

CAEE Strategic Plan 2013-2018

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2013-2018 CAEE Strategic Plan

Introduction

Since 1989, the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE) has been striving to support environmental education (EE) providers and advance environmental literacy while responding to the changing needs and opportunities within the field. This work has led to huge strides within Colorado and nationally. Capitalizing on the momentum, energy and success of the past 23 years, this strategic plan will guide the work of the alliance into the future and set achievable goals for the next five years. This plan will serve to more effectively engage and empower leadership of CAEE and improving the long-term continuity of organizational management, policy, and decision-making. This will allow CAEE to provide Coloradans with the opportunity to participate in quality EE opportunities and become environmentally literate citizens. As environmentally literate citizens, Colorado residents will have the tools, resources, and knowledge to make educated decisions regarding our environment.

Organizational Overview

The Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE) is a partnership between environmental education providers and supporters who are working together to advance environmental literacy. CAEE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and a statewide leader in promoting quality and access to environmental education in Colorado.

At CAEE, our mission statement, vision, and strategic plan drives our programs and activities. We assess the needs of the community and support the development and sustainability of quality programs and services.

Mission

CAEE's mission is to serve all sectors of the Colorado community by improving the collective effectiveness of environmental education.

Vision

CAEE envisions an environmentally literate Colorado, with CAEE as the recognized leader of the environmental education community.

Strategic Focus Areas

CAEE aims to ensure the quality of environmental education opportunities by offering resources and meaningful support to individuals and organizations that provide these services. CAEE accomplishes this through:

- Training and networking opportunities
- Hosting a certification program
- Recognizing best practices.

CAEE aims to advocate for increased access to environmental learning opportunities for all Colorado residents. This is accomplished through:

- Hosting an on-line tools and directory of environmental learning opportunities

- Representing and advocating for the environmental education community in a variety of public settings
- Promoting and supporting EE in PreK-12 schools and higher education
- Examining equity issues regarding access to environmental learning opportunities and promoting inclusive practices

Clients

CAEE provides direct services to those engaged in providing environmental education. Our clients include:

- Environmental education professionals in non-formal education settings
- Teachers, administrators, and professors in formal education settings
- Any individual, agency, organization or business aiming to improve the quality of their environmental education services or whose aim is to enhance environmental literacy.

Additionally, we support and advocate for individuals, organizations, and businesses striving to promote access to quality environmental learning opportunities.

Values

CAEE values environmental literacy and believes that EE supports high quality education and leads to an environmentally literate citizenry. We believe an environmentally literate community will ensure economic, social, and environmental sustainability for Colorado. Our values include:

- Integrity
- Community
- Interdependency
- Collaboration
- Sustainability
- Inclusion
- Equity
- Personal Responsibility
- Appreciation
- Life-long Learning

A Guide for CAEE's Work

CAEE's philosophy is rooted in the Tbilisi Declaration (UNESCO, 1978)

- To foster clear awareness of and concern about economic, social, political and ecological independence in urban and rural areas;
- To provide every person with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment, and skills needed to protect and improve the environment;
- To create new patterns of behavior in individuals, groups, and society as a whole towards the environment.

CAEE is an affiliate member of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) and a member of the national Affiliate Network, a coalition of environmental education support organizations all across North America who partner with NAAEE. CAEE adopted the National Guidelines for Excellence in Environmental Education, established by

NAAEE to guide the development of balanced, scientifically accurate, and comprehensive environmental education programs.

A Culture of Inclusivity

CAEE works to ensure everyone in Colorado has an opportunity to learn about the environment. We value inclusion and welcome everyone to the field of environmental education. CAEE does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, ethnic background, creed, marital status, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender, disability, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

Accomplishments Since 2006

CAEE has accomplished innumerable achievements over the past several years, including:

- Increased the number of programs and services offered to our clients
- Established CAEE as the recognized voice of the EE community in Colorado
- Ensured the passage of the first state legislation supporting environmental education and played a key leadership role in the adoption of a State Environmental Education Plan by the State Board of Education.
- Launched the Colorado Resource T.R.E.E., a new tools and resources directory of environmental education program and resources
- Developed, piloted, and established the Environmental Education and Master Certification programs
- Started a diversity and inclusiveness initiative and committee
- Established an endowment of over \$200,000

Responding to the Needs of the Environmental Education Community

The context of environmental education has changed considerably over the last several years. There has been significant growth in knowledge, motivation, and resources regarding “living green” at all levels. CAEE is continuously evaluating these changes and the outstanding needs in the environmental education community and adapting to meet those needs.

Opportunities

- Environmental Education Plan recently passed by Colorado State Board of Education
- Increase in societal awareness of and action regarding environmental issues
- Increased awareness regarding the value of experiencing the outdoors
- Increase in legislative support for environmental education
- Increase in public/private partnerships within the environmental field
- Increase in formal and informal environmental education opportunities and programs
- Changing demographics, aging and diverse population
- Climate change has created increased awareness
- Advances in communication and technology

Threats

- The economic downturn
- Growing population
- Changing demographics, aging and diverse population
- Climate change can be overwhelming
- Limited resources
- Increased political partisanship
- Increase in K-12 focus on testing and educational standards
- Changes in technology resulting in decreased time outdoors and information overload

Strengths

- Currently a strong leader and voice for environmental education in Colorado and Nationally
- Motivated staff
- Dedicated board of directors
- Committed volunteers
- Experienced and adept at providing support, networking opportunities and building partnerships with our clients

Weaknesses

- Risk to organizational sustainability due to limited funding
- Small staff, increased demand for services
- A lack of presence and services outside the Denver Metro area
- A lack of branding and organizational differentiation
- A lack of clearly perceivable membership benefits

The Future of CAEE

CAEE will spend the next several years becoming the premier resource regarding all aspects of environmental education in Colorado. This includes strengthening the alliance of environmental education providers and supporters in order to increase access to environmental education opportunities and meet the needs of the ever changing environmental education community.

Goals, Strategies and Tactics

- ❖ Goal #1: Strengthen the sustainability and increase the capacity (including the impact, reach, and efficient use of resources) of CAEE.
 - Strengthen and support the leadership capacity of CAEE's staff, board, & volunteers.
 - ◆ Develop a structured volunteer program, including formalized opportunities, tracking mechanisms and emphasis on matching skills and needs.

- ◆ Host an annual leadership meeting for members, staff, board of directors, and committee chairs to review strategic plan and establish annual goals.
 - ◆ Create recruitment and development plans for board of directors to ensure the needs of CAEE are met.
 - ◆ Recruit board members and volunteers from outside the Denver Metro area.
 - ◆ Create a staff development plan to retain and develop leadership.
 - ◆ Develop a process to increase and retain diversity of CAEE staff and board members.
 - ◆ Create a staff development plan to retain and develop leadership.
- Evaluate and modify CAEE's organizational structure, resources, and administrative processes to best achieve current focus, goals and objectives.
- ◆ Formally review and modify each program and sponsored event to ensure the program/event is in line with the organization's current goals.
 - ◆ Review organizational structure, staffing levels, and staffing duties to identify and prioritize the needs of the organization and efficiencies available for implementation.
 - ◆ Strategically increase use and effectiveness of volunteer staff.
 - ◆ Develop a business case for volunteer manager and/or membership coordinator.
- Increase and diversify CAEE's funding sources.
- ◆ Update business plan with particular attention to:
 - developing sustainable funding for CAEE staff,
 - providing adequate compensation for professional services,
 - evaluating event sponsorship opportunities,
 - developing a plan to increase individual giving to 20% of overall budget by the end of the 2018 fiscal year in order to diversify funding sources,
 - analyzing costs and benefits of services and programs, and the role of membership dues.
 - ◆ Establish a board committee or advisory committee charged with identifying, acquiring, and distributing resources to sustain CAEE programs and services.
 - ◆ Develop endowment campaign to increase the balance to \$265,000 by then end of 2018 to work towards the goal of utilizing endowment funds
- Improve both internal and external communications to foster greater awareness and understanding of CAEE and its services.
- ◆ Develop and implement communication and marketing best practices, including but not limited to:
 - enhanced use of web, electronic, and social media and
 - a strategic approach to showcase accomplishments.
 - ◆ Update communication tools to reflect CAEE brand and alliance messaging.
 - ◆ Enhance effectiveness of current communication tools (newsletter, EE listserves, weekly happenings, social media) and networking opportunities to increase participation and communicate the value of CAEE.
 - ◆ Engage members in sharing information about environmental education with their audiences.

- Evaluate and adapt the membership program to both improve satisfaction & increase sustainable funding.
 - ◆ Clarify and market CAEE Membership Program
 - clarify meaning and role of membership in CAEE,
 - develop appropriate membership fees and associated benefits,
 - enhance recruitment and retention, and
 - consider donor/supporter membership level.
 - ◆ Identify and consider potential partnerships or dual memberships with similar or overlapping organizations.
 - ◆ Recruit and retain 285 PreK-12 educators as members by the end of 2018.

- ❖ Goal #2: Ensure the quality of environmental education opportunities by supporting environmental education providers.
 - Continue professional development and networking opportunities valued by primary membership.
 - ◆ Host regular conference and achieve 300 participants each year.
 - ◆ Enhance electronic professional development delivery.
 - ◆ Enhance promotion of existing professional development and networking opportunities to increase participation.
 - ◆ Establish partnerships with higher education to grow and sustain the certification program.
 - ◆ Promote use of the online environmental education directory (TREE) to provide access to tools, resources, and expertise.
 - ◆ Increase internal and external communication of the NAAEE Project for Excellence in Environmental Education best practices.

 - Increase environmental education provider services to areas outside the Denver Metro area, with an ultimate goal of achieving state-wide service.
 - ◆ Implement marketing best practices that communicate the "statewide" concept.
 - ◆ Develop a method for identifying needs and connecting CAEE services and providers to environmental education needs across the state.
 - ◆ Ensure the environmental education directory includes providers and resources from around the state.
 - ◆ Pilot Western Slope Roundtable professional development opportunity.
 - ◆ Establish formal partnerships with environmental education organizations outside the Denver Metro area.

 - Develop a process to evaluate CAEE and the EE Community's impact and effectiveness in the community.
 - ◆ Develop evaluation plan to assess the results of professional development opportunities.
 - ◆ Develop effective internal and external communication plan of exceptional programs, such as award recipients.

- ◆ Annually, communicate status of environmental education in Colorado, focusing on successes and opportunities to influence funding and support for environmental education opportunities.
- ❖ Goal #3: Advocate for increased access to environmental learning opportunities for all Colorado residents.
 - Support development and implementation of the Colorado Environmental Education Plan, advancing environmental literacy for Colorado's PreK-12 students.
 - ◆ Engage in a leadership role in State and Regional Councils for the Environmental Education Plan.
 - ◆ Promote the Environmental Education Plan, CAEE resources, and the Colorado Resource T.R.E.E. directory to formal educators.
 - ◆ Develop relationships with pre-service teacher training programs to determine needs and opportunities.
 - ◆ Advocate for funding for implementation of environmental education in schools.
 - ◆ Tailor selected CAEE programs with the needs of formal educators in mind.
 - Promote and advance inclusivity in environmental education.
 - ◆ Explore, pursue, and communicate research to identify gaps in learning opportunities for underserved populations.
 - ◆ Provide specific and on-going inclusiveness training to membership and EE community.
 - ◆ Highlight best practices and recognize excellence in inclusion.
 - ◆ Tailor selected CAEE programs or resources to assist members in expanding EE audiences.
 - ◆ Nurture relationships with environmental education providers representing or serving undeserved audiences.
 - ◆ Develop a plan for including youth participation in CAEE.
 - ◆ Develop resources to assist member organizations in incorporating inclusive practices into recruitment, hiring, and retaining of staff.
 - ◆ Grow youth certification opportunities.
 - Support life long learning and adult focused environmental education opportunities.
 - ◆ Continue to promote and enhance the database (TREE) so that it is effective in helping teachers, families, and other users to find environmental education opportunities that meet their needs.
 - ◆ Identify stakeholders, collect feedback, and develop strategies to support adult education opportunities in environmental education.
 - ◆ Promote educational opportunities that support young adults pursuing Natural Resources Careers.
 - Develop alliances with new partners in environmental education to more efficiently and effectively reach all Colorado residents.
 - ◆ Foster collaborations with funders, foundations, and corporations to increase support for environmental education outside the Denver Metro area.

- ◆ Consider Development of CAEE affinity group for membership and services. (i.e. nature centers/naturalists; K-12 teachers; EE in Recreation, EE in Business, EE in Agriculture, Youth, etc.)
 - ◆ Foster collaborations with business and "green industry" to explore opportunities to be allies for environmental education.
 - ◆ Foster collaborations with non-profits and community organizations with similar goals (i.e. urban agriculture, health and human services, environmental justice, sustainability, STEM, etc.).
- Serve as a voice and advocate for the environmental education field.
- ◆ Improve distribution of research illustrating the many diverse benefits of quality environmental education.
 - ◆ Partner with allies to market and promote the importance of environmental education.
 - ◆ Continue to provide a voice in support of Federal legislation and initiatives that enable environmental literacy.
 - ◆ Continue to serve as a voice for the environmental education community at key stakeholder gatherings, public input opportunities, and interest groups.
 - ◆ Foster relationships with leaders and decision makers to promote the importance of environmental education.

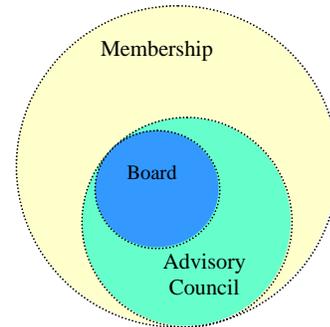
Attachment 1: Summary of Goals and Strategies

Goal #1: Strengthen the sustainability and increase the capacity (including the impact, reach, and efficient use of resources) of CAEE.	Goal #2: Ensure the quality of environmental education opportunities by providing support to environmental education providers.	Goal #3: Advocate for increased access to environmental learning opportunities for all Colorado residents.
Strengthen and support the leadership capacity of CAEE's staff, board, & volunteers.	Continue professional development and networking opportunities valued by primary membership.	Support development and implementation of the Colorado Environmental Education Plan, advancing environmental literacy for Colorado's PreK-12 students.
Evaluate and modify CAEE's organizational structure, resources, and administrative processes to best achieve current focus, goals and objectives.	Increase environmental education provider services to areas outside the Denver Metro area, with an ultimate goal of achieving state-wide service.	Promote and advance inclusion in environmental education.
Increase and diversify CAEE's funding sources.	Develop a process to evaluate CAEE's impact, effectiveness, and success on the environmental education community.	Support life long learning and adult focused environmental education opportunities.
Improve both internal and external communications to foster greater awareness and understanding of CAEE and its services.		Develop alliances with new partners in environmental education to more efficiently and effectively reach all Colorado residents.
Evaluate and adapt the membership program to both improve satisfaction & increase sustainable funding.		Serve as a voice and advocate for the environmental education field.

Attachment 2: Organizational Structure

Advisory Council

- Takes on committee assignments; task accomplishment.
- Sets direction, priorities, goals/objectives.
- Approximately 35-50+ people.
- Council participation is flexible (fairly easy to get on and off.)
- Comprised of former board members; regional/local EE network coordinators; other key EE leaders within community; selected teacher liaisons; interested representatives from key focus areas such as business, agriculture, minority, etc.
- Meets at least once per year
- Elects Board of Directors.
- Receives recognition for participation.



Board of Directors

- Legal officers of the corporation.
- Eleven officers: President, Vice President, Past President, Fiscal Officer, Secretary, directors.
- Management/supervisory responsibility for staff.
- Meets monthly-quarterly
- Three-year terms, no limit of terms.

Staff

- Report to Board of Directors.
- Primary responsibility for management of organization goals and objectives.
- Supervises/manages Advisory Council Committees for coordination and continuity.

Membership

- Individuals who become member associates of CAEE by annual financial support.
- Designated organizational representatives who are key EE contacts.
- Receive discounted rates for CAEE services

Affiliation with North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)

- CAEE is a state affiliate of NAAEE.