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WELCOME TO THE CREEC NETWORK, the best source for Environmental Education resources in California!

The California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC) Network is an educational project supported by the California Department of Education, Environmental Education Program, in collaboration with state, regional and local partners. Visit online, www.creec.org/region1, to find a searchable Resource Directory of environmental education programs in your area, a calendar of activities and exhibits, funding opportunities, and teacher professional development opportunities.



IN FOCUS: Questing - a new tool to help kids of all ages discover nature

The Humboldt Bay Natural Wildlife Refuge (HBNWR), just south of Eureka, is one of the North Coast's special places where land, sea, and sky seem to converge. One could spend hours walking the refuge's meandering trails while not fully realizing the story unfolding around them. A guided tour of the trails enriches the experience for visitors, both young and old, by telling the story of the dynamic coastal ecosystem, encouraging all to take a closer look.

But throw a treasure hunt into the mix as well? Now, that is a recipe sure to engage kids of all ages.

Quests are place-based "treasure" hunts, generally written in rhyme, which can be undertaken by children and/or adults working together. They use a combination of movement and teaching clues to guide participants to the hidden "treasure box". Questing is a way for communities to celebrate their rich natural and cultural history, stories and special places.

Designing a Quest is an excellent activity for students. A second grade class may create a tour of the school yard trees or a Quest designed by a biology class may guide participants through a riparian area. Visit www.creec.org/region1 to find instructions for creating a Quest.

A popular approach to educational family fun on the East Coast, the idea of Questing is a relatively new addition to the environmental educator's toolkit in the West. The North Coast's bank of Quests is building quickly. "Communities Under the Canopy" is a recently completed Quest at the Arcata Community Forest that explores plant life in a second growth redwood forest. Additional Quests are in varying stages of development at Patrick's Point State Park's Sumeg Village, the town of Falk at the BLM's Headwaters Forest Reserve, the city of Blue Lake, Humboldt State University's Natural History Museum, and others. The North Coast CREEC website will house information on regional Quests.

HBNWR's Quest is called "A Place In Between", owing to the refuge's location between upland and bay, its role as a migratory stepping stone on the flyway and its cultural history between wild and developed. The Quest meanders along the 1.7 mile Shorebird Loop Trail past otter slides, bat boxes, "Jupiter's Bucket", Teal Island, cattail marsh, tree frogs perched on alder leaves, and other delights.

Peak wildlife viewing at the refuge is November through March. Visitors can expect to spend one to one and a half hours completing the Quest. The path is level and is wheelchair and stroller accessible. Upon arrival at the Salmon Creek Unit headquarters, stop into the Visitor center to pick up your Quest map and clues. The first clue guides you right out the door.

Call 707-733-5406 or visit www.fws.gov/humboldtby for more information.



Father & son find the treasure box at the HBNWR

Questions or Newsletter submissions?

Contact North Coast CREEC

Regional Coordinator
Allison Poklemba
707-445-4321 x 104
allisonp@arcatarecycling.org
www.creec.org/region1

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Stewardship Council Grants

The Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council is pleased to announce that the Youth Investment Programs 2009 Grant Requests for Proposals (RFP) are now available online! In 2009, as part of its Youth Investment Program, the Stewardship Council will grant between \$2 million and \$2.5 million in funding to improve the lives of underserved youth by providing greater access to outdoor experiences - from urban parks in the city to watersheds in the wilderness. There are four different grant funds, three rounds focused on outdoor and environmental education programs and one on building parks and playgrounds.

www.stewardshipcouncil.org/youth_investment/index.htm

PG&E Bright Ideas Grants application deadline 3/20

The PG&E Solar Schools Program will award up to \$250,000 in grants to schools with Bright Ideas. The program is designed to support the understanding of renewable energy in public schools throughout northern and central California. Qualifying schools may apply for grants of \$2,500 or \$5,000 to be used for innovative classroom and extracurricular programs that further the universe of solar science.

www.pge.com/about/environment/pge/solarschools/brightideasgrants.shtml

Project Orange Thumb Grants application deadline 2/17

Groups with gardening projects geared toward community involvement, neighborhood beautification, sustainable agriculture, and/or horticultural education are invited to apply for these grants for gardening tools and gardening-related materials. www.projectorangethumb.com/pot/

Captain Planet Foundation Grants application deadline 3/31

The Captain Planet Foundation provides grants to support hands-on environmental projects. The objective of the Foundation is to encourage innovative programs that empower children and youth around the world to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their neighborhoods and communities. Grant rewards up to \$2,500 are available. www.captainplanetfdn.org



STUDENT CONTESTS



River of Words Art and Poetry Contest deadline 2/15 A free international poetry and art contest for youth on the theme of Watersheds. The contest is designed to help youth explore the natural and cultural history of the place they live, and to express through poetry and art, what they discover. Open to students, ages 5-19 years. www.riverofwords.org

Young Naturalist Awards deadline 3/2 The American Museum of Natural History's Young Naturalist Awards program is a science-based competition inviting students (grades 7-12) to plan and conduct their own scientific investigations. The project will include questions, hypotheses, and trips into the field to gather data. Students will then write about their investigations in essays that include artwork and/or photographs that help illustrate their findings. Teachers can use this program to incorporate science curriculum into their classroom. www.amnh.org

Igniting Creative Energy National Student Challenge deadline 3/13 This competition is designed to encourage students to learn about energy conservation and the environment. Student entries must reflect the theme Igniting Creative Energy and demonstrate an understanding of what an individual, family or group can do to make a difference in their home or community. Students may express their ideas in the form of documented science projects, essays, stories, artwork, photographs, music or video or web site projects. www.ignitingcreativeenergy.org

Trees are Terrific in Cities and Towns! deadline 3/1 All California 5th graders are invited to participate in the annual Arbor Day National Poster Contest. You can receive a curriculum packet by contacting Kay Antunez, Contest Coordinator 916-653-7958 or Kay.Antunez@fire.ca.gov. Cash prizes for students and gift certificates for teachers of the top three award winners. California's Arbor Day is celebrated March 7-14. www.arborday.org

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Project WET Training: New Local Focus! 2/28 9:30am-3:30pm in Forestville

The goal of Project WET is promote awareness, appreciation and knowledge of California's water resources. This workshop has been tailored to highlight local water issues and concerns. Teachers can earn (.6) CEU credit through Sonoma State University for attending this workshop.

To register call 707-521-6211 or visit www.sonomacountywater.org/education

Horace Mann Educator Scholarships application deadline 3/12

The Horace Mann Companies is offering \$30,000 in scholarships for public and private school K-12 educators to take college courses. One recipient will receive \$5,000 in scholarship funds payable over four years, and fifteen other recipients will receive \$1,000 each in scholarship funds payable over two years. Twenty additional recipients will each receive one-time \$500 awards. www.horacemann.com/resources/scholarships/default.aspx

Forestry Institute for Teachers (FIT) Four locations: June 14-20 Plumas County, Quincy; June 28-July 3 Tuolumne County, Pinecrest; July 5-11 Shasta County, Shingletown; July 12-18 Humboldt County, Arcata

The goal of FIT is to provide K-12 educators with knowledge, skills and tools to effectively teach their students about forest ecology and forest resource management practices. Participants will receive training in Project Learning Tree and Project WILD. Each institute can accommodate 30-45 participants. All meals and lodging are free. Educators receive extensive classroom and curriculum materials, and a \$200 stipend upon completion of a forest related curriculum unit or project conducted in their classroom. To register visit www.forestryinstitute.org

Sharing Nature Conference & Retreat May 3-8, 2009 Nevada City

Joseph Cornell, author of Sharing Nature with Children, is offering a five-day Sharing Nature Conference and Retreat in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Joseph will be giving the following workshop sessions:

- Using "Flow Learning" for dynamic teaching and life-changing experiences
- Joy in nature activities for feeling serenity and a joyous connection with life
- Sharing nature activities for children and adults
- How to be an inspiring teacher — bringing out the best in others and yourself
- A living history performance based the book, John Muir: My Life with Nature

To register visit www.sharingnature.com



EDUCATOR RESOURCES

Exploring Environmental Issues: Places We Live All communities—urban, suburban, small town, rural—are experiencing growth and change, which has an impact on each community's environment. Project Learning Tree's new module provides educators with a useful tool for place-based education to help create a bond between young citizens and their communities. Students will explore current and future community environmental issues, enabling them to make informed decisions about those issues. For more information about this PLT module go to www.plt.org/cms/pages/21_21_15.html

Classroom Earth! The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF), in partnership with The Weather Channel, has recently launched Classroom Earth, a program designed to encourage the inclusion of environmental education into all high school subjects - from biology to art - and make it easier for teachers to access best practices online. The site features a myriad of resources and information focused on the integration of environment-themed lessons into high school curricula. This site also allows teachers to post their own lesson plans, activities, and other resources. www.classroomearth.org

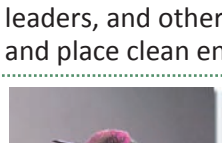
Antarctic Summer In October, two young scientists left Rutgers University to spend six months in Antarctica. While they're there, they'll collect water samples in ice-laden waters, conduct research amidst glaciers and penguins, fly underwater robotic gliders and cruise for one month on a massive icebreaking research vessel. More importantly, they want to share their experiences with students and teachers like you. To do this, Alex and Elizabeth have setup dueling blogs to connect with your classrooms. Antarctic Summer contains all the details on their mission - and a collection of incredible photos. There's also a discussion forum where teachers and scientists can connect to develop and share new classroom resources about Antarctica, climate and the ocean. rucool.marine.rutgers.edu/antarctica

EVENTS

Spring Wildflower Festival 4/11 11:00am-4:30pm Santa Rosa

Come celebrate the majesty of spring wildflowers at Pepperwood Preserve. There will be fun natural history activities for kids of all ages. Naturalists will lead wildflower hikes for teens and adults. Driving tours will provide spectacular hillside vistas across the Mayacamas Mountains and into the valleys. Learn about native plants and wildlife at our educational booths. Families welcome. Meet at the Pepperwood barn. Event will happen rain or shine! Advanced registration NOT required. www.pepperwoodpreserve.org

National Teach-in on Global Warming On February 5th the National Teach-In on Global Warming will engage over a million Americans in solutions-driven dialogue, including young people, national political leaders, and other key decision-makers. Join in, and make the National Teach-In a day that can transform America, and place clean energy solutions to global warming at the top of the nation's agenda. www.nationalteachin.org

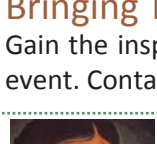


The Great Backyard Bird Count 2/13-16 You and your students can contribute to a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent by taking part in this bird count. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. www.birdsource.org/gbbc

National EE Week 4/12-18 National Environmental Education Week (EE Week) promotes understanding and protection of the natural world by actively engaging K-12th grade students and educators of all subjects in an inspired week of environmental learning and service before Earth Day. This year's EE Week theme is Be Water Wise! Registered partners will have access to a wide variety of FREE environmental education resources, including a school water auditing tool and water quality monitoring resources. You can join a national network of educators dedicated to increasing environmental literacy, promote environmental learning, and gain national exposure for your school or organization by registering today. www.eeweek.org

CONFERENCES

Bringing Life to Learning: Regional Service Learning Conference 2/27 Humboldt State University Gain the inspiration and tools you need to start a service learning project at your school or site at this day long event. Contact Sue Murray for details: murrays@eurekacityschools.org



California Association for Bilingual Education Conference 2/25-28 Long Beach "Releasing Multicultural Dreams Today, Creating New Worlds Tomorrow" is the theme for this year's CABE conference. The CREEC Network presentation is scheduled for Friday, February 27 at 10:45 am to 12:15 pm in the LBCC in Room 102B. www.bilingualeducation.org

Building Green Communities 4/4 Arcata Community Center, Humboldt County
Plan It Green's 3rd annual conference theme is "Wheels of Change". www.humboldtplanitgreen.com

AEOE Statewide Conference 4/24-26 Walker Creek Ranch, Marin County
The theme for the Association for Environmental & Outdoor Education in California's Spring conference is "Education Unplugged" www.aeoe.org

NAI Spring Workshop 4/17-19 Walker Creek Ranch, Marin County
The theme for the National Association for Interpretation's Region 9 Spring workshop is "Creating Connections in a Changing World" www.nairegions.org/9/springworkshop.htm

Green CA Summit & Exposition 3/16-18 Sacramento
"If you want to understand what California's state and local governments are doing to create healthy communities and a vibrant, green economy, you can't miss the Green California Summit and Exposition. This is the event for anyone who wants to be part of a green revolution that is changing the world." Rosario Marin, Secretary, State and Consumer Services, Co-Chair, Summit Advisory Board. www.green-technology.org

From what we get, we can make a living; from what we give, however, makes a life. - Arthur Ashe
 Children are messages to a time we will never see. - Neil Postman
 The Earth is not ours; it is a treasure we hold in trust for future generations. - African Proverb