

EEAA NEWS

The latest news, events and announcements from the
Environmental Education Association of Alabama

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2023 Conference Wrap-up

The Annual EEAA Conference "Tales of Natural Wonder" took place in February at Lakepoint State Park in Eufaula, Alabama. As the theme suggested, "Tales of Natural Wonder" highlighted the usage of storytelling and music in teaching and engaging students of all ages in the natural world.

Our keynote speaker, Ms. Judith Black, implored participants to use stories, both original and folk, to invite our students to consider places, critters, rocks, and observed phenomena and captivate and ignite listeners' passions to further develop love and care for our natural world! Judith presented the example of moth/butterfly differences to educate elementary kids with song and dance. Stories are used to motivate, humanize subjects, and also to entertain and "edutain" our audiences. Thank you Judith for opening our minds to the power of stories! Also, for all 'first-time' participants in our conference: Take what you learned back and use it, take your new network of education friends, and collaborate!



Keynote Speaker: Ms. Judith Black
The Power of Stories to Teach and
Imbue Wonder of our Natural World

Join us next year!



2023 Conference Photos



[See more conference photos here](#)

2023 BEEP Awards



Best Environmental Education Curriculum goes to...
Discovery Hall Program at Dauphin Island Sea Lab



Best Environmental Educator goes to...
Lauren Muncher Massey, Oak Mountain
State Park Naturalist



Best Community Education Project goes to...
the Hoover Beautification Board and City of
Hoover Arbor Day Celebration

EEAA hosts an annual conference in a beautiful location in our state. Conference attendees receive fun and educational field trips, presentations on educational concepts and curriculum, and networking with like-minded educators! EEAA members across the state also host events like workshops and hikes during the year to supplement educational needs. EEAA has Professional Development Funds that offer grants to assist you in paying for your professional development needs! All this is designed to help you, the traditional or nontraditional teacher to be better equipped to bring the environmental subject matter to your students and classrooms!

Wild Alabama Upcoming Events

Wild Alabama's mission is to inspire people to
Enjoy. Value. Protect.
the wild places of Alabama

FRIDAY APRIL 21ST **SAVE ALABAMA'S HEMLOCKS - CONSERVATION THROUGH ART**



This is a 1-day class running from 9 am to 3 pm on **Friday, April 21st**. Registration is open for this workshop, hosted at the Alabama Folk School at Camp McDowell. The workshop will be taught by artists Starr Weems, Jillian Sico, Allison MvElroy, and Janice Barrett. The cost is \$30, which includes materials and lunch!

The workshop is geared toward educators but is open to all.

Learn more and register here

Read about Wild Alabama's Save Alabama's Hemlocks program.



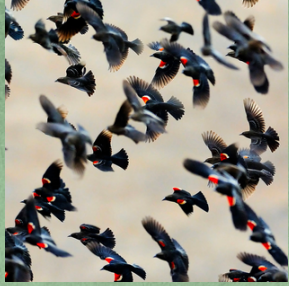
Join Wild Alabama for guided hikes, field trips, forest bathing, community science, and stewardship projects in Alabama's wildest places!

Wild Alabama's calendar for April and May is filled with exciting opportunities

Contact us about field trips and projects for your students or group

Legacy Partners in Environmental Education Educator Excursions 2023

Legacy is proud to offer 5 educator excursions for Alabama's traditional and non-traditional environmental educators to learn and experience our natural treasures.



Birds of A Feather: Flock Together!

May 6-7 at Wehle Nature Center

A 2-day bird intensive workshop with the Alabama Ornithological Society focused on the role of birds in our ecosystems.

Alabama Rivers: A Celebration and A Challenge

June 30th in Prattville, AL

Join Dr. Bill Deutsch and Alabama Water Watch 4H to learn to appreciate and protect our vast freshwater resources.



Non-natives, Exotics, and Invasives: Teaching About Alabama's Plant and Animal Conservation Challenges

July 6-7 at Turtle Point Science Center

Learn about some of our most critical environmental health struggles.

Mountains to the Gulf, July 9-16th

Travel all across the state to experience firsthand the most biodiverse state East of the Mississippi River. Start at Camp McDowell and end at Dauphin Island.



Down Under in North Alabama, Aug. 3-6th

Explore Northeast Alabama's intricate Karst topography and some of our least understood ecosystems.



Sign up today!

Ardmore High School Team Wins 2023 State Envirothon

A team from Ardmore High School just won the 2023 state Envirothon competition in Columbiana this weekend. They will now go on to represent Alabama at the international competition in Canada.

Envirothon is a rigorous academic competition across the United States, Canada, and China. Students must navigate a series of written tests as well as solve a complex environmental issue and present before a panel of judges. Their presentations must be prepared without the use of the Internet or other outside resources.

To compete, students must not only possess strong background knowledge of environmental science but also must demonstrate creative problem-solving, critical thinking skills, and the ability to work together under pressure as a team.

Each team member specializes in a topic. Senior Madalyn Robison serves as the forestry specialist, senior Tara Hobbs is the climate specialist, junior Alison Heimsness is the team captain and wildlife specialist, junior Kaylee Wallace is the aquatics specialist and sophomore Malorie Robison is the soils specialist. Teachers Starr Weems and Elizabeth Hilliard are the team's coaches.

These five students are involved in a myriad of conservation extracurriculars, including 4-H, Ardmore Conservation Society, Alabama Water Watch and participating in Wild Alabama's initiative to save Alabama's hemlocks. They also help maintain the school's outdoor classroom.

The Ardmore Envirothon team's winning presentation was on the topic of creating a sustainable watershed plan to make Alabama more resilient in the face of climate change.

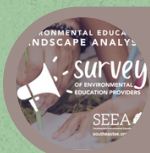


EEAA, in partnership with the Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance, is excited to announce the relaunch of our landscape analysis. We encourage school and district administrators and formal educators who work in the PreK-12 setting, as well as environmental education providers, to participate in this survey.

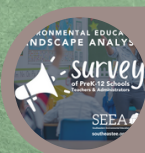
And we want to hear from you!

These surveys should take you less than 15 minutes to complete and will allow us to assess and determine gaps and barriers to EE implementation in schools, and it will enable us to make recommendations that can help combine environmental education into formal education settings.

This project includes a comprehensive study of the environmental education already happening on the ground, enabling states involved to identify gaps and barriers to access that prevent successful implementation in some areas. The report will provide recommendations and next steps for increasing environmental literacy in the southeast based on an inventory of model programs and initiatives happening nationwide.



**CLICK HERE FOR EE
PROVIDERS SURVEY**



**CLICK HERE FOR PREK-
12 SCHOOLS SURVEY**

Big Canoe Creek: A Forever Wild Preserve

EEAA Board Member **Claire Datnow** joined the Alabama Audubon Society recently for a behind-the-scenes tour of one of Forever Wilds's newest properties saying: "It was a privilege to visit the 422-acre, Big Canoe Creek Creek, a Forever Wild Preserve, in Springville, Alabama, with the Alabama Audubon Society. The Preserve will soon be opened to the public for a variety of activities, including birdwatching, and hiking."



About the Preserve

Welcome to Big Canoe Creek Nature Preserve, 422 acres of pristine meandering creek, lush forest, one-of-a-kind species, wildlife, stunning flora, and trails of all kinds to be traveled.

Trails traverse this Alabama Forever Wild property in Springville, perfect for hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, and mountain biking. Paddle by canoe or kayak and take in the unrivaled creekside beauty of this land – forever wild, forever preserved.

Experience its biodiversity – from the Canoe Creek Clubshell mussel to the trispot darter, from mountain laurel and native azalea to beech, red, and sugar maple trees. Find hornbeams, black walnut, catalpa, butternut, and bigleaf magnolia, and perhaps, stands of river cane.

Take in the spectacular views of ridges, mountains, and valleys. Or spot a rare bird soaring above. Each sunrise seems to reveal a new perspective on nature's many gifts found beneath the canopy of its trees or along the banks of this stunning creek that runs for 50 miles. And each sunset beckons visitors to savor the memories of the sights, sounds, and the enveloping feeling of it all. It is a true gift of nature for us all to enjoy, to experience, and to be inspired. (source: bigcanoecreekpreserve.org)



Awards and Honors

Congratulations on two of our members on being awarded the Eagle Award from Alabama State Parks for support of the parks. Toni Bruner of Legacy: Partners in Environmental Education and Verna Gates of Fresh Air Family were recently recognized by Greg Lein, Alabama State Parks Director for their contributions to the success of our parks. Way to go!



Toni Bruner



Verna Gates

Another congratulations to our fearless leader **Toni Bruner**. She was selected for the 2023 Girls Who Hike Alabama's most prestigious Green Flame award. This award reflects Aldo Leopold's "ethical conservation and environmental education" philosophy. Renee Simmons Raney, the 2022 GWAHA Green Flame award winner, passed the torch to Toni last weekend during the GWAHA 2nd Annual Summit at Cheaha State Park.



**SEEA
CONFERENCE
& RESEARCH
SYMPOSIUM**

SEPTEMBER 21-24, 2023



HOSTED BY THE TENNESSEE ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

EEAA: APRIL 2023



Outdoor Learning Store Partnership

EEAA is proud to be the Alabama partner for the Outdoor Learning Store!

The Outdoor Learning Store provides easy access to excellent outdoor learning equipment and resources to schools and organizations. You can find everything from books and tools to free webinars.

Top 5 Resources & Tools for Alabama in the season ahead

1. Alabama Nature Guides
2. A Walking Curriculum
3. Soil Study and Inquiry Kit
4. Mapmaking with Children
5. Outdoor Sit Pads for Students



View all resources, equipment, and kits for Alabama:

<https://outdoorlearningstore.com/southern-usa/>

As always, 100% of the proceeds from these go back to supporting outdoor learning non-profit initiatives!

A poster for the 'Outdoor Learning Spring Virtual Workshop Series'. It features a grid of workshop topics with dates and presenter photos. The topics include: 11 April 'Resources for Earth Month', 18 April 'Taking a Closer Look: Investigations in Nature', 25 April 'Nature Activities for Year-round Learning', 16 May 'Resources for World Oceans Day', 23 May 'Race and Nature for Educators', 30 May 'How to Teach Nature Journaling: Curiosity, Wonder, Attention', 6 June 'Walking Together: (Re)Connecting to Nature through Two-Eyed Seeing', and 13 June 'Animating Outdoor Learning using Finger Puppets'. The poster also includes a 'FREE! TUESDAYS 60 mins April - June' badge, a 'TAKE ME OUTSIDE' logo, and the website 'OUTDOORLEARNINGSTORE.COM'.

The Outdoor Learning Store is partnering to offer these (free!) Spring Outdoor Learning Virtual Workshops!

Learn more and sign up by [clicking here](#).

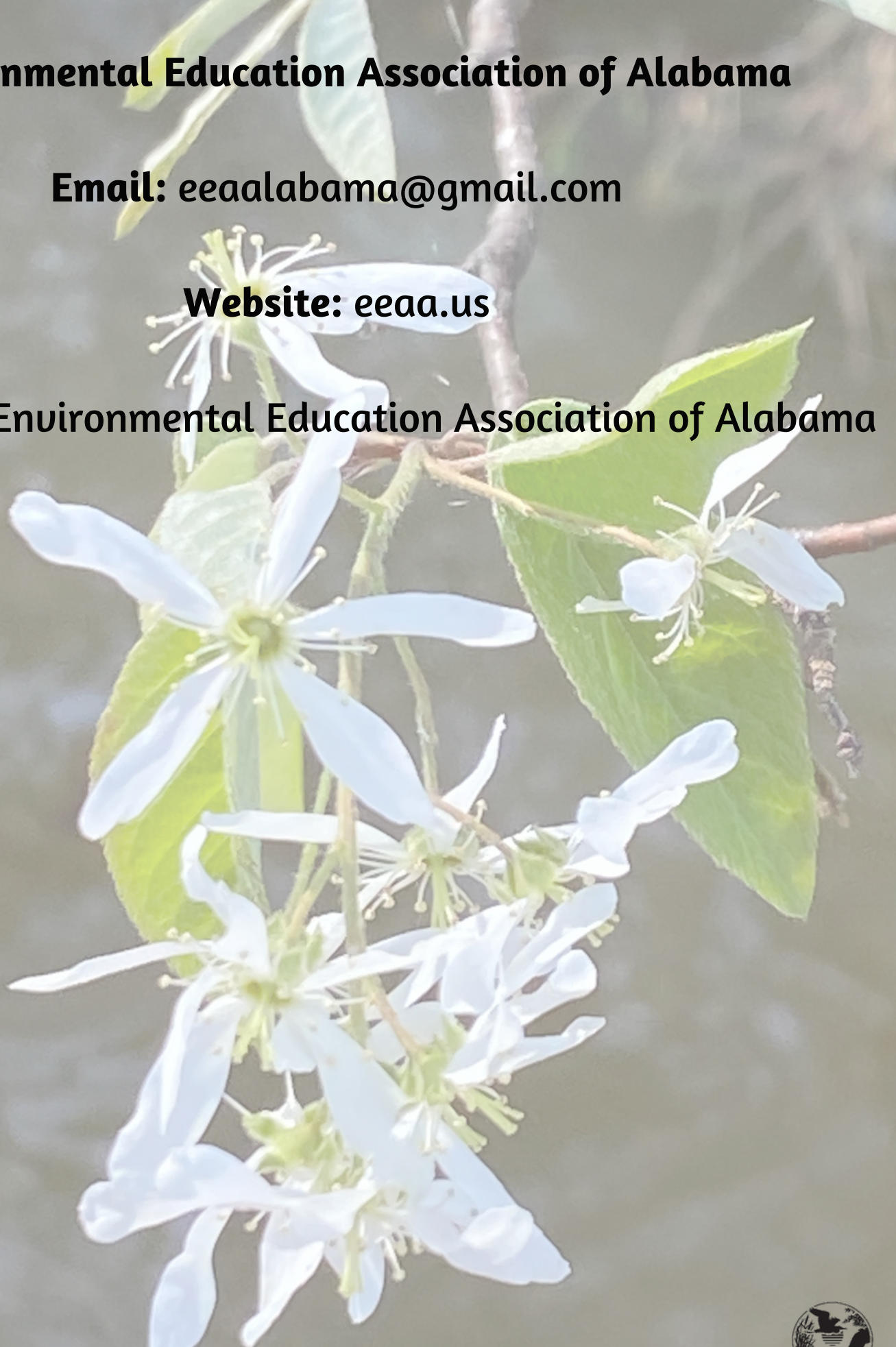
There is something for every educator at these 60min virtual workshops featuring a diversity of presenters and topics. In addition to ideas & inspiration, you'll walk away with a certificate of attendance, discounts on outdoor learning resources & entry for some great prizes!

Environmental Education Association of Alabama

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Facebook: Environmental Education Association of Alabama



Special thank you to Mike Ezell for the nature photography throughout this newsletter!

EEAA: APRIL 2023

