

Welcome to the **August 18, 2006** posting to the Education about the Environment Interchange listserv! Any questions, issues suggestions or postings should be directed to Allison Brody at: allison.brody@unlv.edu

News/Announcements

I am happy to announce the launching of www.enviroedexchange.org – the website that will support this listserv and host the Field Trip Resource Guide. Teachers can use this searchable database to find field trip opportunities that best meet individual needs. Please let me know if you have programs or activities that you would like included on the Field Trip Resource Guide – or fill out the attached form and fax it to: (702) 895-5166, Attn: Allison Brody.

As the result of a generous grant from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection's Waste Reduction and Recycling Program, the Conservation District has printed a large number of composting education posters. The posters measure 24" x 36" and depict the ABCs of Compost Alphabet Soup. A PDF is attached for your viewing pleasure. If you would like to pick up copies of the poster for distribution, please contact Kim Vilt at 592-8322.

Also attached please find an announcement for the Nevada Cooperative Extension Weed Specialist position. Distribute this announcement to anyone who may have an interest. Contact information is listed on the announcement.

Phil Aurit with the Bureau of Reclamation needs suggestions on where he can hold a small conference in February. CAST for Kids, a fishing event for disabled children, is searching for a conference site in Las Vegas that: 1) offers lodging and a small conference room in close proximity; 2) can accommodate about 50 attendees; 3) is near the Las Vegas Strip; 4) offers rooms at less than \$112 per day (federal per diem rate); and 5) offers shuttle service from the airport (if possible). If you have any information or suggestions, please send them to: paurit@lc.usbr.gov.

Calendar

8/15-8/22	Ruby Mountain Backpacking Adventure for HS students	Nevada Outdoor School (with support from NNREC); www.nevadaoutdoorschool.com
8/20-8/22	Nevada Museums Association 2006 Conference	Nevada Museum of Art in Reno, NV. http://nevadamuseums.org/event.html
9/8	Partners for Education About the Environment meeting	Bimonthly meeting – 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m., NDF conference room (Vegas and Decatur), (Moapa field trip postponed to November)
9/12	CHOLLA meeting	1:00 - 3:30 p.m., Room 125, UNLV's Paradise Campus (Tropicana and Swenson)

9/23	National Public Lands Day Clean-up and Restoration Event	8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area; to volunteer, go to www.getoutdoorsnevada.org
9/30	National Public Lands Day Clean-up Events	8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Desert Tortoise Conservation Area; 8:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Lake Mead National Recreation Area; to volunteer for either event, go to www.getoutdoorsnevada.org
10/10-10/14	North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Annual Conference	St. Paul, MN; http://naaee.org/
10/10-10/13	11th Annual Nevada Weed Management Association Meeting	Elko, NV. All member, non-member and vendor registration forms can be found at the Nevada Department of Agriculture-Plant Industry Website: http://agri.state.nv.us/PLANT_NoXWeeds_index.htm
10/21	Nevada Natural Resource Education Council Annual Meeting	Reno/Carson City; http://nnrec.org/
10/21	First Annual Arrowhead Trail Day	8:00 a.m., A day of outdoor recreation (OHV, bikes, hikes, horseriding) as this group works toward the goal of seeking designation as a Backcountry Byway. For info, call Mark Trinko at 798-5003 or Ed Dodrill at 645-1791, Trinko@cox.net
10/28	Make A Difference Day	Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area; to volunteer, go to www.getoutdoorsnevada.org
11/7-11/11	National Association for Interpretation Annual Conference	Albuquerque, NM, www.interpnet.com/niw2006/index.htm
11/10-11/12	Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (AEOE) Southern Fall Conference.	Indian Cove Group Campgrounds at Joshua Tree National Park www.aeoe.org .
11/28-11/30	Workshop on Collaborative Watershed-scale Management & Research in the Great Basin	Silver Legacy Hotel, Reno, NV. For info and registration, contact Dr. Jeanne Chambers, Research Ecologist, USDA-Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, jchambers@fs.fed.us
1/13/07 and 1/20/07	Mojave Max PDE course	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Red Rock Canyon NCA. Contact: Stacy Irvin, Project Coordinator, Mojave Max Education Project, 702-258-7097
1/26 - 1/27/2007	CCSD Math/Science Teachers Conference (K-12)	Green Valley High School, Henderson, NV (500 people attended last year)

Resources

NNREC is offering River of Words workshops for teachers and other educators. Learn how to turn outdoor experiences into creative poetry that informs and inspires your students using time-tested techniques to make creating poetry fun, memorable and anxiety-free. Workshops in western Nevada (Carson, Douglas, Washoe, Storey, Lyon, Churchill counties) the Lake Tahoe Basin and Truckee River Watershed in California (parts of El Dorado, Placer and Nevada counties), and the Carson River Watershed in California (parts of Alpine county) cost \$10 per teacher. Workshops in other parts of Nevada cost \$10 per teacher plus actual travel costs. The cost includes journal-making materials, information on River of Words, and facilitation. For more information or to reserve a workshop: row@nnrec.org.

Nevada Outdoor School in Winnemucca, NV, is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that provides educational experiences which foster connections with plants, animals and habitats in Nevada, while deepening students' knowledge and appreciation of nature. Nevada Outdoor School offers the following services to all of northern Nevada: outdoor education lessons that engage students both in and out of the classroom (NOS comes to your school with its own materials and lesson plan); summer camps; teacher training workshops; outdoor education resources such as interpretive kits for land agencies, non-profit organizations, youth groups, teachers, and non-formal educators. For more information, check out www.nevadaoutdoorschool.com or contact Kendra Ormerod at (775) 623-5656.

AMERICAN HONDA FOUNDATION GRANTS PROGRAM provides funding for organizations working in the areas of youth and scientific education. Grants are awarded 4 times a year, with deadlines on November 1, February 1, May 1, and August 1. Average Grant Range: \$40,000 to \$80,000. Check it out at http://corporate.honda.com/images/banners/america/AHF_brochure.pdf.

Research/Best Practices

“Wild” Nature Play Before Age 11 Fosters Adult Environmentalism

Source: [Cornell University](http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/March06/wild.nature.play.ssl.html)

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Posted: March 13, 2006

The findings will be published in the next issue of Children, Youth and Environment (Vol. 16:1).

Many of you have read Richard Louv's Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature Deficit Disorder (Algonquin Press Books of Chapel Hill, 2005). In this book, Mr. Louv argues that children who interact with nature are less prone to “such maladies as depression, obesity, and attention-deficit disorder,” while environment-based education can foster critical thinking skills and boost test scores.

A study that was published by Cornell researchers this past spring corroborates the importance of early childhood experiences with nature. Both Louv and the study's authors (Nancy Wells and Kristi Lekies) emphasize the importance of unfettered play and “wild” nature activities, such as camping, hiking, walking, fishing, hunting, and “playing in the woods,” and engaging in such activities as building forts and tree houses.

Other studies have taken the approach of looking for the effects of specific early childhood experiences in shaping the attitudes of an adult environmentalist. Wells and Lekies took a different approach: they looked at childhood experiences of a broad representative sample of urban adults to discover what early childhood experiences are predictors of positive attitudes toward the environment.

"Our study indicates that participating in wild nature activities before age 11 is a particularly potent pathway toward shaping both environmental attitudes and behaviors in adulthood. When children become truly engaged with the natural world at a young age, the experience is likely to stay with them in a powerful way -- shaping their subsequent environmental path," said Wells.

Importantly, participating in scouts or structured environmental education programs had no effect on adult attitudes toward the environment. "Participating in nature-related activities that are mandatory evidently do not have the same effects as free play in nature, which don't have demands or distractions posed by others and may be particularly critical in influencing long-term environmentalism," Wells said.

This is not to say that education about the environment is not important – for all the reasons outlined in the first paragraph. But we also need to consider how we can create the types of experiences that will help us achieve our vision that every resident and visitor will understand, appreciate, and take care of Southern Nevada's environment. For example, the design of a new visitor center should include spaces for children to engage in "free-play" with nature-related phenomena. Should we consider the validity of staged experiences, such as the manufacture of a realistic desert wash, complete with animal tracks, burrows, and plants, that allows children to "freely" explore and discover the desert and its denizens? What about an outdoor space in which children can muck around with, say, cargo-netting or tarps, creating tents and forts? These are questions and topics worth exploring and advocating.