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Missouri Shares Success Story at International Conference

(Anchorage, AK) - Missouri environmental education leaders are preparing to share their community-based successes stories at the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) annual conference, October 7-11, 2003, in Anchorage, AK. The presentation, *Awareness to Action: The Missouri Community Leadership Clinic*, will highlight environmental education advances made at the state organized Leadership Clinic, which featured thirteen community-based teams.

“Teams from several communities that came to the state Leadership Clinic gained the skills, training, and resources needed to develop action plans for environmental education projects in their communities,” said Syd Hime of the Missouri Environmental Education Association (MEEA). “The diverse make-up of teams and the variety of community projects successfully extended the reach and benefits of environmental education in Missouri,” said Hime.

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For example, Hime said, one community formed a non-profit organization to monitor environmental issues associated with a local lead smelter. “The organization is also focused on community revitalization,” said Hime. “The intent is to offer local citizens a way to be actively involved in shaping the future of their community.” Another team at the Leadership Clinic began their plan to establish a prairie area to be used as an outdoor classroom by the local schools, the university, and the community.

Teams came from communities throughout Missouri including Herculaneum, Lee’s Summit, Kirksville, the Branson Lakes area, St. Louis, and Kansas City. For details on the Missouri Environmental Education Association, visit their website at www.meea.org.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided a grant to Missouri 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.

“Missouri is taking an innovative, community-based approach to environmental education,” said Jeremy Higgins, NEEAP Outreach Coordinator. “It is exciting to see their success, and important to share this information with educators throughout the country.”

“NAAEE conference attendees will have the opportunity to learn what has helped and hindered their efforts to create quality 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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