

NEW ENGLAND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ALLIANCE PRESS RELEASE

NEEEA 2006 Awards

On September 30, 2006 environmental educators from throughout New England gathered at the W. Alton Jones Campus in West Greenwich, Rhode Island, for the 40th annual conference of the New England Environmental Education Alliance (NEEEA), *Connecting to the Environment: Telling the Earth's Story*. Special recognition was awarded to environmental educators from New Hampshire and Connecticut for outstanding teaching and programs.

Ruth Smith, a naturalist at the Mt. Kearsage Indian Museum, Warner, New Hampshire, received the **NEEEA 2006 Non-formal Environmental Educator Award**. This award recognizes an individual or team working in a non-formal setting such as park, nature center, zoo, or educational setting other than a formal classroom. Smith started her career 23 years ago at the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Wildwood Nature Camp. Later, as a naturalist for the Audubon Society of New Hampshire for many years, she directed the Friends of the Eagle camp program. Statewide, she has trained teachers for Project Learning Tree and Project WILD. Her leadership extends to the Audubon Alliance in the Northeast, the American Camping Association, and the New Hampshire Environmental Educators (NHEE). Smith has developed programs that reach preschoolers, youth, and adults. One of her most rewarding experiences was taking inner city youths into the outdoors.

The **NEEEA 2006 Formal Environmental Educator Award** was presented to Dr. Ralph J. Yulo, Professor Emeritus at Eastern Connecticut State University. There, he has worked with pre-service teachers, developing hands-on/minds-on science as he instilled an understanding and appreciation of the natural world. For many years, he served as the university coordinator for student teachers gaining field experience at the Ragged Hill Woods Environmental Program. He was instrumental in the development of Masters degree programs in both marine and environmental education. As a strong advocate of ocean-literacy, Dr. Yulo has taken a leadership role in the development of Project Oceanology, a center for marine science education. Yulo continues to inform, illuminate, and inspire teachers across Connecticut through programs such as Project Oceanology's Water Quality Institute for Middle School Science Teachers, the Project to Increase Master of Mathematics and Science at Wesleyan University, and workshops for Southeastern New England Marine Educators, the Connecticut Science Teachers Association, and the Connecticut Outdoor and Environmental Educators Association.

The **NEEEA 2006 Maria Pirie Environmental Program Award** was awarded to Project CO-SEED, Community-based School Environmental Education, a program of the Antioch New England Institute at Antioch University New England, Keene, New Hampshire. Bo Hoppin, a project director, accepted the award at the conference. For eight years, the project has worked with schools in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and

Vermont to bring place-based education into the center of the school program. CO-SEED is an innovative program that focuses its three-year systematic school reform model on building strong connections between school and community. CO-SEED makes environmental education relevant anywhere, to anyone, because local people shape it to respond to their needs. The project partners with local conservation organizations such as the Appalachian Mountain Club, Zoo New England, and the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, to form Community-based Learning Centers. With its broad relevance to both rural and urban communities, recently, the project has expanded into the state of Maine and the city of Boston. Through direct experiences with their natural and social communities, Project CO-SEED empowers children and adults, revitalizes communities and instills stewardship.

In honor of Richard Haley, who was lost in a fatal car accident in June, the NEEEA President's award has been named the **Richard Haley President's Award**. Additionally, Richard was honored by a posthumous presentation of the President's Award. His wife Eileen accepted the award. The award is given to an educator who has made an outstanding contribution to the environmental field in New England. Richard Haley's career spanned more than twenty years, beginning as a teenager at Massachusetts Audubon Society's Camp Wildwood. He was an educator at the New Canaan Nature Center (CT), the director of DEP Goodwin Conservation Center in Hampton, CT for several years, followed by three years as Director of Education at Audubon New York. Richard significantly influenced Environmental Education in a leadership role at the state and national levels and it is fitting that the NEEEA board honor him in this way. His famous wit and wisdom will be missed by environmental educators throughout the state and the country.

The New England Environmental Education Alliance takes great pleasure in recognizing outstanding teachers and programs for their critical role in teaching environmental stewardship to children, teachers, and communities in our region.

Paula Coughlin
2006 Awards Chair
New England Environmental Education Alliance