

NEW LEADER AWARD:
john defillipo

page 6

MEET OUR HOSTS:
come on down to ga!

page 8

PROFILE:
get dirty & let's move!

page 10

summer 2015

directions

Journal of the Association of Nature Center Administrators

ANCA's 2015 Nature Center Leadership Award goes to...

"To me, Dede Long is the embodiment of life and nature. She has lived what she learned and practiced what she preached. She has embraced life and environmental education to the fullest and I don't know how she could possibly have given back any more, professionally or personally. She is a truly remarkable person who has enriched the lives of all who have met her through her love of life and nature. To honor Dede Long with the ANCA Nature Center Leadership Award would be validation of a life's work and I cannot think of anyone more deserving."

~ Monica J. Embery

Dede Long!

Holly Dill
Executive Director (retired)
Environmental Learning Center
Vero Beach, FL

Dede Long started her international career in education in 1971 as a science and social problems teacher for grades six through eight in Okinawa, Japan. She then moved to Athens, Greece where she served as Recreation Director for the 7th Fleet of the USO.

Dede's return to the USA led her to California in 1975 where she served as a resident outdoor education teacher for two years. It is her move to Pennsylvania that resulted in Dede's most impressive professional accomplishment.

In early 1979, she became the Executive Director of the, then tiny, Briar Bush Nature Center in Abington, PA. She remained in the position until her retirement in March 2010.



(continued on page 4)

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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 more than 600 members, ANCA is the leader in the profession.

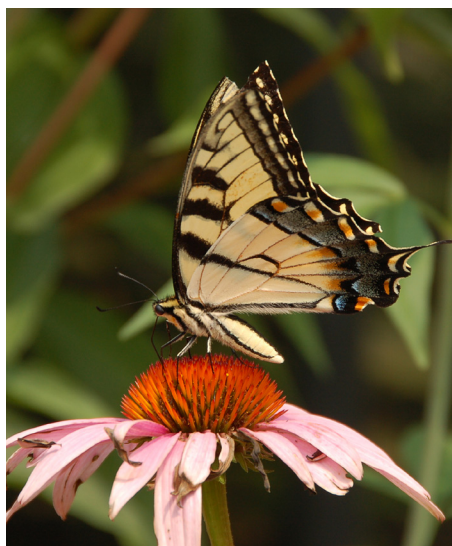


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- 2 Director's Notes:
ANCA at The White House
- 6 Outstanding New Leader
Award:
John Defillipo
- 8 Meet Our Summit Hosts:
Elachee Nature Science
Center
- 10 Profile:
Get Dirty & Let's Move!
- 11 Feet On The Ground:
Recent ANCA Gatherings
- 12 Donor Profile
Lisa Peterfreund



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Papilio glaucus
is the state butterfly of Georgia
photo (c)2007 Derek Ramsey (Ram-Man)



Director's Notes

ANCA at The White House

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

On May 18, 2015 I had the privilege of representing ANCA at the 2015 National Medal for Museums and Libraries ceremony at the White House. It was a thrill to be invited and everyone involved made the guests feel very welcome – especially Michelle Obama. The First Lady, who presented the medals, recognizes that the work we do is not easy but is vital to the health of our communities. For that reason she hosts this event annually and shines a light on museums and libraries. Her final message, “Don’t get tired,” was simple but inspirational. It truly was an honor to be there on behalf of ANCA.

I received the invitation because of ANCA’s affiliation with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) as a Partner Association on Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move! Campaign. IMLS supports the full range of museums, including nature centers, and many ANCA members have benefitted from IMLS programs and funding. Let’s Move! is a national initiative to get kids moving and eating healthy food. Through Let’s Move! museums of all types including nature and environmental learning centers can answer the call to action.

The Let’s Move Campaign also provides an opportunity to shine a light on the work of ANCA members. It is easy to sign on and many of you would be identifying the work you are already doing



including exhibits, garden and farm programs, physical activity, and serving healthy food. IMLS is sharing Let’s Move success stories with the White House, and we want to share ANCA member stories!

Two ANCA members who are active Let’s Move participants are the Dawes Arboretum in Ohio and the Indian Creek Nature Center in Iowa. Indian Creek Nature Center’s Get Dirty and Let’s Move program includes a pizza garden and a trail run – read all about it on page 10. Executive Director John Myers describes it as, “a natural fit with the mission of nature centers.” Luke Messinger, Executive Director of The Dawes Arboretum said, “I would imagine most nature centers would easily meet the objectives for the program. It does offer information and program sharing that is always of value especially in relation to community outreach.” Sign up now! ([click here](#))

The ANCA fiscal year ended on June 30 and three veteran board members retired after serving full terms. We are extremely grateful for the hard work and dedication of Victor Elderton, Ken Voorhis,

and Brian Winslow. In addition, the board approved three new board officers; Francis Velazquez will serve as ANCA President, John DeFillipo as V.P. for Development, and Amber Parker as V.P. for Professional Services. Jim Berry and Pat Welch will remain on the board until the end of their terms next year.


We have four new board members to welcome. Iain MacLeod has been the Executive Director of the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center since 2006. He started his career in his native Scotland, working for the Nature Conservancy Council, then with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds as a nature reserve warden and then an Investigations Officer with the Species Protections Department. Iain has hosted an ANCA Summit, served on a Peer Consult team and a committee, and has been the co-auctioneer at the Summit (and resident campfire singer!) for several years. Iain is, "proud to help guide ANCA as a Board member."

Pam Musk is the Executive Director of the South Shore Natural Science Center and has been a member of ANCA for seven years. She has been active with the membership committee and has helped to plan and conduct two ANCA Regional Meetings. Pam has been in this field for over 25 years as an educator, nature center director, and administrator of environmental education programs and nature centers. She states, "I feel it is important to give back and feel participation on the ANCA Board is one way I can contribute. I also think it is important to mentor the next generation of administrators in this field. While I can and have done this on an individual level,

participation on the ANCA Board will allow me to have a broader impact on a larger group of young professionals."

Tina Popson is the Education Program Manager for Pottawatamie County Conservation & Hitchcock Nature Center with extensive experience in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and events. She has been an ANCA member since 2002 and active on the Development and the Leadership Award Committees. When her own organization was suffering growing pains she secured funding for a Peer Consult which ultimately laid out a road map for sustainable growth. She has since served on a Consult Team and is, "ready to take the next step and serve on the ANCA Board. It is an organization to which I am committed philosophically, whole-heartedly and financially. By serving on the board I am ready to help move ANCA forward into the bright future of nature centers."

Jenn Wright is the Chief Operating Office at the Kalamazoo Nature Center. One of her greatest accomplishments includes completing three major renovation projects as part of a \$6.5M strategic capital campaign. These projects included development of an educational farm program, redevelopment and construction of a summer camp program and redevelopment of a Nature Pre-school program. Jenn has served on several Peer Consult teams and in 2014 was the co-Chair of the ANCA Summit and welcomed a record number of attendees to her center. Jenn says being invited to serve on the ANCA board is, "truly an honor and I am excited to accept."

The honor is ours - Welcome on board Iain, Pam, Tina, and Jenn! 



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That is over three decades as executive director at one nature center. There are very few directors in our profession who can boast an accomplishment like that!

What does it take to remain with one organization for such a large period of time? It requires a person with vision, energy, enthusiasm, tenacity, commitment, motivational skills, and an infectious, positive personality. Those characteristics are a perfect description of Dede.

Just think about the obstacles that could occur while working at one organization for more than 30 years: boredom, lack of motivation, hum-drum routines, and loss of vision. It is an unusual person who is successful at the day-to-day operations of running a nature center for such an extensive period of time. The fact that Dede accomplished this speaks to her remarkable leadership abilities. She had the skills and capacity to handle all of the business details for such a long stretch of time: creating budgets and financial reports, developing programs, raising funds, working with a board of directors, organizing volunteers, and motivating staff. Yet, during those years, Dede also served as the visionary for Briar Bush keeping an eye on the organization's future. Her accomplishments prove it.

Dede's visionary thinking and personal dedication to the value of professional networking is seen in her involvement with other organizations such as the Association of Conservation Executives (ACE). ACE is a group



photo courtesy of Briar Bush Nature Center



photo courtesy of Lori Schreiber.com



photo courtesy of Briar Bush Nature Center

of conservation agencies in the Philadelphia region (including representatives from New Jersey) who have joined together with a mission to increase the effectiveness, visibility, and reach of its member organizations. Dede was one of the founders of ACE and continued her volunteer involvement in the organization from its start in the late 1980s until her retirement in 2010. Today ACE has two dozen organizations participating. Through cooperative efforts, ACE provides opportunities to gain professional expertise, peer support, professional development, and resource sharing.

When Dede retired several years ago she moved from Pennsylvania to Georgia. Most retirees phase into retirement life enjoying hobbies and the outdoors. Not Dede! She immediately saw that her experience in environmental education and knowledge of plant communities would be helpful to the St. Simons Land Trust so she began volunteering for the organization. It is during this volunteer experience that she recommended to the Land Trust that they engage ANCA for a Peer Consult on a major project that was greatly expanding the Land Trust's focus. The consult was held with Dede serving on the team and she continues volunteering for the Land Trust to this day.

Dede Long is not the type of leader who craves the limelight, who is always front and center, who strives for awards and public attention. Dede is the opposite. Quietly helping, mentoring, serving, and guid-

Dede (continued from page 4)

ing are her traits. Her hand is the first one raised when it comes to helping others in the profession. Perhaps she's best described as a sparkplug. She exudes enthusiasm especially when she's describing best management practices and strategic planning and their importance to a nature center.

Just like ANCA's slogan, Dede is *rooted in experience and spent her career reaching for excellence.* 🌿



The gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) is the state reptile of Georgia
photo by Randy Browning/USFWS



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Sandy Creek Nature Center
Athens, GA

ANCA's 2015 Outstanding New Leader Award

John DeFillipo ~ a Man of Many Hats

Lannie Johansen
Graphics & Publishing Coordinator
The Rosewood Corporation
Dallas, TX

I first met John DeFillipo five years ago as we rode up the elevator at my uptown Dallas corporate office. He was arriving to interview for the director position for a new nature center as part of a partnership with The Rosewood Corporation, the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD), and the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center, in Seagoville, Texas.

The nature center is named in honor and memory of John Bunker Sands, who was an Executive Director for The Rosewood Corporation, known for his holistic ranch management style and love for the outdoors, and beloved member of the Caroline Rose Hunt family. To honor Bunker's legacy, Rosewood was seeking a director who could start a new nature center from the ground up and work hand in hand with the NTMWD and their East Fork Project. In our ten second elevator conversation, I was instantly impressed, feeling his enthusiasm for life, the environment, and his genuine friendliness.

John interviewed and was subsequently selected for the director position from a pool of many candidates, thus beginning a new working relationship with many of us at Rosewood.

As Rosewood's corporate graphics and publishing coordinator, I spent time with John, sharing pictures and history of the Seagoville Ranch where the center is located, the wetland project, and the Rosewood family including memories of Bunker. The center was in the construction stage so John had to quickly take on many hats.



Construction Manager Hat:

The building was in a construction stage and John had to envision the future. Large boards had to be developed for educational purposes for use inside the center, which entailed collecting pictures and writing a history. John quickly developed a great working relationship with management and engineers working on the East Fork Water Project. Classrooms and labs were set up for future school field trips. He also wears the Janitor Hat, keeping the building pristine inside and out, maintain the boardwalk, and grounds.

Educator Hat:

As the director of the center the education program was kicked off with busloads of school children arriving at the door. Curriculum following the state education guidelines was set up, and a staff had to be hired. The center currently stays fully booked for school field trips. Specialty programs are offered throughout the year for the general public and individual groups, many held in the evenings or on Saturdays. John manages a staff of three educators. His brilliant knowledge of his profession, his extreme patience with students, his interesting lectures and, strong leadership are evident in the classroom. He makes everyone feel important. He takes the time to listen. He gives advice but easily takes suggestions. John is kind and considerate and passionate in his work. He complements the Center to the highest degree.

Community Service Hat:

John reaches out to the local community as well as the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex and other areas in Texas. He has become a voice for the center, sitting on boards, attending school meetings, and even speaking at garden clubs. He and his team participate in Earth Day functions large and small. Community Fun Days at the center have included a Mud Bug

(continued on page 7)

John (cont. from page 6)

Festival, 5K run, and educational booths. He speaks at schools and local clubs and serves as a board member for ANCA.

Volunteer Base Hat:

John has created a volunteer base which includes adults and teenagers who help run events at the Center. These have included a Mud Bug Festival, 5k Run, Highway Cleanup, Walk & Talk Bird sessions, master gardeners, photographers, Boy Scouts, and many more. He honors the volunteers yearly with an appreciation banquet, making everyone feel special.

Research & Grant Writer Hat:

John has developed an important research program at the center, working closely with and mentoring college level students, including Baylor University students. He has written grants and was selected to represent the US in an exchange program with Russia this summer.

Fund Raising Hat:

John has worked closely with his fundraising team and corporations who support the Wetland Center with generous donations. To raise awareness for Water & Wildlife Conservation, an annual benefit "Wings Over the Wetland" was established. The annual event includes a photography contest, live birds of prey, alligators, in-

teractive art, a silent auction, and celebrity guests. John sets annual goals and has achieved sponsorships of over 536K. John also develops the yearly budget for the center.

Marketing Hat:

John is the voice for the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center. From a detailed website, to video productions, to local TV newscaster interviews, his attention to detail shows in all aspects of how the center runs. He serves as

priority to educate himself about the corporate "family" and he represents them in the highest regard, carrying on the legacy of a man whose boots were very hard to fill. What John does every day can't be learned from a textbook. His passion for his work, his leadership in the community, his talent in the classroom make him an Outstanding Professional that ANCA should be proud to have represent them for their Outstanding New Leader Award. 🌿



The John Bunker Sands Wetland Center provides education and research opportunities pertaining to water conservation, wetland systems, and wildlife management. More than 250 species of birds, including wood storks, can be found here.

writer, photographer, teacher, and representative of the center.

The Eagle Hat:

You can read John's Eagle journal on the wetland center website (www.wetlandcenter.com) and know what a passion he has for this project. He was an integral part in the development of the new Eagle Tower which was donated by Falcon Steel and Oncor. The tower allows the wetland eagle pair to safely nest on the ranch land. His responsibility to the wetland eagles is shown in his observations and protection of the pair.

John DeFillipo didn't know Bunker Sands, but he made it his



Meet Our Summit Hosts:

Elachee Nature Science Center ~ *Come on Down!*

Lavon Callahan
Director of Development &
Communications
Elachee Nature Science Center
Gainesville, GA

We all have common experiences and stories from our nature centers that bind us together. Elachee is no exception and many of our stories are particularly poignant because quite a few of us have been together for 10-15-20-almost 25 years. We share many common experiences and we say “that one is going in the book”....the book we will write about the day to day life at a nature center!

The tales below are not made to poke fun at our customers....they simply reinforce why we do what we do...educate people about nature and the environment!

One of our favorites is one that we are sure you have experienced. It is the call into the front desk: “There’s a bird in my yard!” There is no description of the bird, no indication of what information they want or need from us, or what they would like us to do about the situation (come rescue it, tell them what species it is, help them understand what to do if it is a baby bird, etc.).

One that we bet you have never encountered is the call asking “What kind of animal would be on my porch that looks just like a gnome? Do you think it could it be a gnome?”

The final one we are sure occurs at your center. Everyone is working away in their offices and you suddenly look up and every office is empty, with no indication of where everyone has evacuated to or why... a tornado warning, a private meeting, or free lunch? Within 10 minutes everyone files back in the door reporting that they had to go to see the 12-foot black rat snake out front, or focus their binocs on a rare Neotropical passing through, or go see the day campers do their skit.

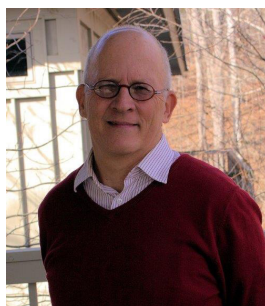
The entire cadre of Elachee staff, board, advisory board, and volunteers are working away planning for your ANCA Summit visit in August. Know that you will meet and get to know all of them at the Summit. We’ve listed a few of the key staff members planning the best darn Summit yet!

Andrea Timpone – Team Leader



President and CEO of Elachee. Thirty nine years in environmental education, 35th year at Elachee starting as an educator/naturalist, MEd science education.

Peter Gordon – Workshops & Facilitated Sessions



Director of Education at Elachee since 1992 (23 years!) with a BA degree and MEd. Peter is coordinating the programming for the Summit and will lead Sunday’s Lake Lanier Birding Cruise.

Lavon Callahan – Eats, Drinks & Hotels



Director of Development and Communications. MA and BS in education, 40 years(!) in education, non-profit and volunteer management, including a stint at the Smithsonian Institution and 22 years at Elachee. A good cook who knows the best in catered food when she sees it!

Robbie McCormac – Volunteers & Hospitality



Volunteer Extraordinaire. Degree in medical technology and a master’s degree in immunology. Robbie is a highly regarded volunteer and leader in many organizations and is knowledgeable about volunteer options, seeking to match each person with a task that highlights their strengths.

(continued on page 9)

Rhonda Bailey – Nature Preschool Conference



Elachee’s Nature Preschool Director. Bachelor’s degree in psychology and post baccalaureate degree in ECE. Taught in public schools for six years and in various preschool positions for six plus years.

Lee Irminger – Technology, Audio & Field Trips



Natural Resources Manager. Degree in applied environmental spatial analysis and experience as environmental scientist for an engineering firm.

Janice Jones – Registration & Many Duties!




Operations Manager and Liason with School Field Trips. Georgia native who spent her childhood playing in the woods developing a lifelong love of nature and outdoors. BS Degree in Medical Technology.

Jock Hornor – Transportation



Volunteer Special Projects Manager. A key position getting you from and to the Atlanta airport, your hotel to Elachee and back, and special field trips. Grew up on the water in South Florida. Bachelor’s degree in business, U of Miami. Involved with Elachee for 20+ years.

The entire staff at Elachee is preparing a great Summit for you filled with content-rich workshops, facilitated sessions, lead speakers, fun things to do, great food and drink, and southern hospitality beyond compare. Gather up your tales and success stories and “come on down” to Atlanta/Gainesville, GA this August. We anxiously await your arrival! 

Thanks to our 2015 Summit Sponsors

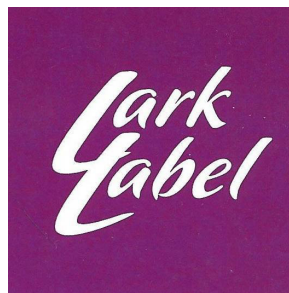


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Profile:

Get Dirty & Let's Move!

Lindsey Flannery
Business Development & Marketing Coordinator
Indian Creek Nature Center
Cedar Rapid, IA

Dirt, or soil, is the lifeblood of all things green, and it's also the world's best classroom for kids. This is the motivation for Cedar Rapids, Iowa based Indian Creek Nature Center's (ICNC) new "Get Dirty" mantra, which provides a succinct way to encourage children and families to connect to nature.

By promoting "Get Dirty" in everything from its online presence to direct mailings to program themes, ICNC encourages children and families alike to engage in activities that get them moving and eating healthfully. Multiple ICNC programs and events specifically incorporate the goals of the Let's Move initiative, all while providing a fun way for participants to "Get Dirty" and experience the wonders of nature.

This summer, children participating in ICNC's Creek Camps are not only eating healthy snacks, they are learning about where those snacks come from by getting their hands dirty in the onsite gardens. Thanks to a partnership with Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area, ICNC employs a biology intern focused specifically on this initiative. Under the guidance of the intern and camp teachers, children help tend the gardens, observe them as they grow, and utilize them as living laboratories for hands-on learning about food

and pollinators.

In the Pizza Garden children help plant, water, weed, and harvest the tomatoes, onions, peppers, basil, and other herbs that will eventually make it to their lunch plates. As a culminating experience they make healthy pizzas



with the veggies they pick, and fire their pizzas in the Nature Center's new onsite clay pizza oven.

In the Butterfly Hoop House pollinator garden they get to see the lifecycle of a monarch butterfly, from tiny white eggs on milkweed through caterpillar, pupae, and emerging butterfly, to learn about the importance of pollinators in the food cycle.

To challenge the whole family to be physically active, in 2014 ICNC added the Sweet Trail Run to its annual Honey Fest celebration. The trail run encourages families to get moving together as they run or walk a dynamic course, winding through woods and prairies and along Indian Creek.



Afterward, they can visit Honey Fest's educational stations and tour the Nature Center's apiary to learn how bees make honey, from nectar all the way to the bottled raw honey available for sale in the Center's Creekside Shop. ICNC also offers one of Iowa's leading beekeeping series each year; those students participate in Honey Fest and help involve event attendees, including many children, in the process of harvesting honey.

Ultimately, ICNC knows that children who develop a passion for nature are more likely to protect and advocate for the world's valuable natural resources throughout their lives. Providing hands-on, interactive experiences that incorporate physical activity and healthy eating help people get excited about what they are learning, in turn building the foundation for a lifelong love of nature – and as an extension, an active and healthy life. The goals of the Let's Move initiative are simple: eat healthfully, get active, and take action – all things that make the program a natural fit for nature centers. 🌱



Feet On The Ground:



Recent ANCA Activities Around the Country



↩ In April an ANCA Peer Consult Team visited Grass River Natural Area in Bellaire, MI to assist them with improving visitors' experiences among other issues.

On May 15 nature center administrations from across Florida met at the Boyd Hill Nature Preserve in St. Petersburg, FL. ↓

photo courtesy of Marine Discovery Center



↑ In May ANCA was in The House - the White House that is!



↩ Many nature center professionals from across Michigan attended the 2015 Michigan Regional Meeting at The Dahlem Conservancy on May 29. Presentation topics included branding and marketing, connecting people living with disabilities to nature, as well as two open forum sessions.

ANCA Donor Profile: Lisa Peterfreund

Over the past 15 years Lisa Peterfreund has donated over \$20,000 to ANCA through her family foundation, The Merrill G. and Emita E. Hastings Foundation.

Lisa is a trustee of the foundation and we owe her a huge debt of gratitude for her outstanding generosity. Many of you will remember that Lisa was instrumental in establishing the ANCA Nature Center Leadership Award in honor of her father, Josh Peterfreund. The Hastings Foundation provided three years of funding to support the award which ANCA ultimately institutionalized. Lisa has continued to support ANCA over the years and is a Charter Member of the Ever Green Society as well as an annual contributor at the Ever Green Society level and higher.

Lisa has always been interested in the environment. She founded the ecology club at The Choate School while attending in high school, obtained a BS in wildlife ecology at the University of Wisconsin Madison and graduated from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies with a MS in forest science. Her career has taken her down many paths, but her abiding passion for the environment has remained her focus. Among the many organizations attracting Lisa's interest are The America the Beautiful Fund, The Conservation Fund, The Defenders of Wildlife, and the Audubon Society of Florida.

The Merrill G. and Emita E. Hastings Foundation, which is a relatively small foundation, was established with the intent to give based on personal relationships and to give where they can make a difference. The Foundation supports scholarships, internships, mentor programs, and occasionally provides general operating support.

Lisa's first exposure to ANCA occurred via her professional relationship with Pat Welch when they worked together at Pine Jog Environmental Education Center. Since their days at Pine Jog, they have remained friends and Lisa's continued commitment is nurtured by her belief in the mission of ANCA, ANCA's performance, and occasional "donor" lunches with Pat. Lisa has a strong background in development and Pat uses the lunches to thank her for her donations as well as pick her brain for potential foundation contacts and tips on donor communication. Lisa has contributed some great ideas for ANCA to use as we launched our annual fund campaign.

The reasons Lisa continues to support ANCA are rooted in the best practices for donor stewardship! When asked why she continues to support ANCA, Lisa responded by saying that ANCA maintained good communication with her, provided personal contact as well as annual reports and newsletters, and kept her informed of ANCA's growth and successes. Lisa stated that she always appreciated updates on ANCA's financial status and how donor funds were used to include the growth in our endowment.



Thank You to our Business Members!

We are grateful for the financial support and expertise of our Business Members. We hope the ANCA membership will consider these businesses when they are in need of market resources.

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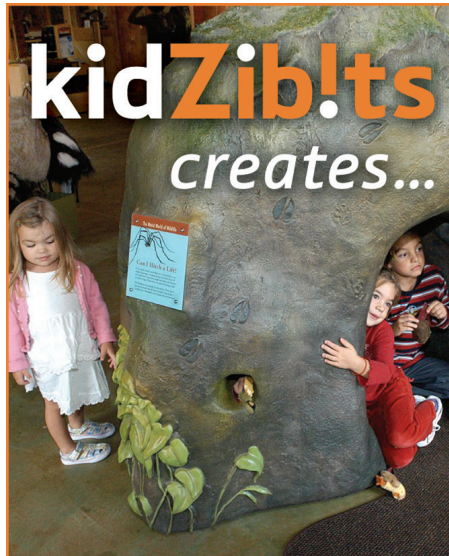
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The peanut is the state crop of Georgia
Illustration By Keith Ward

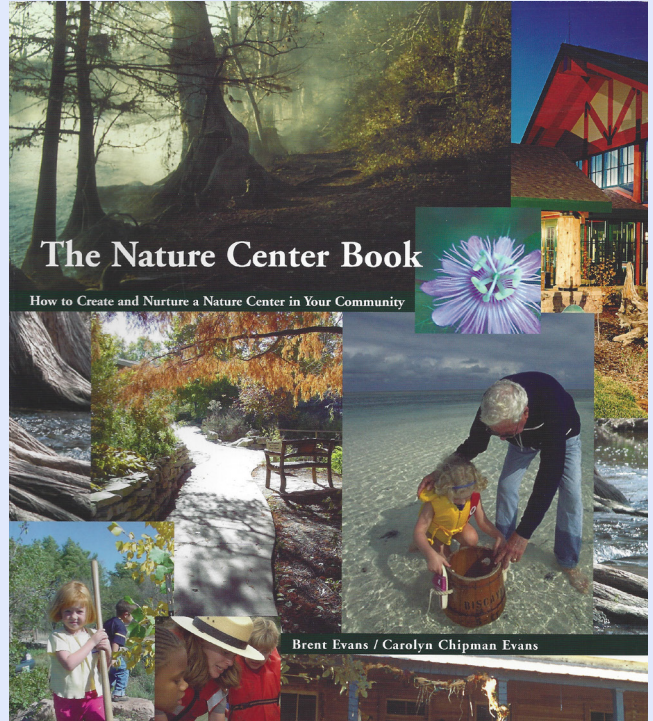
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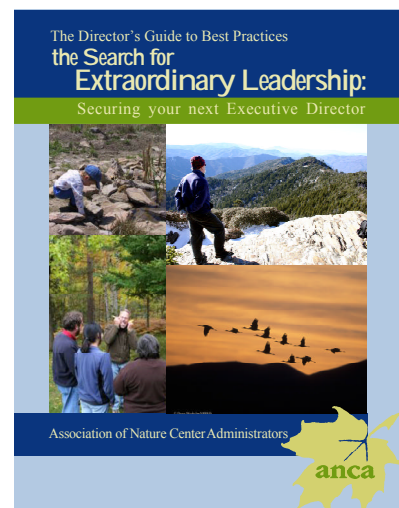
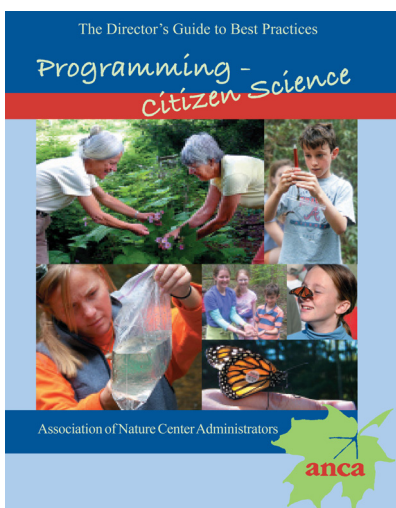
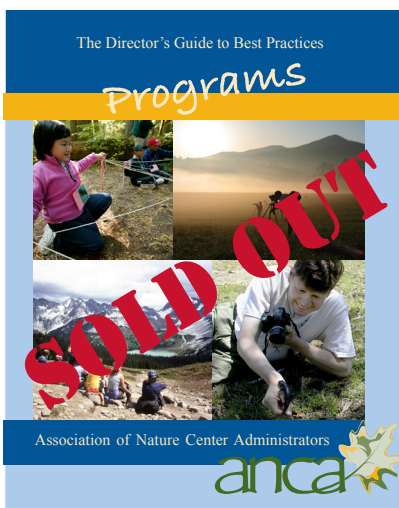


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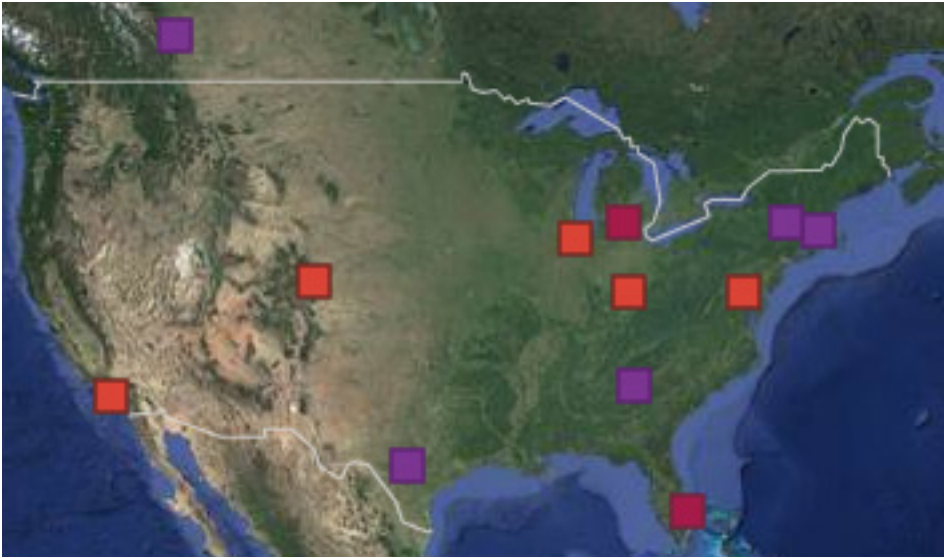


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In an effort to connect our members regionally, ANCA is now offering peer-to-peer opportunities for professional development in several regions across the country. Click on the adjacent map to see if there's a meeting near you!

Upcoming ANCA Regional Meetings:

- Mid-Atlantic Region – October 1-2, 2015. This meeting will be a joint meeting of ANCA and the Association of Conservation Executives.
- Michigan Regional – September 10, 2015 at The Outdoor Discovery Center in Holland, MI

Peer Consults - We know the business. We're in it too!

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