

DECEMBER 1986



THORNE
ECOLOGICAL
INSTITUTE

UPDATE

UPDATE is a periodic release of the Thorne Ecological Institute to inform general audiences about the organization and its activities. This issue highlights one of Thorne's outstanding educational programs and the application of expertise in the research and applied study of a pressing environmental issue.

BNSS CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

"That's what this whole thing is about - having fun and learning."

- BNSS student



Unless a child's curiosity is aroused, education in any field is likely to be a difficult activity to start and to maintain through external motivation.

Unfortunately, many public schools confine their study of nature to the classroom and employ teaching methods based on books, films, lectures, and rigorous testing. This dampens, rather than nurtures, a child's innate curiosity about the surrounding natural world.

The driving-force behind the Boulder Natural Science School (BNSS) is the need to correct this educational short-coming by removing the walls and letting the children explore and experience first-hand the elements of the natural world --- allowing innate curiosity to lead into a self-motivated learning process.

For over two decades, hundreds of children have included outdoor environmental education classes at BNSS in their valued summertime activities. The 1986 sessions of BNSS were very successful. About 240 youngsters (6 to 12 years old) pursued interests in animals, art, geology, stream biology, forests, photography, writing, archaeology, story-telling, and exploring in the plains and mountains near Boulder. A dozen educators guided one-half day classes for two weeks in each of the three summer sessions. Each closed with a general field day where BNSS students shared their experiences and findings with each other, parents, and friends.

This year, again, many corporations contributed funds for scholarships to BNSS, which were awarded on the basis of need to individual youngsters. The major contributors included : NBI Foundation, Flatirons Companies, Rocky Mountain Energy, and Celestial Seasonings.

Registration for the 1987 BNSS sessions will begin on April 1, 1987. For further information, contact Emily Weller, BNSS Director, at Thorne.

WETLANDS ISSUES

"Indeed, wetlands protection involves some of the most difficult issues of environmental regulation, often entailing conflicts between public values and private property rights."

Allan Hirsch, Director
Office of Federal Activities
U.S.E.P.A.

One of the key environmental issues facing many of the proposed development projects in the Front Range is wetlands protection. Due to recent legislation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers now has jurisdiction in reviewing and approving actions that would alter wetlands one acre in size or larger. The decision-making process for this permitting action requires specific information on the characteristics and values of the wetlands, the nature of the potential impacts, and programs for restoration or replacement of wetland losses.

A variety of federal, municipal, and corporate contracts have been awarded to Thorne scientists to address these specific information needs. Federal studies are focusing on advanced identification of wetlands in the Front Range area and on the impacts of acid-mine drainage on wetland structure and function. Several cities have requested Thorne wetland specialists to provide technical assistance in evaluating possible wetlands damage due to urban projects and in the design of replacement habitats. Private companies are engaging Thorne services to review proposed development plans, identify potential wetlands damage, and to design/implement wetland mitigation programs. These efforts require close coordination with all of the various participants in the "404 Permit Program".

For further information on wetlands issues and related programs, contact Dr. David Cooper or Jeff Meyer at Thorne.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plans are underway for Thorne's education programs in 1987. For further information on any of the following events, contact Dr. Gary Beers at Thorne.

COLORADO RESOURCE VIEWPOINTS

A series of bimonthly programs that focus on urban issues and is designed to keep the most current facts, personalities, and initiatives before the Front Range leadership.

WILDLIFE SYMPOSIUM

This biannual national symposium provides a popular forum for sharing new field methods, techniques, and results among wildlife and conservation practitioners.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS DINNER

This annual event is designed to recognize pioneers and precedents as a means of highlighting individual leadership and organizational excellence in achieving both economic development and environmental protection goals.

BOULDER NATURAL SCIENCE SCHOOL
See article.

A NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In early 1986, Carl Norbeck resigned as Executive Director. Nearly 300 applicants from across the nation applied for the open position. The finalists were screened and interviewed by the Board of Trustees. A final selection was made in late April.

In June, Dr. Gary Beers joined Thorne as the new Executive Director. Gary is an ecologist with over 20 years of national and international experience as an environmental consultant. In addition to the direction of major environmental projects, his experience includes teaching graduate courses and conducting environmental management workshops for foreign executives. Dr. Beers, also, served as the first manager of a Municipal Environmental Protection Agency in a major city in Saudi Arabia.

Carl has kindly continued to be available to aid in the smooth transition of management and program activities at Thorne. He is now with the Center for Public/Private Sector Cooperation at the University of Colorado in Denver.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Thorne Board of Trustees recently elected two additional members: Alfred Dietsch and Silver Miller. Mr. Dietsch is President of Chandel Properties and is a long-time supporter of environmental education. Mr. Silver Miller is a specialist in mineral economics and has aided Thorne with review and development of computer-aided programs for environmental education in the classroom.

Current Board members include:

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* Officers

NEW OFFICE LOCATION

In October, the offices of Thorne were moved to the address shown below. This location is about one-half mile east of the South Boulder Road exit off the Boulder/Denver Turnpike

THORNE ECOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

5370 MANHATTAN CIRCLE, SUITE 202 BOULDER, COLORADO 80303 (303) 499-3647