

Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature

Mark J. Belton, Chair
Secretary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Jack R. Smith, Ph.D., Chair
Interim State Superintendent of Schools, Maryland State Department of Education

October 21, 2015 – Quarterly Partnership and Leadership Team Meeting

9:30 am – 12:00 pm at [Maryland State Department of Education](#), 6th floor conference room,
200 West Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201

Agenda

9:30 Welcome and Introductions – Jack Smith, MSDE, Interim Superintendent

9:45 Briefing – Short updates on the current landscape:

National – Sarah Bodor, North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)

- Brief overview of what is happening with environmental literacy nationally, including some highlights of outstanding examples from other states and any opportunities this may present for Maryland.
- Every Child Achieves Act (ECAA) – current status and/or anticipated outcome, what it may mean for us.

Regional, Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Environmental Literacy Goal – Shannon Sprague, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office, Chesapeake Bay Program E-Lit Workgroup Chair

- Status of state E-Lit action plans and the regional rollup, and the process for moving this forward and finalizing. Are there implications for funding or other resources? Expectations for implementation and tracking the actions. Overview of major actions outlined in regional / MD plan.
- “ELIT” survey tool – what is it, response update, how will collected data be used?
- Maryland’s survey of school systems as part of the state E-Lit regulations (COMAR) – what it is, how it has been implemented, status of responses, next steps and how information gained will be used – Gary Hedges, MSDE

10:15 **Statewide** – The Partnership’s Role – facilitated by Mark Belton, Secretary, MD DNR

- **Maryland’s commitments to children in nature**
- **Executive Order for CIN – time to update**

As a response to review by the Governor’s Office, DNR and MSDE agreed the EO should be updated. This is an opportunity to refresh the structure, partners, and responsibilities, and align it well with Bay Agreement priorities. As a group, we will review sections of the EO and strategize changes to carry us into the future.

- **Discussion;** Action Items

11:30 CIN Progress Updates –

- **School Grounds** – Laura Collard, MAEOE, and Karen Mullin, USFWS
Report on the recent meeting with Interagency Committee on School Construction, and followup.
- **Higher Education** – Gary Hedges, MSDE
The CIN higher ed workgroup is proposing coordination on teacher preparation re E-Lit.
- **Nature Play Spaces** – Sandi Olek, DNR
A new demonstration project recently launched in Gaithersburg will be featured at the annual workshop, Oct 28.

11:50 General Announcements

12:00 Adjourn – *Thank you to all participants and to MSDE for hosting us today!*

Did you know?

The **Every Kid in a Park** campaign is underway, created by President Barack Obama so fourth graders and their families could discover our wildlife, resources, and history, with free access to parks, public lands, and waters for an entire year. The Department of Interior's program website is live with information for students, parents, and educators for getting the free passes, finding sites to visit and planning school field trips. There are numerous participating Federal sites in Maryland. www.everykidinapark.gov

Find Your Park is an online resource for connecting people with National parks and public lands, provided by the National Park Service, National Park Foundation, REI, Disney and other partners. Visitors can browse by state or search by zip code or by name for specific sites. The National Park Service is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2016, so there is also a search for centennial events and celebrations. Users can share photos and stories of how they enjoy parks and what their experiences mean to them, and there's also a contest and connections to social media. findyourpark.com

Find Your Chesapeake is a newly launched site, a product of a partnership between the Chesapeake Conservancy and the National Park Service. Geared to the public, families, and educators, the site provides ideas for trips, places to go and things to do, and a calendar of events, with different and easy ways to search. And there's a free app for your phone that helps you find places nearby by activity, trail name, or type of site; take a suggested tour, build your own tour, and more. <http://findyourchesapeake.com/>

National Kids to Parks Day is May 21, 2016 (the 6th annual event). This nation-wide day of outdoor play for children, families, teachers, cities, towns, and parks is organized by National Park Trust (NPT) in cooperation with a host of local and national collaborators. In 2015, more than 630,000 people celebrated the day. NPT is encouraging children across the country to explore their neighborhood parks and discover science, history, nature, and adventure right around the corner or just across town. Visit kidstoparks.org for information, resources for families and schools, and more. www.parktrust.org/youthprograms/national-kids-to-parks-day