**2007 Outstanding NAAEE Affiliate**

Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education

The Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education seeks to develop a Maryland citizenry that understands and is engaged in responsible environmental behavior and stewardship.

To achieve this long range goal, the organization promotes excellence in environmental education by training and supporting Maryland educators. This mission is accomplished through the following activities:

1. MAEOE hosts an annual conference that fosters networking between classroom teachers, non formal educators and resource professionals. In February 2007 MAEOE hosted its largest conference ever with 580 participants, making it the largest environmental education conference in the country. Over two days conference participants can select from over 50 workshops covering a variety of topics.

2. MAEOE organizes the Maryland Green School Awards Program which recognizes schools that demonstrate outstanding achievement in environmental education. This program was initiated in 1999 and has now recognized 136 schools. Twenty-four new schools were honored in 2006 along with 10 schools that renewed their status and one new Maryland Green Center. MAEOE has assisted several organizations with developing their own Green School program, including Antioch Graduate School of New England, the Office of Environmental Education in Kentucky, the state of Delaware and Office of Air Quality for the US EPA.

3. In partnership with NOAA and the USFWS, MAEOE conducts a Schoolyard Habitat Program which trains teachers to carry out habitat improvements on their school grounds. The partnership also assists the schools in implementing their projects. From 2004 to 2006, 232 teachers received training on Schoolyard Habitats, 42 site visits to schools were conducted to assist with projects and 6,960 students were engaged in implementing a Schoolyard Habitat project with the teachers trained under this program.

4. In 2006 MAEOE undertook a year long process of revising its strategic plan. This effort required many additional meetings for the Board of Trustees and resulted in a renewed focus to expand and improve existing programs. The revision also lays out a timeline over the next 2 years to implement an Environmental Education Certification process in Maryland.

5. MAEOE maintains an active Web site which is a major method of communication with members. Registration for the conference is available on line. All information about the Maryland Green School Awards program is also online. Workshop announcements, job openings, internship possibilities and other announcements are posted routinely. Plans call for a complete overhaul of the Web site in 2007 and will include detailed information about schoolyard habitats. MAEOE’s database contains contact information on over 900 people. All of these efforts work toward building the skills, understanding and actions necessary for Maryland educators to know how the natural world functions and how their behavior impacts those functions. These educators can then instill these ideas into their students, families and communities. MAEOE has been actively working to achieve this goal since 1985. This track record of excellence represents many years of distinguished service to the field of environmental education.