

**Meeting Notes - Joint Meeting of the New Jersey Commission on
Environmental Education and the Inter-agency Work Group**

Tuesday, September 22, 1998

9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

DEP Headquarters, 7th Floor, Trenton, New Jersey

Present: Richard Belcher, Joseph Eldridge, Joan Elliot, Frank Gallagher, Anne Galli, Don Haberstroh, Toni Hendricksen, Lou Iozzi, Pat Kane, Christine Keresztury, John Kirk, Jacques Lebel, Bruce Marganoff, Kathleen McLaughlin, Ray Mueller, Tanya Oznowich, Barry Schlegel, Helen Skerratt, Barbara Solem, Sue Willis, Karen Wintress

Observing: Priscilla Hayes, Cook College, Rutgers University

1. **Acceptance of June 29 meeting notes** - Lou accepted the minutes, John made motion to approve, Frank seconded the motion, all in favor, approved.
2. **Membership Report** - is getting resumes for potential reps from the NJ School Boards Association () and the Science Supervisors Association (). We need some students recommended. We also need a museum or nature center representative to replace Elaine Puzo-Castoro. Tanya will update current membership list by adding recent members and adding terms. She will also create committee membership lists.
3. **Electronic Network Committee Report** - The Cook College is currently adding more research data produced by students through their research. Frank offered to write an EPA environmental education grant proposal for state capacity building , which would be a planning grant for the commission. Dr. Mike Sherman is now on board to help to design the website. In the summer DEP personnel in Solid Waste helped to review some of the text on the site for current state policy and priority information. Tanya will develop a calendar of enrichment opportunities for educators, to post.
4. **Communications Committee Report** - The committee is working on Plan of Action revisions. All comments should be faxed to Karen Wintress at 609-951-8410. The deadline for comments is October 16th. The assignment to each commission member is to review the strategy section of the plan (the charts/columns) for the target audience(s) they best represent.
5. **Funding Committee Report** - Regarding open space preservation, many environmental organizations are working together to educate the public about question 1 on the ballot. The Stockton Alliance is taking the lead. The public must understand the funding issue - it is not tax money. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. There is also conflict with local open space voting initiatives. The funds will be used for acquisition, there is no funds for "operations." Must still try to get word to legislators about the role of

education. Secondly, Tanya drafted and presented a funding proposal to DEP Chief of Staff Mark Smith this summer, requesting separate funds for both the commission and DEP for education and outreach initiatives related to the Governor's priority areas. No word yet, though Mark was receptive and has been looking into it. Third, work group member George Schlosser (DLPS) is very interested in how other states are obtaining a % of environmental fines for education. He is currently researching this and will keep the group informed of his efforts. Finally, the group agreed that they should work together to develop a legislative action plan.

6. **Discussion:** Issues regarding environmental education and those speaking out against it. (Articles in mailing were discussed.) The commission should take an advocacy stance in defending, representing and justifying the field.

7. **Discussion:** Tanya brought up the distribution of the commission fact sheet at autumn events, presentations, etc. After discussion, **Tanya made a motion to "spend commission funds to get #5,000 copies of the fact sheet reproduced."** Toni seconded the motion, all in favor, motion was approved. Regarding distribution of copies:

- 1,000 copies to Pat
- 500 copies to Frank
- 500 copies to Anne
- 500 copies to John
- 500 copies to Joseph
- 500 copies to Helen
- Rich and Joan only want 1 good copy to reproduce on their own
- Tanya will send all other commission members 40 - 50 copies.
- DEP will distribute copies at NJSTA, NJEA, NJ Geography Alliance Conference and ANJEC Conference. Plans and copies of the act will also be distributed. Karen will send out the cc to all, electronically.

8. **Presentation: NJ Department of Education Activity Update - Dr. Bruce Marganoff**

- In the late 1980's DOE started standardizing school offerings. Phase I was the creation of the HS Core Course Proficiencies. Eventually the courses were aligned and teachers knew what had to be taught; textbooks began to align with the proficiencies - it was working!
- In 1993 - 94 the DOE determined to do this in grades K - 12 since it was working. It took over 2 years to develop the standards. They were put into code in May, 1996. There are 8 sets (subject areas) of standards, plus the Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards.
- There emerged an interest in hard data from environmental education funders - what has 20 years of funding for environmental education done to improve school and student findings? The Pew Charitable Trusts did a study of 60 model schools. On the days that the environment was used to present subject learning, discipline and absenteeism went down. Skills in subject

learning and socialization went up, along with parental involvement. The project (SEER - State Education and Environment Roundtable) received a second year of funding from Pew. Training will be conducted in states involved with SEER, New Jersey being one of them. The commission is welcome to become involved. We should examine NJ models, gather administrative support, attract people to the training who are teachers or who work with teachers.

- We should take advantage of the Governor's current priority areas and design programming around that. This may get us more promotion and support.
- DOE has draft legislation regarding teacher certification. Another is pending regarding professional development. If approved, each teacher must receive 20 PD hours each year, or 100 every 5 years. This would be overseen by a supervisor at the local level, under the Professional Development Program. NJEA will administer the program when its in place. DOE will register new groups and assign hours. PD includes in-service training, field trips, courses, books being read, trips, etc. A 6-hour in-service program may equate to only 1 or 2 hours of PD time. The collection of credits will begin in January, 2000. The DOE will begin issuing PD hours to "the experience" in Spring, 1999. An independent board is now being seated to determine the # of PD hours that each experience will count for. Universities are gearing up to hold trainings at their facilities, electronically.
- Regarding assessment, the 4th grade test was held this past spring. It included multiple choice, completion and hands on test questions. The questions will be graded by computer while the hands-on portion will be graded locally; the data will also be kept locally. The 9th graders this year will take the new HSPT test. The 4th grade test had 3 environmental questions on it - Bruce is trying to get tabulation on the results. Every question must have a skill and a content component.
- **New Jersey is tied for 1st place with 2 other states (North Carolina and Kentucky) for the level of environmental education in science, in all 50 states.**

9. Updates:

- Anne Galli's distance learning project is now focusing on an outdoor field trip in the wetlands. The purpose of the project is to demonstrate how distance learning can be used for environmental enrichment purposes. This is a pilot, funded by EPA, with urban school districts around Lyndurst.
- Partners for Environmental Quality is coordinating an Environmental Sabbath celebration on the State House stairs on Thursday, October 8. Commission members are invited. The event is to provide support to the Governor's interests in open space preservation and sustainability.

- Tanya discussed DEP's negative response to providing sponsorship in New Jersey for "The Clean Air Challenge," a MS curriculum that, when reviewed by DEP technical staff, carried with it bias, misleading information and watered-down lessons. A response is being drafted to send to the developers (and funders - the Exxon Education Foundation). The materials will be shared with the NJ Clean Air Council as an "FYI." Brief discussion focused on poor environmental education materials being developed by industry, as well as by anyone else. One suggestion was to have the commission or NJ develop or adopt a checklist for sound environmental education guidelines. Frank offered to look into this.
- The new PLT high school module on "risk" is now available. Frank was instrumental in developing this.
- Its anniversary time at NJSOC and Montclair University. The facility is sponsoring workshops and lectures in their honor - commission members are welcome to attend, they are on the main campus. (Call John for details.)
- Karen offered to add e-mail addresses of NJCEE members to the EE network developed at Cook College. Tanya will get the addresses to her.

Submitted: T. Oznowich, 10/9/98

