



## Nature in Neighborhoods: Conservation Education Grant Application

### **Organization, program and contact information**

<b>Date of application</b>	March 14, 2014
<b>Organization name</b>	The Environmental Education Association of Oregon (EEAO)
<b>Organization address</b>	PO Box 66014, Portland, Oregon 97290
<b>Organization website</b>	<a href="http://www.eeao.org">www.eeao.org</a>
<b>Program contact</b> Name	Traci Price Rick Reynolds
Title	Board Member, past chair Board Chair
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<b>Program partners</b> List all committed partner organizations.	Greater Portland Sustainability Education Network (Members include: seven K-12 schools and districts, eight higher education institutions, thirty-seven nonformal education providers, nine businesses, six government agencies, five civil society organizations), The Intertwine Alliance (Conservation Education Leadership Council includes: City of Vancouver Water Resources Education Center, MESD Outdoor School, West Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District, Oregon Zoo/Metro, Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership, Portland Public Schools, Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District, Gray Family Foundation, Mt. Hood Community College YESS Program, Oregon State Extension Services 4H, Oregon Department of Transportation, Portland State University), Portland Metro STEM Partnership (Members include: five school districts, five higher education institutions, seventeen nonformal education providers, fifteen businesses, three government agencies, and five civil society organizations), Portland Farm to School and School Garden Network (over 250 farm and school garden educators), Growing Gardens, Center for Diversity and the Environment
<b>Potential partners</b> List all potential partner	Organizations led by or serving communities of color (Coalition for Communities of Color, Verde, Hacienda, Adelante Mujeres,



organizations.	APANO, Latino Network, NAYA, Soul River, African American Outdoor Association, Self Enhancement Inc, Groundworks, Janus Youth Programs, Friendly House, etc); Oregon Alliance for Education Equity (23 member organizations); Urban League of Portland; Community-based program providers (Girl & Boy Scouts, Big Brother-Big Sister, Playworks, Community Cycling Center, Community Schools, Boys & Girls Club, Campfire, Girls Inc, Metropolitan Family Services – SUN Program, Head Start, etc.); Ecumenical Ministries and other faith based groups; Upstream Public Health and other healthcare organizations (Kaiser, OHSU, etc.); Business and industry (Columbia Sportswear, REI, PGE, etc); Media (Play Again, OPB, Outdoor Project, etc.); Safe Routes to School, Healthy Kids Learn Better, Cradle to Career, Adult Conservation Education Northwest, and others as determined through aspects of this project.
<b>Program title</b>	Building a Comprehensive Regional Leadership Model for Conservation Education
<b>Program summary</b> Provide a 20-45-word summary that describes your program.	The Environmental Education Association of Oregon will hire a Regional Coordinator to lead development and implementation of an inclusive, lasting regional conservation education leadership model that represents a diverse cross-sector of individuals and organizations working together to build a healthy, just, and thriving Portland-Metro region.
<b>Category</b> Under which program category does your program best fit? (Select one only).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Partnerships <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Develop Conservation Leaders
<b>Estimated funding</b>	Amount requested: \$ 100,000 Match funds: \$ 20,000 In-kind match: \$ 112,112 Total program budget: \$213,112



## Organizational Preparedness

The Environmental Education Association of Oregon (EEAO) is a statewide 501(c)(3) nonprofit headquartered in Portland, Oregon. EEAO initiates, leads, participates in and supports projects and programs that advance the role of environmental education in promoting systemic change in educational achievement, and as a non-regulatory tool for addressing natural resource challenges.

EEAO's primary functions include:

- Serving as the statewide advocate for environmental education in Oregon;
- Enhancing the professionalism of environmental education through the establishment and implementation of core competencies; and
- Strengthening the dynamic networks for environmental education from local level systems to complex international collaborations.

EEAO has served as Oregon's leader in environmental education for more than forty years, promoting a vision for a healthy, sustainable, and thriving environment. EEAO is the only statewide organization in Oregon whose role is to promote and influence environmental education on national and statewide levels each day.

EEAO has been instrumental in advancing environmental education in Oregon evidenced by the organization's role as:

- Host to the 2009 North American Association for Environmental Education's (NAAEE) international conference;
- Convener of a series of evaluation workshops in 2010 based on NAAEE's *Evaluating Your Environmental Education Programs - A Workbook for Practitioners* (sponsored by the Environmental Education Training and Partnership, EETAP, program);
- 2011 Leadership Clinic coordinator for EE professionals;
- 2013 EECapacity ([www.eecapacity.net](http://www.eecapacity.net)) State Consortium lead;
- Lead partner in the passage of the *No Oregon Child Left Inside Act* and development and implementation of the *Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan: Toward a Sustainable Future*;
- Active developer of an on-line Resource Directory of environmental and sustainability education resources currently available to non-formal and formal teachers, partners, funders, and other community partners across Oregon;
- 2013-15 lead partner on a Pacific NW regional US EPA grant to develop and assess a local, state and regional environmental literacy plan implementation collective impact model, and
- Oregon's national representative in the Affiliate Network of NAAEE.

EEAO is committed to creating a more coordinated network of environmental educators across Oregon and beyond, working together to change policy and perception while promoting the value of being more connected to each other and where we live. EEAO has recently expanded its capacity by serving as fiscal sponsor to the Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative and the Southern Oregon Environmental Education Leaders in addition to partnering with the Gray Family Foundation to co-host a statewide, annual conference for environmental educators. EEAO has made a commitment to better connect environmental educators with a wider array of culturally and economically diverse communities and to inspire others in engaging and nurturing the next generation of environmentally literate citizens.

This proposal specifically supports EEAO's strategic plan priority to *establish and/or enhance regional environmental education networks throughout Oregon*. This project will serve as a model to guide EEAO in strengthening additional regional networks across Oregon.



## Program Description

**Program narrative.** From parks providers to watershed councils, from school classrooms to the Oregon Zoo, the Portland-Metro region is rich in conservation education resources. More than 300 agencies, businesses, educational institutions and non-profit organizations across our region provide a wealth of formal and nonformal conservation education activities from on-the-ground experiential education to classroom and community-based programs, and volunteer opportunities.

By and large, existing conservation education offerings have emerged organically, in response to individual passions, local needs, specific audiences and available resources, and have done so with little regional coordination or strategizing between organizations and initiatives. Providers across the spectrum are vocal in their desire to optimize collective efforts, yet rarely have the time nor resources to coordinate programming and leverage impact. As a result, our regional conservation education system is characterized by: a fractured field of practice – practitioners associate more closely with green schools, agriculture, sustainability, jobs or outdoor education; no common measures to establish or track data; lack of promotion or scaling of powerful and best practices; inability to leverage significant funds for the field, and difficulty reaching beyond “traditional” providers to diverse organizations and individuals.

Two regionally-based organizations, the Intertwine Alliance and the Greater Portland Sustainability Education Network (GPSEN, formally recognized by the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies for Sustainability) have been working over the last two years to address our regional challenges for conservation and sustainability education. Both of these efforts envision a Portland-Metro region where everyone shares in a lifelong connectedness to nature and engages in building healthy, just, and thriving communities. Both initiatives are committed to building a more unified network of conservation and sustainability education providers and diverse partners who work together in a collaborative system to enhance our collective capacity to educate for a more sustainable future.

In addition to these two initiatives, the following regional collaborations have been formed over the years to help advance conservation education: Regional Environmental Education Network, Adult Conservation Education Northwest, and the Portland Farm to School and School Gardens Network. The Portland-Metro STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Partnership, Synergies, Healthy Kids Learn Better, and Cradle to Career are examples of even more regional networks with ties to conservation education. Additionally, a number of organizations including Verde, the African American Outdoor Association, NAYA, and Hacienda also provide conservation education programs but are not fully integrated within our existing leadership models. Although some cross-pollinating occurs across regional initiatives, unified leadership and inclusive collaboration to support the conservation education field as a whole has not yet been fully attained. We want to change that. Support from Metro can help.

By creating a more unified leadership model and an inclusive, regionally networked conservation education system, hundreds of program providers will be able to optimize their assets, leverage resources, and ensure growth and sustainability of their programs. The result will be a “system” of conservation education that is greater than the sum of its parts.

**Goals.** The goals of this project are to: use an “ecosystem analysis” approach to identify and engage a broad diversity of conservation education constituents and leaders; establish and track shared regional outcomes, and develop and implement an inclusive, lasting regional conservation education leadership model that represents a diverse cross-sector of individuals and organizations working together to build a healthy, just, and thriving Portland-Metro region.

The activities of this project include:

1. Hire a Regional Coordinator to manage all activities of this two-year project. (*Summer 2014*)



2. Analyze the regional conservation education “ecosystem” and identify constituent leaders (early childhood, K-12, post-secondary education, business and industry, sustainability, STEM, “green” jobs, nonformal education, government, food/agriculture, tribal, camps, environmental/social justice, etc.). *(Summer 2014)*
3. Meet with constituent leaders to identify their priorities. *(Fall – Winter 2014)*
4. Compile constituent priorities and draft a common regional agenda. *(Winter 2014)*
5. Host regional gathering(s) with constituent leaders to: review all constituent priorities and common regional agenda; build team cohesion through equity, diversity and inclusion training; refine common agenda, and establish shared regional outcomes – gather feedback from broad regional conservation networks represented by constituent leaders and revise plans as needed. *(Spring 2015)*
6. Develop common language to promote regional outcomes as tools to enhance environmental quality and to create a healthy, sustainable and just Portland-Metro region. *(Spring 2015)*
7. Work with constituent leaders to enhance an existing structure or design a new inclusive, regional leadership model for conservation education to advance shared regional outcomes. *(Spring 2015)*
8. Adopt and implement common measures to establish and track progress of the leadership model & shared regional outcomes. *(Spring – Winter 2015)*
9. Identify regional programs and “models” aligned with shared regional outcomes. *(Winter 2015)*
10. Create an asset map of programs and providers across the region aligned with shared regional outcomes. *(Winter 2015-16)*
11. Develop a strategic funding model to support regional conservation education leadership and shared regional outcomes beyond grant. *(Winter – Spring 2016)*
12. Compile a progress report with next steps including professional development needs. *(Spring 2016)*
13. Secure funds to maintain a lasting leadership model that represents a vibrant and diverse regional cross-sector of individuals and organizations advancing conservation education together. *(Spring 2016)*

**Partnerships.** EEAO, The Intertwine Alliance, and GPSEN are lead partners in this project. Their roles are as follows: EEAO will serve as fiscal sponsor of this project, responsible for hiring and managing a two-year contracted Regional Coordinator. The Regional Coordinator will be responsible for managing successful attainment of the goals and all activities cited above. Outside consultants, including a third-party evaluator and Center for Diversity and the Environment, will also be engaged. EEAO will ensure that this project establishes a replicable model for the organization to advance around the state.

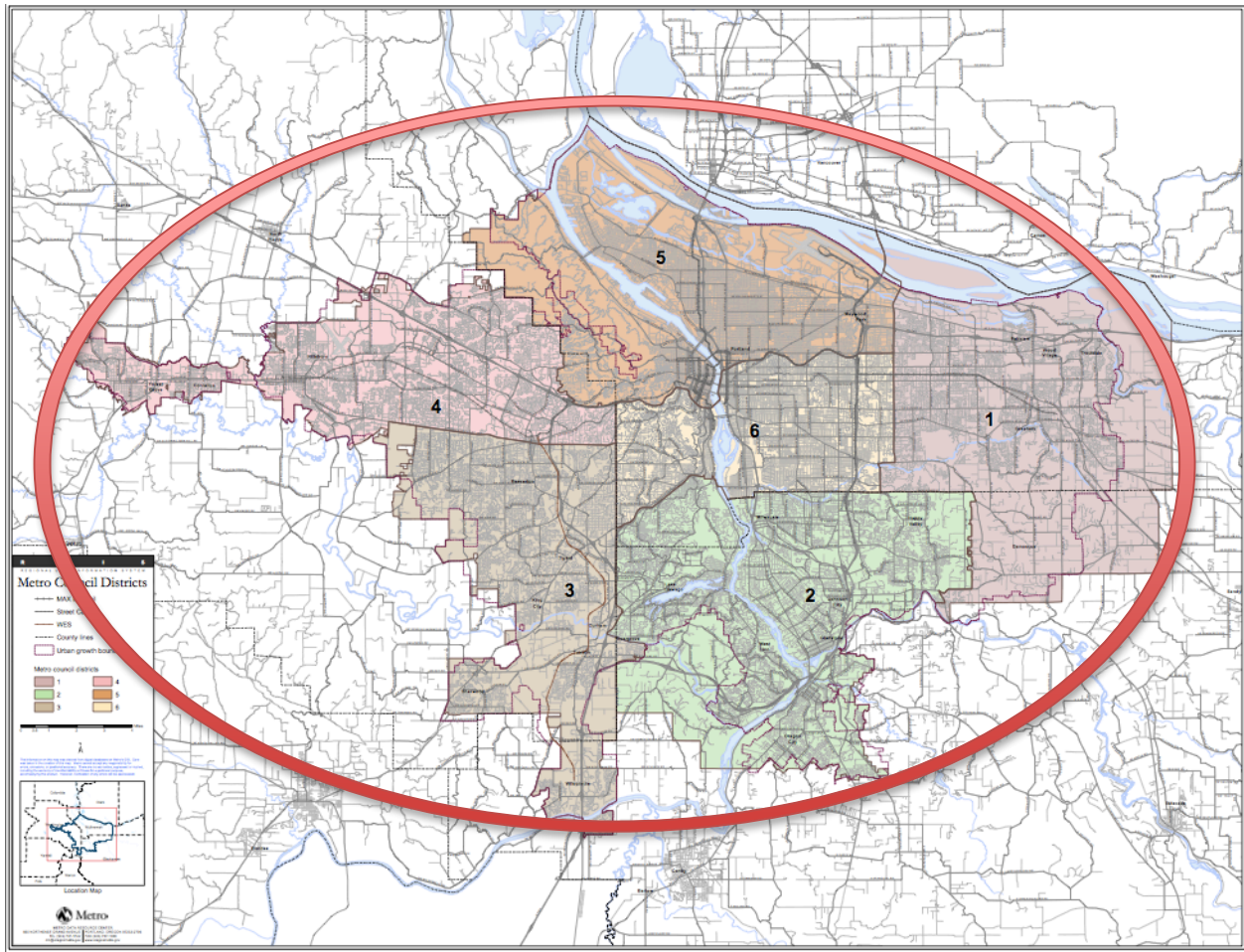
The Intertwine Alliance (IA) will work with EEAO and the Regional Coordinator through its Conservation Education Leadership Council (CELC). The CELC has been working to support a vision where everyone shares in a life-long connectedness to nature in the greater Portland region by hosting annual summits, developing metrics to assess *sense of place*, and promoting funding opportunities. Metro provided critical staff support to the CELC, which has recently been eliminated. The CELC is using this transition time to reevaluate activities and to determine the most effective way to advance its work in conjunction with partner led initiatives toward similar outcomes in the region. Although IA will commit existing staff resources to this project, the CELC will benefit from having a paid Regional Coordinator to guide comprehensive regional conservation education strategies.

GPSEN is a network of formal and non-formal sustainability education organizations, mobilized to deliver education for sustainable development to the Portland-Metro region. GPSEN is currently developing structures to support: governance, outreach, research and development, and transformative education programs. GPSEN will collaborate with EEAO and the Regional Coordinator to advance project goals and share its existing resources. In addition, GPSEN will promote all EEAO initiatives to its participants and identify further areas of potential synergy.





## Location and Program Reach.



The Regional Leadership Model for Conservation Education project will engage individuals and organizations from across the Portland-Metro region. The red circle on the map above indicates the target region for project participants. Individuals and organizations that serve audiences outside of the Portland-Metro region will not be excluded from participating.

Key Portland-Metro collaborators that will be engaged in this project include:

- EEAO regional network leaders (many are EEAO board members)
- The Intertwine's Conservation Education Leadership Council
- Greater Portland Sustainability Education Network (GPSEN)
- Regional Environmental Education Network (REEN)
- Adult Conservation Education Northwest
- Portland Farm to School and School Gardens Network
- Portland-Metro STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Partnership
- Synergies
- Healthy Kids Learn Better
- Cradle to Career



Additionally, individuals and organizations that provide the following will be engaged in this project:

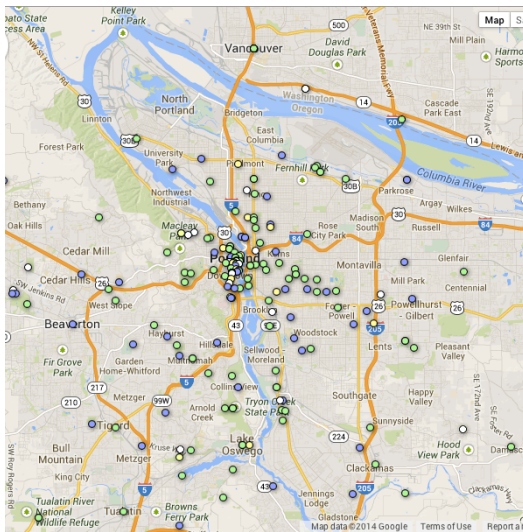
“Traditional” conservation education, including but not limited to:

- sustainability education
- place-based education
- environmental education
- farm and garden education
- outdoor recreation
- camp programs
- primitive skills
- environmental literacy
- STEM education
- natural play space/education
- multi-media resources and technology
- mentoring, intern and job corps programs
- volunteer programs
- entrepreneurial programs

“Nontraditional” conservation education, including but not limited to:

- business/industry
- outdoor retailers
- social services
- healthcare
- environmental and social justice
- high tech
- faith-based
- elected officials
- conservation
- advocacy
- community-based services
- communities of color

The following map represents the GPSEN Sustainability Education Providers (<http://www.pcc.edu/about/sustainability/regional-center-expertise/get-involved/map.html>):



The following map represents the Intertwine Alliance’s present day geography (2011 Business Plan - <http://theintertwine.org/about>):

