

## RIEEA Accomplishments in 2013:

- In February 2013, RIEEA dove into the second year of its five-year strategic plan with its annual meeting held at Cole Middle School in East Greenwich. This gathering of educators, architects and representatives from RIDE included a forum on “EE for Everyone: *celebrating the diversity of best practices in RI*”, a tour of the school’s new green renovations, and a raffle to raise funds for RIEEA’s professional development scholarships.
- In November, RIEEA in partnership with the Sustainable Schools Summit and the New England Environmental Education Alliance (NEEEA) hosted a successful regional conference with the theme of *Achieving Environmental Literacy: Health, Environment, Curriculum* at Salve Regina University. Over 300 participants and presenters attended to hear Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and David Orr’s memorable keynote speeches, participate in a wide variety of workshops and discussions and tour the new “high performance green schools” in Newport. The conference was the best attended in NEEEA’s history and the first one that provided RIEEA with a net profit.
- Our work as a regional partner on the EPA grant with NEEEA continued this year. The primary goal of the grant is to promote environmental education on a statewide and regional basis. Three Rhode Island organizations were awarded sub-grants for this work. Down City Design created a Sustainable Design Resource Guide in partnership with RIDE that helps educators use their own school buildings as teaching tools to share the principles of sustainable design. The URI Outreach Center held Environmental Literacy Training Programs for formal and informal educators interested in environmental science curricula in the areas of: storm water, biodiversity and food literacy. The Apeiron Institute for Sustainable Living facilitated the partnership between the Sustainable Schools Summit and the NEEEA Conference bringing together communities from across sectors to build networks, gather resources, share best practices, and cultivate leadership skills for widespread environmental literacy adoption and implementation in the context of sustainable, healthy schools.
- The EPA grant funds, in addition to funds from the RIEEA budget, made it possible to hire Jeanine Silversmith as the RIEEA Project Coordinator ensuring that our website and environmental literacy projects could move forward in a much more efficient manner than is possible with an all-volunteer board.



**Mission:**  
*RIEEA promotes high quality environmental education throughout the state to increase the environmental literacy of all children and adults.*



# Achieving Strategic Goals

## **A 'go-to' website, which includes a resource database, and a robust social media presence.**

- The Website and Social Media Committee made enormous strides this year. The website has been completely revamped and a plan is in place to keep it current and informative. *Check it out at [www.rieea.org](http://www.rieea.org).*
- Our EE resource database is up and running with 75+ organizations listed so far. Add your organization today!
- RIEEA members can now join or renew ON-LINE!
- RIEEA has 150 friends on Facebook. Join us today!
- Do you tweet? RIEEA now does too. Find us on Twitter @RIEEAConnects

## **High quality professional development opportunities for educators.**

- The Professional Development Committee was very active planning the future of RIEEA's professional development program. Ideas include spring and fall workshops, joint mini-conferences, consulting, learning communities, annual meetings and the continued promotion of opportunities provided by others.
- In May, 30 people attended RIEEA's *Green Ribbon Schools* forum facilitated by Jim Elder, the Director of the Campaign for Environmental Literacy and the originator of the Green Ribbon Schools concept.
- RIEEA Board Member Elisabeth Bux and RIEEA Project Coordinator Jeanine Silversmith traveled to Maine to attend an EPA/NEEEA workshop presented by the ACORN group on the value of collaborative evaluation and aggregate data in helping the EE community promote environmental literacy as a critical educational goal.
- RIEEA board members, Kristen Swanberg and Jen Klein represented RIEEA at the NAAEE affiliate network meeting and conference in Baltimore where they presented a workshop on *Urban Schoolyard Ecology*.
- Eleven RIEEA members were awarded a total of \$567 in professional development scholarships. These scholarships helped them participate in a wide variety of opportunities including the Appalachian Mountain Club's Outdoor Leadership Training and the Climate Reality Leadership Corps Training.

## **Continued pursuit of the authorization and implementation of the Environmental Literacy Plan.**

- RIEEA's Environmental Literacy Planning (ELP) Committee has taken an innovative approach in promoting environmental literacy in Rhode Island. The committee has been working in cooperation with RIDE's School Construction team to incorporate environmental education directly into the high performance protocols for new school construction and renovations. Jim Elder of the Campaign for Environmental Literacy praised this approach saying, he believes that it is the only one like it in the nation.
- The committee drafted the *School as a Tool* guidelines and commitment letter that school districts now sign when applying to the state for CHPS reimbursement for new or renovated buildings. By signing the letter, districts are committing to incorporating high quality EE into their curriculum.
- The committee also drafted, and RIDE approved, an RFP calling for *School as a Tool* contractors to help school districts incorporate EE into their curriculum. Six individuals and organizations submitted applications which will be reviewed by a RIDE committee.
- RIEEA continues to promote the *Green Ribbon Schools* initiative in cooperation with RIDE by reaching out to public and private schools to explain the GRS process and application and to encourage and support the applications.

## **Grow as an organization with a financial plan and Executive Director.**

- Due to a federal backlog, RIEEA is still waiting for the IRS to review its 501c3 application. This strategic goal will be a significant focus for 2014.

