

Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education
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Colorado Individuals & Programs Receive Awards for Excellence in Environmental Education

The Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE) is recognizing exemplary and effective environmental education programs and individuals across Colorado who are setting a new standard for learning in their communities. Eleven programs and three individuals are being acknowledged with an Award for Excellence in Environmental Education for their outstanding work in helping learners, in formal and non-formal settings, understand their role in the environment. The recipients of the 2014 Awards for Excellence in Environmental Education will be honored at an evening banquet hosted by CAEE on Saturday, March 28, 2015 at the Auraria Campus in Denver, CO.

The Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education and its Board of Directors will honor Mike Nelson, Chief Meteorologist of 7NEWS Denver, with its 2014 President's Award in recognition for his support for environmental education and climate change education. From teaching about weather by performing countless tornado dances in classrooms to elevating the conversation on climate change, Mike Nelson has made a profound and positive impact on environmental education.

Each year an individual is nominated by his/her peers to receive the Enos A. Mills Lifetime Achievement Award for outstanding, individual, long-term accomplishments in environmental education (EE). This award is named in honor of Enos Mills, whose writings, photography and passion for education and environmental protection are largely responsible for the establishment of Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP). This year, Dr. Jeff Brigham, Professor Emeritus at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction, Colorado, is being recognized with this prestigious award. Jeff is considered a true pioneer, developing, transforming, and inspiring the field of environmental education in Colorado for over 45 years. Jeff is one of the original architects involved in the development of CAEE, which benefited greatly from his extraordinary partnership building and facilitation skills. Jeff's greatest legacy is his positive and lasting impact on thousands of teachers, students, and adults through his integration of experiential and hands-on learning opportunities into his college courses, workshops, and projects, which he facilitates in and out of the classroom. Always allowing nature to be the teacher, Jeff's methods touch the heart and inspire the soul as much as feeding the mind.

Receiving the Outstanding Retired Environmental Education Award is Dan Witkowsky, Course Coordinator for the Colorado Mining Association Education Foundation, Inc. Starting his career as a civil servant for 23 years with the United States Bureau of Mines, Dan transitioned to coordinating learning opportunities for K-12 teachers through the All About Mining course. For 17 years, Dan was instrumental in providing an accurate and unbiased curriculum on mining industries that emphasized the importance of environmental stewardship and how educators could apply this information back to their classrooms. Dan is still involved with mining education as a volunteer with the Colorado School of Mines and for the Minerals Education Coalition.

Eleven unique programs from across Colorado are being honored for leadership in developing inclusive, effective, and cross-sector environmental education programs. The award recipients represent a wide array of innovative and needs-based educational programs reaching out to a diversity of audiences, often through compelling partnerships, to increase environmental and conservation awareness among their participants.

The environmental education program award recipients for 2014 include these successful and inspirational programs:

Agriculture Award for Excellence in Environmental Education

Agriculture Tours, Boulder County Parks & Open Space, Longmont, Colorado

Best New Program Award

Keep it Clean: Neighborhood Environmental Trios, Earth Force, Denver, Colorado

Business Award for Excellence in Environmental Education

powerED, McKinstry, Golden, Colorado

Community Award for Excellence in Environmental Education

Multi-Family Communities Zero Waste Education Program, Eco-Cycle, Boulder, Colorado

Elementary School Award for Excellence in Environmental Education

ESI: EcoSystem Investigations, Lookout Mountain Nature Center- Jefferson County Open Space, Golden, Colorado

Government Award for Excellence in Environmental Education

Water Wise Classroom Presentation: Fire, Flooding & Your Water Supply, Colorado Springs Utilities, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Higher Education Award for Excellence in Environmental Education

Earth Corps Program, Rocky Mountain Field Institute, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Middle/High School Award for Excellence in Environmental Education

Youth and Inclusiveness Program, Wildlands Restoration Volunteers, Boulder, Colorado

Nonprofit Award for Excellence in Environmental Education

Preserve the Greenbelt Environmental Education Program, Institute for Environmental Solutions, Wheatridge, Colorado

PreK-12 Award for Excellence in Environmental Education

Poudre Learning Center Pre-K – 12, Poudre Learning Center, Greeley, Colorado

Special Recognition Award for Excellence in Environmental Education

Boulder County Environmental Education Collaborative, BCEE Collaborative Steering Committee, Boulder, Colorado

Katie Navin, CAEE Executive Director, said, “The environment is where we live and the decisions we make about the environment impact our economy, our communities and our homes. All across the state these innovative environmental educators and programs are helping create informed and responsible decision makers.”

CAEE’s Seventeenth Annual Awards Celebration is on Saturday, March 28, 2015 at the Auraria Campus, Tivoli Student Center-Turnhalle Room in Denver, CO. The banquet is open to the public, but tickets must be purchased by March 18, 2015. For information and tickets, please visit <http://www.cae.org/awards> or contact CAEE at info@cae.org.

CAEE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and supporting quality and inclusive environmental education by facilitating communication, coordination and professional development among the varied environmental education programs in the state. A comprehensive electronic information clearinghouse and resource directory for environmental education is available on the organization's web site, www.cae.org.