



Missouri Environmental  
Education Association  
***Certification Program***

*Co-sponsored by*

Missouri Department of Conservation

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

*Endorsed by* Association of Missouri Interpreters

*Administered by* Office of Environmental Education

***Information  
Packet***

Missouri

*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 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 field of environmental education;
- to provide a standard that identifies professionals who have demonstrated a thorough knowledge of environmental education 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 environmental education 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 environmental education. Individuals who wish to be certified must complete requirements in five environmental education 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** – include five categories of professional development.

**Approved Workshops** – as well as the criteria for judging workshops. You might also check *The Resource* and the Departments of Conservation and Natural Resources web sites for other professional development workshops that can count toward your certification.

**Frequently Asked Questions** – includes other important information and explanations.

Those who are certified will receive:

- a certificate and MEEA “Environmental Educator” name badge,
- recognition at a statewide presentation ceremony at the Missouri Environmental Education Conference,
- recognition in *The Resource* and MEEA newsletter,
- one year of membership in MEEA,
- professional opportunities to assist with special environmental education and curriculum development projects, and
- priority on MEEA scholarships.

## Certification Process

Individuals wishing to become certified may submit an enrollment application along with the \$25 application fee to the Office of Environmental Education. The application fee, made payable to MEEA, includes one year of membership in the Missouri Environmental Education Association.

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 they submit their application to complete the certification process.

Documentation 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 Out-of-Doors 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:

# environmental education

- a. Teaching component totaling a minimum of 30 hours (Form C)
- b. Action Partnership component totaling a minimum of 30 hours (Form D)

Documentation will be reviewed at the end of each quarter by the Certification Review Committee. Completed documentation must be received at least one month prior to the review.

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 Out-of-Doors

Thirty (30) hours of structured out-of-doors experiences.

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

Thirty (30) hours of activities that provide participants with awareness and knowledge of environmental education support resources and networking opportunities such as visiting environmental education centers, museums, or attending seminars or conferences.

### 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.

### V. Action Partnership

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

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

Instructional workshops must be 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 Southwest 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 in the Office of Environmental Education. Other workshops or courses may be submitted by course instructors for approval and addition 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 as meeting the Instructional Workshop requirement.

Certification candidates record participation in Instructional Workshops on Documentation Form B (one form per workshop).

### II. Environmental Educational Experiences in the Out-of-Doors (Minimum of 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 out-of-doors experiences, led by a qualified instructor, that support the definition and principles of environmental education and include a variety of out-of-doors exercises. A maximum of ten hours may be credited to any one out-of-doors experience.

Excellent opportunities include:

1. University/college courses such as ecology, environmental geology, forestry, etc., that have an outdoor laboratory component,



# certification

2. Instructional workshops or field trips held in an outdoor environment,
3. Organized nature hikes led by environmental education professional(s) in parks, forests, demonstration areas, 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 Out-of-Doors, 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 Out-of-Doors Experiences on Documentation Form B (one form per experience).

### III. Knowledge of Additional Environmental Education Resources and Facilities (Minimum of 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 museums, zoos or nature centers with a minimum of two hours and a maximum of 10 hours per experience. Examples of locations and events 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 NSTA or STOM Conventions.

Candidates register participation using Documentation Form B (one form for each experience).

### IV. Teaching (Minimum of 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 environmental education. 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. Your teaching activity 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 of 30 hours)

Environmental education should result in understanding, commitment, informed decisions and constructive action. The “action partnership” component of the Missouri Environmental Education Association Certification Program demonstrates the effect of the participant’s environmental education through 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 students and follow up. Several examples of acceptable activities are listed below. Student-initiated projects do not qualify. Call the Office of Environmental Education if unsure if your activity would qualify.

1. Stream Team
2. Forestkeepers
3. Adopt-A-Highway/Adopt-A-Trail
4. Earth Day or Arbor Day celebrations
5. Water Festivals or Ecology Day
6. Campus recycling programs
7. Clean up of vacant lots for neighborhood gardens
8. Serving in a leadership capacity (officer or board member) in an organization with an environmental education focus

Please submit documentation of your leadership in an action partnership experience by using Documentation Form D.

### Continuing Environmental Education Development

The Environmental Educator certification must be renewed every four years to remain current. Renewal candidates must be a member of MEEA 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 workshop and teaching experiences on Documentation Form E.





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