

Strengthening Urban Environmental Education: Framing Learning through a Complexity Lens

Friday, September 11, 12noon Central

A central aim of environmental education is to strengthen human-nature connections in order to support transformative changes that help address myriad environmental crises facing our planet. To fulfill this ambitious goal, effective environmental education needs to move away from a dominant focus on linear pro-environmental behavior change models that promote environmental action without attention to multi-scale interactions. Instead, the field needs to apply robust, complexity-oriented approaches that support nested and multi-scale interactions between people and place. In this talk, I will present a conceptual learning ecosystem framework that draws on concepts from the ecological sciences (e.g., use of ecological levels of organization) as a starting point for how we might successfully address complexity issues in education like relationality, uncertainty and emergence. I will then present preliminary findings from a designed-based research project in Cleveland, OH that aimed to support educators as keystone actors working on urban environmental action projects. I will then invite session participants to explore additional strategies for strengthening environmental learning ecosystems.

To get a Zoom link and add the event to your calendar, register here: https://wisconsin-edu.zoom.us/meeting/register/7LdXZNj7QJ-Fs3c0qrw_yQ



Marijke Hecht is Assistant Professor of Environmental Education in the School of Environment and Natural Resources at The Ohio State University. Her research focuses on urban communities where she works collaboratively with educators and youth on design-based research to understand and develop pathways towards more just environmental futures. She explores questions of environmental identity, environmental literacy about complex ecological issues, and the structure and function of learning ecosystems. Prior to her work in academia, she taught middle and high school math and science in her hometown of New York City and led environmental restoration projects and outdoor environmental education in Pittsburgh's city parks. She received her PhD in Learning Sciences and Policy from the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh and a Master of Science in Botany from the Field Naturalist program at the University of Vermont.

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