**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS WINS NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AWARD**

URBANA, IL, October 22, 2016 — The Environmental Education Association of Illinois (EEAI) was recently recognized by the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), a leader in environmental education, as the recipient of one of NAAEE’s hallmark annual awards recognizing leadership in the field. At a special awards reception during NAAEE’s 45th Annual Conference in Madison, Wis., EEAI received the award for Outstanding NAAEE Affiliate Organization.

EEAI exemplifies the dedication of many NAAEE Affiliate Network members that rely almost entirely, or completely, on the efforts of volunteers. Recently, EEAI has gained the capacity to hire staff and begin the transition to executive leadership. EEAI serves as host to national, state-based, and independent professional development events and curriculums such as Growing Up WILD, Project Learning Tree, and the Midwest Environmental Education Consortium. Every eight years, EEAI sponsors the Midwest Environmental Education Conference, drawing participants from around the country. EEAI also publishes the Illinois Environmental Education Update newsletter; the only periodical in Illinois devoted to current information and ideas about environmental education.

"For more than four decades, NAAEE has promoted excellence and impact in environmental education thanks to the determined efforts of our members, supporters, and affiliate organizations," said Judy Braus, Executive Director. “Our award winners are truly inspirational educators and organizations across North America that exemplify the best in our field, showcasing multiple disciplines, approaches, and perspectives–from classroom to community to research–all working toward a more just and sustainable society."

This year, 11 award recipients — an impressive slate of individuals and organizations from North America —were selected across 11 categories. For more information about the 2016 NAAEE Awards including eligibility requirements and a full list of winners, visit [www.naaee.org/our-work/programs/awards](http://www.naaee.org/our-work/programs/awards).

**About NAAEE**

The North American Association for Environmental Education is a pioneering membership organization dedicated to accelerating environmental literacy and civic engagement through the power of education. NAAEE supports a network of more than 20,000 educators, researchers, and organizational members working in environmental education in more than 30 countries through direct membership and 53 regional affiliate organizations. Through community networks, publications, signature programs, eeNEWS, and eeJOBS, NAAEE provides programming and resources for professionals working in all areas of the field. NAAEE’s annual conference, now in its 45th year, convenes leaders from private and public sectors to advance the field of environmental education. For more information, visit [www.naaee.org](http://www.naaee.org) and [www.naaee.org/eePRO](http://www.naaee.org/eePRO).

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