

Friday, March 21

Getting Back to Nature with Rachel Raccoon and Sammy Skunk

Jannifer Powelson

Author - Rachel Raccoon and Sammy Skunk Educational Books

This presentation will include ideas on how to "Get Back to Nature" using books in the Rachel Raccoon and Sammy Skunk educational series, accompanying study guide, and hands-on activities. Ideal for use in indoor classrooms or outdoor natural areas.

What can the University of Illinois Extension do for you?

Angie Welker

University of Illinois Extension

Are you looking for educational activities for your classroom? Extension offers a variety of classroom activities that range from one meeting to multi-week sessions. This session will be a broad overview of programs that we offer with hands on activities for you to try.

It Takes a Village: Connecting Young Children to Nature

Marilyn Brink

Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo

Educators coming together from environmental education and early childhood education explore impacts of nature play and nature-based early learning for young children through NatureStart™ Professional Development. Stories from the field and sample activities will be introduced – Join us!

Educational Strategies to Attract, Develop, and Retain Natural Areas Volunteers

Trinity Pierce

The Morton Arboretum

The Natural Areas Conservation Training (N-ACT) Program provides in-depth ecological restoration training through both interactive online modules and expert-led field sessions. Learn how this blended learning format is grounded in an educational engagement community and effectively builds natural areas volunteerism.

Unlock the Potential to Your Story-Really Tell It!

Danielle Rice

Senior Exhibit Designer, Taylor Studios Inc.

Everyone has an important story to tell. Do your visitors understand your story? In this session we will cover what interpretation means and explore how your site can benefit from telling an effective story. We will spend time discussing the many methods and importance of storytelling, how to form a clear message, and using that message in programming, signage, and marketing. Discover what resources you can use to tell your story and determine which ones may be viable for you and your staff to implement. Leave with new ideas on how to focus your available resources towards inspiring your visitors by giving them the reasons your site is unique and memorable.

How to Craft an Exhibit Budget That Will Get You Results

Danielle Rice

Senior Exhibit Designer, Taylor Studios Inc.

To really set your organization up for exhibit success, you must first understand the foundation of what things cost. This session will cover how costs are calculated, how to create a budget, where to spend your money, and how to maximize your dollars. In an industry where funding comes from all walks of life; federal and state dollars, grants, friends groups, stakeholders, donors, and more; we have formulated a simple method to begin a budget. Many folks may only complete an exhibit project once or twice during the span of their career; this session offers the financial budget training that can help them make the most of your project. Attendees can expect to walk away from this session with the ability to start their own exhibit budget, gain access to a

DIY budgeting tool, garner an understanding of how exhibit costs break down, and how to be creative in stretching their budget. Through demonstration, case studies, and audience engagement, we will share our tried-and-true methods and data for attendees to bring back to their institutions.

SEED (Social-Emotional Environmental Education)

Jennifer Tariq, Douglas-Hart Nature Center

Join us to learn about a unique approach to environmental education that combines science and nature through language arts journaling, classroom visits, field trips, science kits, and more! SEED partnered with community members, received foundation grant money, and fit perfectly with Title 1 objectives for family engagement receiving additional school support and 100% teacher participation.

Science/Math Integration for a Sustainable Planet

April Flood

Eastern Illinois University

In this hands-on workshop, engage in innovative activities that illustrate the science and math behind real-world ecology concepts such as carrying capacity, natural resource use, and how humans are changing Earth's landscape, habitats and biodiversity. Receive electronic lesson plans.

Sensory Bottles: A Way to Bring Outdoor Adventure Inside

Anna Marie Froeschle

Stepping Stones Daycare

In this hands on session, we will craft our own sensory bottles and explore all the uses and activities one can use with it.

Books, Libraries, Characters, Oh My!

Jennifer Tariq & Abby deBuhr

Douglas-Hart Nature Center

The Douglas-Hart Nature Center travels to approximately 50 libraries each year, especially during the summer reading program. Learn about our customized programs, characters, technology, funding, and more in this hands-on session where you can make friends with Mrs. Drizzle and Sal or rediscover your love of chocolate or go wild Where the Wild Things Are!

Materials and Programs from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Joe Bauer

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Attend this presentation and learn about the new "Illinois Pollinators" resources trunks from the IDNR as well as grants, ENTICE (Environment and Nature Training Institute for Conservation Education) professional development workshops, Web-based information and many other Illinois-specific, supplemental educational tools.

Early Childhood Environmental Education: Growing within your Community

Rachel Schaller

Elmhurst Academy of Early Learning

This presentation will show busy teachers how they can improve and promote their nature education programs by gaining access to resources, educating parents, and building relationships in the community.

Growing and Utilizing a Schoolyard Prairie

Vincent Gresham

Cardno Native Plant Nursery

The presentation will offer tips on many aspects of an educational prairie garden project, including: selecting a site, designing the prairie for optimum student engagement, building staff/community support, involving students in the planning process, securing funding, and more.

Happy with Honeybees

Dakota Radford

Eastern Illinois University

From starting a honeybee hive at your facility to leading hands-on beekeeping and dramatic play experiences for kids (no bees required) this program will equip you with "sweet" new ideas. We will not visit the outdoor beehives during this class, but will meet real bees "behind glass."

Early Childhood Environmental Education: More Than the Sum of Its Parts

Panelists: Emilian Geczi, Natural Start Alliance - NAAEE

Marilyn Brink, Nature Start - Chicago Zoological Society

Rachel Schaller - Elmhurst Academy

This panel will discuss how quality early childhood environmental education programs combine knowledge of children's cognitive, moral, physical, and social-emotional development with best practices in fostering an environmentally literate citizenry to support the growth of the whole child and forge a lifelong bond with nature.

Break Out Sessions

EEAI Board Members

Breakout sessions are a great opportunity for you to share and discuss topics you want to learn about! Be sure to write topics on the Breakout board Friday morning. We will group like topics together and facilitate small group discussions.

Saturday, March 22

EE Career Panel

Looking to get involved in the environmental education field but not sure what options are available in Illinois? The panelists from this session will share information about their educational background, their career path and their current role in the field of environmental education. With a wide range of experts from the field, session attendees should get a full understanding of the many options available in environmental education.

Panelists:

Brekke Bounds; IL Clean Energy Community Foundation

Shannon Reedy; Miller Park Zoo

Julie Gianessi; Peoria Academy

Nan Buckardt; Lake County Forest Preserve

Meghan Wiesbrock; The Morton Arboretum

Debbie Fluegel; Trees Forever

Linda Hauser; US Forest Service

Kristi Morris; IL Environmental Protection Agency

Randolph Pankiewicz; IL American Water

Sarah Livesay; Grand Prairie Friends

Tales Along the Trail with Brian "Fox" Ellis

This participatory workshop begins with basic theatre games and improvisation to warm up our skills and instill within us the idea that we already know how to tell a tale or two. We will then explore the differences between stage craft and 'tales along the trail' interpretive telling and the process of translating ideas into performance material. We will then go for a hike and explore the process of creating memorable programs with storytelling as the foundation of all great interpretation.

The Nature of Teaching-Free Curriculum for K-5 Educators

Rebecca Koetz

Purdue University

The Nature of Teaching provides free downloadable formal and informal curriculum for K-5 educators. Curriculum topics include wildlife, health and wellness, and food waste. Formal curriculum is standards-based with National Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards.

Farm to School: Connecting garden education to cafeterias (and beyond!)

Marlie Wilson

Illinois Farm to School Network Coordinator, Seven Generations Ahead

Be part of transforming the school food environment, from schoolyard to cafeteria! Learn how "farm to school" and "farm to early childcare" efforts can advance STEM education, foster student leadership, and encourage the formation of healthier eating habits.

The Importance of Environmental Clubs in Schools

Kristin Jacobson Flex & Jennifer Scoby

Illinois Central College

Come learn how the role of 'Environmental Club Advisor', can be one of the most impactful of your career! Club involvement is where students develop deeper connections, bond with like-minded students, act on their convictions, and become leaders.

The UN Climate Change Conferences: Is the Communication Good Enough?

Tom Duncanson

Millikin University

Based on attendance at COP23 and SB48, the author asks the troubling question of whether or not the Conference Communication is good enough to achieve the Paris Climate Agreement's aspirations? Among surprises, the still robust participation of the US in these meetings.

ITERS/ECERS: Using Nature to Bring Up Your Environmental Rating Score

Anna Marie Froeschle

Stepping Stones Daycare

A quality preschool program must provide for the three basic needs all children have: Protection of their health and safety, Building positive relationships, and Opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience. Each of the three basic components of quality care manifests itself in tangible forms in the program's environment, curriculum, schedule, supervision and interaction, and can be observed. We will show examples of nature in the classroom, to boost your environmental rating score.

Learn One, Take One

Abby deBuhr

Douglas-Hart Nature Center

We all come from different environmental settings and have our own tips and tricks to teaching! Come learn a few tricks and share a few tips on fun activities like attention getters and trail games but also more serious topics like redirection and discipline in this interactive session.

Citizen Science

Pam Evans

Middle School Teacher

We know there numerous citizen science programs out there. Which ones work for non-formal educators or classroom teachers? Learn how to engage with classroom teachers and the public by creating quality citizen science programs.

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