



Engaging with
Pre-K to 3rd Grade Students
in Winter

In Bloom in Vermont

Saturday, March 23, 2019

Academy Elementary School
Brattleboro, Vermont

ANTIOCH
UNIVERSITY
NEW ENGLAND

GEORGE B.
STORER
FOUNDATION

Juniper Hill School for Place-based Education

Based on an academic calendar, our **In Bloom** conference season actually started this past November in Santa Barbara, California. If you've always associated November with melancholy and dreary greyness, we recommend attending **In Bloom in Santa Barbara** in some upcoming year. November in Santa Barbara is the antithesis of November in northern New England!

Antioch University New England will host three **In Bloom** conferences this spring. This conference, our first, will be held on the third day of spring, March 23, 2019 at Academy Elementary School in Brattleboro. We're well aware there will not be much in bloom in March, so this year we've assigned an "in bloom in snow" theme to the **In Bloom in Vermont** conference. We'll be focusing on how to work with children outdoors in winter.

Our second conference, **In Bloom in Maine**, brings us back to Kittery to work with the vibrant nature-based early childhood community there. We look forward to a warm spring day to celebrate the end of Earth Week! This conference has always filled to capacity so plan to register early. Online registration is fairly simple, as we are now doing workshop sign-ups at morning registration.

Our **2019 In Bloom** season comes to fruition with our first foray to Amherst, Massachusetts. On June 8, 2019, The Hitchcock Center for the Environment will host us for **In Bloom in Western Mass**. We are confident that the clematis, iris, peonies, AND dandelions will all be in bloom!

In the past, **In Bloom** workshops have catered to teachers of children between the ages of 3 and 6, but children grow up, so we're catching up! This year our workshops are geared to preschool through third grade, so invite your elementary teacher colleagues.

The enthusiasm of early childhood professionals in their valiant efforts to get children outside continues to be inspirational and heartwarming. We've got exciting new keynote speakers this year from Maine, Vermont, Virginia, Missouri, Minnesota, plus 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.

We enjoy treating you to a tasty and healthy lunch. During the lunch hour, Liza Lowe will be introducing a new initiative for connecting professionals in nature-based early childhood education. She has been working with us to launch the *New England Network of Nature-based Early Childhood Educators (NENNECE)*. You may join this gathering, or lunch with colleagues where we'll show the short documentary movie, **The Best Day Ever: Forest Days in Vermont Kindergartens**. This was filmed in public school kindergartens in Hartland and Norwich, Vermont and illustrates the benefits of one day each week spent outside, year-round, with Kindergarten children.

Structure of the Day

8:00am–9:00am	Registration Opens/Morning refreshments
9:00am–9:15am	Opening Circle
9:15am–10:15am	Morning Keynote
10:30–Noon	Morning Workshops
Noon–1:00pm	Lunch/NENNECE or movie
1:00pm–2:00pm	Afternoon Keynote
2:15pm–3:45pm	Afternoon Workshops
3:50pm–4:00pm	Closing Circle

When I Am Among the Trees

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks, and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness,
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."

The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,
"and you, too, have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine."

by Mary Oliver

Leaf Art by Lynda McIntyre

Morning Keynote

Everything I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten: The Outdoorsification of Vermont Public Schools

Eliza Minnucci, Educational Consultant, ForestKinder, Tunbridge, Vermont, Adjunct Faculty, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

What happens when Kindergarteners start spending more time in the wildspaces beyond the school building? Many things, of course. Inspired by Kindergarten Forest Days, children across the grades in some Vermont elementary schools are spending significantly more time outdoors. Woven together from the reflections of teachers, Eliza brings you the story of the Forest Day movement and the effect it is having beyond its kindergarten roots.

Eliza Minnucci was raised in Deerfield, New Hampshire but now calls Tunbridge, Vermont home. Before teaching Kindergarten in Quechee, she taught young children in Zihuatanejo, Mexico, Chicago, Seattle and Fort Yukon, Alaska. On hiatus from the kindergarten classroom, she supports teachers in cultivating nature-based play and learning for their students through consultation and teaching the Nature-based Early Childhood Curriculum course at Antioch University New England. She is a frequent presenter at *In Bloom* conferences throughout New England. She is the author, with Meg Teachout, of *A Forest Days Handbook: Program Design for School Days Outside*, published in 2018.



Morning Workshops

Protocols for Wild Plant Foraging with Young Children

Ken Benton, Educator, North Branch Nature Center, Montpelier, VT

Foraging for wild food is something that our species has done since the dawn of our existence, though many of us have now lost the knowledge of which plants are safe to eat and which are not. In this workshop, our goal will be to introduce baseline protocols around how we can teach our students to safely interact with the edible landscape around us. We'll first practice observation techniques designed to re-introduce plants (both edible and non-edible) into the daily awareness of your students and then we'll try our hand at safe and ethical harvest, in route to making a few simple recipes to work into your outdoor classroom routines.

Mapping and Sense of Place

Hannah Lindner-Finlay, Kindergarten Teacher, Putney Grammar School, Putney, VT

Where are we? What do we notice around us? Who (and what) lives here? How did we get here and how can we get home? These are some of the questions we will ask as we learn strategies for helping children to notice and get to know the world around them. We will play observation games, notice landmarks and special places, and build maps using found materials. There will be time to learn about teaching children to use a compass, read a map, and measure distances with a measuring wheel. This session will end with a brief powerpoint, packed with examples of how observation and mapping can connect to essential academic standards.



Eyes of the World Discovery Center

Stick Play: The Power of Imagination

Anne Stires, Founder and Director, Juniper Hill School for Place-based Education, Alna, Maine

Sticks are quite possibly the world's oldest toys. Inducted into the Toy Hall of Fame in 2008, sticks often require expansive imagination, the telling of story, engineering skills, and social safety awareness in connection with others. Children use sticks as tools, weapons, utensils, machines, magical people, food, animals, puppets, as building materials, for fire-making, cooking, nature art, and for flying. There are seemingly endless uses of sticks in play and yet there are perceived and real risks as well. This workshop will explore the many benefits of stick play, increase our collective comfort in using sticks with young children, and expand understanding of mitigating and managing the risks.

Starting a Nature Preschool in a Public School

Emma Hallowell and Erin Thaczyk, Nature Preschool Teachers, Guilford Central School, Guilford, VT

Interested in adding a nature-based component to your program? Have little to no budget? Come hear about how a small public school in southern Vermont started a nature-based pre-K. We'll dive right into the nitty-gritty, answering questions about schedules, gear, rules, and *what do you do about toiletting?* We'll also teach you how to build a basic shelter using either a tarp and simple knots or branches and rope lashing so you can create a dynamic outdoor space of your own.

Morning Workshops (continued)

Snow Pants, Mittens, Hats...ELA? Yes! Fun Activities to do in the Snow

Amanda Hull and Lauren Skilling, Kindergarten Teachers,
Hartland Elementary School, Hartland, VT

Many people hesitate to teach outside in the winter and they think that planning lessons for winter days is challenging. Think again! Join us to experience some creative, engaging, tried and true ELA lessons to do outside. We will use sticks, paint, and our moving bodies to do things such as letter work, word work, syllables and story retells . . . and how all of this connects back to our common core standards. We believe that learning should be fun and our lessons in the woods lend to this thought perfectly!

Coyote Mentoring with Young Children

Amy Hyatt, Co-Director, Vermont Wilderness School

For twenty years, Vermont Wilderness School staff has been guiding youth on weekly Nature Connection adventures outside from September to May—right through the Heart of Winter. Our adventures include developing an embodied knowledge of local ecology, earth living skills, and interpersonal skills. In our Foxwalk Forest School, children take time off from school to join us in the woods of Putney, Vermont for the day. Each week, we spend four hours in the woods with the same group of 5-7 year olds learning ancient wilderness living skills with a focus on building knowledge of self, nature, and community. Join us for an hour and half mini-version of what we do in these longer days with youth!

Lunch

Learn about a new opportunity to network, watch our short documentary movie, *Best Day Ever*, or just enjoy a healthy lunch with colleagues or new-found friends.

Gonna Get Myself Connected!

Liza Lowe, Director Wild Roots Nature School, Chesterfield, NH,
Consultant, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

The New England Network of Nature-based Early Childhood Educators (NENNECE) has formed in response to a growing interest in nature-based education. The purpose is to connect early childhood educators with one another, for sharing ideas and resources, and supporting each other in providing high quality nature-based learning opportunities throughout the region. Interested in collaborating with like-minded colleagues? Curious how to start a group in your neck of the woods? Join us as we explore ways to grow NENNECE, create communications, and further organize our New England Network moving forward.

Movie Showing at 12:30pm

The Best Day Ever: Forest Days in Vermont Kindergartens



Chris Hardee

Afternoon Keynote

Eight Owls, Eight Kindergarteners, and Two Teachers

Anne Stires, Founder and Director, Juniper Hill School for Place-Based Education, Alna, ME, Adjunct Faculty, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

What happens when something in the natural world piques children's curiosity, and teachers notice and respond? A curriculum adventure emerges that links seasonal changes, day and night, work and play, science, literacy and more. Anne's story of an owl study began with a hoot, when a five-year-old brought in a book about owls that his grandmother had given him. The children spontaneously began to play a game called "owl families getting ready for winter." The classroom came alive with the buzz of questions: Where do the owls go in the winter? What owls live here in Maine? How do owls eat? Essential elements of emergent curriculum planning will be featured.

Anne Stires is the founder, director, and lead teacher at Juniper Hill School in Alna, Maine. She has worked with AUNE on In Bloom conferences since their beginnings, and serves as adjunct faculty with the Nature-based Early Childhood Certificate Program. She is a contributing author to *Nature Preschools and Forest Kindergartens: The Handbook for Outdoor Learning*.



Afternoon Workshops

Working with Special Needs in Outdoor Settings

Anne Ouwerkerk, Preschool Teacher, New London, NH

Children with special needs not only benefit from outdoor learning but have a right to experience the outdoors with their peers. Educators are in the unique position to be advocates for students with special needs and have the opportunity to show children what is possible. The steps we take to embrace and include diverse students, are steps in the right direction. This workshop will help us think about creating access and developing tools to accommodate diverse students in outdoor learning.

Forest Friday Foodies

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



Juniper Hill School
for Place-based Education

Our students burst with pride when they have roasted the perfect marshmallow. Food builds community and food cooked outdoors tastes magical. Come cook with us and learn how cooking outdoors is a major component to our forest day program. Involving students in the science of cooking will cultivate a welcoming and open-minded approach to food, new tastes, new ideas, and cultures. We'll share practical strategies that will allow children to increase their language development, focus and attention, and enhance fine motor skills all while sitting fireside.

Afternoon Workshops (continued)

Connecting to Wintertime Activities Through Imagination, Story and Movement in the Preschool

Carla Comey, Teaching Faculty, Education Department, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

Through the integration of story and movement we have the opportunity to nurture the child's understanding of the natural world via the gateway of imagination, sparking connection while simultaneously developing movement skills. When encountering a bird or a rabbit in a story, an inner capacity for empathy is nurtured along with the development of imagination. When participating in imaginative outdoor work activities, an appreciation for these activities, and joy in performing them, can be encouraged. Carla will lead participants on a journey through the winter landscape and share guidelines for creating such journeys that she has developed over twenty-eight years of teaching.

School Days to Forest Days: Routines in the Winter Wild

Eliza Minnucci and Meg Teachout, ForestKinder, Tunbridge, VT

In 2013 Eliza Minnucci and Meg Teachout founded a kindergarten Forest Day in Quechee, Vermont. Since then they have collaborated with teachers in dozens of classrooms to develop similar programs. In this workshop experience an abbreviated version of some tried and true outdoor rhythms, as they look in their winter clothes. From the morning bell to hanging up mittens inside out, learn routines that balance play and learning, while also keeping everyone warm. An especially good fit for educators looking to start frequent and extended outdoor time with students. Come prepared for the weather, we'll be outside!

Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Gentle: Cultivating Care and Responsibility Through Authentic Nature Play

Emily Pals, Nature Program Coordinator, Four Winds Nature Institute, Chittenden, VT and **Joanne Pye**, Early Childhood and Special Educator, formerly at Caverly Preschool, Pittsford, VT

As children, we develop a love and appreciation for nature through wonder-filled hours of outdoor play: building fairy houses, climbing trees, catching fireflies, and watching clouds. This kind of authentic nature play also fosters children's problem solving and communication skills, helps to relieve stress, encourages creativity, promotes physical activity and allows space and time for practicing care and responsibility for others, ourselves and the natural world. Together, let's venture outdoors to learn about the adult role in nature play and explore language and strategies that can help to manage behavior and nurture children's curiosity, compassion and confidence.

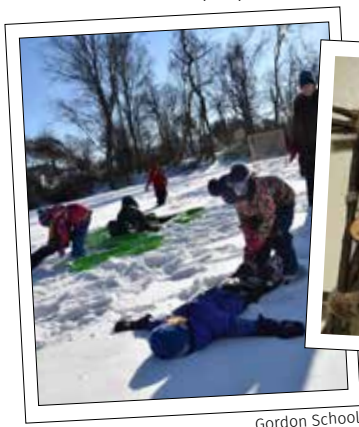
Let's Talk about Tracking: Following Stories in the Snow

Deb Kardane, Faculty, Education Department, Antioch University New England, and Academic Support Teacher, Academy Elementary, Brattleboro, VT and **Joan Carey**, Environmental Educator, Bonnyvale Environmental Center, Brattleboro, VT

Tracks and other signs reveal clues about animals and their activities while literature provides a great way to support this learning. The language of children's picture books is rich with linguistic complexity that can be challenging for young children to understand. By layering elements of this "story language" over our students' actual experiences, we can provide an

authentic exposure to these sometimes unfamiliar ways of speaking. Providing language-rich, tracking experiences can lay groundwork for deeper connections to stories about tracking.

Join us as we design animal tracking experiences for young children with the intentional use of complex language throughout. Together, we will learn how to guide our students through 'reading' the stories that animals leave behind, while also immersing them in the 'story language' of related literature.



Gordon School



The Forest Days Case Studies



The Forest Days Case Studies

Registration Fees:

Working Professional	\$125.00
Group Rate: (per person for 3 or more from same organization)	\$100.00
Antioch University Alumni	\$75.00
AUNE students	\$50.00

Register Here:

<https://tinyurl.com/y9xzr4rc>

Thanks to our Co-Sponsors:



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For more information, visit our website: www.antioch.edu/new-england/in-bloom
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