



2019 Chesapeake Bay Environmental Literacy Leadership Summit Ensuring Equity in Environmental Education

– *Final Annotated Agenda*

June 27, 2019

George Mason University, Potomac Science Center
650 Mason Ferry Avenue, Woodbridge, Virginia

Summit Goal Statement

The Summit goals include reaffirming commitments to the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement’s Environmental Literacy Goal. Most importantly, the Summit will highlight the challenges and explore possible solutions to the equitable distribution of environmental education resources and opportunities. The Summit will explore systemic environmental education and how it can drive diversity, equity and inclusion. Summit participants will share successful models and have the opportunity to share both challenges and successes encountered when implementing these models on a large scale. Formal and informal discussions will identify strategies that may work within a jurisdiction to provide equitable environmental instruction for all students. All participants will be engaged in identifying specific next step actions by jurisdiction to implement as follow-up to the Summit.

9:30 a.m. Registration and Coffee

10:00 a.m. **Welcome**

Dr. Chris Jones, Director, Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center

Dr. James F. Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Commonwealth of Virginia

10:15 a.m. **Importance of Environmental Literacy –**

Where were we? Where are we? Where are we going?

First Lady of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Pamela Northam

10:30 a.m. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Guide for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed**

Ms. Kacey Wetzel, Outreach and Education Program Director for the Chesapeake Bay Trust &

Ms. Mariah Davis, Field Manager with the Choose Clean Water Coalition

A 2014 report entitled ‘The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations’ showed that the environmental movement is not diverse and more importantly that “the dominant culture of (the environmental movement) is alienating to ethnic minorities, the poor, the LGBTQ community and others outside the mainstream.” A number of surveys conducted since 2014 indicate that people of color care about environmental issues and are more vulnerable to environmental hazards

when compared with white communities. Yet in the years since this information has come to light, the environmental movement (including organizations working on k-12 environmental education) remains insular in their approach to their work. A brief update will be provided regarding the high-level outcomes of a recently completed assessment and the May 2019 “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) in Action” guide which provides a path forward on DEIJ for all organizations working on environmental issues in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

10:45 a.m. **Systemic Solutions – Providing Equity in Environmental Education**

- Moderator: Ms. Meryem Karad, Policy and Communications Advisor to the Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources
- Panelists:
- Ms. Venicia Ferrell, Science Supervisor for the Hampton Virginia Environmental Literacy Program
- Ms. Shannon Sprague, Manager of Environmental Literacy & Partnerships, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Chesapeake Bay Program Office
- Dr. Carol Williamson, Deputy State Superintendent for the State of Maryland
- Mr. Curtis Bennett, Director of Equity and Community Engagement for the National Aquarium
- Dr. David Volkman, Executive Deputy Secretary for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education

Environmental education can be a tool for addressing inequities in our education system. Further, providing equity in environmental education may and often looks different in each community, and as we thoughtfully work to reach every student, we know that this starts at a local level but relies heavily on the invaluable partnerships and solutions we create along the way. We have set a goal to reach each student, and provide them with these experiences. And while programs are in place and we’ve seen progress, we are not reaching every student. Equity is a large piece of the equation. Issues in this area stem from lack of resources, support and funding. Panelists will share the inequities states, school districts, and organizations are facing in achieving our environmental literacy goals and share what equity looks like in their world. We will explore what practices, policies, and curriculum can be adopted in order to better embed equity into this work, ensuring every student has a meaningful watershed education experience.

11:30 a.m. **Testimonials on Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences**

- Moderator: Ms. Tamara Pepper, Environmental and Ecology Curriculum Advisor for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Students from the Chesapeake Bay Watershed: Lincoln Heffron from Daniels Run Elementary, Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia; Hanna Ryon from Biglerville High School, Adams County, Pennsylvania; Kristina Chu from Poolesville High School, Montgomery County, Maryland

Each student will provide a few brief remarks on his or her participation in field experiences and environmental education with their school. The moderator will pose a few questions about the students’ experiences.

11:45 a.m. Luncheon Discussion – **Chesapeake Bay Program Partners Strategies and Goals**

- Moderator: Ms. Britt Slattery, Chesapeake & Coastal Service –Director for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Center for Conservation Education & Stewardship

Luncheon discussion guiding questions: 1. What are the significant challenges that your state faces in equitably engaging all students in environmental literacy instruction? 2. What are the key opportunities to expand environmental literacy for all students in your state? And any associated needs to be addressed, stakeholders to engage, partnerships to leverage, or strategies to initiate.

12:45 p.m. **Concurrent Breakout Sessions**

- Overview: Mr. Drew Pizzala, Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship Team Staffer for the Chesapeake Research Consortium

1. ***Equitably Providing MWEEs Across the Watershed***. Session leader: Venicia Ferrell, Science Supervisor, Hampton Virginia Environmental Literacy Program; Josh Bearman, Science Specialist for Virginia Department of Education; Dr. Cynthia “Cindy” Smith, Associate Professor, K12 Education Director, Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center; Kristin Alexander with the Potomac Valley Audubon Society, West Virginia; Dr. Anne Petersen, Science Coordinator for the Virginia Department of Education

This sample MWEE will feature a variety of station activities, both indoors and out. The station activities are selected to emphasize that all schools and students, regardless of location, school size, and division resources, can engage in hands-on, meaningful activities that will provide a foundation on which to build environmental literacy. Teachers do not need to go on a field trip to conduct many of the investigations that will be explored in this session. Instead, these investigations can be done on the school ground and can build on local concerns that are relevant to students. Participants will have the opportunity to explore using macroinvertebrate organisms as indicators of aquatic health, perform chemical testing, use quadrats to make determinations about biodiversity, complete a school yard report card to determine issues in their schoolyard, and other engaging activities. Participants will also have the opportunity to make distinctions between descriptive, correlative, and comparative field studies.

2. ***Sustainable Schools***. Session leader: Holly Gallagher, Senior Manager of Education and Community Conservation for the National Wildlife Federation.

Panelists: MaryAnn Settlemyre, STEAM/Outdoor Education Specialist at Centreville Elementary School, Fairfax County, Virginia; Amy Quinn, Co-founder & Director of Teaching and Learning at Washington Yu Ying Public Charter School, Washington, DC; Andrea Van Wyk, Conservation Technician at the National Aquarium, Baltimore, Maryland; Tanesha Powell, Academic Program Manager at Blue Sky Fund, Richmond, Virginia

This session will start by exploring the current state of sustainable schools across the watershed by sharing analytics from a new GIS mapping effort. We’ll also hear from two school representatives from Washington, DC, and Fairfax County, Virginia as well as community partners working in Baltimore, Maryland and Richmond, Virginia about their successes, challenges, and potential opportunities with implementing and providing support for green and healthy school initiatives. Lastly, we will discuss potential policies, programs, funding, etc. that could help advance the quantity and quality of sustainable schools with a focus on ensuring equitable program access and participation.

2:00 p.m. ***Fostering Partnerships – Providing Equity in Environmental Education***

- Moderator: Mr. Ben Grumbles, Secretary of the Environment for the State of Maryland
- Panelists:
- Ms. Candace Lutzow-Felling, Vice-Chair of the Virginia Resource Use Education Council
- Mr. Judd Pittman, Special Consultant to the Secretary of Education for STEM for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- Ms. Karen Mullin, Director of Professional Learning with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Ms. Samantha Beers, Director of the Office of Communities, Tribes and Environmental Assessment at the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3

Developing comprehensive and sustainable environmental literacy programs requires strong partnerships at the regional, state, and local level. Regional and state coordination can help identify and craft strong funding and policy initiatives to encourage and support the development of equitable environmental literacy programs. Existing initiatives

and funding programs can often be thoughtfully revised to meet multiple objectives thereby increasing efficiency. At the local level, partnerships are important for developing and implementing programs that are locally relevant and cost effective, and that meet the unique needs of the school district. This panel will explore the important roles that different types of partners play in ensuring that ALL students benefit from environmental literacy programs.

2:45 p.m. **Closing Remarks**

- Moderator: Mr. Dana Aunkst, Director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Chesapeake Bay Program
- Panelists:
- Mr. Atif Qarni, Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth of Virginia
- Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools for the State of Maryland
- Dr. David Volkman, Executive Deputy Secretary for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Ms. Tia Brumsted, Deputy Assistant Superintendent, Health and Wellness at the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Regional education leaders have been asked to each provide brief closing remarks reflecting on the Summit and Summit goals. Leaders may identify specific next step actions that their jurisdiction can implement to provide equitable environmental instruction for all students. Leaders may address the importance of partnerships and reflect on successful solutions identified during the Summit.

3:30 p.m. **Adjourn**