

JANUARY 2017

The Natural State Newsletter



AEEA President's letter

Dear AEEA Members,

As we enter another new year, I'm honored to be serving as this year's president. I believe 2017 has many magnificent opportunities in store for AEEA, and I invite all members to participate in the planning committees that the Board has established to strengthen our organization's mission.

We know our membership holds a vast amount of knowledge and insight that can tremendously enhance the capacity for environmental education in Arkansas, and we need your expertise now more than ever.

There are currently four committees that you can join: the 1) **Events**, 2) **Mini-Grants**, 3) **Communications**, and 4) **Membership & Outreach Committee**. Participation in these committees will comprise of planning our annual EE Fests, biennial EE Expos, and other events; reviewing mini-grant applications; creating newsletters and amplifying our website; and, most importantly, boosting our effectiveness and reinforcing our relationship with our members.

Email arkansasee@gmail.com to let us know which committee you can join.

If you can't find the time to join a committee, there is now an easy way for all members to be involved. Christian Garcia, one of our newest Board members, has created a tool that allows individuals to geocode themselves to a state-wide member map that appears on our website's home page.

Please click the following link to add your information to the new map: [AEEA Member Map GeoForm](#).

While you're on AEEA's website, don't forget to check out our new Board of Directors: <http://www.arkansasee.org/board-of-directors/>. I couldn't be more enthused to serve AEEA with such an incredible team of professionals.

Thank you for supporting environmental education in Arkansas and I look forward to meeting more members during my time with AEEA.

Respectfully,

Leah Saffian

Environmental Educator/Deputy Director

Washington County

lsaffian@co.washington.ar.us

[479-444-1725](tel:479-444-1725)

In This Issue

- ◆ AEEA President's letter
- ◆ Working Together to Prepare for Weather
- ◆ Get Involved with Leave No Trace
- ◆ AFAEF Teacher Conservation Tour Expands
- ◆ Keep Arkansas Beautiful Announces Great American Cleanup Youth Poster Contest



AEEA President, Leah Saffian, conducts waste-reduction education program for campers at the Illinois River Watershed Partnership Sanctuary in Cave Springs.

Invite a colleague or friend to join AEEA to broaden our impact in environmental education.



WORKING TOGETHER TO PREPARE FOR WEATHER DISASTERS

In January 2009, a major ice storm hit the Northwest Arkansas area causing over 100,000 people to be without power, some for up to two weeks before being restored. The storm drowned over 3,000 trees in the city of Fayetteville, AR alone and resulted in more than \$80 million dollars in damage across the region.

The Fayetteville Public Library (FPL) in Fayetteville, Arkansas opened its doors for the community during its time of need during the storm. The library's power supply provided heat, water, Wi-Fi access, and electricity for recharging laptops and smartphones. The library's support kept the community connected.

"Partnering with the Fayetteville Public Library in the Young Meteorologist Program Weatherfest is the perfect way to help reach the younger generation and emphasize the importance of being prepared for nature's worst," declares Dan.

"The ice storm was one of the most intense weather disasters in our community that I can remember," shares Lolly Greenwood, FPL Youth Services Director, "We were proud to be ready and prepared to assist the community in any way we could."

Greenwood drew upon her memories of the storm when approached a few years later by Christian Garcia, a University of

Arkansas student and PLAN IT NOW Science Advisory Board President, with the goal of educating Fayetteville kids about severe weather preparedness.

PLAN IT NOW, a nonprofit organization formed in 2004 originally as the Grenada Relief Fund, established after Hurricane Ivan devastated the island nation, advocates for the power of preparedness. The organization educates communities, individuals, and youth about how to prepare for severe weather through its interactive online game, The Young Meteorologist Program (YMP). YMP is a collaboration between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Weather Service (NWS), and PLAN IT NOW.

Garcia wanted to teach local students about severe weather preparedness with the YMP online game and reached out to his local library for assistance. "We had never done a severe weather prep event before and it had not been on our radar to offer that to the community," remembers Greenwood. Liking the idea and knowing her youth community, she helped form a partnership with the local Boys & Girls Club to host an after school event at the library. This first preparedness event was held in 2013 with six students, and the program and local partnerships have continued to grow.

Seeing the potential to reach more members of the community, Greenwood reached out to local KNWA/FOX 24 Chief Meteorologist, Dan Skoff, (aka Dan The Weatherman) to help grow the event. "My husband and I are huge weather watchers! We watch the local weather



The Fayetteville Public Library hosted 2016 Weather fest.

forecasts and connect with the meteorologist as familiar faces that care about their communities," Greenwood explained.

Dan, the Weatherman attests that, "On average, the Northwest Arkansas/River Valley area will experience about 30-40 severe weather events in a given year, with about 10 of those being significant and life threatening. Severe weather in this part of the country can occur at ANY time of the day and year, with some of the most significant tornado outbreaks occurring in the heart of winter, or in the dead of night." That is why it's best to be ALWAYS prepared, so you will know what to do if life-threatening weather is bearing down on you when you least expect it.

One of the most important jobs of a Meteorologist is preparing the community for a weather disaster. That includes everyone from the elderly, to families and their children. "Partnering with the Fayetteville Public Library in the YMP Weatherfest is the perfect way to help reach the younger generation and emphasize the importance of being prepared for nature's worst," declares Dan.

On April 9, 2016, the 2nd annual Weatherfest was held, which included more local partnerships and involved meteorologists from the local television **Cont'd on Pg. 3**



GET INVOLVED WITH LEAVE NO TRACE

Tourism is Arkansas's second biggest economy producer, which means recreational fun in the Natural State is prevalent. Leave No Trace (LNT) teaches people of all ages how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly and is the most widely accepted outdoor ethics program used on public lands. There are several LNT programs going on in the state this spring. It's a great time to get involved!

Mississippi River State Park in Marianna, Arkansas will be hosting a Leave No Trace for **Outdoor Ethics Trainers course March 3rd-5th**. This two-day course assists student participants in learning more about the seven principles of Leave No Trace, and techniques for disseminating these low impact skills. Trainer Courses

are designed for educators, guides, agency employees and other outdoor professionals. Successful graduates of the Trainer Course gain skills to teach Leave No Trace techniques and ethics to their clients, friends and family.

Pinnacle Mountain State Park in Little Rock, Arkansas is **seeking interested individuals or organization to become partners in the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics**. Pinnacle Mountain State Park has been chosen as a Hot Spot Locations. A *Hot Spot location* is one of many outdoor areas across our nation that is negatively impacted by recreational use. These locations are sites that are damaged but that can be recovered to become a healthy location after specific Leave No Trace applications. What this means is we

are literally loving our land to death. Traveling trainers will come to the park and spend 3 days providing workshops for staff, volunteers, and community members from **April 3rd-5th**; where they will work jointly on a pro-



ject, or program specifically tailored for that sites' needs.

To get more information and get involved visit <https://lnt.org/get-involved/state/ar>

These workshops would not be possible without the support and participation of Arkansas State Parks and personnel. Visit an Arkansas State Park, but remember to "Keep It Clean"!

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREPARE FOR WEATHER— CONT'D

stations and the Tulsa, Oklahoma NWS office.

This event reached 250 kids, teens, and adults. The half day festival included a variety of weather related activities, demonstrations of a tornado machine, simulations of flood plan models, displays of the latest high-tech KNWA Storm Spotter vehicles, the YMP online meteorology game, a special weather presentation by Skoff and the KNWA Storm Spotter team, a chance to be a weather star on FPL-TV, and an opportunity to meet "Owlie Skywarn", the NOAA/National Weather Service's mascot. "After our event last year, we received only positive feedback with people saying, 'Please do it again. We loved the info and the game!'" commented Greenwood.

Libraries' educational role in their communities makes them perfect partners for helping prepare their communities for severe weather. The partnership model set forth by FPL and supported by Garcia, now a graduate from the University of Arkansas and current Director of Information and Youth Initiatives with PLAN!T NOW, along with a team including Donna Lee, Rally Coordinator and founder of PLAN!T NOW, and Ron Grid, an Outreach Manager with NOAA, is being replicated in libraries large and small throughout the country.

"Because we share the same goals of outreach and education, library partnerships like the one that developed with Fayetteville Public Library have helped the Young Meteorologist Program grow and set a strong foundation



"Owlie Skywarn" the NOAA National Weather Service mascot interacts with youth.

for the future," noted Lee. Libraries that held 2016 WeatherFests include Detroit, MI; Tupelo, MS; Miami, FL; Las Cruces, NM; Huntsville, AL; and Los Angeles, CA.



TEACHER CONSERVATION TOUR RETURNS & EXPANDS TO 3 REGIONS

In 2017, the Teacher Conservation Tour - sponsored by the Arkansas Forestry Association Education Foundation (AFAEF) - will offer a 3-part workshop series focusing on the environmental, ecological, and economic benefits of Arkansas's forestlands and timber industries.

These three 2-day educational workshops will provide educators with a lot of time in the woods, learning about the interaction between forests, the environment, and the economy. Each session will include presentations on specific topics and in-the-field site visits and facility tours. Participants will also meet and learn from natural resource professionals and members of the forest industry who are in the field conducting this work on a regular basis.

Participants may register to attend all three sessions for \$150 or register for each session individually. Registration fees include lodging (if selected), lunches, transportation during the workshops, resources and materials, and ADE-approved professional development hours.

[Registration fees for each session \(regardless of location\):](#)

- ◆ \$65 includes lodging based on double occupancy (additional \$50 for a private room)
- ◆ \$35 with NO lodging provided



Seedling Nursery in Texarkana, Arkansas

Session 1 - Pulp to Paper **June 8-9, 2017**

Texarkana, Arkansas

This 2-day workshop will focus on forests grown for the pulp and paper industry and include site visits to Weyerhaeuser forestlands, the Weyerhaeuser's seedling nursery, and a tour of the Domtar Paper Mill. This session will qualify for 12 hours of ADE-approved PD.

Session 2 - Urban Forests **June 22-23, 2017**

Springdale, Arkansas

This 2-day workshop will focus on the benefits of urban trees and include a hands-on computer session using the i-Tree program; along with site visits to demonstration sites and project areas in Northwest Arkansas. This session will qualify for 12 hours of ADE-approved PD (2 Technology hours).

Session 3 - Forest to Faucet **November 2-3, 2017**

Russellville, Arkansas

This 2-day workshop will focus on healthy forests and healthy water and include fish sampling, water quality monitoring, and forest health; along with site visits to the Ozark National Forest, Green Bay Packaging forestlands, and a tour of the Russellville water treatment facility. This session will qualify for 12 hours of ADE-approved PD.

Although these workshops provide teachers of grades K through 12 with ADE-approved professional development, any formal or non-formal educator may apply. Applicants should be aware that these workshops will involve outdoor activities requiring walking in rough, uneven terrain and sometimes in adverse weather conditions.

Space is limited to 25 participants per session and selected on a first-received, first-reserved basis.

Visit the following link for additional information and a downloadable application form. <http://www.arkforests.org/?page=TCT>

If you have questions, please contact Rob Beadel at (501) 374-2441 or rbeadel@arkforests.org.



2016 TCT participants visit LD Long Logging, Inc. at a harvesting site near Monticello, AR.

Green Teacher

Non-profit magazine, books and webinars

AEEA and Green Teacher are now partnering on webinars.

The series will cover a wide array of topics and will provide information for formal and non-formal educators.

Next webinar: February 1, 2017
Topic: Place Based Education
Presenter: Amy Demarest
For more information visit: <http://greenteacher.com/webinars/>

As a member of AEEA you can participate in Green Teacher webinars for **FREE**. The PDH certificate will be provided by Green Teacher.

Keep Arkansas Beautiful Announces: GREAT AMERICAN CLEANUP YOUTH POSTER CONTEST

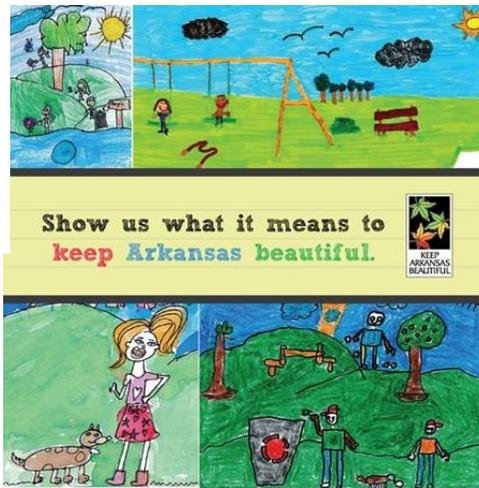


KEEP ARKANSAS BEAUTIFUL
KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE

The Keep America Beautiful® Great American Cleanup® in Arkansas, organized and promoted statewide by the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission (KAB), is an annual spring cleanup event when communities focus on local beautification efforts, flower and tree plantings, park improvements, trail-building, Main Street rehabilitations, litter pickups, and other activities in advance of the tourism/vacation and festival seasons.

KAB coordinates a Youth Poster Contest in conjunction with the Great American Cleanup in Arkansas to involve elementary school students, increase awareness of the Great American Cleanup in Arkansas, and educate the public about the importance of a clean and beautiful community to economic development, civic pride and environmental quality of life.

Prizes will be awarded in two divisions: Grades K – 2 and Grades 3 – 5. KAB is providing gift cards for the Top 3 posters in each division. One poster per class may be submitted for statewide judging. 4-H clubs, scout groups and home-schooled students are also encouraged to enter.



Show us what it means to
keep Arkansas beautiful.

Contest entries are due no later than March 1, 2017. KAB and representatives of the Great American Cleanup in Arkansas will recognize winners in their local communities. Winning posters and honorable mentions will be displayed in Thea Foundation's art gallery on Main Street in North Little Rock April 10-14. Posters will also be posted to KAB's Facebook page.

We are counting on you to share this information with the schools, teachers and youth in your community. You are encouraged to visit schools and youth groups to spread the word. Connections to the Curriculum Frameworks are provided to help classroom educators see where this will fit into lesson plans. We also encourage you to make contact with your local newspaper to help spread the word.

The poster contest entry form is provided on page 5 of this newsletter. If you have any questions

**KEEP AMERICA
BEAUTIFUL**
**GREAT AMERICAN
CLEANUP**

or need more information about the poster contest, contact Liz Philpott, Volunteer Program Manager at KAB, One Capitol Mall, Suite 4A-007, Little Rock, AR 72201; 501-682-3507 or 888-742-8701 (toll-free); or elizabeth.philpott@arkansas.gov.



EPA Announces applications are being accepted for the Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators.

The Award recognizes outstanding kindergarten through grade 12 teachers who employ innovative approaches to environmental education and use the environment as a context for learning for their students. Up to two teachers will be selected from each of EPA's 10 regions. The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administers this award.

For more information visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/education/presidential-innovation-award-environmental-educators>



Great American Cleanup in Arkansas Youth Poster Contest



The poster should convey a message supporting the **Keep America Beautiful® Great American Cleanup™ in Arkansas**. It should stress the need to keep Arkansas “clean and green” by planting flowers and trees, cleaning up parks and public areas, recycling, building trails, improving downtowns, and picking up litter.

Artwork should be two-dimensional and it can be any medium (pen and ink, watercolor, crayon, marker, pencil, etc.). All artwork should be original; no copyrighted characters, please. Posters must be these dimensions: 8½” x 11” (standard letter size). Curriculum framework connections are provided at the end of the contest information.

Schools are encouraged to involve all students, **Grades K – 2 and 3 – 5**, but select **one poster per homeroom** to be submitted for statewide judging. Each school should develop its own criteria for selecting the winning entry. Home-schooled students may enter; please send one entry per home-school unit. 4-H clubs should submit one entry per club. Scouts and other youth organizations should submit one entry per unit.

Posters can be displayed within the community to promote the Great American Cleanup in Arkansas. To encourage student involvement, local businesses are invited to provide prizes and display posters. The Great American Cleanup in Arkansas Youth Poster Contest is an educational project of the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission (KAB), which promotes and organizes the Great American Cleanup in Arkansas statewide.

Each poster entry should include this information on the back:

Student’s Name/Grade _____ County _____
 School/Club _____ School District _____
 School Phone _____ School Fax _____
 Teacher _____ Email _____

KAB reserves the right to use any poster in future promotional campaigns. **Posters sent in for statewide judging will not be returned. Students may want to make copies before submitting entries for judging.**

Prizes are provided by the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Foundation. The statewide contest winners will receive:

Grades K – 2

First Place - \$50 Gift Card
 Second Place - \$35 Gift Card
 Third Place - \$20 Gift Card

Grades 3 – 5

First Place - \$50 Gift Card
 Second Place - \$35 Gift Card
 Third Place - \$20 Gift Card

Posters must be received **no later than March 1, 2017**. Posters should be mailed or delivered to **Elizabeth Philpott, Keep Arkansas Beautiful Commission, One Capitol Mall, Suite 4A-007, Little Rock, AR 72201**. Questions about the contest should be directed to Elizabeth at 501-682-3507, 888-742-8701 (toll-free) or elizabeth.philpott@arkansas.gov. Schools will be notified of winners by Tuesday, March 1. KAB and Great American Cleanup in Arkansas representatives will recognize winners locally. **Winning posters and honorable mentions will be displayed at the Thea Foundation in North Little Rock, April 10-14, and on KAB’s Facebook page.**