



# ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PLANS AND POPULATION EDUCATION

## ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY:

*The North American Association for Environmental Literacy (NAAEE) defines environmental literacy as, "possessing knowledge about the environment and issues related to it; capable of, and inclined to, further self-directed environmental learning and/or action."*

*Environmental literacy consists of four essential aspects:*

- 1.) DEVELOPING INQUIRY, INVESTIGATIVE, AND ANALYSIS SKILLS;
- 2.) ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESSES AND HUMAN SYSTEMS;
- 3.) DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES;
- 4.) PRACTICING PERSONAL AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DECISIONS.

**POPULATION EDUCATION**

A PROJECT OF POPULATION CONNECTION

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## HOW DOES POPULATION EDUCATION FIT INTO A STATE'S ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY PLAN?

**E**nvironmental Literacy Plans (ELPs) are goals and benchmarks for state Environmental Education (EE) programs and initiatives. Environmental Literacy Plans ensure that state EE efforts are aligned with content learning standards across a variety of disciplines and subjects. Population Education is a necessary component of a well-rounded state EE program and will help states meet the benchmarks outlined in their respective ELPs.

## WHAT CONCEPTS RELATED TO POPULATION EDUCATION ALIGN WITH ELP LEARNING GOALS?

The goal of any EE program or ELP is to graduate students who are able to make responsible choices for both humankind and the planet. In order to accomplish this goal, the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) has developed a three-fold framework for assessing environmental literacy in state ELPs. The framework focuses on competencies, knowledge, and dispositions. Population Education can be addressed in all three of the assessment areas across all core subjects to promote well-rounded and environmentally literate students.

### State ELPs and EE programs help students develop three skills:

- **Competencies** – Quantitative and qualitative skills that allow students to analyze and make judgments on environmental issues.
- **Knowledge** – Knowledge of physical and social systems and how environmental problems result from each.
- **Dispositions** – Determinants of behaviors, positive or negative, toward the environment such as self-efficacy and responsibility.

## WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP INTEGRATE POPULATION EDUCATION INTO A STATE'S ELP?

Population Education offers a variety of classroom resources, lesson plans, and professional development opportunities to help teachers meet the learning goals outlined by the NAAEE. In Population Education lessons, students use real-world data and hands-on scenarios to apply concepts of math, science, social studies, and English language arts to analyze and assess contemporary environmental challenges. Sample topics include: carrying capacity, natural resource use, environmental health and quality, and population growth trends. Lesson plans and resources are available on the Population Education website or through professional development opportunities offered nationwide each year.