, so that people could better understand and have longer sessions, both onsite and in the Oakland area. We have field trip, we had a two-day affiliate workshop, we have 54 affiliates across the country and in Canada, and it was great to have everybody together. And again, thanks to EPA who helped make some of that happen.

We did have more than 25 sessions that were focused on different aspects of EE capacity. And that's the project that EPA funds as part of the national training program and that's what we're all here for. It was really great to get so many people together who are part of EE capacity, to be able to talk and share and learn and grow together.

We also had more than 40 conference sponsors, and that allowed us to give more than 150 scholarships to help people get to the conference. A big thanks again goes to EPA, but I also saw Mary Ford, here on National Geographic Society. And Jennifer, I see you're on from NEEF. So, we had a lot of support from a lot of people that helped put this conference on.

It's the biggest gathering of environmental educators in North America, and it really makes a difference that we have money that we can help give to people who really can't be there or can't come without some support. We also worked really hard this year to involve the local community and really give people a flavor of Oakland.

So, for example, Rue Mapp and Outdoor Afro, she was there with her contingency and there was a lot of sharing going on there. We were also presented, and worked with a lot of local organizations like East Bay Regional Park, Monterey Bay and many, many others.

In total, we had about 400 sessions, and I'm going to talk about that in a minute because I'd love your feedback on that. And we also had a number of amazing key notes. For example, Julian Agyeman and Angela Park talked about diversity and inclusion, Annie Leonard talked about The Story of Stuff, Craig Kielburger was there, and he inspired us with his work about Free the Children, and I don't know how many of you saw 60 Minutes, but Craig was featured on 60 Minutes on Sunday, an amazing young man.

Gerry Ellis gave a talk about his work as a really internationally well-known nature photographer, but he's working on a recent project to save the great apes, and he's in Africa right now and he's sending back tweets and Facebook and you can touch him and he was just truly amazing and captured some great photos.

And then, we had a lot of partners there, I see which that you're on the National Recreation Park Association, just a lot of our colleagues were there. We did conduct a SurveyMonkey evaluation, and I just wanted to give you some of the stats, a little bit of feedback and then see if people have any ideas or thoughts about how we go forward.

Eighty-five percent of the respondents said they were very satisfied with the conference experience, 92 percent said they'd recommend it to others, which is always nice to hear, although we want to talk to the eight percent who said they wouldn't. Ninety-seven percent welcome and include it, and then we had a number of comments like, this is the highlight of my year.

We tried two new things at the conference that I just wanted to mention, and we had a lot of really positive feedback about that. One was a family festival where we try to bring local families and EE community in to a community, we'd like to be able to share it with the local folks.

So, we had different performers and a lot of the environmental education organizations in the Oakland area and the Greater Bay area come and present and that was something we've learned a lot from that, but we also have some great feedback from the people who participated there.

We also did something where we are looking at this conference as a way to help promote and strengthen the field in addition to having to be an amazing networking opportunity. And we held a funder's forum at this conference. So, this was something going on within the conference, where we invited corporations, foundations and government representatives come together as funders to talk about how to strengthen the field and have more collective impact.

And we have a few NGOs sprinkled in there. And it was truly an amazing that we have over 100 funders in the room with again, some NGOs to talk about, can we put a forum together that helps raise more money for the field, help work together to have more collaborative impact. And there was a huge consensus to continue that effort and we're working on those next steps right now.

We're hoping that the conference can continue to bring thought leaders together to really talk about how do we look to the future, how do we strengthen the field. We also have a lot of comments about the volunteers. We couldn't have done it without volunteers, the fact that it was an opportunity for some people to be introduced to the field. They've never been to a conference, they've never really understood more about what's going on in environmental education.

And then, we had some constructive feedback, and this is where I'd love to get your feedback. We're thinking about Baltimore already, which is next October, where the next conference will be. So, we traditionally have a lot of sessions because a lot of people have told us they can't come unless they present.

Some of you might have gone to the round table, for a lot of people in the room, you get to meet a lot of people. With over 400 sessions, it's a lot.

Some people suggested we limit that so that more people in each session, there's not as much going on, and we'd love to hear from you about that. We might try something new in Baltimore and think about that issue, but we do want to get as many people to present as well because it's professional development and we want to keep the quality of that conference up.

We also had a lot of comments about trying to find more scholarships for people, that some people when you have conferences at a big hotel, it costs a lot of money. So, how can we get more people there, what else can we do, are there creative ways to engage more people.

So, we're thinking about these, all the feedbacks that has come in, how to balance so many aspects of the field, from people that are working in conservation education, sustainability education, connecting kids to nature, diversity and inclusion, advocate the inter-environmental at building leadership in the field, what are the things that we can do with this conference.

And we could not do it without our sponsors, our volunteers, our affiliates, our members, our partners, and that's what makes me feel really good, it's really truly is a collaborative effort, and I think that the conference is an opportunity for us as a field to keep growing and sharing. So, I'd love to hearing feedback anybody has and look forward to hearing from all of you.

Dale Perry: Operator, can you please make sure the lines are all open.

Operator: OK, hold a moment.

Jennifer Bowman: Anybody have questions?

Female: Yes.

(Georgia Dobson): Judy?

Judy Braus: Yes.

(Georgia Dobson): Judy, this is (Georgia Dobson) from (Fish and Wildlife).

Judy Braus: Oh, hi (Georgia).

(Georgia Dobson): I was glad to hear some of your comments. I think with the (Cisco) issues that we – that everyone is facing, independent of whether they're a federal state or non-profit or business and industry, that in order to travel to the conferences, many of the individuals do have to present in some capacity, so I was really happy to have you acknowledge that.

And there are just lots of opportunities the way that NAAEE is structured nowadays that there's lots of ways that you are accepted as a “presenter” from the round tables to panels, to all of that to really engage individuals as presenter, so I did want to thank you and all the individual who volunteer to review all the presenters and look for ways to put everybody in, in a way that they can thus be utilized just to allow those individuals to do that because it is very critical to have that justification in order to get there.

Judy Braus: Thank you.

(Georgia Dobson): So, thanks very much for that, Judy.

Judy Braus: Thank you, (Georgia) and I just also want to mention that the (Fish and Wildlife) service, I see (Drew Burnett) on the line as well. Thank you for your support of environmental education and for your support of the conference. You are such an important part of making it happen, and we will have a number of conversations leading up to Baltimore to figure out how to get more people to present and also make sure that everybody gets what they need out of the conference in steps we can.

It is an opportunity for some people that have never presented to have an opportunity to present as well. So, it's professional development as well as for seasoned folks to really present new thinking and innovation in the field. So, thanks (Georgia).

Dale Perry: Any other questions or comments, Judy? And I'm sure she would love your continued feedback so that we can all, anybody that's on the call, of course, please let me know. Call me or send me an e-mail.

Robin Organ: Judy, this is Robin Organ from Green Schools. What was the involvement right from the student perspective?

Judy Braus: Well, you know, we had a youth activist panel, and we've talked a lot about having young people there. So, we had a lot of young people there that were more in the university age that were either working on a degree or had graduated at that age level, but we don't have a lot for kids in the sense of, you know, twins and lower, but we did have the family festival, so that we could bring in families and young people. I don't know if that's the question.

So, in the future – oh yes, we had a whole group from Hawaii and they just sent the nicest card, the young people from Hawaii, but I would love to hear your thoughts, not now, but to send me thoughts about the role of young people at the conference, because we've had different opinions about the mix of young people and professionals that (inaudible) and how to blend that and what's the best way to think about that.

(Peter White) put on really a great panel on youth activism and Craig Kielburger is part of that, of trying to say kids really matter to the whole movement and to what we're doing.

Robin Organ: Absolutely. OK.

Judy Braus: But I'd like to hear from you.

Robin Organ: All right. Thank you.

Dale Perry: All right. So, please take Judy up on her offers to follow up with her. And again, for EPA, it was a really great conference and we enjoy meeting a lot of you there and being there. So, thank you, Judy, appreciate it.

Judy Braus: Thanks, Dale.

Dale Perry: OK. We're going to move into the discussion part of our call. And we had, as you I'm sure all know, in April 2012, we had the first White House summit on Environmental Education and at that summit, we had breakout sessions. And prior to the summit we posed a few questions to the audience, but the one that

we discussed during our breakout session was: “What one bold new step would you recommend for all organizations to ensure that environmental education fosters lifelong environmental stewardship from K through gray?”

And a lot of the feedback that we have received about this question is that we really needed more time to talk about this. They were pretty intense sessions, so we thought we would continue the conversation here with our summit attendees. And so, Jennifer Bowman is going to give an overview about, we did go through all of our notes and summarized some of the top themes from the sessions, so we thought we would just kick off this session with a summary of some of those theme, so Jen?

Jennifer Bowman: Yes, as Dale said, what we did was we went through all of the notes that were written at the summit, all of the things that were recorded on the flip charts and your post-its. I went ahead and I typed them all up, and I condensed them into about six pages of notes that we then posted online. Anything that was requested to be kept private, of course, was kept private.

But for the most part, people had a lot of the same ideas. There were similar themes, and so what I did was synthesize. Reading through a lot of the notes, I kept finding reoccurring themes pop up. So, I went through and I tried to consolidate them and categorize and this as I know mean stepping stone in any way. This is the way to kind of manage the massive amount of really, really great feedback.

We definitely seem to be as an EE community to be thinking about the same quirks and issues, challenges really great things that are working, some things that probably need some revisiting. So, I've broken it into three categories. We have connecting people to their environment, challenges that we face as a wider EE community and then mobilization.

Now, we can go through these, I can just read through them so that you have an idea of this outline. And like I said, everything that was pulled into this new collection is on our Web site with the summit information. So, it's all acceptable.

And also in the Web site, I even went ahead and made a Wordle out of all of the notes from the summit to see what kind of common words and the things popped up. And that was really kind of neat to see community environmental education, sustainability, and stewardship all kept popping our program over and over again.

So, connecting people to their environment seem to involve a focus on play safe education due to the involvement in the community. Non-formal learning where briefing, teaching in the outdoors, creating those experiences that are stronger connections of community, project-based learning activities that are hands on, service learning, and then, interdisciplinary or connecting environmental education not just with them you know, not just with science and NASA technology and engineering, but also with art and literature and music, they also came up a lot where there's a concern where possibly leading some of these things out.

And the challenges we face section, we looked at environmental stewardship and responsibility, and you're going to hear things the same over and over again because they just kept repeating. Where we are and what do we need to do with the question that was asked a lot, because it's such a large question. Working with public organizations, NGOs, non-traditional partnerships, large organizations, organizations that have lots of funding opportunities, those that we don't normally talk to was something that was brought up.

National environmental education goals and commitment plans, there was a very strong thread of needing to have some sort of national environmental education, not necessarily standards, but a common thread, something that we can work with on a national scale. And that how can we get funding for all to know of course, how can we get funding involved in it, how can we work towards the challenge of finding ways to keep this running, keep things running financially.

And then, the third category was mobilization, getting used to outside, getting people outside. That is used for themselves as well, embracing the entire community. Go where people are, so work with people in their actual surroundings. It's great teaching about foreign places which is really

important if we, of course, understand the local community initially, but the question is: do they understand the local community?

There is also a very strong sort of that embracing urban environment, as most people live in cities and we need to work with this. And then, we also have community and environmental integrated and interdisciplinary curriculum and standards, once again, that was repeated. We had a very strong tendency towards training teachers to understand how to integrate environment into their work and too often find teachers who do science and math and other subjects, but they're not necessarily sure how to integrate or they don't know that they are doing environmental education kinds of work into their teaching.

So, training was really strong. Teacher support and empowerment for community involves how we get the community connected with the youth and their teacher in classrooms, and then other non-formal learning environments. And then, the results of the suggestion, I thought this was interesting, the mention a couple of times to create a virtual environmental education academy in embracing technology in the outdoors.

One of the speakers at the summit, at the conference actually, was talking about his niece bringing her iPad into the woods for a hike, and it was really annoying him until he realized that she was taking her friends with them on the hike by using the iPad. And it was just as really overwhelming moment, I'm sure, for him as well as a number of people there because it just made you realize that it's something that is a really great tool that we have. So, that is the summary of the note. There were lots of things there, but that's where we are.

Dale Perry: So, let's go back to our question and then we'll open it up for all of you who just came in, including those here in the room. What one bold new step would you recommend for all organizations to ensure that EE fosters lifelong environmental stewardship from K through gray? We'll open it up to folks on the phone first. Anybody?

Merrilee Harrigan: I have a – I have a suggestion. This is Merrilee Harrigan with the Alliance to Save Energy. Can you hear me?

Male: OK.

Female: Yes.

Merrilee Harrigan: Great. I would suggest that – you kind of eluded to something similar to this in terms of getting people to relate to where they are, and this is a variation on that, which is energy is an environmental topic that sometimes is overlooked because it's not quite as much fun as being in the outdoors, but if every environmental group, every environmental activity, most environmental activities are associated with a building, and every building uses energy.

And there's an opportunity to make young people and adults for that matter aware of the way their buildings use energy. And when we've done tours of schools, you know, tours of the boiler room and that sort of thing, people get very excited about it, it's kind of mind changer to actually see, you know, where the fuse box is and where the boiler is and all that.

So, it's interesting to have a unit on energy and energy efficiency that could be sort of plugged into other environmental programs.

Female: That's great. Thank you.

Female: So, this is (inaudible) I'm an Einstein fellow the Department of Energy, and along those same lines with energy, my project is actually the energy literacy initiative. And so, we have put together the energy literacy framework and have lots of great partners that are working on curriculum is excellent and supports energy education.

So, we definitely second that motion that energy should be, perhaps, maybe a bigger part of that discussion.

Dale Perry: And do you know, I should have pointed out in the beginning. Thank you for joining us, the Einstein fellows. A lot of them are on the phone and they were at the summit and helped to pull all of this information together and summarize it. So, you guys are certainly the experts about what was talked about there. So, thank you for that and for you all being on the call today as well.

Jennifer: Thank you for your help with the notes for the summit.

Dale Perry: Yes.

Jennifer: Yes.

Female: No problem. We'll sign up again for (inaudible).

Karen Weber: I have a suggestion. It's Dr. Karen Weber, Foundation for a Green Future in Boston, and I'm wondering, just on the co-tails of the energy and buildings. If the USGBC, the United States Green Building Council were to work with you to help bring in some of their lead corporations to partner with the schools, and help make some of these programs happen, how would that be as – I don't know if that's something that someone thought about already.

Dale Perry: Any folks on the phone wish to comment? I think were talking a lot here internally certainly about the importance of partnerships and taking advantage of those existing network, social networks and connections rather than trying to recreate the will just connecting people who have not been connected before to make a lot of this happen.

David Campbell: This is Dave Campbell at NSF. I was thinking, citizen science campaign might be a good way to address all three of these. It would connect people to environment, challenges to the community, mobilization. So, something like project FeederWatch that Cornell Lab of Ornithology started or a Budburst, things like that.

I think that some sort of campaign where you get people involved in collecting data would be a good one bold move.

Robert Corbin: This is Dr. Robert Corbin from Discovery Place. Can you all hear me?

Jennifer: Yes.

Female: Yes.

Robert Corbin: So, I love the ideas I've heard so far, but it occurs to me that I think – I think we need to be pretty deliberate about helping citizens to develop place making. I think that the citizen science project is a great way to do that, but I think we should commit, all the organizations on this call should commit to providing X number of hours, wander based outdoor play experiences for all ages, which involves a merging of the senses, exploration discovery.

There I say, a bit of danger and most importantly independence, because these are the experience that are non-negotiable precursors to remembering and place making and by remembering, I mean, we must create cognitive touchstones, which reminds us of that nature of the source of infinite wonder to which all humans return and which we are all profoundly blinked.

That's very conservative to suggest all that, but I agree that energy could be the most salient issue we face in the world right now, but what I'm concerned about when I hear that is that is the equivalent of Chicken Little for many kids, and frankly for many adults. So, I think that the very first step which we can't lose sight of is just to provide direct experiences in the outdoors and that can happen in both urban and real setting for their based on play wander and making connection.

And then, I think all the other stuff can happen when you get – when you develop little further into maybe 12 years of age and onwards, then I think that is a natural progression then to go into citizen-based science and community-based problem solving and so forth.

Female: Thanks.

Female: I wonder if the Einstein fellows could take a moment to respond, because I think what we're hearing is really great idea and some of us have this experience of trying to take a class of 30 kids outside with one teacher, and what I really the logistics of that. And then, if you have 150 students and no funding, you know, there are some real logistical issues there. So, I don't know if anybody else wants to comment.

Female: I think the previous – the previous comments are talking about the play space education and the beauty and the wonder and the risks that young children and

those school children need to appreciate is very valid. But unfortunately, like he said, a volunteering with schools to make these things happen and the organizations really need to get out there and arrangements with schools, especially schools where these resources don't exist. Otherwise, we're just talking or not making things happen.

Robert Corbin: So, this is Robert Corbin again, and I'll respond and I'll respond. It's definitely what other people contribute, but I think that if you facilitate experiences and plan very good curriculum, and experiences for people, it's not just – I'm not suggesting half hazardly wandering in the woods, I'm talking about provide opportunities to do things that are truly meaningful, that it is actually possible for a single teacher to manage a group of 30 and it is possible for another person to be trained in order to accomplish that.

I hear you completely that there are issues of providing something meaningful for that number of people and then expanding into a larger number, but it can be done, and I think excellent environmental educators have been doing it for years and years and years, and it can certainly be done if there was a commitment on behalf of all the organizations to actually be deliberate about doing so.

Robin Organ: Great. Can I – can I say something. This is Robin Organ from Green Schools, and we'd like to come back to (inaudible) the puzzle, because it was really exciting at the summit. And I think what many of us tend to do is bring out our extra content which was questions week.

So, just stay focused on question to the recommendation for all organization that seems to be, may be the lacking of one unified resource, whether it's a virtual college that you proposed at the, you know, summit. And getting into all of the different content areas, resources for student (inaudible) may be nice if there is space in the process and collaborate and keep up on that.

I think EPA does a really good job of putting lesson plans and resources, but not necessarily highlighting all the organizations that are already in the space, that are already between the (inaudible) program, so if there was again, an additional web resource that had all of the lesson plans, but it looks like in

your classroom (inaudible) the kids and listed all of the programs on a national level in one organized place and then into the organization would contribute their resources and programs that you'd have a pretty, you know, comprehensive look at what this looks like.

Jennifer Tabola: This is Jennifer Tabola, and I'm with NEEF. And we actually (inaudible) we previously had focused on high school only, and actually showcasing resources from all of the organizations that we reached out to that have evidence-based, research-based, science-based resources that are non-advocacy.

So, we do have a platform for that. And actually this fall, we just shifted to K12. So, at least for now there is definitely a place that we are trying to create and have as a one-stop shop for teachers to come to. I think obviously the challenges, you know, promoting that and making sure people are aware, but we do have a platform at present for that, and I know that there is some other organizations on the call with us who also, you know, have some platforms for that, but that may be an issue of really elevating it.

And I think if you look at something like Edutopia as an example, I think you're right in terms of the multimedia resources that really speak to and engage educators and students as well and you know, I think our field is coming on board with those, that we need more of it. So, is there funding to create the virtual different more comprehensive Web site that shows multiple platform that can house all of the different best practices from these organizations?

Female: I think that's the issue, you know, it's honestly the funding challenge to get it to that level where it's really a dynamic platform, but I think that's the next iteration and that's definitely what's needed to make it attractive and easy to use and actually fun.

Jennifer Tabola: Great.

(Franklin Bates): This is (Franklin Bates) of Wildlife Service, and I guess I would say, I think these are all great ideas for what organizations can do. I would add that I think maybe it's not one bold step to, I think if all organizations would join

and participate in NAAEE, I think that would be a huge step toward including a broader range of organizations in our community.

It's usually those for reaching out to underrepresented audiences. And then, the other bold step that I think is really critical and that we've already got a lot of resources available for is the adoption of the guidelines for excellence. We have done a lot of work in establishing what we – what we as a community believe is quality environmental education, and I think we can all do a lot to encourage folks to adopt those guidelines.

Female: OK.

Male: Hello.

Female: Go ahead.

Frank Tate: This is (Frank Tate) with (Trout Unlimited). Can you hear me?

Jennifer: Yes.

Female: Yes.

Male: One thing that happened to us recently is we've got the same sort of funding issues. And so, we turned toward national service participants, and we try and sort of collaborate to try to design a kind of play safe citizen science program for kids, for school kids. And so, it really was an environmental education program, very much experienced to all service line and focus.

We also know we didn't get funded because I think, the corporations for national community service is not really – they're not really well prepared to review and understand more complex environmental education proposals. They see a lot of trail building, they see a lot of Teach For America, but when you combine, STEM learning and Watershed based science with a grassroots organization and they really didn't know how to respond to our proposal for a miracle program.

So, one solution, getting initial things like Senior Corps where grandparents can do the service term and then give the credit to their grandkids who were in

college. I mean, (Tout Unlimited) has done a lot of great things with observer mentorship role with our older volunteers working with kids inside the classroom (inaudible).

So, it's inter-generational, and I do think that the national service program did really help with environmental education, but it would – I don't know what happened, it's more of a dialogue with the corporation, and bring them up the steam with what, EPA and all the partners that are in some of these conferences, what we're trying to get done, because we didn't finally get very far with it, but it really pulled together what everybody's saying on the call. So, that's just one observation and what's, you know, happened to us lately. Thanks.

Anna Switzer: Hi. This is Anna Switzer. Can you guys hear me?

Female: Yes.

Anna Switzer: Yes. So, I'm not listed in the call – in the roll call there, because I'm sitting in the room with Mary Ford at National Geographic, and just jokingly, I sort of threw out an idea to Mary which sounds kind of out there, but the more I sat here and thought about it, I thought, well why not put it up on radar screen.

And what I said was, well, let's get somebody like Michelle Obama involved and, you know, tie environmental education to her efforts at getting kids healthy and getting to that side to be healthy and I think with, you know, combined efforts in that way and having a health aspect too, it is well as the environmental ed aspect too, could again just create more momentum and give it more visibility across the entire country. Like I said, a little bit out there, but I just thought I would say it.

Female: They're not far out there. I think it needs – it sounds to me that it's going to draw in a lot of people.

Steve Ruthford: This is Steve Ruthford. I'm a fellow – Einstein fellow. I live in Washington State in the small town, and I'm just coming into this, this year and it seems to me like there's really a formal education issue and an informal education issue on the table. And I guess coming as a teacher, I can see one approach direct

and towards formal being completely different than the informal, but that's just my observation.

Jennifer Bowman: That's an interesting point, because one thing that comes up with some of our programs here at the EPA, this is Jennifer by the way, is that we were for example, our teacher program was confined to what we will consider formal educators, teachers who are certified to teach in a school, and it does not include non-formal educators, which is huge point of contention because so much of the work in the environmental education community is done through non-formal education.

And that's a really good point where it means that our guidelines advantage might be off, but that is – there's a way to get the group to work together and when you're embracing non-formal education practice in a formal education setting, it tends to be more creative outreach in a community-based learning.

I want to be sensitive to the time, we have 15 minutes left on the call, and I wanted to leave space for anybody to respond to these last few comments before we go into a bit of wrap up and then round table.

Female: This is (inaudible) again. I'm another one of the Einstein fellows. And I just – we have six teachers sitting around the table here, and I know a couple of other fellows around mine and I just really want to caution you again to keep classroom teachers involved in this discussion, because a lot of the ideas that we've heard have been good, but also would have some challenges being implemented in the classroom.

And so, I think that a teacher's voice is really important. And another concern that I have just related to a lot of work that I've heard, is "I don't think people have done a really good job". I've seen where teachers are getting resources, or how they get resources. I think most often, from my experience and my colleagues can back me up, they're actually getting it from other teachers.

And so, collectively putting together a huge number of resources is not necessarily the most effective way to get two classroom teachers. So, really looking at professional development and using teacher network to get the classroom teachers is really important.

Jennifer: I couldn't agree more.

(Robert Dennis): Hi. This is (Robert Dennis) from (inaudible).

Jennifer B: And I think one of the things that we find is that teachers often ask if (inaudible) the people coming to the office of environmental education here at EPA for information, for education resources, but they also go to many organizations they think of. The National Geographic Society comes to mind and they think of larger organizations that tend to have lots of really comprehensive online resources.

Yes, and they do ask fellow teachers. When I was teaching in the classroom, I would ask my fellow teachers, were the kind of things they were utilizing were and just different kinds of tools and techniques that are really good point. And that is one area we were working on here.

And I know that the number of the organizations on the call are also working with different teacher groups and organizations because connecting with the teachers and getting the teachers to communicate together and providing better channels to that kind of open dialogue is very, very powerful and very, very helpful.

Before we continue, I wanted to quickly recap on a couple of points. I've been hearing- some of the comments that I'm hearing are that we need to work better on national collaboration. How do we create a virtual group? How do we fund that group? Funding is always a question that comes up. It's something that we must address as it's a reality that we have to face that we're working with.

How do we connect with organizations and groups that can provide funding? what is the platform for – or what would be a site or a place for multiple platforms look like when they come together, and then how do we bridge the gap between formal education and non-formal education to help create really dynamic and interactive integrated environmental education.

I have a lot of more notes, and we have a transcript of all of these coming together, so it will be made available I believe. Are there any further outstanding questions before we wrap up the segment of our conversation?

Melissa George: Hi. I have a comment, not a question. This is Melissa George and I'm also an Einstein fellow at NSF, and what I think would help with your resource idea is if you had a map of the United States, and you had states represented, people could click on their State and there were informal and formal resources there and contact people that teachers could get involved with.

And if you actually presented this at state conferences, state teacher conferences to try to get the word out, teachers are your best virus and will spread things fast if it is something that is really place based like you say, and community based and accessible.

Jennifer B: Thank you very much for that very good idea. That sounds like a similar idea- there are number of the state agencies across the country that try to provide some sort of system like that. Some of the things we were talking about at NAAEE when we were meeting, with the affiliates in the different state organizations and groups, was how to better connect the resources with the teaching community in general and how do we provide the teachers doing formal education and informal education with materials.

It's also important to try to help people understand what the differences and similarities are. So, I think that's a very good idea. In regard to this material that we are having this discussion about, we need to pull together some thoughts and ideas for the follow up on our next call before we go into round robin announcements.

What are some things that you would like to continue focusing this discussion on? There's a lot of material we can go into, but based on the notes that we've been taking here today, there's something that you feel we really need to keep working on and create some action points to make some things happen, and also bring it to the table with the national task force.

Richard Dolesh: This is Rich Dolesh from the National Recreation and Park Association. I am pleased to tell you and I'll be glad to amplify a little when we do our round

table remarks, that as a result of the summit last Spring, we established very good working relationship and a budding partnership with NAAEE and NEEF as well as the National Wildlife Federation, who I didn't hear represented on the call, but we recently launched the partnership with them to commit to bring in 10 million kids to nature in the outdoors in the next three years.

We help joint sessions at the NAAEE conference and the NRPA congress in October. And one of the things that was most, I thought, most salient in the discussions about how to move forward with creating the type of national collaborations and partnerships that were referenced by other speakers.

People commenting today, was that – we really have to realistically look at some of the barriers and continue to look at these barriers and come up with actionable, workable solutions and they're scalable and replicable. While we move forward with positive ideas and big thinking, it's great, but I think we have to address the barriers that are present.

And we had some of that conversation in our panel discussions at the conferences, but I think we need to do more. This work and this group needs to take it down as part of their continuing task.

Jennifer B: Thank you. Thank you for that feedback. That's really helpful.

Male: Hi. This is (inaudible). I'm calling from (inaudible), and one thing that came to mind was, I think I probably mentioned before, learning how to leverage organizations that have a broad scope. As we were having these discussions here, what came to mind was how we would reach out to mixed family units.

Maybe some will have different languages at home. It could be that one size does not fit all, not even like the whole family, right? So, I think for some communities to access communities, we have to think of the local community, what would help serve that community, and also better different average options to ensure community engagements.

I know education is really important, but we have to redefine or re-conceptualize education as a broader idea. I'm thinking of like in a great

community or like communities that don't have a high representation in colleges and schools, we submit to create hardships.

And common to the university could be a stakeholder there. They might be able to have access to the local community to engage the kind of dialogue.

Jennifer B:

Great. Thank you so much. That's also something that we have talked a lot about here at the agency, and I know has been a discussion amongst the community with some of the groups we talked to. There's a concern – addressing language barriers, culture barriers, that just aren't getting enough attention, and we're trying to work toward that. But thank you for mentioning so that we continue that discussion. I will make sure that we include that information.

Also, I want to let you all know that the next call will be in a few months. We don't have a set date yet, but we will be sending that information out. Thank you for your feedback on this discussion points, this material. This question is a very intensive, multilayered, multifaceted topic of discussion. There's no one particular answer, and it's really appreciated to be able to discuss this with the group at large.

We only have a few minutes left. I wanted to provide as a space for round robin announcements. I'm going to just open up the call for people who want to make announcements before we wrap up for the next call. Are there any announcements that you'd like to share with the group because we would love to hear about them.

Male:

I have one announcement. This is (inaudible) again from (inaudible). And who knows, this might even take the connotation of education – environmental education to a different level when we make linkages with other kind of communities. On that (inaudible) will be hosting this international conference, February 27th to March 1st in San Antonio, Texas.

And of course, this conference is focused on international education, but you know, the environment is an international idea that could be shared. I think that might be a good place to continue this kind of dialogue and see what kind of (inaudible) result from being engaged with international communities.

Female: Great. Thank you.

Richard Dolesh: This is Rich Dolesh from NRPA. I've mentioned briefly before, but just wanted to let you know that we've seen a lot of energy from our recent efforts to establish broader based partnerships with national organizations leading environmental education. We feel that parks, recreation and public land managers dedicated to managing (inaudible) local state and federal levels have a lot of resources and knowledge to bring to bear to creating these partnerships.

I've mentioned we had two panel discussions at our respective conferences in October, and also we have a working partnership with National Association of State Park Directors and the National Park Service for the children and nature partnership that we've been doing some webinars and educational activities. We're hosting one on December 3rd on Arts & Parks.

And we have some presenters who are going to offer some ideas and free and low-cost programs can be conducted at any level from the local up to the national level. And we're going to continue those educational activities and partnership with NEEF and NAAEE and National Wildlife Federation, but that – if you'd like to pass the link on for that webinar coming up on December 5th, I'm sorry, Wednesday the 5th, I'll be happy to provide it.

Female: Great.

Female: Foundation for a Green Future in Boston is partnering with FireSeed Arts in creating an eco art truck and moving art and environment from one school to the next. So, if anyone wants to connect with us about that project, we'd be happy to hear from you.

Female: OK. Thank you. I want to let you know that if you have topic ideas, things that you want to send out, let us know about in the group. You can send them to education@epa.gov, that's education@epa.gov.

Jennifer Tabola: Hi. This is Jennifer with NEEF. I just wanted to let everyone know on December 3rd, we are going to launch an exciting new video that we filmed in

partnership with project Noah and a school in Maine that is using technology to integrate environment to learning in the outdoors.

So, we're really excited to be launching that, and we'll be doing it with the social media contest in order to incentivize teachers and educators to give us feedback and comments on Facebook about their thoughts about using technology to connect their students and the outdoors. So, I'll send out the photo stills to some of you to just give you a taste of what's to come and we'll look forward to your participation in giving us some feedback.

Female: Thank you, Jennifer. I want to encourage everyone with this group to connect with each other, because it's a really great way to not only see what you're all doing, but also as a way to empower when someone says, "how would that work?", you can use this as great example.

It's wonderful to see the dynamic differences in the community. Are there any other announcements – it is 4 o'clock. I want to be sensitive of the time. Are there any last announcements?

Male: Yes.

Female: I just have a quick question.

Female: OK.

Female: Quick question, how do we connect with each other, do you have an e-mail list?

(Carly): This is (Carly) from EPA. Most of you know me as education@epa.gov. If you would reply back to the e-mail that I sent out stating that it's OK or not OK to share your e-mail address then I will do that accordingly. If you actually prefer not to have your e-mail address shared, we won't do that, but if you do, I can send that around.

Female: Thank you.

Josetta Hawthorne: (Carly), this is Josetta Hawthorne with Project Wild. Do you have a participant list of all those partners that are in this group?

(Carly): I do.

Josetta Hawthorne: Can we get that sent to us, and that would be a starter for...

(Carly): You mean the organizations that are participating?

Josetta Hawthorne: Yes.

(Carly): Yes, I'll do that.

Josetta Hawthorne: And the contacts within each organization. If we don't have a full list, may be we could go off of that directory. That'd be great. Thank you.

Maria Snyder: Hi. This is Maria Snyder from the Eco Boys and Girls, and I just wanted to announce, we're doing a six to seven part book series that's going to be launched with several different partnerships in the Sprint time. And actually we've recruited some of the couple of top award-winning (Emmy) writers from both Blue's Clues and Team Umizoomi that are top shows on Nickelodeon that are helping to edit the books and we're discussing where to sell it as well. So, I'd share that.

Jennifer Bowman: Thank you. Well, I'm going to go ahead and wrap it up. Thank you all so much for participating in today's call. We really appreciate the discussion, the feedback, and the ideas. One last quick announcement. The Hands on the Land will hold a webinar this week at 2 o'clock on Wednesday, November 28th. To register, go to handsontheland.org. Thank you to (Drew Burnett) for posting that announcement.

Drew: Thanks, Jennifer.

Jennifer Bowman: Sure. No problem.

Male: Thank you.

Female: Thank you also, and we'll be in touch about the next call for the summit and we'll continue our conversation and see what we can do.

Male: Thank you.

Female: Thank you very much. Thank you.

Jennifer Bowman: Have a great holiday everyone. Thank you.

Female: Bye.

Jennifer Bowman: Operator, we are finished.

Operator: Thank you.

Jennifer Bowman: Thank you.

END