

A. Project Title and Applicant Name: “EE at the Capital and Beyond”

B. Statement of Need

1. *Target Audience:* The 132 members of the legislature, at least 132 constituents, and the Governor.

2. *Need:* [“The success of any democratic society relies on the ability of its individual members to understand, and collectively solve, the society’s problems.” -Peter F. DeDecker]The Department of Public Instruction’s *A Guide to Curriculum Planning in Environmental Education* identifies the following as needed citizen action skills: identify and clearly state issues; identify alternative solutions; evaluate alternative solutions; use primary and secondary sources of information; recognize and satisfy the need for additional knowledge; analyze data; identify one’s own value positions; and plan individual or group action. In order to make our democracy work effectively citizens need to utilize citizen action skills and legislators need to interact with their constituents.

This project will provide citizens with opportunities to exercise and enhance their citizen action skills. Educators will inform members of the Wisconsin legislature and the Governor of the learning opportunities that empower Wisconsin citizens with the knowledge and skills needed to make wise environmental decisions and to take responsible actions in their personal lives, workplaces and communities. In so doing, they will demonstrate the value of environmental education.

3. *Goals Addressed:* Goal II.3 “Strengthen the WEEB’s communication with state agencies the legislature, and the Governor’s Office; Goal V.6 “Promote media attention related to environmental education; and Goal VII.3 “Continue to explore options to increase state funding for general EE”

4. *Evidence of Need:* Staff at the Senate Chief Clerk’s Office and Assembly Chief Clerk’s Office indicated there will be 2 new senators and 14 new representatives beginning service in January 2009. This is more than 10% of the legislative body. A cursory review of the first 80 pages of the 233 page *2007 Subject Index to Senate and Assembly Bills, Joint Resolutions, Resolutions and Petitions* found 7 bills dealing with air pollution, 5 dealing with aquatic invasive species and ballast water, 10 dealing with drainage and drainage districts, 20 on energy conservation, 10 on fuels (biodiesel, ethanol, etc) and 30 different environmental protection initiatives. Clearly the legislature is actively involved with policy decisions the EE community is and has been educating about for years.

5. *Previous Efforts:* The Board submits a biennial report to the legislature which highlights WEEB funded initiatives. The last report was submitted in October 2007. There are many other EE programs that may not have the capacity to inform legislators and the Governor of their work.

C. Goal: To provide citizen with opportunities to exercise and enhance their citizen action skills by informing members of the legislature and the Governor about local, regional and state-wide EE initiatives that are benefiting, or have benefited individuals within their district.

Objective 1: Project Director will organize and publicize the “EE at the Capital and Beyond” day.

Objective 2: Wisconsin citizens will enhance their citizen action participation skills.

Objective 3: Legislators will acknowledge that environmental education involves consideration of social, cultural, political, economic and environmental factors—just as the legislative process does—and they will also recognize the value of EE to their constituents.

Activity 1: Project director will identify and confirm the participation of at least one constituent from each Assembly and Senate districts; and 3 to 4 individuals to meet with the Governor. Sept. 2009

Activity 2: Constituents will contact their legislators to schedule appointments for “EE at the Capital and Beyond”. Meeting may take place at the capitol or in the district. Project Director will contact the Governor’s office and arrange an appointment. By October 31, 2009

Activity 3: Project director will contact Capitol staff and arrange for space in the rotunda for April 22 2010 for displays that highlight EE initiatives. By October 31, 2009

Activity 4: Project director will prepare (Oct-Nov 2009) and host (Nov 6th 7th, 12th and 13th) four 1 hour webinars (each person attends all four) for constituents in order to provide citizen action skill training and facilitate a coordinated message to the legislators and Governor.

Activity 5: Constituents will inform his/her representative and/or senator of the definition of environmental education, mission of the WEEB and relationship of the WEEB to the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education, and Wisconsin Environmental Education Foundation. (Jan –April 2010-majority on April 22, 2010)

Activity 6: Constituent will provide a brief description of how he/she and the legislative district has benefited from the WEEB grant program (e.g., programs participated in, programs were able to offer, additional resources leveraged, etc) and/or other EE initiatives to his/her legislator. (Jan-April 2010 majority on April 22, 2010)

Activity 7: Constituent will share hopes for the future of environmental education in Wisconsin with his/her legislator and invite feedback from the legislator regarding the State’s strategic plan and attendance/participation in a future EE event. (Jan-April 2010 majority on April 22, 2010)

D. Dissemination: Each constituent will invite members of the media to join them for the “EE at the Capital and Beyond” event. (Each meeting is considered an “event”)

E. Project Evaluation: The project will be considered a success if 30% of the legislators attend an EE event in his/her district within the one year period immediately following the constituent meeting.

F. Staff Qualifications: Mark Wordsworth has been involved in the event planning industry for 12 years and has previously arranged numerous events at the Capitol including the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voter’s (WLCV) Conservation Lobby Day.

G. Continuation: Once constituents have the citizen action skills needed to effectively meet with their legislators they will continue to serve as ambassadors for environmental education.