

GREEN STEMS

Little things that crawl and creep
In the green grass forests,
Deep in their long-stemmed world
Where ferns uncurl
To a greener world
Beneath the leaves above them;
And every flower upon its stem
Blows above them there
The bottom of a geranium,
The back side of a trillium,
The belly of a bumblebee
Is all they see, these little things
Down so low
Where no bird sings
Where no wind blows,
Deep in their long-stemmed world.

by Margaret Wise Brown

In Bloom in Western Mass

Saturday, May 15, 2021
The Hitchcock Center
for the Environment
Amherst, Massachusetts

Juniper Hill School

In Bloom Lives!

Yes, Virginia, we really are planning two face-to-face In Bloom conferences this year. Or perhaps we should say, masked-face-to-masked-face conferences. Antioch University New England will host three In Bloom conferences this spring—two in person conferences and (to hedge our bets) one digital conference. The in-person conferences will be open to a maximum of 50 participants and we're hoping that participants will be mostly from the state where it's occurring. The entire conference will occur outdoors or in open-air pavilions. For more far flung participants, we encourage you to attend the digital conference.

In Bloom in Western Massachusetts will happen on 15 May 2021 from 9:00 - 4:00 at the beautiful Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst, Massachusetts. The maples, sassafras and inspiring ideas will be flowering by this time in the spring. Hopefully, we'll mostly be immunized and the pandemic will be a fading memory.

In Bloom in Vermont will be a digital conference co-sponsored by the North Branch Nature Center in Montpelier on 5 June 2021 from 12:30pm to 4:30pm. This conference will accommodate 150 participants.

In Bloom in Maine will be on 19 June 2021 from 9:00 to 4:00. We've loved being at the Kittery Community Center in Kittery for the past four years and this year we're heading downeast to the Juniper Hill School in Alna, ME. Juniper Hill School has been a leader during this school year in training teachers to take learning outside during the pandemic.

From Early Childhood into the Elementary Grades

In the beginning, In Bloom conferences catered to teachers of children between the ages of 3 and 6, but children grow up, so we've been catching up over the past few years. There's been an interesting upward migration in New England schools as the result of successful nature-based early childhood initiatives. First, second and third grade students look out the window at kindergarteners learning outside and long to smell the roses and feel the sunshine on their faces. Preschool teachers help their upper grade colleagues learn how to teach math in the woods and how to do appropriate outdoors behavior management. And so the doors open up and the school gets turned inside out. This has been particularly true during the 2020-21 year. It's been healthier to have children outside. Our workshops will be geared to preschool through third grade, so invite your elementary teacher colleagues. We'll have regional presenters to lead workshops in each state and we'll also continue to spotlight the work of Antioch University New England faculty members who teach in the Nature-based Early Childhood Certificate program.

We look forward to seeing you at one of this year's spring **In Blooms**. Please be aware that we will be following the state and host's guidelines for COVID 19 and that our programming flexibility will be determined by the conditions at the time of each event. Registrants will receive additional information as needed.

This event is sponsored by:

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EDUCATION FOR A HEALTHY PLANET

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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 Keynote

Not IF, But HOW: Inclusion and Advocacy in Nature-based Programs

Lisa Burris, Founder and Director, *Turn Back Time*, Paxton, MA

How do we build and expand nature-based programs and community that supports inclusive practices? How do we advocate for children who struggle with challenging behaviors to ensure support for every child? Explore solutions to some of the toughest questions facing nature-based educators today.



Turn Back Time is a nature education program whose mission is to help people recognize nature's ability to teach and heal. Our mission is accomplished through education programs, nature play and farm education for children and young adults of all abilities. 30% of the program participants come from an under-resourced demographic such as individuals with a documented diagnosis, children living below the poverty line and children who are involved with a community agency such as DMH, DDS or DCF.

Since 2012 the 58-acre property has expanded from humble beginnings to now include an active beaver pond, an extensive forested trail system, and a fully functional working farm. Lisa and her husband have six children and are the adoptive parents of three children with special needs. As a result of her own personal parenting journey, Lisa created the concept of the nature-based education program for children of all abilities and has built the infrastructure and business plan that now serves over 600 children and young adults a year. Lisa holds a Nature-based Early Childhood Certificate from Antioch New England.



Turn Back Time

Morning Workshops

Wheat Your Appetite for Food Justice: The Little Red Hen Re-imagined

Kate Holdsworth, Director, *Gan Keshet (Rainbow Garden) Preschool*, Northampton, MA

Wheat is a staple crop for many cultures and a key ingredient for many breads. Sometimes referred to as the "staff of life," bread, in some form, has been eaten by peoples all over the world dating back to the Neolithic Age. In this workshop, we will explore the life cycle of wheat, considering how it can be grown in a school garden or farm. Like the Little Red Hen, we will thresh, winnow, and grind the grains we collect into flour to make a simple flatbread baked over a campfire. We'll also look at children's books that introduce the concept of food justice and how this idea can be integrated into a pre-school curriculum.

Folks with an allergy to wheat should likely make a different selection.



Lauren Miller

Teach Them to Fish

Eliza Minnucci Forest Kinder, *Tunbridge, VT*
Adjunct Faculty, *Antioch University New England, Keene, NH*

Eliza Minnucci has been facilitating preK-6th-grade teacher professional development since 2015 in the Upper Valley region of Vermont and New Hampshire. Alumni of these yearlong professional learning communities number over 70 educators who have developed sustained outdoor play and learning. Eliza will demonstrate the rhythms of a typical staff professional development session, sharing specific activities and routines, as well as long-term structure and organization that has proved successful both as all school development or when pulling self-selected participants from across schools. Join for songs, ice-breakers, session topic ideas, and reflections on what works to promote change in schools.

Discovery Yard

Colleen Kelley, Education Director, *Hitchcock Center for the Environment, Amherst, MA*

Come play in the Discovery Yard at the Hitchcock Center! Create a recipe for the mud kitchen, hide in the willow hut, count with the wooden abacus, walk and read the story walk and so much more. The Discovery Yard has been designed for children and families to play in. It is a demonstration site for teachers and parents to experience the value behind different types of play. Participants will learn how these play elements encourage STEM learning and will take away creative ideas and resources to implement at their own sites.



Hitchcock Center for the Environment

Morning Workshops

Taking the Plunge: Transitioning from a Few Hours Outside to Full-Time Forest School

Amy Wright and Sandy Browne, K-1 Teachers, *The Greenfield Center School, Greenfield, MA*

Like all teachers during this pandemic, we have had to shift our preconceived ideas of what school, classrooms and community can look like. For our K-1 classroom in Greenfield, MA, reimagining our 2020-2021 school year required the abrupt creation of a fully-outdoor forest program. Last year, we were excited to spend two hours a day in the forest with our students. Now, with over 400 hours spent outside between mid-August and mid-December, we have seen a remarkable change in ourselves, our students, and the relationships that we have with each other and with the environment. The children are absolutely thriving, and we find that spending our entire day outside is often easier than transitioning between indoor and outdoor spaces each day. We don't ever want to go back inside!

In this workshop, we will share the strategies, routines, materials and supplies that have helped us make full days outdoors in all weather a (joyful) reality. Whether you are thinking about "taking the plunge" yourself, wanting to incorporate a full forest day into your program, or simply looking for ways to increase the amount of time your class spends outdoors each day, we are excited to share our challenges, solutions, and resources with you!



Juniper Hill School



Turn Back Time



Turn Back Time

Lunch



We enjoy treating you to a tasty and healthy lunch and we'll provide everyone with a no-contact, boxed lunch. During the lunch hour, Liza Lowe and other regional coordinators will update you on **Inside-Outside: Nature-based Educators of New England**, our growing professional development network. There are now **Inside Outside chapters** throughout New England. Interested in joining or starting a chapter? Contact elowe@antioch.edu.

Afternoon Panel Discussion

Panel: What Have We Learned About Outdoors Learning from the Pandemic.

Conor Driscoll, Principal, *Hatfield Elementary School, Hatfield, MA*

Hannah French, 4th Grade Teacher, *Rowe Elementary, Rowe, MA*

Eliza Minnucci, Director, *ForestKinder, Tunbridge, VT, and Adjunct Faculty, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH.*

Charlie Spencer, Head of School, *Greenfield Center School, Greenfield, MA*

The topic for the panel is **What Have We Learned about Outdoor Learning from the Pandemic?** Our goal is to articulate some of the beneficial things we've learned from being outdoors with students. And we're hoping that some of these learnings can be carried forward even after the pandemic has subsided. Specific questions panelists will address are:

1. What did you learn about space provision and facilities on the school grounds and in nearby natural areas that facilitated learning?
2. What kind of curriculum was doable, and not doable, in the outside environment?
3. How did you and your colleagues deal with winter weather in a useful fashion?
4. Were there unexpected benefits, for students and teachers, to spending more of the day outside?
5. What practices from this past year might you bring into next year, assuming next year is post-pandemic?

Afternoon Workshops

Becoming Beavers: What We Can Learn from Nature's Greatest Engineer and Community Builder

Ruthie Ireland, Preschool Teacher & Director, *Arcadia Nature Preschool, Easthampton, MA*

Calling all those who love to tinker, build, create, hug trees, and explore with friends. Let's see what North America's largest rodent can teach us about working & playing together—and by doing so make the world an even better place. In this workshop, we will have the opportunity to become beavers, use our handy tool kit/adaptations to investigate, construct, chew, and care for each other. Participants will come away with natural history knowledge and curriculum ideas for implementation that cover social/emotional learning, collaboration, sensory learning, and working together on micro and macro building structures. We will sing songs, make snacks, and play games that invite curiosity and love of this industrious big-toothed mammal.



<https://www.123rf.com/stock-photo>

Afternoon Workshops

Storytelling and Puppetry in the Forest Kindergarten

Rachel Kennedy, Forest Kindergarten Teacher, The Hartsbrook School, Hadley, MA

Come explore the Forest Kindergarten at the Hartsbrook School and the magical world of storytelling and puppetry in the Forest! Puppetry allows us to work in the realm of wonder, imagination, and beauty, and storytelling allows us to continue the oral tradition of passing wisdom from heart to heart. As we do, we create important living pictures for children to take into their inner lives. We will craft simple nature-based puppets and cultivate a story together through puppetry.

Building Community in your Nature-based Setting through Family Programming.

Lisa Burris, Founder and Director, Turn Back Time, Paxton, MA

Learn how to expand engagement from local families that ultimately leads to future program participants and keeps existing families in touch with who you are and what you do. We will talk about how keeping families visiting your program leads to longevity and financial security. Let's have some fun with hands on examples of family time at the farm.

For more information, contact Peg Smeltz at
Antioch University New England, m-smeltz@antioch.edu
603-762-0012

What Do You Do at Nature Play Afterschool?

Katie Koerten, Educator, Hitchcock Center for the Environment, Amherst MA

A nature play afterschool teacher has to strike a fine balance between giving kids space to be themselves while also providing safety and assurance in an unstructured environment. What are the rules? What do you do when it rains? What if a child doesn't want to get muddy? Katie will share how to make nature play after school successful for everyone, whether it's in the sunshine or pouring rain. We'll learn tools for building strong group dynamics and overcoming obstacles to nature play. We'll trek into the woods at the Hitchcock Center and experience Stump City, Fern Town, and the Forest Garden, and play some great afterschool games like Beckon, Four Corners, and What's Your Trade, Lemonade.

Registration

Working Professional	\$125
Antioch University Alumni	\$75
AUNE/College Education or ES students	\$50

If you have a voucher from your 2020 In Bloom registration, please have your voucher # ready to enter in the registration system. If you have questions, contact Peg Smeltz.

REGISTER HERE:

<https://tinyurl.com/inbloomwmass21>

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