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EETAP States Program Writing Rendezvous 2004

On September 20-24, 2004 representatives from the eight EETAP states gathered at the Writing Rendezvous in Olympia, WA to tell the story of their state's EETAP States Program activities and exchange experiences with colleagues from around the country. After four days of talking, writing and editing each of the participants left the workshop with a new perspective on the work they have done.

Participants were excited to have the opportunity to tell their own story and talk about what has happened through their involvement with the EETAP States Program during the past four years. They were also interested in hearing about the experiences of the other participants. The exchanges provided a valuable opportunity to share, learn and grow from both a personal and professional perspective.



Writing Rendezvous participants and resource people (*) from L to R:

Back row – Jeremy Higgins* (NEEAP), David Wright (OH), Patricia Kelly (OK), Hilda Castillo (CA), Martha Kurtz (WA), Gus Medina* (EETAP) and Mary Rice (IL).

Middle row – Gary Cook* (Project WET), Mary Coley (OK), Betsy Leonard (CA), Barbara MacGregor (WA), Joe Heimlich* (ILI/OSU), Syd Hime (MO), Angela Smith (IL).

Front row – Abby Ruskey* (NEEAP), Susan Williams (AZ), Brenda Metcalf (OH), Ollie Bogdon (MO), Jennifer Visitation (UT) and Margaret Tudor (WA).

The Writing Rendezvous workshop achieved several goals simultaneously. One was to capture the rich details (i.e., stories) not normally found in formal reports from the experiences of EETAP States Program participants. This information will be used in an upcoming publication that showcases the past four years of the EETAP States Program. A major thrust of NEEAP's work in 2005 will be to broadcast the knowledge that has been gained through the EETAP States Program activities.



Another goal of the Rendezvous was to gather data to evaluate the EETAP States Program. Although periodic reports are helpful in monitoring progress towards achieving planned activities, the personal interview methods used during the Writing Rendezvous provide important insights into ways to better administer this type of program in the future.

And lastly, this gathering enabled state leaders to develop stronger connections to their colleagues in other parts of the country. One of the major objectives for the EETAP States Program is to bolster the field of environmental education through information exchange between states leaders and organizations. Much of this exchange occurs via a myriad of publications; however, in person meetings are still the premier method of making connections. This meeting was a great example of how people working on different, yet related activities can have valuable exchanges that will have meaningful impacts on their work back home.



Perhaps the most exciting part of the Writing Rendezvous is that it was just the beginning of a year long emphasis on sharing the accomplishments of the EETAP States Program. Check this website regularly for frequent updates on the EETAP states progress towards their goals. News will also be spread through a variety of publications including the *EE Advocate*, *EETAP States Digest*, *EE-News* and many others. For more information about the Writing Rendezvous or the EETAP States Program in general contact Jeremy Higgins, NEEAP Outreach Coordinator at 715-346-4179 or Jeremy.Higgins@uwsp.edu.

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