



Connecticut Outdoor &
Environmental Education Association

and



a program of Common Ground

invite you to their
Second Annual Joint Conference

Outdoor Education, Gardens and Farms:
**Nourishing Health Through
Nature**

**Thursday,
March 12, 2015**

at Mystic Aquarium
55 Coogan Blvd, Mystic, CT



**MYSTIC
AQUARIUM**



Denison Pequotsepos
Nature Center



JASON
Learning

Conference activities will also take
place at nearby **Denison
Pequotsepos Nature Center &
Coogan Farm**



- Full day of practical workshops and roundtable discussions
- Behind-the-Scenes tours
- Meals included



Keynote Speaker: John R.F. Lewis,
Certified Prevention Specialist and Director of Renew
Richmond, VA. Mr. Lewis works as a Health Education
Specialist for Virginia Department of Health, Division of
Adolescent Health where he facilitates sustainability and
agriculture programs that aid in the prevention of
unhealthy behaviors of Richmond inner-city youth.

Register online at: www.coeea.org

Qs? Contact meckman@ctaudubon.org

Workshops

Session A

Gardening with Intention: Saving “At Risk” Herbal Medicines with Backyard Gardens

Angela McCann, Natural Health Elements, LLC

Greenwich, CT

Join us for an hour of gardening glory where we focus on medicinal herbs, how to cultivate them, and teach others about them. In this workshop, participants will learn the health benefits of gardening, be introduced to United Plant Savers and the benefit of protecting medicinal plants for historical, cultural and medicinal purposes. In addition, we will review a few “at risk” and “to watch” plants, to better understand their ecology, teachable characteristics and learn how to plant them as well as plant some medicinal plants in egg carton planters.



Bringing School Garden Curriculum to Life: A Hands-on Workshop for Implementing a Healthy Garden Curriculum

Diane Litwin, CT School Garden Resource Center at Common Ground

New Haven, CT

In this hands-on workshop, we will model examples of healthy food and garden curriculum for formal and informal educators. These activities include: food mapping, edible art, and themed-based lesson plans. Attendees will participate in a food mapping activity for a range of ages and will have the opportunity to debrief the lesson together. Diane will also present curriculum the School Garden Resource Center has developed for after school programs with an accompanying slide show.

Getting to Know a Neighbor ... A Non-human One

Colleen O’Connell, Ecological Teaching and Learning MS Program, Lesley University

Cambridge, MA

Join us for a walk outdoors to find a specific non-human organism – plant or animal. Together we will spend time developing the ways in which we can dig deeper into these relationships. Participants will take part in a focused walk outdoors, a guided sketching activity and a discussion on using nature journaling and the world around us as an educational tool.

Parks for People (and by people): An Approach to Listening, Empowering, and Having an Impact.

Walker Holmes, Program Manager, The Trust for Public Land

Bridgeport, CT

This workshop will explore methods for empowering community members to envision the park, garden, or natural area that will meet specific needs of their community. The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. Participants will learn about The Trust for Public Land's participatory design approach, take part in an exercise to develop a community engagement/outreach strategy for a project and brainstorm about framing environmental initiatives and planning/design processes in a manner that results in the community benefits that are really needed.

Mystic Aquarium Behind the Scenes Tour

Experience firsthand the inner workings of the aquarium, from exhibits to animal care to educational programs. These tours will be offered sessions A, B and D.

Session B

Nature Play: Recharging Our Environmental Imagination

*Deanna Novak, The Garden Education Center of Greenwich
Greenwich, CT*

We'll take an illustrated walk together, discovering characters and activities that put an imaginative twist on EE curriculum. We will share stories and photos of experiments with nature play in the Montgomery Pinetum with families and youth groups. This workshop will include a discovery map/path to 4-5 stations that invite cognitive, physical, and dramatic exploration of the space. The session will also include research that explores the value of integrating more unstructured play into learning and time for individuals to share with their neighbors or with the group.

If it's From My Garden, I'll Eat It: Experiences with Raw Veggies and Data Collection in the All Our Kin Garden Project

*Dana Holahan and Kayla Reiman, All Our Kin
New Haven, CT*

Learn about the All Our Kin Garden Project's success at promoting an increase in young children's consumption of fruits and vegetables in participating Family Child Care homes, and the data system developed to measure the project's impact. Workshop activities include activities for young children on "garden fresh" and canned fruits and vegetables, a presentation on the All Our Kin Garden Project and how anecdotal information was translated into methods for gathering data. In addition, participants will have time to brainstorm ways measure the impact of projects and ways to effectively present data.

Using Outdoor Nature Play to Enhance Math and Science Skills

*Meredith Ahlberg and Lacey Tallman, New Canaan Nature Center Preschool
New Canaan, CT*

Preschool science involves much more than sink and float activities. This workshop will explore ways to use natural materials and your own outdoor space to create play experiences that enrich preschool math and science skills. Activities in this workshop will include how to set up a successful nature/science table, creating play spaces in natural environments, bringing the natural world inside and how to connect the CT state benchmarks (science and math) to outdoor play experiences.

No Elder Left Inside: The Therapeutic Powers of Nature Those Who Can't Get Outside

*Ken Elkins, Audubon Center at Bent of the River
Southbury, CT*

Using the Bird Tales program as a case study, explore the therapeutic powers of nature, and how to make your programs or center more dementia-friendly. During this hands-on workshop, participants will discuss research and observe the health benefits of bird-watching and outdoor time, combine therapeutic elements of programming with specialized needs of those with dementia, gain an understanding of key elements for successful interaction with individuals with dementia and briefly discuss how to partner with long-term care facilities.

Session C

Healthy Habitats at School: Your Schoolyard as an Outdoor Classroom and Urban Oasis

*Katie Blake, Francesca Williams and Ken Elkins, Audubon CT
Greenwich, CT*

Audubon CT's Schoolyard Habitat Program, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, works to create healthy habitats for migrating songbirds. The program integrates place-based environmental education into school curriculum and uses the schoolyard as a living, outdoor classroom. This workshop will provide an overview of Audubon's Healthy Habitat Programs: Urban Oases, Schoolyard Habitat, and Audubon at Home and explore how we engage families in conservation action. In addition, we will stewardship within the school communities, curriculum integration through Audubon CT's Schoolyard Habitat Curriculum Guide, and creating ecologically significant habitats in schoolyards. We will also go outside to participate in a fun outdoor lesson to learn from nature.



Edibles Along The Connecticut Shoreline

*Seth M. Yarish, Norwich Free Academy
Norwich, CT*

Participants will learn to identify several species of edible plants and shellfish that can be found along Connecticut's Shoreline as well as discuss the health impacts of eating these native species. Activities include Identification of a variety of edible plants and shellfish and where to find them (Bluff Point Coastal Reserve will be used as an example), lessons on basic biology and ecology of these species and a discussion of environmental concerns and regulations. In addition, there will be time to build a lesson for your students using these species.

Roundtable Discussion with John R.F. Lewis

Continue the conversation with keynote speaker John R.F. Lewis on his work developing health programs for inner-city youth in Richmond, VA. This session is a small group conversation during which participants can ask questions and learn more about Lewis's work.

Sessions C & D

The Unbuilt Playground: Committing to Authentic Daily Outdoor Experiences with Young Children

*Davnet Conway Schaffer, Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center Preschool
Mystic, CT*

Explore how DPNC Preschool has managed to take young children outside, every day, for 10 years. Early Childhood educators have to contend with strong perceptions of when and under what conditions it is safe to allow young children to play outside. Well-meaning educators often strive to 'create' natural play areas and experiences in an attempt to minimize risk. We'll use the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center Preschool as an example as we discuss ways to help ensure children get outside every day. This workshop will be outside and hands-on and includes a hike to visit our real playgrounds in the wild.

Field Trip: Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center

Whether you're interested in birding, plant identification, hiking, or nature photography, you'll enjoy the varied woodland, wetland and meadow habitats at DPNC. With 10 miles of hiking trails to explore, you can search for bluebirds in the meadow, painted turtles or bullfrogs in the pond, admire our summer wildflower garden or simply enjoy a peaceful walk in the woods. The staff of experienced and certified educators provide environmental education programming on just about any natural history topic including terrestrial, marine and freshwater



communities, plants, insects, weather, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. More than 20,000 participants experience DPNC's hands-on, science-based activities, slideshows, nature walks, and field trips each year. Join DPNC staff on a tour of the nature center and a hike around the beautiful grounds.

Field Trip: Coogan Farm

In September 2013, the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, purchased 34 acres of the historic Coogan Farm property on Greenmanville Avenue in Mystic. With the donation of 11 additional adjoining acres, the Nature Center was able to create the 45-acre Nature and Heritage Center at Coogan Farm. It is the last parcel of undeveloped farmland between downtown Mystic, Mystic Seaport and Mystic Aquarium. The property, with sweeping views of the Mystic River, contains 370 years of American history, four early successional habitats supporting more than 10 species listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as high conservation priority, and protects two crucial watersheds. Join staff from the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center for a hands-on spring garden activity and tour of the farm.

Session D**Making the Health/Nature Connection – Data and Research Outdoor Education Funders Want to See**

Melissa Spear, Executive Director Common Ground

New Haven, CT

Anecdotal evidence is plentiful, but what research is there to demonstrate that exposure to nature is good for human health, and how can this data be used to inform program design and attract funders? This workshop will explore current research and discuss how the data can be used to engage funders and to develop program models that work.

Schedule

8:30-9:30	Registration				
9:30	Ramp Opens				
9:40-10:00	Welcome/Housekeeping – Theatre / Awards				
10:00 – 10:45	Keynote John R.F Lewis				
11:00 – 12:00 Session A	Classroom A Gardening with Intention <i>Angela McCann</i>	Kitchings Bringing School Garden Curriculum to Life <i>Diane Litwin</i>	Mezzanine Getting to Know a Neighbor ... <i>Colleen O'Connell</i>	Nautilus Live Theater Parks for People (and by people) <i>Walker Holmes</i>	Mystic Aquarium Behind the Scenes tour <i>Aquarium Education Staff</i>
12:00 – 12:45	Grab N' Go Lunch & Open Space Networking				
1:00 – 2:00 Session B	Classroom A Nature Play <i>Deanna Novak</i>	Kitchings If it's From My Garden, I'll Eat It <i>Dana Holahan and Kayla Reiman</i>	Mezzanine Outdoor Nature Play to Enhance Math and Science Skills <i>Meredith Ahlberg and Lacey Tallman</i>	Nautilus Live Theater No Elder Left Inside <i>Ken Elkins</i>	Mystic Aquarium Behind the Scenes tour <i>Aquarium Education Staff</i>
2:15-3:15 Session C	Classroom A Healthy Habitats at School <i>Katie Blake, Francesca Williams and Ken Elkins, Audubon CT</i>	Kitchings Edible plants and Shellfish Along Connecticut's Shoreline <i>Seth Yarish</i>	Nautilus Live Roundtable Discussion with John R.F. Lewis	Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center Preschool The Unbuilt Playground <i>Davnet Conway Schaffer</i>	Field Trips <i>Field Trips leave promptly at 2:15 from aquarium entrance and will return to at 4:15</i> Coogan Farm Garden Activity and Tour <i>DPNC Staff</i>
3:30 – 4:30 Session D	Nautilus Live Theater Making the Health/Nature Connection <i>Melissa Spear</i>	Mezzanine Roundtable Discussion TBA	Mystic Aquarium Behind the Scenes tour <i>Aquarium Education Staff</i>		Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center Hike and Tour of Nature Center <i>DPNC Staff</i>
4:30 – 5:00	Ice cream and closing remarks				