

Palmetto Environmental Education Certification

Executive Summary



**Advancing Professional Environmental Education
in South Carolina**



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INTRODUCTION

Efforts to develop South Carolina's first environmental education certification program began in 2013 when the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium (Consortium) disseminated a state-wide survey and hosted focus groups to gauge the interest and need among educators for this type of professional training. Since that time, and with additional funding support from the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) and the Spaulding-Paolozzi Foundation, the Consortium, in partnership with 14 educators representing organizations across the state, has developed the ***Palmetto Environmental Education Certification (PEEC)*** program.

Benefits of PEEC:



Increase knowledge about environmental science, issues and impacts



Increase professionalism and **marketing advantage** for EE businesses



Improve teaching skills and **networking**



Our Vision

Advancing professional environmental education in South Carolina



Our Mission

Foster and empower a professional environmental education network to promote environmental literacy in South Carolina



Our Goal

Establish a demographically diverse network of trained formal and nonformal environmental educators in South Carolina who are skilled in techniques for effective environmental education within their local communities through PEEC

Our Objectives

1. Increase the knowledge about environmental science, issues, and impacts related to the geographic regions of South Carolina among the state's formal and nonformal educators.

2. Elevate the capacity of South Carolina formal and nonformal educators to effectively disseminate relevant environmental information using EE best practices and techniques.

3. Mobilize a network of formal and nonformal educators in South Carolina that are equipped to foster critical thinking and engage in environmental stewardship efforts relevant to their area.



PEEC Program Structure

Overview

- Two year timeframe for completion
- Open to K-12 formal and informal educators
- Four in-person workshops (2 days long each)
- Eight online modules using Coursesites by Blackboard Learning Management System
- Flexible elective component
- Culminating capstone project
- Addresses South Carolina State Science Standards
- Aligned with the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Guidelines:

Theme 1: Environmental Literacy

Theme 2: Foundations of Environmental Education

Theme 3: Professional Responsibilities of the Environmental Educator

Theme 4: Planning and Implementing Environmental Education

Theme 5: Fostering Learning and Promoting Inclusivity

Theme 6: Assessment and Evaluation

Workshops

- A series of four, two-day skill-building training workshops will be held for participants at various locations across the state
- Total of 64 hours
- Each session will be focused on at least one of the six NAEE themes

Online Modules

- Eight online modules will supplement information learned during PEEC workshops
- Total of 40 hours
- Fosters critical thinking
- Each module is aligned with at least one of the six NAAEE themes

Electives

- Opportunity to explore and gain knowledge about different South Carolina regions
- Total of 90 hours
- Participant can tailor elective experience based on personal preference or professional needs
- Elective Documentation Forms will be required for each elective

Capstone

- Each participant will develop and implement a community-level, stewardship-focused EE program
- Participant will demonstrate mastery of EE content and practice

Portfolio

- A compilation of all work completed through the PEEC program, plus a personal reflection and 3-5 year plan for continued professional development



PEEC Pilot Program

Purpose

With funding from the Spaulding-Paolozzi Foundation, a PEEC pilot was conducted prior to the official launch that assessed both the content and format of the program. In order to accomplish this goal, the pilot program has an accelerated timeline and abbreviated content. Participants will receive certification at the end of the pilot program.

Timeline and Content

- Program was seven months
- No cost to participant
- Three in-person workshops
- Eight online modules
- Three elective courses
- Capstone was a presentation outlining how to implement information into teaching setting
- Portfolio was culmination of all work done throughout PEEC and a professional development plan

Participants

- 2 college professors
- 3 formal educators
- 7 nonformal educators representing non-profit organizations and state government agencies
- 2 nature-based tourism owners and representatives



Workshops, Electives & Modules

Three in-person workshops were held at coastal, midlands, and upstate locations in South Carolina. Each workshop was approximately 2 days long. The workshops were aligned with the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAEE) Guidelines.

Eight online modules with due dates were assigned with online submission by participants. Each module was aligned with the NAEE Guidelines and served to enhance what was learned during the previous workshop or to prepare for upcoming workshops.

Three electives were completed in each region of South Carolina: upstate, midlands and coastal. Electives met the requirements of training and networking. A PEEC Elective Documentation Form was completed, signed and submitted after each elective experience.

A modified capstone project outlined how each participant would use the information learned in a new or modified program or product.

Assessments

Part of the PEEC pilot was to provide the Steering Committee with valuable evaluation and assessment of both the content and process of the program. Feedback from participants was requested in the following ways: application assessment, daily reflections, module surveys and a final PEEC reflection.



Modifications for Official Program

The PEEC Pilot provided valuable feedback on modifications to the PEEC content and format. These modifications have been incorporated into the full PEEC program in preparation for official PEEC launch in January 2019:

- The content of the online modules will remain the same; however, some redundancy was eliminated and some content was spread across other modules.
- The order of the online modules was shifted over the course of the two years to flow more efficiently with and build upon the content being presented during the workshops.
- The timing of the in-person workshops has been scheduled in an effort to accommodate both formal and non-formal educators: Two of the sessions fall over a three-day weekend in January and the two other workshops occur during weekdays in August.
- To alleviate too much content being presented at one workshop, homework assignments, in addition to the online modules, will be assigned in between workshops.
- Use of the Discussion Board on the online system will be utilized more to foster networking and communication among PEEC classmates.



PEEC Official Launch

The full, two-year PEEC program is scheduled to launch in January 2019 and run through August 2020. The application process for this course will be open from September 1 - September 30, 2018 with participants notified by October 15, 2018. A maximum of 20 formal and non-formal educators will be selected. The next PEEC course will be offered from January 2021 - September 2022.

Information on specific dates regarding the PEEC program as well as the application link can be found at www.peecsc.com.

Reflections from Pilot Participants

- Tremendous
- Positive experience!
- Enlightening
- Rewarding
- Rigor was spot on
- Great reminder to keep learning both from personal development perspective and from experience
- Formed a community of like-minded people

Website: www.peecsc.com
Contact: peecprogram@gmail.com

