



Nebraska Environmental Literacy Plan: Supporting Natural Resources, Conservation & Stewardship



Executive Summary



Developed for Nebraska by Nebraskans
through the leadership of the
Nebraska Alliance for
Conservation & Environment Education



The Nebraska Environmental Literacy Plan was made possible
through funding from the
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency





What is Environmental Literacy?

Environmental Literacy is achieved when students possess the knowledge, intellectual skills, attitudes, experiences and motivation to make and act upon responsible environmental decisions as individuals and as members of their community. Environmentally literate students understand environmental and physical processes and systems, including human systems. They are able to analyze global, social, cultural, political, physical, economic and environmental relationships, and weigh various sides of environmental issues to make responsible decisions as individuals and as members of their community and citizens of the world.



How was the Plan Developed?

Recognizing the urgency in ensuring that Nebraska's young people have the opportunity to connect with nature and grow to become informed and responsible stewards of our environment, the Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and Environment Education (NACEE) created a workgroup of stakeholders to develop a plan to provide youth with structured and unstructured opportunities for play, outdoor recreation, learning and scientific study through an environmental literacy plan. The Environmental Literacy Workgroup held its first meeting in June 2009 at the Lied Lodge in Nebraska City.



Over the next 12 months, the workgroup refined the plan by soliciting feedback from stakeholder groups from across the state. Over 110 individuals participated in these state-wide meetings representing: classroom educators; nature centers; government agencies; conservation and agricultural organizations; and non-profits.

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Nebraska Environmental Literacy Plan is to develop a comprehensive strategy, linked with state educational standards and curricula, that will foster environmental literacy and a culture of conservation and land stewardship for Nebraska's students.



The goals, strategies and visions outlined in this report suggest significant changes for Nebraska's schools and communities, children and families. They are changes that, if implemented, will mark a pivotal moment in time for education,

environmental stewardship and the ability of Nebraska's young people to personally connect with nature in ways that promote mental, emotional and physical health and well being throughout their lives.


Elements of the Plan

There are ten elements to Nebraska's Environmental Literacy Plan:

- 1) Identifying specific content standards, content areas, and courses or subjects where instruction will take place.
- 2) Identifying how state high school graduation requirements can ensure that graduates are environmentally literate.
- 3) Providing professional development for teachers to improve their environmental content knowledge, skill in teaching about environmental issues, and field-based pedagogical skills.
- 4) Identifying how implementation of the plan and its impact on environmental literacy can be measured.
- 5) Identifying how the Department of Education can secure funding and other necessary support to implement the plan.
- 6) Identifying how schools can incorporate environmentally sensitive practices.
- 7) Identifying how other local school policies and practices can support environmental literacy.
- 8) Providing resources, programs, partnerships, information and training opportunities for teachers to encourage and support environmental education.
- 9) Providing resources and training opportunities to support non-formal environmental educators.
- 10) Developing a plan that creates opportunities to strengthen the public's understanding and appreciation of natural resources and enhances stewardship of our shared environment.





 **NACEE**
Nebraska Alliance for
Conservation and
Environment Education