

Appreciative Inquiry Advisory Board Session  
Environmental Education  
Tuesday, February 28, 2006  
Stewart County Library

The Appreciative Inquiry (AI) session held Tuesday, February 28, 2006 for the Advisory Board covered the topic of environmental education. The session involved 13 Advisory Board members.

The role of the Advisory Board is to provide guidance on the Environmental Education program at Land Between The Lakes (LBL). The AI session served as an ice breaker to provide the Advisory Board the opportunity to better understand each others values as they apply to LBL and environmental education. The AI session also served as a brainstorming exercise between members about the appropriate role and priorities of LBL as it relates to environmental education.

In the AI process, the first series of questions is called the Discovery phase. The goal or objective of this set of questions is to bring out the types of expectations and values participants have about environmental education.

For the purpose of establishing these commonalities and bringing out the individual values, we developed a thought-provoking scenario and questions for the individuals and groups to consider and discuss. The actual scenario and questions are listed at the end of this summary.

The experiences that people shared within their groups varied. As each group discussed the environmental values they associate with that experience, common themes began to form. They expressed the value of being connected to and respect for the natural environment. The group relayed the need to teach awareness, the importance of appreciating and protecting the natural and cultural resources, and the positive value of being in and experiencing nature.

With these basic values discussed and established, the participants moved into the Dream phase session. For this phase we sought input on the ideal environmental education opportunities and activities that LBL should provide and support. The actual scenario and questions are listed at the end of this summary.

The groups awoke to a similar future for environmental education opportunities and experiences. The groups expressed their expectations, for the future of environmental education, were to have a sustainable program and maintain the natural environment. The groups stated the need to involve and raise public awareness. There was an undivided opinion from the groups on the need to obtain more funding and seek out other sources for funding opportunities.

All the groups appeared to have a sense of support and understanding among each other on the values of environmental education. The general theme among the groups was the need to involve communities and schools, acquire alternative funding sources, and provide for a sustainable future of the environmental education program and LBL.

**Appreciative Inquiry Session Flipchart Notes**  
**Environmental Education**  
**February 28, 2006**  
**Advisory Board Meeting**  
**Stewart County Library**

*(\*Note – The lists, notes, and comments below are the exact transcriptions from the flipcharts presented by the participants during this session on Environmental Education at LBL.)*

**Phase 1: Discovery Phase**

*Think about the time when you most enjoyed an environmental experience.*

- *Where was it?*
- *When and who was involved?*
- *What did you learn?*
- *How did that make you feel?*
- *How does this experience help you appreciate LBL?*
- *List three environmental values you have that you can associate with that experience.*

**Group A**

Where was it?

- *Farm*
- *Between the Rivers*
- *Hiking trails*
- *CA. – Sierra's*
- *Across the causeway – LBL*

When and who was involved?

- *1970 – Family*
- *1940-50's – self/God/family*
- *1987 – present family*
- *1980 – Environmental Education Conference with a friend*
- *1978 – Environmental Education residential experience with 40 undergrads*

What did you learn?

- *Respect*
- *What we can do to respect the environment*
- *Use and Don't abuse*
- *Sound of quiet*
- *Sense of wonder*

How did that make you feel?

- *Exhilarated*
- *Satisfied WE can do something*
- *Wholeness/Peacefulness/Oneness*
- *Partner with nature*
- *Part of a greater thing*
- *Burden free*

How does this experience help you appreciate LBL?

- *Local resource where we can experience the out-of-doors and associated values*
- *Place where we can demonstrate and proactively protect the environment*
- *Elevate the environment to produce a stewardship and love for the land*
- *Place for individual enjoyment of nature year round*
- *Environmental education laboratory*
- *Demonstration site for environmental education*

List three environmental values you have that you can associate with that experience.

- *Protection of environment*
- *Enjoyment*
- *Enhancement*
- *Noise filters*
- *Tranquility*
- *Participation*
- *Connectedness*
- *Respect of environment*

## **Group B**

- *The opportunity to see, touch, and feel*
- *How we use our resources has an effect on the environment*
- *Make sure we understand that and how we connect to nature*
- *Being in nature made it real life*
- *Teach an awareness of the environment*
- *The importance of the quality of water*

## **Group C**

- *Study of our natural resources*
- *Appreciation of these assets lead to a lifetime profession*
- *Increased appreciation of the outdoors*
- *Realize the human dependency of the land and its natural resources*
- *Appreciate the finite depletion of those resources*
- *Respect for nature and LBL's culture*
- *Share the assets of LBL with present and future generations*

## **Phase 2: Dream Phase**

*Imagine you awaken from a long sleep and it is just the year 2015?*

- *What does environmental education look like at LBL?*
- *What role did you play to make these things happen?*
- *How does it improve our communities?*
- *What steps were taken in getting there?*

## **Group A**

What does environmental education look like at LBL?

- *Areas set aside to demonstrate sustainable environmental practices*
- *All children in region have a residential experience at LBL*
- *Renewable energy demonstration*
- *No change in the resource*
- *More respect for LBL by visitors and local people*
- *More funding, more EE personnel and 2 more group camps*

What role did you play to make these things happen?

- *Advocate and advisor*
- *Working through NAAEE to require that all teachers take and teach EE*
- *Pass on to next generation*
- *Serve as the conscience*
- *Speak to legislators and groups who can influence more funding*

How does it improve our communities?

- *Improve health (body, mind and spirit) of citizens*
- *Communities that enjoy LBL will attract visitors that enjoy LBL*
- *If we value LBL we value people*
- *Improve quality of life*
- *More people who visit will spend more money in communities*

What steps were taken in getting there?

- *Interagency agreements will generate funding easier/quicker/more efficiently than grants*
- *Look at alternatives*
- *Choose*
- *Educate the politicians and voters*
- *Obtain funding*
- *Be spokesperson for LBL*
- *Raise public awareness and involvement*
- *Establish needs, let people know the needs and get funding*

### **Group B**

- *Diversity of educational opportunity*
- *Maintain natural environment*
- *Expanded educational opportunities*
- *Sustainable program*
- *Public support and adequate funding*
- *Healthy diversified forest*
- *Promote appreciation and understanding of various user groups*
- *Promote more active volunteer program*

- *State of the art educational facilities and equipment*
- *Access and use of area, rationed*
- *Forest management activities are vastly different*
- *Surrounding communities practice good environmental stewardship*

### **Group C**

What does environmental education look like at LBL?

- *State of the art Nature study experiences featuring various environments available in the LBL.*
  - *Develop virtual programs that prepare individuals and groups for ongoing daily, weekend nature study interactions involving youth and senior citizens using adults as facilitators.*
  - *Evolve schools, churches, and community groups developing objectives for LBL programmatic funding and execution*
  - *We have a waiting list for the use of the LBL*
  - *There is more interaction between recreation and conservation of resources*

What role did you play to make these things happen?

- *Awareness of need*
- *Interacting with various youth and senior groups to educate them*

How does it improve our communities?

- *Better quality of life – health, socially, economically, by providing recreational and education opportunities*
- *Natural*
- *Healthier environment in our communities*
- *Provide a focus for our communities to get involved in activities that promote an awareness of nature*

What steps were taken in getting there?

- *More communication between LBL staff and external communities*
- *Ongoing relationships with school systems in useable distance from LBL*
- *Develop an annual meeting among contiguous county executives featuring LBL program activities and encourage community funding support*