

*Chesapeake Bay Program*

# EDUCATION SUMMIT

TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2026



# Commonwealth Commitment to Environmental Literacy







## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Nurtures environmental stewardship
- Fosters responsibility for and connections to nature
- Promotes sustainable living and practices
- Strengthens critical thinking, problem solving, and empathy
- Spurs interest and innovation in environmental learning and career pathways
- Empowers positive change through leadership and advocacy



# Summit Purpose



-  **1** Build awareness of the new education outcomes in the 2025 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement
-  **2** Share opportunities and challenges to implementing programming at scale
-  **3** Engage in discussions and identify strategies that work for your jurisdiction
-  **4** Identify specific next-step actions to implement following the Summit





**Student Experiences**

## PROJECT W<sup>2</sup>ONDER ROADMAP

### STEP 1: COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Meetings with school administrators, teachers and community organizations. Community outreach events and community survey.



### STEP 2: PROJECT FRAMING

Meetings with school administrators and teachers.



### STEP 3: GUIDED DRAFTING

Teacher survey. Convene Steering Committees and begin meeting to advise and create ELP.



### STEP 4: COMPLETE ELP

Evaluate and refine ELP drafts, come to consensus about final drafts, and present to School Board.



**School District Planning**



**Workforce**

# Student Experiences Outcome

Increase the number of students who participate in inquiry-based environmental literacy instruction with the aim of each student receiving at least one Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience, or MWEE, in elementary, middle and high school.

*By 2040, reach jurisdictional targets to result in at least 75% of public school students being enrolled in a school district that offers a MWEE for all students.*



# Sultana Education Foundation

**Chris Cerino**

Student Experiences Outcome  
*Maryland*

# About Sultana Education Foundation

- 501(c)(3)
- Based in Chestertown, MD (Eastern Shore)
- Science/History focus
- EDUCATIONAL PLATFORMS:
  - Schooner Sultana
  - Canoes / Kayaks
  - Holt Education Center
  - Lawrence Wetland Preserve
- 13,000+ students/year



Changing Chesapeake  
Kent County 4th Grade

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Watershed Watch  
Kent County 7th Grade

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Wild Wetlands  
Queen Anne's Co. 6th Grade





- Organizational commitment
- School system & teacher buy-in
- Diversify funding sources
  - NOAA / Chesapeake Bay Trust
  - Maryland DNR
  - EPA
  - MSDE - SAI transportation grant
  - Private foundations
  - Membership donations
  - School system contributions

# West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection

**Callie Sams**

Student Experiences Outcome  
*West Virginia*

West  
Virginia



# School District Planning Outcome

Increase the number of school districts that have policies and practices in place that support environmental education and sustainable schools.

*By 2040, reach all jurisdictional targets for the number of public school districts that are well prepared to deliver a comprehensive and system-wide approach to environmental literacy.*



# Boxerwood Education Association

**Elise Sheffield**

School District Planning Outcome  
*Virginia*



# Boxerwood & Project NEST\*

BOXERWOOD

## GOAL:

Raise an entire generation of local youth who have the **knowledge, skills, and motivations** to be responsible stewards of the Earth.

Division	Enrolled	F/R	preK-5	6-8	9-12
Buena Vista City Public Schools	898	91.20%	preK - 4	Gr. 6	Env Sci
Lexington City Public Schools	535	27.48%	preK - 4	Gr. 6	N/A
Rockbridge County Public Schools	2,465	76.31%	preK - 5	Gr. 6-7	CTE/Ag

**Degree of Systemic EE**

\* Nurturing Environmental Stewardship Together  
more info: [www.boxerwood.org/project-nest](http://www.boxerwood.org/project-nest)

**Shared Success**  
(24-25 School Year)

17 preschools  
12 public schools  
213 field programs

2,286 learners  
5,518 total contacts

12,000+ hours of  
high-quality EE



Gr. 4 watercolor painting, Natural Bridge State Park

# Watershed Heroes

## Fact 1:

By age 12, **all** children attending public school in rural, Rockbridge County will have participated in **years** of high quality programming whose outcomes help protect the Bay watershed.



COMMUNITY PLANTINGS: GROWING NATIVE 22-23

\$120.00

— 1 +

Add to Cart



coreworksva.org

## Fact 2:

Over 2 decades, this grassroots, E-LIT partnership has educated thousands of local youth. Among graduates today are foresters, farmers, park rangers, geologists, solar & wind developers, environmental engineers, marine & conservation biologists, urban planners, ecologists, teachers, parents, and caring Earth citizens.





# Pennsylvania Environmental Literacy Network

**Tammie Peffer, Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
**Michelle Niedermeier, Pennsylvania Sea Grant**  
**Steve Kerlin, Stroud Water Research Center**  
**Steve Mohapp, Stroud Water Research Center**

School District Planning Outcome  
*Pennsylvania*

## **Vision:**

All Pennsylvanians are environmentally literate, prepared with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about complex environmental issues, and take actions that sustain a healthy environment for present and future generations.

- **2017-2020** Initiated a task force of interested partners
- **2020-2022** Advanced MWEE Awareness and PDs, expanding audiences
- **2022-2024** Established regional hubs network in PA to be more responsive to localized context
- **2024-2026** Continued expansion



# PENNSYLVANIA



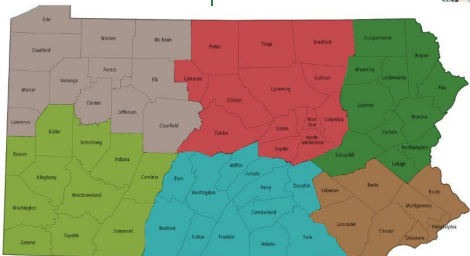
## ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY NETWORK

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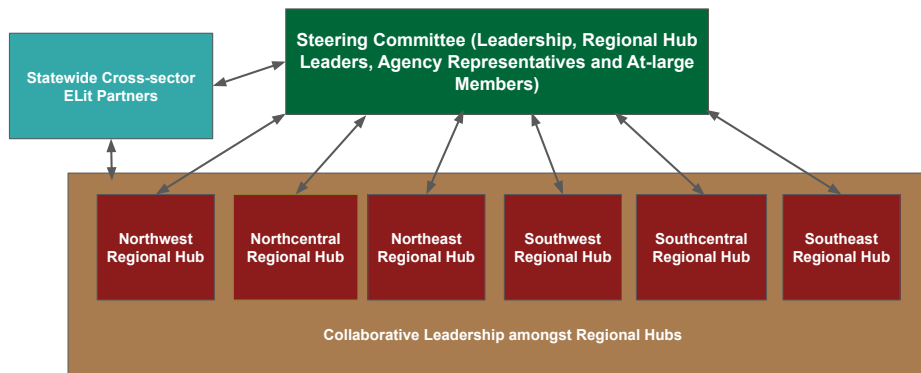


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CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION  
Saving a National Treasure

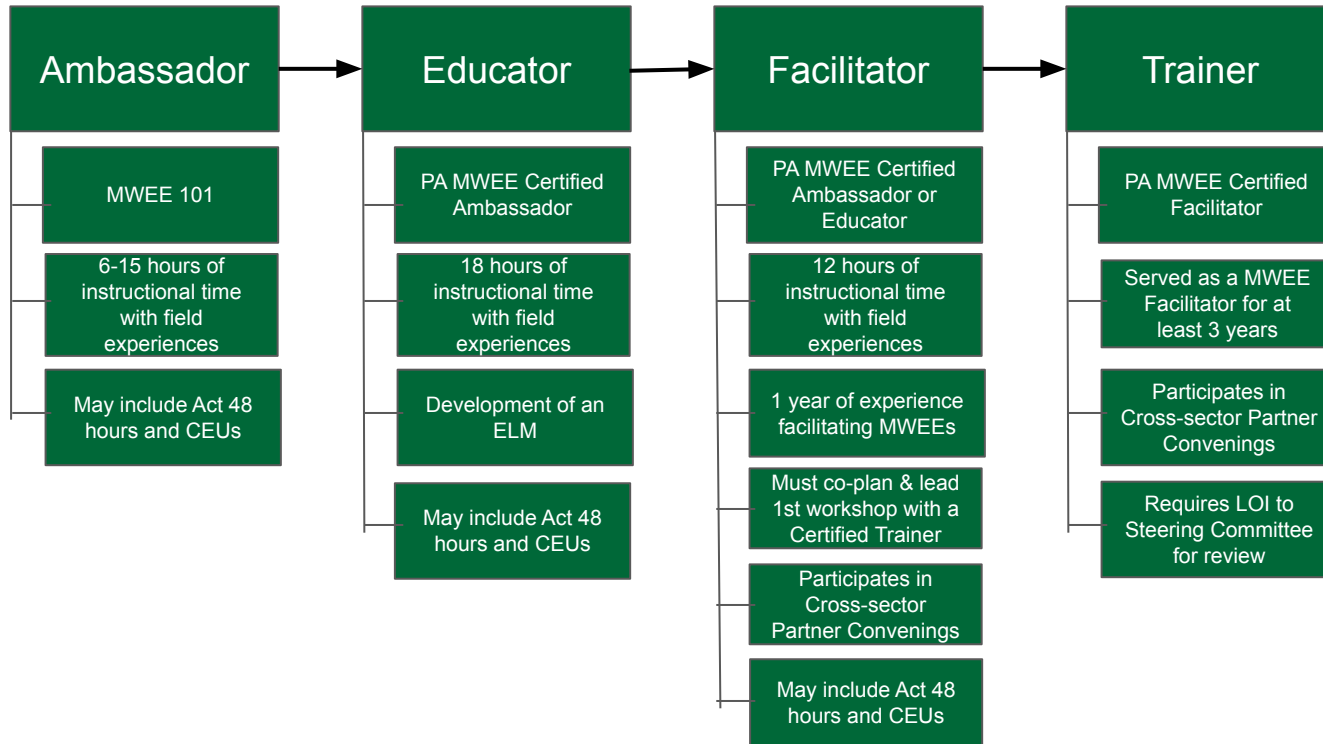


# Pennsylvania Environmental Literacy Network (PA ELit)

## Pennsylvania Certified Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE) Designations

<https://pagatewaytogreen.org/>

2024.10.14



# Workforce Outcome

Increase the ability of all job seekers in the watershed to understand, participate and succeed in career pathways that positively support the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

*By 2040, inform and grow implementation of strategies that help students, educators and job seekers become aware of and understand environmental careers, and the in-demand skills and pathways to access these opportunities.*



# D.C. Department of Energy and the Environment

**Ashley Duncan**

Workforce Outcome  
*Washington, D.C.*

# DC Department of Energy & Environment

## Ashley Duncan, DC Department of Energy & Environment

- **Green Zone Environmental Program:** DOEE and DOES offers a career pathway from age 14 through full-time employment via GZEP. Participants ages 14 to 24 attend six weeks of courses, service activities, and field trips. For those 18 and up, they can be hired as staff to run the various work sites, for a position lasting eight to 27 weeks.
- **Green Ready Program:** Successful staff may be invited to stay with the agency through September 30 as interns in the Green Ready Program, supporting DOEE programs alongside full-time staff.
- GZEP/Green Ready alumni currently work at DOEE in Watershed Protection, Human Resources, and more. Since 2012, 45 people have been hired to the agency full-time through the GZEP staff-to-Green Ready pathway.



# Delaware Department of Education

**Sarah Bell**

Workforce Outcome  
*Delaware*

# Delaware Department of Education

## *Environmental Literacy in CTE*

- Incorporates environmental literacy into Career and Technical Education (CTE) through the statewide Pathways initiative.
- Pathways prepares students for careers while building environmental awareness and sustainability
- Encourages students to understand how environmental issues impact fields such as agriculture, technology, health sciences, and education.
- Aims to equip students with the skills needed to make informed environmental decisions
- Opportunities to participate in a growing green economy while pursuing technical careers.



# Summit Agenda

**1:30** Jurisdiction discussions for each outcome

**3:40** Regional closing with jurisdictional share outs

**4:15** Jurisdiction closing and next steps

**4:30** Adjourn

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**Share:**

- 1 area where your state is excelling
- 1 growth area
- 1 concept that you plan to follow up on



2026 EDUCATION SUMMIT

# Jurisdiction Discussions