

PAEE 2020 Award Winners

Keystone Award - This prestigious award recognizes an educator who has dedicated their life to advancing the quality and opportunity for environmental education in Pennsylvania. Recipients of this award display uncommon and exceptional understanding, passion and commitment to environmental education and serve as an inspiration to other environmental educators.

2020 Keystone Award Winner - Bobby Hughes

Bobby has been founding Executive Director for the Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR) for the last 23 years. He has worked with numerous planning committee partners to coordinate and co-host 22 statewide conferences on Abandoned Mine Reclamation (AMR) and Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) remediation (www.treatminewater.com). This effort started with an Anthracite Region conference on AMD in 1996 to bring many partners together address mine water pollution while he was the Assistant Director of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's NE Office in Wilkes-Barre.

Bobby has been involved with PAEE for his entire career. He has been on the Advisory Board, a past Conference Planning Committee member and volunteer, a PAEE Conference Guest Speaker, presenter, and exhibitor. Bobby had also been involved in leadership roles within PAEE as a Board Member and NE Regional Director for many years. His involvement with NAAEE and other previous PAEE Board members led to many different projects over the last decade including the EE Consortium, the Non-Formal EE Certification, and collaborations with Cornell University, which eventually led to him becoming a published co-author of *Grassroots to Global: Broader Impacts of Civic Ecology*. He has written several curriculums on AMD and incorporation of recycled iron oxide pigment created by EPCAMR into an Art Education curriculum in collaboration with The Interdependence Hexagon Project and a teacher from the Scranton Area School District. He serves as a liaison and project coordinator between the myriad of state, federal, and local agencies to complete hundreds of mine drainage remediation projects. Bobby graduated from The Pennsylvania State University in May 1995 with a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Resource Management and a concentration in water pollution control technologies and hydrogeology. He was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania on the day of the historic Agnes Flood and now lives in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania with his wife Tara of 26 years and 3 children: Hayley, Dawson and Ethan. He has one precious grandson, Lincoln James.

Links to more information on Bobby can be found here

["Getting to Know Bobby Hughes"](#)

[Contributing Author-Grassroots to Global-Broader Impacts of Civic Ecology](#)

Daisy S. Klinedinst Memorial Award - The award recognizes an educator with fewer than five years of experience who shows dedication to expanding their involvement with environmental education.

2020 Daisy S. Klinedinst Memorial Award Winner – Elizabeth Masi

Elizabeth Masi is a young professional in the environmental field. In high school, Elizabeth worked as an environmental educator at Bear Creek Camp and Conference Center in Bear Creek, Pennsylvania. At Bear Creek Camp, Elizabeth served as a naturalist. In this role, she assisted in facilitating a wide array of lesson plans ranging from wilderness survival to ornithology. This program was geared to children ages 4-18.

Elizabeth went on to the Indiana University of Pennsylvania in to complete an undergraduate degree in Ecology, Conservation, Environmental Biology where she completed several field work assignments working in the public and private sector, primarily focusing on wetland ecology and ornithology.

After graduating college, Elizabeth accepted a role as the "Environmental Education Coordinator" at the Graham Academy, a private school which specializes in the education of students living with autism and emotional challenges. In

this role, Elizabeth facilitated a 16,000 square foot education garden program that emphasized horticultural therapy and farm to table lessons to foster her students exposure to the natural world and instill lifelong career skills and healthy lifestyle choices.

Elizabeth volunteered to lead farm to table cooking classes after work for an adult autism support group which focused on using seasonally available produce to create healthy, simple meals and taught the students basic culinary skills to promote their independence.

Eventually, Elizabeth stepped into a role as a Wildlife Biologist in the renewable energy industry. She actively volunteers at environmental education events in her community, and is the Vice President of the Wyoming Valley Mushroom Club (nested under the North American Mycological Society). As Vice President, Elizabeth is responsible member engagement by planning and facilitating monthly workshops revolving around mycology and aids in coordinating monthly forays with club members. Elizabeth is also the Mushroom Fair coordinator, an annual educational fair that invites the public to learn more about the various aspects of mycology that they can bring into their life. Some aspects of the fair include a children's corner, presentations to youth groups, informational booths, culinary demonstrations, and a fungi identification table.

Elizabeth has a passion for the natural world, and enjoys connecting others to the natural world through various mediums. She believes her love for the environment stems from her parents involvement in her childhood, always allowing her to explore her curiosities in the natural world. In her spare time, you can find Elizabeth rock climbing with friends, trail running, or mountaineering with her boyfriend. She also loves spending time with her family, sharing meals together.

Outstanding Contribution to Environmental Education - This award is presented to someone who has contributed to environmental education in a non-teaching area, such as publishing or research.

2020 Outstanding Contribution to Environmental Education Award Winner – Marijke Hecht

Marijke Hecht is a PhD candidate in Learning Sciences and Policy where she works with the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Learning in Out-of-School Environments (UPCLOSE). Marijke's research and practice make use of urban public greenspaces as sites for learning, advocacy, and stewardship that connect human and nonhuman nature in order to build equitable and just social and environmental communities. Her dissertation explores how relational processes between learners, educators, and nonhuman nature support environmental interest and identity development. As a researcher, she brings an interdisciplinary approach to her scholarship, weaving together environmental education, community-based ecological design, learning sciences, and naturalist practices. Her perspective is also informed by her training as a naturalist with a Master of Science in Botany.

Before entering graduate school, Marijke worked in Pittsburgh's parks for 14 years where she spearheaded two major projects – advocating for the Nine Mile Run aquatic ecosystem restoration, one of the largest urban stream restorations in the U.S., and managing the design and construction of the new Frick Environmental Center, a public education and welcome center that is net-zero water and energy, and is LEED Platinum and Living Building Challenge certified. In her previous role as the Director of Education for the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy she also led the organization's efforts to expand and diversify participation in environmental education programs.

Outstanding Environmental Educator - This award recognizes an educator who has made a significant impact and contribution to the environmental education field in a formal or non-formal setting through innovative or inspiring teaching practices.

2020 Outstanding Environmental Educator Award Winner - Laura Branby

Laura Branby is the Pittsburgh area Field Educator for the award-winning Creek Connections watershed education outreach program housed at Allegheny College, as well as the Camp Director for their Freshwater Academy (formerly Creek Camp).

Laura earned a meteorology degree/geology minor from North Carolina State University on an Air Force ROTC scholarship and worked in her dream job(s) as a weather officer/meteorologist in the U.S. Air Force, until her three children changed her career trajectory.

She entered the world of environmental education at the coaxing of her sister, Patti, then the education manager for Pittsburgh Voyager (now part of Rivers of Steel). Onboard their floating classroom (old Navy YP boat), Laura taught watershed programs, and developed new school and public programs to introduce Pittsburgh to the wonder of the three rivers environs. She then became the first and only Pittsburgh educator for Creek Connections. There, she has steadily connected thousands of students/teachers with their local creeks, encouraging stewardship by finding and providing people and resources to support their work. She organizes a yearly sharing symposium for these schools and has created a summer camp "Creek Camp/Freshwater Academy" for high school students to be exposed to environmental careers.

Laura's move to environmental education has allowed her to become intimately familiar with many of the rivers and creeks in the Pittsburgh area, connect her knowledge of weather with hydrology and aquatic biology, and ultimately allow her to share a passion for lifelong learning and the many wonders of our natural world. One of her favorite aspects of her work involves mentoring young people on their career journey, especially high school students and the many college interns who work with her.

Laura's goal in environmental education is to encourage people to connect ALL the parts of the water cycle... including the weather... and to never ever lose their sense of wonder.

Business Partner Award - This award recognizes a company, corporation or member of the business community that has made significant contributions that promote environmental education within the Commonwealth of PA.

2020 Business Partner Award Winner – Amanda Powell and Patagonia Action Works

Amanda Powell works within Patagonia's Digital Advocacy and Action Works teams, and sits on the company's JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) Grants Council. Her primary body of work is the Social Amplification program – which entails building, executing and managing hyperlocal environmental activism campaigns on behalf of Patagonia's nonprofit grantees. This program has proven to create meaningful connections between the brand's community and their nonprofit partners, resulting in more issue awareness, more advocates and more capacity for grassroots environmental efforts across the globe.

Outstanding Environmental Education Program - This award recognizes an exemplary or innovative environmental education program which could serve as a model of excellence for educators throughout the Commonwealth of PA.

2020 Outstanding Environmental Education Program Winner – PA Watershed Education Task Force

Government Partner Award - This award recognizes a government official who serves on a local, state or national level and has demonstrated significant support for environmental education within the Commonwealth of PA.

2020 Government Partner Award Winner – Bill Wasser

William (Bill) Wasser has had a long association with Environmental Education. He started his career with Pennsylvania State Parks in May 1992 and worked through 1995 as a seasonal Environmental Interpretive Technician at Clear Creek State Park, in Jefferson County and Ohiopyle State Park in Fayette County. Bill conducted campfire programs, night hikes, Junior Naturalist day camps, and many public interpretative programs while continuing to build his knowledge of the flora and fauna of Pennsylvania.

In 1996 Bill was promoted to Environmental Education Specialist at the Jennings Environmental Education Center in Butler County. It was there under the mentorship of Dave Johnson and JoAnn Albert that Bill learned the fine details of lesson plan development, facilitating teacher workshops, and working with students of all ages and abilities. In 1998 Bill transferred as an EES to Nockamixon State Park in Bucks County. He focused his programming on Lake Water Quality and worked with numerous schools from Allentown, Lower Saucon, and Philadelphia.

On Earth Day, 2002 Bill was hired as a park manager trainee in Central Office Harrisburg. His program areas were Rights of Way, Leased Campsites, Concession Agreements, and the DCNR Conservation Volunteer Program. Central Office provided a good overview of many of the issues affecting parks state wide, but Bill's goal was to someday be able to use the environmental principles that he'd been teaching for more than a decade for on the ground applications in a state park. He got that opportunity in 2004 by becoming the assistant park manager at Promised Land State Park in Pike County and nearby Varden Conservation Area in Wayne County.

Finally in June 2007, Bill moved back home to Mercer County as Park Manager at Maurice K Goddard State Park. He had grown up in this park fishing and hunting on Lake Wilhelm with his Dad. In the early 80's long before becoming a State Park employee, Bill started up a volunteer group to pick up litter around the lake. It was perhaps providence that he would end up full circle managing the park years later. Over the years, Bill has had the great fortune to work with many conservation partners. Through these partnerships, the water quality of Lake Wilhelm has improved, early successional birds and mammals thrive, forests and wetlands have been protected, and many young lives have been influenced through research opportunities and education programs.