

**Call for Presentations
NAAEE 34th Annual Conference
October 25-29, 2005**

**Sustainability and Environmental Education:
Focus on the Future**

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

World Commission of Environment and Development. (1987). Our Common Future. Oxford: Oxford Press. p 43.

“Sustainability [is] a paradigm for thinking about a future in which environmental, societal, and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of development and improved quality of life.

Education for Sustainable Development Toolkit.
<http://www.esdtoolkit.org/discussion/default.htm>. Para 5



Sustainability carries with it a vision for a better world. Many leaders and citizens envision a more socially tolerant, just, and equitable society. They envision a world in which business, industry, government, and citizens practice environmental stewardship, leave smaller ecological footprints, and are involved in community-based decision making. They envision a world in which environmental, societal, and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of development and improved quality of life for all members of society.

Many paths to sustainability exist. We all should and must share responsibility for achieving a more sustainable society through efforts to attain environmentally sustainable practices in government, business, transportation, construction and design, and in our own households and communities. Environmental Education (EE) and its related field of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) should make essential contributions to our ability to move toward a more sustainable future.

Within the EE Community, NAAEE is leading the conversation about the ways educators can contribute to a more sustainable world and the role it should play during the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

This **call for presentations** serves as our invitation to people across disciplines, within the education community and beyond, to join the conversation about EE's role in educating for a sustainable world. Within the education community, we hope that educators and administrators from the formal, nonformal, and informal sectors submit presentation proposals. We hope that those involved from early childhood education through higher education engage in the discussion. We hope that professionals from business, industry, government, nonprofits, and other sectors join us in the discussion in Albuquerque. We are bringing diverse communities together so that we can:

- Learn from and with one another;
- Identify and acknowledge our common goals related to sustainability;
- Learn new vocabulary and other linguistic, visual, and experiential ways to describe sustainability from people in many disciplines and professions;
- Enhance one another's work by joining together where we live and work to educate for a sustainable future.

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We will address questions such as:

- What are the core content, competencies, and habits of mind that EE and ESD should support? How can they work together to contribute to sustainability?
- In educating for a more sustainable future, what should our priorities be? What characteristics of our society are we trying to reinforce and strengthen and which should we discourage through education?
- How can we broaden our traditional roles and perspectives to encompass environmental, social, and economic themes and integrate them to create a more knowledgeable and empowered global citizenry?
- How can we work together to create schools and communities that strive for a more sustainable future?

Through these discussions, we hope that each participant can envision a role for her/himself in the global EE and ESD efforts.

CONFERENCE STRANDS

The strands for this conference are taken from the major components of sustainability.

Environment

The health of the natural systems upon which all life depends is of paramount importance to present and future generations. Environmental literacy, and especially its subset ecological literacy, includes an understanding of the “carrying capacity” of the earth; basic facts of the natural systems on which life on this planet depends; the resilience and the vulnerability of Earth’s many self-regulatory systems and cycles; the value and irreplaceable nature of biodiversity; the management of renewable and non-renewable resources; the reliance of humans upon precious and irreplaceable ecosystem services; and the interconnectedness of humans and all the earth’s systems. The Environment Strand includes a wealth of topics traditionally embraced by EE practitioners.

Within the Environment Strand, participants will get a broader view of what’s happening “on the ground” in environmental education today and how those efforts align with and contribute to the goals of ESD. The Environment Strand will offer an overall sense of the far-reaching impacts and forward-looking vision of the environmental education community. The Environment Strand will explore such questions as: How do we develop a sense of place? How does what we teach about the local environment connect to understanding the global environment? What do I contribute to a more sustainable future through teaching about the environment? Examples of presentations, though not exhaustive, are: environmental education delivery and “best practice” (e.g., field-tested national curricula, use of public lands, and backyard discovery). The program committee is also requesting proposals that deal with environmental sustainability, such as green technologies and alternative energy development (e.g., green architecture, bio-fuels, and geothermal heating/cooling) and restructuring resource use (e.g. tree-free paper, greywater recycling, and mass transit), to update participant knowledge on sustainability efforts within our communities and nations.

Society

Every day, the world seems to be a little smaller, as the global population communicates more rapidly and exchanges goods and ideas more freely. Respect for diversity and learning to live together peaceably is of growing importance as global mobility increases and people of different nations and cultures interact more frequently and live in closer proximity. Modern sustainable societies are based on human rights and characterized by social equity and tolerance of people whose ethnicity, language, culture, religion, race, or traditions are different than one’s own. Unfortunately, throughout history such differences led to suspicion and separation, which often led to hatred and violence. Education has a huge role in developing tolerant and peaceful societies in which responsibilities of global citizenship include honoring cultural diversity and participation in community decision-making are important outcomes.

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The Society Strand will explore the human-to-human elements of our work such as: How do multicultural issues and a sense of place contribute to or affect a healthy and sustainable environment? How do organizations that work across borders (internationally and culturally) facilitate dialogue and collaboration within the EE community? How do we create and use culturally relevant and responsive pedagogical techniques that will engage learners of different ethnic backgrounds? The Society Strand also addresses issues related to the EE profession such as: How do we create sustainable EE organizations and communities? How do we develop EE leaders on a local level who will integrate concepts of sustainability into their organizations? How do the social concepts of sustainability impact the growth and improvement of the EE profession? Within the Society Strand, participants will also be introduced to opportunities of professional development that explore interpersonal and intrapersonal assessment and efficacy. The program committee is also requesting proposals that deal with society issues related to sustainability, such as eco-justice, lifestyle restructuring, and community mapping.

Economy

Sustainable economics includes an understanding of appropriate and accurate indicators of well-being; an understanding of market dynamics, market failures, and common-pool resources; life cycle analysis and full-cost accounting; a rich understanding of progress and capital (i.e., natural, social, human, manufactured, and financial capital), the ability to see the human needs that underlie modern market behavior, and the ability to envision sustainable ways of meeting those needs; and understanding the resources and constraints Earth's natural systems provide to our economy. Of great importance is honoring the precautionary principle (i.e., where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, scientific uncertainty shall not be used to postpone cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation) when implementing new technologies and innovations.

The program committee is requesting proposals that deal with economic sustainability, such as case studies of green architecture, sustainable business practices, green shopping, sustainable economic development, and smart growth initiatives in communities and cities, as well as ones that look at the financial factors and incentives that can help encourage the adoption of such far-sighted practices in North America and around the world. The Economy Strand also offers participants an opportunity to expand their understanding of economics within the contexts of social and natural systems. Examples of such presentations are: pedagogical techniques and curriculum for teaching courses that bridge ecology and economics, media literacy to decipher product advertisements, responsible consumption (e.g., reduce, reuse, recycle, and purchase of eco-friendly products), sustainable/ecological economics, and alternative economic indicators. The Economy Strand will also have a professional development component that addresses How can EE associations achieve financial sustainability?

Global Responsibility and Perspectives

As environmental educators, we are increasingly reminded of the fact that our natural and human-made systems are all related. Embracing this idea of interconnectedness requires us to take account of our personal responsibility for the impact of our actions on our communities and on communities beyond our own. Continuing in the vein of "casting a wider net" (i.e., the theme from the 2004 NAAEE conference), this strand will invite participants into the greater context of environmental education—that of the global community and our shared environment. This strand has several components that call on the traditional strengths of EE and add dimensions of global interconnections and globalization. These components are: (1) Multiple Perspectives—the ability to consider a sustainability issue from the view of different stakeholders is essential to a sustainable future. Considering an issue from another's viewpoint different from one's own leads to intra-national and international understanding and more harmonious global connections. (2) Systems Thinking—includes the ability to understand the connection between ecological, economic, and social systems. Systems thinking becomes more complex as it extends to issues of globalization. (3) Global Indicators—measure our progress toward sustainability and the degradation and restoration of the environment. For example, calculating and comparing ecological footprints is one method for tracking our resource consumption. Many other indicators also track components of sustainability related to population growth, human well-being, global change, and biodiversity. In general, this strand will explore the relevance and importance of environmental education to the topic of global interdependence and cooperation needed among nations to meet the challenges of such pressing issues as global warming and the rapid loss of biodiversity.

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The Global Responsibilities and Perspectives Strand will also examine the importance of locally relevant and culturally appropriate environmental education within our respective communities. This strand will explore: What new perspectives do my students need to learn to understand the viewpoints of others within this community and around the world? How does what I teach impact the choices that my students make and what are the impacts of their decisions? How does my professional and personal lifestyle impact the world? Within our homes, in our local communities, and throughout the world, these questions are prompting discussion and action in concern for our evolving global future. Examples of presentations include: calculating ecologic footprints, expanding the perspectives of students through values analysis and clarification, identifying habits of mind and paradigms of Western culture, and teaching from a global systems perspective. The program committee is also requesting proposals that deal with global responsibility and perspectives such as case studies on local action to ameliorate global problems, businesses that follow the United Nations Global Compact, governments that implement the Millennium Development Goals, institutions of higher education that have adopted the Earth Charter, international financial institutions and their impact on societies and environments around the world, and issues related to sustainable livelihoods (e.g., job protection and Fair Trade products).

Traditional and Leading-Edge EE

For those whose presentation topic does not appear to fit within one of the four sustainability/ESD-related strands above, this fifth strand has been created to feature the best EE programs in North America and around the world as well as research of particular relevance to EE practitioners and advocates. As regards the latter, presentations are invited on research that advances the knowledge-base of EE (including what we know about educators, learners, practice, curriculum, etc.) and/or helps bridge theory and practice of EE. This strand will highlight both quality traditional EE and the bold new initiatives in the field of EE.

As the discipline of EE grows and matures, professionals need to step back and ponder the lessons learned to inform current and future directions in EE. The Traditional and Leading-Edge EE Stand will explore such questions as: Is what we learned in the first two decades of EE still applicable in the new millennium within the pop-culture and computer-based lifestyles of today? What new perspectives do children and youth currently carry that we can incorporate into our EE programs to make them relevant to their daily lives? Possible submissions include, but are not limited to: programs that include all the goals of EE—awareness to participation (as per the Tbilisi Declaration), EE program evaluation tools, research on the affective domain as a pre-condition for learning, survey research to inform EE practice and program design, capacity building for EE organizations, EE certification, environmental careers for Gen X and Y, and EE in community colleges and other institutions of higher education. The program committee is also soliciting proposals that bridge EE to the ESD paradigm.

FOCUS: SPECIAL AUDIENCES

This year, NAAEE has made it a goal to offer a significant number of sessions that are relevant and inclusive of three specific groups in every strand: Spanish Language speakers, K-12 teachers, and Researchers. The program committee looks forward to receiving proposals which address the needs/interests/studies related to:

Spanish-Language speakers

One or more sessions of each strand will be offered in Spanish. Because of budgetary restrictions, formal translation will not be available but informal translation will be available to the extent that we have volunteers. Please refer to updates on translational services on the conference Web site at <http://naaee.org/conferences/index.php> which will be set up during spring 2005.

K – 12 Teachers

Sessions that address curriculum planning and academic content standards or build hands-on EE skills and techniques are highly welcome. Such sessions will be designated in the program with an icon. K –

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12 teachers and administrators are encouraged to submit presentation proposals. NAAEE conferences are ideal opportunities for professional development.

EE Research

Since EE research continues to provide much of the basis for progress in the field of EE, research presentations will be included in each of the four conference strands. Updates on in-progress research activities as well as reports on completed research projects are encouraged. International, Native American and Hispanic/Latino perspectives and alternative research methodologies are especially encouraged.

Note: EE Research presented at the NAAEE Conference should bridge EE theory and EE practice. Please consider whether your presentation may be more appropriately submitted to the annual conference or to the EE Research Symposium.