Choices facing CCE

12 March, 2010

Overall context

"Rather than promoting more effective means for *engaging* the public in environmental activities, the discourse accentuates methods for *raising public awareness* of the scientific information that has been assembled by experts."

Kelsey, 2003

"We need to open up the communication process to a wider community, in which participants own the process and content of communication… This more interactive forms of communication have a far greater chance of supporting individual behavior change, change in organizations and difference sectors of society…"

Moser and Dilling, *Creating a Climate for Change*, 2007

Our starting point
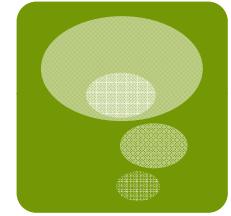
Challenges

- Little research focuses directly on climate change education

- Limited instructional capacity (dire need for professional development for teachers)

- Highly constrained curriculum programming and school schedules

- Perception that climate change is a political issue

Resources

- Great concern in the scientific community

- Growing collection of resources

- Committed NGO/CBO partners

- Networks of school-based and out-of-school practitioners

What is our goal?

- **Knowledge**
  - "…global warming was often confused with the problems of ozone depletion and of air pollution…" (Stamm, Clark & Eblacas, 2000)

- **Behavior change**
  - "…over-consumption lies at the heart of the environmental crisis, that environmental education must teach consumption control…" (Bloomstein & Saylan, 2007)

- **Democratic participation**
  - "is able to make informal and responsible decisions…" (Climate Literacy, 2009)

What is our frame?

- **Science**
  - Knowledge over values

- **Environmentalism**
  - Moral and practical responsibility to act

- **Sustainability**
  - Balancing environment, economy, social equity

Who is our audience?

- **In school, out of school or both?**
  - Greater capacity and fewer logistical obstacles working with informal education
  - Broader participation through schools

- **Existing audiences or the whole population?**
  - Wisconsin has the largest black-white achievement gap in the nation…

- **K-12 or whole community?**

Promising practices

- **Focus on active, democratic participation**
  - Investigating EE Issues and Actions
  - "In each of the eleven cases, the students participating in IEEIA exhibited some type of environmentally relevant behavior change."

- **Ground education in community concerns**
  - *Place-based education*
  - "Project-focused and inherently tailored by local people to local realities"

- **Interdisciplinary approaches**
  - *Environment as Integrating Context (EIC)*
  - "In addition to the academic gains, many schools showed motivational gains, reductions in disruptive behavior, and qualitative shifts in student engagement."

CONVERGENCE?

- We must think about creating:
    - The next generation of scientists
    - The next generation of citizens

- We know that
    - Citizens must be able to connect science and daily life
    - Scientists must be able to effectively communicate the significance of their research

- What can we do to develop both of these at once?