2017 SCSC Science & Nature Conference Presenters

The Bakken Museum in Minneapolis is dedicated to inspiring a passion for science and its potential for social good. While most well-known for their expertise in electricity and magnetism, the Bakken covers a wide range of topics designed to excite and intrigue audiences about science and all the possibilities that go with it.

Breeanna Bateman is a watershed scientist at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Eileen Campbell is a watershed scientist at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Dr. Tyronne E. Carter, “Dr. Fun,” is the director of marketing and curriculum design for America’s Fun Science, which offers hands-on science enrichment activities and STEM programs throughout the Twin Cities and surrounding areas. Tyronne is a licensed, experienced K–8 science teacher, licensed K–12 principal, and a member of both the National Science Teachers Association and American Society for Engineering Education. He is also a certified STEM instructor through the University of Colorado Engineering School and the University of St. Thomas Engineering Education program. The goal of America’s Fun Science is to instill in students an interest and understanding of the world around them through fun, hands-on STEM activities including utilization of the engineering design process.

Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota educators work as catalysts for building a stronger, more vibrant community around play so that all children in our region share in a bright future of opportunity and well-being.

Bob Ebsen is the education director at the Wildlife Science Center and a licensed science teacher.

Heidi Ferris is from Growing Green Hearts, LLC. Growing Green Hearts is all about creative science education and environmental STEM. Together they connect people with nature and play while problem-solving to love our planet’s shared resources.

Dr. Bruce Giebink, “Bruce the Bug Guy,” is founder and manager of his own business, “The Bug Zone, LLC.” Bruce specializes in delivering a variety of educational programs about insects and related arthropods. After obtaining his doctorate degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he accepted entomology positions at Michigan State University (1988–1990) and University of Minnesota Extension Service (1990–1999). Before founding “The Bug Zone, LLC” in 2000, Bruce coordinated pest management and water quality programs as an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota. Beth Girard has been a wildlife educator for more than 25 years with the Minnesota Herpetological Society and as a Minnesota Master Naturalist volunteer.

Jessie Hendrix is a naturalist with the Prairie Ecology Bus Center.

Petra Johnson is from Growing Green Hearts, LLC where science is used to educate students to play, learn and love nature. They offer site visits for children, environmental STEM trainings for teachers and nature play coaching for community groups.

Lee Ann Landstrom is the retired director of Eastman Nature Center, Three Rivers Park District. She was an interpretive naturalist at Eastman and Dodge Nature Centers from 1980–2015 and a school-age instructor for the Science Museum of Minnesota. Lee Ann is the co-author of the “Nature’s Yucky” award-winning nonfiction children’s book series. She has traveled the globe and particularly loves tropical rainforests for their biodiversity.

Adam Lindquist, “Teddy Roosevelt,” is a three-time national champion living history educator. His work as Roosevelt sends him across the country presenting to more than 50,000 students, business professionals, seniors and government officials. Adam’s clients include government and industry where he speaks on leadership and conservation, schools, The National Park Service, The Army Corps of Engineers, the Wildlife Refuge System and many state park and recreation departments. In 2014, he worked with Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewel to help with the creation of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.

Mad Science of Minnesota is the world’s leading science enrichment provider for preschool and elementary students. They spark imaginative learning through their interactive sessions on many STEM topics.

Cody Michel is a naturalist with the Prairie Ecology Bus Center.

The Minnesota Zoomobile and its team of trained naturalists travel to schools and community events throughout Minnesota and beyond, providing an educational and entertaining environmental experience to a variety of audiences. Zoomobile naturalists use live animals, biological artifacts, theater techniques, storytelling and audience participation to create a dynamic, personal and fun program for all ages.

Dr. Rebecca Moen is an assistant professor in the department of chemistry and geology at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She will be accompanied by biochemistry lab students and assistants.
Alisha Paplow is a naturalist and environmental education coordinator with the Prairie Ecology Bus Center.

Jessie Petricka is an associate professor of physics at Gustavus Adolphus College. The Gustavus Society of Physics Students will assist with the presentations.

Dr. James Rife is a professor in the chemistry and geology department at Minnesota State University, Mankato, where he has been on the faculty for more than 25 years. He has a Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Jim has been doing service projects with elementary age students for many years. He will be accompanied by biochemistry lab students and assistants.

Erin Rupp is the founder and executive director of Pollinate Minnesot, which was created in response to the need for unique teaching tools that link bees and food systems advocacy work.

Dr. Terry Salerno is an emeritus professor of biochemistry and geology at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Terry will be accompanied by biochemistry lab students and assistants.

Melanie Schmidt is the youth development program coordinator for Mankato Area Public Schools’ Community Education and Recreation Department. She also coaches speech and debate and presents at student conferences across the state.

Andrea Schneider is the owner and operator of I Know My Way, LLC, Orienteering USA (OUSA) and a Certified Coach Level I. By training, Andrea is a physicist and plastics engineer, but by passion she is an orienteering coach, who learned to read maps well before learning to read books. She started competitive orienteering at the age of eight, and has coached her sons, one on the Orienteering USA National Junior Team and one on the National Team. Having enjoyed this sport for many years in the form of competition, mapping, teaching and coaching, Andrea recently founded I Know My Way, LLC, to bring the life skill of navigation to school curricula and field trips.

Science Museum of Minnesota educators are highly qualified instructors with varied backgrounds and specialties. Collectively, they are experts in biology, sculpture, designing computer games, forensic science, carpentry and much more.

Stephanie and Ross Smith, STEM Bunnies founder and educators, teach kids about STEM while caring for and playing with rabbits in the classroom and homes. In the past year they have shared the program with more than 4,000 students in five states. Presenters are members of the Livestock Conservancy, Minnesota Science Teachers Association and American Rabbit Breeders Association. The youth presenters recently won 16 blue ribbons at the Minnesota State Fair competing against adults and professional breeders!

Art and Barb Straub are retired elementary school instructors who volunteer out of Henderson Feathers Mini Science Museum and the J. R. Brown Minnesota River Center in Henderson, Minnesota. They have been active in environmental education for 55 years and desire to share the fantastic natural phenology of the Minnesota River Valley with anyone who is interested.

Jerry Wenzel retired in 2007 after teaching middle school life science for 35 years in East Grand Forks, Minnesota. He continues to inspire students with his science magic presentations in schools across Minnesota.

Wildland Management Students and Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Services Students from Minnesota State University, Mankato will lead fishing and aquatic education activities in partnership with Dr. Robyn Ceurvorst and the DNR MinnAqua program. An outreach program of the MN DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife, MinnAqua connects people to Minnesota’s waters through fishing and aquatic education partnerships. For more information, contact education specialist Deb Groebner at Deborah.Groebner@state.mn.us.

The Works Museum mission is to inspire the next generation of innovators, engineers and creative problem solvers. Dreams need doing, and exploring engineering gives a child the power to make stuff, break stuff and make it better! We need the imagination and skill of engineers to solve the problems and address the challenges of our modern world. Engineering fuels collaboration, persistence and problem solving; critical skills for every child from every walk of life. The Works Museum welcomes you to explore engineering and stretch your imagination. Their exhibits, programs and design challenges engage kids in science, technology and engineering and make learning memorable and fun. Learn more at www.theworks.org.