

**Project title and Project number:** Wilderness and the Wildness Within

Project number – 17-13

**Organization's name, contact person, website, phone and e-mail:**

Iowa Conservation Education Council

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- **Project's purpose and targeted audience:**

Iowa Conservation Education Council's theme for Winter Solstice was "Wilderness and The Wildness Within: Connecting Wilderness Literature with Environmental Education." This project attracted educators, naturalists, pre-service educators, and university and natural resource professionals from across Iowa.

The workshop gave educators a myriad of activities and resources to take back to the classroom and to strengthen EE in the following ways:

It helped enhance EE at all grade levels providing reading materials, curriculum, and resources based on "wilderness and the wildness within." Many wonderful books were shared that are based on the wilderness theme or that explore the inner exploration and personal growth that spending time in nature can provide.

It provided educators with a foundational knowledge and the necessary skills and tools to integrate reading and quality environmental education in the classroom on a daily basis.

It assisted educators in improving their knowledge of EE and gaining confidence in using hands-on activities and updated biological information as an integrated part of their curriculum.

It helped teachers and naturalists identify and practice ways in which exploring the wilderness theme can be used as a tool for meeting curriculum standards and addressing education reform goals.

- **Reflect on your project, providing a self-assessment. At a minimum, answer the following questions:**

**Did your project go as planned?** All in all, the workshop was conducted as planned. One of the main problems we faced was with the Wesley Woods staff. The group coordinator changed three times during the year and much of the information, such as our original request to reserve the last weekend of January, was not provided to the next person. This resulted in having to change the date of the workshop to the first weekend in February and the committee believes this reduced the number of attendees.

**Explain what went well and why.** Our opening keynote speakers, Chris Adkins and Connie Johnson, overwhelmingly inspired audience members about the speakers' and also the audiences' concept of wilderness and wildness. This is the second year that the workshop has offered field trips to area sites. This has been a very positive opportunity for participants to visit areas of the state they have not been to before and has provided many with further educational opportunities.

We also think another keynote speaker, Kenny Salway, showed the workshop participants that one does not have to be a "degreed" biologist to understand and value the natural world, but that one's own experiences can teach and encourage each of us to broaden our knowledge of the natural world.

Many of the participants enthusiastically attended concurrent sessions to gain knowledge of recent biological work in Iowa. This year they valued learning about Iowa's water quality, IOWARE, research on red-shouldered hawks in Iowa, and also mollusk research in Iowa.

**Explain what you would do differently if you did the project again, and why.** The time schedule for many of the workshop participants fits better during January and keeping the workshop near the end of that month would be best. The workshop brochure should also be sent out sooner, but due to various problems this year this did not happen.

- **Please list the most relevant outputs,<sup>1</sup> and explain, if necessary.**

The workshop attracted 103 participants, plus session speakers that did not pay to attend the workshop. Eighty-six percent of the workshop evaluation respondents stated that they were motivated to use ideas from the workshop in their classroom or programs.

- **Please list the outcomes,<sup>2</sup> and explain, if necessary. Be sure to include the outcomes outlined in your grant proposal.**

Of the participants that responded to the post workshop evaluation, 71 percent stated they received useful information for them, either for their teaching or personal lives.

Keynotes are an important aspect of the Winter Solstice workshop and ICEC hopes these speakers bring inspiration and information that will increase the quality of EE in Iowa. Eighty-six percent of the survey respondents stated that the keynotes provided useful information to them for their educational endeavors.

Only 14 percent of the respondents stated that they have changed their lifestyle in some way because of the conference. This is much lower than the 60% hoped for.

The power of networking at the Winter Solstice Workshop was attested to by 76% of the respondents who indicated they had developed a larger network of environmental education resource people.

Of the respondents, 57% indicated they had use the information they gained from the workshop in other educational settings. This is slightly less than the 60% hoped for who would increase the quality of their EE due to the workshop.

- **Were there any negative outputs or outcomes, and/or concerns about the accuracy of your evaluation data, which you did not list above? If so, please identify the most relevant ones and explain.**

Although ICEC provided information about the service learning mini-grants to the teachers that attended the workshop, we have received only 6, not 10 applications. We will change the timing for the advertising and also the submission of the grants for the next year and hope that will increase the number of respondents.

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<sup>1</sup> Measurements of production, such as number in attendance at a workshop.

<sup>2</sup> What important things happen as a result of the project, such as a documented change in behavior or new concepts learned.

Although we advertised and encouraged workshop participants to bring along an administrator, we did not receive any registrations from this group of educators. As explained elsewhere in this report, we now feel that although this group of people would be a wonderful addition to ICEC as workshop participants, their schedules and continuing education requirements, do not allow for participation.

- **Identify your one to three most effective marketing tools (i.e., conferences, e-mails, flyers, news releases in local papers), describe your use of them, and why they were effective.**

The most effective marketing tool is the workshop brochure which is sent directly to all ICEC members and also all ICEC and IAN members by email. Also, the workshop information in the Iowa Environmental Council E-news and mention in the INHF emails is important.

- **At least one but no more than three photo(s) of activities in jpeg format.**



Dr. Jim Pease presents a concurrent session on EE in Taiwan.



Keynote speaker Kenny Salwey enthralled participants with stories of life along the Mississippi River.



ExCom. Member Joe Boyles presents Dallas County Conservation Board with the ICEC/IAN Ding Darling Environmental Education award.