

## A. Project Title and Applicant Name

Paving the way to a Wisconsin Environmental Education Consortium.  
Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education.

## B. Statement of Need

1. **Target Audience(s):** Four motivated and regionally unique directors of nature centers. EE providers throughout the State.
2. **Need:** The WEEB 2010 Plan for Advancing EE in Wisconsin states, “For EE to be efficient and effective there must be communication, coordination and support among EE providers.” This project is designed to bring together a few key nature center directors who will explore the best format and strategy for presenting all EE providers an annual opportunity to communicate, coordinate and support one another. Through a series of exploratory meetings, these directors will create an Action Plan which will pave the way for creating a Wisconsin EE consortium of EE providers.
3. **Goal Addressed:** Goal II.1 Increase interagency and institutional cooperation by creating a Wisconsin EE consortium of statewide EE providers.
4. **Evidence of Need:** WEEB Goal II.1 clearly states the need for creating a Wisconsin EE consortium. WEEB Education Committee members recognize coordination amongst “non-formal” EE providers as one of three main goals of the Education Committee. Further, Wisconsin Center for EE Director, Randy Champeau, affirms a committee is needed to determine the optimum measures the EE community can take to cultivate support for Wisconsin’s nature centers and advance legislation for nature centers.
5. **Previous Effort:** There was at one time an EE consortium dubbed the “Loose Group” which maintained a collaborative energy amongst EE providers in Wisconsin. This group has been disbanded for many years. Regional efforts have been made (notably by Nature Net) to establish communication and coordination amongst EE providers, but none for the State as a whole.

## C. Project Goals, Objectives, Activities, and Dissemination

- Project Goal: Produce an Action Plan for creating a Wisconsin EE Consortium of EE Providers
  - Objective 1.1: Establish regionally unique directors of nature centers
    - Project Director will call nature center directors from across the state to verify interest in and commitment to the project, selecting four final directors to serve on the committee. Favor will be given to promote a regionally diverse group. (July 2009)
  - Objective 1.2: Coordinate exploratory meetings
    - Project Director will work with nature center directors to establish three meeting dates, times and locations and coordinate all other logistical needs. (Summer 2009)
  - Objective 1.3: Train Project Director for meetings
    - Project Director, in preparation for hosting the exploratory meetings, will seek professional training and development from the UW-Extension.

- Other preparatory work to make the meetings as productive as possible will be conducted. (Summer/Fall 2009)
- Objective 1.4: Host exploratory meetings
    - Over the course of several months, Project Director will lead three exploratory meetings with the selected nature center directors at locations to be determined. One meeting will introduce the idea of a Wisconsin EE Consortium of EE providers and brainstorm needs, goals and objectives; one will follow up on and streamline original ideas; and one will finalize needs for creating the end product: an Action Plan for creating the EE consortium. (Fall 2009 – Spring 2010)
  - Objective 1.5: Summarize outcomes from meetings and create Action Plan
    - Project Director will take the final goals and objectives from the exploratory meetings and draft the Action Plan. This Action Plan will be designed for direct and immediate implementation. (Spring 2010)
  - Objective 1.6: Evaluate viability of Action Plan
    - Project director will circulate the proposed Action Plan to the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education Board and the WEEB for review. A follow up on-line survey to garner input and solicit support for following through with the Action Plan will be circulated to WAEE and WEEB Board. (Spring/Summer 2010)

#### **D. Dissemination**

Information about the project will initially be disseminated to select nature center directors. The final outcome (the Action Plan), however, will be announced to all EE providers in the State as they will be invited to become a part of the EE consortium.

#### **E. Project Evaluation**

The entire project will be deemed a success if four nature center directors are committed to the project, they attend all three meetings, the meetings are considered productive, and if a viable Action Plan is created by the end of the project. The end product will be evaluated by members of the WAEE and WEEB Boards by means of an on-line survey.

#### **F. Staff Qualifications**

Project Director: Betsy Parker, Past WAEE Board Chair; eight years experience in EE and collaborative/networking EE projects.  
Nature Center Directors to be determined.

#### **G. Continuation**

At its very core, this project is designed for continuance. The Action Plan will be intended for immediate implementation. Project Director and nature center directors will seek motivated individuals (ideally associated with WAEE) to follow through with the Action Plan. Funding for the actual EE consortium may come from future WEEB grants or other outside sources.