

## NEEAC Meeting Summary – August 28, 2013

### **Attendees:**

#### EPA

Javier Araujo  
Julia Ortiz  
Josephine Chu

#### NEEAC

Edna Negrón  
Kiki Corry  
Caroline Lewis  
Kelly Keena  
Kay Antunez de Mayolo  
Richard Gonzales  
Scott Frazier  
Ken Gembel  
Angie Chen

#### General Public

Diane Wood (NEEF)

### **Welcome and review of agenda – Kelly**

Kelly thanked everyone for joining and apologized for missing the last call. She reviewed the agenda.

### **EPA-HQ Updates (OEE) – Javier**

Javier reminded everyone to submit their timesheets. He asked everyone to make sure that, if they've changed their addresses, to notify him so that the travel vouchers for the Baltimore meeting can be accurately issued. He shared that a hotel has been selected for the in-person NEEAC conference in Baltimore. Julia took roll. There was a brief discussion of the dates of the in-person meeting and the coordination thereof with the NAAEE meeting. Kelly noted that early-bird registration will be closing soon.

### **Listening Sessions**

Richard thanked everyone for sending out the invitation to their stakeholder group. He reminded everyone to encourage their networks to call in and branch out. The region 1 and 2 call had two participants, both from the Virgin Islands. Julia gave an update on the RSVPs for the calls. Richard ensured that there was a NEEAC member on each call.

### **General Discussion – Diane Wood**

Kelly introduced the subject by reflecting on how she's been listening to the workgroup conversations and the overall progress of the NEEAC. She pointed out that it's been difficult to do most of the work over the phone, and that the listening sessions are a major achievement. She noted that the NEEAC is at a critical time in the process and that it would be prudent to take a step back and think about the intent of the advisory council and its purpose. She asked the group about their hopes for the recommendation report to the EPA administrator, encouraged everyone to participate, and turned the discussion over to Diane and Angie.

Diane thanked Kelly and noted that she regretfully wouldn't be able to attend the in-person meeting. She also mentioned that she had just come back from GSA meetings and felt very optimistic about the progress of EE and green sports. She said there's a lot of interest and commitment within that community that represents strong EE potential.

Diane then reviewed the history of the National Environmental Education Act of 1990. She pointed out that there are difficulties within EPA determining the proper role of education within a regulatory body, and that NEEAC should keep this in mind as they write the report, particularly the "hows" and "whys" of the recommendation. She mentioned the importance of reviewing the connections between OEE and the other EPA office and discussing the opportunities for OEE within the agency. Finally, she reminded the group that the field of EE will be reading this and NEEAC should think about whether that audience should be inspired or represented by within the report.

Angie then gave an overview of what she looks for as a grant reviewer and how that might apply to the advice that NEEAC gives to the EPA Administrator. She pointed out that reviewers look for specific, realistic and relevant work, particularly in situations where relatively small amounts of funding can be leveraged to make a big difference. She pointed out that the audience is the Administrator of EPA and Congress, and the report should make tight, specific recommendations on things EPA can realistically do to move field forward. The report could cover things that are already done – awards, grants – and how to better utilize these opportunities (focus areas for grants, outcomes for research, messaging). She thinks that all the recommendations must be very specific, in contrast to the previous report.

Edna commented that she was very impressed by the observation on the connection between other offices and OEE. She has noticed other offices all have components of EE and that is an area that should be addressed, especially since other agencies are also working on this subject.

Kiki said that from her experience working with a natural resources agency, they are often called upon to justify the inclusion of EE. She mentioned that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has an active conservation education committee, and wondered if some of this research and writing could be boiled down to explain why it's so important that the EPA be involved in education.

Richard noted that it's important to recognize that other agencies are doing good EE work, and there should be some form of coordination. He would like to liaise with the Task Force to see where they are in their work and whether we should integrate our efforts.

Diane clarified that EPA is not on the outside, just that other agencies are doing fabulous things and we should emphasize that how we define the clear niche that's value added and justifies funding. She has been looking at older report and thinking about this conversation in terms of how NEEAC can best help the agency in this niche.

Richard wondered if there is anything NEEAC can do to leverage limited funding opportunities.

Kelly noted that it was important to maximize efficiency and that the recommendation be specific, relevant, and realistic, particularly in regards to finances.

Caroline thanked Diane and pointed out that, while EPA cannot control EE, EPA own the standard of what environmental literacy is. She said that NEEAC must know what OEE does within EPA and that they should champion what others do.

Richard pointed out that if the Department of Education is doing work with green schools and EPA decided to expand, EPA could piggyback on the established work.

Scott thanked Diane and Angie for giving the group a focal point. He supports the idea of raising awareness of EPA programs in terms of what EPA has done with education and its success rate. He thinks that is more important than just finding out what EE is out there.

Ken's perspective is that every other agency is stepping out of their lane since EPA is tasked with protecting human health and the environment. There should be a consolidation of EE materials that are available to the public. EPA should develop the fundamentals and other federal agencies should go to them from EPA stock. EPA should be expert.

Diane said that EPA sits on the most amazing wealth of data and that there is a role for OEE in helping translate that data for purposes of EE.

Kelly noted that it sounded like there might be two scales that we're talking about, one win office of EPA other b/w office of federal government.

Richard said that the same phenomena are happening in industry, that engaging employees in EE activities helps with retention. He would like to include industry in the process, as they are improving the science.

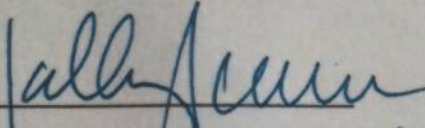
Kelly wrapped up the meeting by getting back to the bigger idea of purpose and audience. She asked the members to send in their thoughts on the ideal result of the recommendation. She also asked them to review the outline of the report and look at table of contents/framework to revise and add notes.

#### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

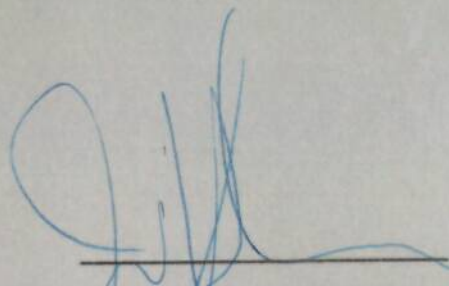
We hereby certify that, to the best of our knowledge, the foregoing meeting summary is accurate and complete.

Submitted by:

  
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Dr. Kelly Keena, Chair, NEEAC

10-18-2013

  
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Javier H. Araujo, NEEAC, EPA, DFO

10-18-2013