"The Implementation of the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board's Communication Plan to Promote Environmental Education In Wisconsin"

By

Rebecca Weber

A Thesis
Submitted in partial requirement of the
Requirements for the degree

Master of Science

College of Natural Resources

University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point

Stevens Point, Wisconsin

August 2002

Approved by the Graduate Committee of

Dr. Richard Wilke, Committee Chairperson
Distinguished Professor of Environmental Education

Dr. Daniel Sivek
Professor of Environmental Education

Dr. Richard Dubiel
Professor of Communication

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to implement two of the five goals of the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board's "Communication Plan to Promote Environmental Education in Wisconsin." The two targeted goals were- 1) to communicate the value of EE to Wisconsin school board members and school administrative staff and increase their support for EE and 2) to help elected and appointed officials understand the importance of EE and increase their support for EE programs. Using these goals, three objectives were identified-1) to determine whether interventions taken in this project have an impact on the frequency participants communicate the value and importance of EE to school board members, 2) to determine whether interventions taken in this project have an impact on the frequency participants communicate the value and importance of EE to school administrative staff, and 3) to determine whether interventions taken in this project have an impact on the frequency participants communicate the value and importance of EE to elected and appointed officials.

157 EE supporters were involved as participants in the project to help reach the three subproblems. The two instruments used by the participants were the "Making a Difference" packet and the "EE Works for Wisconsin" web site. A pre questionnaire was administered in December 2000 before the project began and a post questionnaire was administered in January 2002 at the close of the project to assess the change in behavior of the participants.

Results of the questionnaires showed a dramatic increase in activities by the participants during the project. For example, prior to joining the project, 12% of

participants had contacted a school board member regarding EE. According to the post questionnaire, 73.9% contacted a school board member. Further, less than 2% of participants had contacted a school administrator before joining the project and at the end of the project, 73.9% had. With regard to contacting elected and appointed officials about EE, before joining the project, 5.8% of participants had contacted an official. The results of the post questionnaire showed that 88.8% had contacted an elected or appointed official during the project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tables

Appendices

Introduction

Introduction:

Several key organizations in Wisconsin in recent years have identified a need to increase public support for environmental education (EE). In 1998, several important strategies were developed to address this need. One notable strategy was the creation of a communication plan by an ad-hoc committee of the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education (WAEE) board. Also important was the development of "EE Works for Wisconsin" promotional materials by the National EE Advancement Project (NEEAP) staff, members of the WAEE Communication Committee, the Wisconsin EE Board (WEEB), the Wisconsin Center for EE (WCEE), the University of Wisconsin Extension, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. In 1999, the aforementioned strategies, as well as a number of additional proposals, were united by the development of the "Communication Plan to Promote Environmental Education in Wisconsin." (Appendix A.) This plan was written primarily by University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP) EE graduate students under the direction of Dr. Rick Wilke with input from representatives of WAEE, WEEB, and NEEAP.

Importance:

In 1985, Wisconsin Administrative Code P.I . 8.01 (2)(k) established the requirement that every school district "develop and implement a written curriculum plan incorporating instruction in environmental education into all subject curriculum plans..." However, nearly 20 years later this requirement is not being met by many Wisconsin school districts. EE graduate students at the University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point surveyed

teachers from 72 Wisconsin school districts in early 2000. Of the surveyed teachers, 23% reported that their school district did not have an EE curriculum plan and 18% of the teachers were unsure. It was evident that there was a need to increase support for EE and for its implementation in the K-12 curriculum (UWSP EE graduate students, 2000).

The "Communication Plan to Promote Environmental Education in Wisconsin" is an important strategy targeted to address these needs. The mission statement of the Communication Plan is "to achieve broader public acceptance and support for EE in Wisconsin." This mission is aimed, in part, at closing the gap between the P.I. 8.01 (2)(K) mandated law and the absence of curriculum plans in many Wisconsin school districts.

In 1999, EE graduate students at the University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point developed an informational packet as a tool to help meet all five goals of the Communication Plan. This packet, entitled "Making a Difference: Strategies for Supporting EE in Wisconsin," includes samples of letters and news releases, reasons to support EE, advice for influencing school boards, as well as other information on how to improve awareness and support for EE. (Appendix B). Over 420 of the "Making a Difference" packets were sent by request to EE leaders across Wisconsin (as well as to a few in neighboring states) in the spring of 2000. A detailed description of the distribution of the "Making a Difference" packet is provided in chapter three of this thesis.

Simply distributing the "Making a Difference" packet did not accomplish the goals of the Communication Plan. The packet offered suggestions and advice for individuals desiring to participate in activities to promote EE. However, people need to successfully carry out these activities in order for the goals of the Communication Plan to be achieved.

In order to implement several goals of the Communication Plan, the Wisconsin EE Board funded a grant proposal from the College of Natural Resources at UWSP. The grant agreement, entitled "Implementation of a Communication Plan for EE in Wisconsin-Phase II," includes two goals. The first goal is to use the "Making a Difference" packet as a vehicle to increase support for EE in Wisconsin. The second goal is to implement the Communication Plan around the "EE Works for Wisconsin" theme, specifically through the development and use of a website

Problem Statement:

The purpose of this study is to assist the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB) in implementing its "Communication Plan to Promote Environmental Education in Wisconsin" and to assess the effectiveness of the plan's strategies to involve citizens in supporting EE.

Communication Plan Goals:

The following are the targeted goals of the Communication Plan.

1. Communicate the value of EE to Wisconsin school board members and administrative staff and increase their support for EE. (Goal #1)

2. To help elected/appointed officials understand the importance of EE and increase their support for EE programs. (Goal #2)

Thesis Objectives:

The following are the objectives of this thesis.

1) Determine whether interventions taken in this thesis have an impact on the frequency participants communicate the value and importance of EE to school board members.

2) Determine whether interventions taken in this thesis have an impact on the frequency participants communicate the value and importance of EE to school administrative staff.

3) Determine whether interventions taken in this thesis have an impact on the frequency participants communicate the value and importance of EE to elected/appointed officials.

It is important to note that although the objectives of this thesis correspond to two of the five goals of the Communication Plan, the activities of the thesis address the first four goals of the Communication Plan.

Limitations:

1. 84.8% of the recipients of the "Making a Difference" packets received the packets eight months before this thesis was started. This may have affected the recruitment of participants to join the thesis.

2. The period of this thesis coincided with the time frame determined in the grant contract with the Wisconsin EE Board. The actions taken by the volunteers that occurred after the completion of the grant were not assessed. The actions taken between the time of receiving the "Making a Difference" packet and the start of Phase II of the WEEB grant were assessed.

3. This thesis is to assist in implementing the Communication Plan to promote EE in Wisconsin. Therefore, the recipients of the "Making a Difference" packet in states other than Wisconsin were not included in the assessment.

Definition of Terms:

Citizen Action- actions, such as letters or personal contact, performed by an individual that are targeted toward a specific topic in which the individual wants to achieve some desired outcome

Environmental Education- a lifelong learning process that leads to an informed and involved citizenry having creative problem solving skills, scientific and social literacy, ethical awareness and sensitivity for the relationship between humans and the environment, and commitment to engage in responsible individual and cooperative actions. By these actions, environmentally literate citizens will help ensure an ecologically and economically sustainable environment. (Wisconsin EE Board)

Participants- people who requested a "Making a Difference" packet and joined the list serve. Participants are classified as either mail participants or email participants. Mail participants do not have access to email and were contacted via mail. Email participants have access to email and were contacted via email.

Assumptions:

1. People who requested the "Making a Difference" packet and joined the list serve wanted to participate in the implementation of the Communication Plan.
2. Elected and appointed public officials will act on behalf of their constituents. Specifically, the public officials will behave in ways that they feel reflect the ideologies and opinions of their constituents.

Literature Review

Introduction:

The goal of this thesis is to assist in implementing the WEEB's Communication Plan. To fully understand the nature of the thesis, it is essential to have an understanding of five main areas. First, one must understand the importance of EE and the goals of EE. Second, one must look at the history of EE in Wisconsin to appreciate the foundation of the WEEB Communication Plan. Third, an understanding of the WEEB is essential to the scope of the thesis. Fourth, it is imperative to review the Communication Plan to comprehend the need and goals of this thesis. Fifth, the requirements outlined in the WEEB grant that supports this research are important.

Importance of Environmental Education:

EE is important for several reasons. The resources chosen to explain the importance of EE in this particular context are representative of the consensus of the value of EE within the EE community. Although the consensus does not offer one explicit explanation for the importance of EE, there are remarkable trends within the literature.

According to the "Report Assessing EE in the United States and the Implementation of the National EE Act of 1990," the importance of EE can be explained by the "need and relevance to Americans' everyday lives." By its very nature, EE develops skills fundamental to responsible decision-making and problem solving. These skills are developed through the knowledge, tools, and ethics gained through EE. Thus, EE prepares students, as well as adults, to understand the important relationship between

humans and their interdependence on the environment for survival. With this understanding, environmentally educated citizens will realize that their decisions impact the environment, and, with this make environmentally responsible decisions in their daily lives. EE is relevant and contributes to Americans' everyday lives in five key areas- protecting human health, advancing quality education, expanding employment opportunities, promoting sustainable development, and protecting America's natural heritage (Environmental Protection Agency, 1996).

A second resource explaining the importance of EE is a study conducted by Palmer (1996) to determine which factors are most influential in impacting a person's environmental awareness and concern. Of the surveyed environmental educators, 60% identified outdoor experiences and environmental education as the most important factors contributing to their interest and involvement in the environment. Thus, EE is important because it may influence a person's interest and involvement in the environment.

A third document that addresses the importance of EE is the "Making a Difference" packet. This packet was designed and authored by graduate students in the EE program at the University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point. This packet was developed to assist in implementing the Communication Plan and is a key resource in this thesis. The packet lists four reasons explaining the importance of EE in Wisconsin. First, EE builds a knowledgeable and skilled citizenry. Second, EE promotes a balanced analysis of social, economic, and ecological needs. Third, EE improves the quality of education, better preparing tomorrow's leaders. Lastly, EE makes education relevant to students, bonding schools and communities.

Several years ago, the federal government adopted eight goals that are imperative to education with the passage of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. These goals set high standards for education in the United States; for example, goal #4 is to be first in the world in math and science (Simmons, 1995). EE by nature is interdisciplinary because it incorporates several core subjects into one. Because EE is interdisciplinary, it can be helpful to both teachers and students in meeting these high standards set by the federal government by incorporating principles of one subject into another. For example, students can identify plants in a plot (science) and then use the collected data to determine statistics about the area surveyed (math). Students could also diagram the site (social science).

A study designed to "identify the most innovative and successful programs" completed by the State Education and Environment Roundtable supports this concept (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998). The nationwide study compares schools using the Environment as an Integrating Context for learning (EIC) model with schools that did not use the EIC. The findings of the study show that students of teachers who use the EIC significantly improve in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998). For example, in classrooms where the environment was used to help teach math, 92% of the students showed a better mastery of math skills. Further, 89% of students cited more enthusiasm for studying math.

The results for science are quite similar. EIC students scored higher on three of four standardized science achievement tests than their peers without EIC. Additionally, 99% displayed an increase in knowledge and understanding of science content, concepts,

processes and principles (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998). Further, 98% revealed a greater enthusiasm and interest in learning science.

EE is beneficial to parents, teachers, and students because it is extremely relevant to real life experiences. We are dependent on the earth for resources and our actions do impact the quality of our environment. Incorporating EE into schools will give teachers a valuable tool for making school subjects relevant to the lives of the students. For instance, instead of simply teaching students statistics, teachers can have students conduct a survey about recycling practices in their community and then apply the statistics lesson to determine the results of the survey.

The study cited above also supports this concept. The results indicted that 99% of students displayed a better ability to apply science to real-world situations. Additionally, 97% of students had more advanced skills in applying civic process to real-life situations. Additionally, 97% of students also had a greater proficiency in solving problems and thinking strategically (Lieberman and Hoody, 1998).

Further, teachers benefit from EE. The teachers in the study cited interesting and exciting results as well. Increases in enthusiasm and commitment toward teaching were reported by 95% of the teachers. Also, 94% had better working relationships with their students and colleagues.

EE is beneficial to students because EE helps them achieve academic standards. Also, the need to apply school lessons to real life is unarguable. EE is important because it is a subject that is relevant to all people's lives; further, it is interdisciplinary so it can be used in the application of all required school subjects.

To summarize, EE is valuable for several key reasons. EE helps develop knowledge, skills and ethics from which citizens can formulate responsible decisions. EE helps provide a foundation for environmental concern and interest. Lastly, EE is relevant to every American because of our dependence on natural resources, yet, EE promotes balance between social, economic and ecological needs.

History of Environmental Education in Wisconsin from 1980-2000:

To fully understand and appreciate the present status of EE, in Wisconsin, it is essential to trace its history. Because the Wisconsin EE Board is just twelve years old, it is necessary to look at the occurrences that led to the development of WEEB and ultimately its Communication Plan. Much of the past success in implementing EE requirements and programs in Wisconsin is based on the development of grass roots political support for EE.

In 1935, a state statute was issued requiring preservice teachers to have "adequate preparation in the conservation of natural resources." By 1980, both supporters of the statute, as well as those who opposed it questioned the relevance of the statute. This led to a major attempt to review the 45 year old statute.

Leaders in EE recognized that to revamp the statute, all interested parties would have to be involved in the process. In 1980, over 400 leaders in Wisconsin educational, conservation, and environmental organizations were contacted and asked to respond to questions regarding the requirements. Overall, the respondents felt that the 1935 statute was outdated and did not reflect the needs of the time. Respondents were concerned that

teachers were not required to have ecological training, environmental issue awareness, citizen participation skills, or EE methods development. Additional concerns were that EE should begin in pre-kindergarten and extend through elementary school, therefore elementary teachers should be required to have EE training (Wilke, 1985).

The second step in reviewing the 1935 statute involved forming the "EE Teacher Preparation Review Committee." The committee consisted of 20 members, representing the State Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Natural Resources, science education professors, Wisconsin school districts, and professional organizations. This committee met in 1981 and agreed that the statute needed revamping. The committee decided to request changes in the Department of Public Instruction teacher certification requirements pertaining to conservation education (Wilke, 1985).

Also in 1980, letters on behalf the Wisconsin Association for EE were written to each candidate in the upcoming campaign for the Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction. The candidates were asked to respond to specific questions about the preservice teacher training requirement. Candidates were told that their responses were to be shared with the members of environmental and conservation organizations in Wisconsin. Three of the five candidates strongly supported preservice EE training.

In addition to publishing the candidates' responses, a second strategy involved the candidate debates. Members of the Wisconsin Association for EE attended the debates between the candidates and asked at least one question pertaining to EE and teacher training.

Herbert Grover, who offered strong support for preservice EE training, won the election. EE supporters in Wisconsin responded with letters of congratulations and

reminded him of their support for him because he supported EE. For several reasons, the reaction from the Department of Public Instruction was slow.

In 1981 and 1982, many efforts were made on behalf of the changes in the certification rule. Letters were sent to leaders in Wisconsin's conservation, environmental, and education organizations, asking them to continue to contact Grover. EE supporters also issued news releases about the importance of the proposed certification change. In the end, over 60 state organizations supported the rule change.

Actually changing the certification requirement was a multi-step process. First, members of the "EE Teacher Preparation Review Committee" presented the proposal to the State Superintendent's Advisory Council for Teacher Education Certification. In the spring of 1982, the council voted to support the change. The second step required a set of public hearings, which took place in 1983. The "EE Teacher Preparation Review Committee" organized many EE supporters to testify at the hearings. The Department of Public Instruction, after making minor edits, passed the proposal to amend the administrative rules on to the state legislature for review. The final step in the process was completed on October 13, 1983, when it passed through both the Senate and Assembly Committees on the Review of Administrative Rules and the State Superintendent announced the rule.

In 1985, the Wisconsin Legislature passed a curriculum planning standard requirement that required school districts to develop, implement, and evaluate a K-12 EE curriculum by September 1, 1990. This mandate is key because it requires that EE be taught in all public schools in Wisconsin. This mandate gives proponents of EE a fundamental legislative basis for incorporating EE in the public classroom. In 1988, the North

American Association for EE gave the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) the Outstanding Institutional EE Award for its many successful EE initiatives.

In 1990, the 20th anniversary of Earth Day was celebrated, and the Wisconsin Legislature created both the Wisconsin EE Board (WEEB) and the Wisconsin Center for EE (WCEE). The WEEB was to administer $200,000 annually in EE grants and also assist state agencies and organizations in identifying EE priorities. The WCEE had six goals determined by the Wisconsin Legislature. These were-

- To develop, offer, and evaluate undergraduate and graduate credit courses in environmental education
- To exchange environmental education information and resources with educators and students
- To maintain an environmental education resource center for use by educators
- To collaborate and develop partnerships with agencies, organizations, and institutions on the development, implementation, evaluation and recognition of environmental education programs in the state of Wisconsin
- To develop and conduct environmental education needs assessments and program evaluations
- To develop and conduct environmental literacy assessments of Wisconsin's students and teachers

The WCEE conducted a statewide EE literacy assessment from 1992-1994 of fifth and eleventh graders as well as their teachers, principals, and Directors of Curriculum and Instruction.

In 1994, the EE Consultant position in the DPI became vacant and was subsequently eliminated during a period of budget reductions. One year later the WEEB sponsored an EE Summit for Wisconsin. The purpose of the Summit was to meet and plan for the future of EE in Wisconsin. In 1998, the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for EE

were developed and published by the DPI and the following year the WEEB adopted the Communication Plan to Promote EE in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin EE Board:

As mentioned above, the Wisconsin Legislature created the WEEB in 1990. The mission of WEEB is "to provide leadership in the development of learning opportunities that empower Wisconsin citizens with the knowledge and skills to make wise environmental decisions and take responsible actions in their personal lives, workplaces and communities." WEEB has four central purposes, three of which are specifically relevant to this thesis. The first is to provide positive leadership, advocacy, and policy making in the comprehensive arena of environmental literacy and education. Second, to support the development of local leaders and their fellow citizens to become environmentally aware and concerned enough to act on environmental issues. Lastly, to advocate the development and implementation of interdisciplinary environmentally based curricula at all levels of the educational system.

WEEB consists of 17 members who represent a diverse array of interests. Currently, there are four members of the Wisconsin State legislature, two senators and two representatives, one from each major political party. Also represented are nature centers, environmental organizations, the state Department of Natural Resources, energy, forestry, and business and industry interests. Additionally, there are members from the education field including representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction,

Wisconsin Technical College System, University of Wisconsin System and a K-12 educator.

The WEEB Grant Program:

The primary means through which the WEEB addresses their mission is through a grant program. As of 2001, the WEEB received 1,288 proposals requesting $12,164,553. The WEEB funded 297 proposals, with a value of $2,622,721. Funded projects have been state wide in focus as well as focused on local projects.

Each year, the WEEB identifies several specific priorities it wishes to address. Grant proposals that address their specific priorities for the year do not undergo the regular review process. Rather, grant proposals that address the WEEB priorities are reviewed before grant proposals that do not.

This thesis specifically address the WEEB priority D, statewide initiatives in EE leadership development and enhancement projects. It also addresses priorities A and C through the statewide leadership development, as EE leaders and partners were recruited to mobilize community support and involvement in EE. Therefore, this grant proposal did not undergo the regular review process and was given priority by the WEEB.

The Communication Plan to Promote EE in Wisconsin:

In 1999, the WEEB adopted the "Communication Plan to Promote EE in Wisconsin." As mentioned in chapter one of this thesis, the Communication Plan was a document written in collaboration with three EE organizations, and facilitated by Dr. Richard Wilke. The Communication Plan was written because the WEEB, Wisconsin

Association for EE, and the National EE Advancement Project identified a need to strengthen efforts to promote EE in Wisconsin. Specifically, they wanted to increase communication about the value of EE and increase support for EE. These two goals were identified through the 1995 WEEB Summit and the Wisconsin Association for EE Communication Plan.

The mission of the WEEB Communication Plan is "to achieve broader public acceptance and support for EE in Wisconsin." The Communication Plan has five goals; two are mentioned in chapter one of this thesis as objectives of this thesis. They are 1) "to communicate the value of EE to Wisconsin school board members and school administrative staff and increase their support for EE, and 2) to help elected/appointed officials understand the importance of EE and increase their support of EE programs." The additional three goals of the Communication Plan are: 3) "to increase support from parents and members of parent organizations for EE within their schools," 4) "to increase recognition and support for EE by members of the news media in Wisconsin," and 5) "to improve the implementation of Wisconsin's existing EE teacher training requirement at universities and colleges."

The Communication Plan indicates that volunteers will complete the majority of the efforts to achieve these goals. To assist these volunteers, the EE graduate students at the University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point developed an organization packet called "Making a Difference: Strategies for Supporting EE in Wisconsin." Potential volunteers were identified and contacted and the informational packets were sent to those who requested it. The "Making a Difference: Strategies for Supporting EE in Wisconsin" packet includes- a) sample letters to the audiences targeted by the Communication Plan, b) a

document entitled "Twelve Reasons to Support EE," and c) tips for letter writing. The "Making a Difference" packet is the main vehicle for the implementation of the Communication Plan and especially relevant to this thesis.

The WEEB grant:

As indicated earlier, the WEEB funded a grant proposal, for a project entitled "Implementation of a Communication Plan for Environmental Education in Wisconsin-Phase II." The overall importance of this thesis was reflected by the necessity of EE and the goals of the WEEB Communication Plan. The Communication Plan was written carefully and strategically to achieve five specific goals that are important to increasing support for EE in Wisconsin. The Communication Plan also offered suggestions on how to achieve these goals.

But more specifically, the Communication Plan itself acknowledged that its success was dependent on volunteers. Particularly, volunteers using the "Making a Difference" packet to help meet the goals and objectives of the Communication Plan. Thus this thesis targeted at assisting and supporting these volunteers is fundamental to achieving all aspects of the Communication Plan.

The duration of the grant was July 2000 to December 2001. The objectives of this thesis were developed using the goals and objectives identified by the grant proposal. The grant proposal stated two goals: to "increase support for environmental education by continuing the dissemination of the WEEB approved "Making a Difference" packet" and "implement the WEEB Communication Plan around the "EE Works for Wisconsin" theme."

According to the grant proposal, the first goal was addressed through two objectives. These objectives were (1) to increase the number of community leaders supporting EE through continuous recruitment and distribution of the packet and (2) to maintain communication with volunteers to offer advice and updates on how they can support EE by pursuing strategies and activities from the packet. (Appendix C).

The second goal listed in the grant proposal, to "implement the WEEB Communication Plan around the "EE Works for Wisconsin" theme," was addressed using a web site. The web site developed for this thesis contains: key components from the "EE Works for Wisconsin" brochure; frequently asked questions about EE; information from the "Making a Difference" packet; successful EE activities in Wisconsin; and activities targeted to influence particular audiences of the WEEB Communication Plan (i.e. school boards).

Summary:

The purpose of this thesis was to increase support for EE in Wisconsin, particularly from school board members, elected/appointed public officials, and parent organizations. The objectives of this thesis were addressed by using the "Making a Difference" packet and the "EE Works for Wisconsin" web site. The help of over 150 volunteers from across Wisconsin was essential to the success of the thesis.

Methods

Introduction:

The purpose of the "Implementation of a Communication Plan for Environmental Education in Wisconsin" thesis was to increase support for EE in Wisconsin. The WEEB's Communication Plan has five goals; each targeted at a specific audience. The objectives of this thesis are modeled around two of the five goals and are reviewed in the section below. There were two tools used to aid the researcher in addressing these objectives- the "Making a Difference" packet and the "EE Works for Wisconsin" web site. An integral aspect of this study is to assess the usefulness of these tools.

This chapter will cover the following topics: 1) review of the objectives, 2) a description of the tools used to address the objectives, 3) a description of how the tools were used, 4) the research design, and 5) the method of data collection.

Review of Objectives:

Because the purpose of the thesis was to implement the WEEB's Communication Plan, the objectives were based on the goals of the Communication Plan.

The objectives are:

1. Determine whether interventions taken in this thesis have an impact on the frequency participants communicate the value and importance of EE to school board members.

2. Determine whether interventions taken in this thesis have an impact on the frequency participants communicate the value and importance of EE to school administrative staff.

3. Determine whether interventions taken in this thesis have an impact on the frequency participants communicate the value and importance of EE to elected/appointed officials.

Each objective focuses on an audience with an important role in increasing support for EE in Wisconsin. These three audiences are important to EE because they can influence the quality and quantity of EE in their local school districts. For example, a successful EE program in a school district must have the support of the school board to be a priority.

The nature of each objective is quite similar; each targets a specific audience important to EE in Wisconsin. This similarity allowed the researcher to think of the objectives as one large problem in some circumstances. Therefore, the tools described below that were used for the thesis apply to all three.

Thesis Tools:

There were two tools used to address the objectives of the thesis- the "Making a Difference" packet and the "EE Works for Wisconsin" web site. Both tools offer important information to the thesis participants about EE and how they can help increase support for EE in Wisconsin. Each was essential to the success of the thesis.

EE graduate students enrolled in Natural Resources 750 at the University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point wrote the "Making a Difference" packet in 1999. The packet included reasons to support EE, answers to frequently asked questions about EE, and example letters and news releases. The purpose of the packet was to assist participants in achieving the goals of the Communication Plan.

In the spring of 2000, the EE graduate students compiled a list of individuals from several mailing lists obtained from the WEEB and the Wisconsin Association for EE. The graduate students mailed just under 1,000 post cards to individuals who would be most likely to support the implementation of the Communication Plan. They asked the individuals to return their post cards if they wanted to receive a copy of the "Making a Difference" packet. Over 420 copies of the "Making a Difference" packet were requested and sent in the spring of 2000.

As the class project progressed, the students decided that having a project coordinator would be extremely beneficial to the implementation of the Communication Plan. The project coordinator could maintain on-going contact with the recipients of the "Making a Difference" packets. The project coordinator could also continue the distribution of the "Making a Difference" packets and accomplish other duties, including producing a web site.

In the fall of 2000, the project coordinator (researcher) began the EE graduate program at the University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point. The implementation of the Communication Plan project became the researcher's thesis and assistantship responsibility. To distribute additional packets, the researcher compiled another mailing list from the list of Wisconsin Conservation Clubs obtained from the Wisconsin

Department of Natural Resources and a directory of environmental groups in Wisconsin. The project coordinator mailed just under 250 post cards as the EE graduates had done the previous spring. Over 75 post cards were returned and "Making a Difference" packets were sent to these individuals. With the additional 75 recipients, the total number of recipients who received the "Making a Difference" packet through this thesis was just under 600.

The "EE Works for Wisconsin" web site:

The "EE Works for Wisconsin" web site is a web site that integrates the information from the "EE Works for Wisconsin" campaign and both WEEB's Communication Plan and the Strategic Plan. The web site also includes the information from the "Making a Difference" packet. The goal of the web site is to promote and support EE in Wisconsin, specifically to assist in implementing particular aspects of the Wisconsin EE Board's Communication Plan and Strategic Plan.

The content of the "EE Works for Wisconsin" web site ("EE Works" web site) was determined by a web site committee. The committee is comprised of representatives of the WEEB, the Wisconsin Association for EE, the Wisconsin Center for EE, and the University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point. The web site was designed by the researcher and contains five main pages:

1) The "EE Works" page contains the information from the "EE Works for Wisconsin" campaign that was started in 1998 by five core organizations in Wisconsin- the Wisconsin EE Board, the Wisconsin Center for EE, the Wisconsin Association for EE, the Department of Natural Resources, and the University of

Wisconsin- Extension. These five core organizations offered links from their respective web sites to the "EE Works" web site.

2) The "EE Facts" page answers six frequently asked questions about EE. These questions and answers are from the "Making a Difference" packet.

3) The "EE Documents" page contains information about the WEEB Communication Plan, the WEEB Strategic Plan and the "Making a Difference" packet. The page summarizes the three documents and offers links to the full Communication Plan and Strategic Plan on the Wisconsin EE Board's web site. The page also offers links to the information from the "Making a Difference" packet.

4) The "Monthly Activities" page lists monthly activities targeted at achieving the three objectives of this thesis. These activities will be explained in more detail in the section below.

5) The "Wisconsin Highlights" page highlights successful EE activities in Wisconsin. The purpose of the page is to spread information on successful EE activities throughout Wisconsin, and actually, throughout the world. The web site users can send their success stories via email and have them added to the web page. The "Wisconsin Highlights" page also includes information on how the Communication Plan is being implemented, for example, a presentation at an EE conference on the thesis.

(Appendix D.)

Purpose of the Tools:

In the fall of 2000, the researcher developed a series of activities and an associated timeline to focus the efforts of the project participants. A strategically planned activity was developed for each month for the duration of the thesis. Each monthly activity targeted an objective of the thesis. The specific monthly activities were selected based on two criteria. First, the activities that best addressed the three objectives of the thesis were selected. Additionally, the activities selected were assigned to a specific month based on their timeliness (for example, the Wisconsin state budget is submitted in January to the Joint Committee on Finance, so the monthly activity for February was to contact a member of the Joint Committee on Finance). (Appendix E.) The monthly activities were the focus of the efforts of the thesis participants and were also included on the "EE Works" web site.

Each month, the researcher contacted the project participants to inform them of the activity for that month. This contact was made via email to those who provided email addresses and by mail to those who did not. The contact to the participants included the activity (such as 'write a letter to the editor'), information about the activity (why contacting the editor is important), and suggestions for letter topics. Included in the monthly contact were references to the "Making a Difference" packet to assist the project participants in the activity.

The "Making a Difference" packet was an important tool in the thesis because it contained valuable, useful information. The packet was used as a reference tool for the project participants as they could use the packet to answer their questions (such as how to write a news release). The "Making a Difference" packet also provided the participants

with ideas for topics to write about for the monthly contacts. The packet also included suggestions on how to find facts to incorporate into the monthly contact.

The "EE Works for Wisconsin" web site was also an important resource for the thesis. The web site was important for at least three reasons. First, the "EE Works" web site provided basic, thorough information about environmental education. This information was taken from the brochures from the "EE Works for Wisconsin" campaign as well as information about EE from the "Making a Difference" packet.

Second, the "EE Works" web site provided clear, definite suggestions for the web site user to help improve EE in their community. Through the monthly activities, the web site users could get ideas on how they could increase support for EE. They were also provided with background information about EE issues, and facts about EE.

The third way the web site was valuable is it provided the information from the "Making a Difference" packets to a wide audience in Wisconsin (and virtually world-wide). Although the "Making a Difference" packets were sent to EE supporters in Wisconsin (less than ten were sent out of Wisconsin), the majority of the information in the packet was not specific to Wisconsin. Thus, web site users who do not reside in Wisconsin could benefit from the information in the "Making a Difference" packet. Additionally, the information in the packet was designed to help EE supporters contact decision-makers in their community. By having the information from the "Making a Difference" packet available on the Internet, the web site users had access to the sample letters and news releases as well.

Research Design:

The nature of this thesis called for a qualitative research design. Qualitative research has several key attributes that are relevant to this thesis. First, qualitative research is practical because it is used to research and explore where and why policy and practice do not work (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). This is relevant to this thesis because an important aspect of this thesis is to determine if the practices in this thesis were successful at motivating self-identified EE supporters to help increase support for EE in their communities. The second attribute of qualitative research is that is it useful to explore informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organizations. This concept is relevant to this thesis. Since qualitative research is also an important component of action research, it will be described in more detail in the section below.

Action Research:

The specific methodology used for this thesis was action research. Action research is a method of descriptive research. Descriptive research is used to document a phenomenon of interest (Marshall and Rossman, 2000). The action research model was proposed by Kurt Lewin in 1946 as a methodology to address societal change and improvement (Aguinis, 1993). Lewin suggested that social research should lead to social action, thus he proposed a research method that integrated science and action. Action research is a methodology that is increasingly used by educators, but is applicable to other social situations as well.

Action research is based on the idea of 'trying something and evaluating how it works.' Action research is the process of collecting data about a system relative to some

goal or problem within that system (Aguinis, 1993). Action research has several important attributes that make it useful to this thesis.

First, action research is useful in organizational settings, such as in the thesis, because it integrates research and action to increase understanding and generate change. The goal of the thesis was to increase support for EE in three specific audiences. However, a major *purpose* of the research part of the thesis was to increase the understanding of how the project participants act on their feelings about EE. The purpose of this thesis was to assess how self-identified EE supporters were motivated to act on their support for EE. Thus action research was useful for increasing the understanding of this motivation and for making suggestions for future efforts that are similar.

A second reason that action research was valuable to this thesis is that action research is a cyclical method of research (Aguinis, 1993). Action research is a continuous process of stating hypotheses, collecting data, and using the data to re-evaluate the hypotheses. Action research allows the researcher to re-evaluate the hypotheses and attempt to understand the causal relationship between the data and the hypotheses. This attribute of action research was important to this thesis because it allowed the researcher to continuously evaluate her actions and determine if the actions were successful. Adjustments to the thesis could be made if the researcher felt her actions were not working.

A third reason that action research was valuable to this thesis is that it is applicable to real life experiences. Because action research allows the opportunity to explore issues resulting from life experiences, it can be tailored to a specific social problem (Auger, 2000). This was important to this thesis because this thesis did not necessarily fit a 'text-

book' definition of a thesis. This thesis did not have a dependent and independent variable. Rather, this thesis involved many individuals and the variables that result from these individuals were not controllable. Thus, it was necessary to have a research methodology that is dependent on the inconsistencies that arise from real life experience.

Action research is often criticized for a lack of science. Critics argue that action research does not meet the criteria needed for scientific explanation (Aguinis, 1993). Because the methods used by an action researcher do not rely strictly on the scientific method, these critics feel that results from action research are not sufficient to explain a phenomenon. A second criticism of action research is that it does not concentrate on the present. Science methods focus on what is happening now, whereas action research looks at what occurs in the present and uses the occurrences to predict or even try to change the future. A third criticism of action research is that it does not use representative samples as the focus of the research. Action researchers review and analyze individual cases.

Supporters of action research reply to these criticisms with the following arguments. Action research does not attempt to confront normal science, but rather it is meant as an alternative means of analysis. Additionally, supporters argue that action research is important because it can complement normal science. Lastly, proponents of action research argue that action research is necessary. It is necessary because not all laws of human nature uncovered by conventional science are sufficient to explain every specific situation. There is a need to have a methodology that can look at individual situations.

Data Collection:

The two methods of data collection used in this thesis were questionnaires and interviews. Pre and post questionnaires were used to determine the amount of change in their actions the volunteer participants attributed to the thesis. The participants were surveyed twice during the duration of the thesis. The first questionnaire was given in December 2000 to the participants to assess the amount of citizen action they had taken relative to the three objectives of the thesis. This questionnaire was administered via mail and email. Information was gathered for the post questionnaire via a mail/email questionnaire and through a telephone interview. The mail/email questionnaire was given at the end of the thesis in January 2002 to determine whether there were any changes in the citizen action of the participants.

Ten participants were selected to receive the questionnaire via a telephone interview. These ten were participants with access to email. The researcher first emailed the participants asking them to be part of a telephone interview. Those who agreed (seven participants) were called and answered the same questions from the mail/email post questionnaire.

Questionnaires:

The questionnaires were chosen for data collection for several key reasons. First, questionnaires were the best choice because the researcher did not have direct personal contact with the project participants. Questionnaires could be easily mailed or emailed to the project participants. Second, questionnaire responses could be quantified and

analyzed with statistics. Additionally, questionnaires are relatively easy to administer. As mentioned above, the questionnaires were sent to the project participants via mail or email. Lastly, the questionnaires were cost effective, which is extremely important with a thesis with budget constraints. Sending the questionnaires via email did not cost any money and sending the questionnaires with postage paid, return addressed envelopes was within the means of the budget.

Interviews:

Interviewing is another means of collecting data for qualitative analysis that was used in this thesis. Telephone interviews were selected for several reasons (as opposed to face-to-face interviews). First, telephone interviews are not as time consuming as face-to-face interviews for the researcher. Additionally, interviewing over the telephone was less costly than a face-to-face interview. The budget for this thesis, as well as time constraints, precluded the use of face-to-face interviews. As stated above, the nature of the data needed was not complex, thus the simplest, most cost effective means of data collection was selected.

Participant Questionnaires:

As mentioned above, the participants received two questionnaires during the duration of the thesis. The two questionnaires were necessary to determine whether there was any change in citizen action of the participants from before they became involved in the theis to after their involvement. The difference in citizen action of the volunteers before and after participation was key to the thesis for two reasons. First, it was necessary determine

the researcher's success in addressing the three objectives. It was also used to assess if the thesis was successful in motivating the participants to complete the activities.

The first questionnaire was administered in December of 2000. The initial questionnaire addressed the citizen actions of the participants relative to the three objectives. Specifically, the participants were asked to describe their contact with each of the three audiences focused on in the objectives of the thesis. The actions reported by the participants were limited to those taken in the previous two years; information prior to December of 1998 was not requested. Specifically, the participants were asked to answer 'yes' or 'no' to the following question-

"Have you contacted the following persons or groups in the last two years regarding an issue pertaining to environmental education-

Member of your local School Board?

School Administrator ?

Elected or Appointed Public Official?"

The participants were also asked to describe the means of contact (e.g., letter) and the result of the contact. Specific to the elected or appointed public official, the participants were asked to identify the nature of the contact as either- "about increasing support for EE programs or about the importance of EE" with either a 'yes' or 'no' response. The participants were asked to identify the nature of the contact because the objective relating to elected and appointed officials is twofold. The objective is concerned with both increasing the support for EE programs from elected and appointed officials as well as increasing their understanding of the importance of EE. (Appendix F.)

The second questionnaire was administered at the end of the thesis in January of 2002. The second questionnaire contained the exact same questions as the first survey, except the time constraint was one year instead of two. The time constraint was included to limit the citizen actions to the duration of the thesis. Additionally, the participants were asked to describe the results of their contact. The purpose of the second questionnaire was to allow a comparison of results with the results of the first questionnaire to determine if the thesis was successful at motivating the participants to partake in citizen action in support of EE.

The researcher had to make a rather large, but not uncommon or uneducated assumption for this thesis. The researcher assumed that elected and appointed public officials (including school board members) would act on behalf of their constituents. Specifically, that the public officials would increase their public support for EE if they felt that their constituents felt strongly about EE. Public officials are elected by the people who live in their districts; thus public officials are responsible for representing their constituents. Those who do are often re-elected, and those who do not often are not re-elected.

Results

Introduction:

The three objectives for this thesis revolved around the idea of increasing support for EE from three specific audiences in Wisconsin. These audiences were school board members, school administrators, and elected or appointed public officials. The researcher had to make a rather large, but not uncommon or uneducated assumption for this thesis, which was that elected and appointed public officials (including school board members) would act on behalf of their constituents. Specifically, that the public officials would increase their public support for EE if they felt that their constituents felt strongly about EE because their re-election depends on their representation of their constituents.

The following chapter reports the results obtained in this thesis. These results were completed through the analysis of the pre and post questionnaires administered to the participants. The pre questionnaire was distributed to the participants in December 2000 via mail (to participants without email) and email (to those with email) before the thesis activities began. The post questionnaire was distributed also via mail and email at the conclusion of the thesis in January 2002.

Possible Questionnaire Responses:

The three questions used on the questionnaire were composed of several parts. The following section describes how the results of each part of the question were categorized in order to evaluate the success of the thesis.

Question One:

"Have you contacted the following persons or groups in the last 24 months (pre questionnaire)/12 months (post questionnaire) regarding an issue pertaining to environmental education- Member of your local school board? If yes, briefly describe the type of contact and the result of the contact." The three parts to this question are:

1. **Have you contacted a member of your local school board in the last XX months?** Responses could be either Yes or No.
2. **If yes, briefly describe the type of contact.** Responses could be via 1) telephone, 2) written (a letter or email), or 3) face-to-face meeting.
3. **If yes, briefly describe the result of the contact.** This portion of the question was included on the questionnaire as a means for the researcher to gain additional information regarding the status of EE in Wisconsin. Although important information, the answers provided by the participants to the third part of the question were not used to determine the success of the thesis. Determining the success of the thesis was through identifying the change in behavior of the participants of the thesis. Therefore, the result of the contact, although important information, it is not quantified in this evaluation. However, because the results of the contact are important to the nature of the thesis as a whole they will be discussed later in this chapter.

Question Two:

"In the last 24 months (pre questionnaire)/12 months (post questionnaire), have you contacted a school administrator regarding an issue pertaining to environmental

education- If yes, briefly describe the person you contacted, the type of contact and the result of the contact." The four parts to this question are:

1. **Have you contacted a member of your local school board in the last XX months?** Responses could be either Yes or No.
2. **If yes, briefly describe the person you contacted.** Responses could be principal, curriculum coordinator, or superintendent.
3. **If yes, briefly describe the type of contact.** Responses could be via 1) telephone, 2) written (a letter or email), or 3) face-to-face meeting.
4. **If yes, briefly describe the results of the contact.** Again, this portion of the question was included on the questionnaire as a means for the researcher to gain additional information regarding the status of EE in Wisconsin. Although important information, the answers provided by the participants to the third part of the question were not used to determine the success of the thesis. Determining the success of the thesis was through identifying the change in behavior of the participants of the thesis. Therefore, the result of the contact, although important information, is not utilized in this evaluation. However, because the results of the contact are important to the nature of the thesis as a whole they will be discussed later in this chapter.

Question Three:

"Have you contacted the following persons or groups in the last 24 months (pre questionnaire)/12 months (post questionnaire) regarding an issue pertaining to environmental education- elected or appointed public official? If yes, was the contact

about increasing support for EE programs? If yes, was the contact about the importance of EE? Briefly describe the person you contacted, the type of contact and the result of the contact." The six parts to this question are:

1. **Have you contacted an elected or appointed public official in the last XX months?** Responses could be either yes or no.
2. **If yes, was the contact about increasing support for EE programs?** Responses could be either yes or no.
3. **If yes, was the contact about the importance of EE?** Responses could be either yes or no.
4. **Briefly describe the person you contacted.** Responses could be local, state or national public officials.
5. **Briefly describe the type of contact.** Responses could be via 1) telephone, 2) written (a letter or email), or 3) face-to-face meeting.
6. **Briefly describe the results of the contact.** Again, this portion of the question was included on the questionnaire as a means for the researcher to gain additional information regarding the status of EE in Wisconsin. Although important information, the answers provided by the participants to the third part of the question were not used to determine the success of the thesis. Determining the success of the thesis was through identifying the change in behavior of the participants of the thesis. Therefore, the result of the contact, although important information, is not utilized in this evaluation. However, because the results of the contact are important to the nature of the thesis as a whole they will be discussed later in this chapter.

Questionnaire Results and Discussion:

There were 157 participants in the thesis and 157 pre questionnaires were sent in December 2000. The return rate for the questionnaires was 77.1% (121 returned). The same questions were used for both the pre and post questionnaire. In January 2002, 157 post questionnaires were sent and 107 were returned for a return rate of 68.2%. The following sections summarize the results of the questionnaire. This section will be divided into two parts- 1) a discussion of the results of each pre and post questionnaire question and 2) a comparison of the pre and post questionnaire results of all three questions.

Discussion of Results:

The first question on the questionnaire pertained to objective one, communicating the value of EE to Wisconsin school board members to increase their support for EE. The following table summarizes the results.

Table One: Questionnaire results regarding contacting a school board member.

Pre Questionnaire: n = 121		Post Questionnaire: n = 107	
Have you contacted a member of your local school board within the last 24 months?		Have you contacted a member of your local school board within the last 12 months?	
Yes: 13 No: 108	Yes: 12% No: 88%	Yes: 75 No: 32	Yes: 70.1% No: 29.9%
Briefly describe the type of contact-		Briefly describe the type of contact-	
Phone: 3 Written: 8 Face-to-Face: 2	Phone: 23.1% Written: 61.5% Face-to-Face: 15.4%	Phone: 5 Written: 66 Face-to-Face: 4	Phone: 6.7% Written: 88% Face-to-Face: 5.3%

The questionnaire results show that 12% of respondents contacted a member of their school board within two years prior to joining the "Making a Difference" campaign. This number rose to 70.1% at the ending of the thesis, for an increase of 584.2%. According to the pre and post questionnaire results, the most chosen method of contact was written contact.

The second question on the questionnaire pertained to objective two, communicating the value of EE to Wisconsin school administrative staff to increase their support for EE. The following table summarizes the results.

Table Two: Questionnaire results regarding contacting a school administrator.

Pre Questionnaire: n = 121		Post Questionnaire: n = 107	
Have you contacted a school administrator in the past 24 months?		Have you contacted a school administrator in the past 24 months?	
Yes: 2 No: 119	Yes: 1.7% No: 98.3%	Yes: 78 No: 29	Yes: 73.9% No: 26.1%
Briefly describe the person you contacted-		Briefly describe the person you contacted-	
Principal: 2 Curriculum Coordinator: 0 Superintendent: 0	100% 0% 0%	Principal: 17 Curriculum Coordinator: 58 Superintendent: 3	21.8% 74.4% 3.8%
Briefly describe the type of contact-		Briefly describe the type of contact-	
Phone: 2 Written: 0 Face -to-Face: 0	Phone: 100% Written: 0% Facet -to-Face: 0%	Phone: 7 Written: 67 Facet -to-Face: 4	Phone: 9.0% Written: 85.9% Facet -to-Face: 5.1%

The questionnaire results show that 1.7% of respondents contacted a member of their school board within two years prior to joining the "Making a Difference" campaign. This number rose to 73.9% at the ending of the thesis, for an increase of 4,347.1%. The majority of respondents contacted a curriculum coordinator (74.4%). The results of the

pre questionnaire show that the chosen method of contact was via the telephone, however, this dramatically changed during the thesis. According to the post questionnaire, the majority of respondents chose a written correspondence (85.9%) over a telephone correspondence (9.0%).

The third question on the questionnaire pertained to objective three, communicating the value and importance of EE to elected/appointed officials to increase their support for EE programs. The following table summarizes the results.

Table Three: Questionnaire results regarding contacting an elected or appointed public official.

Pre Questionnaire: n = 121		Post Questionnaire: n = 107	
Have you contacted an elected or appointed public official within the last 24 months?		Have you contacted an elected or appointed public official within the last 12 months?	
Yes: 7 No: 114	Yes: 5.8% No: 94.2%	Yes: 95 No: 12	Yes: 88.8% No: 11.2%
If yes, was it about increasing support for EE programs?		If yes, was it about increasing support for EE programs?	
Yes: 0 No: 7	Yes: 0% No: 100%	Yes: 95 No: 0	Yes: 100% No: 0%
If yes, was it about the importance of EE?		If yes, was it about the importance of EE?	
Yes: 0 No: 7	Yes: 0% No: 100%	Yes: 95 No: 0	Yes: 100% No: 0%
If yes, briefly describe the person you contacted- **Not Applicable**		If yes, briefly describe the person you contacted-	
Local level- 0 State level- 0 National level- 0	Local level- State level- National level-	Local level- 0 State level- 87 National level- 8	Local level- 0% State level- 91.6% National level- 8.4%
If yes, what type of contact was made- **Not Applicable**		If yes, what type of contact was made-	
Phone- 0 Written- 0 Face-to-Face- 0	Phone- Written- Face-to-Face-	Phone- 0 Written- 95 Face-to-Face- 0	Phone- 0% Written- 100% Face-to-Face- 0%

The questionnaire results show that 5.8% of respondents contacted an elected or appointed official within two years prior to joining the "Making a Difference" campaign. This number rose to 88.8% at the ending of the thesis, for an increase of 1531.0%. According to the results of the pre questionnaire, the topic of EE was not addressed in the seven contacts to elected or appointed officials. On the other hand, 100% of the contacts made during the thesis pertained to EE, which is fitting, because the thesis activities suggested contacting an elected or appointed official. According to the post questionnaire results, 91.6% of the contacts were made to state level officials and 100% of these contacts were made with a written correspondence.

Discussion of the Pre and Post Questionnaire Results:

This thesis aimed to increase support for EE from three key audiences in Wisconsin. All three audiences are deemed influential and therefore no one is considered "more important" than the other. Therefore it is important to compare the contact made to each discrete audience.

According to the results of the pre questionnaire, the majority of respondents (12%) contacted a member of their local school board. Less than 2% (1.7%) of respondents contacted a school administrator and although 5.8% contacted an elected or appointed official, none of these contacts pertained to EE.

Comparing these results to the results of the post questionnaire, the majority of respondents (88.8%) contacted an elected or appointed official, 73.9% contacted a school administrator, and 70.1% contacted a member of the school board.

"Results" of the Contact:

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the pre and post questionnaires asked respondents to describe the results of the contacts made. This information was not quantified for analysis, but it is worthwhile to note the outcome of the contacts made during the thesis. In this section, the outcome of the contacts made during the thesis will be discussed.

Objective One: Determine whether interventions taken in this thesis have an impact on the frequency participants communicate the value and importance of EE to school board members.

First, it is important to state that although the post questionnaire asked respondents to describe the results of the contact with school board members, the majority of respondents (78.6%) did not. This could be for several reasons. First, participants may not know the result of the contact. For example, they may have written a letter of support for EE to a school board member. The participant did not know if there was a result from the letter. Second, the participants maybe did not want to take the time to answer this question.

Comments from the post questionnaire include:

- "Once they understood that my commitment to education was genuine and that my understanding was deep, they were much more receptive to hearing about EE."
- "To date, positive progress is being made to begin the integration of EE into all levels of the curriculum."

- "Have received good support from the school board members."
- "No luck urging to reinstate EE field trip transportation funds."

Objective Two: Determine whether interventions taken in this thesis have an impact on the frequency participants communicate the value and importance of EE to school administrative staff.

Again, the majority of respondents (80.4%) did not respond to this question. Again, this could be for several reason, as listed above.

Comments from the post questionnaire include:

- "Discussed collaboration projects. Results were OK, support verbally and somewhat in action. They are feeling constrained."
- "Excellent response with joint funding and collaborative grants projects."
- "Letters of support of EE field trips by principals."
- "I met with one of the elementary principals on several occasions and feel that she is open to the hands-on teaching/learning techniques and the added contact between community and school."
- "I met with the middle school principal and he told me they already do EE (the sixth graders to a three day residential camp). He is not interested in hearing more about EE."

Objective Three: Determine whether interventions taken in this thesis have an impact on the frequency participants communicate the value and importance of EE to elected/appointed officials.

Unlike the other two questions, the majority of respondents (78.5%) did respond to this question. The vast majority of respondents (85.9%) contacted a representative in response to the budget concerns of the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board in July 2001. Additionally, many respondents (35.8%) contacted the State Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding reinstating the EE Consultant position.

Comments from the post questionnaire include:

- "Letter, email and phone contact about reinstating the funding (for WEEB) with limitations of scope of the $ could be used for."
- "I wrote an email to my representative regarding the WEEB grant program funding."
- "Contacted my representative about the WEEB funding. They received the funding."
- "Attempted to convey the importance of EE to Elizabeth Burmaster."
- "I emailed the State Superintendent in support for EE."
- "Wrote an email to Elizabeth Burmaster about the importance of the EE Specialist."

Conclusion

Introduction:

The thesis to implement two goals of the WEEB Communication Plan began in December 2000 and ended in January 2002. The objectives of the thesis were to increase support for EE by three key audiences in Wisconsin- school board members, school administrators, and elected and appointed public officials through communication with the project participants. The success of the thesis was determined by the change in behavior of the participants during the thesis. Specifically, the researcher compared the amount of contact participants had with the three audiences prior to involvement in the thesis and after the thesis.

This final chapter contains an analysis of results, implications for future use, and recommendations for future efforts.

Review of Objectives:

There were three objectives to this thesis. Each of the objectives was similar. In this section, each of the objectives will be analyzed individually.

Objective One: Project participants communicate the value of EE to Wisconsin school board members and increase their support for EE.

One activity included in the thesis asked participants to contact members of their school boards. The results of the pre questionnaire showed that within the two years prior to the thesis, 12% of respondents had contacted a member of their local school board regarding EE. The results of the post questionnaire showed that during the

duration of the thesis, 70% of respondents had contacted a member of their local school board regarding EE, for an increase of 583%.

Objective Two: Project participants communicate the value of EE to Wisconsin school administrators and increase their support for EE.

A second focus for the activities of the thesis asked participants to contact school administrators about the importance of EE programs. The results of the pre questionnaire showed that within the two years prior to the thesis, less than 2% of respondents had contacted a school administrator. Upon completion of the thesis, 74% of respondents had contacted a school administrator.

Objective Three: Project participants communicate the value and importance of EE to elected and appointed officials and increase their support for EE programs.

A third focus of the thesis focused the efforts of the participants on increasing the support for EE programs from elected and appointed officials. Pre questionnaire results showed that just fewer than 6% of respondents contacted an elected or appointed official and none of the contacts were regarding EE. Post questionnaire results showed that nearly all of the respondents (94%) had contacted an elected or appointed official about EE programs.

It is important to note that the majority of respondents responded to the activity pertaining to the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board grant program. Additionally, many respondents contacted Elizabeth Burmaster (State Superintendent of Public Instruction) about the importance of EE.

Implications for Future Use:

There are several key implications for future use of this thesis. Looking at the change in participant behavior based on the results of the pre and post questionnaires it is evident that this thesis did impact the environmental and educational community in Wisconsin. This thesis is one part of a larger picture of addressing the obvious need to increase support for EE in Wisconsin. Therefore, the success of this thesis, based on participant behavior change has implications for this overall goal.

The obvious implication for future use of this thesis is the establishment of similar projects in other states. Research, as described in chapter two of this thesis, shows the importance of EE and the impact EE has on student performance (Palmer, et.al., 1996. United States Environmental Protection Agency, 1996. Lieberman and Hoody, 1998). Additionally, all states have a professional organization for environmental educators. These professional EE organizations should support and facilitate a project similar to this one for several reasons. First, the professional organization has access to and support of hundreds of EE supporters in the state. Second, the professional organization can serve as a hub of information relevant to EE at the local, state, and national levels.

Implementing a project similar to this thesis would not be overly time consuming. The "Making a Difference" packet as well as the WEEB Communication Plan could be used as a model for other state organizations in the development of similar products. Additionally, with the proliferation of access to the Internet, more and more members have access to email accounts as well as the web site of the professional organization. The information from the "Making a Difference" packet could be available via the

Internet, and contact could be made to the members of the professional organization via email, at virtually no cost to the organization.

Third, the members of the professional organization are a vital asset to the project, for several reasons. First, they are supporters of EE. Second, they would benefit from an increase in support for EE by key decision-makers in the state. Third, the members of the organizations could use personal anecdotes in their contacts to these decision-makers. Additionally, by providing sample letters, the actual time it takes to complete an activity is minimal. Lastly, the coordinated effort of the members of an entire organization would have more of an impact than one person acting alone.

A second implication for the use of this thesis relates to the fact that the funding for EE programs at the federal, state, and local levels fluctuates greatly. As schools and governments face budget constraints, difficult decisions have to be made. Subjects, like EE, which are viewed by some as less important than other subjects, like math, are likely to be cut first. Organizing a group of EE supporters is one key step to ensuring funding for EE.

Recommendations for Future Efforts:

The success of this particular thesis was determined by the change in behavior of the participants. However, the assessment needs to be expanded to truly address the overall goals of the larger effort- to increase support for EE in Wisconsin.

There are several aspects that could have been included in the planning of the thesis to help achieve the both the goal of this thesis as well as the overall goals of WEEB's goals described in the Communication Plan. In general, the researcher recommends that a detailed plan be devised prior to the start of a similar project. Specific recommendations follow pertaining to the selection of participants and the selection of an advisory committee.

Participant Selection:

The participants in this thesis were selected through several contact lists, including a membership list of the Wisconsin Association for EE and a listing of recipients of grants from WEEB. These two groups were certainly important to the success of the thesis, as the members of each list were currently involved in EE. However, to be even more effective on a local and state level, the researcher suggests that other environmental organizations be solicited in this type of effort.

Secondly, volunteers should be solicited from regions throughout the state to serve as key liaisons between the researcher and the participants in the thesis. This would be beneficial for several reasons. First, by including a liaison in the thesis, there would be a "face" for the thesis. Participants would associate the thesis with an actual person, rather than through a computer screen. Second, it would help ensure the success and concentration of the efforts of participants at a local level. Third, by having a liaison in a specific region, that liaison could help ensure that all potential parties were involved in the campaign. For example, by having a liaison in Eau Claire, that liaison would be more aware of the local environmental groups, such as the Eau Claire Bike-To-Work group,

and be a local contact between that organization and the larger EE community. A fourth way the liaison would be key to the success of the thesis is that by communicating with the liaison, the researcher would have continuous feedback about the thesis.

Advisory Committee:

As mentioned above, it would be advantageous to have the support of the state level professional EE organization for an effort like this. This thesis impacted EE at the local and state level. The success in achieving the overall goals of WEEB and the Communication Plan rely on collaboration and support for not only the EE community in Wisconsin, but also from the environmental and education community.

The researcher suggests that an advisory committee be identified. This advisory committee would link the efforts, ideas, and resources of environmental and education interests in the state. Members of the advisory committee would serve as contacts for the project coordinator and also provide key contacts to others in the state. By organizing an advisory committee for the thesis, more interests in the state would be "on board" and therefore have an interest in achieving the goal of increasing support for EE in Wisconsin.

Conclusion:

The thesis, "The Implementation of the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board Communication Plan to Promote Environmental Education in Wisconsin" began in September 2000 and ended in December 2001. Over 150 EE supporters in Wisconsin joined together to increase support for EE in Wisconsin. Using the "Making a

Difference" packet and the "EE Works for Wisconsin" web site, these project participants attempted to communicate the value of EE to three key audiences- school board members, school administrators, and elected and appointed officials.

Although the researcher could not measure the actual results of the contacts, the overall change in participant behavior illustrates a dramatic increase in communication between EE supporters in Wisconsin and members of school boards, school administrators, and elected and appointed officials. The dramatic increase could have been the result of many factors. Most importantly, the researcher feels the increase occurred because completing an action was made relatively easy for the volunteers. The volunteers were provided with the contact information for the elected officials, for example, as well as a detailed suggestions for making the contact.

Literature Cited

"The ABC's of activism." Sierra Club. Jan/Feb. 1996, Page 23.

Aguinis, Herman. "Action research and scientific method." Journal of Applied Behavioral Science. December 1993. Volume 29, issue 4. Pages 416-432.

Auger, Wendy and Wideman, Ron. "Using action research to open the door to life-long professional learning." Education, Fall 2000. Volume 121, issue 1. Pages 120-128.

Chawla, Louise. "Life paths into effective environmental action." Journal of Environmental Education. Fall, 1999, Pages 15-26.

Davis, Steven M. "Environmental politics and the changing context of interest group organization." Social Science Journal. 1999, Volume 33, Issue 4, Pages 343-358.

Denzin, Norman K. and Lincoln, Yvonna S. Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials. SAGE Publishing. Thousand Oaks, California, 1998.

Engleson, David. "Wisconsin environmental education timeline." Unpublished document, 1999.

"Environmental education at a glance." North American Association for Environmental Education. Washington D. C., 1998.

Lieberman, Gerald A. and Hoody, Linda L. Closing the Achievement Gap. Science Wizards Publishing. Poway, California, 1998.

"Making a Difference." Unpublished document. UWSP environmental education graduate students. University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point.

Marshall, Catherine and Rossman, Gretchen B. Designing qualitative research. SAGE Publishing. Thousand Oaks, California, 1989.

Palmer, Joy A. and Suggate, Jennifer. "Influences and experiences affecting the pro-environmental behavior of educators." Environmental Education Research. February 1996, Pages 109-122.

"Report assessing environmental education in the United States and the implementation of the National Environmental Education Act of 1990." National Environmental Education Advisory Council. United States Environmental Protection Agency. Washington D. C., December 1996.

Scott, William and Oulton, Chris. "Environmental values education: an exploration of its role in the school curriculum." Science of Moral Education. June 1998. Pages 209-227.

Simmons, Bora. "How can environmental education support education reform?" NAAEE Environmental Communicator. March/April 1995, Pages 6-7.

WEEB Grant Award- project number 2000-0079. Written by Jennifer Folsom. Project duration July 2000-December 2001.

Wilke, Richard and Ruskey, Abby. "A Survey of the Status of State-Level Environmental Education in the United States--1998 Update." Journal of Environmental Education. Spring 2001, Pages 4-15.

Wisconsin Environmental Education Board's web site at http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/weeb.

Appendix A:

The Wisconsin Environmental Education Board's

"Communication Plan to Promote Environmental Education in Wisconsin."

Communication Plan to Promote EE in Wisconsin

Background

The need in Wisconsin to strengthen efforts to communicate the value of EE and increase support for EE was identified at the 1995 Wisconsin Environmental Education Board EE Summit. Both the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education (WAEE) and the WEEB discussed strategies for addressing this need. In 1998 an ad-hoc committee of the WAEE Board, chaired by Paul Wozniak developed a WAEE -Communications Plan addressing this need. Also during 1998 the staff of the UW-SP based National Environmental Education Advancement Project (NEEAP) worked with representatives of the WAEE Communications Committee, WEEB, the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education, UW Extension, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to develop the "EE Works for Wisconsin" promotional materials. In January of 1998 NEEAP and the WAEE Communications Committee sponsored a media training workshop for Wisconsin EE leaders. Also during 1998, a Communications Committee of the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, chaired by Pat Marinac, developed a plan to build upon previous efforts to promote EE in Wisconsin. During the summer of 1999 Dr. Rick Wilke proposed bringing together the WAEE, WEEB and NEEAP efforts for the purpose of more effectively promoting EE in Wisconsin. He offered the assistance of graduate students in his EE Research Seminar. The graduate students with advice from Dr. Wilke and input from key representatives of WAEE, WEEB and NEEAP designed and assisted in the implementation of a communication plan to promote EE in Wisconsin. The group used the WAEE Communication Plan as a starting point in the development of their plan.

Vision

The development and implementation of a Wisconsin EE Communications/Promotion Plan will result in a demonstrated increase in recognition, acceptance and support for EE by decision makers on school boards, parent organizations, school administrative staffs, members of the legislature, and the news media.

Mission

To achieve broader public acceptance and support for EE in Wisconsin.

Timeframe: January 1, 2000 - December 31, 2001

Goals

1. To communicate the value of environmental education to Wisconsin school board members and school administrative staff and to increase their support for environmental education.

2. To help elected/appointed officials understand the importance of environmental education and increase their support of environmental education programs.

3. To increase recognition and support for environmental education by members of the news media in Wisconsin.

4. To increase support from parents and members of parent organizations for environmental education within their schools.

5. To improve the implementation of Wisconsin's existing environmental education teacher training requirement at universities and colleges.

A major part of the effort to achieve these goals will be completed by volunteers across the state, including parents, teachers, administrators, and business people who support EE in Wisconsin. To help these volunteers become organized and to give them a head start in their effort an organizing packet was developed and will be sent to select individuals across the state (UWSP EE Summer Master's program students, EE Liaisons, and EE centers/ organizations in the state). The packet will describe for the volunteers what kind of action is needed to support EE in their community and how they can take that action. It will include the following information pertaining to all five goals:

- Information about how to use the packet
- Frequently Asked Questions about EE
- 12 Reasons for EE
- Tips for writing letters and news releases in support of EE
- Questions for parents to ask school boards about EE in their community
- Example letters and news releases in support of EE including:
    - Letter from a parent to parent organization
    - Letter from a teacher to parent organization
    - Letter to the editor to alert public of the need for EE
    - Letter to the editor to encourage school district support for EE
- Letter to school board member from parent
- Follow up letter to school board member from parent
- News release highlighting key messages of EE and successful EE programs in the area
- "EE Works for Wisconsin" brochure

Specific examples of documents to assist with all the organization or implementation steps with an asterisk (*) after them are included in a separate organizing packet.

Goal # 1

To communicate the value of EE to Wisconsin school board members and school administrative staffs and to increase their support for EE.

Objective 1A - School boards and school administrative staffs will evaluate their district's K-12 EE curriculum requirements and support the development and implementation of curriculum plans based on the new DPI EE Guidelines.

Objective 1B - School boards and school administrative staffs will increase their support for EE programs by placing greater emphasis on funding and staff development.

Strategies for Targeting School Boards and School Administrative Staffs

A) Organizational Steps

- Obtain mailing lists of school administrative staffs, including school principals, curriculum coordinators and district superintendents.

- Determine the level of implementation and evaluation of the legislatively required EE Curriculum plans in Wisconsin school districts through surveys completed with the assistance of the EE Liaison Teachers and the teachers enrolled in the Summer EE Masters program at the UW-SP. (Based on prior research and on recently competed research it is) known that implementation levels are low).

- Develop a news release highlighting the lack of school district compliance with state legislation and Department of Public Instruction rules requiring the development implementation and evaluation of K-12 EE Curriculum Plans. The story will also point to other shortcomings: a) lack of EE assessment, b) unlike surrounding states, Wisconsin has no DPI EE Specialist position, etc. **Story -** *Wisconsin schools are not mating state requirements to provide an environmental education to out children. Surrounding states are doing much more. 7his is in spite of the fact that 96% of the nation's parents want EE taught to their children in schools.*

- Develop components of the organizing packet including:*
  - An explanation of the benefits of EE
  - Example letters to school board members and school administrative staff-s
  - Specific questions to ask school board members and school administrative staffs

- Key messages to communicate to school board members and school administrative staffs
- Example letters to the editor describing the need for increased emphasis on EE in the local K- 12 curriculum. The packet win also include suggestions for implementing this effort.

- Identify organizations and individuals who are willing to become involved in efforts to communicate the need for EE in the K-12 curriculum to school boards and school administrative staffs.

- Develop and disseminate a persuasive article for appropriate newsletters(WAEE, Wisconservation, etc.) and targeted mailings (WAEE members, etc.) describing the need to communicate to school boards and school administrative staffs the importance of strengthening EE in their districts. The article would also request people to become involved in this effort and provide information on how to obtain the organizing packet containing implementation suggestions and resources.

B) Implementation Steps

- Distribute the organizing packet to select EE supporters across the state.

- Disseminate the news release to state media markets regarding the shortcomings in implementation of legislative and DPI EE requirements and the potential association of these shortcomings and the lack of environmental literacy in the K-12 students of Wisconsin. Organize editorial board, radio and television follow-up stories.

- Request interested parties to write letters of concern to school boards, individual school board members, school administrative staffs, and their local newspaper. Parents, teachers, environmental organizations, environmental education organizations, and community businesses are all potential interested parties. Letters should address specific concerns and encourage a review of the district's EE curriculum and a discussion of the status of the curriculum at a school board meeting.*

- Encourage interested parties to attend and participate in the school board meeting that the EE curriculum and curriculum review is discussed.

- Encourage interested parties to present their views on the district's EE curriculum at multiple school board meetings and at statewide events, such as the Wisconsin Association of School Boards annual conference.

- Encourage your school board members and school administrative staffs to participate in EE professional development. Alert them of upcoming events,

conferences, and courses. Possibly provide assistance with registration or otherwise coordinate their involvement.

- Highlight exemplary EE that is occurring in their district or nearby districts in the form of a letter, in person at a board meeting, or by providing them the opportunity to have a hands-on experience viewing the program in action.

- Coordinate student involvement in as many of the above strategies as feasible and age appropriate. Provide opportunities for students to write letters, present at board meetings, and invite school board members and school administrative staff to their classroom.

- Develop a follow-up plan to encourage continued discussion implementation of decisions made at school board meetings. Future coordination, presentations, or letters will be needed.

Goal # 2

To help elected/ appointed officials understand the importance of EE and increase their support of EE programs.

Objective 2A – Elected / appointed officials will support the assessment of environmental literacy in conjunction with the ongoing statewide student assessment programs administered by the DPI.

Objective 2B – Elected / appointed officials will support the reinstatement of the EE Specialist position in the DPI.

Objective 2C – Elected / appointed officials will specifically support the WEEB and its programs.

Strategies for Targeting Elected/Appointed Officials

A) Organizational Steps

- Request WEEB support for annual environmental literacy assessment of Wisconsin students. The research project would: a) identify the existing state assessment questions that address the Wisconsin EE Standards, b) identify voids where the EE standards are not being assessed, c) develop valid and reliable questions to fill the voids, d) provide assistance to DPI in inserting the questions in appropriate on-going state assessments, and e) provide an annual environmental literacy assessment of Wisconsin students.

- Develop a news release highlighting reasons why Wisconsin schools need an EE Specialist at the DPL Reasons could include: since the EE Specialist position was eliminated, there has been no assessment of the EE curriculum requirement and there has been no EE outreach program available to schools for staff or curriculum development.

- Identify interested parties who are willing to become involved in efforts to communicate the need for an EE Specialist position and for assessment of environmental literacy among Wisconsin students.

- Develop an example letter to elected/ appointed officials to be included in the organizing packet, requesting the reinstatement of the EE Specialist position in the DPI.

- Identify elected/appointed officials who will support the assessment of environmental literacy in conjunction with the current statewide student assessment conducted by the DPI.

B) Implementation Steps

- Obtain the financial and political support of the WEEB for the development of an annual environmental literacy assessment of Wisconsin students.

- Distribute organizing packet to Summer EE Masters degree students and EE Liaison Teachers.

- Disseminate the news release regarding the lack of a DPI EE specialist to state media markets. Organize editorial board, radio, and television follow-up stories.

- Request EE Liaison Teachers and Summer EE Masters degree students to write letters of concern to the State Superintendent and other elected / appointed officials describing the importance of an EE Specialist at the DPI and the statewide assessment of EE literacy.

- Request EE Liaison Teachers and Summer EE Masters degree students to solicit similar letter of support for an EE Specialist at the DPI from other teachers, school administrators and parents.*

Goal # 3

To increase recognition and support for environmental education by members of the news media in Wisconsin.

Objective 3A - Wisconsin radio, television and newspapers will increase the coverage of EE-related news and events.

Objective 3B - A network of key media contacts across Wisconsin who are supportive of EE will be developed and maintained.

Strategies for Targeting Members of the News Media in Wisconsin

A) Organizational Steps

- Identify the major media markets in Wisconsin. Determine if a network of media contacts that are supportive of environmental education exists in these markets. These contacts should be in varied media outlets (newspaper, radio, TV) across the state. If such a network does not exist, it should be developed through the assistance of state EE organizations and/or media consultants with ties in these major markets.

- Develop components of the organizing packet including news releases, tips for writing news releases and advice for doing media coverage.

- Collaborate with EE grants programs in the state (such as WEEB). As a stipulation of the grant award, grantees must send out news releases on their projects. Grantees should relate the key messages from the "EE Works for Wisconsin" promotional materials to their project.

- Leadership should be provided by WEEB in developing a media workshop for EE organizations/conferences. The workshop will stress the importance of media relationships, the different types of media, and how to get your project/event/center into the news.

B) Implementation Steps

- Hold workshops for the staff and volunteers from environmental education centers and EE organizations at state conferences to educate EE supporters about gaining media coverage for their center/project.

- Encourage teachers and organizations to write news releases about events or projects that are being developed or implemented in their schools, EE centers or organizations. The news releases should include information pertaining to the key messages from the "EE Works for Wisconsin" program. *

- Encourage EE centers, EE organizations, and schools to maintain contact with media representatives in their major market area. EE centers, organizations, and schools should make sure that media representatives in newspaper, radio and TV know of EE related events or projects occurring in their area.

- Request the Summer EE Master's students, EE Liaisons, parent organizations and other teachers to write op-ed articles supporting EE for newspapers in their area.

- Require WEEB grantees to write and send out news releases pertaining to their funded project. The news releases should relate the key EE messages for Wisconsin to the purpose of their project.

Goal # 4

To increase support from parents and members of parent organizations for environmental education within their schools.

Objective 4A- Parent organizations will Increase financial support and volunteer time on behalf of EE programs in their schools.

Objective 4B - The number of parents expressing support for EE programming to schoolteachers, administrators, and school board members will increase.

Strategies for Targeting Parents and Members of Parent Organizations

A) Organizational Steps

- Identify the parent organizations for schools or school districts and the contact people for these organizations.

- Identify the manner that the parent organization can further EE. Some examples include: using profits raised from parent organization fundraisers to purchase EE materials or to fund residential or day visits to local environmental education/nature centers or providing parent volunteers as chaperones on EE field trips or assisting teachers in the classroom with EE activities.

- Develop components of the organizing packet including:
  - Laws governing EE curriculum implementation
  - The current level of EE curriculum implementation
  - Statistics on parental support for EE
  - An example letter to request support from parent organizations for EE. The promotional material "EE Works for Wisconsin" should be included.

B) Implementation Steps

- Alert environmental educators, specifically those individuals receiving the organizing packet, as to the benefits of parental support.

- Encourage environmental educators, EE centers / organizations, teachers and parents to write letters and / or give presentations to parent organizations

describing ways parent organizations can be involved in supporting EE programs at their school.

- Encourage formal and nonformal environmental educators to request support from parent organizations for *specific* upcoming programs, activities, and events.

- Encourage organizations to write new releases supporting and describing the benefits of EE with the target audience of these releases being parents and parent organizations.*

Goal # 5

To improve the implementation of Wisconsin's existing environmental education teacher training requirement at universities and colleges.

Objective 5A - The EE Specialist position will be reinstated at the DPI.

Objective 5B - The DPI will evaluate the implementation of the EE teacher training requirement at universities and colleges.

Strategies for Targeting Wisconsin's Universities and Colleges

A) Organizational Steps

- Identify teachers who have graduated from teacher training programs in Wisconsin and are interested in becoming involved in efforts to communicate the need to evaluate the EE teacher training requirement in Wisconsin universities and colleges.

- Develop a news release for appropriate newsletters (WAEE, PTA/PTO environmental and business newsletters, etc.) and targeted mailings (WAEE members, etc.) describing the need for the reinstatement of the EE Specialist position at the DPI and a DPI evaluation of EE teacher training requirements at universities and colleges.

- Identify interested parties who are willing to become involved in communicating the need for an EE Specialist at the DPI and DPI evaluation of the implementation of the EE teacher training requirements at universities and colleges.

B) Implementation Steps

- Disseminate the news release described above.

- Request interested parties to write letters of concern to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, to key members of the legislature and to their local newspaper.

- Request teachers to write ""testimonials" of using EE in their classroom, the benefits of having an EE Specialist at the DPI, and the usefulness of pre-service and in-service training in EE. These letters can be submitted to local newspaper and environmental organizations/ associations newsletters.

Appendix B:

The "Making a Difference" packet

Making a Difference:

Strategies for Supporting Environmental Education in Wisconsin

Making a Difference was developed by graduate students from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources in conjunction with the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board's (WEEB) ad-hoc Committee on EE Communications and Promotion. WEEB provided funding for printing and distribution of this packet through a grant to the Wisconsin Environmental Education Association.

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
College of Natural Resources

Dear Environmental Education Supporter,

We are requesting your assistance in increasing the support for environmental education (EE) in Wisconsin! Whether you are a parent looking for the best education for your child, a teacher searching for more support for EE in your classroom or a citizen concerned about the environmental education students are receiving, this *Making a Difference* packet can help you. Included are examples of letters that target specific audiences and ask for their support for environmental education. We need you to be part of a statewide campaign for EE.

The release of this packet precedes a major, statewide media campaign beginning in the spring of 2000. Environmental education supporters from across the state will be working with the media to increase media coverage about EE. With this major media campaign in full swing, the public will be primed and receptive to your specific environmental education concerns and needs.

We would like you to take a local leadership role in this statewide effort. There are only a select few in Wisconsin receiving this packet. Share the information in your *Making a Difference* packet with colleagues and friends who may be interested in helping you get the word out about what EE is and why Wisconsin schools need to develop and implement quality EE programs.

Use the resources in this packet to strengthen environmental education in your school district and local community. With your support and that of others around the state, we can strengthen EE across Wisconsin. Please help us encourage people to demonstrate their support for environmental education to local newspapers, community leaders, school boards, and organizations. As general public support increases for EE, support for your local EE programs will increase as well.

If you need any assistance or would like to receive additional packets, please contact Kerry Eastman at (715) 346-4748 or Dr. Rick Wilke at (715) 346-4766, or Email Joan Hewett at jhewe690@uwsp.edu. Thank you in advance for your participation in this effort. Good luck increasing the support for your environmental education programs!

Sincerely,

Rick Wilke, Ph.D.
College of Natural Resources
UW– Stevens Point

Rick Koziel, Chair
WI Environmental
Education Board (WEEB)

Cindy Halter, Chair
WI Association for
Environmental Education
(WAEE)

Making a Difference: Strategies for Increasing Support for Environmental Education in Wisconsin was developed by graduate students from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources working with the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board's ad-hoc Committee on EE Communications and Promotion.

Table of Contents

How do I get started?

Your Role:
While one person can certainly "make a difference," a more effective way to promote environmental education is by working with a group of dedicated people. As a leader in this effort, your first step is to organize a committee of a few individuals who are willing to spend a small amount of their time to promote EE in their schools and state. Anyone who supports environmental education is a possible committee member. Try to include a variety of people. Some suggestions for members are:

- Parents
- Teachers
- Local business people
- Community EE, outdoor, or nature center employees
- Environmental organization members

The Role of the Working Committee:
Once established, the working committee needs to develop a plan for supporting environmental education. Suggestions for communicating with key audiences (such as the public, parent organizations, school boards, and state employees) are included in this packet. The Committee should: a) determine what the group's specific purpose is, b) discuss the steps you will take to accomplish this goal , and c) develop a timeline. A proposed timeline for reaching the public, parents, and eventually the school board is as follows:

• Step 1	Letters to the editor, over a period of several weeks
• Step 2	News release to local paper
• Step 3	Letters to the school board and parent organizations
• Step 4	Follow-up letters to school board and parent organizations, as needed
• Step 5	School board meeting
• Step 6	Letters to the editor and news releases addressing progress

General Tips for Running an Effective Campaign:

- Remember to be realistic with your timeframes. It takes time to build public support and reach school board members.
- Take advantage of public speaking opportunities. Be prepared and confident in your speeches.
- Do not underestimate the potential of casual interactions. Talk to friends and family about EE.
- Edit your letters and news releases. Ask others to review them and give honest feedback.
- Rehearse school board presentations in front of colleagues, friends, and family.
- Be persistent. If your letter does not get published immediately or the school board does not respond to your initial inquiries, don't give up. People are busy and may unintentionally forget to respond. Mail a second letter or make another phone call.

Get the FAQs about EE:

Frequently Asked Questions about Environmental Education

What is Environmental Education (EE)?
According to the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB), "EE is a lifelong learning process that leads to an informed and involved citizenry having creative problem solving skills, scientific and social literacy, ethical awareness and sensitivity for the relationship between humans and the environment, and commitment to engage in responsible individual and cooperative actions. By these actions, environmentally literate citizens will help ensure an ecologically and economically sustainable environment."

Why is Environmental Education important for Wisconsin?

- Builds a knowledgeable and skilled citizenry.
- Promotes a balanced analysis of social, economic and ecological needs.
- Improves the quality of education, better preparing tomorrow's leaders.
- Makes education relevant to students, bonding schools and communities.

What characterizes quality Environmental Education?
Quality environmental education maintains a balanced viewpoint when presenting information to students. It presents all sides of an environmental issue, providing students with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed decisions. Good EE also teaches adults and children effective techniques for citizen action. Since good EE makes economic and environmental sense, high quality environmental education programs often have partners in business and industry.

What is NOT Environmental Education?
Environmental education does *not* attempt to influence people's opinions, decisions, or values. It teaches them how to develop educated ones. EE is also *not* environmental advocacy. EE is *not* in opposition with the economy, business, industry, or recreational activities. Environmental educators do *not* encourage environmentalism. As John Hug states in his essay "Two Hats" published in the WI Department of Public Instruction's Guide to Curriculum Planning in Environmental Education (1998), the environmental educator is "a developer of skills and an information analyst who prepares the people (from any segment of the population) who will participate in environmental decision making."

Why should Environmental Education be taught in schools?
Environmental education can be integrated into all subject areas, facilitating a true interdisciplinary approach to education. Through the investigation of current environmental issues, EE produces skilled and critically thinking graduates. Several national studies have shown that students from schools that have environmental education programs test higher on standardized tests than those students who attend schools without environmental education.

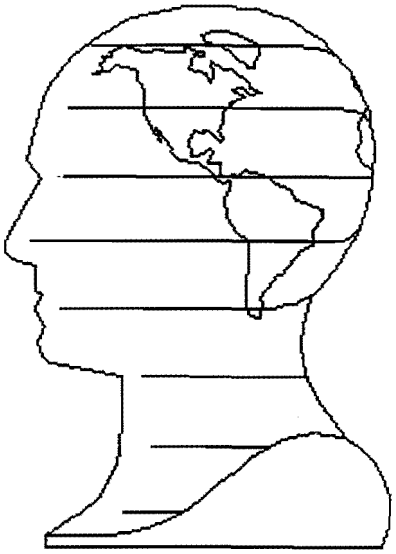
What can I do to support the development of stronger EE programs in my school district?

- Implement the suggestions included in this packet to express your support for EE.
- Contact your school board, legislators, school administrators, and other local and state leaders.
- Get involved with environmental education programs in your school and community.
- Write letters to the editor and news releases supporting good EE in your area.
- Volunteer or become a member of your local EE, outdoor, or nature center.

Why should people support EE?

Environmental Education:

1. Builds Better Citizens
2. Builds Better Workers
3. Advances Excellent Education
4. Develops A Sound Ecological Foundation
5. Promotes Tolerance for Diverse Views
6. Creates A Nation of Critical and Creative Thinkers
7. Links Disciplines
8. Helps Learners Resolve Conflicts
9. Helps Learners Understand Value Differences
10. Links Human Health and Environmental Health
11. Reaches Out to All Audiences/Promotes Social Equity
12. Works for A More Sustainable Future



- from Judy Braus, World Wildlife Fund

Tips for Writing News Releases Supporting EE

News releases can be a simple and effective way to reach an extremely large audience. The following information will give you a better idea of how to write news releases that successfully communicate important messages to your community. Try to highlight a successful environmental education program and present the key reasons for supporting EE. When you have the opportunity, it can be a good idea to tie your messages into a recent or upcoming related event – a wetland clean-up day or a group of students speaking to their school board about the importance of EE, for example.

How to Write a News Release:

- **Identification**: Letterhead, Contact Name, Address, Phone, Fax, Email
- **Date**: Release Time ("for immediate release" or a specific date)
- **Headline**: This is what will draw initial attention to your article
- **Lead**: Strong statements detailing who, what, when, where, why, and how. Put the most important information at the beginning of your article, so if editors cut something from your article, it is less likely to be vital to the story.
- **Quote**: This provides validation for your story and plays to the human-interest angle. It should elaborate on the main point of your story introduced in the lead paragraph.
- **More Data**: Give the reader background facts that add meat to your story. Be concise and to the point.
- **Quote**: A closing quote is definitely a good idea. Use it to have a new spokesperson say the same thing differently, or add some color to a secondary point in your article.
- **Closing**: You can close with some general information about your organization or school, and or contact information depending on the topic of your release.
- **General Tips:**

  - Restrict length to 1-2 pages.
  - Limit sentences to 15 words.
  - Use active, engaging language.
  - Use a 12-point font.
  - It is acceptable to use a quote from yourself.
  - Follow faxes with a mailed hard copy.
  - End the news release with centered "-30-" or "### " on the last page.
  - Continue to a second page with centered "-more-" at the bottom of first page.
  - Type, double-space, and print on one side the paper.
  - One or two **quality** photographs that directly support your points are recommended. Make sure they are clearly labeled on back – the who, what, when, where, and how of the image, as well as who submitted it. Do not expect to have photos returned.

A Sample News Release

This sample news release informs the community of a successful local environmental education program and presents key messages promoting EE.

Your name
Address
Phone
Fax (if available)
Email (if available)

****For Immediate Release****

Half Moon Nature Center and Town Middle School: Take Learning Out Of the Classroom

Seventh grade students at Town Middle School are spending their school hours this week covered in pond muck. No, it's not a new kind of fashion statement. They are participating in a water quality assessment project at Half Moon Nature Center. The trip is part of the Anytown School District's Environmental Education curriculum.

"Our students get a hands-on look at how people can affect the environment in their own backyard," says Sally Smith, a 7th grade science teacher. "The education they receive in the classroom suddenly takes on new meaning. They are able to apply their knowledge in real world settings."

The staff at Half Moon Nature Center teach the students water quality monitoring techniques. They also provide instruction on the habitat of Half Moon Pond. The data collection project has been going on for 10 years. The results are sent to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for analysis and comparison with other lakes in the area. Students return to the classroom and perform an analysis of their own.

"Through environmental education, these students are gaining valuable knowledge and skills," states Anytown School District Superintendent Leo Smith. "They are beginning to understand the need for balance between social, environmental and economic needs. As a result, they will be effective contributors to their community now and in the future."

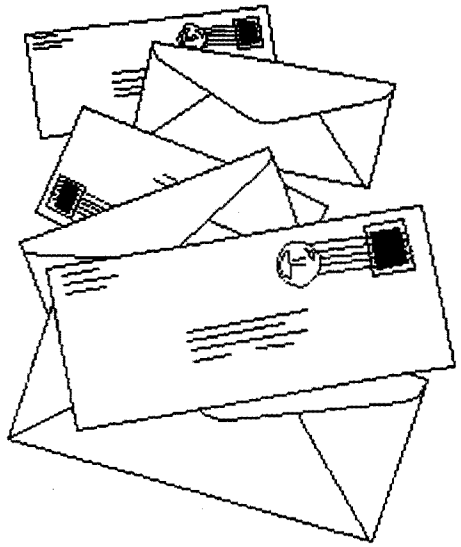
-30-

Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor Supporting EE

The letters to the editor section of the local newspaper is one of the most widely read sections. Letters to the editor reach many different members of the community and can be extremely influential when properly written. Be prepared to write multiple letters relating to the same issue, to keep the public up to date and interested.

How to write a letter to the editor:

- Check the editorial page or call your local paper for information on the preferred format and requirements for letters to the editor.
- Keep it short and simple – 500 to 700 words at most.
- Be sincere! State your opinion as you see it. Don't try for balance.
- Make your main point in your lead paragraph.
- The body should justify your view with supporting facts and opinions.
- Summarize your point and the supporting facts in the conclusion.
- Sign your letter. Provide your home address and phone number for all letters. This does more than merely enhance your credibility; many letters will not be printed without this information.
- Address the envelope to the correct person. Call the local paper for their full name and title.



Sample Letters to the Editor

Here are two sample letters to the editor. The first letter alerts the public of the importance of environmental education and encourages them to take action to promote EE in local schools.

Your name
Address
Phone number
Fax number (if available)
Email (if available)

Recipient name
Title
Address
Address

Today's Date

To the Editor,

Can 96% of America's parents be wrong? That is what Wisconsin school districts seem to be saying to us. A recent Roper Poll that surveyed our nation's parents indicated that 96% support environmental education (EE) in their schools. Despite this overwhelming majority, there is not nearly enough environmental education in Wisconsin schools.

Wisconsin state legislation requires environmental education to be taught in public schools. Each school district is mandated to have a K-12 environmental education curriculum. A survey of Wisconsin teachers and curriculum coordinators was conducted by a UW-Stevens Point graduate research seminar in the fall of 1999. Almost a quarter of the teachers surveyed said that their school district does not have an EE curriculum plan, even though the law requires it. In the districts that do have an EE plan, only about 40% of the teachers said they are satisfied with it. Respondents believed that only 31% of teachers use their district's EE curriculum.

Wisconsin has academic standards and curriculum guidelines to aid school districts in developing and implementing environmental education curriculum. As a community, we should be concerned about how thoroughly our district is complying with these standards and guidelines. We need to address our school boards about this issue and get our community leaders involved in its resolution.

Your name and signature

Sample Letters to the Editor

This second letter to the editor encourages the local school district to show more support for environmental education.

Your name
Address
Phone number
Fax number (if available)
Email (if available)

Recipient name
Title
Address
Address

Today's Date

To the Editor,

I am writing on behalf of our local schoolchildren. They are being done an injustice, and the entire public should become involved in correcting it. A major goal of their education should be to prepare them to become active participants in our community, the area's leaders and future policy makers.

One area of education that does an excellent job at promoting the types of attributes we need in our community is environmental education (EE). It has been shown to develop strong leaders, active community members, and the feeling of empowerment. It teaches our kids to feel like they can make a difference.

Knowing what we do about these benefits, why isn't there more environmental education in our schools? That is a question I can not answer. Our local school district has an environmental education curriculum plan, but hardly any teachers seem to be using it. One of my child's teachers is using the EE curriculum, and says that it has not been evaluated or improved for nearly a decade. She also says that she knows of only three other teachers in our whole district who are trying to use the district's EE curriculum in their classrooms. ***(*See note below.)***

Many teachers do not have the tools they need to effectively teach EE in their classroom. Our school administration should take steps to ensure that the environmental education curriculum is current and encourage more of our teachers to start using it by providing the training, materials, and time necessary to do so.

As a community member and a parent, I want the best possible education for our children. Incorporating environmental education into our school can help us achieve this.

Your name and signature

***Note: The statements in this paragraph are specific to one school and may not apply to the situation in your district. To determine the status of your district's EE curriculum plan, talk to your curriculum coordinator, school principal, and teachers.**

Sample Letter from a Teacher to a Parent Organization

This letter from a teacher encourages the parent organization to support EE programs in their schools.

Your name
Address
Address

Recipient name
Address
Address

Today's Date

Dear Contact Person,

I am writing to request your support for a very valuable addition to our curriculum. As a sixth grade teacher at King school, I am introducing some innovative activities in my classroom. I have implemented the district's environmental education curriculum in my class. This curriculum has specific goals and objectives, but also allows for flexibility in activities.

Environmental education is excellent way to help my students meet the state standards they are required to achieve by the end of sixth grade. Through engaging EE activities, my students have become more involved in their own education. It is exciting to see my students so interested in what we doing. Long division is intertwined with social studies during a population growth analysis activity. Wisconsin academic standards related to reading comprehension and current issues are achieved by analyzing newspaper articles related to environmental issues.

I have chosen to take an interdisciplinary approach to education by integrating environmental education into my classroom. A continuation of this approach would be a class visit to Frog Pond Outdoor School, where interdisciplinary, cooperative, and hands-on learning are emphasized–a perfect fit with the approach I am using with my class. The Outdoor School Program meets multiple sixth grade objectives, which I could not achieve as quickly or as thoroughly in a traditional classroom setting. I believe that it would be a wise use of time and energy for our class to attend.

On behalf of my class, I am requesting that your organization consider sponsoring our visit to Frog Pond Outdoor School. My class and I are interested in sharing the benefits that come from a visit to Outdoor School with your group. We would like to make a presentation to your organization so that you may see the educational impact this approach has had on the students. The class will also be requesting the financial support they need to attend Frog Pond Outdoor School in Outdoorland, WI.

I will be contacting you to discuss the possibility of their presentation. We thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name and signature

Sample Letter from a Parent to a Parent Organization

This letter from a parent to their parent organization serves two purposes. It requests direct support for EE programs in schools, and it encourages the parent organization to seek support for the implementation and analysis of the EE curriculum from the school board.

Your name
Address
Address

Recipient name
Address
Address

Today's Date

Dear Contact Person,

I am a parent of a student at King school. I have recently become aware of some very innovative educational programs that have been happening in my child's class and I felt that our entire parent organization should be made aware of them. I am excited about how Mr. Robert Smith is teaching science using our school district's environmental education curriculum.

I think that environmental education is great for our kids. My son has been participating in a community research project that Mr. Smith's class has undertaken. The class was asked to identify an environmental problem in our community. Each student came up with what they believed to be a problem for our community. Among all the suggestions, they decided as a class which the environmental problem they would work on. The class chose to determine how citizens can reduce the amount of hazardous waste that regular households send to the landfill. They are working on creating a community reuse program for these chemicals. They have identified a place where the chemicals can be stored and displayed. When community members need them, they can come over and pick them up for reuse.

The approach Mr. Smith has taken to education is really helping my son. He is beginning to realize that he is part of our community and that he can make a difference. Most importantly, Jake looks forward to going to Mr. Smith's class. He is enjoying his education and is applying his newfound excitement to other classes. It is not merely knowing how to resolve environmental issues; Jake has learned some important skills that he will use to solve problems throughout his life.

I wrote this letter for two reasons. First, I am sure that the students in Mr. Smith's class could use our financial support. They are collecting donations, having bake sales, and speaking to community leaders, all in an attempt to raise enough funds to start their project. Second, I believe that more of this sort of education should be happening in our schools. Our organization needs to approach our school board and see what they are doing to further environmental education in our district. The school board should be encouraging teachers to use EE and making sure that we have the best environmental education available.

Sincerely,

Your name and signature

Sample Letter from a Parent to a School Board Member

Here is a letter to a school board member that demonstrates a parent's interest in the status of environmental education in the district and recommends that a discussion on the topic be included in a board meeting.

Your name
Address
Address

Recipient name
Address
Address

Today's Date

Dear Contact Person,

I am writing to you as a parent of a child in your school district and a concerned community member. Awareness of environmental issues and the skills necessary to deal with them effectively are important in the development of good citizens. I feel that environmental education (EE) should be a significant part of the curriculum in our district so that our children learn these skills.

I am interested in learning whether or not our school district has an environmental education curriculum in place. If we do, I would like to know what it consists of and how its implementation is evaluated. I am very interested in learning about the process of curriculum evaluation the district uses. It is important that the implementation of our EE curriculum is being evaluated for effectiveness. New concepts, issues, and teaching techniques are always arising in the field of environmental education, and we need to be receptive to these changes.

Without a quality environmental education curriculum plan established in our schools, our children will not be as well equipped to become actively contributing citizens. I hope that you consider my concerns, again as a parent and an active community member. I believe that it is important for the board to discuss these issues. Please notify me as to when my questions can be addressed at a school board meeting.

Sincerely,

Your name and signature

Sample *Follow-up* Letter from a Parent to a School Board Member

Whether you receive a response or not, a follow-up letter can play an important part in getting your message across. This letter reminds the school board member that the parent has concerns about the district's EE curriculum and specifically requests a discussion at a board meeting.

Your name
Address
Address

Recipient name
Address
Address

Today's Date

Dear Contact Person,

I am writing this follow up letter to remind you of the topics I addressed in my first letter. Again, I am a concerned parent and community member, interested in the status of environmental education in our schools. I am concerned about the quality and degree of implementation of environmental education in our school district.

Awareness of environmental issues and the skills necessary to deal with them effectively is increasingly important in the development of good citizens. Without a quality EE curriculum plan established in our school, our children are not likely to become involved in the resolution of environmental issues as adult citizens.

I would like to know about the status of environmental education in our school district. I would appreciate it very much if the school board would include a discussion of environmental education on the agenda for a future meeting. Please notify me as to when this discussion will occur. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name and signature

Sample Questions to Ask at a School Board Meeting

When you attend a school board meeting to promote environmental education programs, you need to be prepared. Here are some suggestions that should help you get answers to important questions.

Opening Statement:

Support for environmental education in our schools has been documented in many ways. A recent Roper Poll indicated that 96% of the nation's parents want environmental education taught in their school. The Wisconsin legislature has passed statutes requiring school districts to develop, implement and evaluate K-12 Environmental Education Curriculum Plans, and the WI Department of Public Instruction has developed an "Environmental Education Curriculum Planning Guide" and Environmental Education Standards. We believe that our school district should place more emphasis on environmental education in the curriculum and we have several questions we would like to ask.

1. We are interested in hearing how members of the school board feel about the importance of providing a sound environmental education to the children of our district.

2. Wisconsin statutes require every school district to develop, implement and evaluate a K-12 Environmental Education Curriculum Plan. We would appreciate it if one of our school administrators would provide their perspective on the status of the EE curriculum plan in our district. When was it developed? How was it disseminated? Have our teachers been trained to effectively implement the plan?

3. What procedures are in place for evaluating the EE curriculum plan and its implementation?

4. [If a curriculum evaluation has occurred] How are the results of the evaluation being used to guide future curriculum planning related to environmental education?

5. Does the school district support staff development in the area of environmental education? How? To what degree?

6. How much funding do EE programs receive in this school district? What specifically is the funding used for? How can funding for EE programs be increased?

7. How many of our district's teachers have a copy of the DPI EE Guidelines?

Closing Statement:

We strongly believe that more attention needs to be paid to achieving environmental literacy in our district's students. The ability to understand environmental issues and make decisions on complex issues is an essential part of our children's education. Because environmental education emphasizes problem solving and critical thinking skills, it will strengthen our overall educational program in the district. Several national studies have shown that students from schools that have environmental education programs test higher on standardized tests than those students who attend schools without environmental education. We hope the district will begin a process to insure that our students are provided a solid education, and part of that is environmental education.

Sample Letter to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction

This letter encourages the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to support the reinstatement of the Department of Instruction Environmental Education Specialist position.

Your name
Address
Address

John T. Benson
State Superintendent
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 S. Webster, Box 7841
Madison, WI 53702

Today's Date

To Superintendent Benson:

In order to further Environmental Education in Wisconsin, the EE Specialist position within the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) must be reinstated and Environmental Literacy questions must be infused into the statewide assessment tests. The EE Specialist position is valuable to teachers, school administrators, curriculum supervisors, teacher education programs and the general public; it has been vacant since 1994. Environmental literacy assessment is needed to determine the progress and quality of the EE in Wisconsin.

The legislatively created Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB), a fifteen-member board representing the public and private sectors and the legislature, is charged with identifying the needs and establishing priorities for EE in the state of Wisconsin. According to the WEEB's strategic plan, reinstating the EE Specialist position within the DPI is a high priority for providing quality EE in Wisconsin. The reinstatement of the EE Specialist position is also a high priority for the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education (WAEE), the statewide professional organization of environmental educators. WEEB also strongly supports the inclusion of Environmental Literacy questions into state exams.

The EE Specialist position is crucial to assist school districts in meeting the EE curriculum requirement established by the legislature. This position is also needed to monitor compliance with the pre-service EE teacher-training requirement at Wisconsin's universities and colleges. Many teachers, curriculum supervisors and school districts require the expertise of the specialist for assistance in the development and implementation of Wisconsin's Academic Standards for EE and to coordinate professional development opportunities in EE.

Reinstating the EE Specialist position will benefit the children in Wisconsin's public schools and the state's economic wellbeing. Wisconsin needs students who will graduate and enter the workforce with the knowledge and skills necessary to assess and respond to environmental issues. Wisconsin teachers and school administrators need the EE Specialist within the DPI to help develop and implement high-quality EE curriculum in our public schools. To monitor the quality of EE in Wisconsin, the data from statewide assessment is needed.

Please reinstate the Environmental Education Specialist position within the Department of Public Instruction and incorporate EE questions into the statewide assessments to ensure that we can assess environmental literacy in our state's students.

Sincerely,

Your name and signature

Example letter to a State Representative or Senator

This letter encourages your State Representative or Senator to support the reinstatement of the Department of Public Instruction Environmental Education Specialist position, and to provide the funding necessary to do so. You can find the name of your elected officials on the World Wide Web at http://www.legis.state.wi.us or you can call your County Clerk's office.

Your name
Address
Address

Recipient name (State Representative or Senator)
Address
Address

Today's Date

Dear Representative or Senator _____,

In order to further Environmental Education in Wisconsin, the EE Specialist position within the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) must be reinstated and Environmental Literacy questions must be infused into the statewide assessment tests. The EE Specialist position is valuable to teachers, school administrators, curriculum supervisors, teacher education programs and the general public; it has been vacant since 1994. Environmental literacy assessment is needed to determine the progress and quality of the EE in Wisconsin.

The legislatively created Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB), a fifteen-member board representing the public and private sectors and the legislature, is charged with identifying the needs and establishing priorities for EE in the state of Wisconsin. According to the WEEB's strategic plan, reinstating the EE Specialist position within the DPI is a high priority for providing quality EE in Wisconsin. The reinstatement of the EE Specialist position is also a high priority for the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education (WAEE), the statewide professional organization of environmental educators. WEEB also strongly supports the inclusion of Environmental Literacy questions into state exams.

The EE Specialist position is crucial to assist school districts in meeting the EE curriculum requirement established by the legislature. This position is also needed to monitor compliance with the pre-service EE teacher-training requirement at Wisconsin's universities and colleges. Many teachers, curriculum supervisors and school districts require the expertise of the specialist for assistance in the development and implementation of Wisconsin's Academic Standards for EE and to coordinate professional development opportunities in EE.

Reinstating the EE Specialist position will benefit the children in Wisconsin's public schools and the state's economic wellbeing. Wisconsin needs students who will graduate and enter the workforce with the knowledge and skills necessary to assess and respond to environmental issues. Wisconsin teachers and school administrators need the EE Specialist within the DPI to help develop and implement high-quality EE curriculum in our public schools. To monitor the quality of EE in Wisconsin, the data from statewide assessment is needed.

Please provide the Department of Public Instruction with the resources necessary to reinstate the Environmental Education Specialist position and encourage the DPI to incorporate EE questions into the statewide assessments to ensure that we can assess environmental literacy in our state's students.

Sincerely,

Your name and signature

Curriculum Plan
Section 121.02 (1), Wis. Stats.

Each school board shall:

(k) By September 1, 1988, develop a written, sequential curriculum plan in at least 3 of the following subject areas: reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, health, computer literacy, ***environmental education****, vocational education, physical education, art and music. The plan shall specify objectives, course content and resources and shall include a program evaluation method.*

By September 1, 1989, develop a written, sequential curriculum plan in at least 3 additional subject areas specified in subd. 1.

By September 1, 1990, develop a written, sequential curriculum plan in all remaining subject areas specified in subd. 1.

Need more information or assistance?

Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education (WAEE)

WAEE is the state professional organization for EE. WAEE holds annual conferences, publishes a newsletter, and promotes important EE events in WI and across the nation.

Contact **WAEE** at:
Nelson Hall
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Stevens Point, WI 54481
Phone: 715-346-2796
Email: waee@uwsp.edu

Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education (WCEE)

The WCEE is a clearinghouse for K-12 EE resources. Quality materials and programs are available for parents, teachers, curriculum specialists, and administrators.

Contact **WCEE** at:
110 College of natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Stevens Point, WI 54481
Phone: 715-346-4973

Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB)

The WEEB facilitates statewide leadership in EE. It also manages an EE grants program and an EE trust fund.

Contact **WEEB** at:
College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Stevens Point, WI 54481
Phone: 715-346-3805

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and University of Wisconsin – Extension

Both WI DNR and UWEX have divisions that provide statewide youth and adult EE programs. They furnish information and materials addressing EE and environmental issues.

Contact **WI DNR** at:
608-266-6790

Contact **UWEX** at:
608-262-1377

Appendix C:

The Wisconsin Environmental Education Board's grant

"Implementation of a Communication Plan for Environmental Education in Wisconsin – Phase II"

University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point

Wisconsin Environmental Education Board
110 College of Natural Resources
Stevens Point, WI 54481-3897

phone: (715) 346-3805
fax: (715) 346-3025
e-mail: weeb@uwsp.edu

NOTIFICATION OF GRANT AWARD

Recipient Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education 233 Nelson Hall UW-Stevens Point Stevens Point, WI 54481	**Project Number** Log #: 2000-0079	
Project Title: Implementation of a Communication Plan for Environmental Education in Wisconsin-Phase II	**Amount** $16,897.00	**Grant Period** **July 1, 2000 – Dec. 31, 2001**

Terms and Conditions of Award

1. The services and products described within the applicant's 2000-2001 grant proposal to the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB) will be carried out as agreed to in the *Grant Award Acceptance Form.*
2. No grant funds may be used to replace or supplant existing funding from other sources.
3. The matching requirement will be met as indicated in the project proposal.
4. No funds will be encumbered prior to July 1, 2000. All funds must be expended on or before Dec. 31, 2001.
5. **Budgetary changes not to exceed 10% of a budget category may be made without the advance approval of the WEEB. Budget variances over 10% must be approved in advance by the WEEB.**
6. Original receipts and documentation for expenditures must be kept by grant recipient for 5 years after grant period ending date.
7. A final report will be prepared and submitted within 60 days of the end of the project or not later than Jan 31, 2002, whichever is earlier. **Failure to provide all components of the report in a timely fashion will result in our inability to make payment.** The final report will include three copies of:
   - the End of Year Summary Report form
   - a narrative discussing the level of achievement of the project's goals and objectives, with two or three photographs of representative activities
   - the final Project Summary, Budget Expense Summary, and Program Fiscal Report (P1 1086) forms
   - copies of all written, visual, or audio materials produced.
   - documentation of a presentation at a public forum and a published article regarding the project.
8. All materials *produced under the grant* shall be copyright of the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, and bear the citation "*Produced under a 2000-2001 grant from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board.*

Grant Authority	State ID or Federal CFDA #
s 115.375(2)(b), Wisconsin Statutes, 1989 Wisconsin Act 299.	285.K901005
s20.285(1)(rc), Wisconsin Statutes, 1997 Wisconsin Act 27	285.K901006
	285.K901003

APPROVED

Division Administrator Martin D. Phillipson	Date 5/26/00
Budget Officer Richard Dahman	Date 5/30/00
Chancellor Thomas F. Demske	Date 5/30/00

GRANT AWARD ACCEPTANCE FORM

Wisconsin Environmental Education Board

110 College of Natural Resources
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Stevens Point, WI 54481

ph: 715-346-3805
fax: 715-346-3025
email: weeb@uwsp.edu
website: http://weeb.uwsp.edu

Project Title: Communication Plan to Promote Environmental Education in Wisconsin
Grant Award: $ 16,897.00 Log Number: 2000-0079

Rebecca Weber
~~Jennifer Folsom~~
University of Wisconsin Stevens Point: College of Natural Resources (Changed to WAEE)
College of Natural Resources, UW-Stevens Point
Stevens Point, WI 54481

The undersigned hereby accepts a grant in the amount indicated above, and certifies that:

1) The services and products described within the applicant's 2000-2001 grant proposal to the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board will be carried out as proposed with the following modification. Grant award to be $16, 897 rather than $16,749.40 due to addition error. Timeline, statement of who will participate in, and who will conduct each activity and evaluation statement for each objective shall be submitted to the Board along with this signed Grant Award Acceptance Form.
2) No grant funds will be used to replace or supplant existing funding from other sources.
3) The matching requirement will be met as indicated in the project proposal.
4) No funds will be encumbered prior to July 1, 2000 and receipt of the official *Notification of Grant Award* form. All funds will be encumbered or expended on or before December 31, 2001.
5) Budgetary changes not to exceed 10% of a budget category may be made without the advance approval of the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB). Budget variances over 10% must be approved **in advance** by WEEB.
6) Original receipts and documentation for expenditures will be kept by grant recipient for 5 years after grant period ending date.
7) Interim reports will be prepared according to WEEB format for the periods ending December 1, March 1, and July 1 and submitted by the 15th of the corresponding month.
8) A final report will be prepared and submitted within 60 days of the end of the project or January 31, 2002 whichever is earlier. The final report will include three copies of:
   - The End of Year Summary Report form
   - A narrative discussing the level of achievement of the project's goals and objectives, with a minimum of two photographs of representative activities
   - The final Project Summary, Budget Expense Summary and Program Fiscal Report (PI 1086) forms
   - Copies of all written, visual, or audio materials produced.
   - Documentation of a presentation at a public forum and a published article regarding the project have been accomplished.
9) All materials produced under the grant shall be copyright of the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, and bear the citation "Produced under a 2000-2001 grant from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board." This statement applies to print, audio, electronic and all other media. Materials to be approved by the WEEB prior to distribution via mail or posting onto a website.

David Staszak _____ Date

s115.375(2)(b), Wisconsin statutes, 1989 Wisconsin Act 299 or
s20.285(1)(rc), Wisconsin Statutes, 1997 Wisconsin Act 27

Please sign and return this form before April 30, 2000

MAR 3 1 2000

describes your project:
☒ general EE
☐ forestry EE

2000-0079 2000
University of Wisconsin Stevens Point: College of Natural Resources

Communication Plan to Promote EE in WI

Application Cover Page

GENERAL INFORMATION	
1. WI Legislative Districts Assembly District(s): ALL	Senate District(s): ALL
2. Nonprofit or LEA ID No. WAEE Information is on file with WEEB	☐ College/University ☐ Municipal Government ☐ School ☐ State Agency ☒ Other (Specify) Private non-profit
3. Administering Organization Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education	Mailing Address (Street, City, State, Zip) WAEE Nelson Hall UWSP Stevens Point, WI 54481
4. Project Director/Contact Person Jennifer Foleom	Telephone area code/number 715-824-2428
5. Mailing Address (if different from above) Street, City, State, Zip 10186 County Road NN Amherst Junction, WI 54407	6. If different addresses, send mail to: ☐ Admin. Organization ☒ Project Director
7. Project Title Implementation of a Communication Plan for Environmental Education in Wisconsin- Phase II	8. What WEEB priority does it address? ☐A ☐B ☒C X D
9. Grant Request $ 16,749.40 Matching Funds $ 6,000.00 Percent Match: 36 % (25% minimum)	10. Projected Start Date 07-01-00 Projected End Date 12-31-01 Duration 18 months

CERTIFICATION

If this project is approved, the undersigned certifies that the organization will participate as indicated in the narrative and will provide the matching dollars by cash, services, or in-kind contributions. None of these grant funds will be used to supplant existing funding.

Chief Executive Officer	Title	Date signed
Cindy Halter	Chair, WAEE	03-31-2000
Signature ▸ Cindy Halter		

ABSTRACT
Limit to space provided.

Efforts supporting a statewide initiative to communicate the benefits of and increase the support for EE will continue with this project. The "Implementation of a Communication Plan for EE in Wisconsin—Phase II" builds on the development and initial dissemination of "Making a Difference", an EE leadership development and communications packet. This project will continue with the development of the EE leadership at the local community level throughout the state using the "Making a Difference" packet. It will also assist WEEB with the completion of its Strategic Plan 2000. A web site will be developed that will provide information on the "Making a Difference" program, the WEEB, other statewide EE organizations, and EE in general. Through the web site partnerships and internet links will be developed and activated with EE supporters throughout the state. Throughout the project, the "EE Works for Wisconsin" theme will be used and pre-existing supporting materials. It is an innovative project that is comprehensive in design and has enlisted support from many key Wisconsin EE organizations.

A. **Project Title:** Implementation of a Communication Plan for EE in Wisconsin—Phase II
Applicant: Jennifer Folsom and Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education (WAEE).

B. **Statement of Need**

1. **Target Audience:**
The general public, Wisconsin organizations focused on the environment, education, or communities, and the recently recruited "Making a Difference" community leaders across the entire state are the direct targets. They will be reached through the direct contact during workshop training sessions, partnership development, and by web site interactions.

2. **Need:**
In order to increase the quantity and quality of EE implementation throughout the state broader public acceptance and support for environmental education must be realized. Environmental education needs recognition, acceptance and support. Through this project several hundred people will become active supporters of efforts to implement EE programs. The current WEEB Strategic Plan requires support and provides a basis for many aspects of this project.

Much of what was addressed in the Pre-proposal for this statewide initiative grant has been accomplished by funding from a WEEB unexpended funds grant entitled "Implementation of a Communication Plan to Support EE in Wisconsin". As a result of the success of the previous grant, this project is able to incorporate additional goals, objectives, and activities, which would further address the needs already identified as important to the WEEB.

Specifically, follow-up contacts continuing from the previous grant, with the "Making a Difference" community leaders are needed. Additional and continued recruitment of EE supporters statewide for the "Making a Difference" packet, for the WEEB, and for EE in general is critical to the success of EE advancement in our state. The result will be an increased support for environmental education efforts at the local and state levels.

3. **Evidence of Need:**
The need in Wisconsin to strengthen efforts to communicate the value of environmental education and increase support for EE was identified at the 1995 WEEB Environmental Education Summit. Support of the development and implementation of the "Communication Plan to Support EE in Wisconsin" is recommended under Section E—Communication/Coordination of the WEEB Strategic Plan 2000.

4. **Previous Efforts:**
In 1998 an ad-hoc committee of WAEE Board, chaired by Paul Wozniak developed a WAEE Communications Plan addressing this need. The staff of UWSP based NEEAP worked with representatives of WEEB, WAEE, WCEE, UW-EX, and the WI DNR to develop the "EE Works for Wisconsin" promotional materials. Also in 1998, a Communication's committee of the WEEB, chaired by Pat Marinac, developed a plan to further develop previous efforts to promote EE within the state. In 1999, Dr. Richard Wilke united UWSP, WAEE, WEEB, and NEEAP promotion efforts.

A group of University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point environmental education graduate students, advised by Dr. Richard Wilke, combined efforts with statewide and national organizations and developed a "Communication Plan for the Support of EE in Wisconsin" and an accompanying "Making a Difference" packet.

Through the WEEB unexpended funds grant (for use March 13-June 1) the project staff has disseminated over 300 copies of the packet and over 3,000 copies of the "EE Works for Wisconsin" materials to voluntary community leaders statewide. The graduate students have also coordinated the dissemination of targeted news releases to the Wisconsin's major media markets and developed new EE and WEEB grant promotion guidelines for WEEB grantees for WEEB consideration at its April 11th meeting. They are using the "Making a Difference" packet and the "EE Works for Wisconsin" materials to communicate the value of EE to Wisconsin citizens and decision makers. As a result, it is expected that many citizens will lend their support to the implementation of various aspects of the WEEB Communications and Strategic Plans.

For example, several Wisconsin senators and legislators have indicated initial support for the reinstatement of DPI EE specialist position and creation of statewide environmental literacy assessment. This clearly supports the effectiveness of the previous WEEB funded efforts. These efforts need to be continued to insure the WEEB Strategic Plan and Communication Plan goals are achieved.

5. **Priorities Addressed:**
This project addresses WEEB Priority D, statewide initiatives in EE leadership development and enhancements projects. It also addresses Priority A and Priority C through the statewide leadership development, as EE leaders and partners are being recruited to mobilize community support and involvement in EE.

One or more Objectives/Outcomes from all six Strategic Priorities of the WEEB Strategic Plan 2000 are directly furthered by this project. The creation of a "EE Works for Wisconsin" web site, in cooperation with WEEB, will allow WEEB to promote the Strategic Priorities of its choice to a wide audience.

C. Project Goals, Objectives, Evaluations, Activities:

Goal 1: Increase support for environmental education by continuing the implementation of the WEEB approved "Making a Difference" packet.

Objective 1.1: To continue recruitment of community organizing leaders in support of the "Making a Difference" Packet.

Activity 1.1.1: The Project Coordinator (PC) will re-contact respondents to the initial packet mailing and attempt to motivate them to continue their support and involvement.

Activity 1.1.2: The PC will develop additional targeted mailing lists in an effort to enlist the involvement of leaders and members of organizations that would have interest in supporting efforts to achieve the WEEB Strategic Plan and Communications Plan goals, i.e., business, environmental, agriculture and related organizations.

Activity 1.1.3: The "Making a Difference" packet will be mailed to those identified in Activity 1.1.2 who express a desire to become involved.

Objective 1.2: To continue cultivation of a communication system with "Making a Difference" community organizing leaders.

Activity 1.2.1: The PC will contact "Making a Difference" leaders and alert them of special leadership development and EE advancement opportunities sponsored by WAEE, WEEB, NEEAP, and other national and statewide organizations.

Activity 1.2.2: The PC will serve as a resource person for developing "Making a Difference" leaders and will be available for phone, email, and mail contacts.

Activity 1.2.3: The PC will coordinate with the staff of the WEEB funded Local Leadership Development Grant to maximize the synergy between the two programs

Goal 2: Implement the WEEB Communication Plan around the "EE Works for Wisconsin" theme.

Objective 2.1: To implement the WEEB Communication Plan around the "EE Works for Wisconsin" theme, including an interactive web site and statewide partnerships.

Activity 2.1.1: The Project Coordinator will recruit a planning committee from key members of WEEB, WAEE, NEEAP, UWSP, and other appropriate organizations.

Activity 2.1.2: The PC and planning committee will determine web site content. Possibilities for inclusion include the WEEB Strategic Plan, the NAAEE "EE Materials: Guidelines for Excellence", the Wisconsin EE standards, the "Making a Difference" packet, NEEAP leadership development opportunities, and the "Communication Plan to Promote EE in Wisconsin".

Activity 2.1.3: The PC and planning committee will develop a mailing list of possible partners for the "EE Works for Wisconsin" campaign and web site, such as those concerned with the environment, education, and community improvement. These partners will assist in the promotion of the "EE Works for Wisconsin" web site and publicity campaign through providing links on their web sites and other organizational publicity.

Objective 2.2: To develop an "EE Works for Wisconsin" interactive web site.

Activity 2.2.1: The PC, with recommendations from the planning committee, will proceed with the web site content and design development.

Activity 2.2.2: The PC will cultivate partnerships throughout the state with identified organizations and provide them with the necessary information to make web site links and assist with other organizational publicity pieces.

Activity 2.2.3: The PC will activate the web page and partnership links.

D. Staff Qualifications:

The fiscal agent for this project will be WAEE. The **Project Coordinator** will be recruited to the UWSP Environmental Education Master's Degree program and this project would provide for their graduate assistantship. The PC will have a Bachelor's degree, related experience, and meet the necessary requirements of the UWSP-CNR graduate program.

Dr. Richard Wilke will act as the Project Coordinator's graduate program advisor and project advisor. Dr. Wilke has been closely involved in previous efforts made on the project and has direct continued contact with the project staff from previous project efforts.

E. Innovation:

This project is a continuation of the innovative "Implementation of a Communication Plan for EE in Wisconsin". This project is the first of its kind in the nation and will be promoted by NEEAP as a model for use in other states.

F. Continuation:

This statewide initiative focuses on developing leaders in the promotion of environmental education across the state. Once leadership is initiated it is likely to continue. The web site will be online and links accessible after the grant period ends.

Additionally, a detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of the "Making a Difference" packet and the "EE Works for Wisconsin" interactive web site can be completed as part of the PC's graduate program, since this project will most likely serve as the Master's thesis for the Project Coordinator.

Administrating Organization: WAEE

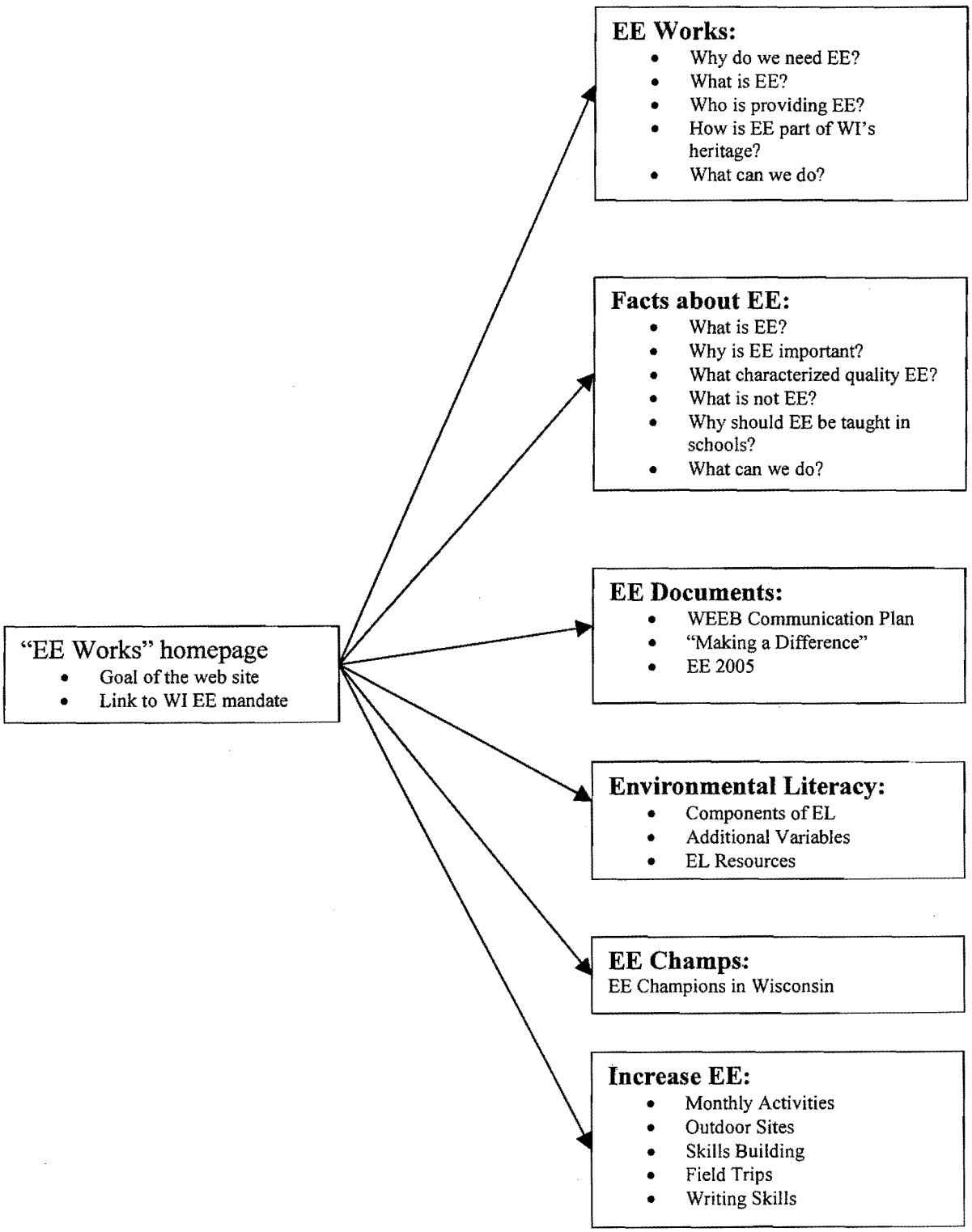
Budget Category	Activity Number	Grant Request	Match	Match Source
Salary Project coordinator (80 hours/month @ $700/month) Local Volunteers (150 x $10.00/hour x 4 hours. Each on average)	ALL 16 months @ $700/mo Aug 20, 2002 - Dec 19, 2002	$11,200	 $6,000.00	Local volunteers involved in implementing the "Making a Difference" packet
Fringe Benefits Project coordinator ($8.75/hour @ 25%)		$2,800		
Material/Supplies "Making a Difference" Printing (500 @ 1.00) Postage (500 @ 1.25) Envelopes (500 @ 0.50)	1.1.3	$1,375.00		
Postcard Printing (600 @ 0.04) Postage (600 @ 0.23)	1.1.2	$162.00		
Return Postcard Printing (600 @ 0.10) Return Postage (400 @ 0.41)	1.1.2	$224.00		
Telecommunications (800 calls @1.00 per call)	1.1.1 1.2.1 1.2.2	$800.00		
Resource letters Printing (800 @ 0.04) Postage (800 @ 0.33) Envelopes (800 @ 0.05)	1.2.1	$336.00		
Total		$16,749.40	$6,000	

Appendix D:

"EE Works for Wisconsin"

Web site content map

"EE Works for Wisconsin" Web site content map



Appendix E:

"Making a Difference" Monthly Activities List

Monthly Activities

January: Contact Governor Thompson

Tell him you know he has to submit suggestions for the 2003-2005 budget to the state legislature later this month, and you want him to include the EE Specialist position in the DPI budget.

February: Contact a Member of the Joint Finance Committee

Tell her/him you know he/she will be working on the budget from Governor Thompson and that you know they can offer an amendment to the budget bill. Tell your representative that you want the EE Specialist position in the DPI budget.

March: Letter to the Editor

Write a letter to the editor about the importance of voting for a State Superintendent of Public Instruction who supports EE.

April: Letter to Parent Organization

Write a letter to a member of your local parent organization. Tell him or her about the importance of EE and the benefits of EE. Ask them to support EE.

May: News Release

Write a news release to your local paper about the importance of EE. You can announce an upcoming event or share a personal story illustrating the benefits of EE.

June: Letter to Elizabeth Burmaster

Write a letter to the new State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Tell her about the importance of EE and ask her to reinstate the EE Specialist position.

July: No specific activity

Thank participants for the cooperation and efforts. Promote "EE Works for Wisconsin" web site.

August: Letter to the editor

Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about the importance of EE.

September: Contact a Member of the School Board

Contact a member of your local school board and request a copy of the EE curriculum. Explain the importance of EE.

October: Follow-up with Member of School Board

Re-contact the school board member. Either re-request the EE curriculum or thank them for their participation. Remind them of the importance of EE.

November: News Release

Write a news release about the importance of EE. Ideas to include in the news release: an upcoming EE event, a recent EE event, sharing a personal EE story, commend a teacher in your school district on quality EE.

December: No specific activity

A letter to participants thanking them for their participation in the project, including the post questionnaire.

Pre and Post Questionnaire

Questionnaire for the "Making a Difference" listserv members-

Have you contacted the following persons or groups in the last two years regarding an issue pertaining to environmental education-

1) Member of your local School Board ___Yes or ___No
   If yes, briefly describe the type of contact (i.e., a letter), and the result of the contact-

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2) School Administrator ___Yes or ___No
   If yes, briefly describe the person you contacted (title or professional position), type of contact, and the result of contact-

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3) Elected or appointed public official ___Yes or ___No
   If yes, was the contact about increasing support for EE programs __Yes or __No
   If yes, was the contact about the importance of EE __Yes or __No
   Briefly describe the person you contacted, type of contact, and result of contact-

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____