

Handbook for Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB) Members

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Overview

In addition to operating a broad-based environmental grants program since its establishment in 1990, the WEEB provides consensus building leadership in identifying needs and establishing priorities for environmental education in Wisconsin. This is summarized in the 2-page brochure distributed to legislators and state agencies at the WEEB winter 2009 Open House ([press here](#)), and the WEEB power point slide show (33.5 MB, [press here](#)). For commonly used acronyms [press here](#).

Our History

Since the late 1800s, outdoor and nature education have been provided in Wisconsin schools. In 1935, a law was passed requiring teacher-training colleges to provide conservation education. In 1985, The Wisconsin legislature enacted a curriculum planning standard requiring that school districts develop and implement a K-12 environmental education curriculum by September 1 1990, followed by creation of the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education (WCEE) administered at UW Stevens Point, and the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB) administered by the Department of Instruction (DPI). Key reference materials for the following paragraphs are:

- for core 1989 Act 299 including WEEB members, charges/responsibilities, and annual administrative and grant program funding [press here](#); for WEEB-related legislated statutes [press here](#);
- for an operational summary of legislated and key internal policy structural guidelines for WEEB [press here](#);
- for budgetary time line details of general and segregated WEEB funding [press here](#) (Table 1, current/projected funding; Table 2, historical).

Summarizing key historical events through 2002:

- in 1990 at its inception the Board's resources consisted of annual General Program Revenue (GPR) funding of \$36K for a 0.5 full time equivalent (FTE) administrative program assistant position and supplies/expense budget (latter \$5K in recent years), and \$200K for general environmental education grants;
- in 1993 and 1997 additional annual funds were legislated, respectively, from a surcharge on environmental fines (\$30K/year conservatively projected, for general EE) and from the conservation fund (\$200K/year for forestry EE, with 5% useable for grant administration);

- in 1997 the Board was transferred from DPI to the UW System (with WEEB based administratively at UW Stevens Point)
- in 2002 the Board was allocated funds (\$18K) for energy education grants from the public benefits program, and a Forestry and an Energy industry seat was added to the Board.

In 2003, during the biennial budget process the legislature removed the \$200K GPR for general EE grants from WEEB and laterally replaced it with \$200K from the forestry account of the conservation fund.

- Because prior legislation stipulated that these forestry/conservation funds could only be used for forestry education projects, starting 2003-2004 the Board created the school forest grant category with an annual funding of \$200K at the expense of a counterbalancing annual \$200K reduction in general EE grant funding ([press here](#), Tables 1 and 2).
- In response to the catastrophic decrease in general EE grants funding, task forces charged with exploring diverse alternative private and state funding sources for general EE grants were established within the WEEB Development Committee (e.g., Oct-03 progress report, [press here](#)).
- In 2006, the general EE private funding task force evolved into the semi-autonomous Wisconsin Environmental Education Foundation (WEEF) 501C3 organization: for WEEF's connections to WEEB [press here](#) (Table 1, footnote 2); and for WEEF's brochure identifying its mission and role in support of WEEB [press here](#) (latter page 4).
- The general EE state funding task force became the major focus of the Development Committee. Sustained efforts by WEEB and allies since 2002, particularly in recent years by WEEF and Representative Molepske, has resulted in legislative authorization to increase the amount and relative % allocation to WEEB from the environmental surcharge starting 2009; for legislation amendment details [press here](#); and for relative budgetary impact of this increase for WEEB [press here](#) (Table 1, including footnote 5).

Who We Are

In accordance with its legislative charge to provide advice and assistance in identifying needs and establishing priorities for environmental education in Wisconsin to the department of instruction and other agencies including the university of Wisconsin Extension, conservation and environmental groups, youth organizations and nature and environmental centers, the Board members are as follows ([press here](#), IIA and IIIA, respectively).

- (1) The state superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI);
- (2) The secretary of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR);
- (3) The president of the University of Wisconsin System;
- (4) The director of the Technical College system;
- (5) One majority and one minority party senator and one majority and one minority party representative to the assembly, appointed as are the members of standing committees in their respective houses;
- (6) One member, appointed for a 3-year term by the president of the University of Wisconsin System, to represent the following: a) Elementary and secondary school environmental educators, b) Conservation and environmental organizations, c) Business and industry, (d) Agriculture, e) Labor, f) Faculty of public and private institutions of higher education, g) Nature centers, zoos, museums and other nonformal environmental education organizations, h) Forestry, and i) Energy industry.

For current Board member names, contact and representation details [press here](#); for past and continuing member names within each organization [press here](#) .

For membership details [press here](#) (III: B, Member selection; C, Designees; D, terms of membership; E, reimbursement; F, Nomination/appointment process).

Structure and Function of Our Officers and Committees

Our officers are a Chair and Vice Chair, elected by the Board to serve for a term of two years subject to reelection for no more than one additional term ([press here](#), IVA-B), with agenda and meeting organization/implementation, ad hoc membership of all committees, and staff supervision duties ([press here](#), IVC).

Our committees comprise four standing committees and a variable number of other (ad hoc/task force) committees as follows ([press here](#) for source); italicized bold font means a direct hot link to the WEEB web site for additional details. For additional details on committee appointments and logistics [press here](#) (V).

Standing committees:

- ***[The Strategic Planning Committee](#)*** provides the WEEB with advice and recommendations for its overall goals and priorities as well as its strategy for reaching the goals and priorities. In advising the WEEB, the committee seeks input from all sectors involved with environmental education.
- ***[The Grant Committee](#)*** establishes procedures used in applying for grants, develops the "Request for Proposal (RFP)" document, solicits proposals, evaluates proposals, recommends projects for approval, evaluates programs of grants issued.
- ***[The Development Committee](#)*** is responsible for assisting the WEEB in expanding the grants program and developing partnerships between the private and public sectors to improve environmental education.
- ***[The Executive Committee](#)*** provides overall coordination of WEEB activities, and deals with appropriate matters between meetings of the entire Board. It is made up of the chairs of the standing committees, the Board chair, and the Board vice-chair. Ad hoc committee chairs are not members of the Executive Committee.

Other (ad hoc/task force) committees:

- ***[The Nominating Committee](#)*** provides overall coordination of the process for soliciting individuals to serve on the WEEB within the nine sector seats (agriculture, business/industry, conservation/environmental organizations, elementary/secondary school environmental educators, forestry, higher education faculty, labor, nature centers/museums/ zoos/other nonformal environmental education organizations, forestry, energy industry)
- ***[The Education Committee](#)*** provides overall coordination for the WEEB's goals dealing with environmental education in the PreK-12 schools, institutions of higher education and non-formal educational facilities.
- ***[The Legislative Relations Committee](#)*** provides the WEEB with advice and recommendations for its overall strategy for reaching goals and priorities that may be addressed through the legislative process, and serves to encourage strong communication and relations with the legislature.

- ***The Research Committee*** provides overall coordination for the WEEB's goals dealing with developing and pursuing a research and evaluation agenda for environmental education.
- ***The Handbook Task Force*** provides for continuing and new WEEB members, a concise handbook on WEEB's history, representation, structure and function, business operation, establishment of EE needs and priorities, and operation of the EE grant program.

Our Operational Guidelines, Administrative Support and Calendar

Our activities are governed by legislated statutes (require legislative action for change), and internal policies enacted by WEEB (that are consistent with the statutes but can be initiated, deleted or modified by Board action). For an operational summary of legislated and key internal policy structural guidelines for WEEB [press here](#) ; for a chronological list of WEEB internal policies within functional categories (operation, development, grants, nomination) [press here](#).

For our meeting frequency and mechanics and administrative program support [press here](#) (VI and VII, respectively). For our calendar [press here](#).

How We Identify Needs and Establish Priorities for EE in Wisconsin

One of our two core responsibilities is to identify needs and establish priorities for environmental education in Wisconsin in consultation with the University of Wisconsin Extension, the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education, teacher training institutions, conservation and environmental groups, youth organizations, and nature and environmental centers ([press here](#) , IIA).

The Strategic Planning Committee provides the WEEB with advice and recommendations for its overall goals and priorities as well as its strategy for reaching the goals and priorities, for details [press here](#). For an overview of our strategic planning process, including hot links to related publications such as the WEEB EE2005 and EE2010 strategic plans, the WEEB 1997 to 2009 biennial reports, the 1997 DPI academic standards for EE, the WEEB 2000 communication plan, the WEEB 2004 power point program, and the Sivek et al 2000 Evaluation of the WEEB's grants program, [press here](#).

How We Operate the EE Grants Program

Key legislative details governing our other core responsibility, to make grants for environmental education programs in accordance with the needs and priorities established by the Board, is as follows ([press here](#) , IIB). The University System administers the grant funds and maintains the fiscal records. And in administering the grants: 1) Grants may be made to non stock, nonprofit corporations and public agencies; 2) No more than 1/3 of the total grant dollars may be awarded to state agencies in any fiscal year; 3) All grant recipients must match at least 25% of the amount of the grant with private funds or in-kind contributions. The seeking of private funds in support of the grants program ([press here](#) , IIC) is accomplished in collaboration with WEEF ([press here](#), Table 1, footnote 2).

For an overview of our EE grants program, including amounts of funding for different categories of grants, and links to the grant application, review and reporting processes [press here](#).