

Maryland Partnership for Children In Nature – Quarterly Partnership Meeting  
**July 19, 2012** 9:30-11:00am  
Brookside Gardens Visitors Center  
(moved to nearby county facility due to power outage)

## Meeting Notes

### Welcome and Introductions

Mary Bradford, Director of Montgomery County Parks, welcomed the Partnership to the county parks system.

Mary Cary, Maryland State Department of Education, opened the meeting and expressed Dr. Lowry's regrets over her inability to attend. As she assumes her role as Superintendent of Maryland Schools, Dr. Lowry has many priorities to balance. Dr. Lowry comes to MSDE from Delaware, a state that was among the first to receive Race to the Top Awards; Mary noted the significant value in leadership familiar with RTTT, as well as experience steeped in classroom teaching, and leadership as both district and state Superintendent. Dr. Lowry is very in-tune with EE issues and plans to attend the October meeting, to be held at the National Aquarium in Baltimore.

Joe Gill, Department of Natural Resources, co-chaired the meeting on behalf of Secretary Griffin, who had a conflicting meeting with the Governor.

### Recognition of Julie Dieguez

Joe recognized Julie Dieguez, former Maryland No Child Left Inside Coordinator who recently left the partnership to focus on her nature play space design business, The Wild Child.

Julie served as MD NCLI Coordinator for 4 years and was instrumental in building and managing the coalition, which today includes more than 250 organizations representing over 635,000 Marylanders.

Her work to support the Partnership for Children in Nature on behalf of the Maryland NCLI has been key to the success of our collective efforts, including the historic passage of Maryland's high school graduation requirement for environmental literacy.

Prior to coordinating the NCLI coalition, Julie worked as a Schoolyard Habitat specialist for Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She is a past member of the MAEOE Board and a current Board member of the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council.

Julie is a brilliant facilitator and communicator, with a sharp wit and the striking ability to navigate even the most complex red-tape cutting and hoop jumping obstacle course with grace and precision.

She has received the Izaak Walton League National Honor Roll Award and has recently been published in the organization's Outdoor America magazine with an article on the importance of Nature Play.

### Action Plan Updates

*Celebrate Maryland Outdoors Days—Karen Mullin, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

In June, USFWS and Maryland DNR hosted (on behalf of the Partnership) Celebrate Maryland Outdoors Days as part of Great Outdoors Month. The two-week celebration was meant to help connect children, families, and communities to nature; increase awareness of Maryland's diverse resources; promote participation in outdoor activities; and, demonstrate that spending time in nature is a shared cultural value in Maryland. A total of 257 events in 83 parks and other sites were submitted to the website and additional data is still being collected. There are considerable opportunities for expansion next year, including improving the mechanism for capturing individual contact information for future communication.

*Environmental Literacy—Laurie Jenkins, Montgomery County Public Schools (see powerpoint)*

ELit Summit—plans continue for the August Summit, Aug 5-9 at Rocky Gap. Teams from each LEA will convene to develop a preK-12 ELit plan and strategy for implementation.

Green Schools/Youth Summit—130 schools/3500 participants (a 24% increase over last year). Celebration of MD Green Schools and Green Ribbon Schools, strengthened connections between schools and EE providers, promoted new ideas to excite schools, and engaged students.

Higher Ed Forum, scheduled for Sept 27—designed to increase collaboration with higher ed community in order to increase the capacity of pre-service and practicing teachers to meet environmental literacy goals. Invitations have been sent to 20 higher ed partners and planning for the forum will be done in September.

Every Student Every Year (“ESEY”) —the workgroup has developed criteria for what yearly experiences should look like (see powerpoint) and will next create a guidance plan for implementation.

*Communities/ Community Planning – Sandi Olek, MD DNR*

DNR is working to develop a free **smart phone Trail App** that will provide trail maps of parks and forests to the public by September. This app will be part of a national product that is being expanded to include MD information, and will include information on all public lands including Federal, state and local lands.

The web based **Maryland Trails Interactive Map** should be final by August. This product will draw from multiple agencies and will provide information on safe on-road connections to state and local trails.

The **Nature Play Spaces** workgroup continues to develop demonstration projects including the next phase of the Annapolis Play and Learn, and a series of urban community play space projects. Two urban sites have been considered for the installation of a community NPS, including identifying partners, funding and site plans. These ultra urban sites will pose a new set of constraints and lessons for establishing nature play in public spaces.

The DNR Land Trails Office will complete its review of the **County 5-year recreation plans (LPPRP's)** by the end of July, and together with the Community Planning workgroup will develop recommendations regarding Children in Nature enhancements at public recreational facilities throughout the state.

*Health and Agriculture Connections—Kim Martinez, National Wildlife Federation (see powerpoint)*

Agriculture: The agriculture workgroup is on track with scheduling formal and non-formal educator workshops to integrate the Farm to School program into existing curriculum. Farm to School representatives will present at the E-Lit Summit and at the farm-based non-formal educator’s workshop in November. If awarded a USDA Farm to School grant, a school garden and food systems curriculum will be created and presented to teachers via webinar. The workgroup is collaborating with MAEOE to integrate agriculture initiatives with Maryland Green Schools and will submit case studies to MAEOE in August.

Health: Stakeholders from around the state participated in a health forum on June 13<sup>th</sup> at Robinson Nature Center in Columbia. Partnership leaders facilitated an interactive presentation, inviting representatives from outdoor education, parks and recreation departments, universities, state agencies, non-profits, and the health industry to share program successes, gaps in programs/support, and ideas for collaboration. Collectively, the group identified and prioritized the greatest needs for addressing children’s health issues in Maryland. The Health workgroup has compiled the responses from the stakeholders and will develop an action plan, with additional input from the Partnership.

*Discussion*: Joe Gill noted that it may be time to directly engage the Health Department in our work and raise the need for increased connection to the outdoors as a public health and health management issue.

Others noted that planning and zoning and local management boards may have something to contribute to the conversation.

There may also be a need to review policies at the federal and state levels that dictate the health of learning environments (e.g. school lunch, exposure to chemicals, safe routes to schools, etc).

The group brainstormed additional partners and groups to engage as we move forward, and noted other topics that we should consider addressing. Ideas were captured and will be used in the planning.



### **New EE Capacity Building Initiative**—*Laura Collard, MAEOE*

- Maryland is participating in a National EE Capacity Building project funded by EPA.
- A Consortium of 5 Maryland groups will be working to build a network of collaborative partnerships by pooling resources and developing new tools that will improve the health of Marylanders and their environment. EE Capacity Website <http://www.eecapacity.net>.
- Three workshops are planned and will engage individuals not currently associated with the more traditional EE networks. The target audience is one that is doing EE work in their communities but not necessarily labeling it as EE. Workshops will build new relationships and provide participants with capacity building tools.
- Will have a better idea of how the Partnership can support this effort as the process moves forward.
- Possibly the upcoming B-WET RFP focused on underserved communities could help to advance this (capacity building) work.

### **Mid-Atlantic Environmental Literacy Strategy**—*Karen Mullin (standing in for Shannon Sprague, NOAA)*

The Mid-Atlantic Environmental Literacy Workgroup has finalized a regional strategy document (as called for in the Chesapeake Bay Executive Order). The strategy is very well-aligned with the EE affiliates strategies in the Bay states. Many organizations signed onto a letter requesting that the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council endorse the Strategy document and consider strengthening metrics for implementation of previous EE commitments. There was active discussion at the EC's annual meeting earlier this month and we expect a closer look at the Mid-Atlantic strategy and associated recommendations moving forward.

Jamie Baxter announced that Chesapeake Bay Trust and NOAA Chesapeake Bay Program are hosting a workshop in August with EE researchers to develop best practices, based on the Common Qualities of Effective EL Programs and recently revised "ESEY" recommendations, both developed by members of the EL workgroup along with broader review. Ideally, conference findings will influence the development of and pilot implementation of an improved data collection tool to track student EE experiences in the state/region (by Summer 2013).

### **Announcements:**

- Jamie Baxter reminded participants that the Chesapeake Bay Trust is considering proposals that build capacity to implement the Mid Atlantic EL Strategy. These small grants should dovetail well with Partnership's commitment to support implementation of the environmental literacy graduation requirement in MD.
- Laura Collard announced that the call for presentations for the MAEOE conference (February 7-10, 2013 in Ocean City) is now open, with proposals due September 7. More information is available at [www.maeoe.org](http://www.maeoe.org).

Participants and hosts were thanked and the meeting was adjourned, and after a short break, the Leadership Team and Steering Committee were to reconvene for a separate, annual formal Leadership Team meeting to review progress and provide input and guidance for the remainder of the year's work.

*[see powerpoints on following pages for E-Lit workgroup and Health Forum presentations]*

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY WORKGROUP

- ▶ ELit Summit
- ▶ Green Schools/Youth Summit
- ▶ Higher Education ELit Forum
- ▶ Every Student Every Year

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SUMMIT

- ▶ Participants
  - ▶ Teams of educators from each LEA
  - ▶ Up to five people: teachers (ES, MS, HS) and one or two curriculum supervisors
- ▶ Outcomes
  - ▶ A working PK-12 Environmental Literacy plan for each LEA
  - ▶ A strategy for implementing the plan

## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY SUMMIT

- ▶ Format
  - ▶ Conference style: general sessions, concurrent breakouts, field experiences
  - ▶ Invited presenters include formal and non-formal educators (PK-20)
- ▶ Location and Dates
  - ▶ Rocky Gap Resort and nearby State and National Parks
  - ▶ August 5 – 9, 2012

## REGIONAL E-LIT LIAISONS

Region	Liaisons
<b>Western</b> <i>(Washington, Allegany, Garrett)</i>	<b>Carol Garner</b> (ACPS) <b>Cat Styliński</b> (UMCES)
<b>West Central</b> <i>(Frederick, Montgomery, Howard, Carroll)</i>	<b>Laurie Jenkins</b> (MCPS) <b>Stephanie Oberle</b> (MNCPP)
<b>Central</b> <i>(Prince George's, Anne Arundel)</i>	<b>Deb Albert</b> (AACPS) <b>Tom Ackerman</b> (CBF)
<b>Northeast</b> <i>(Baltimore City, Baltimore Co., Harford)</i>	<b>Pat Ghinger</b> (BCPS) <b>Mary Hardcastle</b> (Parks and People Foundation)
<b>Upper E. Shore</b> <i>(Cecil, Talbot, Caroline, Queen Anne's, Kent)</i>	<b>LeeAnn Hutchison</b> (MSDE) <b>Mark Scallion</b> (Pickering Creek)
<b>Lower E. Shore</b> <i>(Dorchester, Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset)</i>	<b>LeeAnn Hutchison</b> (MSDE) <b>Carrie Samis</b> (MD Coastal Bays)
<b>Southern</b> <i>(Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's)</i>	<b>Donna Miller</b> (CCPS) <b>Andy Brown</b> (Battle Creek Cyprus Swamp)

## ROLE OF REGIONAL LIAISON

- ▶ Attend planning day at E-Lit Summit (8/9/12)
  - ▶ Select sites and dates for regional meetings
  - ▶ Develop tentative agenda(s)
- ▶ Facilitate two regional e-lit meetings during Fall 2012 and Spring 2013
  - ▶ Plan and implement agenda
  - ▶ Secure appropriate resources for meeting
  - ▶ Communicate with participants
  - ▶ Communicate progress with ACPS and MSDE



### June 1<sup>st</sup> – Maryland Green School Youth Summit

- ▶ Celebrated MD Green Schools and MD National Green Ribbon Schools
- ▶ Connected schools to environmental providers and programs
- ▶ Provided new ideas to excite school communities
- ▶ Engaged students in outdoor environmental education at beautiful Sandy Point SP



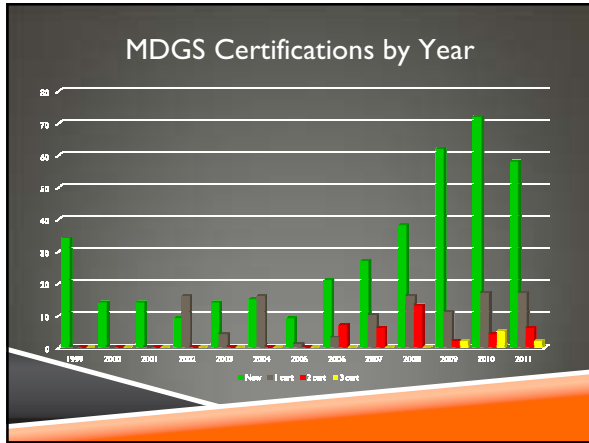
### Maryland Green School Youth Summit

- ▶ 24% increase in # of schools over 2011
- ▶ 130 schools with over 3500 students and teachers
- ▶ 50 + learning stations
- ▶ 40 partner organizations
- ▶ 250 volunteers and exhibitors



### Post-Summit Feedback

- ▶ Very positive, in general – many repeat schools
- ▶ Strong CIN Partnership support contributed to success
- ▶ Schedule earlier in the spring
- ▶ Request input for a theme in the autumn
- ▶ Funding is necessary to continue this event
- ▶ Governor was missed!



### HIGHER EDUCATION FORUM

- ▶ Goal: Increase collaboration with higher education in order to strengthen the capacity of pre-service and practicing teachers to teach environmental education
- ▶ Strategy: Conduct a forum of higher education staff and Partnership members to develop ways to work together on Elit for all

### HIGHER EDUCATION FORUM

- ▶ Progress
  - Invitations were sent to 20 potential higher education participants
  - Planning meeting – September
  - Forum Date – September 27, 2012

### EVERY STUDENT EVERY YEAR

Criteria for Implementing *Outdoor* Environmental Education

- ▶ Delivers standards-based, multidisciplinary pK-12 instruction through hands-on, outdoor field investigations
- ▶ Connects characteristics of the local environment and/or local environmental issues to larger ecological systems

## EVERY STUDENT EVERY YEAR

Criteria for Implementing *Outdoor* Environmental Education

- ▶ Utilizes **inquiry** instruction and **cooperative** learning
- ▶ Involves students in **investigative and/or hands-on** activities that address **environmental issues** and include preparation, action plans, **student action**, and reflection
- ▶ Includes all students

## EVERY STUDENT EVERY YEAR

Draft recommendations for implementing ESEY:

Create an ESEY plan!

- ▶ Who? (should be on the team)
- ▶ What? (should a lesson address and include)
- ▶ When?(should this happen - set a calendar date)
- ▶ Where ? (are locations for the lesson)
- ▶ How? (can partners and PD assist)

Continued...



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### Gap Analysis

- Existing Programs
  - Nutrition
  - Exercise
  - Active Outdoor Experiences
  - General Health
  - Access to Green Spaces
  - Schools and Education
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Missing Resources
- Potential for Collaboration



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### Priorities for Action

- Communication
- Networking/Sharing/Collaboration
- Urban Initiatives
- Social Marketing
- Data Sharing
- Policy

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