



Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education

Promoting responsible environmental action through education in the classroom and community

2011-2012 Annual Report

Abbie Enlund, Chair

2011-2013
Greening Sam and Avery
Wausaukee, WI

Cassie Bauer

2010-2012
YMCA Camp Minikani
Hubertus, WI

Katie Boseo, student

2011-2012
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Stevens Point, WI

Amy Jo Dusick, student

2011-2012
University of Wisconsin –Madison
Madison, WI

Eli Fyksen

2002-2014
YMCA Camp Minikani
Hubertus, WI

Karla Lockman, Past Chair

2010-2012
Stevens Point Area Senior High
Stevens Point, WI

Molly McKay

2012
Raptor Education Group, Inc
Antigo, WI

Brittany Roberts

2012-2014
Northern Waters Environmental School
Hayward, WI

Susan Schuller, Chair Elect

2011-2013
Wisconsin Center for
Environmental Education
Stevens Point, WI

Jeff Su

2012-2014
Myrick Hixon EcoPark
LaCrosse, WI

Sandy Vander Velden

2011-2013
Fox River Academy
Appleton, WI

From the Chair...

What a year! I have been honored to serve as the WAEE Board of Director's chair in 2011-2012. I have met, gotten the chance to work with and learned from some truly incredible educators. I am always impressed by the amount of passion and drive that environmental educators have for the job that they do. It is because of that passion that this organization continues to grow stronger and reach more educators across this state!



The WAEE Board continues to build strong partnerships with other organizations around the state. The project that started a few years back with the WI EE Board and the WI EE Foundation, Wisconsin's Plan for Environmentally Literate and Sustainable Communities, continues to be a strong tool that the three Boards are working to utilize. Smaller committees, or working groups made up of members from all three Boards, have been formed to help strategize about ways to put The Plan into practice and spread the word about this important document.

WAEE has had a very exciting year with our professional development events. The 2011 Fall Conference was held in Rosholt at the Lion's Camp. It was fun to go back to a place that holds history for WAEE and it brought a large crowd together! In a beautiful setting, with incredible weather WAEE members got the chance to learn, network and reconnect with old friends. And don't forget that Black Bear Plunge, I know I never will!

The annual Winter Workshop was also a huge success! The committee worked hard to build strong partnerships with schools such as UWSP and Conserve School to get even more undergraduate and graduate students at this event. The event had an incredible keynote speaker John Francis, new evening entertainment and some great new features for families which all combined lead to the attendance being bigger than WAEE has had in many years. It was wonderful to see a lot of familiar faces but also a lot of new folks at this event too.

WAEE Board of Directors continues to work hard on our mission of supporting environmental education through advocacy, networking and recognition. But our work would not be possible without the support of our members, committee members and chairs, Jodi Hermsen the WAEE Administrative Specialist and financial and in-kind sponsors. We are honored to have so many strong and passionate people backing this organization!

Thank you all for your hard work and support this past year.

WAAE Advocacy

Wisconsin Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights

About 70 children and adults rallied to show support for the announcement of the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights at the State Capitol on January 5th, 2012. WAAE representatives present included, Abbie Enlund, Betsy Parker, Rebecca Clarke, Becca Franzen, Dolly Ledin, David Eagan and staff from the Aldo Leopold Nature Center. Children displayed their nature artwork while Rep. Taylor and Sen. Larson announced the bill. Children then hand-delivered information and artwork to key legislators. News reporters were on hand and a piece aired on WKOW News in Madison that evening. The Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters' staff worked hard to make the event a success and were (and continue to be) excellent partners in this endeavor. Unfortunately, (largely due to the strained political climate) the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights was not scheduled for a joint assembly vote during the legislative session. However, WAAE representatives have worked to garner about 250 proponents - between the on-line supporter list and Facebook - and are setting the scene to introduce the bill again during the 2012-14 legislative session. WAAE Advocacy Committee Chair,



WAAE Awards

WAAE encourages all members to reach for new heights in environmental education by presenting achievement awards at the annual Fall Conference Awards Banquet. WAAE recognizes schools, groups, and individuals for outstanding contributions in the field of environmental education.

The **Student of the Year** was **Tara Van Dollen**. Tara created the Wonder Bugs program at the Aldo Leopold Nature Center in Monona which provided an opportunity for nearly 2500 children to learn about local natural topics and get guided, hands-on experiences in nature.

The **Earthguard Award** was presented to the **HOPE Science Club** at Ben Franklin Jr. High in Stevens Point. Hope Science Club manages the Portage County Ecycle drive raising money to fund alternative energy initiatives. Students also coordinate educational, interactive and fun Earth Week activities.

The **Non-Formal Educator of the Year** was awarded to **Eli Gottfried** from Eau Claire. Eli created the Urban Agriculture Project, a program that teaches prison inmates how to use sustainable urban gardening practices to grow produce which is then donated to a local food pantry.



The **Administrator of the Year** was **Paul Nistler**, Principal in the Brillion School District. Paul supported the iCanConserve School to Home program which is a community-wide effort that works to lower energy bills and protect the environment, and teach students about energy conservation.

The **David Engleson WAAE Award** was presented to **Janet Brandt**. Janet was a leader in energy education, served on the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board and spearheaded the formation of the Wisconsin Environmental Education Foundation, and created the Wisconsin Women Forward for Environmental Education.

Betsy Parker, will keep all WAAE membership posted on events and how to help champion this effort.

Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Program

WAAE Advocacy Committee Chair, Betsy Parker, along with UW Arboretum Naturalist and Paul Burowski, facilitated the state's first pilot training session for the WIMN Program in Madison this summer. The program received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the 25 students - all of whom hailed from varied backgrounds and age groups. Certified students were offered a unique one-year gift membership from WAAE as a means of forging a strong partnership with the Master Naturalist Program and introducing graduates to WAAE's continuing education opportunities and other benefits. The Wisconsin Natural Resources Foundation is committed to funding raising for the program and is looking for sponsors and donors. Support is also provided through UW Extension.

WAAE Membership

Current Membership: 335	
Individuals: 209	Individual Life: 52
Students: 24	Non-profit Organizations: 36
Retired: 5	Organizational Life: 5
Family: 4	Additional Staff: 82



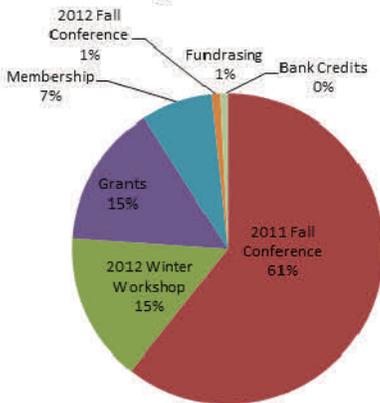
As a membership organization, the WAAE strives to find new ways to serve and reach out to its members each year. This year in addition to hosting our annual conference and winter workshop, WAAE worked to expand networking through the organizational Facebook page and blog. However, even with a 14% increase in membership numbers this year, the WAAE board is still looking ways to engage its members and potential members. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you are interested in being a part of any of our committees or helping to plan an event.



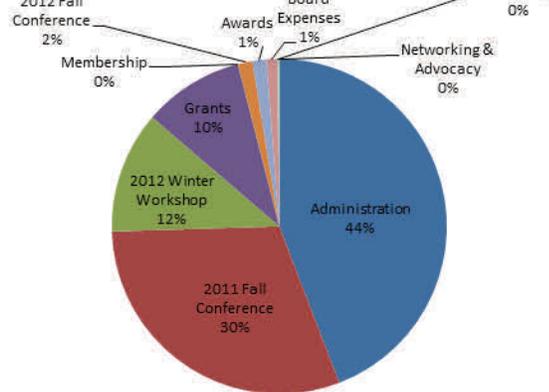
WAAE Finances

WAAE's stability is dependent on dedicated board members, active organization members, and annual WAAE events. Fiscal year 2011-2012 was no different. Despite the financial difficulties Wisconsin has faced over the past 2 years, our events this fiscal year were a great success! The fall conference planning team exceeded their goal by raising \$22,000 in grants and sponsorships. Winter Workshop with its committed planning team, outstanding keynote by John Francis, and new options to attract families helped us exceed our financial goal by over \$3,000. In fiscal year 2013, WAAE will continue to raise funds through the State Employees Combined Campaign. The board is creating a business plan for WAAE to establish a long-term financial strategy for the organization. Furthermore, WAAE will be strengthening its partnerships with the WI Environmental Education Board, WI Environmental Education Foundation, and WI Green School Network this coming year.

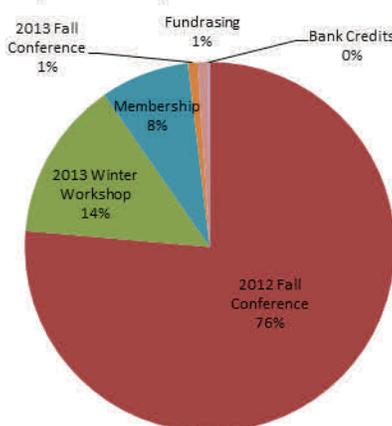
WAAE Budget 2011-2012: Income



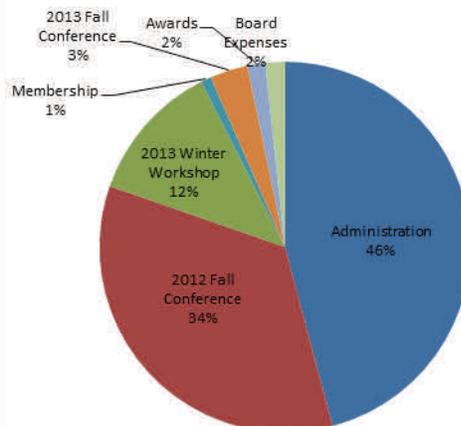
Budget 2011-12: Expenses



Proposed Budget 2012-2013: Income



Proposed Budget 2012-13: Expenses



WAAE Events

2011 Fall Conference

Theme: *Celebrating Wisconsin's Environmental Education Partnerships*

Dates: *November 3-5, 2011*

Location: *Wisconsin Lions Camp, Rosholt, WI*

The setting for the 2011 WAAE Fall Conference was on a beautiful 440 acre wildlife refuge at Wisconsin Lions Camp in Rosholt, Wisconsin. This conference offered a plethora of opportunities to learn, share, and network. A dynamic keynote speaker, David Rendall, kicked off the event with his highly engaging talk, *The Freak Factor: Discovering Uniqueness by Flaunting Weakness*. He explained how to turn our weaknesses into strengths. Following Rendall's "kick off," 38 workshops, field trips, and concurrent sessions were offered to attendees. Exhibits including three exhibit socials provided time for sharing and networking on Thursday afternoon through Friday evening. Last, but not least, a special thank you to the hardworking and dedicated 2011 WAAE Fall Conference Planning Team: Jesse Haney, Jodi Hermsen, Karla Lockman, Jamie Mollica, Victoria Rydberg, Susan Schuller (chair), Dennis Yockers, and Carrie Ziolkowski. Thank you for organizing a wonderful and successful conference!!!



2012 Winter Workshop

Theme: *Awareness, Action, Enjoyment!*

Dates: *January 27th-29th, 2013*

Location: *Treehaven Field Station, Tomahawk, WI*

WAAE Winter Workshop 2012 welcomed 105 individuals to participate in a weekend to remember. Some attendees even made the trip to Tomahawk, WI from Indiana, Iowa, and Minnesota! New to Winter Workshop this year was a family friendly focus. This year the workshop welcomed individuals of all ages to share the experience with their families. Attendees ranged in age from 9 months to 70+ years.



Opening the workshop Friday evening was the Homegrown EE Panel- a unique collection of environmental educators throughout the state of Wisconsin. The panel included: Clayton Russell, Joey Zocher, Molly McKay, & Dennis Yockers, who shared their perspectives of environmental education in Wisconsin today. On Saturday, conference participants welcomed our key note Dr John Francis, the Planet Walker, Visiting Associate Professor at the Nelson Institute of UW-Madison. John captivated all of us while tickling our souls with the sound of his banjo followed by his inspirational tale of environmental action through walking and silence. Winter Olympics was brought to us by UWSP Environmental Educators and Naturalists Association (EENA). Saturday evening offered a little bit of something for everyone including a kids wolf howl, the traditional Nertz tournament, games in Black Bear Lounge, and live evening entertainment provided by Milwaukee based band: Overstory. Overstory rocked the northwoods while participants danced, swayed, and hoola-hooped their evening away!

WAAE Networking

As always WAAE is working hard to find new ways to network with other organizations as well as provide networking opportunities around WI for our members. Our online social networking continues to grow and improve. This year on Facebook we focused much more on sharing resources, connecting with members and promoting member events. We hope our community on Facebook will continue to grow and members will find it a helpful way to hear about things that are happening around the state.

The WAAE Blog has also grown. New monthly features include "Lessons in Leadership" which is written by the WI Environmental Education Foundation, "Who Are They Anyway" which is a monthly get to know the Board post and an



"EE Online" post that highlights online resources for educators. Besides these monthly features we also post updates on our events, providing members and conference attendees with much more information about exhibitors, presenters, entertainment, the facility and sponsors than they have ever had access to before prior to the event. This

is something that we are very excited about because we think it will really show teachers, students and non-formal educators all the amazing opportunities that will be offered at the events, helping to increase the attendance.

Outside of our online networking WAAE has also worked hard to provide and support face to face opportunities for networking as well. Board Members were present representing WAAE at many major environmental education events around the state such as the UWSP Spring Adventure Workshop and the Midwest Renewable Energy Association annual Energy Fair.

We are always striving to provide more opportunities to bring people together at our Winter Workshop and Fall Conference in creative ways to encourage networking and information sharing!