Strategic Direction

Purpose and Mission
The Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education (WCEE) fosters universal environmental and social responsibility through the development, dissemination, implementation and evaluation of sustainability and environmental education (EE) programs in PK-12 schools and communities. WCEE is a center of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources and the University of Wisconsin Extension-Cooperative Extension.

WCEE Goals
The following eight goals provide a framework for the WCEE’s staff to fulfill our purpose and mission. These goals are aligned with “Wisconsin’s Plan for Environmentally Literate and Sustainable Communities” and “Wisconsin’s Plan to Advance Education for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability in PK-12 Schools” statewide plans.

- Support green, healthy and sustainable schools
- Provide professional development for PK-12 teachers
- Provide learning opportunities for PK-12 students
- Distribute environmental and sustainability education resources
- Facilitate networks for education and resource professionals
- Assess environmental literacy of PK-12 students and evaluate program effectiveness
- Innovate and communicate in the field of environmental and sustainability education
- Support undergraduate and graduate student learning

History
In 1990, the WCEE was officially created under Wisconsin Legislative Act 299 (see section 9). Since that time, the WCEE has worked with partners to develop effective outreach programs, support undergraduate and graduate student learning, and administer affiliated statewide organizations. More in-depth history of the WCEE can be found at: www.uwsp.edu/cnr/wcee.

A Vision for the Future
As the WCEE staff look to the future, we continue to embrace changes in the education community and be poised to address the needs of educators and those who support them. The WCEE programming and staff structure focus on sustainability education to meet the needs of school districts and communities. The WCEE staff work with partners around the state to build capacity for environmental and sustainability literacy through a comprehensive approach that addresses the environmental, social and economic aspects of life. The vision is to develop actively engaged, educated citizens who support healthy human and natural communities.

2014 Annual and Status Report Overview
This report provides an overview of accomplishments and status update achieved during the past fiscal year, including achievements and status updates by WCEE goals (pages 3-6), a list of partners (page 7), descriptions of WCEE outreach and affiliated programs (pages 8-11), a list of WCEE staff and their positions (page 12).
Goal: Support Green, Healthy and Sustainable Schools

The WCEE’s overall goal is to support green, healthy and sustainable schools. All of the WCEE outreach programs are aligned to accomplish this goal. The Green & Healthy Schools (GHS) Wisconsin program, in which the WCEE is a partner, is our umbrella sustainability and environmental education program in the state.

Highlights and major accomplishments of WCEE program efforts include:

- There are now 198 schools and 19 entire school districts registered in GHS.
- Twenty-three schools participated in the GHS Cool Choices game between January-May 2014 engaging 360 players. Collectively, 22,042 actions have been taken that save natural resources, increase environmental/sustainability literacy, save money, increase the safety of schools and assist schools in advancing through the levels of the GHS program.
- There are currently 412 school forests in Wisconsin that are owned or used by 238 schools districts. School forest education plans have been approved for 85 schools.
- Educators developed 25 course-required action plans implementing energy efficiency projects in their classroom, school building or school district in the last year. Since 2004, more than 600 teachers have participated in this professional development opportunity.

Goal: Professional Development for PK-12 Teachers

Professional development is a key WCEE strategy to advance sustainability and environmental literacy in Wisconsin schools. Teachers are “high leverage points,” allowing the WCEE to reach high numbers of students.

Professional development is provided in a variety of formats including graduate courses (face-to-face, online and hybrid), workshops and in-services varying from two hours to one week in length. Professional development is offered to audiences throughout the state through a network of ad hoc instructors, staff presentations and online delivery.

Highlights and major accomplishments of WCEE program efforts include:

- In the past year, 1,595 in-service teachers participated in WCEE professional development.
- Sixteen teachers have completed the Energy Education Certificate from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point since the offering began in 2011. Certificate recipients have completed at least three courses offered by the Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program (KEEP) in addition to providing evidence of involvement in at least three energy education activities.
- As of last May, 213 teachers have graduated with a Master’s of Natural Resources in Environmental Education.
- More than 12,750 teachers have participated in WCEE-provided professional development during the past 20 years.
- There are now 331 “KEEPtacular” teachers; these teachers have taken three or more KEEP courses.
Goal: Provide Learning Opportunities for PK-12 Students

The primary way the WCEE reaches students is through teacher professional development. However, WCEE staff also work directly with students during special events, pilot projects and mentor teaching.

**Highlights and major accomplishments of WCEE program efforts include:**
- The WCEE staff worked directly with 3,487 students in the past year. Examples include:
  - Girl Scout Family Science and Engineering Night for girls in grades 2 through 8. Approximately 400 Girl Scouts and their families attended the event in Madison and engaged in hands-on energy activities to teach about energy consumption and conservation.
  - Staff from LEAF, Wisconsin’s K-12 Forestry Education Program, coordinated four BioBlitzes for 305 students in the Denmark, Fox River Academy (Appleton), Montello and Pulaski schools. In BioBlitzes, students, teachers, community members and biologists inventory an area of land and document all of the species they can find.
  - Undergraduate students majoring in Environmental Education and Interpretation, Education and Youth Programming and Camp Management taught lessons to elementary students in the Stevens Point Area and Tomorrow River School Districts.
  - The Milwaukee Environmental Sciences (MES) Charter School provided a seven-week Energy Expedition to all 150 students (grades K4-5). Lessons included sound and light waves, school energy audits and reporting and energy efficiency and conservation activities.
- There are 127,600 students enrolled in current Green & Healthy Schools who have been impacted by sustainability efforts in their schools.
- Through teachers who have participated in WCEE professional development, nearly 400,000 additional students learned about sustainability and our environment this past year.

Goal: Distribute Environmental and Sustainability Education Resources

The WCEE distributes resources directly through outreach programs and through the Environmental Education Resource Library on the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point campus.

**Highlights and major accomplishments of WCEE program efforts during the past year include:**
- Curriculum materials from KEEP, LEAF, PLT, Facing the Future and Flying Wild were provided to 1,129 professional development participants.
- LEAF curriculum materials were viewed more than 4,000 times online.
- There were 1,200 visitors to the Environmental Education Resource Library and 977 resources were checked out.

Currently, the WCEE Resource Library contains more than 5,000 resources available for checkout by Wisconsin educators. Resources include hands-on kits and trunks, DVDs, textbooks, activity and field guides and a variety of audio video materials.
The WCEE facilitates a variety of networks for educators and resource professionals through face-to-face meetings, online networks and collaborative partnerships.

**Highlights and major accomplishments of WCEE program efforts include:**

- Establishing the Wisconsin Nature Centers Collaborative, which includes regional networks of nature centers, site visits and consulting services and shared resources between organizations. An inventory of environmental education related organizations was conducted that includes more than 750 organizations in the state. The Nature Centers Collaborative is done in partnership with UW Extension-Cooperative Extension Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development program.

- The Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education (WAEE) received an Environmental Education Capacity/North American Association of Environmental Education grant to establish a statewide working group of 21 stakeholder organizations. The members identified three initiatives to increase the capacity of environmental education in the state and are now working toward implementation of the initiatives.

- EEinWisconsin.org now contains 282 organizations and 97 schools with profiles and connects to more than 500 Wisconsin schools through the Special Maps Feature.

- WCEE staff worked with UW Extension-Cooperative Extension through the Community Food Systems and the Engaging Young People in Sustaining Communities, Families and Farms teams. These teams include networks of more than 200 Extension professionals.

- The School Forest network includes 238 schools or school districts with involvement from teachers, students, administrators and natural resource professionals. Each county in the state now contains at least one registered school forest.

- The statewide Teacher Educator Network for Environmental Education has been continued through formal and informal communications including a meeting as part of the 2013 WAEE conference.

Evaluation of WCEE programs is ongoing and done through a variety of methods including focus groups, advisory groups and pre-post surveys done internally by WCEE staff and externally by evaluators. In addition, the WCEE faculty conduct research on a variety of topics and are working with other partners to develop strategies for statewide environmental literacy assessment.

**Highlights and major accomplishments of WCEE program efforts include:**

- Conducted “A Review of the Environmental Education Component of Wisconsin’s Teacher Education Programs: A Five-Year Follow-Up Study” through the WEEB Research Committee.

- KEEP and LEAF conducted post-professional development evaluation of teachers that examined classroom implementation of environmental education and individual environmental behaviors.

- The annual school forest survey, which documents utilization of school forests across the state, was completed for the seventh consecutive year.

- A WCEE faculty member and graduate assistant created, administered and conducted preliminary analysis of a statewide status and needs survey of environmental education-related organizations in Wisconsin.

- KEEP staff were published in the Middle Grades Research Journal in the article “Ensuring Teacher Education Program Success Through Formative Assessments: An Overview of the Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program.”
WCEE programs are continuously evolving to meet current needs. Innovation and communication are key strategies that keep our programs relevant and help to share the amazing work and accomplishments in environmental and sustainability education in Wisconsin.

**Communications**

- Each WCEE program provides focused communication for their target audiences. Newsletters are distributed to more than 10,000 recipients on a consistent basis.
- During the past year, WCEE staff presented to approximately 3,000 attendees at conferences and meetings.
- In the last year, 10 newspaper articles from across the state featured WCEE programs.
- Eight articles or chapters by WCEE faculty and staff were published in academic journals and books during the past year.

**Innovations**

- WCEE faculty and a graduate assistant implemented a pilot technology project to investigate field friendly iPad apps for use by teachers and environmental educators.
- LEAF is developing the School Grounds program to support outdoor education at school sites. Through School Grounds, LEAF staff worked with more than 300 teachers in the past year to establish outdoor learning. In partnership with the Wisconsin School Gardens Initiative, LEAF is developing resources and support for Edible Forests. There are currently 20 documented Edible Forests established on School Grounds.
- In an effort to collect, maintain and report data on participation or energy savings impacts through KEEP activities, KEEP teamed up with the Energy Center of Wisconsin to create and pilot an online, centralized data collection system, KEEP in Action (KEEPinaction.ecw.org). A total of 320 energy saving actions were recorded in the system during the pilot period.
- The WCEE developed the Creating Sustainable Community-Driven Economies workshop and learning community. More than 40 participants from across the state and beyond attended the three-day workshop led by John Ikerd, Ph.D. An ongoing learning community, resources and Facebook site were established to continue learning and engagement in this area.

**Goal: Support Undergraduate and Graduate Student Learning**

The three WCEE faculty and director each have teaching appointments in the College of Natural Resources (CNR). Faculty and staff work to integrate WCEE programs into undergraduate and graduate courses.

**Highlights and major accomplishments during the past year include:**

- WCEE faculty taught 12 courses for 334 undergraduate and graduate students majoring in environmental education and interpretation, youth programming and camp management, education and other CNR programs.
- More than 1,400 hours of service, teaching and observation were provided by students in these courses for local schools and organizations.
- Ten graduate students were advised by faculty including four on-campus graduate students in environmental education and interpretation studying youth development, art in environmental education, technology in environmental education and environmental literacy in higher education.
- WCEE faculty assessed environmental literacy of NRES 370 students (pre-service teachers) and graduating environmental education and interpretation majors.
- Approximately 100 undergraduate students attended a class in the Environmental Education Resource Library during which the students were given an introduction about the library and then exploration time to browse through the collection.
- WCEE program outreach staff presented to 370 UW-Stevens Point undergraduate students on a variety of topics.

“Really helped a lot for our initial school forest plan writing... couldn’t have done it without the help and assistance of your organization.”
- Wisconsin K-12 Educator
The organizations, businesses and agencies listed below worked directly with and supported the WCEE and its outreach, affiliated and undergraduate and graduate programs during the past year. There are many other recipients of WCEE and affiliated program services and funding who are not listed below because of space constraints. An “**” denotes primary program funders.

We would like to thank all of our partners over the past twelve months.

Aldo Leopold Audubon Society
Aldo Leopold Foundation
Aldo Leopold Nature Center
Alliant Energy*
Alliant Foundation
American Forest Foundation, Project Learning Tree
Arts Alliance of Portage County
Baking for Friends
Board of Commissioners for Public Lands
Boston School Forest
Boys and Girls Club of Portage County
Center for Land Use Education
Center for the Small City
Center for Watershed Science and Education
Centry
Central Rivers Farmshed
Central Waters Brewing Company
Central Wisconsin Children’s Museum
Central Wisconsin Environmental Station
Christian’s Bistro
Citizens Climate Lobby
Citizens for a Clean, Green & Welcoming Community
Cool Choices*
Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) 10
Easter Seals of Wisconsin
Emy J’s
Energy Center of Wisconsin
Energy Federation Inc. (EFI)
Family Natural Foods
Friends of Beaver Creek Reserve
Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce
Incredible Edibles Investment Club
International Bank of Amherst
The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread
KidWind
Kindred Spirit Books
Madison Gas and Electric*
Main Grain Bakery
McDill Elementary School
Mead Wildlife Area
Menominee County UW Extension
Menominee Tribal College, Sustainable Development Institute
MGE Foundation
Midwest Renewable Energy Association
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin
Northwind Renewable Energy
Omernik & Associates, Inc.
Pineries Bank
Portage County Extension
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
Raptor Education Group, Inc.
River Alliance of Wisconsin
Riveredge Nature Center
Riverside Fuels, LLC
Schmeeckle Reserve Visitor Center
Schlitz Audubon Nature Center
Stevens Point Area Co-op
Stevens Point YMCA
Tomorrow River Community Charter School
Treehaven
UW Extension, Center for Community & Economic Development
UW Extension, Community Food Systems Team
UW Extension, Engaging Young People in Sustaining Communities, Families and Farms
UW Extension-Cooperative Extension, Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development*
UW-Stevens Point
UW-Stevens Point, College of Natural Resources
UW-Stevens Point, College of Professional Studies
UW-Stevens Point, Office of Sustainability
UW-Stevens Point, Waste Education Center
UW-Stevens Point, Water Resources/Fisheries Co-op
Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center
The Village Hive
Visit Wisconsin Rapids
We Energies*
Wisconsin Art Education Association
 Wisconsin Association of Agriculture Educators
Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources-Division of Forestry*
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Wisconsin Energy Foundation
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Foundation
Wisconsin Farm to School
Wisconsin Green Building Alliance, Green Schools Committee
Wisconsin Green Schools Network
Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association
Wisconsin Lions Camp
Wisconsin Public Service*
Wisconsin School Gardens Initiative
Wisconsin Sustainable Schools Coalition
Wisconsin Technology Education Association
Wisconsin Water Association
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation
Wood County Health Department
Wood County UW Extension
WPPI Energy Wisconsin Member Utilities*
Xcel Energy*
Youth Net
The Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education works toward its mission through outreach programs, faculty and affiliated programs. WCEE outreach programs include Green & Healthy Schools, KEEP, LEAF, Food Systems Education and the Environmental Education Resource Library. Affiliated programs are independent organizations or institutions that are housed in and administered by the WCEE. The WCEE affiliated programs include the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education and the Wisconsin Environmental Education Foundation. Each program is briefly described below.

Green & Healthy Schools

Green & Healthy Schools Wisconsin is Web-based, self-paced, voluntary and available to all Wisconsin PK-12 public and private schools. The program is administered through a partnership between the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education. Green & Healthy Schools Wisconsin provides information, resources and announcements for all school staff, community members and others interested in green and healthy initiatives and activities for Wisconsin schools.

Through this program, schools can find support to get started or continue to move forward and receive recognition for green and healthy measures already put in place, such as integrating environmental education in the curriculum, having an active school forest program or attaining LEED or Energy Star certification.

WCEE staff provide point-of-contact expertise in six of the nine GHS Focus Areas. Areas in which the WCEE provide expertise are:

- Energy
- School Site
- Community Involvement
- Transportation
- Health and Wellness
- Environmental and Sustainability Education

Green Ribbon Honor for Wisconsin

The U.S. Department of Education honored the DPI by giving the 2013 Green Ribbon Schools Director’s Award to Victoria Rydberg, Wisconsin’s environmental education consultant.

In its announcement letter, the agency highlighted Rydberg’s efforts to take Wisconsin Green and Healthy Schools to the next level, “enrolling hundreds of Wisconsin schools in this pathway to [Green Ribbon Schools] certification.” The department also noted her work on a number of other national initiatives.
Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program (KEEP)

Since 1995, KEEP has provided effective energy education in Wisconsin making it one of the most successful statewide K-12 energy education programs in the nation. The goal of KEEP is to leverage teacher education to improve and increase energy literacy in Wisconsin’s K-12 schools as a means of contributing to statewide energy savings.

KEEP is a partnership between Wisconsin utilities – Alliant Energy, Madison Gas & Electric, WE Energies, Wisconsin Public Service and WPPI Energy Wisconsin Member Utilities – and the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education. KEEP’s scope of work is designed around three areas of focus that expanded programming efforts to include home and community initiatives in addition to existing school initiatives.

- School-based initiatives facilitate efficient and effective schools where students learn about energy and begin practicing good energy habits.
- Home-based initiatives empower students to be ambassadors for good energy practices in their homes.
- Community efforts encourage students and teachers to reach out and contribute to their community energy resources.

LEAF, Wisconsin’s K-12 Forestry Education Program

In 2001, LEAF was created to help promote forestry education in Wisconsin. LEAF’s mission is to integrate learning in and about Wisconsin’s forests into Wisconsin schools to provide the knowledge, skills and ways of thinking necessary to sustain our forests and communities. Therefore, formal and nonformal educators are LEAF’s primary audience and developing their forestry literacy is essential to improving forestry education in Wisconsin’s schools.

LEAF is a partnership program between the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education in the College of Natural Resources at UW-Stevens Point and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry. In fiscal year 2014 LEAF began administering Wisconsin Project Learning Tree (PLT), one of the premier environmental education programs in the world. Through hands-on interdisciplinary activities PLT helps young people learn about complex environmental issues. Project Learning Tree is a program of the American Forest Foundation.

KEEP recognized for helping millions learn how to save energy

The Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program (KEEP) at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point has been bringing educators and energy professionals together to promote energy literacy in Wisconsin and beyond for two decades. This work recently earned the program the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance’s (MEEA) 2014 Inspiring Efficiency Education Award.

Bestowed annually at the Midwest Energy Solutions Conference (www.meeaconference.org), the award is presented for development and implementation of a local campaign, program, strategy or idea to increase knowledge and action on energy efficiency.

“I really like the resources provided by LEAF. It has allowed me to enhance our Forestry Curriculum over the past several years.”
- Wisconsin K-12 Educator
The KEEP course taught me fun, hands-on ways to teach energy efficiency in my classroom...This class especially helped because it helps meet the NGSS 4th grade energy standards.”

- Amy Marvin, K-12 Educator

Food Systems Education
The focus of the newly created Food Systems Education program is to develop a pre-K through professional level food systems education framework. The purpose of the framework is to serve as a reference tool for educators who are seeking to incorporate food systems lessons into their teaching. In partnerships with the UW Extension Community Food Systems Team, this project launched in the spring of 2014. This framework will support food systems literacy in our community, boosting our collective understanding of the food we eat every day. Seeing as the ultimate reach of any aspect of a food system is to be sustainable into the future, the food systems education framework is inherently work in environmental and sustainability education.

Environmental Education Resource Library
The Environmental Education Resource Library (EE RL) serves teachers, nonformal educators, community members and undergraduate and graduate students throughout the state of Wisconsin. Located in the UW-Stevens Point Library Resource Center, the EE RL has formed a partnership with the UW-Stevens Point library to utilize the university’s cataloging and checkout system, as well as using the Red Box Loan system, which allows the EE RL to ship books and other resources to patrons throughout the state free of charge.

With more than 5,000 resources available, the library has amassed a collection of activity guides, books for youth and adults, trunks and kits, DVDs, magazines and scholarly research that assists teachers and non-educators alike in locating the environmental education and sustainability resources they need.

Randy Champeau, Ph.D. and Becky Martin Awarded for Service
Randy Champeau, former and founding WCEE director and associate dean for outreach and extension, received the University Service Award in recognition of his 32 years in state service and incomparable accomplishments. Dr. Champeau spearheaded the efforts to establish the WCEE and has shaped environmental education in the state of Wisconsin.

Becky Martin, office and budget manager for the WCEE, received the UW-Stevens Point Outstanding Work Performance Award for consistently going above-and-beyond the expectations of her position. She volunteered to help train new staff, managed amendments of the UW Extension IIA budget and assisted with search and screen committee responsibilities.
Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education
The Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education (WAEE) is a statewide nonprofit professional organization of environmental educators which support environmental education through advocacy, networking and recognition. The organization advocates by working with our members to identify environmental education priorities and amplify their voices. WAEE creates venues for networking by organizing annual conferences, winter workshops and other events to connect professionals within the field of environmental education. WAEE is a learning community sharing professional development opportunities, research and expertise for continual improvement. The organization hosts an annual awards banquet to recognize groups and individuals for outstanding environmental efforts. WAEE publicizes and disseminates environmental education activities of members and member organizations.

Wisconsin Environmental Education Foundation
The Wisconsin Environmental Education Foundation (WEEF) works to improve the quality of life for all Wisconsin citizens through investments in environmental education. WEEF is a 501(c)3 donor-supported organization that develops public and private funding for environmental education opportunities promoting environmental stewardship, economic vitality and healthy communities. Funds raised by the Wisconsin Environmental Education Foundation are used to pursue the goals and priorities identified in “Wisconsin’s Plan for Environmentally Literate and Sustainable Communities.”

Specifically WEEF is working to:
• ensure strategic leadership and vision for environmental education in Wisconsin,
• invest in special projects that address newly emerging priorities for environmental education and
• provide sustainable funding for the statewide environmental education grants program.

Program Accomplishments:
• Took on primary responsibility for maintenance and expansion of EEinWisconsin.org, which is a free clearinghouse website with environmental education resources and events
• Partnered with WAEE to increase the prestige and funding for the annual Celebration of Excellence in Environmental Education (Awards Ceremony)
• Raised funds to support the environmental education activities of other organizations through their role as an umbrella organization in the State Employees Combined Campaign
• Funded forestry education grants and second annual WEEB Water Education Grants Program

Wisconsin Environmental Education Board
The Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB) is a state board created to promote environmental education within all segments of society. By state statute 36.54 (1)(a ) the WEEB is directed “to consult with the state superintendent of public instruction in identifying needs and establishing priorities for environmental education in public schools, including needs for teacher training, curriculum development and the development and dissemination of curriculum materials.” The overall mission of the 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.”

Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014 the WEEB distributed more than $220,000 in grant funds to non-profit organizations, schools, universities and units of government to complete environmental education initiatives.
The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.