Environmental education has always been about envisioning a better world—and that’s true now more than ever. And because our 2020 Annual Conference and Research Symposium will be online for the first time ever; environmental educators from around the world can collaborate to inspire change in more ways than ever before.

NAAEE’s conference will bring together global leaders and decision makers, teachers, students, researchers, and rising stars to leverage the power of environmental education to inspire change. As always, the conference will offer inspiring and thoughtful keynotes with an emphasis this year on addressing racism and civic engagement; a rich variety of workshops, symposia, sessions, roundtable discussions, bright spots, and posters; and great opportunities for networking, growth, and change.

We look forward to seeing you in this global community of environmental educators as we work together to inform and inspire; advance justice, equity, and inclusion; build human capacity; galvanize action to ensure equal access to nature; and create healthier communities for all.

We know that many in our field have been affected by the pandemic, and we do not want cost to be a barrier to anyone wishing to attend. We are committed to making this online experience accessible to all and are offering automatic scholarships to anyone who needs financial help—no questions asked.
Schedule at a Glance

Bringing you two exciting weeks of plenary and concurrent sessions, along with workshops, affinity group meetings, networking opportunities, exhibits, and more.

Plenary and concurrent sessions and most meetings will be scheduled between 11:00 AM and 7:30 PM Eastern time. Exhibits will be available throughout the two-week period.

Annual Conference

Monday, October 5–Tuesday, October 13
- Workshops, eePRO Groups, affinity group meetings

Tuesday, October 6
- Special Pre-Conference Plenary Panel

Tuesday, October 13
- Welcome and Opening Keynote: Dr. Ibram X. Kendi with Jaime González

Wednesday, October 14
- Concurrent sessions
- Plenary session: Dr. J. Drew Lanham, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, and Audrey Peterman
- A Night of Networking

Thursday, October 15
- Concurrent sessions
- Plenary session: Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson with Danni Washington

Friday, October 16
- Concurrent sessions
- Plenary session: Young Leaders Inspiring Change
- Conference closing

Research Symposium

Thursday, October 8
- Research Symposium Welcome Reception

Friday, October 9
- Concurrent sessions
- Plenary panel: Dr. Corey Knox, Dr. Fikile Nxumalo, Dr. Alexa Schindel

Saturday, October 10
- Concurrent sessions
- Plenary session: Dr. Alberto Arenas
- Closing plenary: Dr. Marcia McKenzie, Dr. Martha Monroe

49th Annual Conference

October 13–16, 2020

Welcome & Opening Keynote

Tuesday, October 13, 3:30 PM ET

How to Be an Antiracist

Dr. Ibram X. Kendi
Boston University Center for Antiracist Research

Ibram X. Kendi is a #1 New York Times bestselling author, Professor in the Humanities at Boston University, and the Founding Director of the Boston University Center for Antiracist Research. He is an Ideas Columnist at The Atlantic, and a correspondent with CBS News. He is the author of four books including Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America, which won National Book Award for Nonfiction, and the New York Times bestsellers How to Be an Antiracist and STAMPED: Racism, Antiracism, and You, co-authored with Jason Reynolds. His newest book, Antiracist Baby, published on June 16th, 2020.

Jaime González, Moderator

The Nature Conservancy in Texas

Jaime González works with communities in Greater Houston to co-create a healthier, more climate resilient, better-connected, and more biologically diverse region using nature-based solutions. He is one of more than 20 Nature Conservancy city leads using nature-based solutions to Build Healthier Cities throughout North America and the world. Mr. González earned an MEd in curriculum and instruction–science education and a BS in biology from the University of Houston.

Choose from a wide variety of concurrent sessions in six strands:
- Advancing Civic Engagement and Sustainable Communities
- Building Leadership for Environmental Literacy
- Connecting with Nature
- Conservation and Environmental Education
- Green Schools, Universities, and Vocational Institutions
- Linking Research and Practice to Increase Impact
49th Annual Conference
October 13–16, 2020

Wednesday, October 14, 3:30 PM ET

Real Talk About Race, Nature, and Education

Dr. J. Drew Lanham
Clemson University

Dr. J. Drew Lanham is a writer, birder, hunter-conservationist, and naturalist. He is a Clemson University Master Teacher and Alumni Distinguished Professor in wildlife ecology. His research interests include songbird ecology and conservation; the integration of game and nongame wildlife management; and the African American land ethic and its role in natural resources conservation.

Aimee Nezhukumatathil
University of Mississippi

Aimee Nezhukumatathil is a professor of English in the University of Mississippi’s MFA program and lives in Oxford, Mississippi, where she teaches creative writing and environmental literature. Aimee is the poetry editor of Orion magazine and her poems have appeared in the Best American Poetry series, American Poetry Review, New England Review, Poetry, Ploughshares, and Tin House. She is also the author of a number of books, including the forthcoming book of illustrated nature essays, World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments.

Audrey Peterman
Earthwise Productions, Inc.

Audrey Peterman is president and co-founder of Earthwise Productions, Inc., an environmental consulting and publishing firm focused on connecting the public lands system and the American public. She is author of From My Jamaican Gully to the World and Our True Nature: Finding a Zest for Life in the National Park System, and co-author, with her husband Frank, of Legacy on the Land: A Black Couple Discovers Our National Inheritance and Tells Why.

Thursday, October 15, 3:30 PM ET

A Conversation with
Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson: Ocean Conservation, Climate Justice, and Education

Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson
Urban Ocean Lab and Ocean Collectiv

Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson is a marine biologist, policy expert, and widely published writer. She is founder and CEO of Ocean Collectiv, a strategy consulting firm for conservation solutions grounded in social justice, and founder of Urban Ocean Lab, a think tank for the future of coastal cities. Recently, she co-created the Blue New Deal, a roadmap for including the ocean in climate policy. In her native Brooklyn, Ayana curates and hosts the Science & Society series at Pioneer Works. Outside Magazine called Ayana “the most influential marine biologist of our time.”

Danni Washington, Moderator
Mission Unstoppable

Danni Washington is a TV host and science communicator who is also the first African-American woman to host her own science television series. Currently, Danni is featured as a correspondent on a weekly nationally syndicated CBS series called Mission Unstoppable. Danni has also hosted other STEM shows including Xploration Nature Knows Best on FOX, Science the $#!* Out of It for Facebook Watch, Untamed Science for Pearson Publishing, and Ocean GEMS. Danni also served as the 2018 spokesperson of the nation’s largest celebration of STEM at the USA Science & Engineering Festival in Washington D.C. She is a graduate of the University of Miami with a BS degree in marine science and biology and the co-founder of Big Blue & You.

Friday, October 16, 3:30 PM ET

Young Leaders Inspiring Change

The final plenary panel of the conference features the stories of inspirational young leaders selected from the 2020 EE 30 Under 30 honorees. Each year, EE 30 Under 30 shines a spotlight on the work of exceptional young professionals, representing a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines, who are using EE to spark change in their communities and on the global stage.
Special Pre-Conference Plenary Session
Tuesday, October 6, 3:00 PM ET

Building an Active and Engaged Public: Discourse, Media Literacy, and Civic Education

Jimmeka Anderson
The Urban Education Collaborative at University of North Carolina–Charlotte

Jimmeka Anderson is a doctoral student in the Curriculum and Instruction Urban Education program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte with a research focus on critical digital media literacy education. She received her master’s degree in educational media with a focus on new media literacies and global perspectives at Appalachian State University. While serving as the founder and executive director of I AM not the MEdia, Inc. for nine years, she developed curriculum and award-winning community programs that empower youth through media literacy and media creation. Jimmeka is the Chapter Lead for North Carolina for Media Literacy Now, the creator of the Teen Media Literacy Conference in Charlotte, and has served in leadership roles with the National Association of Media Literacy Education. She also worked as a library outreach coordinator at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and has served as a course instructor and community engagement consultant with the Carolina School of Broadcasting.

Mary Ellen Daneels
Illinois Civic Mission Coalition

Mary Ellen Daneels is a National Board Certified teacher who taught at West Chicago Community High School for 27 years. She has been recognized as the Law-Related Educator of the Year by the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Chicago, Teacher of the Year by the 19th District of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and American Civic Education Teacher from the Center for Civic Education. Mary Ellen has presented on service learning, simulations, and the use of controversy in the classroom at the local, state, and national levels, and she has provided professional development workshops in Estonia, Angola, and Belarus. A member of the Illinois Civic Mission Coalition, Mary Ellen has advocated for civic education before federal and state lawmakers. She served on the Board of Directors for the National Council of the Social Studies and worked on a task force to revise Social Studies standards in the state of Illinois.

Dr. Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg
Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, Tufts University

Dr. Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg is the director of CIRCLE—the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University. She oversees CIRCLE’s wide-ranging portfolio of research and impact projects with its diverse partners and audience groups. Kei has a background in community psychology and social-emotional learning, which she applies to various projects at CIRCLE. Before coming to CIRCLE, Kei worked with young people and families at a public high school, and at an emergency room and community health center as a therapist in training. Working with people who faced numerous structural challenges made her want to work with systems that created those challenges in the first place.

John Silva
News Literacy Project

John Silva is the director of education at the News Literacy Project. He has 13 years of experience as a history teacher with Chicago Public Schools, including seven years at Lindblom Math & Science Academy, one of Chicago’s top selective enrollment schools. A US Marine Corps veteran, John spent several years in corporate telecommunications positions before becoming a teacher. He graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a bachelor’s degree in the teaching of history and has a master’s degree in education, with a concentration in educational technologies, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Register for this free pre-conference plenary on the NAAEE website.
17th Annual Research Symposium
October 8–10, 2020

NAAEE’s annual Research Symposium brings together new and experienced researchers from around the globe to explore the current state and future directions of environmental education research and advance the use of practices proven to be effective. The symposium fosters dialogue and collaboration among members of the EE research field, including researchers, policy makers, and practitioners at all stages of their careers. Participants can also meet with colleagues and mentors to discuss publishing and career advice, as well as issues and concerns in the world of research.

As researchers and practitioners, we seek to understand, inspire, and create change for our generation as well as future generations. We often do this through pedagogical practices and innovative programming; however, methodological and theoretical decisions also inspire change in the field. Therefore, this year’s Research Symposium will focus on two tracks: Inspiring Change Through Method and Theory, and Inspiring Change Through Pedagogy and Programming.

The Research Symposium will kick off with an informal reception (BYOB) on Thursday, October 8, at 7:00 PM Eastern time.

Research Symposium Keynote Speakers
Friday, October 9, 1:30 PM ET

Dr. Corey Knox
University of Arizona

Dr. Corey Knox is a research scientist and instructor at the University of Arizona College of Education. She earned her PhD from the University of Arizona Teaching, Learning, and Sociocultural Studies Department in 2018. Dr. Knox has over 20 years of experience conducting community-based research and developing programs related to social justice, youth, women, and science and environmental topics. Her dissertation research focused on a local environmental contamination crisis and the processes by which multiple diverse stakeholders participated in the development of a school-based curriculum. Her continuing research, practice, and teaching focuses on student and community funds of knowledge within STEM learning and practice, and the ways that pressing global and community issues are framed and communicated in school-based and community learning spaces.

Dr. Fikile Nxumalo
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Dr. Fikile Nxumalo is faculty in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching & Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Fikile’s research is centered on possibilities for place-attuned pedagogies that are responsive to the ethics and politics of children’s inheritances of anti-blackness, environmental damage, and settler colonialism. Her book Decolonizing Place in Early Childhood Education (Routledge, 2019) examines the entanglements of place, environmental education, childhood, race, and settler colonialism in early learning contexts.

Dr. Alexa Schindel
University at Buffalo, SUNY

Dr. Alexa Schindel is an associate professor in the Department of Learning and Instruction at the University at Buffalo, SUNY. Alexa researches the experiences of high school-aged youth and educators when engaged in socially just science learning and teaching. In a collaborative project with Dr. Sara Tolbert, Alexa studies teacher-initiated social justice activities in formal school science. Another facet of her research investigates “placemaking,” or interrogating and constructing understandings of place within and through the lens of science. Her most recent publications focus on themes of empowerment, sustainability, critical care, and critical pedagogy of place.

Saturday, October 10, 12:15 PM ET

Dr. Alberto Arenas
University of Arizona

Dr. Alberto Arenas is the editor-in-chief of The Journal of Environmental Education, a leading environmental and sustainability education journal. Alberto is a professor of environmental and sustainability education in the College of Education at the University of Arizona, where he specializes in the greening of formal education; vocational and technical education; and the decolonization of education with a focus on restoring culturally-rich, non-commodified knowledge and skills. From 2009-2019 he was co-director of the Study of the United States Institute, which worked with Indigenous college students from Latin America around Indigenous and environmental sustainability issues. He has been a Fulbright scholar in Mexico and Colombia. Alberto obtained his PhD degree from the University of California, Berkeley.
17th Annual Research Symposium

October 8–10, 2020

Closing Plenary
Saturday, October 10, 5:45 PM ET

Dr. Marcia McKenzie
Sustainability Education Research Institute,
University of Saskatchewan

Dr. Marcia McKenzie is a professor in the Department of Educational Foundations and director of the Sustainability Education Research Institute at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. She is principal investigator of the Sustainability and Education Policy Network (www.sepn.ca), and co-author and co-editor of numerous publications. She is an associate editor of the journal Environmental Education Research. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on social theory and education; education policy; critical education; climate change, environment, and sustainability education; place; and the politics of social science research.

Dr. Martha Monroe
University of Florida–Gainesville

Dr. Martha Monroe is a professor and Extension specialist in environmental education in the School of Forest Resources and Conservation at the University of Florida–Gainesville. Her work in the human dimensions of natural resources (wildfire, water quality, climate change) emphasizes public perceptions, adaptive collaborative management, community engagement, and behavior change. She uses educational programs to build understanding and efficacy. As part of a USDA/NIFA project on pine production in a changing climate, she surveyed Extension agents to understand their perceptions of climate change and developed an instructional module for high school science teachers. She holds a BS, MS, and PhD in natural resources from the University of Michigan.

Equity and Inclusion

NAAEE is committed to advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the field of environmental education. This is especially important this year in light of the urgency in dismantling systemic racism throughout society and supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. Throughout the conference, we will be focusing on race, justice, and sustainability, including in our plenary sessions and several of our workshops. In addition, at least 15 percent of our concurrent sessions will explore strategies and programs that help diversify our audiences as well as our workforce, build cultural competence, support environmental justice, engage with new audiences, forge new and lasting partnerships, honor traditional knowledge, and increase our reach and relevance throughout society. Affinity groups including the Environmental Professionals of Color (EPOC) and the Queer Environmental Educators Network (QEEN) will also be meeting.
Pre-Conference Workshops
Most workshops are scheduled from 12:00 PM to 3:30 PM Eastern time; some end earlier. Workshops require a separate registration fee.

Thursday, October 8
• Climate Change Education in The Classroom
• Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast: Leading Culture Change Using Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
• Fostering Quantitative Reasoning and Climate Understanding with Project EDDIE
• Sustainability Lived & Learned: Facilitating Inclusive Projects

Monday, October 12
• Community Engagement Guidelines for Excellence—Equity and Inclusion
• Connecting Research and Practice: Strategies to Improve Your Environmental Education Programs
• Exploring the Misinformation Landscape: News Literacy, Science, and Civic Learning
• Say “Yes!” to Kids with Disabilities in Nature-Based Programming
• Young Professionals Clinic: Capitalizing on Your Strengths

Tuesday, October 13
• Eat First: Resilience in a VUCA World
• Environmental Civic Education: Turning Passion into Action
• The Road to NAAEE Higher Education Accreditation: A Map for Success
• Understanding and Applying Antiracist Practices in Your Work and Life

Visit our website for more information about workshops.

Networking Opportunities
There will be many networking opportunities throughout the two-week Annual Conference and Research Symposium.

• You can easily schedule one-to-one or small-group chats with other attendees.
• eePRO Groups and other affinity groups will be meeting Monday, October 5 through Wednesday, October 7. Check the schedule on our website.

Networking events, open to all registered participants, include:

• eePRO Groups & other affinity groups (Monday, October 5–Wednesday, October 7)
• Research Symposium Opening Reception (Thursday, October 8)
• Discussion groups following Dr. Kendi’s opening keynote (Tuesday, October 13)
• A Night of Networking—Affiliates, exhibitors, authors, plus trivia! (Wednesday, October 14)

Back by Popular Demand!
• Evaluation Clinic
• Fundraising Roundtables
• Young Professionals Skill-Building Clinic

Thank you to our Conference and Research Symposium Chairs!

Sheila Williams Ridge
Conference Chair
Olivia Aguilar
Research Symposium Chair
Dilafruz Williams
Research Symposium Co-Chair

Special Event
HHMI Movie Night
Thursday, October 15
7:30 PM–9:30 PM ET

Inventing Tomorrow
Film screening and Q&A with director Laura Nix

hhmi
Tangled Bank Studios

Visit our website for additional details!
About NAAEE

For nearly five decades, NAAEE has served as the professional association, champion, and backbone organization for the field of environmental education. Dedicated to strengthening the field, we bring the brightest minds together to accelerate environmental literacy and civic engagement through the power of education to create a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

NAAEE’s influence stretches across North America and around the world, with members in more than 30 countries. NAAEE and its 56 state, provincial, and regional Affiliate organizations in the United States, Canada, and Mexico have more than 20,000 members. Our members are professionals working across business, government, higher education, formal (K-12) education, nonformal education, early childhood education, science and STEM education, philanthropy, and other sectors of society.

NAAEE also oversees the Natural Start Alliance, focused on early childhood environmental education; serves as the Secretariat of the Global Environmental Education Partnership (GEEP), in partnership with US EPA and EPA Taiwan; leads the ee360 initiative to strengthen the EE field and support professional development through a cooperative agreement with US EPA; and, in partnership with NOAA, leads the eeBLUE program to build capacity for environmental literacy.