

West Virginia Environmental Literacy Update June, 2021

BACKGROUND DATA

ELIT Summary [[Full report](#)]

Four of the 8 LEAs that are within the Chesapeake Bay watershed in West Virginia responded to the ELIT in 2019, a response rate of 50%. When response rate is examined based on the students enrolled in each district, this sample represents 79% of students in the watershed. 3 out of 4 of responding LEAs in West Virginia scored as not prepared to implement high quality environmental education. One LEA scored as somewhat prepared. None of the responding LEAs had systemwide MWEEs available at any of the grade bands. Three out of four reporting LEAs had some MWEEs in place in elementary and middle school grades

Standards of Learning

- *Do you have stand alone environmental literacy standards? If not, where are the major places environmental literacy shows up in the standards for your state?*
 - No, there is not a stand-alone environmental literacy standard. At the high school level, this would best show up in the standards for the Environmental Science class, however, this class is not offered at all schools (my guess is that it's not offered at many schools, but I don't have a way to confirm this). At the elementary and middle school level, WV has included the engineering design and science literacy skills from NGSS that could be used to achieve the goal of environmental literacy. Environmental literacy standards are woven throughout these grades.
- *Is climate change included in your standards? If so, in what disciplines does it show up?*
 - No, West Virginia State Board of Education adopted the NGSS in 2015, but with revisions in the language around climate change. West Virginia standards do not link climate change explicitly to human causes -- something NGSS does -- and instead hint at the connection.

Teacher preparation

- *None identified.*

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 2019 WV Outdoor Learning Network Initiative
 - Berkeley, Jefferson and Morgan county superintendents sign memorandum of understanding including, "participate in creating a county-wide MWEE plan".
 - Cacapon Institute, Experience Learning, Potomac Valley Audubon, and Wind Dance Farm & Outdoor Education Center join WV ONLI as backbone partners
 - With NCBO, Chesapeake Bay Trust, and Chesapeake Bay Foundation, backbone partners and school systems held teacher PD for MWEE

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

Existing Environmental Education Efforts/Priorities

- *Any major drivers for environmental literacy beyond standards?*
 - WV DEP Chesapeake Bay Program is funding MWEE that includes conservation action
- *What are the priorities for the next 2 years?*
 - Establish systemic MWEE plans in Berkeley, Jefferson and Morgan counties
 - Plant >250 trees on school grounds (and maintain >2,500 trees planted since 2011)
 - Install 8 new rain gardens (and maintain >30 existing gardens and wetlands)

Existing Climate Change Education Efforts/Priorities

- *Any major drivers for climate change education beyond standards?*
 - Efforts: Make school flood proof (flash flooding is a major concern in ridge & valley communities)
- *What are the priorities for the next 2 years?*
 - Stabilize Warm Springs Run through Widmyer Elementary and Berkeley Springs High in Morgan County, WV, to minimize impact from frequent flash flooding (e.g., 2011, 2015, 2018)

Connections with Natural Resource agencies

- Environmental Literacy programs recently became eligible for funding through WV DEP in support of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.

Existing Educational Equity Efforts/Priorities

- *None identified.*

Opportunities

- Encourage the use of COVID relief funding to establish outdoor classrooms and other projects that support West Virginia Sustainable Schools program.
- Continue to work with WV DEP to fund student MWEEs.

Challenges

- There is no state working group focused on environmental literacy.
- West Virginia did not formally sign on to the environmental literacy goal constraining support from state agencies.

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY NETWORK

State Working Group: NA

NAAEE Affiliate: WV Environmental Education Association

WVEEA is only active as a Facebook organization page informally sharing information on programs, projects, funding, training, curriculum, events, etc.

Other Major State Environmental Literacy Partners:

- Cacapon Institute
- Experience Learning
- Potomac Valley Audubon Society
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation

FUNDING

Major State Funding Programs Supporting MWEE

- WV DEP grants for activities supporting the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

Active NOAA B-WET Grants

- *No active grants, Cacapon Institute recently wrapped up an award working in Berkley, Morgan, and Jefferson County Public Schools (NA16NMF4570294).*