

In Bloom in Vermont

Saturday, June 13, 2020
Moretown Elementary School
Moretown, Vermont



North Branch Nature Center

The Big Picture: An In Bloom Overview

Looking through a school-calendar lens, our first **In Bloom** conference this year unfolded in Santa Barbara in early November. The keynote address, given by Gopal Krishnamurthy was titled “*Re-Wilding Learning.*” That theme also applies to the content of our upcoming New England conferences this spring.

In the beginning, **In Bloom** conferences catered to teachers of children between the ages of 3 and 6, but children grow up, so we’re catching up! There’s been an interesting upward migration in New England schools as the result of successful nature-based early childhood initiatives. Children continue to want outdoor learning as they move up through the grades. First-, second- and third-grade students look out the window at kindergarteners learning outside and long for the sunshine on their faces and sticks in their hands. Preschool teachers now help their upper grade colleagues learn how to teach math in the woods and how to encourage learning outdoors. And so the doors open up and the school gets turned inside out. Our **In Bloom** workshops will be geared to preschool through third grade, so please invite your elementary teacher colleagues. We’ve got exciting new keynote speakers this year from around the country and a host of new workshop presenters from each region, along with some old favorites. We’ll also continue to spotlight the work of Antioch New England faculty members who teach in the Nature-based Early Childhood Certificate program.

Relative to big pictures, we have a new movie to show! In July 2016, 23 acres of land adjacent to Chesterfield School in Southwestern NH came up for sale. **Turning School Inside Out** is the story of what happened next.

We look forward to seeing you at one of this year’s spring **In Blooms**. Bring mud boots, rain gear, sun protection, your indomitable spirits . . . and perhaps some backyard flowers!

This event is sponsored by:



There is
nothing left
to worry about
the sun and her flowers are here
by rupi kaur

Spring 2020 In Bloom Conferences

In Bloom in Maine

18 April 2020
Eyes of the World Discovery Center
120 Rogers Road, Kittery, Maine.

In Bloom in Western Mass

16 May 2020
Hitchcock Center for the Environment
845 West Street
Amherst, Massachusetts.

In Bloom in Vermont

13 June 2020
hosted by North Branch Nature Center
at Moretown Elementary School
Moretown, Vermont.

Structure for the Day

8:00am-9:00am	Registration Opens Workshop signups Morning refreshments
9:00am-9:15am	Opening Circle
9:15am-10:15am	Morning Keynote
10:30-Noon	Morning Workshops
Noon-1:00pm	Lunch & Movie Inside-Outside network
1:00pm-2:00pm	Afternoon Keynote
2:15pm-3:45pm	Afternoon Workshops
3:50pm-4:00pm	Closing Circle

Morning Workshops

From Seed to Belly: Literacy with Edible Plants in the Schoolyard

Angie Barger, Educator & Consultant, *The Tea Project*, Adjunct Faculty, Castleton University, Castleton, VT

We will explore literacy as we discover the wild edibles we often mistake for weeds right outside the classroom door. Meet common edible plants in the wild and the school's herbal tea garden, practice mindfulness exercises—resulting in greater concentration—in an engaging and fun way, and share an herbal tea made from plants you harvest. You will depart with a toolbox filled with mindfulness practices that slow us down, engage our senses, and emphasize the moment so we remember and recall with excitement what we're learning.

Down and Dirty with Numbers

Brenda Hartshorn, Kindergarten Teacher, *Moretown Elementary School*, Moretown, VT

Participants will visit national mathematics practices through a hands-on group activity that will support outdoor mathematics learning. A variety of games will be played outside, using what is found around us, to support student understanding of the connection between mathematics and their natural environment. Sticks, rocks, and living plants are some of the items that will be used to support the maths to be covered, including measurement, counting, cardinality, number sequencing, addition, subtraction, and pattern, shape and design.



Eliza Minucci

Morning Keynote

Nature Preschool in the Urban Wild: Lessons from the Pacific Northwest

Kit Harrington, Founder and Former Director, *Fiddleheads Forest School*, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Kit will reflect on her pioneering work at the **Fiddleheads Forest School**, sharing the story of how socially and culturally responsive outdoor preschool programming came to shape a regional movement for nature-based education. She will discuss the opportunities and challenges of providing a quality early childhood program in a public park setting, focusing on the importance of community and place-based education in outdoor classrooms. By examining the evolving relationship between families, teachers, and the environment, as well as the larger context in which outdoor classrooms operate, Kit will provide a framework upon which teachers and administrators can build.



Kit Harrington is the co-founder of one of the country's first urban outdoor preschools, the **Fiddleheads Forest School** at the University of Washington. In 2015, Kit founded the Washington Nature Preschool Association to support the regional growth of nature-based early childhood education. She helped to pass and develop the first licensing regulations for outdoor preschools in North America. Kit was part of the writing team that crafted the field's first professional practice guidebook, and currently engages in nature-based early childhood education consulting and advocacy, helping to disseminate the practices around the country. She now spends her free time meandering around the backwoods of Vermont with her family in search of the perfect maple creemee.

Documentation in the Forest Classroom

Jenny Lyle, Preschool Teacher, *Moretown Elementary School*, Moretown, VT

Arianna Dayharsh, Preschool Teacher, *Moretown Elementary School and Staff*, North Branch Nature Center, Montpelier, VT

The natural world is filled with endless opportunities for children to play, learn, and explore together. The forest is a place where children's interests guide the curriculum organically. We observe so many wonderful experiences when we enter the forest with children, but how can we capture and document them? How can we create meaningful documentation honoring children's thoughts and ideas? How can the docu-

mentation support children's learning? What role does documentation play in making the home-to-forest/school connection? In this workshop we will share our year-long forest documentation experience . . . much like a story. We hope to show how documentation can help scaffold children's learning.



Wild Roots Nature School



Juniper Hill School



Juniper Hill School

Morning Workshops

Real Tools, Real Benefits

Jennifer Newberry and Ashley Morse, Kindergarten Teachers, Marion Cross Elementary School, Norwich, VT

Have you ever tried to cut an apple with a plastic knife? Real tools give real results. With intentional teaching about how to use real tools (hammers, hand drills, saws, files, peelers and such) children can improve their eye-hand coordination, increase confidence, improve safety awareness and risk assessment skills and practice self-regulation. This workshop will explore the difference between hazards and risks, and outline safety rules and routines. We'll discuss all the possible applications and you'll get to work with the tools yourself.



Juniper Hill School

Slow Birding: Reimagining Our Connection with Birds

Bridget Butler, Bird Diva Consulting, St. Albans, VT.

Birds are everywhere, from cities to farmlands, from mountains to shorelines. Birding has traditionally been competitive and methodical. *Slow Birding* shifts the practice to something more mindful and meditative. Recent studies have shown that noticing birds can improve your mental health, reduce depression and improve memory and attentiveness. Bird Diva Bridget Butler will show how you can awaken your students' innate birding skills and reconnect with nature. She'll share a variety of techniques so your class can get to know your schoolyard birds, interpreting their voices and their unique behaviors. We'll explore how to build a *Slow Birding* practice with your students through the use of sit spots, mapping, gameplay, storytelling and art. Please be prepared to be outside for the entire session and to sit in place for a short period of time.

Wet Sneakers + Dirty Clothes = A Day at Crellin School

Dana McCauley, Principal, Crellin Elementary School, Oakland, MD

While engaging students in lessons that are both meaningful and relevant, teachers are able to address multiple curriculum standards. This hands-on session will have you collaborating and problem solving as you acquire "wet sneakers and dirty clothes!" With your colleagues you will be immersed in two outdoor learning activities that lead you to a web of teaching and learning opportunities. These primary elementary lessons are examples of

how we teach the same standards as others. They demonstrate how you can blend standards to create learning experiences that leave students wanting more.



Crellin School

Afternoon Keynote

Our Journey to Become the Crellin Corps of Discovery

Dr. Dana McCauley, Principal, Crellin Elementary School, Oakland, MD

Crellin Elementary School's journey toward the creation of a learning environment that increased student and community engagement required a community vision and effort. By "taking down the school's walls," students and teachers have discovered unique learning opportunities in the community. A shift in the school's culture has given teachers the freedom to be creative and foster students' curiosities.



Dana McCauley has served as the teaching principal of Crellin Elementary School in Oakland, Maryland for the past eighteen years. As the instructional leader at Crellin Elementary School she coordinates and monitors a learning program that guides students to achieve and sustain academic and personal success.

Under her direction, Crellin Elementary School participated in a reclamation project that led to the creation of their Environmental Education Laboratory, consisting of a 5.5-acre outdoor classroom on school property. In addition, the schoolyard is the home of Sunshine Farm, which houses sheep, goats, chickens, multiple gardens and a greenhouse. These unique school features serve as resources for instruction, place-based projects and student research. McCauley holds a B.S. and M.Ed. from Frostburg State University in Maryland and an Ed.D. from West Virginia University.

Afternoon Workshops

Storytelling: Making the Magic of Learning Stick

Harriet Hart, Director, Brookfield Early Education Program, Brookfield, VT

Storytelling can be the glue that makes the magic of learning stick. It can create a sense of place, help scaffold activities, reinforce safety protocols, support social and emotional development, and make the mystery of nature comprehensible to the young. It can draw your class together in a joint narrative that empowers and inspires.

Together we will unravel the make up of this magical yarn, single out the steps in the story building process, and experiment with creation. We will play games to inspire us, forage for props on the forest floor, and reflect on ways to bring storytelling into our teaching practice.

During the lunch hour, Liza Lowe will update you on *Inside-Outside: Nature-based Educators of New England*, our growing professional network. There are now a dozen *Inside-Outside* chapters. Interested in joining or starting one? Contact Liza Lowe at elowe@antioch.edu.



Afternoon Workshops

Nature-based Programming Through the Grades: Building a School-wide Scope and Sequence

Eliza Minnucci, ForestKinder, Tunbridge, VT, Adjunct Faculty,
Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

Meg Teachout, ForestKinder,
Tunbridge, VT

Vermont's Sharon Elementary School has a long history of place-based education which is now evolving to include a Forest Day for every classroom pre-K through 6th grade. Now in their third year of focus on developing the Forest Day for everyone, the staff is working to describe the scope and sequence of their nature-based play and learning. Join us to peek inside this work-in-progress. With hands-on examples of the play and work through the grades, Meg and Eliza will share a framework for guiding school-wide nature-based education.



David Sobel

Practices to Nurture a Caring Community

Angella Gibbons, Founder and Education Consultant,
EarthWalk Vermont, Plainfield VT

At the heart of connecting children to nature is creating a caring community to support one another, listen, share and be our best selves. We'll experience some of the Core Routines* that nurture caring relationships. The transitions, the silence, the relationships, and what we may discover in the wild are also our teachers, if we pay attention. Come tune into your senses, learn new activities, games and songs, share stories and experience your own *Sit Spot*.

*Core Routines are learning habits practiced worldwide and are documented in *Coyote's Guide to Connecting to Nature*, co-authored by Jon Young.

Understanding and Supporting Self-Regulation and Executive Functioning in the Outdoor Environment

Kit Harrington, Founder and Former Director, Fiddleheads Forest School, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Self-regulation plays a critical role in children's learning and growth, and studies show it is a better indicator of future success than any single other aspect of development. While young students often struggle with aspects of self-regulation, the natural world has unique characteristics that help support children's development of this important capacity. In this workshop, we'll explore the ways in which the outdoor classroom is especially suited to support children's development of self-regulation and executive functioning, and learn a variety of games, activities, and routines to help scaffold and support young learners.

The Force of Nature

Susan Koch, 1st Grade, Union Elementary School, Montpelier, VT.
Jillian Zeilinga, Kindergarten, East Montpelier Elementary School, Montpelier, VT

Wondering how to investigate force and motion with early learners? Join us as we focus on the ways to utilize the outdoors as a learning environment that optimizes play and exploration. Discover ways to integrate force and motion activities with your outdoor learning curriculum. Learn to employ strategies that encourage questioning, prompt inquiry and spark curiosity. Investigate some new tools, materials and ideas to use with early learners. Participants will have an opportunity to play, create, collaborate, explore and reflect.

Citizen Science in the ECO Classroom

Pam Dow and Karen Cingiser 1st/2nd Grade Teachers,
Moretown Elementary School, Moretown, VT

Zac Cota, Staff, North Branch Nature Center, Montpelier, VT

Educating Children Outdoors (ECO) is a weekly partnership between North Branch Nature Center and local elementary schools. During this nine-year partnership at Moretown Elementary School, teachers and naturalists have partnered to create weekly routines of learning with nature through practicing phenology, recording wildlife observations and sketching in journals. By providing opportunities for students to conduct real citizen science they are contributing to real world research. In this workshop we will learn how the ECO routines support a year-round nature study and how to use platforms like iNaturalist to connect to the greater world of scientists and earth stewards.

Empowering Children Through Nature Connection in a Head Start Community

Elaina Foxx, Preschool Teacher, Twinfield Union School, Marshfield, VT.

Children of every age and ability benefit from being immersed in nature; those suffering from trauma may benefit the most. This workshop will delve into the philosophy behind outdoor education and why our most vulnerable students need access to it. We will touch on the challenges when beginning an outdoor program with an at-risk population and go through the steps of educating administration and families. Most importantly, we will talk about ways to get the children themselves feeling a sense of belonging in nature.

Registration Fees:

Working Professional	\$125
Group Rate:	\$100
per person for 3 or more from same organization	
Antioch University Alumni/Co-sponsors: . .	\$75
AUNE/College Ed or ES students:	\$50

For more information, contact Peg Smeltz at
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