

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

January 20, 2016 – Quarterly Partnership Meeting

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

at U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Chesapeake Bay Field Office,
177 Admiral Cochrane Dr., Annapolis, MD 21401 (2nd floor conference room)

Agenda

Notes taken by Heather Lageman, MSDE

10:00 **Welcome and Introductions** –

Genevieve LaRouche, Field Office Supervisor, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Chesapeake Bay Field Office

- This office has quite a history with environmental education and outdoor education. They are committed to the work and have passion for it. They depend a great deal upon their partnerships. Examples of their work include:
 - Riviera Beach Elementary – schoolyard habitat (one of many projects over many years)
 - Pollinator and water quality work and environmental literacy
 - Online tools for environmental literacy
 - Genevieve co-chairs Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition (Pillars include: resiliency, biodiversity, equity and discovery) – Masonville Cove is one of their first projects of urban networks (<http://masonvillecove.org/>) and looking to expand the work. They also have a summer internship program for career development programs. The National Aquarium is involved.

Mark Belton, Secretary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources (not present, called to Legislature)

- *Joanne Throwe, Deputy Secretary representing the office*
- The Department made the commitment to really support this partnership effort. They have worked to reach out to other state agencies to join the effort. So far, Department of the Environment, Dept of Planning, Dept of Mental Health and Hygiene – all are on board.
- Unfortunately Joanne was not able to talk about the state budget today.
- Her daughters had mentors from the great programs within the Howard County Public Schools.
- We have opportunities to get students to experience our parks and waterways – there are ways we can encourage kids to utilize the environment.
- We are looking for more ways to have DNR and other agencies to partner and make a lot more happen.

Dr. Henry Johnson, MD State Dept. of Education, Interim Deputy Superintendent/ Chief Academic Officer

- This work falls within my division, and we are very committed to this work. We know that our school systems are doing outstanding work.
- We agree that our students should show a commitment to learning about the environment.
- We have become very involved with multiple groups here today and look forward to continued collaboration.

10:20 **New Opportunities to Grow Environmental Literacy:**

- **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** – *Sarah Bodor, North American Assoc. for Environmental Education (NAAEE)* – The Federal ESSA has passed – what will it mean in MD and how can we best support schools? What is the niche or role for The Partnership as a group and for individual EE providers? **Q&A**
 - On December 10th, the bill was signed into law to replace No Child Left Behind (NCLB).
 - The new bill has some language that we hope will be helpful to EE going forward – in **Title IV**:
 - Program to fund “well rounded education programs” – EE is called out as eligible

- STEM subjects language “hands on” and “field based” can be translated into outdoor education
- Formula grants from Federal to State and State to LEA
- We need to educate school systems so that they can apply for these funds
- Existing 21st Century Learning Opportunities Grants can focus on EE and now EE is explicitly called out (formula to states and then competitive to LEAs)
- NAAEE and others are looking at disseminating information about new language and the ways in which states and LEAs can use these funds to build on what we have already done.
- She is happy to share information about percentages of allocations to those who are interested.

Q&A:

- Dr. Johnson: We have called an internal stakeholder group together to discuss how we will transition from NCLB to ESSA. We will be inviting stakeholders like this group to be a part of that conversation once that transition structure is organized.
- Sarah Bodor: What is the timeframe? Are they new or revised programs? Will the well-rounded education grants be available in the 2017-2018 school year? Yes (Dr. Johnson)
- Daryl Anthony: *What is the reason for switching?* Dr. Johnson: NCLB was passed in 2002. States have been asked to submit waivers because things change in education. *Was NCLB a success?* Dr. Johnson: We would like to say it was a success because it gave us the opportunity to look at the success of every child for accountability purposes through state level assessments.
- Sarah Bodor: This new bill very deliberately shifts responsibility toward states and LEAs.
- Wayne Gilchrest: Could funds go from federal to state to LEA? Sarah: Yes – Well Rounded Education Grants go to school systems. 21st Century Grants can go directly to partners.
- Britt: Do we have any idea of the level of funding that will trickle down? Sarah: The legislation authorizes:
 - \$ 1.6 billion for Well Rounded Education (across the U.S.)
 - \$1 billion for 21st Century
 Dr. Johnson: Many things are lumped into these funds so decisions about distributing the funding will need to be a collaborative effort.
 Janet Norman: Will priority be given to FARMS? Sarah: There is language around “high need” but it is not defined. 21st Century Grants in particular are meant to support this.
 Dr. Johnson: He gets the sense that there will be some flexibility at the state level. It depends about the amount of funding and how the partners decide to distribute. That is why your input is critical to this process.
- Britt: What can the partnership do? Is there some communication effort that we can send to stakeholders? Dr. Johnson: At this point, MSDE will look at the various partners we have a relationship with now and invite new partners to have a discussion about how to best advocate for these funds. We too would like to see the commitment of external partners (matching funds, etc.) as a priority.

- **Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and Environmental Literacy** – *Shannon Sprague, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office, Chesapeake Bay Program E-Lit Workgroup Chair* – Plans for a regional Bay Watershed education leadership event.
 - A meeting is planned for April 20th for state superintendents of education and secretaries of natural resources to talk about environmental literacy in terms of ESSA and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. They will talk about partnerships and good examples. A letter is going out from the Virginia Governor’s Office. The purpose is to showcase how it can be done effectively and broadly.
 - Math Science Partnership and 21st Century coordinators have looked at funding opportunities
 - Two year Action Plans are released for public comment on Friday. Shannon will send the link to Britt so that she can disseminate it – please submit comments.
 - E-Lit will be discussed by Jamie later in today’s meeting.

Q&A:

- Joanne Throwe: What is the level of support you are getting from the EPA/NOA regional offices? Shannon: Region 3 of EPA has worked very closely with sustainable schools. From NOAA we have both the BWET (\$2.7 million) from headquarters.

- Britt: April 20 is next Quarterly Partnership Meeting – we are discussing shifting to the afternoon, for 1-2 hours after this smaller, high level meeting. Please save the slot on your calendars.
- **The Watershed Report Card** in Howard County – *Mary Weller, Coordinator, Secondary Science, Howard County Public School System* – an example of a systemic environmental literacy initiative supporting MWEEs and student action, with potential for sharing with other school systems.
 - We are very fortunate to have 2 environmental educators who are stationed at 2 partners. This makes Howard County able to have very open lines of communication in the areas of environmental ed and STEM. We are able to leverage the special resources those partners offer.
 - Ann Strozyk & Meg Boyd, Howard County Conservancy described the program.
 - We capitalize on the strengths of the school system and all partners (see handout).
 - DNR tools for stream study are very exciting.
 - In looking at program offerings, we felt like we needed to work more on reaching high school students. How could we work on involving biology students and building a program? Student Scientists in Action is the result. They scouted out streams for hands-on engagement. MWEE Yearly Timeline:
 - Quarter 1: Data collection
 - Schoolyard field experience
 - Visual benchmarks
 - All kids can be successful.
 - Quarter 2: Data analysis
 - DNR worked with the students to improve identification and write a student guide on how to survey streams
 - DNR ran the student data against their past DNR stream health data – this improves the science that goes along with the experience
 - Quarter 3: Advocacy
 - Quarter 4: Watershed Summit (300+ people) students present their data, their interpretation, and their ideas – local decision makers invited.
 - Watershed coaches, parent family nights, and teacher professional development are several elements that make this successful.
 - It is very interesting to go through the questions the students create (questions they formulate and ask about the watershed and related).
 - They held a meeting last week re sharing this program with other school systems – had 30 people (9 jurisdictions) interested in creating a Statewide Watershed Report Card.
 - <http://hcconservancy.org/watershedsummit>

Q&A:

- Daryl: His son has become very interested in (and is now employed in) water management due to his time in Howard County Schools, learning in ways similar to this program!

11:00 **The Partnership's Actions** – *facilitated by Mark Belton, Secretary, MD DNR*
Progress updates on accomplishments from 2015:

- **Community Planning, Access to Nature, and Nature Play Spaces** – *Sandi Olek, DNR*
 Highlights of technical assistance provided in various forms: the annual workshop, college student greening project designs, demonstration projects and working with local planners.
 - Our group looks at everyday access to green spaces and “nearby nature.” We look at reaching out to partners who are doing long range community planning. They have met with local parks departments as they do long range planning. The focus is equitable access for children. They are working to capture and share best practices. They have been asked to attend local planning meetings. UMD Landscape Design Program has been a wonderful partner. State and local parks are key partners. Graduate students also work collaboratively on these efforts. Community level greening is the focus.
 - This year they hosted their third Nature Play Space Workshop. Educators, schools, designers, landscape architects, etc. are all involved. Have had 100-130 participants each year.
 - They have met with planners in every county in the state to delve into equitable access.

Q&A:

- Joanne Throwe: What do we do to overcome barriers/lack of interest? The new CIN Executive Order (once in place) will really help to identify the health benefits. We are looking to share good management practices that are happening across the state.

- **Environmental Literacy Highlights:**

- **Agriculture Education, Farm-Based Educator curriculum project** – *Peggy Eppig, Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation (MAEF) (not present – Britt shared update)*
 - They are doing a half-day workshop at the upcoming MAEOE conference. They are rolling out 10 of their 20 new lessons, and the 5-E Model and will explain how that works in a farm based setting.
 - www.maefonline.com
 - The Buzz newsletter is sent out by email.
 - (Laura Collard added) Curriculum is being developed by educators across the state – it is exciting classroom material.
- **2015 Regional E-Lit and MWEE planning workshops** – synopsis of workshops and key findings on local education agencies’ plans – *Gary Hedges, MSDE and Laura Collard, MAEOE*
 - They hosted a series of six regional meetings and the results were to show the connection of MWEE and E-Lit. Over 125 people participated.
 - Essential partners were invited.
 - POCs from E-Lit included science and social studies.
 - How do we get kids outdoors and engaged in meaningful watershed experiences?
 - They used the Kids in Kayaks videos (from Baltimore City Recreation & Parks) to show how a student MWEE could help fulfill the environmental literacy project.
 - They looked at data and strategies – every school system has MWEEs going on.
 - All this was done to show the connections to E-Lit in Maryland. Those experiences that are integrated into the curriculum are sustainable. Integration into the curriculum is critical.
 - These experiences must occur once in elementary, middle and high school (per Bay Agreement)
 - Get the curriculum specialists involved!
 - Funding for transportation can be a major issue.
 - They are working on a report, coming soon.

Q&A:

- Amy Green: How is the Bay Program approaching the multi-disciplinary nature? Is it safe to say that there is work to be done in bringing more content areas into MWEEs. The E-Lit standards are supposed to be multi-disciplinary.
Howard County is an excellent example. Pre-k through 12 they have a science – social studies connection. NOAA is promoting integration in what they fund.
Montgomery: The advocacy connection automatically brings social studies into the science realm – it is embedded in the MWEE.
- Service Learning as a part of this? Sometimes it is very explicit, but other times it is still student action contributing toward a need in society. It varies by school.
- Green Schools are integrating curriculum more, particularly at the elementary level.
- **Environmental Literacy Implementation Tool (“ELIT”)** state level survey results summary – *Shannon Sprague, NOAA and Jamie Baxter, Chesapeake Bay Trust*
 - When the partnership was established, it was clear that we need to be able to measure progress toward the goals.
 - They have been working at the regional and state level to develop a model to evaluate. “Environmental Literacy Indicator Tool” – a school level survey that measured:
 1. Degree of preparedness to provide EE
 2. Extent to which MWEE’s are provided to students
 3. Number of and capacity to certify sustainable schools
 - These track nicely to Maryland’s E-Lit Program standards and the Chesapeake Bay states’ agreement.
 - The data that was shared was self-reported around participation in other sustainable school efforts or certifications.
 - Maryland’s priority needs ranking was shared:
 1. Funding
 2. Teacher professional development (student led inquiry, PBI, Action projects)
 3. Curriculum Planning/Integration Support
 4. Sustainable Schools Technical Assistance

11:30 **Partnership Priorities for 2016** – interactive / discussion – *facilitated by Britt Slattery, DNR*
Help identify order of priority for actions and needs regarding environmental literacy (educator professional learning, student field experiences, sustainable schools, etc.), community connections to nature, green careers pathways, and building support.

- Steering Committee is meeting on February 11th to talk about this and begin to set the plan for 2016.
- It is a monumental task to whittle this down to manageable tasks and make sure it aligns with Bay Agreement actions as well as our own (broader) priorities.
- As we are planning, we are trying to leave some room for new things, because new partners will be coming on board providing increased capacity and new ideas.
- The group was asked to mark their top 3 priorities among the 7 main areas identified as CIN priorities. Britt will use this visual of the group’s priority areas to help with the action plan development process – *below is the number of people who marked each as their #1, 2, or 3 priority:*

Priority Topic Area	#1 Priority	#2 Priority	#3 Priority	TOT.
E-Lit: Teacher professional development	15	5	0	20
E-Lit: Student authentic experiences in nature	7	9	3	19
E-Lit: Students outdoors on & around school grounds	5	3	7	15
E-Lit: Sustainable schools	1	1	2	4
Kids outdoors in the community / parks	5	6	5	16
“Green” careers pathways	5	4	9	18
Marketing the value of time spent in nature	5	3	4	12

- Comments from the group:
 - Teacher Preparation:
 - Issue investigation training
 - Important for teachers to become more able to deliver outdoor learning experiences independently and with support from practitioner models (but not relying on practitioners/ EE providers).
 - Time for teachers to meet with each other and outside providers – Professional Learning Communities
 - Getting Students Outdoors
 - Parks are an important piece of this
 - Authentic, skills-based learning experiences at those sites

11:50 **General Announcements**

- 3/17/15 Gary’s next State EE Briefing at Hard Bargain Farm
- MADE CLEAR Academy: July 18-21, 2016 and August 3, 2016 – applications currently open
- NOAA BWET closes Feb 4th – get your applications in – no late applications can be accepted
- February 4-7, 2016 is the MAEOE Conference
- Gary is reviewing Green Ribbon Schools applications from MD now, will likely be forwarding some to US for award consideration
- Explore and Restore Maryland Streams Grants – Solicitation is under review now, Britt is hoping for applications due date end of March/beginning April for funding beginning in July 2016.
- Britt sent a link around regarding the community job fair February 20th – “Taking Nature Black” <https://allianceforthebay.org/2016/01/taking-nature-black-a-celebration-of-black-history-month-and-job-fair/?preview=true>

12:00 **Adjourn** – *Thank you to all participants and to U.S. Fish and Wildlife for hosting us today!*
Next meeting April 20 – to be confirmed

Meeting participants list to follow, next page

Attachment, ESSA Summary

Meeting participants 1/20/16:

Henry Johnson, MSDE, Int. Deputy Superintendent (representing co-chair)
Joanne Throwe, DNR Deputy Secretary (representing co-chair)
Britt Slattery, DNR (Partnership coordinator)
Gary Hedges, MSDE
Kriste Garman, Harford County, ACLEC
Christine Hintz, DNR
Hilary Falk, NWF
Joshua Bennett, Sustainafest
Genevieve LaRouche, USFWS
Karen Mullin, USFWS
Amy Reese, Howard Co. Public Sch.
Laurie Jenkins, Montgomery Co. Public Sch.
Stephanie Oberle, Montgomery Parks
Tara Baker, CBT
Margarita Rochow, The Elms, St Marys Co Pub. Sch.
Patrick Angleton, The Elms, St Marys Co Pub. Sch.
Anita Goehringer, The Elms, St Marys Co Pub. Sch.
Christine Allred, The Elms, St Marys Co Pub. Sch.
Amy Green, CBF
Joe Harber, National Aquarium
Adrienne Farfalla, Alice Ferguson Fndn
Kim Martinez, NWF
Pat Harcourt, MADE CLEAR
Stacy Epperson, DNR
Sandi Olek, DNR
Melissa Rogers, MADE CLEAR
Laura Johnson Collard, MAEOE
Jamie Baxter, CBT
Shannon Sprague, NOAA
Heather Lageman, MSDE
Pamela Reese, Robinson NC
Daryl Anthony, DNR Asst. Secretary, Land Resources
Janet Norman, USFWS
Mary Weller, Howard Co. Pub. Sch.
Meg Boyd, Howard County Conservancy (HCC)
Mark Scallion, Pickering Creek Audubon Ctr.
Meagan Downey, Robinson NC
Sarah Bodor, NAAEE
Ann Strozyk, Howard Co. Pub. Sch. / HCC
Christina Thompson, Maryland Zoo
Sarah Haines, Towson U
Wayne Gilchrest, Sassafras EE Ctr
Mark McMullen Bushman, Ward Museum
Angie Pease, DNR MPS
Mary Hardcastle, Balto City Rec & Parks
Joe Richardson, Mountainside NC
Shannon Caravello, Mountainside NC
Marlo Atkinson, USFWS

Total 48

Environmental Education in the Every Student Succeeds Act (S.1177)

Summary provided by Sarah Bodor, NAAEE

Background

Large numbers of environmental education providers, conservation organizations, businesses, sportsman's groups, health care workers, school administrators and others have advocated for increased federal support for environmental education through amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (formerly No Child Left Behind). In 2007, Senator Jack Reed and Congressman John Sarbanes first introduced the No Child Left Inside Act (NCLI) which would amend ESEA to include federal funds that state could use for implementation of state-wide environmental literacy plans. The legislation has enjoyed bipartisan support since that time and a modified version of the bill passed the House in 2008.

The years of advocacy and support for NCLI have yielded critical and unprecedented gains for environmental education. States across the country have begun or completed comprehensive environmental literacy plans that address opportunities to embed EE in K-12 schools as well as increase access to nature at the community level. Working closely with Senator Reed's office, NAAEE, along with its affiliates and partners secured some key language for EE in the Senate version of a reauthorization bill for the ESEA which passed in July. A House version also passed in July, but it was remarkably different than the Senate version and contained no language referencing environmental education or environmental literacy. NAAEE closely monitored negotiations between Senate and House leadership as they sought to draft compromise legislation late this fall. While the final proposal looked more like the House version than the Senate, the language supporting environmental education remains intact.

EE Language

The key language sits in **Title IV of the Every Student Succeeds Act—21st Century Schools**:

- Environmental education is called out as eligible for funding under a \$1.6B "well-rounded education" grants program.
- Environmental literacy programs are eligible for funding as part of the \$1B 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.
- The prioritization of STEM activities including "hands-on learning" and "field-based or service learning" to enhance understanding of STEM subjects may provide additional opportunities for environmental science education programs.

Overwhelming support

- The Every Student Succeeds Act passed the House on December 2, 2015 with a vote of 359-64.
- It passed in the Senate on December 9, 2015 with a vote of 85-12.

Next Steps

While we are celebrating this advance for EE after many years of hard work, there is a great deal that will need to happen after the legislation is signed into law. NAAEE, its Affiliates and partners will work to:

- Make recommendations to the U.S. Department of Education regarding the design of the grant programs described in Title IV of the bill,
- Develop fact sheets and messages that provide state and local education agencies and their partners important information about how ESSA funds can be used to support essential environmental education programs and implementation of environmental literacy plans,
- Identify and disseminate models for the use of U.S. Education grant funds to support effective environmental education in K-12 schools.

NAAEE will continue to analyze the full bill and develop communications to inform affiliates, EE providers, and state and local education agencies how the law may benefit their environmental literacy work. NAAEE continues to work closely with Senator Reed and Congressman Sarbanes to assess additional opportunities to strengthen federal support for EE.