Introduction

The Utah Society for Environmental Education (USEE) is the Utah affiliate of the North American Association for Environmental Education. Working with environmental education (EE) providers, including nonprofits, formal educators, state and city agencies and individuals, USEE works to advance environmental literacy. Environmental literacy is having the knowledge, understanding, skills, and motivation to make and act upon responsible environmental decisions as individuals and members of a community. USEE has been a leader in promoting quality EE programming and access to EE opportunities in Utah since 1981. Capitalizing on our work and successes over the past 39 years, this strategic plan will guide the work of USEE into the future and set achievable goals for the next 4 years.
USEE Board & Staff

Board of Directors

- Aaron Dekeyzer, *Living Wasatch*
- David Kimberly, *Westminster College*
- Mark Larese-Casanova, *Utah State University*
- Michelle Mileham, *Tracy Aviary*
- Brandy Strand, *Utah Nonprofits Association*

Staff

- Alex Porpora, *Executive Director*

USEE works to elevate the field of environmental education in Utah.

2021-2024 Strategic Plan
Mission

USEE promotes excellence in environmental education and community engagement to connect all Utahns to their natural world.

Vision

A culture of environmental literacy, knowledge and action to create a sustainable future for Utah.
USEE's Values

USEE believes that all Utahns should have access to quality environmental education to ensure that we have an environmentally literate population that will ensure economic, social and environmental sustainability for Utah. Our values include:

- **Sustainability**: we are motivated to ensure that Utah becomes more sustainable and strive to lead by example to demonstrate that these efforts are achievable.
- **Community-Oriented**: we build relationships throughout the community and allow community members to be involved in decision making, creating a collective voice to advance our goals.
- **Equity & Inclusion**: equitable access to environmental education resources and opportunities is critical. We also believe that the field of environmental education is stronger when the workforce is equitable and inclusive. We embrace all diversity and celebrate our differences to drive excellence and social progress.
- **Collaboration**: our work is stronger when we work together to advance environmental education.
- **Leadership**: we engage and foster leadership to enable individuals to make their optimal contribution to advancing environmental education.
- **Action & Advocacy**: we believe USEE should be a voice for environmental education and work to ensure that it is a priority for Utah.
- **Bright Outlook**: we are abundantly optimistic about the future of environmental education in Utah.

2021-2024 Strategic Plan
Foundation of EE in Utah

USEE's philosophy is rooted in the Tbilisi Declaration (UNESCO, 1978)

- To foster clear awareness of and concern about economic, social, political and ecological independence in urban and rural areas;
- To provide every person with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment, and skills needed to protect and improve the environment;
- To create new patterns of behavior in individuals, groups, and society as a whole towards the environment.

USEE is an affiliate member of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) and a member of the national Affiliate Network, a coalition of environmental education support organizations all across North America who partner with NAAEE.

2021-2024 Strategic Plan
A Guide for USEE's Work

- USEE's core programming and resources focus on meeting the needs of our members and partners, which are primarily informal environmental educators. We strategically weave in other audiences to benefit the field of environmental education.
- USEE serves individuals and organizations in all segments of society that provide environmental education.
- USEE adopted the North American Association for Environmental Education’s Guidelines for Excellence as a standard for best practice, integrating with program offerings to guide the development of balanced, scientifically accurate, and comprehensive environmental education programs.
- USEE has a role in ensuring that all Utahns have the opportunity to connect with nature and to learn about the environment. We value inclusion and believe that everyone should be welcome to the field of environmental education. USEE does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, ethnic background, creed, marital status, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender, disability, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.
The Future of USEE

USEE will spend 2021-2024 becoming the premier environmental education resource in Utah by focusing on these strategic goals:

- Promoting Equity
- Driving Excellence and Collaboration
- Encouraging Advocacy and Action
- Ensuring Sustainability for USEE

Success in each of these key areas will allow us to further the field of environmental education in Utah.
Promoting Equity

USEE acknowledges that equitable access to environmental education resources and opportunities is critical. We also believe that the field of environmental education is stronger when the workforce is equitable and inclusive. For our field to flourish in Utah, we will focus on:

- Working with our partners to develop equitable hiring and compensation practices to nurture a diverse workforce that is reflective of our community.
- Ensuring that all Utahns have access to environmental education opportunities.
- Creating space to discuss the practices of our field and working together with our members and partners to develop programs that are relevant and accessible.

2021-2024 Strategic Plan
Promoting Equity - Goals

USEE acknowledges that equitable access to environmental education resources and opportunities is critical. We also believe that the field of environmental education is stronger when the workforce is equitable and inclusive.

- USEE works to gather data and share best practices regarding hiring and compensation for the field of environmental education.
- USEE brings in outside expertise in diversity and equity to provide resources and best practices for Utah's EE community.
- USEE highlights member and partner programs that demonstrate equitable practices in EE.
- USEE shares diversity, equity and inclusion efforts and resources from Affiliate partners and NAAEE.
- USEE's Board and Staff participate in DEI training to incorporate best practices into USEE's day-to-day operations.
- USEE develops relationships with EE stakeholders and EE allies that support underrepresented communities.

2021-2024 Strategic Plan
Driving Excellence & Collaboration

USEE will be a champion for sound environmental education efforts at the state and national level. USEE acts as a leader by facilitating partnerships and building relationships to foster innovation and collaborative efforts.

- Providing professional development, an updated EE Certification program, access to best practices, knowledge and current trends and information.
- Highlighting the efforts of environmental educators, programs and EE allies across the state.
- Bringing together Utah environmental educators to pursue innovative education and engagement strategies.
- Developing partnerships with an array of organizations and individuals to be reflective of the field of environmental education in Utah.

2021-2024 Strategic Plan
Driving Excellence & Collaboration - Goals (1)

USEE will be a champion for sound environmental education efforts at the state and national level. USEE acts as a leader by facilitating partnerships and building relationships to foster innovation and collaborative efforts.

- USEE increases access to resources and ideas through the USEE website, standard programming and outreach media (e-newsletter, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube).
- USEE continues to disseminate programs that model quality EE pedagogy and content, including Project Learning Tree, Project WET, Utah Green Schools, Utah EE Conference, webinars and public programming. Increase and diversify attendance at these events.
- USEE increases communications between organizations by acting as a conduit through which organizations can connect as well as assisting with facilitation of meetings between member organizations.
Driving Excellence & Collaboration - Goals (2)

USEE will be a champion for sound environmental education efforts at the state and national level. USEE acts as a leader by facilitating partnerships and building relationships to foster innovation and collaborative efforts.

- USEE facilitates partnerships on a statewide basis and will expand its member base by 10% annually. This will be accomplished through improved promotion, recruitment activities and benefits.
- USEE works with EE stakeholders and EE allies, continually seeking out new partnerships. These may be in the form of committee participation, grant proposals, innovative projects and/or general networking with members.
- USEE provides networking opportunities, including the conference, professional development and will also develop non-formal social events for those interested in networking with peers.
Encouraging Advocacy and Action

USEE will be a voice and strong advocate for environmental education. We serve as a statewide leader to provide best practices, research driven data and national trends to inform policy and decision making that affects or influences environmental education.

- Connecting with our state and federal leaders to highlight the work done by USEE and partner organizations.
- Work to advocate for local (city and statewide) and federal legislation that forwards the field of environmental education.
- Provide support to organizations advocating for environmental education efforts and policy.

2021-2024 Strategic Plan
Encouraging Advocacy and Action - Goals

USEE will be a voice and strong advocate for environmental education. We serve as a statewide leader to provide best practices, research driven data and national trends to inform policy and decision making that affects or influences environmental education.

- USEE works to develop relationships with state agencies, like the Governor's Office for Outdoor Recreation, to work together on common goals and advance legislation that supports environmental education efforts, specifically the Utah Environmental Literacy Plan and UCORE funding.
- USEE disseminates information regarding EE advocacy issues from the North American Association for Environmental Education to our members and partners.
- USEE represents Utah EE on statewide issues and projects through outreach events.
- USEE ensures that Utah’s federal legislators support the National Environmental Education Act on an annual basis.
- USEE continues to cultivate relationships with the Utah State Board of Education.

2021-2024 Strategic Plan
Ensuring Sustainability for USEE and the Field

Environmental education is necessary now more than ever. USEE will work to ensure that our organization remains strong and vibrant, while continuing to provide resources for our members and partners.

- Developing strategic partnerships to grow USEE and the field.
- Developing a philanthropic/funding plan for USEE to ensure its long-term viability.
- Working to cultivate scholarships and resources for active environmental educators.
- Growing the membership base of USEE.

2021-2024 Strategic Plan
Ensuring Sustainability for USEE and the Field - Goals

Environmental education is necessary now more than ever. USEE will work to ensure that our organization remains strong and vibrant, while continuing to provide resources for our members and partners.

- USEE works to develop strategic relationships with current, lapsed and new partners, with the goal of at least 2 new strategic partnerships annually.
- With outside expertise, USEE will develop a funding plan.
- USEE cultivates sponsors and funding to ensure that programs are available at a low cost to our partners and members.
- USEE regularly updates membership benefits to be responsive to the needs of our community with a goal of a 10% increase in membership annually.
Key Milestones

**Annually**
- Membership growth of 10%
- Identify trends and needs from Utah's EE community to drive efforts and grant applications
- Provide programming to 500 or more participants

**2021**
- Utah Environmental Literacy Plan convening and development of a draft ELP
- Secure funding to reimagine EE Certification and begin work on this project
- Create a fund development plan
- Development of a DEI Committee and multiple offerings for our EE community on these topics

**2022**
- Completion of the Utah Environmental Literacy Plan
- Completion of EE Certification
- Grown programming, operations and funding base to necessitate a larger staff.

**2023**
- A community-listening process to gain feedback on our work and to guide the development of a new strategic plan.
- Demonstrated success with EE advocacy efforts

**2024**
- New strategic plan developed for 2025-2028
- Demonstrating a larger presence overall in Utah and North America

2021-2024 Strategic Plan