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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAEE Releases eeGuidance for School Reopening in Colorado: How Environmental Educators and Learning Outdoors Can Help!

- Outdoor classrooms offer opportunities for schools and districts reopening amidst COVID-19
- Environmental Education programs can help expand the classroom outside of the school building
- Environmental educators and programs can support teaching and learning in challenging times

Denver, Colorado, July 1, 2020— The Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE) today released *eeGuidance for Reopening Schools*, a new publication which offers support for schools and districts as they find ways to safely and equitably reopen their schools to students this fall. Developed in collaboration with the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), the guidance offers dozens of specific strategies for schools and districts, including using the school grounds for outdoor classroom spaces as a strategy for adhering to physical distancing guidelines, engaging community environmental and outdoor education programs as alternative spaces for learning, tapping into the expertise of environmental educators to support teaching and learning, creating healthier learning environments and supporting at-home learning.

According to Katie Navin, Executive Director of the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education, “Outdoor and environmental learning can have tremendous benefits for schools in providing engaging learning opportunities, supporting student’s mental health, and reducing risks of COVID-19 transmission by using outdoor learning spaces. Environmental and outdoor educators across Colorado are ready to help support schools in using the outdoors to navigate some of the challenges they will face as they reopen schools.”

In addition to the *eeGuidance for Reopening Schools*, CAEE is supporting the E Movement and Thorne Nature Experience to launch a searchable database of high-quality, free virtual environmental education resources in September. CAEE is also compiling a directory of environmental education and outdoor learning organizations schools and districts can partner with to support their reopening efforts. As stated in the *eeGuidance*, “These organizations can and should be essential partners in supporting schools and families as states begin to reopen schools. As with any strategy, these recommendations are not without hurdles, nor will they fully address all of the challenges facing schools. But environmental and outdoor education programs present some promising tools for schools and districts throughout the U.S. and are essential partners in creating a more just and sustainable future for all.”

The *eeGuidance for Reopening Schools* is available at <https://www.caee.org/eeGuidanceSchools>.

About the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education

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The Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education supports the many types of educators who teach concepts we all need to understand: how natural systems work, what we must do to interact responsibly with the environment, and how we can protect natural resources for future generations. We are the largest network of environmental educators in Colorado, serving over 850 members who reach 800,000 learners annually. Collectively, we inspire educators, schools, and communities to impact conservation, education, social justice, health and wellness, and positive youth development. For more information on CAEE, visit <http://www.caee.org>.

About NAAEE

For almost five decades, the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) has served as the professional association, champion, and backbone organization for the field of environmental education (EE), working with EE professionals across United States, Canada, and Mexico, as well as globally, to advance environmental literacy and civic engagement to create a more equitable and sustainable future. NAAEE is the only national membership organization dedicated to strengthening EE and increasing the visibility and effectiveness of the field. NAAEE's work aims to provide professional development, access to learning networks and collaborative partnerships, tools and resources to promote effective practice, and leadership and capacity building. NAAEE is also involved in a number of field-building activities and signature programs, including the Natural Start Alliance to advance environmental education in early childhood and the Global Environmental Education Partnership—a global network dedicated to building capacity at the country level (see thegeep.org). For more information on NAAEE, visit <https://naaee.org>.

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