

**QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT
for October – December, 2012**

The full **2012 Action Plan** can be found online at www.dnr.state.md.us/cin/pdfs/2012_CIN_ActionPlan_Final.pdf.

Environmental Literacy – Support for EL in Schools and the Community

Lead: Laurie Jenkins, Montgomery County Public Schools, laurie_c_jenkins@mcpssmd.org;

Co-Lead: Joe Harbor, National Aquarium, jharber@aqua.org

Best Practices & Improved Data Collection for Environmental Education (EE) Experiences: The EPA and Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) held a workshop in November to update the meaningful watershed education experience (MWEE) definition, Bay program MWEE indicator and related tracking system and to develop strategies to advance systemic adaption of EE/MWEE's in mid-Atlantic jurisdictions. Pilot implementation of a new tool for the state/region is anticipated by summer, 2013.

Regional EL Liaisons: The seven teams of regional liaisons planned and facilitated full day regional meetings in the fall. Professional development was a major part of each agenda, and included presentations by higher education scientists and a political scientist from the U.S. Naval Academy. Follow up meetings are being planned for spring 2013.

Higher education: Dr. Robert Blake, acting chair, with the Professional Development School (PDS) at Towson University, will join the next meeting of the EL workgroup on January 31, 2013. The immediate focus of the work continues to be identifying ways to provide professional development in EE for pre-service and in-service teachers through the PDS, and investigating the creation of levels of certification/endorsement in environmental education.

Professional Development in EE: MAEOE applied for and received funding to host EL professional development workshops. One was completed in December, and two more are scheduled for January and March, 2013, to serve three regions of the state. Participants have been introduced to Next Generation Science Standards, Common Core Standards, issues investigation and the MWEE. Using this knowledge, participants will be able to align their programs to the new standards, which will allow LEA educators to see clear connections between EE provider programs and their curriculum.

Capacity Building Workshops: A series of three EE provider workshops was funded by NAAEE, Cornell with EPA funding in 2012. The workshops brought together traditional and non-traditional environmental educators to share strategies for reaching new audiences. NAAEE tools such as Guidelines for Excellence and "What's Good in my Hood" were reviewed. The group has received a mini-grant from CBT to allow work to continue in 2013. This funding will be used to expand EE capacity networks on the Eastern Shore, on Prince George's county and Baltimore.

Maryland School Grounds for Learning is a planned new project to support sustainable, natural outdoor learning environments at schools. A small group of Partnership members met to discuss updating MSDE's 1999 guide "Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment: A Guide to Planning, Design, Construction, and Maintenance on New & Existing School Sites" (commonly referred to as the Green Book). This guide has been used to improve the design of new school grounds and to enhance some existing ones with natural features. The group is planning to update the content and case studies, and add a critical piece on how to use the school grounds for teaching and learning. In addition, a grant proposal was submitted in December to request support for a collaborative effort to integrate the guide expansion project with a professional development series.

MAEOE Conference: The MAEOE 2013 Annual Conference *Educate, Engage, Energize: Understanding the Natural World* has been organized for February 7–10. Presentations were selected from a large pool of applications. The Thursday Professional Development Institute will be hosted by University of Maryland Extension STEM Education Action Team / Maryland Sea Grant Extension. Half-day and full day workshops will occur on Friday. NASA Astronaut (and teacher) Richard Arnold is the Keynote Speaker.

Clearinghouse: Recommendations for a comprehensive and user-friendly clearinghouse of environmental education (EE) providers and professional development opportunities is being met by NOAA, through the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) Education Workgroup-sponsored website, www.baybackpack.com. Bay Backpack is scheduled for an overhaul in 2013 to better meet the needs of educators and administrators supporting environmental literacy efforts in the region. NOAA/CBP has held input sessions with MD and VA and is in the process of scheduling meetings with PA and DE.

Health and Food (Agriculture) Connections

Leads: Health – Kim Martinez, National Wildlife Federation (NWF), martinezk@nwf.org
Food/ Agriculture – Karen Fedor, Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), karen.fedor@maryland.gov

Healthy Maryland Children: Connecting kids' health to time spent in nature is a "cross-cutting" goal of organizations which make up the Partnership. The **Community Health Initiative** intends to engage as many of the CIN Partners and outside partners as possible, to bring all avenues of the issue and a diversity of resources to one selected urban community in **Baltimore**. The Initiative evolved out of recommendations from our June **Health Forum**, to: (1) create opportunities for collaboration; and (2) participate in urban initiatives. A **workgroup** was assembled which included representatives of the health, education, parks, research, and natural resources fields; and has convened monthly to create a vision, identify broad goals, and develop criteria for selecting a community to pilot the initiative on a small scale. The pilot will test methods to get more families outside to improve the health and well being of their children. The workgroup has completed a **draft approach** to frame out the Initiative and has presented it to the Partnership Steering Committee for internal review, and is seeking Leadership Team approval in January. From there, **community selection criteria** will be used to identify potential neighborhood(s) to contact about participating in the pilot project. Once a community has been selected and confirmed, the Partnership will work with community leaders to develop a full program strategy, with a timeline for implementation in 2013. Feedback from the pilot project will inform the workgroup's next steps in creating a set of recommendations to be used as a "**blue print**" for **replication** in other Maryland communities.

Agriculture\Food Connections

- Nearly 70 people attended two Mid-Atlantic Farm-Based Educator's workshops held in November and December. The workshops were organized by the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation and Maryland Department of Agriculture. The Mid-Atlantic Farm-Based Educator's Network (non-formal education providers) will meet on March 6 to discuss how to structure and align farm-based education activities to meet standards (E-Lit, Next generation, STEM, Common Core), sharing and developing curriculum (with an emphasis on expanding to middle and high school grades), and introducing some evaluation methods into pre/post and in-field experiences. The workshop will be hosted by Montpelier Farms in Prince George's County.
- MAEF and MDA will host *Farm-Based Education: Taking Students to the Field and Greenhouse!* a workshop at the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education Annual Conference on Friday, February 8. At this all day workshop, participants will visit a hydroponic greenhouse facility and a winery to demonstrate how to connect with and utilize community farmers and their farms as fantastic outdoor classrooms for science and social studies.

Communities and Community Planning

Lead: Sandi Olek, Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), solek@dnr.state.md.us

Enhance Access to Green spaces and the trails network:

- The **Nature Play Spaces** workgroup continued to promote the establishment of Nature Play Spaces throughout Maryland with continued outreach efforts including publications, presentations and the establishment of another demonstration project at Rocks State Park, with one in the planning stages for Susquehanna State Park. Upcoming projects will include Jug Bay and potentially the town of Chestertown. www.dnr.state.md.us/cin/nps.
- The Communities workgroup is supporting and participating in the **Community Health Initiative** by providing input into project development, using the Park Equity Analysis and other tools to help guide plans for the pilot. The workgroup will continue to contribute to the Initiative by coordinating with ongoing community revitalization work such as state and local projects, developing best practices and building partnerships to support the efforts.
- The workgroup has begun to review submitted local (e.g., county) Long Range Parks and Recreation Plans and/or policy guidance to determine best practices which can be incorporated into the **Statewide Land Preservation and Recreation Plan**. This review and input into the State plan will occur through 2013. The workgroup will use this process to identify a potential proactive role for CIN in assisting future county practices in providing / utilizing nature areas in parks (e.g., a workshop to facilitate exchange between counties re successes, challenges, etc.).

Maryland Partnership for Children In Nature 2012 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Support for Environmental Literacy in schools and in the community:

- 1. Regional E-Lit workshops** – 7 completed (Feb-March), over 300 attendees;
- 2. E-Lit Summit** – statewide, 5-day, 24 schools teams/ 125+ attendees (August), LEAs developed ELit plans;
- 3. E-Lit professional development for EE providers** – MAEOE received grant, planning workshops;
- 4. Regional E-Lit Liaisons** – pairs of school system + EE reps; 7 workshops Oct-Dec, 7 more planned Spring '13;
- 5. Clearinghouse of resources** – NOAA revamping Bay Backpack website (Fall 2012);
- 6. Higher Education Forum** to improve coordination w/ preK-12, teacher prep, E-Lit Prof Dev (held Sept);
- 7. Best Practices & Improved Data Collection** for EE Experiences – NOAA/CBT conf (Aug), tracking tool ('13);
- 8. MAEOE Green Schools Youth Summit** – held 3rd annual, 54 learning stations, 3500 attendees/130 schools;
- 9. Mid-Atlantic E-Lit Strategy** – CIN partners participate in and support/ endorse the Fed strategy, ongoing;
- 10. U.S. Green Ribbon Schools program** – support program, great MD representation (4 awards), ongoing;
- 11. School grounds design/construction guidance** – planning enhancements to existing guide and prof development;
- 12. Capacity Building Workshops** (3) for non-traditional EE providers in diverse communities;
- 13. Conservation Jobs Corps** serving ~300-500 youth/ year, ongoing.

Communities/ Community Planning:

- 14. Oh Ranger! Smart phone Trail App** – free trail maps, now available www.ohranger.com;
- 15. Maryland Trails Interactive Map, web based** – safe on-road connections to state and local trails (avail.);
- 16. Park Equity Analysis** to identify needs re access to park space – being finalized, will use with health initiative;
- 17. Nature Play Spaces** – Pattern Book www.dnr.state.md.us/cin/nps and demo projects (state parks, DNR HQ, more);
- 18. County 5-year recreation plans** – review / recommendations (Fall '12 - on), will contribute to state plans in 2013.

Health and Agriculture Connections:

Children's Health –

- 19. Health Forum** held in June w/ 50 stakeholders, identified greatest needs for addressing health issues as relates to integrating the outdoors/nature into health and recreation;
- 20. Community Health Initiative** – developed framework and strategy for comprehensive community initiative in an urban area, with action plan drafted for pilot project in a specific community to be selected in early 2013.

Agriculture Education –

- 21. Ag Ed programs** are being integrated into school E-Lit programs and the MD Green Schools application;
- 22. Farm-Based Educators** align w/ E-Lit – 70 people attended two workshops held Nov and Dec; more planned for 2013;
- 23. Farm to School** – Expanded efforts to increase locally grown foods provided in schools, tying it with E-Lit.

Promoting Outdoor Play and Learning:

- 24. Celebrate Maryland Outdoors Days** – two weeks in June, promoted 257 events across MD, online resource;
- 25. Communications / outreach components** were included in most of the above actions and initiatives.

More projects and collaborations are planned for 2013!