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North American Association for Environmental Education

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In partnership with

53rd Annual Conference
November 6–9

21st Annual Research Symposium
November 5–6

BUILDING BRIDGES
Pittsburgh, PA

# 53rd Annual NAAEE Conference

## Building Bridges

# Call for Presentations

### November 6–9, 2024 ● Pittsburgh, PA

### Proposals Due by April 26, 2024

Pittsburgh, renowned as the city of bridges with an impressive 446 structures spanning its rugged terrain, stands as a testament to the power of connectivity. These bridges, which gracefully cross the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers and other waterways, have set a world record, symbolizing unity across neighborhoods once divided by landscapes of deep valleys, steep hillsides, creeks, and rivers.

Our conference draws inspiration from Pittsburgh's iconic bridges, celebrating their symbolic significance while embracing our theme of "Building Bridges" to address challenges in the environmental education landscape. In a world grappling with complex environmental and social issues, ranging from climate change to injustice, the need for collaboration and understanding is more crucial than ever.

We seek to spotlight environmental educators as natural bridge builders. Focused on bridging gaps across borders, disciplines, and ideas, our event aims to foster mutual understanding and explore how to discover common ground. We recognize the pivotal role environmental educators play in developing solutions by dismantling barriers in communities, working collaboratively across borders, nurturing innovative partnerships, and amplifying program impact.

NAAEE seeks compelling proposals that advance this theme of connectivity, as well as justice, equity, and inclusion in the field and how education and civic engagement can help us address our toughest challenges and create a more just and sustainable future for all.

This is the Call for Presentations for the NAAEE Annual Conference.
Click here for the Call for Presentations for NAAEE Research Symposium, November 5–6, 2024

We invite proposals for presentations in the following thematic strands. Each strand explores a different aspect of the environmental education profession, with cross-cutting threads such as research-based practice, centering justice and equity, and cultural relevance. The focus points listed indicate this year's priority topics. Use these to guide your submissions and choose the one strand that most closely aligns with your proposal. Entering identical or nearly identical proposals under more than one strand will not increase your chances of being selected and is strongly discouraged.

# 1) Advancing Civic Engagement and Sustainable Communities

Creating sustainable, equitable, and resilient communities through partnership building, civic engagement, personal decision making, systems thinking, connecting community and environment, and understanding historical impacts on underserved and marginalized populations

Sessions address such topics as:

- Achieving environmental integrity, social equity, environmental justice, and economic prosperity through education and authentic engagement of all communities
- Incorporating culturally rooted practices into our work and understanding how people from different backgrounds relate to, engage with, and care about the environment in urban, suburban, and rural communities
- Creating grassroots partnerships for community improvement; characteristics of successful community action projects
- Demonstrating strategies, tools, and training for finding common ground when addressing controversial issues
- Linking environmental education and civic engagement and building networks to scale up community efforts into effective change.
- Highlighting successful examples of how environmental education can effectively achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals

# 2) Educating for a Changing Climate

Highlighting innovative approaches and best practices in climate change education to help learners of all ages understand climate impacts and solutions and overcome barriers to  spur effective action.

Sessions address such topics as:

- Reducing climate anxiety and fostering hope for the future
- Addressing climate change and building more resilient communities with education and civic engagement.
- Addressing the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities and working toward a just transition.

- Preparing educators to teach about all aspects of climate change, from climate science to climate justice and community solutions
- Building public awareness, support, and policies for climate action
- Incorporating climate change across all grade levels and subjects in preschools, primary and secondary schools, and in universities, and nonformal education organizations

## 3) Conservation and Environmental Education

Achieving conservation goals through education, communication, social marketing, and ecotourism strategies, including public participation in scientific research and place-based community action

Sessions address such topics as:

- Integrating education strategies into the broader practice of conservation
- Increasing equity and inclusion in the conservation movement
- Applying current research on behavior change in conservation education initiatives
- Demonstrating effective education strategies for addressing specific conservation issues such ecosystem restoration, ocean conservation, food systems, energy, and water
- Showcasing effective collaboration between conservation educators, scientists, resource managers, and practitioners in formal and nonformal education settings
- Highlighting successful tools, approaches, and educator preparation for bringing community-based science to classrooms and communities

## 4) Enhancing Environmental Education in Formal Settings

Using environmental education to transform education, enhance student achievement, prepare students for green careers, conserve resources, support national and international education trends, link schools and communities, and build support for environmental education in formal education, including early childhood, primary, secondary, university, and vocational

Sessions address such topics as:

- Green Schools as a pathway to service learning, student leadership, civic engagement, outdoor learning, and other effective education practices
- Research-based benefits and challenges of learning and teaching in outdoor settings and in a culturally relevant context
- Nature-based learning in early childhood and primary grades, including nature preschools
- Preparing a workforce with 21st century learning skills—including vocational skills—for the green and blue economies
- Exemplary initiatives for greening the campus and the curriculum, including strategies for using gardens, schoolyards, and landscapes to advance learning and demonstrating how facilities management practices and policies can support learning
- Integrating EE into preservice teacher preparation and in-service professional development

# 5) Connecting with Nature

Cultivating partnerships and providing accessible outdoor education experiences that connect people of all ages and backgrounds to nature and foster a sense of stewardship

Sessions address such topics as:

- Developing outdoor programs that are inclusive, culturally relevant, and provide equitable access for all
- The restorative power of nature during challenging times
- Developmentally-appropriate and inclusive practices for connecting young children to nature
- Creating and using parks and other green learning spaces in urban, suburban, and rural areas
- Outdoor programs that promote physical or spiritual health and wellness and that build a sense of place and cultural relevancy in urban, suburban, and rural communities
- Using the arts to explore and strengthen people's connections to nature

# 6) Building Leadership in Environmental Education

Strategies for building leadership and infrastructure to advance EE at the state, provincial, national, and global levels, and for preparing and motivating the public to take informed actions to protect the environment and address social and economic disparities

Sessions address such topics as:

- Providing effective and relevant environmental education to build a more inclusive, equitable, and accessible field
- Cultivating and supporting leadership and early career professionals in EE
- Exploring opportunities and challenges of using technology and AI to advance the field
- Culturally responsive strategies for evaluating and improving environmental education programs
- Highlighting experiences from around the world that integrate, scale up, and sustain environmental education efforts
- Promoting global citizenship through collaborative networks and online learning communities

## Keywords

Program listings will be searchable by keywords. You can tag your proposal with up to three keywords selected from the word bank on the online proposal form.

## Session Formats

All sessions will be presented at our in-person gathering in Pittsburgh; the length and structure vary by format. Select the most appropriate format for your proposal.

### Bright Spots

(10 minutes) Bright spots are succinct talks that celebrate specific triumphs and showcase things that work. These 10-minute presentations highlight successful and innovative family programs, school programs, community partnerships, conservation achievements, expanded audiences, research and evaluation findings, civic engagement, and more. Three loosely related sessions are presented back-to-back during one 40-minute time block, followed by a short discussion. A/V equipment is provided.

### Hands-On Presentations

(90 minutes) Hands-on sessions provide participants with an opportunity to engage in teaching activities and interactive discussions about a particular topic. A/V equipment is provided.

### Poster Presentations

Posters are two-dimensional printed presentations of any size up to 36 x 48 inches. Posters summarize programs, resources, research studies, or other work through text, images, and data. They are most often created using applications such as Adobe InDesign, Adobe Illustrator, Microsoft Publisher, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Canva. Posters are fixed to portable bulletin boards for attendees to review at leisure throughout the conference. We will schedule a one-hour general poster session during which all presenters stand near and share their posters with conference participants. No A/V equipment or electricity is provided, but presenters may use their own laptops or tablets during the poster session.

### Roundtable Discussions

(40 minutes) Roundtable discussions emphasize spirited discussion between the presenter(s) and session attendees about a central question. Presenters briefly introduce the baseline idea or issue they wish to explore, and then open the discussion for input and exchange of ideas among participants. Examples and interactive materials are welcome, but this format does not lend itself to formal presentations, and PowerPoints are strongly discouraged. Up to six roundtable discussions are scheduled simultaneously in the same large room; no A/V equipment or electricity is provided but presenters may use their own laptops or tablets at volume low enough not to disrupt nearby discussions.

### Symposia

(90 minutes) Symposia are panel discussions presenting different perspectives on a topic or question related to one of the focus points for each strand. Proposals must include a moderator and a minimum of three panelists representing different organizations, ideas, or experiences. To

enhance the richness of discussion, criteria for selecting symposia include the diversity of presenters and viewpoints. A/V equipment is provided.

## Traditional Presentations

40 minutes) Traditional presentations focus on a single topic or program, typically including a talk or PowerPoint (or other media) presentation followed by questions and answers or a short discussion. A/V equipment is provided.

## Workshops

(3½ hours) Pre-conference workshops are in-depth sessions that actively develop specific professional competencies and have widespread potential for implementation. They will be offered prior to the conference on November 6. Workshops require a separate registration fee, and all workshops are subject to cancellation due to insufficient enrollment. Note that workshop proposals are highly competitive and very few are selected for the conference program. A/V equipment is provided.

## Audio-Visual Equipment

Rooms for all presentations except roundtable discussions and poster sessions are equipped with a PC laptop (with Office Suite loaded), LCD projector, and screen. We do not provide audio-visual equipment for roundtable discussions and posters, but presenters in these sessions may use their own battery-powered laptops or tablets. NAAEE strongly recommends bringing PowerPoint and other audio-visual materials on portable drives and using the equipment provided. Internet access is available in all meeting rooms.

## Review Criteria

The strongest proposals carefully address the criteria listed below and provide enough detail for reviewers to fully understand what the session will entail.

## Proposals will be assessed and selected by how well they:

- Describe in detail what will occur in the session
- Explain why the session is appropriate for the selected format and allotted time
- Describe how the session will effectively engage the audience in innovative thinking about new or proven ideas and approaches
- Raise important questions or deliver positive, solution-oriented outcomes supported by research and/or program evaluation
- Explain how the session will inform environmental educators about proven practices, push the leading edge of the profession, and/or motivate the pursuit of excellence
- Demonstrate how the session fits the strand description and one or more focus points

We also place importance on advancing justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in EE and hope that many proposals will reflect these concerns. These sessions may explore strategies and programs that help diversify our audiences as well as our workforce, build cultural competence, support environmental justice, focus on vulnerable communities, engage with new audiences, forge new and lasting partnerships, honor traditional knowledge, and increase our reach and relevance throughout society.

To help us identify these sessions, reviewers will also consider these program criteria:

- Incorporate culturally rooted practices and an understanding of how people from different backgrounds relate to, engage with, and care about the environment in urban, suburban, and rural communities
- Affirm differences in skills, abilities, and perspectives as resources and opportunities to build stronger programs
- Describe how curriculum design, participant recruitment, program leadership or administrative structure result in equitable environmental education opportunities
- Contribute to a more just, equitable, diverse, inclusive, diverse, and accessible field

## How to Submit a Proposal

Proposals must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m. PDT on Friday, April 26, 2024. You may find it helpful to download a blank form from the NAAEE website and use it to draft your proposal before entering the information online.

Each individual or team of individuals is limited to three proposals to maximize the number and diversity of presenters and perspectives on the conference program.

## Important: Please use the same email address for submitting your proposal and registering for the conference.

1. Proposals must be submitted online through All Academic, our proposal management system.

- Click here to enter All Academic or find the link on the conference or research symposium home page or from the menu on NAAEE's conference website.
- If you've been part of a proposal in the past, you likely already have an All Academic account. Log in with your email as your username and your password from 2023. (Older passwords will no longer work.)
- If you need to reset your password, click on the appropriate link in All Academic. You will receive an email message from Do_Not_Reply@AllAcademic.com with further instructions.
- If you do not have an All Academic account, you'll need to create one by clicking on the new user link. Use your email address as your username. You will immediately receive an email message from Do_Not_Reply@AllAcademic.com with further instructions.
- Check your filters if you do not receive the message. You will continue to receive messages from this email address; make sure it is in your safe senders list.

2. On your home page in All Academic, click "Submit a Proposal." Select "Conference" or "Research Symposium" and complete the online submission form.

3. Click the "Accept and Continue" button on each page until you reach the final confirmation page.

4. When your proposal is successfully submitted, you will receive a confirmation email from Do_Not_Reply@AllAcademic.com. This email address is often caught by sensitive filters. If you haven't received it, check your junk folder and make sure the "@allacademic.com" domain is in your safe sender list so you receive future mailings.

5. You can edit any information in your proposal until the April 26 submission deadline by logging in to your All Academic account and selecting the proposal from the list on your All Academic home page.

## Important Notes About Registration

### All presenters and co-presenters are required to register and pay published fees for the conference.

NAAEE depends on registration fees to cover conference expenses and cannot provide waivers or discounts to presenters. There are typically more than 500 presenters on the conference program.

NAAEE has not yet finalized fees, but we expect conference registration for current NAAEE members to be about $500 for a professional and $350 for a student or retiree. Nonmember rates will about 30% higher, and we hope to provide lower-cost options for those with limited funding. There is a separate registration fee for the NAAEE Research Symposium.

### All presenters must confirm their participation by registering for the conference by the September 13, 2024 early bird deadline.

If your proposal is accepted, you will have an additional opportunity to finalize session information after receiving your acceptance notice.

## Questions

As a first step, please check the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the NAAEE website for assistance with submitting your proposals. If you need additional help, please contact us at [conference@naaee.org](mailto:conference@naaee.org).