

Environmental Education: Engaging Military Communities

Online Course May 12th – June 8th, 2014



Course Overview

This course is designed for environmental educators, community health professionals, and anyone exploring the role of nature in working with members of the military community. Research suggests direct experiences with nature through outdoor recreation, gardening, tree planting and similar activities can be valuable. The potential impacts include improved personal health, resiliency, strengthening family ties and community cohesion. Further, active engagement with nature provides opportunities for developing new environmental attitudes and behaviors. Environmental educators, health professionals, and civic groups are in a unique position to advance these opportunities by working with the military community to develop relevant programs that address the needs and concerns of military personnel and their families. The objective of this course is to increase your capacity to effectively develop programs that increase environmental awareness, stewardship, and utilize the therapeutic value of nature in building resilient communities. This course provides an overview of approaches that link environmental education, outdoor recreation, and community greening with military personnel, veterans and their families.

Course Format

This is a 4-week online course. The course is designed to encourage student interaction and collaboration. Rather than emphasize memorization of large amounts of information, this course is designed as a “innovation incubator.” Participants will work on crafting a program plan (outdoor adventure, garden party, tree planting activity, etc.) that combines EE in a way that addresses specific needs of veterans, military families, and/or broader military community. For example, a program concept could focus on nature skills building for youth with parents deployed overseas. The program should include proposed duration of the activity, the ways the activity addresses the needs of participants, and a detailed outline of objectives associated with the activity. This project will serve as one of the key outcomes of the learning experience. These are intended to be useful in your work, and shared with others to improve the overall impact of programs linking EE and military communities. Participants will learn through a variety of media including video, weekly webinars, written publications and activities designed to support the final project. The course site is powered by Facebook and Google Apps for Education which provide a suite of tools to support both synchronous and asynchronous collaboration. Participants should expect to spend at least one hour per day to complete the objectives.

EECapacity

This course is offered by the Cornell University Civic Ecology Lab through EECapacity, the EPA-funded national environmental education training program. The EECapacity Leadership Team includes the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), Environmental Education Exchange, and Akiima Price Consulting. This course is offered for the first time and is based on the EPA Professional Development Needs Study, NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence, and the wealth of innovative EE practice emerging in cities across the US.

Course Facilitator

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Site Administrator

Need Technical Assistance?
Direct Technical Questions to:
e-Learning Administrator
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Selected Readings

Tidball, Keith G. (2013). *Returning Warriors and Environmental Education Opportunities: Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Restoration for Veterans*. In Cornell Civic Ecology Lab (Ed.), *Civic Ecology Lab White Paper Series* (pp. 17). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University. Access at: <http://resources.spaces3.com/7ac695c4-ad98-4ea0-92b9-c09dd75d4a26.pdf>

Krasny, Marianne E., Pace, KH, Tidball, Keith G., & Helphand, Kenneth. 2014. Nature Engagement to Foster Resilience in Military Communities. In K. G. Tidball & M. E. Krasny (Eds.), *Greening in the Red Zone: Disaster, Resilience, and Community Greening*. New York: Springer. Accessed at: http://collaborate.extension.org/mediawiki/files/c/c8/Krasny_et_al_nature_%26_military_communities.pdf

Course Timeline

Due dates for course assignments each week are **Saturdays**. But please try to complete assignments in the beginning of each week to allow time for feedback and online discussions. This syllabus is a living document, and the latest version will always be available in the Calendar on the **EE and Military** course website.

	Course Activities
Week 1:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intro - Welcome Video 3. Get to know your cohort/collaborators – reach out via phone or video chat to at least one fellow student. 4. Module 1 – <i>The value of nature - benefits to individuals and military communities</i> 5. Complete readings 6. Webinar with Madeline Bachner – Cottonwood Institute 7. Post - thoughts, ideas on message board associated with module/readings/webinar.
Week 2:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Module 2 – <i>Communicating through Nature Experiences</i> 2. Activity – Exploring the Nature Pyramid (Link to Reading) and your personal nature experience. 3. Post thoughts, ideas on message board associated with activity 4. Webinar with Daniel Morgan – Project Healing Waters 5. Post thoughts, ideas on message board associated with webinar 6. Choose Project Idea – Share idea through Facebook Group
Week 3:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Module 3 – <i>Activities that can support resiliency among military communities.</i> 2. Complete readings – TBD 3. Post thoughts, ideas on message board associated with module. 4. Webinar with Jeremy Grisham – WA State Veterans Conservation Corp 5. Post Project Ideas – Provide Feedback to Course Participants
Week 4:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finish Projects 2. Web Meeting Hosted by Justin Smith 3. Share projects with group and discuss plans for moving forward. 4. Post Final Projects