

# MEEA Meeting Notes - 8/5/2020

## **Meeting Participants:**

Serena Flores, Youth Science Institute  
Nina Vuoso, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District  
Hannah Cunningham, Grassroots Ecology  
Amy Bono, ED at HEAL Project  
Toby Goldberg, Environmental Volunteers  
Aja Yee, Stay at home mom - Formerly from Don Edwards, YSI, and part time MSI.  
Laurie Alexander, Friends of Edgewood Junior Explorers and Education Center.  
Renee Fitzsimons, Interpretation & Education Program Mgr - Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District  
Marilou Seiff, ED at Marine Science Institute  
Erika Buck, ED at Youth Science Institute  
Elliott Wright, ED at Environmental Volunteers  
Mallory Traughber, Living Classroom  
Mera Burton, Valley Water  
Carolyn Knight, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society  
DJ Alexander, Marine Science Institute  
Elizabeth Evans, Santa Clara County Parks  
Alex Hamilton, Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo

*(Did I miss anyone?)*

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## **Status Updates: What We're Working on for the Fall (and Beyond)**

*(Please update anything I've missed/typed incorrectly)*

PAJMZ (Alex):

- Focusing on virtual school programs for the Fall
- Sending packets of supplies to students (received a grant to do so)

HEAL Project (Amy):

- Doing virtual videos of a visit to the farm for students (see [EE and COVID-19 document](#))
- Volunteer days at the farm will be in-person - small groups, physically-distanced
- Families can still request personal in-person tours
- Planning a fall "camp" that may help with childcare challenges for parents who have to work
- No in-person field trips until 2021; working heavily with Cabrillo Unified School District for group instructions at schools only at first (nothing on a bus for a while...)
- Need/want program collaboration/partnerships - more important now than ever!

Valley Water (Mera):

- All distance learning right now (see [EE and COVID-19 document](#))
- Regular programs ("Wonders of Water Wednesdays"), videos of read-along books, YouTube playlist
- Sending list of materials in advance for each programs (where appropriate)
- Have two teachers to manage tech and content

- Engagement/enrollment is one of the biggest challenges
- Posting programs on Social Media using interns (instagram trivia, for example); Facebook and Eventbrite Events.
- Partnering with local libraries to help get the word out
- Looking at KCAT TV and Create TV (which hosts/posts lessons from SJUSD teachers)

#### YSI (Erika, Serena)

- Cancelled all of their summer programs, then restarted in new covid configuration - limited to 12 students per group, 1 week block (repeated 3 times); programs filled but at a fraction of their normal enrollment
- Working on virtual, pre-recorded programs for schools in the Fall; committing to having 3 full programs available
- Working on Science Safaris with Parent/Child groups (in general, Outdoor programs have been well received)
- Staffing limited

#### SCVAS (Carolyn):

- Cancelled all live/in-person programs in 2020
- Hit YouTube hard - lots of videos about birding, exploring outdoor spaces throughout SC County
- Great use of High School volunteers (lots of interest and engagement in creating these videos)
- Working on creating a virtual program for 2 of their most requested programs
- Connecting with libraries to get the word out about their online programs and videos
- Restarting their monthly speaker series, but online
- Using Facebook and YouTube analytics to track user engagement (YouTube much easier to use...)

#### MSI (Marilou, DJ):

- Finishing up last of the 3-week summer camp series: on MSI site (except for boat excursions) with masks at all times (surprisingly easy to get kids to do), and limited to no more than 24-36 campers, total; 3 - 3 week sessions which all filled with a wait list. Trying to get kids away from their computers...
- Following strong/stringent disinfectant protocols (will share process with the group) - see [EE and COVID-19 document](#)
- Would like to continue to offer camp-style programs throughout the fall, but have to figure out how to schedule working around mandatory live teacher time during the school day
- Working on a 1-week online camp series ( looking at Out School for comparable fee structure)
- Using Notepad and Zoom for online programs

#### Grassroots Ecology (Hannah):

- Summer Stewards Program (w/high school students) went really well and was well attended (students were desperate for these opportunities)
- Careful protocols: symptom trackers w/self check each day, long term programs w/only 2 staff consistently interacting with each group of students
- For the fall - Pollution-prevention programs @schools (virtually?) with K-5 students
- Creekside programs with highschool students may be able to continue in person with same protocols in place as summer program
- Thinking about a Nature Play program for younger students (outdoors)

EV (Elliott, Toby):

- Focusing on three main programs:
  - Virtual K-5 programs, with one program available for each grade
  - At-Home Learning/Homeschool Field Trip series - small groups in-person
  - After School field trip series - small groups in-person
- Challenges are getting volunteers who are willing to do in-person groups, marketing/engagement - how to get the word out to parents

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Renee, Nina):

- Focusing heavily on docent reengagement right now, with a variety of different strategies
- Doing virtual Skyline Ridge OSP field trip programs
- Still working through the development of synchronous vs asynchronous programs for schools (where to devote the time/energy - where will be the biggest ROI)

Living Classroom (Mallory):

- Converted to all virtual programs for the fall, with garden videos

Santa Clara County Parks (Elizabeth):

- Using the summer as a chance to “practice” virtual programs
- Trying to convert 3 of their NGSS-supported field trips (out of their normal 6) to a virtual format

**Overall questions/comments:**

- Lot of schools using Mystery Science for content (but isn't based on local ecology) - schools want local content
- How to get the word out about specific programs - **MARKETING!!!**
- How to get the kids whose parents need to work during the day (i.e. might not have adults who can drive them places or who can help them participate in a program...)
- How to work with the micro-pods (make teachers available?)
- How to focus on equity and inclusion with participation already being a challenge
- How to get staff/volunteers to participate in in-person programs again (may not be comfortable for a while, since many of our volunteers are in higher risk groups) - need to have backup staff in case someone gets sick