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spring 2009

# directions

Journal of the Association of Nature Center Administrators

## the Granite State Summit - Aug., 26-29 ANCA's 15th annual gathering

A Warm Welcome Awaits You in New Hampshire

Iain McLeod  
Executive Director  
Squam Lakes Natural Science Center  
Holderness, NH

Plans are falling into place nicely for the August 2009 ANCA gathering in New Hampshire – The Granite State Summit. Please be certain you make your hotel arrangements early and double check which hotels ARE on the shuttle route and which are NOT. We have all kinds of options available from chain hotels to lake-side motels and quaint B&Bs.

The following is a quick overview of the Summit highlights.

First of all we are excited to announce that this year we have created an online registration form that should streamline the whole registration process. The form is up and ready for your registration at [www.nhnature.org](http://www.nhnature.org).

[www.natctr.org/anca\\_summit.html](http://www.natctr.org/anca_summit.html) and

All materials related to the Summit will be electronic this year and will soon be available for your review and download.

Summit activities start on Wednesday, August 26th with four options for field trips. One trip will be an all-day tour of green buildings (including LEED certified) in various parts of New Hampshire. Another outing will tour several nature centers



photo courtesy of Squam Lakes Natural Science Center

*Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, in Holderness, NH is hosting ANCA's 15th annual Summit - The Granite State Summit - August 26-29, 2009.*

(continued on page 4)

### ANCA Headquarters:

Jen Levy, Executive Director  
mail • P.O. Box 464  
Logan, Utah 84323  
email • [jenlevy@natctr.org](mailto:jenlevy@natctr.org)  
phone • 435-787-8209  
toll free • 800-490-2622  
fax • 435-752-3984

[www.natctr.org](http://www.natctr.org)

Founded in 1989, the Association of Nature Center Administrators is a private non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and supporting best leadership and management practices for nature and environmental learning centers.

Serving nearly 500 organizations, ANCA is the leader in the profession.



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Fisher

photo by Ed Sharron

# Director's Notes

## Time to Make Your Summit Plans

Jen Levy  
Executive Director  
Association of Nature Center  
Administrators  
Logan, UT



It's time to make plans to attend the ANCA Summit XV, The Granite State Summit! This year's Summit will be held at the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center in Holderness, NH.

I realize for many of our members this will be a difficult year to attend the Summit, but in this time of financial uncertainty we can all benefit from time spent with our peers. As many of you know, the Summit provides the rare opportunity to come together with fellow nature and environmental learning center directors from around the country (and a few other countries) for learning, laughing, and sharing best practices in a relaxed atmosphere. For many, the ANCA Summit is an opportunity for rejuvenation and to rekindle the passion we have for our work. Whether you are new in the field or an ANCA veteran, the Summit is an investment that guarantees great returns.

If you have never been to an ANCA Summit you really don't know what you are missing. Unlike other professional development opportunities, the ANCA Summit encourages everyone to participate through facilitated discussions and open space sessions. During the facilitated discussions, instead of a single voice presenting information, everyone present will enrich the discussion by contributing his or her ideas and experiences. The result is a synergistic dialogue that brings out an abundance of perspectives, possibilities, and renewed energy.

Open space sessions provide an opportunity for participants to create

their own meeting, continue a session that needs more time, or find a group to address an issue that was not presented elsewhere during the Summit. In the open space meeting, participants will gather and collectively design the session topics that will be offered. It is a unique opportunity for participants to bring issues, questions, and new ideas to the Summit to share with their peers.

In addition to the learning and networking opportunities, the Summit is your chance to visit beautiful New Hampshire and the Squam Lakes – Big Squam Lake, Little Squam Lake, and White Oak Pond. Big Squam is 6,791 acres, six miles long, four miles wide and 98 feet deep with 61 miles of shoreline. It is the second-largest lake located entirely in New Hampshire. Little Squam is 408 acres, two miles long, 1/2 mile wide and 84 feet deep. The lakes are host to 67 islands. As many of you know, Squam was the location for the movie "On Golden Pond." If you have not seen it I recommend renting it. You will be inspired to visit this beautiful part of the country and possibly do a back flip Jane Fonda-style into the lake!

Despite being located only a couple of hours from major metropolitan areas, Squam has managed to maintain its pristine and undeveloped landscape. The nearby White

Mountains and the islands and coves on the lakes offer the perfect refuge for nesting loons and other wildlife including fishers, foxes, bobcats, raptors, moose, and black bears. The abundant recreational opportunities of the region makes this the perfect vacation spot for before or after the Summit. Outdoor adventures include hiking, biking, climbing, and boating on one of the 273 lakes and ponds in the region.

The New Hampshire tourism website says, "You're going to love it here" and I agree. The ANCA board met in New Hampshire in January 2008 and all were impressed with the



Common loon

photo by Tom Hissong

Science Center and the surrounding area.

For a couple of our southern board members, this was their first experience walking out on a frozen lake.

I had the opportunity to visit Squam again this January and look forward to returning in August when the days will be warm and sunny. I especially look forward to getting out on both Big Squam and Little Squam Lakes and revisiting the coves and islands I explored twenty years ago as a "Loon Ranger." For more than 25 years, the Loon Preservation Committee has worked to preserve loons and their habitats in New Hampshire through research, management, and education activities. After graduating from the University of Maine with a BS in wildlife management, I spent the summer of 1988 working for the

Loon Preservation Committee on the lakes monitoring the common loon population through their nesting season. Although in decline on Squam Lakes, loons continue to attract tourists from all over and inspire much of the local flavor of gift shops and inns. The eerie yodel of the common loon is a symbol of wildness and worth the trip if you are lucky enough to hear it!

If you have not seen the Summit brochure, be sure to visit the ANCA website, [www.natctr.org](http://www.natctr.org), and register soon! As in past years, ANCA will provide scholarships based on financial need, budget-size, and first-time attendees. In addition, there is a grant

template on the website if you are interested in finding your own funding for attending the Summit.

I hope you will be joining us in August! 🌿

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704-910-9809

Carolyn Chipman Evans  
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Environmental Learning Center  
[holly@discoverelc.org](mailto:holly@discoverelc.org) / 772-589-5050

##### Jenny Harmon

Ozark Natural Science Center  
[jennymharmon@hotmail.com](mailto:jennymharmon@hotmail.com)  
479-789-2754

##### Cynthia Harrell

Crow's Neck Environ. Education Center  
[cbharrell@nemcc.edu](mailto:cbharrell@nemcc.edu) / 662-738-6751

##### Dede Long

Briar Bush Nature Center  
[dede@briarbush.org](mailto:dede@briarbush.org) / 215-887-6603

##### Bob Mercer

Silver Lake Nature Center  
[ramercer@co.bucks.pa.us](mailto:ramercer@co.bucks.pa.us) / 215-785-1177

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[jenlevy@natctr.org](mailto:jenlevy@natctr.org) / 435-787-8209

##### MARKETING & COMM. DIRECTOR

Ann Rilling  
[arilling@natctr.org](mailto:arilling@natctr.org) / 970-375-7090

##### BOOKKEEPER

Teresa Bassett  
435-787-8209

in the Greater Concord area. A third trip will take a spectacular hike up nearby Mount Percival and Mount Morgan. There will also be a shorter hike to beautiful Rattlesnake Mountain which boasts the nicest views of Squam Lake.

That evening we will gather for the official welcome and opening remarks followed by the traditional Brag Night photos. Then we will really break the ice with local comedians and musicians The Choich Sisters (and guests).

Each evening will conclude with the opportunity for some spontaneous songs and music around our fire pit.

Thursday morning's first activity option will be a quick Tai Chi lesson to relax and focus you before a full day of workshops in the morning and afternoon.

Summit organizers have put together the following menu of workshop choices:

- *Social Networks for Community Development and Constituent Loyalty* - Non-techie ANCAites will be introduced to the world of Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Why is this important? Facebook alone has 125 million users. They are discussing current events, sharing their weekend outings, and spreading the word about their favorite causes. Join Kelly-Sue LeBlanc and Tara Mahady of Aleuromedia for a practical session on the use of social media as a marketing tool.

- *New Tools for Restoring Nature Play* - ANCA members Ken Finch, Marcie Oltman, and Debbie Greene will present several new approaches to nature play including family nature clubs, play naturalists, and risk/benefit assessments. Participants will also be asked to share their program ideas adding to the "nature play toolbox."

- *Diversity: Managing and Serving the Changing Demographic* - In order to effectively support an increasingly diverse population of employees and visitors, it is essential to deepen our understanding of important concepts related to diversity. Dr Michael Fischler of Plymouth State University will present this workshop on diversity and emerging demographic trends.

- *Non-Profit Accounting and Budgeting from The Environmental Institute Management (EIM) Course* - Executive directors are held responsible for virtually every aspect of their organizations' activities including marketing, programming, membership operations, and financial management. Dave Toman, Associate Director of Business & Finance at the Delaware Nature Society will present information on financial management and help new executives (or perhaps those in need of a financial refresher)

gain a better understanding of accounting and finance.

- *Site & Architectural Master Planning – Making good centers exceptional* - Exceptional nature and residential centers have site and architectural master plans to guide their growth. Learn what steps are involved in site and architectural master planning, how to select the best team of professionals (landscape architects, architects, exhibit designers, engineers) needed, how to create a planning process that will serve your needs, and find out what "deliverables" to expect. John Royster of The Big Muddy Workshop will lead this fun and interactive session.

- *Places that Teach: Incorporating Architecture and Landscape in Your Learning Place* - When designed and programmed creatively and effectively, buildings and



photo courtesy of Squam Lakes Natural Science Center

Summit XV plans will include pontoon boat tours of beautiful Squam Lake, hiking in nearby mountains, birding, wildlife viewing, and more.

landscapes themselves can contribute significantly to the learning experience provided by nature centers and environmental education facilities. By reaching beyond the site to understand the context of a place and digging deep within the site to understand the histories that have shaped a place, nature centers can enhance their learning potential with focused programming and engaging, place-specific features, and experiences. Presented by Kari Stiles and Mark Johnson of Jones & Jones Architects, Landscape Architects, and Planners.

- *Lemonade from Lemons: Ramping up Fund Raising When the Economy's Down* - Porter D. Caesar, CFRE will present strategies to strengthen the impact of development efforts to maximize fundraising success during challenging economic times. He will work with participants to sharpen their stories, improve institutional fitness, train board members to serve as informed advocates, and inspire trust through transparency.

- *Ins and Outs of Accreditation* - This workshop will explore the accreditation processes of both the American Association of Museums (AAM) and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). We will learn about the procedures and requirements of both organizations, with an additional focus on concerns regarding live animal exhibits and programs. The co-presenters, Charles Browne, Executive Director of The Fairbanks Museum and Dave Erler, Senior Naturalist of Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, bring the unique perspectives of both accreditation applicant and reviewer.

Late that afternoon you can walk the animal exhibit trail, explore Kirkwood Gardens (the Science Center's beautiful semi-formal garden), get a behind the scenes tour of the Science Center, or take a guided lake cruise on one of our pontoon boats to look for loons and bald eagles.

After dinner, it is time for the Nature Center Leader-

ship Award followed by our keynote speaker, Gary Hirshberg. Gary is Chairman, President and CE-Yo of Stonyfield Farm the world's leading organic yogurt producer, based in Londonderry, NH. Gary is an ardent conservation activist and will highlight concepts and issues from his book *Stirring It Up: How to Make Money and Save the World*.


Friday will start off with another Tai Chi session, then we have a full slate of facilitated sessions in the morning and afternoon. Late afternoon there will once again be a behind the scenes tour, a trail walk, garden tour, and lake cruise. Friday evening will start with music by NH-based guitar/vocal group Wilson's Crossing, then after dinner, it's time for Bob Mercer and Larry Richardson to enliven things with the always-fun Live Auction!

Saturday starts with the annual Membership Meeting followed by facilitated sessions. After lunch, it's Open Space Session time, so please share a topic and be prepared for some lively and enlightening discussions.

After dinner we are delighted to welcome Terminal Hip Dance Company who will perform an original dance composition. They will be followed by a rousing "raise the roof" performance by the Black Bear Moon Drummers.

On Sunday we are offering three field trips. An all-day trip includes a Whale Watch off the NH coast and a tour of seacoast nature centers. Humpback and fin whales and pelagic birds (shearwaters and petrels) will be the highlight of this trip. A second all-day trip involves a hike up New Hampshire's highest peak – and home of the fastest wind speed ever recorded – Mount Washington. This trip will be led by staff of the Appalachian Mountain Club. The third trip is a half-day hike up nearby Rattlesnake Mountain.

Then it will be time to send you on your way and the staff and volunteers of the Science Center will instantly curl up into fetal positions and sleep soundly for two days straight!

I certainly look forward to welcoming you in New Hampshire and sharing with you the delights of Squam Lake and all that the Granite State has to offer. 

*Iain MacLeod is Executive Director of the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center. Prior to joining SLNSC is 2006, Iain had been Director of multiple nature centers during his 18 years with the Audubon Society of New Hampshire. Iain started his career in his native Scotland as a "bird detective" with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.*



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# Profile:

## Crow's Neck Environmental Education Center: Going Green & Purple for Military Kids

Cynthia Harrell  
Executive Director  
Crow's Neck Environmental  
Education Center  
Tishomingo, MS

The group light bulb came on all at once, as evidenced on a dozen separate faces. With a collective "Ah-hah!," the twelve first recognized the solution, then quickly moved to complete their "Co-op Course" problem. A few minutes before, this had been a collection of frustrated teenagers. Now they were a successful team, with much happiness and high-fiving in evidence.

What made the result so satisfying was not the group's speed (probably slower than average) or their creativity at problem solving, but that their answer came from an unlikely source. At the start of the exercise, two girls hung on opposite edges of the group reluctant to take part. Although from different states, I knew each had a father serving in Iraq, and each was having a tough time dealing with that reality. I sensed each felt lonely and withdrawn. Their first ideas were hesitant; their suggestions tentative. Yet, when the group's progress stalled, it was these two young girls who kept the brainstorming going. As their ideas started to build, one on another, their companions began to recognize their leadership, and willingly followed. I was seeing the start of a new friendship, one built on mutual respect and increasing confidence in their abilities, a friendship each girl needed badly, and one

I would watch grow in the coming week. This was my introduction to Operation Purple® Camp.

When we were approached by the National Military Family Association (NMFA) a year ago about our inter-



photo courtesy of Tony Finch, NEMCC/Crow's Neck

*Jacob Torres from Ocean Springs, MS, tries out new skills on the climbing wall, during "Military Day" at Crow's Neck's Operation Purple Camp.*

est in hosting an Operation Purple Camp, I was not familiar with the organization. But I quickly learned, like our Crow's Neck Environmental Education Center, these folks had the well being of children as a key mission. That was all I needed to know to begin exploring a new partnership opportunity.

War affects not just service members, but spouses and children as well. As an organization dedicated to serving these military families, the NMFA, headquartered in Alexandria, VA, recognized the need for more resources to support military children. In 2004, they created the Operation Purple Summer Camp Program as a way to help military children struggling with having a parent deployed. The program offers these kids free, week-long, overnight camp experiences. NMFA aims to help military kids experience carefree fun, while also learning coping skills to deal with war-related stress and fostering relationships with other children who know what they are going through. Please be sure to visit their website at [www.nmfa.org](http://www.nmfa.org).

During the 2004 pilot season, the National Military Family Association implemented 12 different Operation Purple Camps (OPC) across the country. NMFA continued to support and expand the program in the following years, and in 2008 the NMFA provided nearly 10,000 military children the opportunity to attend 100 weeks of camp held at 62 locations in 37 states and territories!

NMFA has been able to secure donations to make the camps financially possible, but has no infrastructure and so they work with established camps – like our environmental learning center – to host the program.

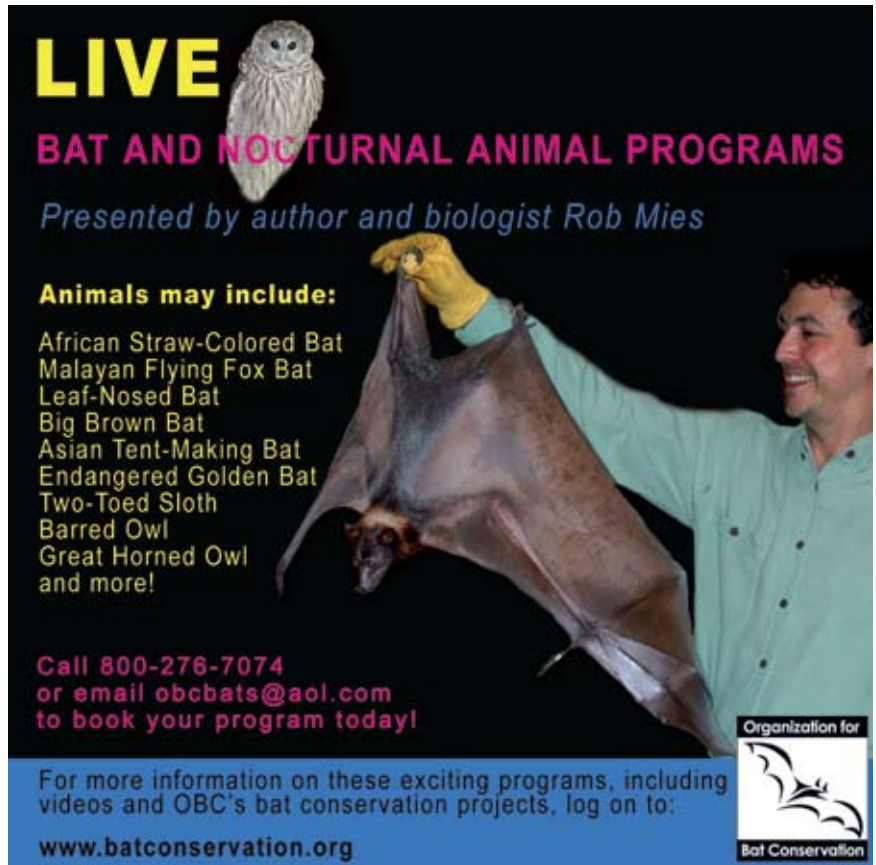
Located in the northeast corner of Mississippi, near the tiny town of Tishomingo, Crow's Neck sits on 530 acres of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land, jutting into the northern end of 6,600-acre Bay Springs Lake.


Opened in 1993 as an end product of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway project, Crow's Neck is one of the Southeast's premier residential environmental education centers, and a leader in experiential learning. Since 2001, the Center has operated as part of Northeast Mississippi Community College in nearby Booneville. With an outdoor classroom characterized by rolling, forested hills nestled along the lake's rugged, meandering shoreline, Crow's Neck provides "a natural place to learn," serving nearly 6,000 visitors a year, most of them K-12 school children and their teachers.

The addition of OPC to our June calendar was an easy transition, allowing us to extend our busy season into a traditionally slack time at the end of the academic year, while fully taking advantage of our "veteran" crew of spring SCA intern-naturalists.

The Operation Purple philosophy is built on a three part strategy of creating social networks, engaging in physical exercise, and targeted learning. The curriculum focuses on strengthening coping and communication skills, which build resiliency among military children during this time of our Nation's high military tempo. There's also a strong environmental education component which increases the campers' knowledge and enjoyment of nature and helps to develop coping skills using outdoor activities as a catalyst. The Operation Purple program is the only national summer camp program that focuses on helping kids cope with deployment-related issues.

Crow's Neck's Operation Purple Camp had all the elements of a typical week of camp, filled with team-building activities (the Cooperation Course), life skills classes (survival skills, orienteering, canoeing, and fishing), arts and crafts, and Top Ten Lists, all served up with LOTS of snacks with ice involved, like homemade snow cones, homemade ice cream, chilled watermelon, and



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slushy juice boxes (after all - it was June in Mississippi...)!

To help kids become more familiar and comfortable with the elements of order and discipline that make up their parents' military life, the OPC weaves a military aspect through its curriculum. We got creative and made several cosmetic changes to the Center. Our cabins 1 through 4 were re-named "barracks," and labeled "Alpha," "Bravo," "Charlie," and "Delta." The dining hall became the "mess hall," and the restrooms the "latrine." Kids were divided into "squads" (small family groups) and came up with their own identifying squad flags. We incorporated a flag raising ceremony at the beginning of each day and a flag lowering ceremony at dusk, offering up a dose of good, old-fashioned patriotism. In one particularly meaningful exhibit, our campers created the OPC Wall of Honor, where they displayed pictures of their parents.

We were fortunate to have the services of a military liaison from the local 155th BCT Mississippi National Guard unit. He led activities on the mid-week "military day" that included a climbing wall, camouflage face painting, an introduction to hand-held radios and radio etiquette, and basic marching techniques. And, yes, we had some straight lines by the end of the session!

To say our Operation Purple Camp was a highlight for us last year is an understatement. We had a blast! And although the Crow's Neck staff was worn out by the time we said our goodbyes to the last camper, we had



photo courtesy of Tony Finch, NEMCC/Crow's Neck

*Brandon Robinson from Plattsmouth, NE, checks out the controls and dashboard of a troop transport truck as a guardsman from the 155th BCT Mississippi National Guard Unit looks on.*



photo courtesy of Tony Finch, NEMCC/Crow's Neck

*Adam Thomas from Greensboro, NC, "disappears" in camo paint.*

a tremendous sense of satisfaction. We helped some kids who really needed it and we all had fun doing it. We were humbled by some things they said during their "Closing Circle," a staple farewell activity at Crow's Neck.

Perhaps it can be summed up best by an Operation Purple Camp parent who gives this testimonial:

"The impact of Operation Purple Camps on our military children is powerful. For some it is a week of being able to have fun and forget a bit about the worries that may be waiting for them at home. For others it is a chance to make connections with friends who will help them get through the tough times they sometimes face. And still for others it is a life changing event where they discover their own personal strengths and abilities to get through whatever life throws at them."

And - those two young girls from our inaugural OPC camp last year...it wouldn't surprise me if they've been keeping up with each other and are making plans to meet up at Crow's Neck for the 2009

OPC season. 🌿

*Cynthia Harrell has been the executive director of Crow's Neck Environmental Education Center since 2001, currently serves on the ANCA Board of Directors and is president of the Mississippi Environmental Education Alliance. She has been preparing for a through-hike of the Appalachian Trail for over 30 years, and on three separate occasions has been named Time Magazine's "Person of the Year" (1966, 1975 & 2006). In her spare time Cynthia supports Penn State football, Duke basketball, and has visited national parks and preserves in four different hemispheres.*



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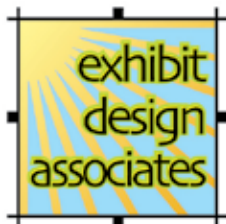
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# Book Review

## *What Tree is That? A guide to the more common trees of North America*

Reviewed by Gordon T. Maupin,  
Executive Director  
The Wilderness Center  
Wilmot, OH

When this book arrived for review, I briefly checked it out then immediately passed it on to for quick comments by two foresters and a naturalist.

Their comments were consistent They liked it. I liked it too.

This is probably not a book a professional botanist will want to purchase. In trying to cover all of North America in only 164 pages, many less common species had to be skipped. However, the authors did an excellent job selecting which species to include. It could be useful because it includes many horticultural species that are often omitted from other field guides.

The weekend naturalist, curious hiker, homeowner, and schoolteacher will find the book useful and user-friendly. Some professional interpretive naturalists may find it a convenient field reference.

Karina Helm did a wonderful job with the full color illustrations that depict leaves and fruit.

The authors designed the book such that a user can choose between

quick and dirty picture keying or move methodically through the dichotomous key. Either method will work pretty well.

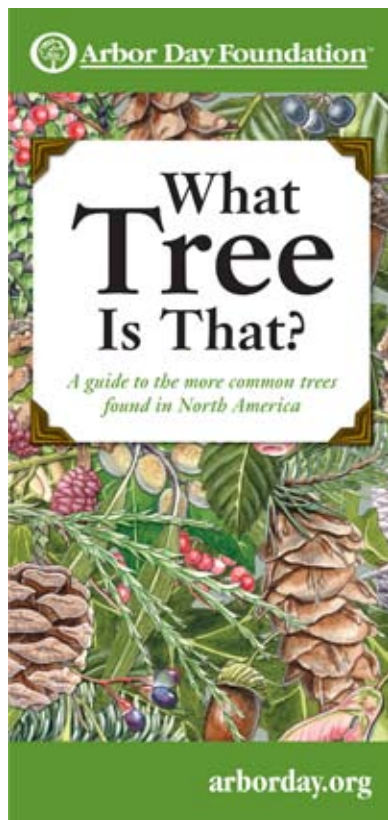
To accelerate the process, the first half of the book covers trees found in eastern North America and the second half covers western North America. For convenience, trees such as Northern Red Oak, found throughout North America, have species accounts in both places.

Conclusion: *What Tree is That?* deserves a spot on the shelf of your nature center gift shop. Some of your naturalists may wish have a copy for their bookshelf or daypack. It could be most useful for teaching people to use a key. 🌿

*Gordon Maupin is half Ozark Hillbilly and half prairie sod-buster with a touch of Cherokee.*

*He studied biology and plant ecology at Missouri State University earning bachelors*

*and master's degrees. He became Executive Director of The Wilderness Center in 1981. Prior to joining the Wilderness Center he worked for the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.*



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Photo by Kleinman

# From The Field:

## RELC Directors' Conference 2009

Tim Neu  
Director  
Ashokan Center  
Olivebridge, NY

In mid-January of this year, resident environmental learning center directors and senior staff gathered at McDowell Environmental Center in north central Alabama for the seventh biannual Residential Environmental Learning Center Directors' (RELC) conference. More than 40 participants from resident centers across the nation came to advance the residential environmental education movement through the sharing of current ideas, concerns, solutions, and insights. Whether new to the field or a seasoned administrator, we all benefited from this congregation of collective wisdom.

With inspiration provided by the annual ANCA Summit, the RELC conference was designed specifically to address the unique challenges associated with resident environmental education programs. The first conference was organized in 1996, and hosted by the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont in Tennessee. The success of this first gathering of resident program directors confirmed that there was a strong desire to share ideas and concerns with other like minded people.

To ensure that the topics covered in the conference workshops were pertinent to the attendees, the Open Space meeting format was chosen as the perfect means for the participants to get what they had hoped for from

the conference.

Open Space meetings are a contrast to most conferences where participants listen to presentations of topics that are selected months prior to the gathering. An Open Space Meeting is a gathering of peers brought together through common interests and concerns. It is understood that participants bring to the table the experience and expertise necessary to address current issues and topics in their professional field. To be truly



photo by Ken Voorhis

*Field trips, like this outing to Secret Cave in Alabama, are just one of the activities that educate, inspire, and build camaraderie at the biannual Residential Environmental Learning Center Directors' Conference.*

successful, all attendees must spend time prior to the conference thinking through agenda topics that they feel would be most relevant and meaningful to themselves and the group.

On the first evening of the conference, a facilitator opens the meeting with a blank slate and moderates the steps leading toward the finalization of an agenda. The agenda is created by the people in the room who identify topics that are important to them, and they are prepared to discuss. This process acknowledges the potential for leadership in every person. Passion and responsibility are the two

keys to a successful session. Without passion, an idea will soon wane, and without responsibility, there is risk that the ideas will never move forward. If this was to happen, the Law of Mobility kicks in. Also known as the "two foot rule" it states that if anyone finds themselves in situations where they are neither learning anything nor contributing anything, they are responsible for moving (with their own two feet!) to another group meeting. These principles enable people to

participate in ways that are most meaningful to them.

Although I was skeptical at first that enough topics would be suggested to fill a two-day conference, I quickly realized there wasn't enough time slots to accommodate all the interesting concerns the participants were prepared to tackle. We had to either pare it down or extend the conference an extra day!

Through a playful caucus process, we trimmed it down to about 20 sessions offered in four venues over a two day period. Because the participants chose the

agenda, and everyone has an opportunity to voice their opinion, the resulting schedule is always very satisfying.

Many of the topics represented in the final agenda could apply to any nature center, including marketing programs, community connections, and hot technology for administrators. Other topics truly unique to the resident program world included dorm innovations, managing food service operations, and administrative concerns for overnight trips. All of these topics have been discussed on the ANCA listserv, but there is noth-

ing like sitting down for an hour and a half face to face with your peers to really delve deep to explore solutions for your common concerns.

For those of us that have been in the “camp” business for a few years, it is an opportunity to mentor the aspiring young leaders, and they in turn energize and invigorate us. It is a wonderful synergy that everyone involved thrives on.

With such a diverse and relative schedule of workshops, it is always hard to choose which sessions to attend. To avert this dilemma, a “scribe” is appointed at each session who records the most important points on a lap top computer. These



photo by Ken Voorhis

McDowell Environmental Center in Nauvoo, AL hosted the 2009 RELC Directors’ Conference where folks from throughout the U.S. gathered to network and get rejuvenated.

notes are then posted on a website created by the conference host. This year’s conference summary can be referenced at <http://www.campmcdowell.com/cmec/RELC.htm>.

What you won’t find there are all the great conversations that take place at the dining tables and around the fireplace in the evenings. And what you really can’t capture, even with today’s amazing technology, is the feeling of camaraderie from being with dozens of your peers! A common quality of camp directors is the ability to create a community from a group of unacquainted people. We are pretty adept at and amenable to that process, and by the end of the conference, what began as a networking opportu-

nity has grown into a new family of friends.

Before the “business” aspect of the conference even begins, the peer bonding is facilitated with pre-conference tours to points of interest unique to the conference venue. This year’s offerings included canoeing the biologically diverse Cahaba River and exploring the beautiful sandstone canyons and rock formations of McDowell Environmental Center. Although the weather was chilly by Alabama standards, we were all warmed by the Southern hospitality provided by Maggie Johnston and the Camp McDowell staff.

The final conference activity

this year was a visit to the Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham, AL. It was a mind-opening experience, made all the more auspicious by coinciding with the inauguration ceremony of President Obama.

Plans are already underway for the next RELC confer-

ence in 2011. Mid-January seems like the time of year when many resident facility programs are slower than we would like to be, so it is the perfect time for a winter get-away. Stay tuned to *Directions* and the ANCA listserv for more details on this wonderful conference.

A great publication regarding open space is *Open Space Technology: A Users Guide* by Harrison Owen, Barrett-Koehler Publishers at: [www.openspacetechnology.com](http://www.openspacetechnology.com). 🌿

*Tim Neu began his career at the Ashokan Center in 1982. In 2003, Tim became Director of Ashokan, and is helping to guide his team through the challenge of becoming an*

*independent not-for-profit organization, and to design and build a new resident facility. His vision of Ashokan’s future is to become a model of sustainability, and to create a living classroom dedicated to promoting our cultural heritage through living history, music, and the arts, and to bring environmental awareness and responsible stewardship back into mainstream consciousness.*

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# Membership Notes & News

## Enews

Are you receiving the ANCA Enews? Beginning in May 2008, we have been sending an electronic newsletter to members through iContact online. This is not a replacement for *Directions* – instead it serves as a safe method of communicating to the ANCA membership on a periodic basis.

The message comes from Association of Nature Center Administrators with this address: [info@natctr.org](mailto:info@natctr.org). Be sure to check with your service provider or in your spam folder if you are not receiving the ANCA Enews. You don't want to miss out on any important updates and announcements!

## Renewal Revamp

Recently, the ANCA board changed its policy regarding membership. Your membership now lasts a full twelve months from the date you joined.

In the past, a membership in ANCA was good for the calendar year and everybody was asked to renew at the same time. With the new policy, you will receive member benefits for a full twelve months from the date you join, and we will send you a renewal notice on your anniversary date.

## ANCA's Utah Address

Please be sure your address file is up to date with ANCA's address in Logan, UT.

We still have a few members who use the Ohio address when mailing to ANCA. Please check with your bookkeeper or accounting office to make sure their files have been updated to include the new address:

ANCA  
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## New Strategies

For nonprofits, social media strategies and tools can mean less expense, better relationships, and wider opportunities for fund raising and support.

To test this theory, ANCA is on Facebook! To date, we have 27 members and \$70 raised (thank you Martin, Bill, Renee, and Debbie!).

If you are on Facebook please consider joining the ANCA cause and inviting your friends to join also. If your center utilizes a social media approach and you are willing to share your story, we would love to hear about it. Please email Ann at [arilling@natctr.org](mailto:arilling@natctr.org) with your social media story for consideration in a future issue of *Directions*.

## ANCA Membership - a Great Investment in the Profession

### Who Should Join ANCA?

The Association of Nature Center Administrators is intended to serve professionals who provide the vision and leadership to carry out the development and administration of an environmental learning center's mission, goals, and objectives.

Although most members are center directors, other senior staff will find it valuable for their own work and career development.

### Membership Benefits

- Quarterly Issues of *Directions*
  - electronic or hard copy versions
- Special Issues of *Directions*
  - topics focussing on relevant issues
- Discounts on Publications
- Discounted Summits and Workshops
- Reciprocal Admissions Program
- Membership Guide
- Networking with Nature Center Professionals
- Free job postings on ANCA's web site

### Membership Categories

- Individual \$70
- Institutional \$110 (benefits for 2)
- Graduate Student \$25
- Emeritus \$50 (retired from the profession)

### Business Membership & Summit Sponsorship

The ANCA Business Membership and Summit Sponsorship Programs allow businesses to be part of the ANCA community on many different levels.

ANCA also offers additional advertising and p.r. opportunities for those with products and services of interest to the nature and environmental learning center profession.

Please contact Ann Rilling, Marketing & Communications Director for more information:

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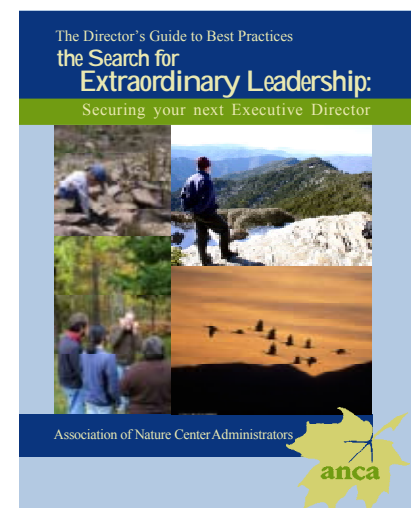
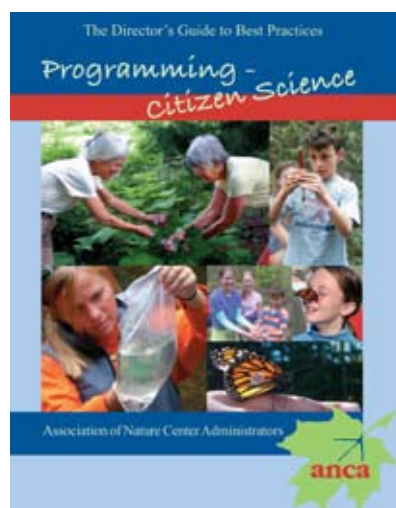
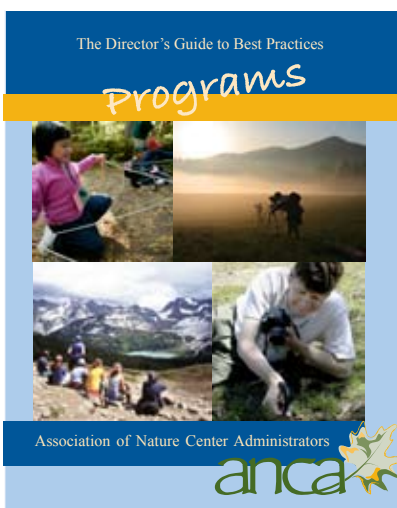
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# ANCA Publications - a Fabulous Educational Investment

- The Director's Guide to Best Practices: Examples from the Nature & Environmental Learning Center Profession
- The Nature Center Book: How to Create and Nurture a Nature Center in Your Community
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What can be covered? Well, just about anything involved with planning, funding, and operations.

Some topics include:

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### Join the Team!

ANCA's Consult Services are a success because of it's members' participation on Consult Teams. Please consider sharing your experiences and lessons learned.

Consult Team members donate their time but all expenses are paid. Participating in a Consult is a great way to see other parts of the country, learn about other nature centers, and take home valuable knowledge for your own center.

So don't delay!!!

PLEASE fill out the skills survey in the Member's Section on ANCA's web site at [www.natctr.org](http://www.natctr.org).

To find out more about  
ANCA's Peer Consults contact:

Ann Rilling  
Marketing & Communications Director  
970-375-7090  
[arilling@natctr.org](mailto:arilling@natctr.org)