



Arkansas Environmental Education Association

JANUARY 2016

AEEA President's letter

Dear AEEA Members,

Happy New Year! As this year's president of AEEA I'm looking forward to what's in store for 2016. I'm also excited to be working with this year's Board of Directors, a great group of folks committed to environmental education and helping AEEA meet it's mission as Arkansas's only statewide organization for environmental education professionals. Let us introduce you...

- Bryant Baker, Secretary, *Program Coordinator, Beaver Watershed Alliance*
- Jimmy Blevins, *Public School Program Advisor, Arkansas Dept. of Education*
- Sarah DeVries, *Environmental Analyst, Arkansas State Highway & Transportation Dept., Env. Div.*
- Linda Gatti-Clark, *Instructor of Science, Arkansas State University, Heber Springs*
- Rebekah Penny, *Interpreter, Hobbs State Park, Arkansas Dept. of Parks and Tourism*
- Leah Saffian, Vice President, *Environmental Educator, Washington County Environmental Affairs*
- Teresa Sidwell, Treasurer, *Environmental Manager, Benton County*

AEEA is more than a Board of Directors, it is all of us linked by a common

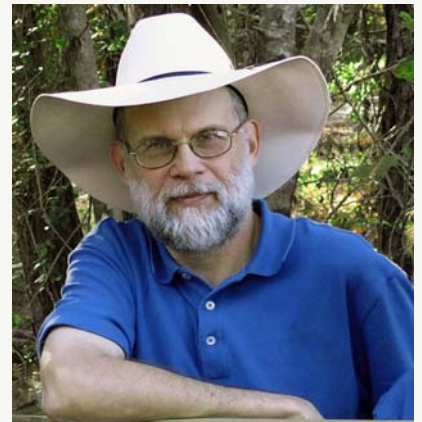
desire to, "*promote environmental education and the work of environmental educators*". Whether you are a formal or non-formal educator, work in a school, a conservation organization, governmental agency or simply believe in our mission and the importance of environmental education and environmental literacy AEEA is your organization.

Our bi-annual EE Expo is one of the important ways AEEA is able to put the above motto into action. This year the EE Expo is being held at the Ozark Natural Science Center, in Huntsville, June 21-23. AEEA is excited to be partnering with Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge to host EE Expo 2016. Watch your mail, email and AEEA website in the days and weeks ahead for more information about the conference and how you can be a part of EE Expo 2016.

The AEEA website has been quiet as we have been revising and updating information. As AEEA members, the website is a tool for us to stay in touch, share events, happenings, articles and photos. I hope you will add your voice to the site by sharing information through the website. Information for the website can be sent to Bryant Baker at bryant@beaverwatershedalliance.org, Sarah DeVries at ozarksarah@yahoo.com

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or Matthew Miller at matthew@onsc.us.

Thank you for the work you do in delivering environmental education programs in the Natural State!

Sincerely,
Matthew Miller
AEEA President and Executive Director
Ozark Natural Science Center

**Have you renewed your
AEEA membership?**



Street-side storm drains are a major route for trash to take to our creeks. In many cities, rain water, and any pollutants it carries, goes down storm drains and directly into the nearest waterway, untreated-

Brianna Peterson says her work is, “Inspired from imagery along the Arkansas River Trail where many Arkansans Enjoy outdoor activities.”

ed. Painting storm drain murals draws attention to the usually discreet concrete and iron stormwater infrastructure with the hope that people stop and think about where the water flows after it enters a storm drain.

The friends of Fourche Creek, a coalition of organizations and concerned citizens working to restore and revitalize Little Rock’s main waterway, launched Central Arkansas’s dRAIN smART in 2015 as part of a multifaceted litter prevention and reduction campaign. As a largely urban watershed, Fourche Creek is polluted. About 73% of the surface area of the city is in the Fourche Creek Watershed; the

rest drains directly to the Arkansas River. In its inaugural year, dRAIN smART recruited 17 artists to paint murals on selected storm drains in three high-traffic parts of Little Rock covering both watersheds – River Market, South Main, and War Memorial. To further emphasize the point, each

mural features two decals – one that states “Do not Pollute. Drains Directly to Fourche Creek/Arkansas River” and a QR code directed to www.drain-smart.org. Brianna Peterson’s “AquaCulture” can be viewed on Fair Park Boulevard next to War Memorial Stadium and just north of Interstate 630. She is a High School Art Educator in Little Rock. Brianna says her work is “inspired from imagery along the Arkansas River Trail, where many Arkansans enjoy outdoor activities.”

As with Northwest Arkansas’s UpStream Art, the project it was modeled after, dRAIN smART has brought together the conservation and art communities to share in a common goal – make their city more beautiful. As a result, we’ve created public art that has garnered a lot of attention. You’d be hard-pressed to find a Little Rock resi-



Drain Smart artist, Brianna Peterson painting a storm drain on Fair Park Boulevard next to War Memorial Stadium

- dent who hasn’t noticed the murals. Nearby businesses have been enamored with the effort too. The City of Arkadelphia used dRAIN smART as a model for its own program. Planning has begun for 2016 with three new areas selected: The Promenade at Chenal, Center St., and further south on South Main. There are several ways you can be involved in this effort, you can donate to the cause, vote for your favorite artists, or become an artist the applications will be available in January online at www.drain-smart.org.



Brianna Peterson’s completed work of art, “AquaCulture”



Creative Reuse Themed Display at the Farmington Public Library

Most of us educators want to have access to resources that have minimal cost but provide great materials. The Washington County Environmental Affairs has recently provided a collection of books on environmental topics to rural libraries in Washington County that you can check out for free

Washington Co. Environmental Affairs provides “Waste Not, Want Not” books

and learn, teach, and incorporate into your classroom, home, or environmental event with little cost. The collection includes titles appropriate for all age groups on various topics, including composting, how to lead a zero-waste lifestyle, litter, reuse crafts, and recycling. This effort would not be possible without the partnership of the Washington Co. Library System and the funding through the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) education grant. Participating libraries include Farmington, Prairie Grove, Lincoln, Elkins, West Fork, Greenland, and Winslow. The Washington County Education Team is creating themed displays to raise awareness and foster interest in these new titles, as well as offering hands-on education programs in conjunction with the topics. The educators have been visiting with books clubs at each li-

brary to demonstrate crafts from the Creative Reuse book theme, including holiday ornaments made from old calendars and picture frames made from old maps. Look for these resources at Washington County libraries to reduce your environmental impact in 2016.

Employment Announcement

Opportunity knocks! Are you interested in helping environmental education in Arkansas? AEEA has an immediate opportunity for a part-time assistant to aid the organization with membership, events, and external communications. Contact AEEA at: info@arkansasee.org

AFAEF hosts 23rd Teacher Conservation Tour

After 23 years you'd think they would have it perfected, yet the Arkansas Forestry Association Education Foundation (AFAEF) has been conducting the Teacher Conservation Tour (TCT) since 1993 and this program just continues to get better every year!

The AFAEF and dozens of local, state, and federal agency partners, nonprofit organizations, along with businesses and corporations have collaborated to put together a weeklong educator's workshop that has become one of Arkansas's premier summer professional development trainings for formal and non-formal educators.

This annual workshop and tour provides 25 educators with a lot of time in the woods, learning about the interaction between forests, the environment, and the economy. Participants tour forest product manufacturing facilities, view forest ecosystems, and harvesting and replanting operations all while learning valuable information about our forest communities. Participants meet and learn from natural resource professionals and members of the forest products industry who are in the field conducting this work on a regular basis.

For more information about the tour this



TCT participants visited ArborGen Nursery to learn about tree seedlings and propagation

summer and a downloadable registration form visit the link: <http://www.arkforests.org/?page=TCT>