2023
Annual Report
MEEA's mission is to support educators in connecting every Missouri learner to the natural world and equipping them to care, understand, and act for the environment.

MEEA works through two primary means: providing professional development for educators and building networks to support the expansion of environmental education.

MEEA provides professional development opportunities for educators through an annual conference, in-person workshops, and online courses. MEEA provides funding support for educators and schools, and connects practitioners to a wide variety of resources and networking opportunities in the field of environmental education.

From the newsletter to the myriad resources on our website, MEEA shares its digital content freely regardless of membership and offers a pay-what-you-can option for our fee-based programming.

In partnership with the Missouri Gateway Green Building Council, MEEA co-manages Show-Me Green Schools (SMGS), a suite of 3 free support and recognition programs that provide structure, resources and recognition to support every PreK-12 Missouri school in becoming green and healthy - no matter their starting place. SMGS is structured so that participating schools’ unique needs and student interests are at the forefront of green and healthy efforts. Together, this suite of programs is able to guide a school just getting started or elevate a very accomplished school into a mentorship role.

Without MEEA, Missouri educators would be isolated from assets that help them ignite a love for learning and respect for the natural world. Learners of all ages would lack the knowledge to enjoy, respect and preserve the world around them.
Show-Me Green Schools (SMGS) officially launched at the start of the 2023-2024 school year, putting 3 complementary green schools support and recognition programs under one umbrella.

Green Schools Quest (since 2013)
An annual project-based, student-driven challenge to implement a no or low-cost sustainability project at the school over six months with the help of a volunteer Green Mentor. Teams submit their process and impact at the conclusion and schools are recognized at an annual Green Schools Event with prizes in each grade level.

Missouri Green Schools (since 2020)
A statewide recognition program that supports schools in taking a systems-based approach towards creating school-wide and long-term sustainability. MGS supports growth through a continuous loop of tracking and advancing sustainability practices, ultimately cultivating a culture of sustainability at the school. Schools may enroll at any time and recognition is offered annually at five levels. Extra support available for schools with ≥60% students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch Pricing.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (since 2012)
Drives innovative practices through one-time, national recognition of schools and districts for comprehensive achievements across all three of the "Green Schools" pillars: health and wellness, environmental impact, and eco-literacy. Missouri has consistently nominated schools because we have set up programs like the Quest and MGS as feeder programs.

SMGS served a total of 78 schools in 2023, impacting more than 10,540 students and staff.
Green Schools

34 schools actively enrolled, 12 of which serve low-income communities primarily (MGS+).

18 Schools recognized in 2023; 8 of these are MGS+ schools

Recruited 3 AmeriCorps Vistas to provide extra support to MGS+ schools and prep for leaving the pilot phase, which concluded August 2023.

Awarded $28,139 in action plan grants and Green Champion stipends to MGS+ schools.

Hosted professional development webinar for the 59 organizations in the Partner Network to learn about the Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM), a 90-year-old conservation advocacy organization, and edited a draft resolution to present for CFM adoption in early 2024.
Green Schools

Missouri’s 2023 EDGRS Honoree
Patrick Henry Downtown Academy
St. Louis Public Schools

PHDA engages many strategies to make their school a happy and healthy place. From outdoor learning and adding in movement throughout the day, to intergenerational learning and providing fresh garden produce for this “food desert” neighborhood, to stocking a free family resource center with everything from diapers to a computer bank, PHDA is a shining example of why green and healthy go hand in hand.

Above: Getting transplants ready for the garden
Right: Prepping the garden for planting; garden is always open to the community

Left: A Field trip to the Missouri Botanical Garden
Below: Mayor Jones attends the EDGRS celebration and students each receive a trophy
Workshops & Presentations

MEEA Staff:
1 Guidelines for Excellence in EE Workshop
3 Invasive Species Mock Trial Workshops
1 Hands-On Presentation about Place-Based Education at Mo DESE Interface Conference
1 Presentation on Gen Z care and engagement at Association for Missouri Interpreters Conference
1 Green Career Presentation for Students at the Missouri 4H Congress
3 Presentations promoting Show-Me Green Schools opportunities and benefits

Friends and Allies:
7 more presentations on Show-Me Green Schools

Total Audience #s: 294

Workshop Participants: 36
Workshops provide a deep dive into EE and allow participants to start implementing their learning right away. 100% of participants said they plan to use what they learned during the workshop, and these educators alone reach an estimated 18,900 learners each year.
MEEA Mini-Grants

MEEA supports its members each year with Mini-Grants of $250 to support EE projects.

2023 Recipients (Reports and Photos Pending):

Rolla Outdoor Collaborative School
*Outdoor classroom restoration and native garden planting*

Flance Early Learning Center
*Workshop series for Flance families on non-traditional gardening techniques*

Twin Rivers High School
*Purchasing tables for their outdoor classroom*

H2Ozarks
*Enviroscape watershed table and resource materials*

Marvin Elementary
*Purchase materials to support their school garden programming*

Audubon Center at Riverlands
*Materials for a river-centered education program*

A couple of previous mini-grant projects

Janet Price published a field guide to common Ozark critters, used in her programming in the Missouri Ozarks (left); Mehlvills High School hosted an Earth Day Extravaganza, with high school students teaching their elementary peers about all things green (right).
114 teachers, nonformal educators, and young people gathered in St. Louis on Nov. 3 & 4 at the Saint Louis Zoo for learning, networking, and fun. Together, conference attendees impact 59,879 learners each year!

What attendees had to say:

The conference was eye-opening! - Hope Jett, ZooALIVE Teen volunteer

This was a GREAT day! I was inspired by the keynote speaker Dr. Pierson and the youth-led Call to Action, I reconnected with EE folks I hadn’t seen in years, and I expanded my professional EE network with new contacts. - Susan Flowers, WashU Tyson Research Center

I was personally energized to meet the amazing people at the conference. The sparks fairly flew. - Anonymous

The MEEA conference demonstrated that there IS a dedicated movement to advance environmental education and impact across all corners of Missouri. By shining a spotlight on it, MEAA helps support this movement to grow and thrive. - Anonymous

The 2023 MEEA Conference was packed to the brim with current and emerging environmental leadership, uplifting educational presentations, enriching activities, and a strong sense of community. I cannot wait to come back next year! - Anonymous
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

2023 momentum includes:

- Published new Values Statement on website
- Conducted first annual cultural relevance internal review of MEEA
- Continued offering a Pay-What-You-Can option for the conference and workshops
- Updated DEI goals for Missouri Green Schools and Green Schools Quest
- Joined the advisory board of River City Outdoors, an organization dedicated to equitable access to nature recreation in the St. Louis region
- Recruited 3 rural schools to the Green Schools Quest
- Adopted a Gift Acceptance Policy

Membership & Newsletter Growth

140 Individual Members  
* up 48% from 2022 *

8 Pay-What-You-Can Memberships

3 Young Environmental Leaders Memberships

24 Organizational Members  
* up 60% from 2022 *

455 MEEA Newsletter Subscribers  
* up 10% from 2022 *

Spreading the word in so many ways!

Left to right
Top: Earthworms Podcast, Tabling at Nat’l Assn of Interpreters, Conservation Federation of MO (CFM) magazine article
Bottom: Climate Solutions Day at the Zoo, Video Series for EOY Giving, Missouri Life magazine, CFM General Assembly
How did we do all this?
With 2 part-time staff members and 3 AmeriCorps VISTAs?

Volunteers
Over 40 volunteers donated more than 1,300 hours in service to MEEA, led by our intrepid and hard-working Board of Directors!

Organizational Members
Audubon Riverlands
Bonebrake Center
City of Springfield Environmental Services
Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture
Deep Roots
Friends of the Rainforest
H2Ozarks
James River Basin Partnership
Kansas City Zoo
Missouri Botanical Garden
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
Missouri Department of Conservation
Missouri Gateway Green Building Council
Missouri Prairie Foundation
Missouri River Bird Observatory
North Wood R-IV School District
Ozark Environmental News
Rolla Outdoor Collaborative School
Saint Louis Zoo
Sea Life Aquarium Kansas City
Washington University's Tyson Research Station
Watershed Committee of the Ozarks
Wyman Center

Collaborations
Missouri Gateway Green Building Council
Show-Me Green Schools Partner Network
Missouri Dept of Elementary and Secondary Education
NAAEE Affiliate Network
Plains Environmental Education Partnership
Conservation Federation of Missouri
Missouri Department of Conservation
Missouri State Parks

Diversifying our revenue streams is important for our financial health.

While grants are still overly represented in our annual budget, we reduced our dependence on that stream by 13% in 2023.

Demand for our services is growing fast, so we must grow all of our funding streams to meet the need. YOU can help us achieve this in a variety of ways.

Volunteer, donate, or help us spread the word. Be it time, talent, or treasure, we would be most grateful for your help. Contact us today!
So thankful for our donors!

Individual donations

Glenda Abney
Deborah Barker
David Bedan
Jamiin Bray
Amy Collette
Christy Cunningham
Gary and Connie Fennnewald
Susan Flader
Susan Flowers
Janet Freiman
Benjamin Freiman
Erin Graves
Ethan Gwinn
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Conference Sponsors

Saint Louis Zoo
Greenscape Gardens
City of Springfield Environmental Services
Missouri Master Naturalist
SEED St. Louis
River City Outdoors
FRESH Thyme Market
Tyson Research Center
Washington University in St. Louis

We completed the Missouri Green School pilot phase, and launched the Show-Me Green Schools suite with organizational support from Block, Inc., Missouri Foundation for Health, and AmeriCorps!

MEEA
Missouri Environmental Education Association

Check us out, get involved

Website: mee.a.org
Email: director@meea.org
What's Next?

Complete the Landscape Analysis of EE

Results from Phase 1 Outdoor and Environmental Education Survey coming soon; Phase 2 now in progress

eeCourses

In 2023, we piloted our first online eeCourse: “Teaching & Learning Outdoors” and added “Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in EE” to the course offerings. In 2024, we are working with other NAAEE Affiliates to continue growing our course catalogue. Stay tuned!

*eeCourses are funded in part by the EPA and the North American Association for Environmental Education*

Young Environmental Leaders Membership

MEEA’s first foray into offering member services for young people age 16-26. We’ll be conducting focus groups with this audience to co-create a model of service tailored to Gen Z, the generation inheriting perhaps the most critical environmental challenges in our history.

Rural Services

We are expanding outreach and service to rural schools and rural libraries in 2024! With support from the Ozark Rivers SWMD and Mid-Missouri SWMD, we will begin providing Compost Education PD to rural schools. With support from the Carthage Community Foundation and the LAD Foundation, we will begin partnering with libraries to provide EE materials for rural communities.