



Environmental Literacy in New Jersey: A Call to Action



Section 7 Appendices

Appendix I - Guiding Principles for Environmental Education

These guiding principles are grounded in the Tblisi Declaration (1977), a watershed document for environmental education. They also strive to capture the essence of reports on environmental education, conservation education and sustainability education. Additionally these principles reflect those listed in Environmental Education in New Jersey: A Plan of Action (1993) and extensive public comment.

The New Jersey Commission on Environmental Education believes that these principles should serve as common ground for both commission members and environmental education providers. Effective environmental education should:

- Acknowledge that humans are an integral part of natural systems.
- Consider the environment as many interacting systems – natural and built, technological, social, economic, political, moral, cultural, historical, and aesthetic.
- Recognize that human health and well-being depend on healthy natural and manmade systems and that people are responsible for “meet[ing] the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (United Nations, 1987)
- Recognize the complexity and interrelated nature of environmental problems, issues and their solutions.
- Emphasize individual and collective participation in preventing environmental problems and resolving environmental issues while respecting each individual’s set of experiences, perspectives, assumptions and values.

Appendix II – Instructional Approaches to Environmental Education

The New Jersey Commission on Environmental Education believes that environmental education providers should strive to provide experiences and opportunities that:

- Engage and involve people continuously throughout their lives.
- Use strategies appropriate to the needs, cultural perspectives, learning styles, and developmental capacities of each individual.
- Encourage the use of critical, creative and long-term thinking when solving problems, addressing environmental issues, assessing risks and making quality of life decisions.
- Rely on comprehensive, interdisciplinary, accurate and up-to-date information and data.
- Provide real world, hands-on experiences that develop and deepen personal understanding and appreciation for the environment.
- Examine environmental issues within local, regional, national and global contexts as a basis for determining individual action where one lives, works and plays.
- Involve individual and cooperative efforts among individuals, families, organizations, businesses, educational institutions and government.

Appendix III – Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviors

The New Jersey Commission on Environmental Education believes that in order for New Jersey citizens to be environmentally literate they should have knowledge of ecological and environmental concerns; possess attitudes that support and enhance this knowledge and practice behaviors that are environmentally and economically sustainable.

KNOWLEDGE

The commission encourages all individuals to understand that:

Ecological precepts:

- The earth is comprised of renewable and non-renewable natural resources.
- Natural resources are living and non-living.
- Living things depend on both living and non-living components of the environment and their interrelationships.
- All ecological components function as parts of dynamic and interactive systems
- The ability of the earth to support life and biological diversity as we know it has certain limitations.
- Change in the environment may affect species' survival.

Environmental precepts:

- The environment is the basis of our physical lives, economy and emotional well- being.
- Human actions have significant impact on the earth's ecosystems.
- Human health is directly linked to the quality of the environment.
- Historical and cultural knowledge can contribute to present and future environmental decisions.
- The manner in which each individual manages or conserves resources will affect our ability to have a sustainable economy and a healthy environment.

ATTITUDES

The commission encourages all individuals to appreciate that:

- Environmental issues transcend cultural, social, economic and political boundaries.
- Environmental issues have a moral and spiritual dimension.
- Cultural diversity has an impact on the environment and should be considered when making environmental decisions.
- The natural environment can serve as a place for regeneration of the human spirit.

And therefore,

- Humans, as stewards of the Earth, should recognize that people's daily individual and collective actions impact the sustainability and health of the environment.
- Humans must be committed to maintain, restore and regenerate ecosystems and ensure biological diversity.

BEHAVIORS

The commission encourages all individuals to:

- Use knowledge about ecosystems and how they are related in making individual, family and community decisions.
- Recognize the current and future value of biological diversity.
- Acquire a deeper appreciation for the natural world.
- Develop a lifestyle that supports and promotes environmental and human health.
- Examine and assess short- and long-term environmental gains versus the economic and societal costs associated with those gains.
- Become active participants in decision-making processes that determine environmental and human health.