



Kentucky Environmental Education Council (KEEC)  
Certification Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
November 2, 2015

**Meeting Location:** Room 1901, Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY

**Meeting Time:** 1:00 p.m. Eastern

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Billy Bennett, Roberta Burnes (by phone), Ashley Hoffman (by phone), Kazi Javed (by phone), Ginny Lewis (by phone), Elizabeth Schmitz, Henrietta Sheffel (by phone), Pattie Stivender (by phone), Melinda Wilder, Carol Young (by phone), Carroll Young (by phone)

**Absent Members:** Joe Baust, Vivian Bowles, April Haight, Doug McCoy, Cheryl Messenger, Peggy Nims, Merin Roseman, Deb Spillman, Terry Wilson

**Staff in Attendance:** Wesley Bullock

**Others in Attendance:** Laura Lang

#### Meeting introduction

##### Quorum and approval of minutes

E. Schmitz discussed the need to publish minutes for this committee under Open Meetings law. In order to publish the minutes, we need a quorum to approve minutes of all past meetings. She asked committee members to consider whether they can attend regularly in the future in order to facilitate getting quorum. After approval, minutes will be posted on the KEEC website.

##### Reinstatement Course

E. Schmitz asked for input on Reinstatement forms from those engaged in the process. Consensus was that the forms are clear and well designed, but there was some concern that reinstatement requirements do not help the educator, only KEEC, and that once a year renewal is difficult for a teacher. Consensus was that the requirements do help the EE community as a whole, and that the annual renewal requirement helps ease of understanding and engagement in the community.

H. Sheffel joined the meeting by phone.

##### Renewal Course

The Renewal Course was re-scheduled to December 10 at 2:00 p.m. KEEC will send out an update for everyone to change their calendars. E. Schmitz discussed possible topics of the renewal course, such as clarifying what numbers we are asking for on the renewal application, asking for stories about the impact of the course, announce the reinstatement process and clarify that difference between renewal and reinstatement process. She asked for training ideas to make it more like professional development. R. Burnes noted that "Recertification" on the Overview page of the PEEC part of the website should say

“Renewal” instead. She suggested putting a mention of reinstatement in the same part of the website. Suggestions for professional development were:

- Looking at people’s renewal from last year to see what they needed and target that for professional development
- Surveying the certified folks to see if they had any input, although that was determined to be redundant if we already have the information
- Updates about initiatives at the state level and NAAEE, including community engagement guidelines and EE Pro, and what’s happening with certification programs in other states

R. Burnes said that if we use the same format we used last year, it didn’t work for everyone, so she would like PPT in advance. E. Schmitz asked if KEEC could work with her in advance to troubleshoot the broadcast. E. Schmitz said that the webcast would be followed by a survey to confirm participation, including soliciting input on format and location of the reunion. E. Schmitz asked if there are better ways to engage people in the webcast than the Soapbox response and poll format. Twitter was suggested as an alternative.

#### PEEC course costs

E. Schmitz explained the difficulty of continuing to fund the course with agency funds as inflation and personnel charges reduce the discretionary funds. The application fee will continue to rise from \$100 per person in 2014-15 to \$200 in 2016-17, but that still will not come close to meeting costs. She explained that the cabinet budget office requires that we raise fees slowly, so we can’t just increase the fee by hundreds of dollars. KEEC is looking for new sources for grant funding, and no matter where those funds come from, they will not change the integrity of the course. It will still be under the oversight of the staff and Council, and subject to accreditation requirements.

E. Schmitz went over the TMMK grant from last time, and how the funds were allocated both to meet the goals of TMMK by offering scholarships, and to meet the needs of KEEC by covering agency costs. She discussed applying again for TMMK funds. She also mentioned that we will apply for Coal Education Funds, by increasing the amount of time we spend on the theme of coal, energy, and climate change in the Kentucky setting. E. Schmitz asked for comments on the Coal Education funds. M. Wilder noted that the issue is the perception of the course and whether there are strings attached. P. Stivender noted that Bluegrass Greensource has taken funding from this source and has used the DEDI logo, and it has not affected their neutrality. This is one of their strongest programs because of the energy content. E. Schmitz noted that the RFA is not even available, but if it becomes available, we will apply.

E. Schmitz noted that participants can get independent study graduate credit through universities that offer the EE endorsement. M. Wilder noted that students have to pay tuition for those credits. E. Schmitz noted that we could market this opportunity better. She noted that it was suggested to her that we consider anyone with the EE endorsement as certified. This would have its own issues, such as ensuring that we could retain accreditation, and also lacking the networking benefits of the current course.

#### Accreditation

E. Schmitz reported that KEEC still does not have final word on accreditation, but that the NAAEE board has reviewed the application and we expect word soon.

### Course instructors

E. Schmitz discussed changing the process for hiring instructors to release an RFA for instructors (to everyone who is a Certified Professional Environmental Educator) instead of one RFA for a course contractor. This means that KEEC will not be able to make arrangements with individual instructors until contracts are signed in July. Reunion and graduation will be done at restaurants or other locations that do not require an event fee. The change to individual RFAs will save money on administrative costs. There will be additional criteria than just being certified, and the weight of experience will be higher than cost.

### 2016-17 PEEC course schedule

W. Bullock noted that the first weekend in November, the traditional start of the course before last time, conflicts with KSTA Conference. That leaves the second weekend of November as the best time, and it is also available at Lake Cumberland. E. Schmitz discussed moving Workshop 2 from Natural Bridge because of booking issues there last time, and also to move to a place that would tie in to a coal them: Carter Caves, Jenny Wiley, Pine Mountain Settlement School, Pine Mountain State Park.

H. Sheffel left the meeting.

Pine Mountain Settlement School was suggested as an alternative. It is great and cheap but remote, with the potential for people to get lost, and communication is not good.

A.Hoffman left the meeting.

Pine Mountain State Park was suggested for having a nice meeting space, easy access, and being recently refurbished. Jenny Wiley was a concern because of reservation problems for KAEE Conference. The Wendell Ford Regional Training Center in Greenville is on a reclaimed strip mine, and could open up the possibility of military funds. It is a spartan facility but good food and good meeting spaces. Benham Schoolhouse Inn, which has the coal museum and strip mining on Black Mountain, was also suggested.

### Enrollment cap

E. Schmitz discussed how many participants can be enrolled. In the 2014-15 course, 30 enrolled, 25 showed up for Workshop 1, 20 graduated. Could we enroll 35 to maximize impact, knowing that it would probably go down? She also mentioned that, in relation to how people still want to take the course despite cost, she has thought about charging per workshop instead of per course. Under a per workshop method, there would be a loss in income for those who don't complete the course, but some people can afford the payments better if they are spread out. M. Wilder thought Workshop 1 as currently structured would be difficult with 35 people, but some of the other workshops would be easier with 35 people. With 3 instructors, maybe we could break it down into small groups. E. Schmitz said that we can make a decision on the cap after we have restructured the workshop.

E. Schmitz asked for new business announcements or other announcements. M. Wilder encouraged everyone to go with her service learning course to Belize in May. E. Schmitz said that Bora Simmons is working on community engagement guidelines for NAAEE.

Meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.