



CONSERVATION EDUCATION — Success Story
Mid-Atlantic Conservation Education Cooperative

INTRODUCTION — The Mid-Atlantic Conservation Education (MACE) Cooperative is an organization consisting of the conservation education (CE) coordinators representing state forestry agencies in New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia; and supported by the USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area, State and Private Forestry. Spurred in 1995 by the efforts of then Maryland State Forester, John Riley, these states began exploring ways to work cooperatively on CE projects. Their initial project consisted of an educational Forestry CD ROM and a corresponding Forestry Activity Guide to be used by teachers, youth leaders, and other educators working with middle school students.



Members of MACE during the Winter 2001 Meeting held in Morgantown, WV. From left to right - John Benton, New Jersey Forest Service, Bill Schultz, Ohio Division of Forestry, Leslie Fitzwater, West Virginia Division of Forestry.

After completing the CD project, the states met for a conservation education sharing session at Redden State Forest in Delaware in October of 1999. It was at this session that they voted to formally establish their working relationship, which they had been cultivating since 1995.

MACE was officially born and the first officers were Chairman, John Benton of NJ; Vice-Chairman, Bill Schultz of OH; and Secretary-Treasurer, Judith Leith of DE. Forest Service representatives Vicky Evans and Dan Kincaid were asked to serve as ad-hoc members of the group. The intent of MACE is to assist one another in elevating the overall quality and quantity of conservation education activities and programs in their states. They generally meet twice per year to share information and ideas, as well as to work on cooperative projects.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION — In FY 2000, MACE was awarded a \$14,000 grant from the USDA Forest Service to assist them with:

- Organizational travel costs.
- Meetings and training sessions related to conservation education.
- Development of educational products.
- Correlation of activities to state education standards.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS — By October of 2001 MACE completed its grant by:

- 1) Purchasing 375 copies of the Forestry CD ROM for use by the MACE group.
- 2) Reprinting 1,000 copies of the Forestry Activity Guide for use by the MACE group.
- 3) Printing 2,000 copies of “How To Correlate Project Learning Tree To Your State Education Standards,” and working with member states to complete correlation projects.
- 4) Purchasing a laptop computer and software to assist MACE with its activities.
- 5) Covering travel costs for members to three-conservation education related meetings/conferences.
- 6) Completing a regional survey of state conservation education programs and staffing levels, and entering it into a database for future use and analysis.

KEY PARTNERS

- Delaware Department of Agriculture – Forest Service
- West Virginia Division of Forestry
- Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry
- District of Columbia – Environmental Health Administration
- Ohio Division of Forestry
- New Jersey Forest Service
- Maryland DNR Forest Service
- USDA Forest Service

CONCLUSION — MACE is a model, multi-state conservation education organization. Through partnerships, sharing, and assisting one another, they have enhanced both the quality and quantity of conservation education activities in the six Mid-Atlantic States and the District of Columbia. This particular grant helped them to get organized; attend training sessions, workshops, and meetings; reprint and order educational products for use in their states; increase the level of correlations of CE activities to state education standards; and to purchase and begin using computers and software to support their efforts. Working in a heavily populated region of the country with multiple natural resource issues, the MACE Cooperative is making a difference in the quality and quantity of educational activities offered to its citizens.

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