

# 55th Annual NAAEE Conference Call for Presentations

*Imagine If...*

October 6–9, 2026 • Portland, Oregon

Proposals Due by April 10, 2026

In times of change, imagination matters. Imagine If... invites us to pause, look beyond current constraints, and consider what becomes possible when education drives connection, action, and positive change.

At the 2026 NAAEE Annual Conference in Portland, we will explore how we can build on the momentum already underway across our field—and what more becomes possible when environmental education is fully leveraged to shape a more just, resilient, and sustainable world. Imagine strengthening efforts to build healthier communities, support community engagement, and reconnect people to nature. Imagine partnerships that deepen collaboration across sectors, cultures, and generations. Imagine learning that sparks not only understanding, but sustained collective action and renewed hope.

The conference will bring together environmental educators, researchers, youth leaders, community organizers, policymakers, and partners from across the field and around the world. Together, we will imagine and advance solutions grounded in research and practice, inspired by place, and strengthened through collaboration.

NAAEE seeks compelling proposals that spark imagination and action, broaden participation and belonging, elevate promising and proven practices, and push us to be creative and ready to lead change. Join us in imagining—and building—the world we want, using the power of education.

This is the Call for Presentations for the NAAEE Annual Conference.

[Click here for the Call for Presentations for NAAEE Research Symposium, October 6–7, 2026.](#)

# Conference Strands

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) Enhancing Environmental Education in Formal Settings

Using environmental education and E-STEM 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 in this strand 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 21<sup>st</sup>-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

## 2) 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 in this strand address such topics as:

- Integrating education strategies into the broader practice of conservation
- Expanding the conservation movement to all communities
- Applying current research on behavior change in conservation education initiatives

- Demonstrating effective education strategies for addressing specific conservation issues such as 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 strategies for bringing community-based science to classrooms and communities

### 3) Advancing Civic Engagement and Sustainable Communities

Creating sustainable, equitable, and resilient communities through partnership-building, civic engagement, personal decision-making, systems thinking, and connecting community and environment

Sessions appropriate to this strand address such topics as:

- Achieving environmental integrity, social well-being, and economic prosperity through education and authentic engagement of all communities
- Understanding how people from different backgrounds relate to, engage with, and care about the environment in urban, suburban, and rural communities, and incorporating this knowledge into our work
- Creating grassroots partnerships for community improvement, characteristics of successful community action projects
- Demonstrating innovative 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 examples of successful collaboration across disciplines, contexts, and countries

### 4) 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 in this strand address such topics as:

- Developing outdoor programs that are culturally relevant and provide access for all
- The restorative power of nature during challenging times
- Developmentally-appropriate, engaging, and accessible practices for connecting all 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, storytelling, and imagination to explore and strengthen people's connections to nature

## 5) Educating for a Changing Climate

Highlighting innovative approaches and best practices that help learners of all ages understand climate impacts and solutions, and overcome barriers to spur effective action

Sessions in this strand address such topics as:

- Reducing climate anxiety and fostering hope for the future
- Building more resilient communities through education and civic engagement
- Addressing the impacts of climate on all communities
- Preparing educators to teach about all aspects of climate change, from climate science to 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

## 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 in this strand provide training in such areas as:

- Providing effective and relevant environmental education to build a stronger and more representative field
- Cultivating and supporting leadership and early career professionals in EE
- Exploring opportunities and challenges of using technology and AI to advance the field
- Strategies for evaluation and improving environmental education programs that recognize all learners' strengths, knowledge, and experiences
- Highlighting experiences and creative insights 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 a maximum of 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 Portland on October 7, October 8, or October 9. The length and structure vary by format. Select the most appropriate format for your proposal. Bright spots are submitted as "Individual Submissions" in All Academic; all other formats are submitted as "Session Submissions."

### **Bright Spots**

(10 minutes) Bright spots are brief 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 within a single 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 their posters and share them with conference participants. No A/V equipment or electricity is provided, but presenters may use their own laptops or tablets at low volume 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, then open the discussion to input and exchange 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 a 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 at least three panelists representing different organizations, ideas, or experiences. To enhance the richness of discussion, the criteria for selecting symposia include the range 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 October 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 only a few are selected for the conference program. A/V equipment is provided.

## Review Criteria

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

### 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

## Advancing EE for All

We strive to dedicate at least 15 percent of our concurrent sessions within each strand to advancing environmental education for all. These sessions explore ways to strengthen our field through strategies and programs that help broaden our audiences as well as our workforce, support fairness, engage with new voices, 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 assess proposals by how well they address any of these program criteria:

- Demonstrate an understanding of how people from different backgrounds relate to, engage with, and care about the environment in urban, suburban, and rural communities
- Recognize differences in skills, abilities, lived experiences, and perspectives as strengths that enrich programs and outcomes
- Explain how curriculum design, participant recruitment, program leadership, or organizational structures help create fair and meaningful opportunities to participate in environmental education
- Strengthen a field that is welcoming, accessible, and relevant to the variety of communities served

## How to Submit a Proposal

Proposals must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m. PDT on Friday, April 10, 2026. 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 is limited to three proposals to maximize the number and variety 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 most recent password.
  - 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](mailto:Do_Not_Reply@AllAcademic.com) with further instructions.



- If you do not have an All Academic account, 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" 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 ensure the @allacademic.com domain is in your safe senders list so you receive future mailings.**
  5. You can edit any information in your proposal until the April 10 submission deadline by logging in to your All Academic account and selecting the proposal from the list on your All Academic home page.

## Audiovisual 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 audiovisual equipment for roundtable discussions and posters, but presenters in these sessions may use their own battery-powered laptops or tablets at a volume low enough to not to disrupt nearby discussions. NAAEE strongly recommends bringing PowerPoint and other audiovisual materials on portable drives and using the equipment provided. Internet access is available in all meeting rooms.

## 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, and these rates are estimates. We expect full conference registration to be about \$585 for current NAAEE, \$735 for nonmembers, and \$400 for students and retirees. We are currently fundraising so we can also provide lower-cost options for those with limited funding. There is a separate registration fee for the NAAEE Annual Research Symposium.



**All presenters must confirm their participation by registering for the conference by the August 21, 2026 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).

