



NEW TOOLS FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY IN THE STATE OF PUEBLA

In the state of Puebla, environmental education (EE) activities and events are very popular and being led by many different organizations and individuals. While many are carrying out EE in the state, it is the Department of EE in the state Environment and Natural Resources Secretariat (SEMARNAT) office that most people contact when they have an event or activity. Each week, the Department of EE receives several requests for assistance for presentations, trainings, lending and/or donation of materials, activities at fairs or contact information for other providers. However, with a population of over six million and a staff of one it is impossible for the department to attend to every request. Thus, it was identified that the state was in need of new EE tools to include an EE guidebook, conference and an EE network.



As part of this project, the department began creating a database of lesson plans and accompanying materials for activities and presentations on the topics of climate change, water, waste management, ecosystems and watersheds. The 21 lesson plans and their materials were then incorporated into The Guidebook for Environmental Education in the State of Puebla (*Guía de Educación Ambiental para la Sustentabilidad en el Estado de Puebla*), which has been published in both physical and digital form for environmental educators throughout the state.

In an effort to bring together environmental educators from throughout the state, SEMARNAT along with other local and state organizations planned and lead the two-day Exchange of Environmental Education Experiences in the State of Puebla Conference (*Foro Intercambio de Experiencias de Educación Ambiental en el Estado de Puebla*). One hundred twenty-seven educators gathered in the city of Puebla to share their experiences and knowledge through presentations and posters, make new connections and leave with new ideas and new partners for future EE activities and projects. They also demonstrated and/or observed 22 different activities during the Environmental Education Fair held on the second day for 250 students ranging in age from 9 to 17 to celebrate World Environment Day.

Finally, in an effort to increase the sustainability of EE in the state the conference included sessions focused on consolidating and strengthening a statewide EE network. A panel discussed past experiences with, benefits of and ways to work within an EE network. The conference participants then discussed what they want and need from an EE network. In August, 16 members of the newly formed EE Network Advisory Committee gathered and created an action plan on how they are going to recreate the state's EE network over the next year, with a goal of hosting a conference in 2017 and bringing together even more environmental educators.