

EECONEWS



...a focus on environmental justice

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Environmental Justice in Ohio: Equity for Our Sustainable Future

Leanne Jablonski, FMI, Ph.D., Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC)

Addressing environmental justice (EJ) issues in Ohio is critical to our sustainable future. EJ requires unbiased treatment of people of all races, incomes and cultures in all steps of forming and executing environmental laws, regulations and policies. Because these burdens

be the most vulnerable or sensitive. Finally, those without access to cool air or medical insurance will be least able to adapt.



Photo by Ken Kiser

Ohio ranks in the top 5% of all states in toxic releases and other pollution indicators. Those with below-poverty incomes or who are minorities are two to three times as likely to live within two miles of a hazardous waste facility,

most often fall on people of color, the term environmental racism is also used. Environmental injustice is often a consequence of other social situations such as poverty, lack of civil empowerment, and cultural and communication barriers.

Examples of EJ issues:

- Low-income housing is frequently situated near high emission corridors (traffic and industry), landfills or brown spaces.
- Parks and other green spaces are not equally distributed, but correspond with income level or racial demographics.
- Environmental proceedings are not accessible to residents if they are written only in technical English. Similarly, public meetings are not accessible if held only during the workday or at sites inaccessible from public transportation.
- Pollution episodes have a greater impact among groups with increased exposure, heightened sensitivity or low resilience. For example, in a summer air pollution episode, those who work outdoors or located near the source will be most exposed. The very young and very old and those already with respiratory diseases will

Brief History of EJ

The EJ movement developed from the civil rights movement, as leaders from grassroots and religious organizations realized the placement of toxic landfills threatened the health of minority communities. The cry for government policies arose as a result of the 1982 protests against the toxic PCB landfill in Warren County, NC. A landmark 1987 United Church of Christ study demonstrated the correspondence between toxic waste and race.² In response, President Clinton signed the 1994 Presidential Executive Order 12898 which directed each federal agency to develop an EJ strategy “for identifying and addressing... disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.”

By 2001, the federal EPA required integrating EJ issues in permitting and all policies, programs, and activities. Today, the US EPA has an EJ compliance program.³

Addressing Ohio's EJ challenges

As the seventh most populous state at 11.5 million with nearly 12% below the poverty level, Ohio has several environmental challenges. An industrial leader, Ohio ranks in the top 5% of all states in toxic releases and most other pollution indicators.

Ohio has 21 (fourth in rank) of the nation's 400+ commercial hazardous waste facilities, with Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton/ Springfield and Toledo among the major 80 EJ cities of national concern.¹

Empirical evidence shows that living within two miles of a hazardous waste facility is associated with adverse health, property value and quality of life impacts¹. In Ohio, those with incomes below the poverty line are twice as likely than those with higher incomes to live within



EJ, continued on page 3

EECO's Role in an Even Broader Context

Erv Ball, Cuyahoga County Board of Health

It never fails. Every time I leave a gathering of folks attending an EECO event like the annual conference, I have come away with a sense of excitement, renewal and awe. For me, this is simply because of the innate good nature of my fellow EECO members. Regardless of our diverse backgrounds, disciplines, careers and personalities, we share a love of the environment and people, and their interrelationship (read interdependency) is what drives us.

I think EECO already plays an important role in this discussion about the relationship between economics and the environment. EECO facilitates a remarkable partnership among formal and informal education, the community at large, government, and business/industry. Each and every member brings a genuine commitment to and understanding of the necessity for conservation and the need to instill lasting generational values and understanding through education.

Next time you go to EECO's website, look at your long-standing mission. You've all been ahead of the wave currently sweeping Ohio, the nation and the world. Individually and collectively, your programs, your relationships and your passion demonstrate your recognition of the interrelationship, that interconnectivity between humans, a sustainable environment and a sustainable economy.

Read Erv's complete article at www.eeco-online.org

SAVE THE DATE

2008-09 EECO Sponsored Events

Language of Nature

July 7-11, 2008

Cuyahoga Valley National Park

101 Conference

October 3-5, 2008

YMCA Camp Kern

EECO Winter Conference

February 6-8, 2009

Cuyahoga Valley National Park

EECO Annual Conference

April 30-May 3, 2009

Deer Creek State Park

If you would like to start receiving your quarterly EECO Newsletter electronically, contact Brenda Metcalf at director@eeco-online.org

Silent Auction Adds to EECO Endowment

Josh Flory, treasurer, New Albany Schools

In March, the EECO Endowment Fund was established with an initial investment of \$30,000. The fund will diversify our funding sources and help EECO become more self-sustaining. The Columbus Foundation is managing the account.

We are pleased to announce that the silent auction at the 2008 Annual Conference raised an additional \$2000. The fund is off to a great start! For more information and to donate, please visit www.eeco-online.org. Watch for additional information in the Fall 2008 issue.

Caesar Creek Hisey Park is Lost and Found

*Bill Schroeder, Warren County Park Board
EECO Member, Environmental Education and Outdoor
Education Organizations Section*

The theme of the Warren County Parks breakout session presented at the 41st Annual EECO Conference, "Lost and Found," was the essence of the story of a new park development in Warren County, Ohio known as Caesar Creek Gorge Hisey Park. As part of one of the first Clean Ohio Grant Projects, the Park District proposed a re-constituted wetland on a 158-acre site that is adjacent to both the Little Miami Scenic River, and Caesar Creek tailwater.

The Hisey Farm property originally had a stream meandering through it that delivered hydrology for a wetland. To enhance its use as a productive farm, the owners drained it and diverted the stream away from the field into a roadside ditch that carries the water into the Little Miami River without filtration and removal of suspended sediment and nutrients. Drain tile was also installed beneath the surface to make sure the field would remain dry enough for the annual crop plantings to be successful. The wetlands and their benefits were lost.

"Now that we have found this stream disguised as a ditch, we plan to put it back where it belongs so it can meander through the park and into the wetland, as it once did two hundred years ago, delivering all the ecological benefits of the wetland that were there prior to farming the land," explained Vince Messerly, Ohio Wetlands Foundation president.

We were very pleased to be able to share our Lost and Found story and a video about our Hisey Park Wetlands Project at the 41st Annual EECO Conference at Mohican Lodge. However, when we received suggestions and offers of help from the people who attended our session, our participation in the conference became even more valuable to us.



two miles. Those who are African American or Latino are three times as likely as whites to live in these hazardous waste neighborhoods.¹

In Ohio, proponents of EJ include religious and community-based organizations. The Ohio Council of Churches EJ policy (www.ohcouncilchs.org) calls for “collaboration with concerned religious and secular stakeholders” in advocating “for EJ by voicing our



Photo by Ken Kiser

Environmental education is central to addressing EJ by providing unbiased information on pollution and its impacts on the health and quality of life of low income and minority cultures and in promoting civic engagement.

concerns about policies affecting environmental impacts on the poor, inviting diverse participation in our deliberations, insisting on clean air and water, resource protection, reduced dependence on fossil fuels and more sustainable practices.”

Ohioans for Health and Environmental Justice (www.ohej.org) are joining grassroots concerns with pollution and socio-economic data, and are formulating an EJ policy that asks for designated government job roles and strategies within each state agency and department. They are promoting: 1) greater environmental quality for all Ohioans by ensuring that material use and production are done in ways that positively impact health and economy; and, 2) citizen participation in any decision making about planned development that would affect natural resources, local economic goals and overall quality-of-life.

Environmental education helps address EJ by providing unbiased information and promoting civic engagement. See page four for ideas on how to get involved.

Development of this article was supported in part by an Ohio EPA OEEF grant awarded to the Ohio Council of Churches and MEEC

EndNotes

1. Bullard, R., P. Mobai, R. Saba and B Wright. 2007. *Toxic Wastes and Race at 20: 1987 – 2007, Grassroots struggles to dismantle environmental racism in the United States.* United Church of Christ.

2. Lee, Charles. 1987. *Toxic Wastes and Race In The United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Waste Sites.* United Church of Christ, Commission for Racial Justice.

Development of this article was supported in part by an Ohio EPA OEEF grant, Faithful Care for Ohio's Environment to the Ohio Council of Churches and MEEC.

3. www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/index.html retrieved 5/15/08.

K-12 Sustainability Education Resources

*Jeanne Russell, Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources/Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Carolyn Watkins, Ohio EPA, Ohio Environmental Education Fund*

Here are just a few great resources for teaching about sustainability at all grade levels. Many more can be found online at www.eeco-online.org.

Interactive Websites

America's Rivers and WVIZ Ideastream. An accompaniment to the PBS series *The Return of the Cuyahoga*, this site offers lesson plans, standards, additional websites, ideas, and information regarding the Cuyahoga River. There are lessons for each area of the site: History, Environment, and Water Monitoring. Web: www.wviz.org/edsvcs/cuyahoga/

Ecological Footprint Quiz. An online footprint calculator. Web: www.earthday.net/footprint/index.asp

Sustainability Education Center. A non-profit organization that “educates American citizens for responsible participation in their own communities and our nation in the context of an interdependent world.” Web: www.sustainabilityed.org

Books & Newsletters

Hren, Benedict J. and Diane M. *Community Sustainability: A mini curriculum for grades 9-12.* The Izaak Walton League of America, Gaithersburg, MD, 1996. Designed to provide students with information about the emerging community sustainability movement and the action skills that will facilitate their participation.

National Science Teachers Association and Natural Resources Conservation Service. *Dig In! Hands-on Soil Investigations.* NSTA Press, 2001. Geared for grades K-4, it introduces soil's mysteries and builds a greater appreciation for the value of soil.

Parella, Deb, and Cat Smith. *Project Seasons.* The Shelburne Institute, 1995. Using the school year's seasons of fall, winter, and spring, it integrates science, agriculture, and environmental themes into the curriculum and aims to show how all things are interconnected.

World Wildlife Fund and Center for a New American Dream. *Smart Consumers: An Educator's Guide to Exploring Consumer Issues and the Environment.* A comprehensive, interdisciplinary guide that helps middle school students learn how their consumer choices affect the environment. The toolkit includes an Educator's Guide with background information; fourteen hands-on and creative activities; an annotated list of resources, and more. Web: www.newdream.org/about/campaigns.php

Call to Action – Get Involved in Environmental Justice

Leanne Jablonski, FMI, Ph.D., Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC)

Carolyn Watkins, Ohio EPA, Ohio Environmental Education Fund

There are many ways each of us can become more aware and active in assuring environmental justice for all Ohioans. Here are a few suggestions; please visit www.eeco-online.org for several others.

Network with others - Become more aware and join your voice with your local community concerns or the networks:

- 1) Join EECO's environmental and community-based organizations member section network of non-profit conservation, faith-based, community action groups.
- 2) Learn more through the network of Ohioans for Health, Environment and Justice (www.ohioej.org). Upon request, they will synthesize the available government data to produce environmental toxin fact sheets specific to your region.

Educate yourself about where you live:

- 1) Where are landfills, industrial noise, brownfields (lack of greenspace) located and what is the demography of those neighborhoods?
- 2) Consult the environmental data sources available for your region and by zip code that highlight hazardous facilities, emissions and pollution. (Ohio is in EPA Region 5): EPA sites: www.epa-echo.gov/echo; www.epa.gov/tri. Also consult the non-governmental databases of: www.rtknet.org and www.scorecard.org

Read more about EJ issues:

Fact sheets and reports

- 1) The Ecological Society of America Environmental Justice fact sheet highlights EJ definitions, history, role of ecological science, and key EJ-websites. www.esa.org/education_diversity/pdfDocs/EnvironmentalJustice.pdf
- 2) Visit www.ejrc.cau.edu in Atlanta and the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice www.dscej.org in New Orleans.

Books

- 1) *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution* by Robert D. Bullard. 2005: Sierra Club Books, ISBN-10: 1578051207. This book captures the voices of frontline warriors who are challenging the government and industry policies and globalization trends that place people of color and the poor at special risk.
- 2) *The Promise and Peril of Environmental Justice* by Christopher H. Foreman. 1998: Brookings Institution Press, ISBN-10: 0815728786. In the first book-length critique of the environmental justice movement, Foreman argues that the EJ movements is structurally and ideologically unable to generate a focused policy agenda, because it refuses to recognize critical issues and fundamental limitations. Foreman recommends specific institutional reforms intended to recast the national dialogue about the stake of minority and poor populations in environmental protection.



Educate others about environmental justice:

- 1) Highlight inclusion/cultural diversity and awareness of EJ issues impacting your region.
- 2) The Marianist Environmental Education Center (meec.udayton.edu), in partnership with Ohio Council of Churches, is developing Ohio-based, adult EE curriculum highlighting EJ dimensions of water, land and food, climate change and energy. MEEC also provides resources on faith community and environment issues in Ohio. Contact us at meec@udayton.edu.

Environmental justice is a challenging issue to address, given the economic, social and other environmental challenges we face. By addressing EJ in our education programs and personal actions, we can enjoy clean air, water and soil in our global backyard today and help ensure a sustainable and equitable future for all.

Abandoned Coal Mining Lands Turning into Bird Havens

Courtesy of American Bird Conservancy

In early April, a coalition of groups contributed to a program that has the potential to dramatically alter the landscape of abandoned and disused coal mines throughout Appalachia for the benefit of some of our fastest declining birds.

The project will plant 15,000 seedlings on a plot in Vinton County, Ohio that will serve as a model for future partnership efforts. The project will restore degraded mining lands to provide habitat for Cerulean Warblers and other interior forest birds that have been declining due to the loss and fragmentation of forests in the United States and Canada.

Over the last 30 years, many mines have been reclaimed to non-native grasslands or shrublands, replacing diverse hardwood forests with large, unnatural openings. However, some of these areas now support populations of other priority birds such as Golden-winged Warblers, Northern Bobwhite, Henslow's Sparrows, and American Woodcock. Future reforestation efforts will be coordinated to avoid affecting these species.

Readers who own previously mined lands in southeastern Ohio, or anywhere in the Appalachian Mountains, and who are interested in learning more about reforestation opportunities, please contact the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Ohio Private Lands Office or American Bird Conservancy. Web: www.abcbirds.org

Read the complete article at www.eeco-online.org



EECO Awards 2008

It is the honor of EECO to recognize individuals and organizations that are providing exemplary EE and striving to preserve our natural environment in Ohio. Congratulations and thanks to this year's recipients.

If you would like more information about the EECO Awards, or if you would like to make a nomination, please visit www.eeco-online.org



Outstanding Volunteer Award – Presented by: Sara Vance (center) and Betsy Loeb (right). Recipient: Jenny Morgan (left)



Outstanding Environmental Educator in the Field of Formal Education – Presented by: Christy Ahnmark (right). Recipient: Marty McTigue



Organization Award – Presented by: Dick Dieffenderfer. Recipient: Sunday Creek Associates/Little Cities of Black Diamonds Council, represented by Dana White



Ohio Alliance for the Environment Award – Presented by: Penny Traina, Columbiana County commissioner. Recipient: Waste Technologies Industries, represented by Mike Parkes



Publications Award – Presented by Carolyn Watkins (left). Recipient: *Rain Garden Manual for Homeowners*, represented by Ann Rzepka, Geauga SWCD



Outstanding Environmental Educator in the Field of Non-formal Education – Presented by Jeanne Russell. Recipient: Lynda Adams



Finlay-Johnson Award – Presented by: Jeanne Russell. Recipient: Nelson Strong, ODNR



President's Award - Presented by: 2006-08 EECO President David Wright. Recipient: Laura Busby



Christy Dixon Award (young professional) - Nominated by: Lynda Adams. Recipient: Denise Natoli Brooks



EECO Arts Award – Recipient: Charley Harper, represented by his son Brett Harper



Special Honor Award - Recipient: David Wright, in appreciation for distinguished service as President, 2006-2008

In Search of the Righteous Bean

Nelson Strong, contributing editor, Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources/Division of Soil & Water Conservation

Long before it was hooked on oil, America was hooked on coffee and, barring some disastrous calamity, coffee will still be powering many of us long after we've strapped solar panels to our espresso machines. (Fact: Coffee is the 2nd most-traded commodity in the world – after petroleum!)

But in our world, coffee has become complicated. Forget the lattes and frappuccinos and espresso macchiatos. Today the concern is whether the coffee is shade-grown, and if shade-grown, is it rustic, traditional or commercial polyculture, or shaded monoculture? Is your coffee fair-trade? Organic? Bird friendly?

Whew!

The coffee plant can be traced back to the Ethiopian highlands. It is a woody perennial evergreen that belongs to the *Rubiaceae* family; the little partridgeberry plant that creeps along the ground in some Ohio woodlands is a close-to-home family member. While coffee plants can grow to about 35 feet, they are generally pruned for easier harvesting. Three to four years after the coffee is planted, sweet smelling flowers (gardenia is another relative) grow in clusters in the axils of the leaves. About 15 weeks after flowering, the “cherry” containing the bean forms; it changes from green to red in about another 15 to 20 weeks.

There are several coffee species, but two are commercially cultivated today. *Coffea arabica*, known as Arabica coffee, accounts for 75-80 percent of the world's production. *Coffea canephora*, known as Robusta, accounts for about 20 percent.

Coffee grows naturally as an understory tree, shaded by a mix of other forest trees. Until relatively recently, all coffee was more or less shade-grown. But take away the

shade and the plants grow faster and the beans mature in less time. Much of today's coffee is plantation-grown without shade. Consequently, the other plants and animals (especially songbirds) are also gone. Sun-grown, plantation coffee also requires more fertilizer (petro-based) and pesticides, some of which are illegal in the U.S.

Increasingly, coffee drinkers want to drink locally while thinking globally; hence the interest in organic, shade-grown, fair-trade coffee. These terms are not mutually exclusive, but neither are they synonymous. However,

fair-trade coffees are often shade-grown and many are certified organic. Many support programs such as the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, Rainforest Alliance, Defenders of Wildlife, and missions, and are easy to find online if not in your local market. When shopping, make sure to look for the Fair Trade* certified logo.

So go ahead; have your coffee and save the world, too. You'll pay a bit more for these Earth- and people-friendlier coffees, but you'll sleep better for it.



**Fair Trade Certified™ products directly support a better life for farmers and farm workers in the developing world through fair prices, community development and environmental stewardship. Through Fair Trade, small farmer organizations market their own harvests through direct, long-term contracts with international buyers, learn how to manage their businesses and compete in the global marketplace. For some products, Fair Trade welcomes estates and plantations that are committed to social responsibility, community development, and environmental stewardship to participate for the benefit of their workers. Small farmers and farm workers benefit from premiums that allow them to invest in building their communities and bettering their lives.*

BECOME AN EECO MEMBER!

Register online at www.eeco-online.org

Environmental Education Opportunities

Summer 2008 Calendar

July

- July 7-11 Language of Nature, summer writing institute, and Leopold Education Project educator workshop, at Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Peninsula, Ohio. Sponsored by the Environmental Education Council of Ohio. Visit: www.eeco-online.org. Cost: Some fees may apply
- July 8 Ohio Environmental Education Fund deadline to submit Letter of Intent to apply in the July grant cycle. Visit: www.epa.state.oh.us/oeef
- July 11-12 Experiencing Environmental Education: Project Learning Tree, Project WILD/Aquatic, Project WET. This workshop for current and pre-service educators will be held at Zane State College – Natural Resources Center, Zanesville. Contact: Bonnie Daily at 740.455.8237 or by email at mvpd@muskingumcounty.org OR Nicole Hafer at 740.455.2767 or by email at nicole.hafer.muskingumswcd.org. Cost: \$30, plus \$163 additional for possible, optional one hour of graduate semester credit through Ashland University. Deadline: July 2.
- July 15 Ohio Environmental Education Fund deadline to submit completed grant application. Visit: www.epa.state.oh.us/oeef
- July 18-19 Ohio Prairie Conference, Toledo area. Sponsored by the Toledo Metroparks. Visit: www.ohioprairie.org. Cost: Some fees may apply.
- July 28-29 Project Learning Tree Modules and Project WILD Educator Workshop at Old Woman Creek Research Reserve, Huron, Ohio. Learn about Flora and Fauna at this two-day learning vacation. One day will be devoted to Project WILD and the next to two Project Learning Tree Modules: Exploring Environmental Issues: Focus On Forests, and Exploring Environmental Issues: Focus on Risk. Contact: Phoebe Van Zoest at 419. 433.4601 or by e-mail at info@oldwomancreek.org. Cost: \$50, for meals, plus additional for possible, optional one graduate credit semester hour from Ashland University, (must pay for credit on July 28).

August

- August 4-5 Using Local Research in the Classroom at Old Woman Creek Research Reserve, Huron, Ohio. This workshop will help educators understand the research process by participating in research projects being conducted at Old Woman Creek, from collecting samples to analyzing data. Also, a section is devoted to finding and using real time data and other classroom and internet resources. Contact: Phoebe Van Zoest at 419.433.4601 or by e-mail at info@oldwomancreek.org. Cost: Free. Additional cost for possible, optional one hour of graduate semester credit from Ashland University (payable by check on August 4).
- August 9-10 Appalachian Butterfly Conference, Shawnee State Forest and the Edge of Appalachia Preserve, Adams and Scioto counties, Ohio. Don't miss this first-ever conference. The preserve offers some of the best butterfly-watching north of the Ohio River. Racking up a list of over 60 species during the course of this weekend isn't out of the question, including much rarer butterflies such as Hayhurst's Scallopwing, Gemmed Satyr, Juniper and White-M hairstreaks. Jaret C. Daniels, author of *Butterflies of Ohio*, will be the keynote speaker. Dr. Daniels is a noted butterfly conservationist, professional photographer, and avid field researcher. Visit: www.flora-quest.com/butterflies.html for details. Contact: Jim McCormac at 614.265.6440, or jim.mccormac@dnr.state.oh.us. Cost: Fees do apply and vary.
- August 11 Art of the WILD: Advanced Project WILD Educator Workshop at Old Woman Creek Research Reserve, Huron, Ohio. Join our staff and guest artist as they take you on a WILD artistic adventure. Learn how connecting art and science can help your students with observation skills, using a grid and expression in verbal and non-verbal ways. All skill levels welcome. Bring sketching and drawing supplies if you have them. Dress comfortably; activities will be outside as much as possible. Please bring your lunch. Contact: Phoebe Van Zoest at 419.433.4601 or by e-mail at info@oldwomancreek.org.
- August 11-13 Teaching and Learning With Monarch Butterflies, Brookside Elementary School, Columbus, Ohio. This workshop combines classroom and field experiences for pre-K to grade 8 teachers. Teach skills in literacy, math, science, the arts, geography, technology, Spanish and social studies through the captivating story of monarchs. 9am-3pm daily. Contact: Erik Mollenhauer at 856.582.7000, ext. 110 or erikm@eirc.org. Cost: \$99
- August 13-15 Same as above, Cox Arboretum, Dayton, Ohio. Cost: \$99.

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www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Xy57R1YZhbxqU9H8rntVMQ_3d_3d

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For membership application, please contact Josh Flory, Membership Manager.

For information about EECO's programs and services, please contact Brenda Metcalf, Executive Director.

Visit EECO online at www.eeco-online.org

mail permit #



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