

Appendix A

A Brief History of Environmental Education

1890s

Nature study movement (John Muir and Enos Mills)

Wilbur Jackman wrote *Nature Study for the Common Schools*—aimed to educate urban dwellers who had lost touch with the natural world.

Junior naturalist program at Cornell University taught students about the natural world in the context of rural agriculture.

1900s

The *Handbook of Nature Study* published for teaching natural history.

Nature study movement contributed ideals for education that are still important in modern elementary science education—inquiry and discovery with first-hand observation.

1930s

Conservation education movement began in response to the soil erosion, dust storms and flooding disasters.

Goal of the movement was to awaken Americans to the importance of conserving various natural resources to avoid further destruction.

Laws were passed that gave land to schools for use in nature study.

Camps sponsored by churches and agencies used recreation to help promote an understanding of the natural world.

Progressive education movement focused on learning by doing.

1950s

Outdoor education focused on learning outside the school building. Concerns that urban youth were not experiencing direct contact with the natural environment.

1960s

Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*.

People began to notice human impacts on the environment.

Environmental movement began.

1970s

Environmental movement expanded development of environmental education.

Earth Day celebrations were a landmark expression of public support for a realignment of values and a new respect for the environment.

Set the stage for the transition of education *about* the environment and *in* the environment to education *for* the environment.

U.N. Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden, recommended establishment of international environmental education programs.

U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sponsored a series of international EE workshops and conferences.

Belgrade Charter (1975) provided a widely accepted goal statement for EE:

“The goal of environmental education is to develop a world population that is aware of, and concerned about, the total environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, attitudes, skills, motivation, and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones.” (UNESCO-UNEP, 1976).

1970s continued...

World's first Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education held (1977). Tbilisi Declaration built on the Belgrade Charter, established objectives of EE:

- Awareness - to acquire an awareness and sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems;
- Knowledge - to gain a variety of experiences in and acquire a basic understanding of the environment and its associated problems;
- Attitudes - to acquire a set of values and feelings of concern for the environment and motivation for actively participating in environmental improvement and protection;
- Skills - to acquire the skills for identifying and solving environmental problems; and
- Participation - to encourage citizens to be actively involved at all levels in working toward resolution of environmental problems (UNESCO, 1978).

United States passed the National Environmental Education Act of 1970, reflecting a national commitment to environmental education.

This act stated that environmental education:

“is intended to promote among citizens the awareness and understanding of the environment, our relationship to it, and the concern and responsible action necessary to assure our survival and to improve the quality of life.”

1990

National Environmental Education Act reaffirms the purpose of the earlier act. Focuses on schools as the place for effective EE, although it recognizes the importance of non-formal (outside the formal school system) avenues for educating citizens, communities, and the workforce.

1996

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) publishes *Guidelines for the Initial Preparation of Environmental Educators* and *Environmental Materials: Guidelines for Excellence*.

1999

NAAEE publishes *Excellence in Environmental Education—Guidelines for Learning (K-12)*, establishing standards for quality environmental education.