

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Environmental Educators of North Carolina

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2020 Highlights

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUNE JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

- Facilitated meeting for EE Program Leaders and Directors at The N.C. Arboretum, Asheville
- Hosted 1st of 17 Community Calls on Zoom in response to COVID-19 & other topics
- Awarded \$2384 in mini-grants to EE organizations in NC
- Launched Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Team
- Launched 1st of 20 Professional Development Webinars
- Was awarded \$100,000 in support the expansion of "Don't Waste It!" curriculum
- Hosted 1st of 8 "Guidelines for Excellence in EE" virtual workshops
- Facilitated the formation and meetings of a COVID-19 & EE Advisory Council
- Virtual Conference: CommunitEE Together
- Rolled out new membership benefits and levels

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It goes without saying that 2020 held surprises that none of us could foresee and no one would have asked for. The world shifted and environmental education — as we knew it — changed.

In January of 2020, we were looking forward to a calendar full of in-person workshops, a mini-conference in the Spring, and a conference in the Fall. Fundraising events and networking socials were scheduled across the state. It was going to be another busy year! Within two months' time nearly every event had been cancelled.

However, our mission had never been clearer. In this changed world, we needed more than ever to build connections, provide professional development, and promote excellence.

On March 17th we hosted our first Community Call in response to the COVID-19 outbreak and 65 educators from across the state attended to share their needs and concerns. From there, we altered our plans to focus on supporting environmental educators as they adapted to virtual platforms and planned for socially distanced programming. Our calendar refilled with webinars, meetings on Zoom, virtual networking, and a successful virtual conference.

While the pandemic challenged us to quickly respond to change, the movement for racial justice challenged us to slow down and examine our own organization. In March, we formed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Team of individuals from both inside and outside the organization to review EENC's internal systems and make recommendations on ways to improve. The DEI Action Team concluded their meetings in November, in which time they built a foundation that will inform EENC for years to come.

We are living through an unprecedented moment in time, but what gives me hope is our community's equally unprecedented commitment to providing quality environmental education for a better world. - Amy Renfranz, 2020 EENC President



EENC's mission is to build connections, provide professional development, and promote excellence for North Carolina's community of environmental educators.

Our vision is to inspire those we work with to create an environmentally literate citizenry.

— 2020 by the Numbers —



135% INCREASE

TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Our number of workshops increased from 40 in 2019 to 94 in 2020. Programs included community calls and webinars.

461 MEMBERS

ACROSS N.C.

EENC is the professional organization for environmental educators in the state. Membership increased by 14%.

3238 HOURS

DEDICATED BY VOLUNTEERS

EENC's board members and many others dedicated thousands of hours toward supporting the organization's efforts in 2020. The monetary value of these hours (at standard rate of \$25.43 per hour, from Independent Sector) is \$82,342.

1 EMPLOYEE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In January 2018, Lauren Pyle became EENC's first Executive Director. Lauren works to increase environmental literacy throughout North Carolina by advancing EENC's strategic priorities, building partnerships, supporting EENC's programming and operations, and coordinating fundraising and development.



Environmental Educators of North Carolina

2020 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CommunitEE: Together for A Better World

By June 2020 it became evident that EENC would have to shift away from the original plan to host an in-person conference in the Western Section of the state. Plans for a new, virtual event unfolded under the theme of community-building. It would become the best attended conference in EENC history—with 260 participants.

Keynote and Socials

Networking and socializing—both key aspects of in-person conferences—took on a new form in 2020. Zoom played host to icebreaker polls, professional speed dating, and virtual happy hours. Thirty two individuals even joined in on a Morning Coffee Hour on September 19th!



Keynote speaker Diquan Edmonds

Our keynote speaker on September 18th was Diquan Edmonds. Edmonds spoke on the “Power of Community” - addressing the topic of underrepresented communities in the outdoors, and tips on creating more inclusive outdoor spaces for all.



Mary Meyer’s “Virtual Teambuilding” session.

A CommunitEE Together

In 2019, EENC members voted to create two new board member positions to lead conference planning and facilitation. Shannon Culpepper and Trent Stanforth were able to navigate the challenges of 2020 to create a meaningful, virtual conference on September 18th and 19th.

Before the conference began, scholarships were awarded that assisted 57 individuals in paying registration costs—a total of \$1795.00.

The conference schedule included 23 sessions led by leaders in the field. Topics included citizen science implementation, inclusion practices, and skill development to meet the demands of the lingering pandemic.

One such session was, “I Wonder Why They Aren’t Participating? Nature is For Everyone” by Ti’Era Worsley from University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The session addressed issues of diversity and inclusion by examining socio-historical narratives of why different races have not seen themselves as “environmentalists” and why it is our job as environmental educators to disrupt that narrative.

The busy schedule also included a Research Symposium with oral and poster presentations.

Thanks to the generous support from conference attendees, we raised \$6,374 for future diversity, equity, and inclusion programs through our virtual auction.



Elise Tellez, Membership Chair, presenting the Environmental Educator of the Year Award to Krista Brinshek.

Congratulations to the 2020 award winners!

Each year, EENC recognizes environmental educators, members, organizations, and partners for their valuable contributions to EENC, the North Carolina community, and to the field of environmental education.

Environmental Educator of the Year:

Krista Brinshek

Exceptional Environmental Education Program:
Teacher Education Unit of the NC Museum of Natural Sciences

Outstanding Partner:

N.C. Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Outstanding Newcomer

Tori Duval

Outstanding Practitioner:

Alayna Schmidt

Outstanding Service:

Mary Meyer

EENC Goes Virtual in 2020

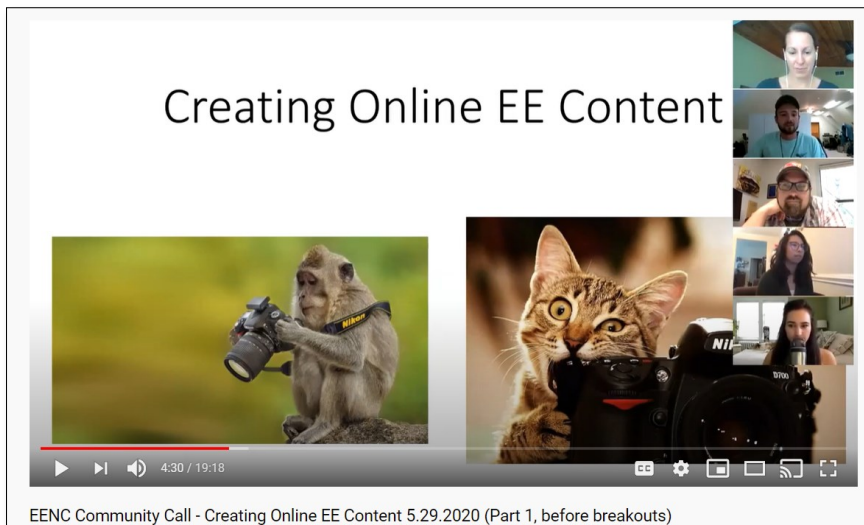
Community Calls and Webinars Deliver Vital Professional Development

In 2020 EENC facilitated over 70 virtual events including Community Calls and Professional Development Webinars. The topics presented included pertinent information and training to support educators as they shifted their programming in the face of the pandemic.

The effort began in March with a series of initial calls on the immediate response to the COVID-19 outbreak. These calls would become “Community Calls” - free events, offered to the public in an effort to build community and promote excellence in a remote world. Topics would go on to include subjects such as “Summer Camp 2020” and “Working Parents and EE.”

By April, EENC had raised over \$5000 in a “GivingTuesdayNow” campaign in order to hire and pay educators to facilitate professional and timely webinars.

The long list of webinars included “How to Use Social Media” by Berkley Bryant and “Video Production” by Erin Hines and Chris Goforth.



EENC hosted a Community Call in May 2020 led by Will Freund and Jonathan Marchal.

Additional Events

Section Events

Section Chairs work to hold events throughout the year, which vary in topic and location. These events are a way for local environmental educators to network with each other and are open to members and non-members. Below are some 2020 highlights.

Eastern

Eastern section met in February to tour the Red Wolf Education Center in Columbia, N.C. and again in October for a plant hike at Carolina Beach State Park. The section ended the year with a workshop at Long Leaf Park in Wilmington, N.C.

Central

Central section was busy this year with their Nature Book Club and field trips. They also ventured to Howell Woods for an Owl Safari and to watch the Perseid Meteor Shower.

Piedmont

Piedmont section organized a fun, virtual social and Happy Hour!

Western

Through a partnership with the Association of Experiential Education, the Western section organized a field trip to Chimney Rock in February. They also joined together in Boone for a “Sip and Learn” program about fungi.

Workshops

In March, EENC partnered with the NC Association of EE Centers to host a NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence workshop prior to their annual meeting. Twenty-five educators representing over 15 organizations learned to apply the Community Engagement and Nonformal Program Guidelines for Excellence within their own communities.



In addition, EENC led the country in the development of an online version of NAAEE’s Guidelines for Excellence, and facilitated four workshops in 2020.

EENC Echoes

Our members-only newsletters reached 5,734 educators across the state in 2020!

Other Webinars

The North American Association of Environmental Educators hosts webinars with a variety of topics. EENC co-sponsored twenty webinars with NAAEE. In addition, in 2020 EENC became a partner with Green Teacher’s Webinar series and co-sponsored six of their high-quality programs.

EENC Outreach

EENC attended statewide and regional events to foster publicity, partnerships, and outreach, including NAAEE’s virtual conference, NC Office of EE and Public Affairs’s Non-Formal Educators Meeting, and many more!

EENC Board of Directors



An all-volunteer Board of Directors governs EENC, and 100% of our board members contribute financially to the organization each year.

The 2020 Board consists of sixteen members who work to seek funding for the organization and manage the budget; plan the annual conference, mini-conference, and other events; manage and recruit members; and much more. Section Chairs organize section-specific events, and help spread the word about the activities of members within their section.

The Board of Directors is an amazing group of dedicated volunteers that helped make all of EENC's 2020 accomplishments a reality. In January, the Board met at Kanuga Retreat and Conference Center in Hendersonville for the annual Board Retreat where we worked on updating the strategic plan, reviewed membership levels and even had time for a silly mud flop in our Executive Director's backyard!

In March, the Board of Directors and other volunteers worked to award over \$2000 in mini-grants. Several board members volunteered dozens of hours on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Team. Among many other things, this team helped to write a guiding statement in EENC's Policy Handbook relating to inclusivity.

Board members worked relentlessly to help EENC and its members meet the challenges of 2020. Partnership Chair, Renee Strnad, helped to form and facilitate COVID-19 Response and Advisory calls in which leaders from across the state shared needs and concerns. Together, this team developed a plan for a state-wide, concerted effort in response to the pandemic.

Membership to the organization grew by 10% in 2020. Membership Chair, Elise Tellez, had her hands full in updating the roster and communicating with new members! She also dedicated hours each month to participating in a "Membership Bootcamp"-laying the groundwork for an overhaul of the membership program that will launch in 2021.

The year ended strong with a successful crowdfunding campaign that raised \$20,627 for the organization! The Board members contributed 2,756 hours of volunteer service to EENC. Using the federal volunteer rate of \$25.43 per hour, the Board contributed a total of \$70,085 in volunteerism!

2020 Board Meetings

January 10-12	Board Retreat, Kanuga Center, <i>Hendersonville</i>	June 13	Zoom Conference, <i>Statewide</i>
March 1	Rockfish Camp & Retreat Center, <i>Parkton</i>	December 8	Zoom Conference, <i>Statewide</i>
February - November	Monthly Conference Calls		

2020 Board of Directors

President: Amy Renfranz

President- Elect: Erin Hines

Past-President: Christine Wittmeier

Secretary: Chris Goforth

Treasurer: Lauren Lampley

Communications Chair: Kyleene Rooks

Education Chair: Brent Jackson

Membership Chair: Elise Tellez

Partnership Chair: Renee Strnad

Conference Co-Chairs: Shannon Culpepper & Trent Stanforth

Resource Development Chair: Chelsea Sloggy

Eastern Section Chair: Marissa Blackburn

Central Section Chair: Stacie Hagwood

Piedmont Section Chair: Mary Meyer

Western Section Chair: Libbie Dobbs-Alexander



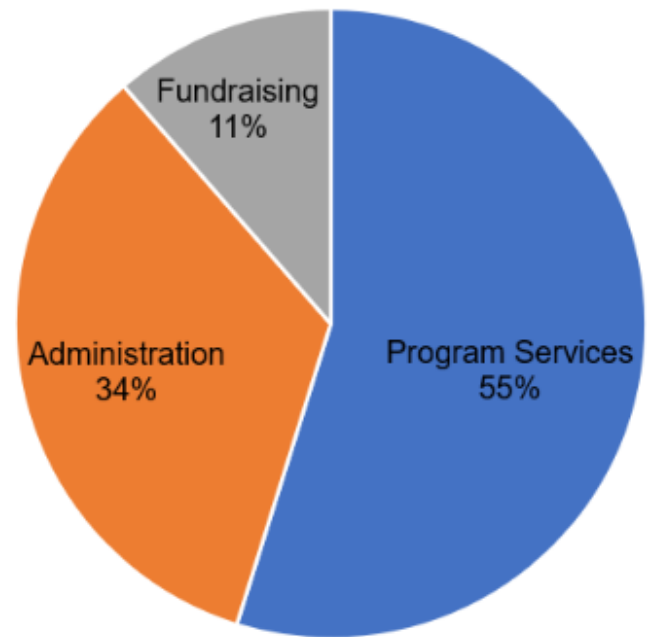
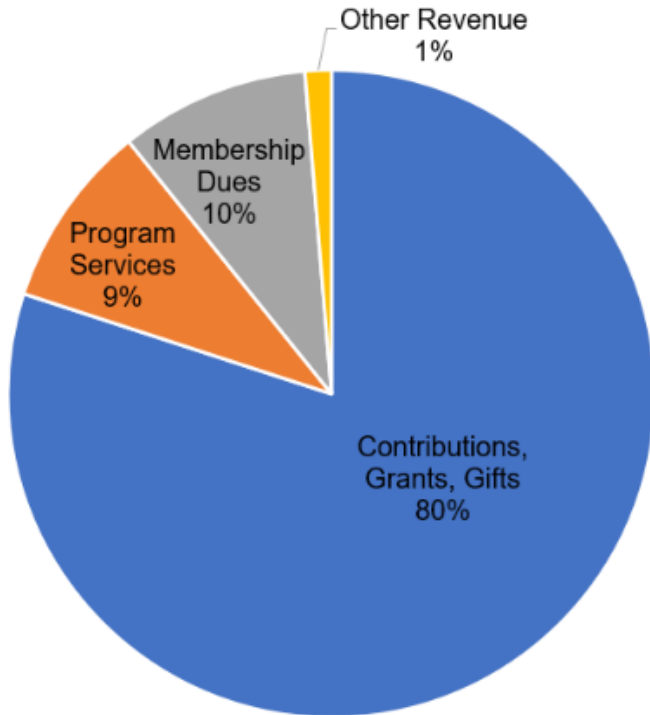
Mud Flop, January 2020

The Board of Directors performed a Mud Flop after to thank donors after a successful crowdfunding campaign in 2019, raising \$37,161 for EENC.

Budget Summary

INCOME

Contributions, Grants, Gifts	\$72,386
Program Services	\$8,341
Membership Dues	\$8,560
Other Revenue	\$1,192
Total Revenue	\$90,480



EXPENSES

Program Services	\$44,576
Administration	\$27,474
Fundraising	\$9,265
Total Expenses	\$81,315

EENC's total income in 2020 was \$90,480 and total expenses were \$81,314. This was the second year that the organization has employed a full-time Executive Director.



\$2500+ Anonymous



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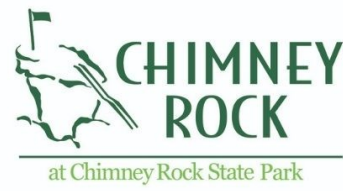
\$1000+

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\$500+

Anonymous, Beth Cranford, Randy Dobbs, Erin Hines



\$250+



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