
Rationale

The Roadmap to Environmental Education in Extension grew out of a need within our organization. The mission for Extension is to “help people improve their lives through an educational process using scientific knowledge focused on identified issues and needs.” Within each program area, Extension educators are sometimes confronted with questions on topics about which they have some knowledge but have not had time to develop a stronger background. In addition, Extension personnel identify issues relevant to local communities which may not currently be adequately addressed. Environmental education is one of these areas.

For example, the 2000 National Report Card on Environmental Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors (NEETF/Roper Starch) gives Americans an “F” on their understandings of causes of basic environmental problems in the 21st century. Only one in nine scored 60% or above on a test of knowledge of issues likely to be a major problem in the next 15-20 years, and 1 in 25 scored 70% or above on an environmental knowledge quiz. Here in Ohio a study of adult environmental literacy found that Ohio adults demonstrated relatively good knowledge on only four of eight ecological principles (Mancl, Carr, & Morrone, 1999).

Extension can play a vital role in addressing the public’s need for a better understanding of the environment and environmental issues. A team of Extension educators from all four program areas developed the *Roadmap to Environmental Education in Extension* in order to assist agents in finding ways to promote and incorporate environmental education into their programs in a time-efficient and effective way. Along with this, the *Roadmap* publication helps to dispel common misconceptions about what constitutes environmental education.

Basically, environmental education enables youth and adult learners to make evidence-based decisions related to the environment that lead to changes in behavior for individuals and/or communities. As with any effective Extension program, environmental education incorporates a variety of teaching strategies to meet the needs of diverse audiences.

The Roadmap to Environmental Education in Extension includes easy to integrate, user-friendly educational activities, methods, and resources that can support and expand upon the current successful programming provided by Extension. Techniques used in environmental education apply across all program areas and can easily support almost any educational initiative. Too often Earth Day and/or Arbor Day are the only times of the year that are associated with environmental learning. *The Roadmap* provides ready-made materials that agents can use throughout the year. It also serves as a springboard for new agent-designed programs.

References

Mancl, K., Carr, K., & Morrone, M. (1999). Environmental literacy of Ohio adults. *Ohio Journal of Science* (3), 57-61.

National Environmental Education and Training Foundation (NEETF) and Roper Starch Worldwide. (2000). *The eighth annual survey of adult Americans*. Washington, DC: NEETF.





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To all Extension Personnel:

The key mission of Ohio State University (OSU) Extension is to help improve the lives of Ohioans. Our primary vehicle for achieving this mission is through education programs that are based on scientific knowledge and focus on critical issues and needs. The environment, and how we as individuals and communities interact with the environment, is one of these critical issues. A healthy and sustainable environment supports productive agriculture, renewable natural resources, viable communities, strong families and growing youth.

Since environmental topics and issues cross all four Extension program areas, we need to continue to share the responsibility for delivering environmental education programs. In addition, we need to expand our efforts to meet the growing need for sound environmental information and skills necessary for Ohioans to make informed decision and take responsible action. The *Roadmap to Environmental Education in Extension* was developed to assist you in addressing the public's need for a better understanding of the environment in which they live, whether urban or rural, and the environmental issues that are part of their daily lives.

I invite you to use this new resource to better understand your role as an environmental educator, to enhance your existing programs and to develop new programs to meet the needs of your clientele. The *Roadmap to Environmental Education in Extension* provides ideas for the novice and expert, for short-term and long-term programs. Take time today to explore the possibilities.

Sincerely,

Keith Smith
Associate Vice President, Agricultural Administration and
Director, Ohio State University Extension





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To Extension Educators:

The School of Natural Resources and OSU Extension play critical roles in supporting the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences' integrated systems approach to agriculture and natural resources management. Envision this systems approach as a four-sided pyramid, which represents our ecological paradigm. Such approach requires us to pay as close attention to the environment and society as to yields and economics. Within the School of Natural Resources we see environmental education as a powerful means to helping people not only understand the individual parts of the pyramid—environmental compatibility, production efficiency, economic viability and social responsibility—but also the complex interrelationships among the parts.

We are committed to providing environmental education programs and resources to educators and communicators like you to help accomplish this challenging task. The *Roadmap to Environmental Education in Extension* describes the comprehensive nature of environmental education and its emphasis on responsible behavior, sustainable environments, and quality of life. It illustrates how environmental education can be incorporated into each Extension program area. In addition, this resource book includes some ready-to-use lessons, ideas for enhancing your existing programs, and idea starters for developing new ones.

The ecological paradigm requires us to think holistically, as does environmental education. I encourage you to use the *Roadmap to Environmental Education in Extension* as a tool for programs planning.

Sincerely,

Gary W. Mullins
Director, School of Natural Resources



How to Use Roadmap to Environmental Education in Extension

The overall format of the *Roadmap to Environmental Education in Extension* addresses two broad questions:

1. What is environmental education?
2. How does it fit with Extension?

Sections 1, 6, and 7 are applicable to all of Extension. Sections 2-5 are each specific to a program area. You are strongly urged to read Section 1 first because it serves as the organizer for Sections 2-5 as well as provides a common understanding of environmental education and Extension.

The first section, **Environmental Education in Extension**, forms the philosophical foundation for the whole notebook and presents a framework that demonstrates how environmental education fits into different program areas. The section contains four subheadings:

- “Making the Connection” provides a description of what environmental education is, common misconceptions, and how it fits within Extension.
- “Teaching and Learning in an Environmental Context” reviews three broad components of education, illustrates how environmental education differs from general education, and provides formal definitions of environmental education.
- “It’s Just Good Education” outlines how environmental education addresses the needs of learners and models effective educational practice.
- “Turning Missed Opportunities into Golden Educational Programs” describes two formats for incorporating environmental education into existing programs: 1) a matrix of different approaches and 2) a chart showing how to “transform” existing Extension programs using an environmental education approach.

Sections 2-5, follow the same format and focus on specific Extension program areas: **Agriculture and Natural Resources, Community Development, 4-H and Youth Development, and Family and Consumer Sciences**. Each contains:

- A letter from the associate director,
- Example of the matrix of different approaches,
- Example of a transformed program, and
- Sample lessons.

Section 6, **Resources**, provides a listing of environmental education resources available through Extension, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and others. Some are tied directly to material discussed in Sections 2-5 and others provide additional ideas.

The last section, **Perpetual Calendar**, lists “environmental” dates, month-by-month, and suggests ways to use this information as a hook for incorporating environmental education into your programs.

