

Annual Report of the Environmental Justice Section – July 2009

The environmental justice section is completing its first full-year as a section. Section activities in the past year included official enrollment of members in the EJ section, development and posting of the section webpages (<http://www.esa.org/ejsection/Home.html>), official election of officers, and a variety of other activities as outlined below:

Summary of EJ activities at the ESA 2008 annual meeting

- 1) *Ecology Education in Religious Organizations: Advancing Ecological Literacy and Environmental Justice*. Two dozen ESA and local/regional members of interfaith organizations joined together for a Sunday afternoon workshop overview of the history of the interface of ecology, religion and environmental justice initiatives and to discuss how ecologists might serve the emerging ecology education needs of faith-based organizations. (Organizers: Leanne Jablonski and Greg Hitzhusen).
- 2) At the ESA Council meeting:
 - a. Official recognition of the Environmental Justice section.
 - b. Discussion of the need to reduce workshop registration fees (especially for noon and evening times) to maximize possibility of student and community participation.
- 3) Luncheon workshop sponsored by the EJ and Student Sections, *Extending Your Research into Policy and Adult Education: Two for the Price of One*, had 23 participants (18 students and 5 "researchers").
- 4) *Are there missing links? Delivering ecological concepts for environmental justice* (co-authored by Leanne Jablonski, Charlie Nilon and George Middendorf) invited to the Organized Oral Session, *Ecological Literacy in Public Audiences: Building upon Successful Strategies and Defining the Research Agenda*. Highlighted the low inclusion of EJ in ecology texts and ESA website documents.
- 5) EJ Section-sponsored Organized Oral Session, *Ecological Education Furthering Environmental Justice*, included presentations by Roberto Gonzalez-Plaza; Ramble Ankumah, Raymond Shirk & Robert Zabawa; Mimi E. Lam; Godfrey & Mary Uzochukwu; Leanne M. Jablonski and Gregory F. Hitzhusen; Mary Lynn Washington, Rebecca Jordan, Wesley R. Brooks & David T Mellor; Harold A. Perkins; and Sonia Ortega. This session highlighted the formal and non-formal ways that EJ can be incorporated in ecology education for a variety of audiences.
- 6) The EJ and Urban Ecosystem Ecology Sections sponsored the Urban Forestry, Ecosystem Services and Environmental Justice field trip (36 participants). Organized by Charlie Nilon, Harold Perkins (Ohio University) and Preston Cole (City of Milwaukee) and led by Ken Ottman and Jeff Kluslow, two of Milwaukee's urban foresters.
- 7) EJ Section Business meeting discussed:
 - a. Election of Section Officers: It was agreed that the first Chair would hold the position for only one year so that future elections would follow By-Laws that

- state that the Chair and Vice-Chair are elected for two year positions in alternate years. Email balloting in early 2009 resulted in the election of Chair- George Middendorf; Vice Chair- Leanne Jablonski; Secretary- Gillian Bowser.
- b. Plans for the 2009 meeting:
 - i) EJ Section Business meeting (Wednesday, 5 August 11:30 -1:15)
 - ii) Workshop: Environmental Justice in Ecology Curricula and Community Engagement (WK 22 - Tuesday, August 4)
 - iii) Field trip: Exploring the Urban Gradient of Albuquerque (FT 14 - Wednesday, August 5)
 - c. Growing the EJ Section: An ad hoc committee to investigate and develop methods to increase EJ Section membership was formed: Yvette Williams, Roberto Gonzalez-Plaza, Kasi Jackson, Ramble Ankuma, and Jessica Mikels-Carrasco.
 - d. Awards to recognize the best EJ-related presentations. Charlie Nilon, Gillian Bowser and Kara Borden agreed to develop this concept further.
 - e. Not So Rapid Response Team (NSRRT): Discussion of the idea of extending the Rapid Response Team (RRT) concept to a more local level and over a longer period of time focused on 1) the benefits of providing focused, regional responses (coordinated with regional chapters) to "local" issues, 2) the advantages of developing sustained interactions with communities, 3) the need to develop a database of interested ESA individuals and their skills, 4) the need to explore and coordinate development of this concept with the national ESA office's RRT and regional chapters, and 5) the possibility of submitting a Long Range Planning grant. George Middendorf, Heidi Ballard, Kasi Jackson, Kara Borden Jessical Miesel, Angelica Patterson, Roberto Gonzalez-Plaza, Andriana Leiva, Scott Herron and Mimi Lam all indicated an interest in working on this.
 - f. Reducing our footprint on the local community: Jerrod Blue, Gillian Bowser, and Rachel O'Malley proposed that the Section ask consideration of a social component in its donation to local environmental organizations in Milwaukee and that for future meetings would ESA investigate means by which to "reduce its footprint on the local community." This concept was unanimously supported and they agreed to develop a recommendation to this end.

We are exploring ways to maintain an active voice in ESA's development of the EJ dimension including by: 1) being an active voice in EHRC through participation of EJ section members and continuing to advance the WAMIE report recommendations, 2) participation in Millennium Conference which includes EJ, and 3) proposing events for each conference theme. We welcome increased member engagement and partnerships with other sections.

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Gillian Bowser	gillian.bowser@colostate.edu	Secretary