

Brenda Weiser Receives Award from International Education Group

Washington, DC – Brenda Weiser, associate professor of science education in the School of Education at the University of Houston - Clear Lake, has received the highest honor from the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). The Jeske Award recognizes outstanding service to NAAEE and leadership within the profession.

Weiser attended the NAAEE conference in Portland, Oregon, on October 9, 2009, to accept the honor.

“As an environmental educator, I have met many outstanding individuals,” said Weiser. “I’ve read about former leaders and how each contributed to our profession. I am in awe of the past recipients, but to receive the Walt Jeske Award is most humbling and to be recognized by your peers, in any profession, is the highest tribute one can achieve. I am honored to be a Jeske Award winner.”

A member for 20 years, Weiser was instrumental in developing develop NAAEE’s professional standards known as the NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence. With these Guidelines as a base, NAAEE also is working with its Affiliates to develop a professional recognition system for nonformal environmental education providers to help enhance their standing with employers and their peers. Weiser chairs the Certification Advisory Council that is determining standards by which NAAEE will accredit the certification programs.

Weiser also has served on the NAAEE Board of Directors, serving on numerous committees, and was the Special Events Co-Chair for the 1995 annual conference. Weiser served as chair of the 29th NAAEE annual conference at South Padre Island in 2000, which had more than 240 primary presenters, 10 field trips, and 7 workshops. It took seven years for NAAEE to replicate the attendance of 1100 participants at that event.

Until recently, Weiser served as Director of Environmental Education for the Environmental Institute of Houston, where she was responsible for developing and evaluating environmental education materials, creating and coordinating teacher training on these materials, and seeking funding to support curriculum development and training. She also taught courses through the University of Houston - Clear Lake's School of Education.

Weiser began her professional career as a secondary science in Houston, Texas. During more than six years in formal education, she taught Earth Science, Biology I, Honor's Biology I, Environmental Science, Marine Science, and Astronomy. A former Executive Director for the Canon Envirothon, Weiser directed the development and growth of the program. She also served as the education specialist for the National Association of Conservation Districts. She is a

facilitator for Project WET, Project WILD, and Project Learning Tree (PLT), and serves on the Texas State PLT committee and the National PLT Education Operating Committee.

Weiser has served on a variety of other local and national advisory boards and committees including the Texas Association for Environmental Education (an NAAEE Affiliate), the Houston Zoo's Education Advisory Committee, and the National EPA Environmental Education Advisory Council. She also was the state conservation education coordinator for Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Conservation Commission. She coordinated the conservation/education programs for 89 conservation districts; assisted with the development of outdoor classrooms; co-coordinated PLT and Project WILD, and was the Project WET state coordinator.

Weiser has attained an Ed.D. from the University of Houston in Curriculum and Instruction in science education. She holds a Master's of Agriculture in Wildlife, Fisheries, and Sciences/Conservation Education and a B.S. degree in Wildlife, Fisheries, and Sciences/Secondary Education from Texas A&M University.

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) is an international network of environmental educators who infuse communities with high-quality teaching methods to show the positive, non-confrontational ways that people can bring about solutions to environmental challenges. Find out more information about the organization and the conference at www.naaee.org.

Weiser and previous award recipients are highlighted on the NAAEE Web site, <http://www.naaee.org/programs-and-initiatives/awards/>. The award honors the memory of Walt Jeske, Chief of the Education and Publications Unit with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. Jeske was a dedicated member of the NAAEE Board of Directors and outstanding environmental educator until his untimely death in 1981.