



**2025 Environmental Educators Symposium, February 21, 2025**  
Sponsored by Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S. & Anchorage Parks Foundation

**Symposium Schedule and Session Descriptions**

**Event Center**

**Check-in 8:45-9:15**

**Welcome 9:15-9:40**

**Keynote 9:40-10:30 Robin Mayo**

**Session 1 1045-11:45**

***Lunch 12:00-12:50, provided by ANROE***

**Session 2 1:00-2:00**

**Session 3 2:20-3:20**

**Closing Remarks 3:30-4:00**

Building Community - Learning Commons

Professional Development - Moose Room, 2nd Floor

Capacity Building - Beluga Room, 2nd Floor

**Session 1 10:45-11:45**

**Inspiring Girls\* Expeditions Alaska: Removing Barriers to Entry to Science and the Outdoors Through Tuition-free Programs for High School Youth with Dr. Joanna Young in the Learning Commons**

What do you get when you package a 12-day backcountry adventure with a seasoned outdoor guide, a field science expedition with professional scientists, and an opportunity to create artwork with an expeditionary artist? Meet Inspiring Girls\* Expeditions Alaska, a unique, free, science/art/outdoor education program for high school youth offered through the International Arctic Research Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Each summer, Inspiring Girls\* takes teams of four instructors and nine participants into remote corners of Alaska to connect with nature and build curiosity, creativity, and courage through scientific and artistic exploration. Our approach is rooted in our own and others' research in science, outdoor, and environmental education and is intended to break down barriers that prevent marginalized youth from accessing science and the outdoors.

This presentation will outline our program and provide strategies for reimagining inclusivity in the scientific and outdoor fields through inspiring learning adventures.



A Practical Guide to Start Your Own Nature-Based Preschool in Alaska: Tips, Tricks, and All the Secrets for Success! With Lacey Hemming and Bri Ramsey in the Moose Room

We will provide practical tips and strategies for educators who are interested in starting (or transforming a school) a forest preschool. We will cover logistics, safety, curriculums, resources, and community building.

This information will also help educators implement forest school practices even if they don't have access to a full outdoor space. We will discuss creative ways to bring nature into the classroom.

Better Together - Building Trust and Partnerships for Community Engagement with Annie Runde and Meredith Gutierrez in the Beluga Room

In this session, we will explore the importance of partnerships in engaging the community and fostering strong relationships. Staff from Anchorage Park Foundation and Bureau of Land Management will walk participants through the types of trust, how they play into partnerships, and ways to build trust with partners and the community. By fostering trust, we can build strong, collaborative relationships that benefit everyone involved.

**Lunch 12:00-1:00 Provided by ANROE in the Event Room**

**Session 2 1:00-2:00**

What Now? A Community Conversation on the Future of Outdoor and Environmental Education with Emily Leak Michie

As outdoor and environmental educators, we are navigating a time of uncertainty and change. This session provides space for an open and honest community conversation about how current events are impacting our organizations, programs, and the broader field of outdoor learning. Together, we will explore pressing questions: How do we support one another as an educational community? What steps can we take to advocate for the future of outdoor and environmental education? And, most importantly, how do we sustain our work and ourselves in the years ahead? Join us for this collaborative discussion to share challenges, exchange ideas, and build a stronger network for the road ahead.



### K to Grey: Adjusting Activities for Different Ages in Informal Education with Kate Trudeau in the Moose Room

The session will explore developmental stages and appropriate activities as well as tips and tricks for engaging learners of all ages. These tips include questioning strategies, transitions, and inquiry-based techniques. There will be a quick case study showing how the Prince William Sound Science Center employs these tactics to scale their tide pool lesson from kindergarten to high school. Following the case study, there will be a reflection time and small group break out. During reflection participants can think about ways to apply these skills to their own lessons. Participants can share their ideas and elicit feedback from each other in the breakout groups. This session is ideal for interns and volunteers, educators new to the field, and mentors who are looking for succinct tools to help guide new employees.

### Memorandum of Agreements (MOA), Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and Cooperative Agreements (CA): When and which one will/can/should/could be used in your situation? With Glenn Hart in the Beluga Room

Who can write one, when and which one is the most appropriate for you and your partner? Who should be the official signer of any agreement? How can any of the agreements aid and/or assist you in bringing leverage or meat to a grant proposal? At this discussion, we will go over each agreement type, then you will then have an opportunity in this session to write a brief one.

### **Session 3 2:20-3:20**

### Lessons From Those Who Lived It: Understanding Neurodivergence In Order To Create More Inclusive Experiential Education Curriculum with Matthew Jones in the Learning Commons

In this workshop we will dive into the world of neurodivergence and how to create engaging curriculum that may help them feel more successful within our programming. Focusing primarily on ADHD, autism, and anxiety we will dive into the complexity of these diagnoses and various ways to support our youth that may have them. Utilizing lived experiences of those with these diagnoses alongside current research we will discuss how we can create a more engaging curriculum that is neurodivergent affirming alongside some emotional support techniques we can utilize for our students as well.



## Reflection: Enhancing Participant & Staff Experiences with Travis Marchand and Arlo Adamson in the Moose Room

Reflections and debriefing sessions have the power to turn a thrilling high ropes element or a frustrating team building activity into a deeply impactful life lesson. Reflection can also be vitally important for staff, whether seasonal or year-round. Group dynamics are never static; reflection exercises and activities can create opportunities for insight and strengthen your teams. Through hundreds of hours of facilitation, we've discovered different tools and methods to facilitate those discussions. Join us to learn about ways you can bolster your post-activity discussions and help grow the impact of your program. We think that these are easily adaptable to any program, and we'd love to share them with you.

## Photo Bootcamp for Outdoor Educators with Gretchen Weiss-Broos in the Beluga Room

Taking the time to click a photo with your phone while you're wrangling a horde of students through an outdoor activity may be the last thing on your mind, but it can be a source of regret later on when it is time to report out or promote for a following session. In a perfect world, we would have funds to hire professional photographers to capture all the magical moments of students engaging with our programs, but with our current funding climate, this world is ... a work in progress. Thankfully, photo bootcamp will have you snapping happily and quickly so you can get the engaging photos you want for telling the story of your program on the fly, making up for the opportunity for quantity with quality. **Be advised that this presentation will ask you to move your body and use the camera on your cell phone.**