



Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Youth Water Leadership Program receives 2020 Award for Excellence in Environmental Education**

**Denver, Colo.** – The Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE) awarded the Youth Water Leadership Program with the 2020 Innovative EE Program Award for exemplary and effective environmental education.

The Youth Water Leadership Program (YWLP) is a student-driven education experience intended to increase watershed literacy and specifically Colorado watershed management knowledge. The YWLP inspires meaningful dialogue and community engagement among students and water resource professionals and policy makers. Secondary students and teachers engage in project-based learning to create unique, student-driven water stewardship call-to-action projects. The development process of a call-to-action project promotes critical thinking and leadership skills applicable and tools necessary for the 21st century workforce. The YWLP connects students with the best available watershed science and management information, exposes them to experts in the field, and introduces them to future career possibilities in natural resource and STEM fields. The culminating event in the Roaring Fork Watershed, the Healthy Rivers Youth Water Summit is presented by Pitkin County Healthy Rivers. It is a student-driven educational conference creating an opportunity for learning, dialogue, and action on Colorado River Basin issues. And in 2020, the program is expanding to reach high school youth across the Upper Colorado River Basin. Read more at [www.youthwaterleadership.org](http://www.youthwaterleadership.org).

CAEE and its Board of Directors also honored Tom and Jody Cardamone of Aspen with the Enos A. Mills Lifetime Achievement Award for outstanding, individual, long-term accomplishments in environmental education. “We are so honored to recognize the Cardamones with this prestigious award,” said Katie Navin, executive director for CAEE. “Through their knowledge of natural history, love of teaching, and decades of hard work, Tom and Jody have instituted EE programs throughout Aspen-area schools and instilled an overarching environmental consciousness throughout the Roaring Fork community.”

The following organizations and individuals also were selected as 2020 award recipients for bringing innovative, inclusive and cross-sector environmental education to Colorado:

#### **Advancing Environmental Literacy Awards**

Eco-Cycle Schools Waste Reduction Programs

Early Childhood Health Outdoors (ECHO) Program - National Wildlife Federation

### Innovative Environmental Education Program Awards

Rocky Mountain National Park Snow Science Program

Schools and Outdoor Learning Environments (SOLE) Program - Colorado Parks and Wildlife

### Outstanding Environmental Educator Awards

Rachel Balduzzi

Rob Gay - Colorado Canyons Association

### Outstanding Youth Environmental Leadership Award

Katharine Kurtz - Denver School of Science and Technology Montview

### Outstanding Retiring Educator Recognition

Barb Horn

Sue Kenney

Jena Sanchez

Tim Sandsmark

Dave Sutherland

“All across the state of Colorado these innovative environmental educators and programs are teaching concepts we all need to understand: how natural systems work, what we must do to interact responsibly with the environment, and how we can protect natural resources for future generations,” said Navin. “Our future looks bright thanks to their efforts. They are creating a new standard for learning in their communities.”

CAEE was incorporated in 1989 to facilitate communication, cooperation, collaboration, and coordination among the varied environmental education programs in Colorado. For more than 30 years, CAEE has worked to strengthen the EE field in Colorado through various initiatives and programs such as the Certified Environmental Educator program, Collective Outcomes in EE and most recently, the Colorado Environmental Education Plan (CEEP). CAEE is the Colorado affiliate of the North America Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE).

CAEE works with teachers, schools, administrators, non-formal education providers, businesses and higher education professionals to ensure all have the opportunity to learn about the environment.

For more information, please visit <https://caee.org/programs/act/ee-awards> or contact CAEE at [info@caee.org](mailto:info@caee.org).

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### **About the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education**

The Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education supports the many types of educators who teach concepts we all need to understand: how natural systems work, what we must do to interact responsibly with the environment, and how we can protect natural resources for future generations. We are the largest network of environmental educators in Colorado, serving over 850 members who reach 800,000 learners annually. Collectively, we inspire educators, schools, and communities to impact conservation, education, social justice,

health and wellness, and positive youth development. For more information on CAEE, visit <http://www.cae.org>.