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## **Illinois Shares Success Story at International Conference**

(Anchorage, AK) - Illinois environmental education leaders are preparing to share some of their successes stories at the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) annual conference, October 7-11, 2003, in Anchorage, AK.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided a grant to Illinois and seven additional states to advance efforts of environmental education. These eight states receive U.S. EPA funds through the EE and Training Partnership (EETAP) based at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. The National Environmental Education Advancement Project (NEEAP), one of eight EETAP partners, administers the states' grant.

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Illinois is using the grant funds to create a regional network to help advance environmental education throughout the state. “The regional network has increased our communication with school teachers, as well as educators in museums, nature centers and other facilities,” said Mary Rice, IL Project Manager for the EPA grant.

"While a number of good programs and curriculum exist for environmental education, it has been difficult to ensure educators have access to these resources," said Angela Smith, Director of the Douglas-Hart Nature Center, and part of the project's east-central region. "With the network, we have increased our communication between educators, but we've also brought more interest to environmental education, and how it fits into state standards, and can enhance programs already in place."

For more information about Illinois' initiatives, visit: [www.eeai.net](http://www.eeai.net).

“Illinois is taking an innovative approach to advancing environmental education by creating a strong network that connects all parts of the state,” said Jeremy Higgins, NEEAP Outreach Coordinator. “It is exciting to see their success, and important to share this information with other environmental organizations throughout the country.”

“NAAEE conference attendees will have the opportunity to learn what has helped and hindered their efforts to create more effective environmental education,” said Higgins. For more information about NEEAP or capacity building related activities, visit the website <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/neeap/>.

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