



Missouri Environmental  
Education Association  
*Certification Program*  
***Information***  
***Packet***

*Co-sponsored by*  
Missouri Department of Conservation  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Endorsed by the Association of Missouri Interpreters

*Administered by*



*Environmental education is an active process that increases awareness, knowledge and skills that result in understanding, commitment, informed decisions and constructive action to ensure stewardship of all interdependent parts of the earth's environment.*

The Missouri Environmental Education Association Certification Program is designed to recognize formal and non-formal educators who have attained a certain level of proficiency in the field of environmental education. Certification is a voluntary program that provides recognition of an individual's knowledge and skills related to environmental education. It constitutes acknowledgment by the Missouri Environmental Education Association (MEEA) that, to the best of its knowledge, a certified environmental educator meets certain minimum preparation, professional experience and continuing education.

It is the mission of MEEA to advance environmental education (EE) in Missouri by providing professional development opportunities for educators. In accordance with that mission, the goals of the certification program are:

- to provide an educational program that improves technical competency of environmental educators;
- to create incentives for individuals to continue their professional development and excel in the EE field;
- to provide a standard that identifies professionals who have demonstrated a thorough knowledge of EE principles, practices and skills;
- to implement a high level of skill, competency and education that enhances opportunities for growth, encourages new environmental educators and serves as support for professionals in the field.

Certification helps you cultivate and build a professional self-image. By becoming certified, you reaffirm your commitment to maintaining the knowledge and dedication to the principles and skills of EE for yourself and your peers. Certification makes you more competitive and may improve your chances of being hired, getting a promotion, making job changes and working as a consultant.

The process of becoming certified and maintaining the designation provides incentives to continue professional development and confirms that you excel in this discipline. Certification helps you maintain cutting edge skills and knowledge in the field of EE. Individuals who wish to be certified must complete requirements in five categories. Three categories refer to acquiring knowledge and skills while two categories recognize the sharing of knowledge and skills with others. The following documents explain the certification process, eligibility and approved workshops.

- **Certification Process** – involving the documentation and review procedures.
- **Eligibility Criteria** – includes five categories of professional development.
- **Approved Workshops** – as well as the criteria for judging workshops. Check the MEEA Online EE Database at [www.meea.org/database.html](http://www.meea.org/database.html) for approved workshops, as well as the Departments of Conservation and Natural Resources websites.
- **Frequently Asked Questions** – includes other important information and explanations.

Those who are certified will receive:

- a certificate and MEEA Certification pin,
- recognition at the Missouri Environmental Education Conference,
- recognition in the MEEA newsletter,
- one year of membership in MEEA,
- opportunities to assist with special environmental education development projects, and
- priority on MEEA scholarships.

## Certification Process

Individuals wishing to become certified may submit an enrollment application along with the \$40 application fee to Missouri Environmental Education Association. The application fee, made payable to MEEA, includes one year of membership in MEEA. Completion of the required experiences will be documented by the applicant on the forms provided and submitted for review. Candidates have four years from the date of their official enrollment in the program to complete the certification process. Candidates must maintain membership in MEEA while completing the Certification program.

Documentation (to be submitted on a quarterly basis) will consist of three parts:

1. Summary of Completed Eligibility Criteria (Form A)
2. Verification of Participation (Form B) for each of the following:
  - a. Seven (7) Instructional Workshops totaling a minimum of 70 hours
  - b. Experiences in the Outdoors totaling a minimum of 30 hours
  - c. Knowledge of Additional Environmental Education Resources and Facilities totaling a minimum of 30 hours
3. Teaching and Action Partnership documentation for each of the following:
  - a. Teaching component totaling a minimum of 30 hours (Form C)
  - b. Action Partnership component totaling a minimum of 30 hours (Form D, parts I and II)

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Documentation will be reviewed at the end of each quarter by the Certification Program Coordinator. Candidates will be notified when the review process is complete. Newly certified Environmental Educators will be honored at the annual Missouri Environmental Education Conference.

## Eligibility Criteria

Individuals who wish to be certified will complete requirements in the following five environmental education categories:

### **I. Instructional Workshops**

Seven workshops including three of the following five: Project Learning Tree, Project WILD, Project WET, Leopold Education Project and Investigating and Evaluating Environmental Issues and Actions totaling at least 70 hours.

### **II. Environmental Education Experiences in the Outdoors**

Thirty (30) hours of structured outdoors experiences. A maximum of 10 hours may be credited to any one outdoors experience.

### **III. Knowledge of Additional Environmental Education Resources and Facilities**

Thirty (30) hours of activities that provide participants with awareness and knowledge of environmental education resources and networking opportunities such as guided tours of environmental education centers or attending conferences. A minimum of two hours and a maximum of 10 hours may be credited to any one experience.

### **IV. Teaching**

Thirty (30) hours of teaching experiences which are flexible and intended to fit the needs of both formal classroom teachers and non-formal educators. A minimum of 10 hours is required for each distinct teaching experience.

### **V. Action Partnership**

Thirty (30) hours of an action partnership/leadership role in a community involvement activity that promotes environmental stewardship.

## Category Descriptions

**I. Instructional Workshops** (Minimum of seven workshops totaling at least 70 hours)

Instructional workshops must be selected from the list of approved workshops found on MEEA's Online Environmental Education database ([www.meea.org/database.html](http://www.meea.org/database.html)). These workshops are structured to support the definition of environmental education and reflect a

variety of environmental education opportunities. To be eligible, the workshops must provide a teacher's manual or teacher materials that support the objectives of the workshop, contain content background information, supply age appropriate instructional activities and offer suggestions for integration with curriculum areas such as Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Math, Art and Music.

Three of the following five workshops must be included in the minimum of seven workshops:

**Project Learning Tree** sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation

**Project WILD** sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation

**Project WET** sponsored by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources

**Leopold Education Project** sponsored by Missouri State University

**Investigating and Evaluating Environmental Issues and Actions** sponsored by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Four additional workshops are also required. These additional workshops may be selected from the **list of approved workshops**. This list will be updated regularly and maintained on MEEA's Online EE Database. Other workshops or courses may be submitted by course instructors for approval and added to this list. Workshops must meet criteria stated above and support the definition of Environmental Education. Please see **Instructional Workshop Review Procedures** and **Instructional Workshop Criteria** for further information about getting workshops approved.

Certification candidates record participation in Instructional Workshops on Documentation Form B (one form per workshop). Make sure to have your form signed and include proper documentation.

### **II. Environmental Educational Experiences in the Outdoors** (Minimum 30 hours)

Since direct experiences affect the learner most vividly and demand spontaneous use of all senses – hearing, taste, sight, touch, and smell – environmental educators must possess skills in teaching outdoor experiences. Therefore, the candidate should participate in a variety of structured outdoors experiences, led by a qualified instructor, that support the definition and principles of EE and include a variety of outdoors exercises. A maximum of 10 hours may be credited to any one outdoors experience. Excellent opportunities include:

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1. University/college courses such as ecology, environmental geology, forestry, etc., that have an outdoor laboratory component,
2. Instructional workshops or field trips held in an outdoor environment,
3. Organized nature hikes led by environmental education professional(s) in parks, forests, zoos, aquariums and other nature centers, and
4. Independent study projects under the direction of an environmental education professional.

Although some workshops may qualify for both I: Instructional Workshops, and II: Environmental Education Experiences in the Outdoors, you may apply any single workshop toward only one category. You have the flexibility to apply your training where you need it, provided the experience meets specified criteria. Candidates record participation in Outdoors Experiences on Documentation Form B (one form per experience). Make sure to have your form signed and include proper documentation.

### III. Knowledge of Additional Environmental Education Resources and Facilities (Minimum 30 hours)

This category must support the definition of environmental education by providing participants with awareness and knowledge of support resources; the theory, practice and history of environmental education; current areas of concern in the field of environmental education or natural resources management; and networking opportunities. To fulfill this requirement, the candidate must attend seminars and conferences or guided tours at museums, zoos or nature centers with a **minimum of two hours and a maximum of 10 hours** per experience. Examples of where this requirement could be met include: zoo, science center and botanical garden seminars; Missouri Environmental Education Conference; Missouri Natural Resources Conference; Interface; National Association for Interpretation conferences; and National Science Teachers Association or Science Teachers of Missouri Conventions. Candidates record participation using Documentation Form B (one form for each experience). Make sure to have your form signed and include proper documentation.

### IV. Teaching (Minimum 30 hours)

This category acknowledges the role of the environmental educator as a “teacher.” In addition, it recognizes the applicant’s efforts to share with others the knowledge and skills gained through participation in **Categories I, II and III**. Your teaching activities should provide hands-on, interactive experiences for the audience and should support the definition of EE. Audiences may include K-12 students; youth groups such as church, scouts, or 4-H

clubs; and various adult groups. To fulfill this requirement, applicants must teach at least three distinct lessons with a minimum of 10 hours each. At least one lesson must include an outdoor activity. The 10 hours may include preparation time, activity with students and follow up. Each individual teaching experience may include leading the same activity with different groups of students (upper grades and candidates working in non-formal settings such as nature centers) or extending the activity over a period of days with the same audience. Include documentation for each experience using Documentation Form C (one form for each 10-hour experience).

### V. Action Partnership (Minimum 30 hours)

Environmental education should result in understanding, commitment, informed decisions and constructive action. The “action partnership” component of the MEEA Certification Program demonstrates the effect of the participant’s EE leadership, stewardship and action while developing a partnership with an outside group.

To fulfill this component, the applicant must assume a leadership role that involves others in school or community projects promoting environmental stewardship. The hours counted may include preparation time, activity with participants and follow up. Student-initiated projects do not qualify. **You are required to complete a proposal form prior to engaging in your action project.** Contact the Certification Program Administrator if unsure if your activity would qualify. Examples of Action Partnership projects include organizing and leading projects such as Stream Teams, Forestkeepers, Adopt-A-Highway, Earth Day celebrations, water festivals, campus recycling programs or creating neighborhood gardens. Please submit documentation of your leadership in an action partnership experience by using Documentation Form D, Parts I and II. Detailed information is helpful to the advisory board during the review process.

### Continuing Environmental Education Development

The MEEA certification must be renewed every four years to remain current. Renewal candidates must keep their MEEA membership current each year and complete 10 contact hours every four years from the instructional (Categories I, II & III) and teaching/action (Categories IV & V) components of the certification process. Hours do not have to be equally divided between the two components but should represent a balance of experiences. There is no administrative fee for renewal. Renewal candidates record a summary of workshops and teaching experiences on Documentation Form E and submit Forms B, C and D for each individual experience.