

WAEE 2008 Fall Conference Recap

Buildings and people may be the first things you notice when you look at a city, but when you look deeper you will find the trees, birds, bugs that also call it home. In fact, if it was not for the rivers that empty into Lake Michigan, Milwaukee would never have become such a wondrous city. It was a great pleasure to host this year's fall conference in Milwaukee which offered a great opportunity to introduce this great city to educators through out the state.



"Thank you for the scholarship that allowed me to attend. I appreciate all the time and effort that went into making this a quality conference."

"As always, I met some wonderful EE educators. Thanks for the opportunity."

"Food was good. Sessions were great. Hotel staff was friendly. Taste of MKE was fun! Overall a nice conference! Great job conference committee."

Conference

The fall conference theme was "There's more to a city than its skyline". It was held October 29th to Nov. 1st at the Wyndham Milwaukee Airport and Convention Center just 7 miles from downtown Milwaukee. The theme was used to help focus the conference field trips, work shops, session and speakers. Additionally, conference sessions were organized into the tracks of:

- Sustainable Cities
- Urban Outdoor Exploration
- Bringing the Classroom to Life
- Environmental Justice

Pre-conference workshops and field trips were held on Thursday morning. The conference officially began with Ken Leinbach's, Executive Director of the Urban Ecology Center, keynote followed by a welcome from Betsy Parker. Bob Peterson, La Escuela Fratney and Rethinking Schools, also gave a keynote on Friday evening following the awards banquet.

Registration/Attendance

A total of 163 people registered for the conference and 35 of them were students.

Committee

The Conference Committee consisted of:

Exhibits:

- Emily Stahl - Timber-lee Christian Center
- Karen Good - Timber-lee Christian Center

Site Committee:

- Tricia Mallett - Wyndham Milwaukee Airport Hotel & Convention Center

Program Committee:

○Tory Bahe - Urban Ecology Center - Washington Park

Special Events:

○Jesse Hill – Urban Ecology Center - Riverside Park

Graphic Designer:

○Ang Curro - Angela Pea Paperie

Conference Chairs:

○Emily Michi – Urban Ecology Center - Washington Park

○Joey Zocher - Urban Ecology Center - Washington Park

Sessions

Sessions ran from Thursday afternoon to Saturday morning. There was a wide variety of proposals offering attendees a chance to take sessions dealing with all the conference tracks.

Field Trips

A total of 11 field trips were offered. Keeping with the theme of Urban Environmental Education, the field trips included everything from biking the Hank Aaron State trail and canoeing the Milwaukee River to harvesting at an urban farm and touring local recycling facilities.

Workshops

- Renewable Energy Education in the City—KEEP (special 1-credit graduate course)
- Flying WILD!
- Great Lakes in My World—Alliance for the Great Lakes
- Urban Schoolyard Restoration—Earth Partnership for Schools
- LEAF K-12 Educator Workshop
- Cosmos in your Classroom—(Including Wehr Nature Center’s inflatable Starlab)

Special Events / Entertainment

○Taste of Milwaukee was held during the WAEE Annual Meeting. Local vendors donated food and beverages that help to define Milwaukee. It was rather delicious and fun.

○Gomeroke – who does not want to be the lead singer of their very own rock band? Once again the Gomers offered conference attendees this opportunity.

Auction

A live and silent auction was held. All items were donated by conference attendees and exhibitors. The auctions generated \$2000. A portion of the money earned will be used for student scholarships next year. Dan Graves, an Environmental Educator from the Urban Ecology Center, volunteered to be the auctioneer for the live auction. He did an amazing job, Thank you Dan.

Awards

The awards banquet was held Friday evening. Both WAEE and School Forest awards were presented.

Meals

The site committee worked in close contact with hotel staff to try to ensure local and organic food was served at all the meals.

Sponsorship / Donation

The conference sponsors were We Energies and Jansen Construction. Organic fair-trade coffee and tea was provided through the conference thanks to the donations of Alterra Coffee and Rishi Tea. The Urban Ecology Center donated transportation for the field trips.

Environmental Efforts

Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful donated the use of recycling bins to increase the number of recycling bins located through out the conference area.