Choices facing CCE

12 March, 2010
“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?