

FINAL DRAFT – EDUCATION 01/07/13

PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATION EMPLOYEES PROGRAM TRAINING PLAN — EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

Training plans for professional education employees will consist of three tiers to guide the training process. Tier 1 is geared toward partnership employees with up to 1 year of experience; Tier 2 for those with two years of experience; Tier 3 for those with 5 years of experience or more. The committee realizes that each employee's training plan should be tailored to meet the specific employee's and/or District's needs, especially those District Educators who wear multiple hats.

SKILL LEVELS

TIER 1 - Skill set needed after one year of service:

Organizational Skills

- Create and set-up a working Filing System to effectively manage education files (electronic & hard copy).
- Create and set-up a working Scheduling Calendar to track education outreach, workshops, grant deadlines, meetings, professional development trainings, etc.
- Develop a working Education Progress Spreadsheet to track and report deliverables meeting District goals and objectives (# presentations conducted, # students taught, # educators trained & # learners educators will reach in 1 year, # students/teachers/schools entering Poster Contest, # citizens provided information, # students/teachers/schools competing in Envirothon, # educational materials distributed, etc.)
- Establish a plan & policies* to maximize 40 work hours/week and to strengthen proficiency in time management skills.
- (See *Administrative and Technical plans for other organizational skills*)

Communication Skills

- Research and develop efficient way to communicate with potential participants in District's education programs and set-up communications system (i.e. email lists, mailing labels, telephone tree, social media, etc.)
- Learn to use computer software and clip art to create effective flyers to promote District's educational and volunteer programs and to provide certificates to District award winners and to educators and volunteers to document hours
- (See *Administrative and Technical plans for other communication skills*)

Education Skills

- Become familiar with District's education program(s)—Poster/Essay/Computer Slide Show/Computer Poster/Public Speaking contests, Envirothon, field days, school presentations, workshops, volunteer/ scholarship/grant programs, etc.
- Become familiar with Association's "Contests, Workshops, and Awards Handbook" – especially rules and judging criteria pertaining to those contests in which your District participates.
- Select a few of the District's education programs to lead in first year; observe Mentors leading the components that are new to you, taking copious mental and written notes or videotaping mentors if possible to use as training videos.
- Understand and incorporate into the District's education program the Key Characteristics of Environmental Education as outlined in the NC EE Plan, Third Edition, page 7. http://www.ee.enr.state.nc.us/ee_plan_web_print.pdf
- Beginning now and throughout District education career, study and apply the six themes recommended in the national Guidelines for the Preparation and Professional Development of Environmental Educators by North American Association for Environmental Education (especially Themes 1 and 2 in year one.) <http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines>
- Become familiar with and practice using a variety of instructional strategies for learner-centered lessons such as those described in the Guidelines above: hands-on observation and discovery in the environment, inquiry, cooperative learning, community-based action research and problem-solving, investigating environmental issues, service learning, simulations and models, case studies, problem-based learning, and project-based learning.
- Set-up a personal library and/or District Loan Library of EE resources by using criteria contained in the national Environmental Education Materials: Guidelines for Excellence by North American Association for Environmental Education that will shape content, technique and other aspects of instruction based on six key characteristics. <http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines>
- Learn about the NC Environmental Education Certification Program and the five required components.
- Create effective teaching materials, props and visuals as needed for District lessons, exhibits and workshops.
- Develop a *District Policy for District's education programs—along with program description that includes answers to questions such as: How will participants register? What is minimum/maximum number of registrants? What can participants expect from District educator? What expectations does District educator have of participants? What will participants receive? Outdoors or indoors? How often can requests be made for same program or different programs?

- Develop an evaluation form and/or survey to assess your personal instruction, District's education program, and to obtain constructive feedback from participants.

Leadership Skills

- Volunteer to help another District to see how they organize and run programs such as Field Days, classroom presentations, contest judging, etc.
- Volunteer as an RCW Counselor to provide guidance to participating high school students and to learn about natural resources management.
- Volunteer to help at your Area Envirothon and the NC Envirothon, serving as a "Station Guide" to see how the competitions work at each level. Volunteer for another task the next year to learn more or to assist where most needed.
- Volunteer to help at the NC Envirothon Team Advisor Workshop to learn about natural resources management and to gain ideas for preparing your District's Envirothon teams.

TIER 2 - Skill set needed after two years of service:

Organizational Skills

- Increase knowledge of soil and water conservation partnership and related watershed, environmental, private and nongovernmental organizations.
- Gain working knowledge of commonly used acronyms in conservation programs and government.
- Become familiar with county natural resource maps and soil surveys.

Communication Skills

- Write Education sections contained within District Plan of Work and all required reports.
- Contact school system officials and/or school administration and/or classroom teachers to assess their needs with regards to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), environmental science, ecology, natural resources management, and outdoor classroom development.
- Develop promotional materials that meet local schools' needs while meeting District's goals and objectives (See "NC Standard Course of Study" below under Education Skills.)

Education Skills

- Learn about best management practices in agriculture, sediment & erosion control, and stormwater management (what these practices are and how they work) by going out in the field with District's technical staff and/or community partners.
- Learn how to take a viable soil sample, complete sample form, mail the sample, read & understand the soil test results, and apply the recommended amount of soil amendments so as to assist landowners, homeowners and schools with this process.
- Review and incorporate improvements from feedback provided from participant evaluations.
- Enroll in the NC Environmental Education Certification Program and begin earning the required 200 hours of professional development within five years.
- Know thy audience and strive to conduct lessons with audiences of different ages and cognitive abilities: preK, K-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12, adults, special needs, specific target audiences, etc. See Guidelines below.
- Study and apply the national Excellence in Environmental Education - Guidelines for Learning (K-12) by North American Association for Environmental Education that sets appropriate expectations for learner performance and achievement at the 4th and 8th grades and by high school graduation via four strands. <http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines>
- Become familiar with NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) and the new NC Essential Standards mandated for grades K-12, especially science and social studies. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/new-standards/>
- Align District's school programs (contests, field days, etc.) with NCSCOS objectives for the intended conceptual content and grade level.

Education and Leadership Skills

- Research and create a new lesson; then model and share it with other District Education Coordinators.
- Volunteer on a working committee in improving and/or updating existing District Education Programs (Education Committee, District contests, Envirothon, FLP, RCW, CET, State Fair, etc.)
- Train to be a workshop facilitator in Food, Land & People and other EE curricula; then conduct a workshop within the next year to fulfill training commitment.
- Conduct a District-sponsored EE workshop for formal and non-formal educators in your county and/or Area.

- Direct District volunteers in performing volunteer work for District or improving their local environment through environmental projects (tree plantings, litter cleanups, etc.)
- Assist local schools, organizations and partners in developing outdoor classrooms and/or community gardens.

TIER 3 - Skill set needed after five or more years of service:

Communication Skills

- Write and submit news articles/press releases/newsletters to broaden District's public outreach.
- Hone group facilitation and presentation skills.
- Author all Education sections contained in all District reports and publications.
- Become familiar with grant writing process and begin writing grants to fund District education programs.
- Explore the use of marketing theories and social marketing plans to alter people's environmental or natural resources behaviors.

Education and Leadership Skills

- Help plan and host your District's Field Day, Conservation Awards Banquet, Keeping the Farm Workshop, etc.
- Play a major role in developing and implementing your Area Spring & Fall Meetings and/or your Area Contest Judging and/or Area Envirothon, including communicating with and involving all Districts in your Area.
- Serve as a Community Partner and lead a school or organization in a long-term environmental service learning project that is student-centered, student-owned, and student-directed.
- Assist in planning and implementing District education programs such as the Education Track at the annual Conservation Employee Training (CET).
- If teaching very young children, study the Early Childhood Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence by North American Association for Environmental Education. <http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines>
- Study and apply the Nonformal Environmental Education Programs: Guidelines for Excellence by NAAEE that recommend six key characteristics to professionalize District education programs. <http://eelinked.naaee.net/n/guidelines>
- Serve as a Mentor to train other District Education Coordinators via one-on-one assistance and/or invite them to shadow you in action.
- Chair a working committee to develop or improve a District education program—set the agenda, lead committee members in producing deliverables on time, guide the tasks & timeline, develop report of committee's results, initiate and maintain communications.
- Take the lead in coordinating and conducting the Education Track at the annual Conservation Employees Training (CET) Workshop.
- Assist in facilitating a Train-the-Trainer workshop for District Education Coordinators and/or District employees.
- Lead and manage District's volunteer program(s) involving all facets of volunteer recruitment and recognition, event promotion, data entry, reporting of results, ordering and distributing volunteer supplies, etc.
- Write letters of recommendation and award nominations for District colleagues, educators, students, volunteers, and participants in District education and volunteer programs.
- Develop and initiate a brand new education program and/or workshop for Districts from conceptual inception to on-the-ground delivery.
- Write and propose new resolutions to develop, improve, and support new and existing District education programs and the policies governing the Conservation Partnership.
- Provide thoughtful feedback to draft state standards proposed by the NC Department of Public Instruction—propose and provide learning objectives that focus on the study of natural resources, consequences of mismanagement of natural resources, the role of human choices and actions, innovative solutions (i.e. best management practices), and ways learners can practice stewardship in their daily lives), especially in Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Healthful Living, etc.
- Provide thoughtful feedback to state drafts of the NC EE Plan, NC Environmental Literacy Plan and other statewide documents proposed by the NCDENR Office of Environmental Education—provide edits and suggestions that encompass the education work of Districts and a holistic perspective of EE content and methods provided by a diversity of EE practitioners across NC.
- Provide thoughtful feedback to national drafts of the No Child Left Inside legislation that is relevant to the NC Environmental Literacy Plan and the work of NC's environmental educators and District Education Coordinators.

- Stay abreast of continuous changes in the fast-growing field of EE and provide updates to other District Education Coordinators.
- Serve as an active Board member on a professional education organization's Board of Directors (such as DEA, EENC, HHB SWCD Society, NCSTA, etc.)
- Serve on the Professional Conservation Employees Program Oversight Committee to further update and refine this training template for District Education Coordinators.

Education Core Committee:

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**→ Your Name Here!
We need more dynamic District Educators to join our committee!
(and your name doesn't have to start with "S"!)**

Edits received from:

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