



Alaska Natural Resource and Outdoor Education Association

An Affiliate of the North American Association for Environmental Education

2024 Environmental Educators Symposium, March 1, 2024

Symposium Schedule and Session Descriptions

Check-in 8:45-9:15

Welcome 9:15-9:40

Keynote: 9:40-10:30 Representative Maxine Dibert

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Presentations in Alder and Cottonwood Rooms

Professional Development Presentations in Birch Room

Capacity Building Presentations in Spruce and Willow Rooms

Session 1: 10:45-11:45

Yuraq: Energy and Life in Balance: Yup'ik Knowledge and Energy Education- Valerie Tony, Yup'ik/Sup'ik Knowledge Bearer and Colleen Fisk, REAP (Alder/Cottonwood Room)

Yuraq is a way to tell stories of the past and provide direction for the future demonstrated as dancing and singing and is an integral part of Yup'ik/Sup'ik culture. In this session, you'll be introduced to Yuraq as a way of embodying the importance of energy and life in balance. Culturally relevant Alaska energy curriculum will also be shared and ways in which Yup'ik/Sup'ik Traditional Knowledge and Wisdom has been braided into lessons from the free resource AK EnergySmart. Overlapping topics such as qasriq (traditional Yup'ik meeting house), slanak (environmental energy), Indigenous Knowledge as place-based (Yuraq cont.) knowledge, and others will be discussed. This will be an interactive session including yuraq (Yup'ik singing and dancing) led by Yup'ik/Sup'ik Knowledge bearer Valerie Tony and co-led by REAP's Colleen Fisk.

Project Learning Tree- Trees and Me- Lia Keller and Molly Gillespie (Birch Room)

Project Learning Tree's Trees & Me: Activities for Exploring Nature with Young Children includes 12 activities and more than 250 learning experiences for families and teachers to connect children ages 1–6 to nature, with a focus on trees. Gain resources and knowledge on how to successfully take young children outdoors for learning experiences from the nature based preschool, Alaska Forest School

Equitable Pay and Hiring in Environmental Education Guidance- Kari Eschenbacher Young, ANROE (Spruce and Willow Room)

The eeGuidance for Equitable Pay and Hiring in Environmental Education is a document that examines several key areas that environmental education employers must change to make careers more accessible to a broader population. These key areas include pay and benefits, position design, recruitment processes and practices. This guidance was created by a partner and affiliate of the North American



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Environmental Association of Environment Education (NAAEE). The guidance document will be shared and discussed in this session.

Lunch 12:00-1:00

Join Lia Keller and other nature preschool teachers at a lunch networking session. We can share ideas, brainstorm solutions to problems and discuss a path to licensing outdoor preschool programs in Alaska.

Session 2: 1:00-2:00

Inclusive Programs: Working with kids on a spectrum : Megan Kelley, Stone Soup Group (Alder/Cottonwood Room)

Stone Soup Group is a statewide non-profit that provides information, support, training and resources to assist families caring for children with special needs. Megan will be discussing the benefits of outdoor therapy as it relates to her experience as a mother of a child with autism. She will talk about occupational therapy and kinesthetic learning with children on the autism spectrum.

Virtual Visitation- Glenn Hart, National Park Service (Birch Room)

In an era defined by digital connectivity, engaging with today's youth requires innovative approaches that resonate with their tech-savvy minds. This presentation, "Empowering Youth Through Virtual Presentations," is designed to equip educators and professionals with some (not all of course) tools and strategies needed to connect with students in a virtual learning environment.

Stronger Together: Creating and Strengthening Partnerships for Environmental Education - Robin Mayo, WISE (Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment) (Spruce and Willow Room)

Stronger Together: Creating and Strengthening Partnerships for Environmental Education This session will explore how partnerships can be used to provide environmental education, especially in rural Alaska. Using the example of both long-running and new programs in the Copper River Valley, we will explore best practices in creating and maintaining partnerships, and brainstorm potential partners, including nonprofit, agency, indigenous, and business.



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Session 3: 2:20-3:20

Art Integration- Shelly Lawson, Kodiak NFWS (Alder/Cottonwood Room)

You don't need to be an artist to integrate art into your lessons! In this hands-on session you can learn benefits and strategies for integrating art into any existing curriculum. Art integration enhances memory retention and a deeper understanding of the topic, while also providing an opportunity for student self-reflection. In addition to educational benefits, art integration builds self-confidence, is empowering for the students, and builds connection and trust within the classroom.

Wellness for the Outdoor Educator- Diana Rhodes, Anchorage Park Foundation Director of Programs (Birch Room).

Join Diana Rhodes in a mindfulness practice, seven daily stretches and a tour of a forest project on the BP Energy Center campus.

Building a Leadership Ladder! How meaningful engagement of tween and teens can help a program grow and thrive while building lifelong learners- Leila Pyle (Spruce/Willow Room)

Interested in ideas for how to meaningfully engage older youth and teens in your programs? Let's talk about it! In this session we will explore two examples of "leadership ladders" implemented in environmental education programs in Alaska that have successfully engaged youth ages PreK all the way through 18+. We will focus particularly on how leadership opportunities created for 12-18 year-olds have the ability to keep youth engaged as they age out of other programming, provide pathways to future careers, and can help build volunteer and staff capacity for your organization (all while you get to work with awesome youth!).