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# National Environmental and Natural Resources Technology Center (EARTH Center)

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## **1. Introduction**

The goal of the EARTH (Environmental and nAtural Resources Technology) Center is to leverage the extensive work of the consortium partners who are leaders in environmental technologies (ET) and natural resources to create a national ATE Center. This Center synthesizes the cross-disciplinary efforts of ET-related sectors and collaborates with industries, government and public agencies, professional organizations, 2- and 4-year colleges and high schools to define and disseminate the critical knowledge and skills required in ET education and support the environmental advanced technology industry. To meet this goal, the Center has created a Leadership Network to support the development and sharing of best practices in environmental technology; establish collaborations between existing, new and potential ATE projects in ET fields to mentor new and prospective PIs and broaden the impact of ATE; provide models and leadership for collaborations between secondary, 2- and 4-year institutions, business and industry, economic development agencies and government; promote ET careers; educate highly skilled technicians and provide faculty professional development; and develop institutionalization of Center functions to sustain activities after the grant.

The Center actively connects with students, including women and underrepresented minorities, economically challenged, first generation, indigenous and those from rural backgrounds. The Consortium making up the Center includes the Advanced Technology Environmental Education Center (ATEEC), the national Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (PETE) and the Nahant Marsh Educational Center (NMEC). Each of these organizations bring essential strengths to the Center. Operated through Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (EICC), ATEEC became an inaugural NSF ATE Center of Excellence in 1994 to support community colleges across the nation and train ET educators to meet current and projected workforce needs.

PETE is a national non-profit organization established in 1993 to facilitate partnerships with educational institutions, industry, and governments in the environmental area. PETE serves 50 states, Tribal Nations, US Territories and insular areas including more than 400 community, Tribal and technical colleges.

NMEC is a nonprofit organization for education and research of natural resources and ecology. Nahant Marsh Preserve is one of the largest urban wetlands on the Upper Mississippi River. After years as a sportman's club, EPA declared the marsh a Superfund Site and cleaned up 243 tons of lead, arsenic, antimony and Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbons. Today the nature preserve is home to over 650 different plant species, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians and provides programming on ecosystems, conservation and stewardship to 20,000 individuals each year including K-12 students, college students and adults, undergraduate student researchers, graduate level research students and Ph.D. researchers.

The EARTH Center provides the J ATE community opportunities to utilize resources for further environmental technology research, collaboration and educational reference.



*Fig. 1. Blandings Turtle Release Day June 2021*