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Abstract: What One Holds Dear, One Will Protect: Reconnecting Adults with the Natural World  
What One Holds Dear, One Will Protect: Reconnecting Adults with the Natural World  
This discussion will center on an ongoing study of the connection between childhood play in the natural world and resulting beliefs and behaviors regarding the environment. A recent New York Times Gallop Poll indicated that unstructured outdoor play, a mentor, and scouting rank as the three highest “significant life experiences that made one an environment and nature lover”. Another recent statistic revealed that 96% of the so-called Baby Boomers cited the outdoors as the most influential environment on their childhood development, whereas, one generation later only 46% responded similarly. Using a qualitative approach, nearly 200 pieces of data have been collected and analyzed pertaining to childhood play in the outdoors. Parents, early childhood educators, teachers and community members were asked to recall their childhood memories of what they did, with whom and where graphically and in narrative form. Louv (2005) and Finch (2008) discuss what researchers like Bandura have found, that there is a strong relationship between the affective, emotional learning and resulting beliefs and behaviors. In other words, what we have in our hearts will motivate us to express caring concern and we will act accordingly. Can we inspire adults to recall enjoyable time spent as a child exploring in nature and thereby get today’s children outdoors to play? This study has a larger implication in that reconnecting with their love of the natural world will spark more people to make positive, informed decisions regarding sustainability and the environment.

Bio: Linda K. Ramey, Ph. D.  Assoc. Professor, Environmental/Science Education  345 Allyn Hall  Wright State University  Dayton, OH 45435-0001  (937) 775-3231 office  (937) 477-8662 cell  Linda.Ramey@wright.edu  I have worked in Environmental Science Education for over 30 years and loved the natural world for over 50. I have a two Masters degrees – one in science education (College of Mt. St. Joseph) and one in environmental ecology (Wright State University).  Leaving Ohio, I headed for the beautiful plains of Kansas, working on Konza Prairie and a major NSF Science and Mathematics project. I also worked at Chicago Botanic Garden on outreach science education in the Chicago City Schools. When I completed my dissertation on enhancing science teaching self-efficacy, I spent a year as a visiting professor at Kansas State University. After Kansas and Chicago, I spent a year at the University of South Carolina as a visiting professor teaching science and mathematics methods courses and working with Sandhill Environmental Research Center. I was then hired at WSU in the Biology Department in what is termed a Dual Appointment which meant I developed and taught courses in both the biology and teacher education.
department. Since 1995, I have fulfilled several roles at WSU such as Director of the Office of Professional Field Experiences, Coordinator of the Middle Childhood Teacher Preparation Program and Environmental Science Educator. I have had involvement with several grant funded projects as well as numerous publications and presentations in the areas of informal science education (science centers/museums), gender issues in science learning and science teaching self-efficacy. I am presently engaged in STEM and Sustainability Initiatives in the Miami Valley Region.