Environmental Literacy Committee History and Activities

- Federal *No Child Left Inside (NCLI)* legislation and TEEP
- Environmental Literacy Committee officially established by NYSOEA board in January 2009
- Task – lead the development of a state-wide environmental literacy plan (ELP)
- Working with state legislators (Kavanagh and Bradley) to introduce NYS Environmental Education legislation
The ELC hosted a series of roundtables to:

- Inform constituents about the NCLI legislation
- Inform constituents about the state legislative activity
- Gather input on developing an ELP for New York State
To date 6 Roundtables were held in NYS:

- Teatown
- Poughkeepsie
- Cortland
- Irondequoit
- Paul Smiths (Adirondacks Region)
- New York City
Roundtable Attendees

- 48 Non-Formal Educators
  - Representing government agencies, not-for-profit organizations, etc.
- 11 University Faculty
- 8 K-12 Teachers
- 4 Graduate Students
- Total attendees: 71
Defining Environmental Literacy: Initial Goals

An environmentally literate citizen:

- Has a connection to the outdoor environment and a sense of place
- Understands the interconnectedness of all Earth systems
- Is engaged and empowered to address environmental issues and their impact.
Defining Environmental Literacy

Understands the interconnectedness of all Earth systems:

- Has a working knowledge of ‘sustainability’
- Understands how the world works from an ecological perspective
- Comprehends basic scientific principles, environmental history, processes, etc.
- Sees humans as one of many species, as a part of the ecological world
- Understands human impact/influence on earth systems
- Appreciates that everything is connected
Defining Environmental Literacy

Is engaged and empowered to address environmental issues and their impact:

- Is a life-long learner
- Can apply environmental knowledge to solve problems
- Considers ethics in decisions
- Engages in service learning
- Exhibits behaviors of stewardship
- Takes action on environmental issues
Pathways to environmental literacy - Formal

School
- Integrated EE curriculum
- Use of school grounds
- Green schools

Institutionalizing EE across the state
- EE requirement for PK-16
- Regents
- Semester-long courses
- Field trips
- Service learning requirements
- Placed-based education
- Certification for Non-formal educators
Pathways to Environmental Literacy – Non-formal

- Nature Centers
- Youth organizations
- Field trips
- Family
- Role Models
- Media and Technology
How do we assess environmental literacy?

Traditional assessment
- Environmental literacy surveys or assessments
- Regents Exam

Non-traditional assessments: (students)
- Service Projects (outcomes)
- Student Portfolios (writing, drawing, photography)

Behavior changes and environmental awareness surveys

Number of individuals ready for the ‘green workforce’
What other entities should we invite into this process?

- College Faculty
- Classroom Teachers
- School Administrators
- State Education Representatives
- Additional State Agencies
- Businesses
- Youth Organizations
- Outdoor Recreation Organizations
- Local representatives of national environmental organizations
Committee Tasks

- Draft the ELP
- Develop environmental literacy goals
- Assessment
- Professional development
- Advocate for legislation to support NYS ELP and/or NCLI
- Engage other stakeholders
ELC Subcommittees

- Education
- Outreach
- Legislative
- ELP Development
- Fund Raising
Become Involved!

- Be ready to advocate for EE state legislation
- Visit and participate on NYSOEA’s Facebook page:
  
  http://www.facebook.com/pages/NYSOEA/143143469473