



**EPA Honors Outstanding Environmental Educators  
2015 Applications Sought; 2014 Central Washington Teacher Recognized**

For Immediate Release

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Seattle, WA -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) want to honor, support and encourage educators who incorporate environmental education in their classrooms and teaching methods. Applications for the 2014-2015 Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators (PIAEE) must be submitted by March 13, 2015.

This award recognizes outstanding kindergarten through grade 12 teachers who employ innovative approaches to environmental education and use the environment as a context for student learning. Up to two teachers from different states in each EPA Region will be selected to receive this award.

In 2014, the EPA Region 10 honored Kathleen Ferguson from Okanogan, Washington. Kathleen teaches Chemistry, Earth Science, Physical Science, Biology, Advanced Biology, Anatomy, and Ecology, to students in grades 7 - 12 at Okanogan High School. During 29 years as an educator, Kathleen has involved her students in real world environmental studies that take advantage of the excitement and effectiveness of outdoor, experiential learning.

"We applaud Kathleen Ferguson for bringing environmental education into the classroom and making students enthusiastic about the natural world," emphasized Region 10 Administrator Dennis McLerran. "It ensures that future generations will also be inspired to protect the environment."

Kathleen's students, including Native American, Hispanic and special education students, work with field scientists throughout the school year. Her Ecology students work with the Fisheries Division of the Colville Confederated Tribes to study the effects of interventions to rehabilitate a spawning channel on the Okanogan River. Biologists from the local Conservation District teach the students about sustainable agricultural practices.

Understanding that students enjoy being outside and that learning thrives when students are excited about what they are experiencing, Kathleen's Advanced Biology students participate in the long term Oden Road Fire Study each year; researching water quality, soils, bird populations, and insect activity at the forest fire site. In addition, her Ecology and special needs students help the Conservation District with a native plant sale each spring, identify flora and fauna on Conservancy Island near the edge of the city, and create interpretive signage along a community walking/cross-country trail.

"We look forward to seeing applications from other deserving teachers in the Pacific Northwest in 2015," McLerran said.

For more information about how to apply for this award, visit: <http://www2.epa.gov/education/presidential-innovation-award-environmental-educators>.

Winning teachers will receive an award of up to \$2,500 to further the recipient's professional development in environmental education. The teacher's local education agency will also receive an award of up to \$2,500 to fund environmental educational activities and programs.

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