

ENC

EEN

Fall 2009

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS OF NORTH CAROLINA

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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS OF NORTH CAROLINA
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EENC CONFERENCE

19th Annual Conference: Green Spaces in Urban Places

SHELBY LAIRD
President-Elect



We're looking forward to seeing you at EENC's 19th Annual Conference, Green Spaces in Urban Places, November 5-8, 2009.

If you think that this year's conference looks a little different than those in the past, it's really a product of the survey our participants took last year following the conference at Oak Island. We discerned that we have three audiences within our membership: formal educators (teacher track), Certified EE (professional development track) and EE Newcomers (working on Certification credit track). We understand that each of these tracks have different goals, so we're hopeful that we have something for everybody, while maintaining the high quality of our programs. We also have another not-so-hidden agenda for this conference. We will be using many of our mobile workshops to preview programs for the 2011 conference of the North American Association for Environmental Education.

I'll get to the details below. First, I know that for many of our members, paying for the conference is probably more of a concern this year than in the past. We do have some scholarships available so please submit an application: [http://](http://www.eenc.org/scholarships.html)

www.eenc.org/scholarships.html.

Diane Silver has also come up with a great program for fundraising for EENC and for your scholarship at the same time. You can reach her at: eenc-business@diane-silver.com to get the details.

For the entire schedule, visit our website at <http://www.eenc.org/overview.html> which lists the times and abstracts for all the weekends workshops and sessions. Still if you want a sneak preview....

Friday, November 6th, offers a number of mobile workshops. Rather than sitting in a conference room, we will be heading out to various nature centers and cultural centers including Historic Yates Mill and Historic Oak View County Park to see how they lived, back when the piedmont was decidedly more rural. We'll also take a trip forward in time to tour Centennial Campus Center for Wildlife Education, which is housed in the headquarters building of the Wildlife Resources Commission's on NCSU's Centennial Campus, where we will check out some demonstration rain gardens and a detention wetland. We also have some great workshops on grant writing. Friday night we'll enjoy a keynote address by Akiima Price of the New York Restoration Project, followed by our silent (and a not-so-silent) auction.



Akiima Price

Saturday's offerings include a number of 6-hour workshops: Project Learning Tree Places We Live, Winter

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

PRESIDENT'S PEN

It's amazing how quickly time flies! If it weren't for the cooler temperatures and abundant apples, I'd have a hard time believing that it's already fall.

I want to take a moment to thank you, our members, for your part in getting the General Assembly to reinstate funding for the Office of Environmental Education! What a wonderful example of coming together as a unified voice to effect change. We hope the information, sample letters, and links to your representatives on our web site and in our emails helped you stand up for the field of environmental education. While we cleared that hurdle, please remember to continue to invite your elected representatives to your events and programs. If they know what you are offering, if they have a chance to see those "Aha!" moments our students have, they will have first hand knowledge of what environmental education does for children and adults alike.

In this issue, we take a look at successes in environmental education, from Pat Curley's award for his work with at risk youth, to Sarah Fuller's grant which gives her students a chance to understand what it's like to be a citizen scientist. We also get to celebrate the big win that the Johnston County Envirothon Team experienced at the national

competition in Asheville. They took 2nd place overall and received the winning scores in three of the 5 subject areas. Kelly Heath gives us some great ideas for bringing environmental education to the youngest among us. What we all know is that having funding for our work is important, but having the professional skills to deliver programs is critical. We like to think that the professional development provided by EENC and our members plays a role in these successes.

EENC members have been working hard for you this summer; getting ready for our 19th Annual Conference: Green Spaces in Urban Places. Please don't let money keep you away. We have scholarships available and Diane Silver has developed fundraising opportunities which help to raise funds for your registration as well.

We've also been designing a new web site to better meet your needs, and have contracted a State Co-chair to help us host North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) in Raleigh on October 11-16, 2011. Of course, these are only a few of our projects.

We saw this spring and summer how small actions from each of us

can do amazing things—like securing funds for a DENR department during a time of economic crisis. Let's keep the ball rolling—help EENC, your professional organization, through small tasks. Together we can move mountains! Volunteer to help at the EENC annual conference. Can't make it this year? You can still help by donating either your time, making a monetary donation or providing an item for our auction.

Are you on Facebook? Join now and keep the EE conversations going! Ask fellow environmental educators if

they are members of EENC.

Send us a picture and tell us about a recent program or event. Contact your section coordinator about hosting a section gathering or bring a friend to a section event! Little tasks, big results. Together we can continue to grow EE in North Carolina.

Respectfully yours,
Dee Thonnard Rudolph

“What we all know is that having funding for our work is important, but having the professional skills to deliver programs is critical.”



IN THE NEWS

Archdale-Trinity Middle School Receives Grant To Turn Students into Citizen Scientists

ENC Membership Co-Chair Sarah Fuller, and her after school environmental club at Archdale-Trinity Middle School, recently received an \$1100 grant from the Community Foundation for Randolph County to fund two projects. Currently, the students in the club collect and analyze water samples from Muddy Creek and assess the creek's health.

The first project is a GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) weather station. GLOBE promotes and supports students, teachers and scientists to collaborate on inquiry-based investigations of the environment and the Earth system working in close partnership with NASA and the National Science Foundation in study and re-

search about the dynamics of Earth's environment.

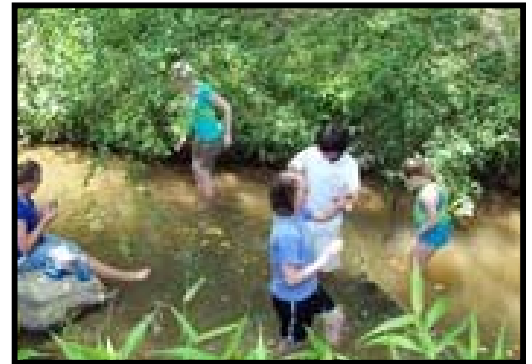
The second project is a rain garden to be built at Trinity's City Hall.

What's the connection?

According to Sarah, "Since we are analyzing water quality in the creek, having accurate weather information allows us to accurately interpret our data. The rain garden is the students' community service project and a tool for making their message about water conservation visible to the community. These gardens are set up at government and community buildings, with signs that explain the function of rain gardens. The goal of these demonstration gardens is to show folks how they can reduce the impact of stormwater runoff through gardening."

Bonnie Renfro, with the Community Foundation for Randolph County, noted that, "One of the appeals of the Archdale-Trinity Middle School project is the hands-on applied learning nature of this project around an important topic."

"I'm thrilled that the Community Foundation for Randolph County is investing in this project," said Sarah. "Today's, students lack the understanding about where their food comes from or what happens to the garbage in the trash can. So, by having clubs and tools like this, students can appreciate the impact



Children exploring and learning.

they have on their watershed. This also empowers students to be agents of change in their community. If we are going to address environmental issues, we need to start with students who aren't afraid to try new things."

But all the environmental exploration isn't limited to the after school club. Sarah noted that, "While I am the advisor of the after school club, the equipment will be used by teachers in the classroom as well. Through this grant, students outside of the club get to experience hands-on learning with the same tools and protocol use by field researchers. In 7th grade, we teach weather data collection and analysis. Now, we will have a state of the art weather station that is permanently mounted in the school yard for everyone to use. In 8th grade, students learn about water and its impact on the watershed. Those students get to visit local streams, while using new water collection equipment and testing kits the school has not had before."

Congratulations, Sarah. And thanks to the Community Foundation for Randolph County for their investment in environmental education and the health of the community!

NAAEE CONFERENCE

EENC and NAAEE No Time to Waste: Company's Coming!

LOIS NIXON

When the EENC board submitted our proposal to host the 2011 annual conference for the North American Association for Environmental Education, we were really hopeful. We had about 23 letters of support from the “Who’s Who” of North Carolina’s environmental leaders. Our proposal cover letter was filled with terrific ideas for field trips (OBX, mountains, visits to potters, nature centers, and kiln openings to name a few). As a board, we knew that we couldn’t lose.

Fast forward a couple of months. When the word came that we had been selected, there was a little sense that you have to be careful what you wish for. We looked around and realized that despite the 24-month warning that visitors were coming, time was wasting. In order for EENC to be the “best in show,” we will need to have the support of every member in our organization. Fortunately, there are jobs to be done if you have a little, or a lot of time. What’s really special about working on this conference is that you’ll have an opportunity to meet the most prominent people in our profession on a local, national and international level.

I’ll be looking to fill volunteer chairs on committees including Communications, Exhibit Hall, Host City, Community Service Project, Field Experiences, K-12 Teacher Outreach, Auction, Volunteers, Student Scholarships, Sustainability, Young Professional and Student Events, Sustainability, Technology, Arts and Culture, and Fundraising.

Big jobs? They are. But they are also terrific positions that yield high results in personal satisfaction, resume value and experience you can’t get anywhere else.

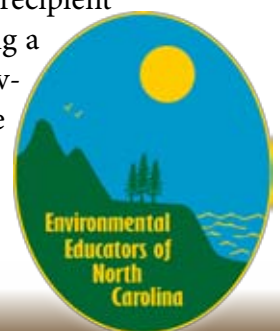
At the other end of the spectrum, there are jobs that offer you a chance to work a shift and then enjoy the conference, such as volunteering to monitor a room during a morning or afternoon session, helping to stuff folders prior to the conference and other well-defined volunteer tasks.

And there are all kinds of volunteer positions between the big and small. All in all, we’ll need 100 volunteers over the course of the conference. It would be great to fill those with EENC members who appreciate the value and prestige that this conference brings to our organization and our state.

If you’d like to volunteer, or if you’d like to know how your organization can have an active role in the conference, please go to <http://www.eenc.org/contact.html> and select NAAEE Conference in the recipient list. We are looking forward to finding a meaningful volunteer position for everyone, and endeavor to find a niche for all of our participating organizations.



Promoting excellence in environmental education



Back to the Basics in 2010

DIANE SILVER

EENC Past President

Last year, the board decided to schedule our conferences out a year in advance, to ensure that we are able to have a selection of sites from which to choose, and to give our members a year to plan, and save, for the upcoming conference.



Blowing Rock Conference Center

I'm pleased to announce that our conference will be held October 7-10, 2010 at the Blowing Rock Conference Center in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, near Boone. Autumn in the mountains. This will be a retreat-like conference, as an interlude between our two urban conferences in Raleigh. We'll take the time to get back to basics."

The inspiration came from member Tom Shepherd and his concern that we need to take a little refresher on learning to identify plants and animals. As he puts it, "Without an understanding and heartfelt kinship for the plants and animals and natural systems around our citizens, how can we hope for a citizenry able to make environmentally conscience decisions?"

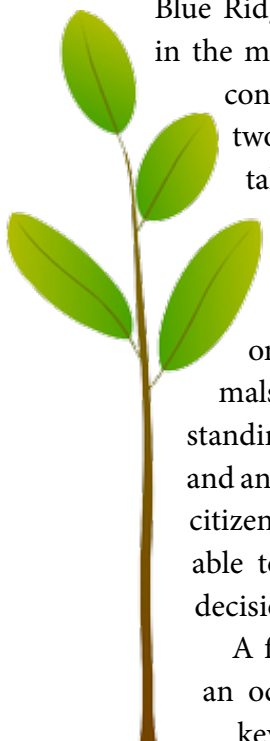
A few years back, we had Paul Dayton, an oceanographer from Scripps, make a keynote address to our conference. You might recall his name from Richard

Louv's Last Child in the Woods. Telling a story about species found outside of their natural environment, he comments, "If you don't know something is an invasive species, you won't detect any change."

So, next year we will take a closer look at the plants and animals in our state, we will also take a closer look at the State Environmental Literacy Plan.

There will also be a lot of great outdoor "mobile workshops" with the Linville gorge and the New River nearby. You'll also want to bring your boots and gloves since we already have some good service projects in the works, including a possible stream restoration project with the Extension folks up there.

So start your "back-in-the-day" layaway plan this month. Set aside \$20 a month for the next year, and you'll probably be pretty close to paying for the conference. Or, generate a grant or donation, and a portion of that will be set aside for your conference registration. If you want to know more about this latter option, drop me a note at enc-business@diane-silver.com.



HONORS & AWARDS

National Environmental Education Fund Honors Onslow County Schools' Patrick Curley

Every year, the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) awards the Richard C. Bartlett Environmental Education Award an outstanding educator who has successfully integrated environmental education into his or her daily education programs. The award is given to an educator who can serve as an inspiration and model for others.

The Richard C. Bartlett Award honors teachers that are bringing environmental education into the curriculum and the community, not just teaching about environmental challenges but also engaging students in the solution.

We are honored to announce that EENC Board Member, Pat Curley, was one of only two teachers nationally who received a certificate of merit. The following is the text from NEEF's announcement: While a teacher at the Onslow County Learning Center, a school for at-risk youth in North Carolina, Bartlett Certificate of Merit recipient Patrick Curley integrated environmental education into every aspect of his teaching.

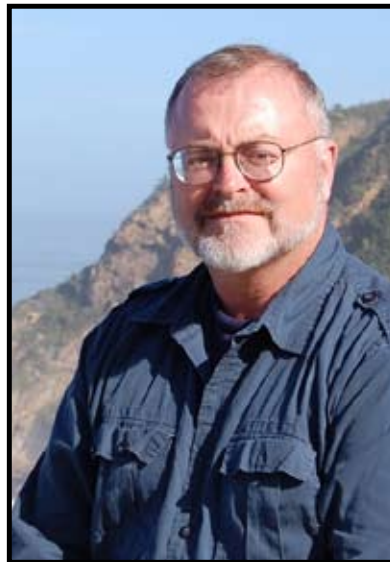
In response to his students' diverse academic and social needs, Curley took an innovative approach to his science instruction, often leading his students on "citizen science" expeditions into the 66-acres of longleaf pine forest surrounding the school to monitor the local creek and record bird breeding activ-

ity. Students have taken what they have learned in the classroom and created positive change in the community—including building a nature trail for the Isaac Walton League, propagating native plants for donation to the Coastal Federation, and building and maintaining an oyster shell recycling facility that will help to rejuvenate oyster populations.

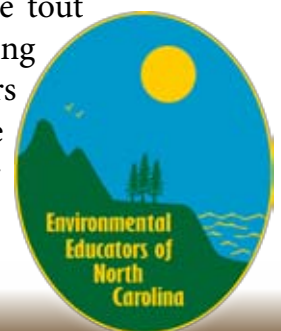
During the 2008-2009 school year, Mr. Curley served as a "teacher-coach" for the Onslow County School District, helping his fellow teachers to use the world around them as a framework for integrating the curriculum. Mr. Curley directed students and teachers to the many resources that are available through private and public agencies in order to support and enhance instruction of environmental issues. Curley's students, many of whom were once afraid of nature, now take the lead on teaching other students about

the natural world, and many OCLC students who were once at-risk of academic failure and had a history of disruptive behavior have developed feelings of accomplishment in Curley's classroom. Students have performed well on state assessments, have fewer behavioral referrals, and in many cases have returned to a traditional school environment.

Congratulations, Pat. When we tout EENC and North Carolina as having the best environmental educators in the nation, we are thrilled to see that other organizations share our opinion.



Pat Curley



COMMUNICATIONS

Finding a Better Way to Communicate: Thanks for Your Patience

ELIZABETH BURKE
Communications Chair

So far, I've tried out all the clichés to describe the many changes in our communications department the past few months. I've backspaced them out of existence. So, I'll just hit the highlights. Hang with me and read on, because I'll need your help on an item or two.

Website: I guess the most visible change has been our website. My friend and co-chair, Lynn Cole, moved from North Carolina to take on a fabulous job as the Interactive Exhibits Supervisor at Queens Borough Public Library in New York. Since I am primarily a wordsmith, this left me with no option but to find someone who could update the website, design a newsletter and keep me far away from anything resembling computer code. (The stories my children

could tell.) Fortunately, we managed to persuade Matt Besch of In Your Head Advertising to take on our account. In addition to being extremely talented and able to turn a page of bullet points into a website, he's a super nice guy. And patient. And a new dad. Congratulations Matt and Allison on the arrival of Eli!

Newsletter: This is the first real newsletter out of the gate in a good many months. We had to take a break in the Communications Department and get the website in order, and fire off all those emails to elected officials to get them to think twice (or more) about eliminating the Office of Environmental Education. That being done, I can get back to the business of writing. Here's where you can help.

Profiles: We've always had profiles, which feature two of our members in every quarterly issue. If you'd like to share a little about yourself, please let me know. I'll send you a list of questions (those bullet points again). You answer them and send them back. I'll turn them into a little bio. If you're shy, you can have someone else recommend you. If you know of someone really cool that all of us should know, send me an email with their email and I'll take it from there.

Organizational Spotlight: One of the perks of having an organizational membership is seeing your organization highlighted for everyone to see. I'll be contacting our organizations. But, if you'd like to jump on this sooner rather than later, please drop me a note and let me know that you're interested and the contact person's name/email address/phone number.

Awards: I know you're getting them. Go ahead and brag. I love highlighting the accomplishments of our members. Send me the award announcements and pictures.

Emails: Speaking of emails, every time I send something out, I get a handful of emails returned as undeliverable. These are school addresses, government addresses and other company/organization addresses that do not like to receive emails going to a lot of addresses. So, if you can send me an email with a home account, I'd really appreciate it.

Help! I Need Somebody: No, not just anybody. I'm currently a one woman communications department here in Vienna, Virginia. I'm proof that you don't need to live in the state of your state's professional organization for environmental educators. But I could use some help

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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: More Than Child's Play?

KELLY HEATH

Director of Marketing & Development
Randolph County Partnership for Children

As environmental educators, we all know that nature is important to children's development in every major way—intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and physically. However, many efforts under way to combat nature deficit disorder tend to focus on school aged children. What about our youngest children, birth to age five?

Research shows that early childhood is the most critical time in a child's development, with 85 percent of a child's intellect, personality and social skills formed and 90 percent of brain development complete by age five. Research has also shown that every \$1 spent on high quality early childhood education saves taxpayers more than \$7 in future costs associated with school remediation, welfare dependency and juvenile delinquency

Smart Start, North Carolina's nationally recognized and award-winning early childhood initiative, is designed to ensure that young children enter school

healthy and ready to succeed. The program focuses on children birth to age five and their families. Smart Start funds are administered at the local level through local nonprofit organizations. There are 77 of the local partnerships in the state. The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. is the statewide nonprofit organization that provides oversight and technical assistance for local partnerships.

For you research-philes out there, there has not been a lot of research done on environmental education, outdoor learning environments and very young children, at least that I can find. There is more research available on play itself, and this certainly connects with early childhood. First, if you're not familiar with the Natural Learning Initiative, be sure to visit their website and their publications page (<http://naturallearning.org/publications/publications.htm>) for lots of great articles and links. Also, for example,

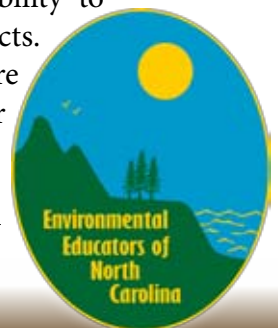
in a paper published in a 2007 edition of Pediatrics, Kenneth R. Ginsburg and colleagues reviewed the key health benefits that play provides to children, including the development of new competencies and decision-making skills, resiliency, and the ability to share with others and resolve conflicts.

Just as we know how important nature is to a young child, play in an outdoor learning environment among those natural elements certainly helps to positively reinforce a child's healthy

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Children exploring the woods on a nature hunt.



SPECIAL TO EENC

Special To EENC continued...

development. Other articles on play and children's development are included at the end of this article.

One of the big roles for Smart Start is to improve the quality of child care in our state. Did you know that 267,157 of our youngest citizens are in child care in North Carolina? I've found it's an area often overlooked when considering places where children gather for hours in a day—schools are always in the mix, but child care is often not thought about as an opportunity for improving outdoor learning environments.

The good news is that a unique project addressing this potential is now under way. This past spring, ten Smart Start partnerships from across the state were selected for what is known as the Preventing Obesity by Design (POD) project. The POD project is designed to improve the outdoor learning environments at thirty child care centers in the 10 counties over a three-year period. The POD long-term

goal is connected to reversing the trend toward childhood obesity through improving outdoor environments in child care centers. Teacher education to support children's physical activity and healthy eating is also a part of the project. The project is a result of a partnership between the Natural Learning Initiative of N.C. State University and the North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., with funding by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of North Carolina, Inc.

Many of the child care centers in the state have traditional outdoor playgrounds, with concrete or paved areas and/or mulched areas and not much greenery in the way of trees or bushes or other plantings. Through training sessions and events, and with design assistance through the Natural

Learning Initiative, these 30 centers will improve their outdoor learning environments by adding vital natural elements and green space. The project will culminate with a showcase event so that all the centers can share information and lessons learned, as well as serve as model sites for other centers.

There are opportunities for you to help these centers in their efforts. For example, centers need help selecting appropriate for their sites. They need help writing grants to secure materials and supplies and can always use ideas for how to incorporate environmental education activities into their daily routines. If you need volunteer teaching hours for your N.C. EE certification, don't forget that child care centers have a captive audience! So, if you live near one of these Partnerships, visit <http://www.smartstart-nc.org>, look them up under Smart Start in your County and give them a call or drop them an email. The POD Project Sites include: Buncombe, Brunswick, Mitchell-Yancey, Guilford, Dare, Randolph, Iredell, Mecklenberg, Robeson and Orange.

Here are some other research resources on childhood and the importance of play and nature.

Kellert, Stephen R. "Nature and Childhood Development." In *Building for Life: Designing and Understanding the Human-Nature Connection*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2005.

Burdette, Hillary L., M.D., M.S.; and Robert C. Whitaker, M.D., M.P.H. "Resurrecting Free Play in Young Children: Looking Beyond Fitness and Fatness to Attention, Affiliation and Affect." © 2005 American Medical Association.

Ginsburg, K. R. (2007). "The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds." *Pediatrics*, 119(1), 182-191.

Lester, S., & Maudsley, M. (2006). "Play, naturally: A review of children's natural play." Children's Play Council.

Moore, R. C., & Cooper Marcus, C. (2008). "Healthy planet, healthy children: Designing nature into the daily spaces of childhood." In S. Kellert, J. Heerwagen & M. Mador (Eds.), *Biophilic design: Theory, science and practice*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



Wonders of a backyard stream.



SECTION NOTES

Western Section

KELLY HOKE

Coordinator

Lake James State Park Ranger Nora Coffey has been awarded a scholarship to attend the astronomy Sky Rangers Workshop at Bryce Canyon National Park. The workshop, scheduled for Oct. 13-16th, will cover hands-on astronomy activities for outdoor settings, sky navigation, and telescope operation.

Participants will receive a free toolkit of materials for outdoor astronomy activities, participate in short online follow-up sessions that cover seasonal skies, and become a member of the Astronomy from the Ground Up online community of over 450 informal educators around the U.S.

Only 15 National Park Service and 15 non-NPS educators will participate in this workshop.

Sky Rangers workshops and materials are developed and delivered by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP), in partnership with NPS and National Association for Interpretation (NAI), and the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC), thanks to generous funding from NASA.

For more information: <http://www.astrosociety.org/afgu/skyrangers/index.html>



Get ready for Fall in the mountains in 2010. Next year's conference will be back in the



Photo from Trees and Tees program at Mount Jefferson State Natural Area with member Ranger Tom Randolph.

western part of the state. Mark your calendars for Oct. 7-10th in Blowing Rock, NC!

Bees at Balsam Mountain Nature Preserve

Things were buzzing during summer camps at Balsam Mountain Trust Nature Preserve. Naturalist Blair Ogburn invited educators from The Honey Bee Project to talk with children about the importance of bees, the work they do and how to get along with these peaceful pollinators.

It's hard to know who had more fun: Blair or the campers. The educators taught children about the importance of pollination, brought costumes so the little ones could role play different bees in the hive, and let them dress up in a beekeeper's suit so they could have the experience of a beekeeper.

If you're interested in bee programs, Blair suggests you reach them at the following website: <http://the-honeybeeproject.com/>.



Future Beekeeper



SECTION NOTES

Central Section

MICKEY JO SORRELL

Coordinator

We've been planning for the conference. Speaking of which, don't forget to bring an auction item to the conference. If you're not coming, we'd still love to have your item. Let me know if you want to rendezvous and I'll get your contribution. Of course, I'd really rather see you at the conference and have a chance to catch up.

Communications continued...

-- from researching press lists to writing for the newsletter to helping update our display. And it's only going to get busier as we get closer to the NAAEE 2011 Conference. If you see that you can fill one of these niches, I would be thrilled! If you have a complementary skill, let me know. Contact me. Soon!

Contact me: So I've been telling you to contact me. But how, you ask? The easiest way, is to go to our website (eenc.org), go to the contact page, go to the "choose recipient" and scroll down until you get to communications. Fill out the form and hit send. I'll get back with you. While you're at the website look around. If you have some suggestions or if you run into a link that doesn't work, please let me know.

Eastern Section

SARAH PHILLIPS

Coordinator

It's been a bit quiet at the coast. If you have an idea for a section program, please reach me through the eenc website contact form.

Annual Conference continued...

Tree ID on the NCSU Campus, SchoolYard All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory, and Waldo and the Green Growth Toolbox. In addition, we have some terrific half day sessions.

We are also honored that Dr. June St. Clair Atkinson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, will be joining us Saturday



Dr. June St. Clair Atkinson

night to announce the recipients of The North Carolina Environmental Education Awards. Dr. Atkinson is the first woman elected to the post of State Superintendent. She oversees more than 1.46 million students in almost 2,500 public schools.

The last little piece of business is our awards program. Each year, we honor the best in our profession with The North Carolina Environmental Education Awards. This process has been made considerably less painful, thanks to an online form on our website. Here's that link: <http://www.eenc.org/nominations.html>. We have so many talented and successful educators, we want to make sure that their accomplishments don't go unrecognized.

I look forward to seeing you at the conference and welcome your suggestions and feedback.