



## Environmental Educators of North Carolina Awards Program

The EENC Awards Program recognizes individuals or organizations that have demonstrated the principles of environmental education and raised the quality of environmental literacy in North Carolina.

### Everyone is eligible for the following awards:

**Environmental Educator of the Year** recognizes an educator who stands out among environmental educators as a professional who exemplifies excellence in environmental education and lends credibility to the field. Through valuable contributions and professionalism, the environmental educator is regarded as an ideal example that other EE practitioners should strive to emulate.

- 2021 Nicolette Cagle, Duke University
- 2020 Krista Brinckek, Science Specialist of Abbotts Creek Elementary
- 2019 Meredith Morgan, NC Museum of Natural Sciences at Whiteville
- 2018 Patrick Brannon, Highlands Biological Station & Nature Center
- 2017 Jennifer Browndorf, Middle School Teacher, Hilburn Academy  
Kim Kelleher, Retired School Counselor, New Hope Elementary
- 2016 Sarah Fuller, Middle School Educator, Randolph County Schools
- 2015 C C King, Piedmont Outreach Education Specialist, North Carolina Wildlife
- 2014 Jennifer Brooks,
- 2013 Lori Davis, Education Coordinator, NC Coastal Reserve / National Estuarine Research Reserve
- 2012 Ms. Sarah Haggerty, Director of Education, Piedmont Wildlife Center  
Eric McDuffie, Eighth Grade Science Teacher, C. W. Stanford Middle School
- 2011 Ms. Lisa Rider, Onslow Solid Waste Assistant Director
- 2010 Elizabeth Baird, Director of Education, NC Museum of Natural Resources
- 2009 Sarah Palmer
- 2008 Frank McKay
- 2007 Stan Cross
- 2006 Randy Senzig
- 2005 Anne Radke
- 2004 Lyle Estill
- 2003 Donna Rogers
- 2002 Deborah Hall
- 2001 Jessica Kester
- 2000 Tom Shepherd
- 1999 Lois Nixon
- 1998 Deborah Miller
- 1997 Luann Bridle
- 1996 Anne Taylor
- 1995 Sheila Jones

**Everyone is eligible for the following awards:**

**Exceptional Environmental Education Program** recognizes a program, education center, organization, partnership or educational system that exemplifies excellence in environmental education. The program reaches far beyond the usual magnitude and degree of scope and scale to create: a sustainable commitment to environmental education, a more environmentally literate public, a stronger profession for environmental educators, and otherwise supporting EENC's mission and objectives.

- 2021 STEM Outreach Program, Highlands Biological Station, Contact: Patrick Brannon
- 2020 Teacher Education Unit of the Education Section of the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, Contacts: Melisa Dowland and Megan Davis
- 2019 North Carolina Envirothon, Contact: Richard Hayes
- 2018 AmeriCorps Project Conserve, Contact: Amy Stout
- 2017 Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers, New Hanover Soil & Water Conservation District, Contact: Dru Harrison
- 2016 The Mountain Science Expo, The North Carolina Arboretum, Contact: Michelle Pearce, Youth Education Coordinator
- 2015 Urban Outdoor Connection Program, Contact: Anthony Shaheen, Outdoor Recreation Specialist
- 2013 Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park
- 2012 Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education, Melinda Paterson, Center Director
- 2011 Environmental Education Program at the Kathleen Cray Edwards Library, coordinated by Melanie Buckingham, Environmental Resource Librarian
- 2010 Evergreen Community Charter School, Asheville, contact: Suzan Mertz, Executive Director, and Marin Leroy, Environmental Education

**Everyone is eligible for the following awards:**

**Outstanding Partner** recognizes a business, non-profit, or governmental agency that have partnered with EENC to support the mission and growth of EENC. This organization has made significant contributions to EENC by providing in-kind contributions; donations of employees' time, talent, and materials; monetary support to the EENC Board or Board Training; or by providing significant funding or services to the annual conference, funding for EENC's annual conference. This partnership enables EENC to experience a growth in professionalism and/or membership, which may not have been possible without this contribution.

- 2021 Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance
- 2020 NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- 2019 North Carolina Office of Environmental Education and Public Affairs, Lisa Tolley
- 2016 Mt. Jefferson State Natural Area & New River State Park, Thomas Randolph
- 2015 Chimney Rock Management, LLC at Chimney Rock State Park, Emily Walker
- 2013 North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching
- 2012 Potash Corporation of Aurora, Steve Beckel, General Manager
- 2011 North Carolina State Parks
- 2010 NC Office of Environmental Education
- 2009 In Your Head Advertising
- 2008 NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher
- 2005 Blue Gecko Web Design
- 2004 Progress Energy
- 2003 Haw River Program
- 2002 NC Coastal Federation
- 2001 Southern Cherokee Nation
- 2000 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Environmental Education
- 1999 Environmental Resource Program at UNC-Chapel Hill
- 1998 Environmental Media Corporation

**The following awards require the recipient to be a member of the Environmental Educators of North Carolina:**

**Outstanding Newcomer** recognizes an Environmental Educators of North Carolina member of five years or less who has made significant contributions to EENC during his or her short time with EENC.

- 2021 Brian Wuertz, NC Museum of Natural Sciences at Whiteville, EENC Communications Chair
- 2020 Tori Duval, Outreach Education Specialist with the Friends of the WNC Nature Center
- 2018 Chelsea Sloggy, Union County Soil & Water Conservation District
- 2015 Shannon Culpepper, EENC Policy Chair
- 2014 Jonathan Navaro, Communications Chair, NC Division of Air Quality
- 2013 Jonathan Marchal, The North Carolina Arboretum, EENC Western Section Chair
- 2012 Chip Freund, Communications Chair
- 2010 Blair Ogburn, Balsam Mountain Preserve, Education Chair,
- 2009 Sarah Fuller, Membership Chair
- 2008 Kelly Hoke, Western Section Chair
- 2007 Shelby Gull-Laird; Sandra Weitzel
- 2006 Elizabeth Burke; Lynn Cole
- 2005 Marc Dreyfors
- 2004 Rachel Golden
- 2003 Julie Worth
- 2002 Charlotte Clark
- 2001 Sara Ashenburg; Mir Youngquist-Thurow; Maureen Stock
- 2000 Shannon Leigh Deaton; Aaryn Kay
- 1999 Belinda Hogue
- 1998 Nancy Pritchett
- 1997 Kristin Arnebold
- 1996 Deborah Miller
- 1995 Steve Law

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**Outstanding Practitioner** recognizes a member of the Environmental Educators of North Carolina who works regularly as an environmental educator, lending their skills to the growing body of environmental education as a profession. The individual will have made significant contributions to the Environmental Educators of North Carolina through statewide participation, leadership in their region, and being an advocate for high quality education through how they teach, live, and do.

- 2021 Marissa Blackburn, Cape Fear River Watch
- 2020 Alayna Schmidt, WNC Nature Center
- 2019 Mandy Smith-Thompson, City of Concord
- 2018 Dana Fitz-Simons, Blue Jay Point County Park
- 2017 Melissa Dowland, The North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences
- 2016 Anne Ellis, Director of Tom E. Smith Nature Exploratorium
- 2015 Mir Youngquist-Thurrow, Environmental Education Director at Agape Kure Beach Ministries
- 2014 Anne Ellis
- 2013 Pat Curley, Instructional Coach- Math and Science Partnership Grant
- 2012 Terri Kirby Hathaway, Marine Education Specialist, North Carolina Sea Grant
- 2011 Tanya Poole, Education Specialist, Pisgah Wildlife Center  
Sheila Jones, Certified Environmental Education Specialist, Wake Soil and Water Conservation District

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**Outstanding Service** recognizes an active member who has served in several key leadership roles making a significant contribution to further the mission of EENC. This individual has given many hours of dedicated service to help shape EENC into a viable statewide professional organization.

- 2021 Shannon Culpepper, EENC Conference Co-chair
- 2020 Mary Meyer, K-12 Instructional Specialist of Horizons Unlimited
- 2019 Brad Daniel, Executive Director, 2nd Nature TREC
- 2018 Erin Hines, Gaston County Soil & Water Conservation District
- 2017 Lauren Pyle, The Western North Carolina Nature Center
- 2016 Keith Bamberger, Information & Communications Specialist, NC Division of Air Quality
- 2014 Lauren Pyle, EENC Secretary
- 2013 D’Nise Hefner, Educational Program Director, Blue Jay Point County Park
- 2012 Sarah Yelton, Environmental Education Coordinator, UNC Institute for the Environment
- 2010 Libby Wilcox
- 2009 Shelby & Renee Strnad
- 2008 Mickey Jo Sorrell
- 2007 Tom Shepherd
- 2006 Sheila Jones
- 2004 Mir Youngquist-Thurow
- 2003 Sara Ashenburg
- 2002 Aaryn Kay
- 2001 Lois Nixon
- 2000 Celeste Maus
- 1999 Deborah Miller
- 1998 Amber Parker
- 1997 Laura White
- 1996 Sally Boerschig
- 1995 Marti Kane

**The following awards require the recipient to be a member of the Environmental Educators of North Carolina:**

**Melva Fager Okun Life Achievement** recognizes an individual who has served EENC in key leadership roles for over three years on the Board of Directors. This individual has made very significant contributions in furthering EENC's mission to serve as a leader in building a statewide network of EE practitioners, providing excellent professional development, strengthening EE throughout North Carolina, and serving as an active state affiliate to the North American Association for Environmental Education.

- 2021 Terri Kirby Hathaway
- 2017 Kim Smart, Education Coordinator, Prairie Ridge Ecostation, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences
- 2016 Dr. Brad Daniel, Professor of Biology, Environmental Studies & Environmental Education, Montreat College
- 2015 Dottie Shuman, Professor of Outdoor and Environmental Education, Montreat College
- 2014 Renee Strnad, NC PLT Coordinator, EENC Board Member (Past President in 2014, Treasurer in 2015)
- 2012 Elizabeth Burke, Mud Pie Planet
- 2010 Diane Silver
- 2007 Mir Youngquist-Thurow
- 2006 Melva Fager Okun
- 2005 Tom Shepherd
- 2004 Lois Nixon
- 2003 Deborah Miller
- 1999 Marti Kane
- 1998 Laura White
- 1997 Sheila Jones
- 1996 Sandy Ruble
- 1995 Melva Okun

**Special Award(s)**

- 2019 Tanya Poole, Lifetime of EE
- 2018 Donna Rogers, Lifetime of EE
- 2010 Evergreen Charter Community School, "Exceptional Environmental Education Center" (see Exceptional Environmental Education Program)
- 2006 Randee Haven O'Donnell (logo)