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Contact: Dan Seligson, communications director, National Environmental Education Foundation, 202-365-5568

Students, Educators Celebrate National Environmental Education Week

EPA Administrator Jackson: EE Week will 'make a positive and lasting difference'

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Millions of students and thousands of teachers across the country will take part this week in [National Environmental Education Week](#) (EE Week), the largest environmental education event in the United States held annually during the week leading up to Earth Day.

EE Week, a project of the [National Environmental Education Foundation](#), runs from April 11-17, features field trips, class exercises, outdoor classrooms, school garden planting and other activities at schools, nature centers and museums. This year's focus on the connection between water and energy will help K-12 students better understand how usage of each affects the other and empower students to come up with strategies for conservation.

In the United States, generating power consumes 3 percent of our nation's water annually and 13 percent of the energy produced in this country each year is used to treat, transport and heat our water. Conserving water saves energy, and vice versa. The water-energy connection is complex, but it provides an excellent opportunity to get students thinking about the interrelatedness of ecological and environmental concerns.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson, in a [message to educators](#) said EE Week will "engage young people from every grade level and help lead us to the 40th anniversary of Earth Day later this month."

"Whether it's taking students to explore nature, planting native species gardens to prevent runoff, or developing in-school recycling projects, these creative activities can make a positive – and lasting – difference," Jackson said.

Diane Wood, president of the National Environmental Education Foundation, said this year's theme provides timely lessons to students.

"Water conservation and learning about the water-energy connection engages students to take an active role in problem solving," Wood said. "Their learning, whether in classrooms, on field trips or through activities on school grounds spark ideas for solutions for conserving resources, saving water, saving energy and ultimately having a real impact in their schools and their communities."

A seven-day lead in to Earth Day, EE Week features class outings and activities focused on the understanding and protection of the natural world. Last year, more than 2,500 partners – including schools, zoos, aquaria, nature centers and museums – took part engaging an estimated 4.5 million students around the country.

This year's focus, "Be Water and Energy Wise" includes focused lesson plans, quizzes, water measurement kits and nature journaling exercises. The materials cut across all academic areas, from math to language arts and art to science.

James Nolen, a biology teacher at Gar-Field Senior High School in Woodbridge, Va., said EE Week helps teachers find ways to integrate environmental education not just for a week, but during the entire school year.

"EE Week demonstrates how easily environmental themes can be incorporated into the curriculum," Nolen said. "The lesson plans and resources that EE Week provides make it easy for me to develop a meaningful experience for my students with a real-world application. My students and I look forward to being a part of this national program."

Governors in 19 states signed proclamations commemorating the week, along with mayors and city councils in 13 cities.

A wide variety of activities will be taking place across the country at all grade levels. Some highlights:

- At Escuela Luz del Mundo in Albuquerque, New Mexico, students will be learning about water and energy usage in the United States compared to other countries and will hold a water and energy conservation challenge between students and adults who support the school.
- Students at Al Ihsan Academy in Detroit, Mich. will be checking tire pressure and fluid levels for their parents and will be distributing flyers to raise awareness about conserving fuel.
- Students at Mojave Vista Elementary School in Victorville, Calif. will be creating solar projects, demonstrating ways they can use solar energy in their daily lives.
- Hillside Elementary School students in Manchester, N.H. will work on their "cluster garden project," an effort to adapt school grounds to recent flooding.

For more information, visit www.eeweek.org

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NEEF partners with professionals in health, education, media, business and public land management to promote daily actions for helping people protect and enjoy the environment. Through our primary programs -- Classroom Earth, National Public Lands Day, National Environmental Education Week, Business and Environment, Earth Gauge® and Health & Environment -- we offer Americans knowledge to live by. To learn more, call (202) 833-2933 or visit www.neefusa.org.

National Environmental Education Week connects educators with environmental resources to promote K-12 students' understanding of the environment.