



Promoting environmental literacy through education

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Michigan Alliance for Environmental & Outdoor Education (MAEOE) announces 2012 award recipients

Each year, the Michigan Alliance for Environmental & Outdoor Education recognizes deserving educators who have excelled in their efforts to provide environmental and outdoor education to Michigan K-12 students and teachers, and to Michigan citizens through formal and informal education venues. The 2012 award recipients are listed below. Candidates may be nominated by anyone, and award recipients need not be MAEOE members.

Julian Smith Award

The Julian Smith Award is named for a former faculty member at Michigan State University who pioneered outdoor education in the 1950's. This award is given to **one** individual each year who:

- exemplifies the best in the field of outdoor education (i.e., service, research, teaching administration).
- has made outstanding contributions to outdoor education.
- demonstrates a lifetime of devoted service.
- has spent at least 10 years working in Michigan.

The **2012 recipient of the Julian Smith award** is **Andrea Grix, Education Program Coordinator at the Kettunen Center in Tustin, MI.** Andrea has dedicated her professional life to advancing environmental education. She has been an active 4-H program coordinator for MSU Extension, conducted a wide variety of programs over her decades-long employment at the Kettunen Center, and has served on the MAEOE board of directors for many years in multiple capacities including treasurer and the annual conference planning committee. While many American's are jumping on the "get outside" bandwagon, Andrea Grix has been pushing kids outdoors for many, many years. Her work spans many years and thousands of Michigan children and 4H leaders have benefited from her welcoming smile, enthusiastic teaching style and results-oriented expectations. Andrea helped develop *Caring for the Future*, a guide for educators correlating Michigan state standards with published environmental education curricula like Projects WET, WILD and Learning Tree. Andrea has simply dedicated her life to outdoor education whether it be teaching a ten years old how to explore the woods or balancing the books of the state EE organization, and she always seems to enjoy what she is doing!



William B. Stapp Award

The William Stapp Award is named for a former faculty member at the University of Michigan who made many contributions to environmental education locally, nationally, and internationally. He was the first chief of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Environmental Education Section. He founded the international Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN) in 1989 that engaged schools and youth around

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the world in stream monitoring, co-authored the Field Manual for Water Quality Monitoring (now in its 12th edition), and initiated the Rouge River Education Project (1987) that involved more than 40 Detroit-area schools in stream monitoring and which still continues today. This Stapp Award is given to one individual each year who:

- has made outstanding contributions to environmental education.
- exemplifies the best in the field of environmental education (i.e., service, research, teaching, etc.).
- demonstrates a lifetime of devoted service.
- has spent at least 10 years working in Michigan.

The 2012 recipient of the William B. Stapp Award is Steve Stewart, Senior Extension Educator, Michigan Sea Grant for Huron, Macomb, Monroe, St. Clair, Wayne, Sanilac, and Tuscola Counties.



Steve works with coastal communities and businesses in southeast Michigan to apply science-based knowledge to address Great Lakes, western Lake Erie and southern Lake Huron issues. Steve developed and directs the Great Lakes Education Program (GLEP), a scholarship program that targets fourth-grade students and involves approximately 200 classes each year in classroom learning and educational cruises on Lake St. Clair and the lower Detroit River, providing much needed environmental education to urban students who have little to no connection to the outdoors or Michigan's waters.

Recognition Award: 2 Recipients

Awarded to **TWO** individuals who:

- have made significant contributions to the fields of environmental and outdoor education in a specialized area.

1. Bindu Bhakta, MSU Extension Educator, Oakland County



Bindu Bhakta takes water resource education to a high water level. Bindu works as an Extension Educator for Michigan State University in Oakland County and she specializes in, yes you guessed it, water and natural resources. She is a leader in the implementation of the Conservation Stewards program which empowers Michigan citizens to "make a difference" by volunteering a minimum of 40 hours doing conservation projects within their community, many water resource oriented. Bindu also works closely with riparian property owners in a program called Natural Shoreline Partners. She organized one of the first shoreline management classes in an effort to teach landowners how to improve their shoreline habitat for flora and fauna---nearly 50 people from across southern Michigan attended this program.



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2. Sue Blackall, 3rd Grade Teacher, Applevew Elementary School, Sparta, MI

As an elementary teacher for close to two decades, Sue always finds a way to get children outdoors to learn about the wonders and importance of caring for nature. The activities that she has provided to Sparta students range from raising money to build wells in Africa to cleaning up trash near the school to winter field trips that promoted outdoor recreation such as ice fishing and snowshoeing. When tackles a project, she often gets the community involved. Sue's current project is the restoration of "Old Orchard Prairie" on the grounds of Sparta High School. Sue is creating an outdoor classroom and providing service learning opportunities for students. Sue secured nine different grants, along with many in-kind donations, to complete the five-year project which includes prescribed burning and planting native trees and plants. Sue has a knack for getting people on board with her projects, whether she is gaining the support of a national organization like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or locally coordinating the many entities involved in planning a prescribed burn right on the edge of town! This past spring third grade students teamed up with high school students to plant wild flowers and a team of volunteers watered the seedlings through the summer.¹ Sue always promotes teamwork. Sue's passion for the environment has reached beyond the families in Sparta. Her expertise has benefitted the greater Grand Rapids community as well. Read more about Sue's efforts:



http://www.spartaschools.org/downloads/bell_ringer/bell_ringer_20120813_090054_1.pdf

Appreciation Awards: 3 recipients

Awarded to a maximum of **THREE** individuals who have taken exemplary steps to initiate successful environmental or outdoor education programs where they live, and enthusiastically promote the goals of outdoor and environmental education.

The 2012 Appreciation Award recipients are:



1. **Rebecca Heckman**, Science Teacher, Inland Lakes Schools, Indian River, MI. Rebecca engages her students in hands on, place-based education. She was the lead instructor for the student-led effort to gain Green School status and received the first Green School designation in Cheboygan County. She facilitated the school receiving the National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitat certification for the school's nature trail. She has her students conduct long-term water chemistry and macroinvertebrate monitoring of the Sturgeon River. She is also engaging her students in the Northeast Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative, and has formed partnerships with a wide range of organizations including Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, Huron Pines, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Sea Grant, NOAA Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Burt Lake Association, Mullett Lake Association, and Little Traverse Land Conservancy.



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Brian Matchett, Science Teacher, Alcona Public Schools, engages his students in many innovative hands-on educational projects ranging from hands on experience with sustainable agriculture practices, to water quality monitoring on the Black River, to guiding his students in creating and implementing interpretive signage at nearby Negwegon State Park.



His students are involved in sustainable agriculture projects including a Sugar Shack to produce maple syrup, aquaculture, and bio---diesel production. Brian encourages his students to take ownership of their own education. He is also engaging his students in the Northeast Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative and works closely with a wide range of government agencies and local organizations: Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Sea Grant, 4-H Youth Programs, Friends of Negwegon State Park, U.S. Forest Service, Black River Watershed Council, Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG), Huron Pines and Cedar Brook Trout Farms.

2. **Anne Jeannette LaSovage, Science Teacher, Southfield Lathrup High School.** Anne Jeannette engages her students in many hands on learning experiences including working in the school's green houses and garden, and becoming a certified Michigan Green School. She facilitates a high school student-led Green Team that has established greenhouses, gardens, planted trees, tagged butterflies, along with creating a school-wide recycling program. Anne Jeanette efforts have been an important facet in environmental awareness at Southfield-Lathrup which has been especially beneficial to English language learners which come from countries with limited awareness of our impact on the environment. Anne Jeanette has taught students they can make a positive difference. Anne Jeannette has just been elected to the MAEOE Board of Directors.



MAEOE Volunteer Service Award is awarded to a maximum of FIVE individuals who:

- Volunteer their time and skills for more than one year to a Michigan school, college, park, outdoor education center, nature center, zoo, etc.
- Work toward the goals of environmental and/or outdoor education with enthusiasm.



The 2012 Volunteer Service Award recipient is David Holt, who has generously volunteered his time as a volunteer for Oakland County Parks for 15 years primarily in the role of assisting staff with Astronomy programs---his area of expertise. As a longtime member and officer in the Oakland County Astronomy Club, Dave brings a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm to programs and events, many of which he plans and organizes. Dave's involvement in MSU Extension's Conservation Stewards Program has broadened his "nature horizons." Dave spends countless hours monitoring grassland birds at Highland Oaks County Park. His professionalism in this field work has given Oakland County staff emerging management ideas for conserving the habitat and these birds. Dave willingly steps in where

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needed and his knowledge and energy make him an excellent trail leader. When Oakland County Parks needs a volunteer, they call...Dave Holt!

The Michigan Alliance for Environmental and Outdoor Education is a professional association supporting and advancing environmental and outdoor education in a variety of settings, including K-12 classrooms, nature centers, camps, youth programs, government agencies, as well as for-profit and non-profit organizations. MAEOE advocates environmental literacy and personal responsibility for environmental sustainability. MAEOE advances the idea that direct experience in the natural environment establishes a sense of place, enhances environmental appreciation and builds a foundation for environmental stewardship.

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