St Edward EERC Public Engagement Meeting
Thursday, February 21, 2019
Kenmore City Hall

Opening
After welcome and introductions, the group reviewed the EERC’s planning process to date. The team is still on track to provide recommendations to the State Parks Commission in May. A request for capital funds has been submitted to the legislature to renovate the Gym Annex for use as EERC space.

Susan Carlson reviewed NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence in K12 EE and WA state ESE Standards to provide context for the idea of designing education programs in the park across different age bands, with learning reinforced by practical experience and mentoring.

To illustrate the kinds of scientific inquiry that could be expanded or enhanced by the EERC, Keegan O’Neill described a wildlife tracking project currently underway within St Edward State Park and neighboring green spaces.

Breakout Group #1 - Public Engagement Brochure
The group began with a discussion of market opportunity. Imagining that this brochure would be used to draw in people from the surrounding community, the group felt that St Edward SP’s key selling point was its biodiversity. The park is more than just a green space; there are significant environmental assets. A “Gem in an Urban Setting.”

Breakout Group #2 - Scientific Investigation
The group focused on teaching biodiversity and ecosystems across age bands:

Kindergarten - sensory experiences (slugs), observing: where do things live? What do they eat? food chain, using their imaginations to explore trophic pyramids; ferns, tree studies.

4th Grade - traditional park uses and medicinal history, a timeline of the park’s natural history (old growth, young forests, introducing ecosystems), plant identification

Middle School - more advanced concepts around ecosystems and biodiversity studies, experiments and lab-based science, mentorships/connecting with scientists, science fairs, how to use satellite imagery

High School - Stewardship (volunteer requirements), real world issues (habitat fragmentation, species loss), climate studies with a focus on solutions.

Young Adult - research, independent studies, citizen science
**Breakout Group #3 - Scientific Investigation**

The group discussed how the Park can teach a variety of subjects: biology, chemistry and physics. They discussed how a variety of scientific topics might break out across age bands:

Younger students begin by learning about invasives; when they’re older they can help with blackberry removal; then they can move onto holly.

In teaching phenology, students begin with plan identification; then progress to counting and inventory; later they can learn instrumentation and measurement; and later they can design experiments.

Students may begin with bird identification and then later incorporate learning about acoustics.

In learning about water quality, students can begin with color matching tests; advance to measurement; and later formulate questions for research.

**Breakout Group #4 - Learning Ladders**

The group discussed the need for a market/gap analysis to identify who is being served and who is not. Programs should be targeted accordingly. The EERC should do something different and unique that no one else is doing.

In designing programs, it is a good idea to start with a range of a few, free programs that scale up in price as people become more engaged. It’s important to gain buy in early on and then get participants to pay in support of their involvement. Drop in, free family programming makes it easy for busy families to participate. Emphasize repetitive immersive experiences – leading to KSA (knowledge, skills, aptitude) development. Move beyond just science inquiry skills to also emphasize the “E” in STEM by providing project-based learning opps for students to apply/develop design thinking/problem solving skills while developing solutions for locally relevant problems/issues.

Formal educators very difficult to engage. Develop numerous informal offerings that meaningfully engage students, by extension their families, and ultimately brings schools, teachers and school admin along.

**Closing Comments and Open Threads**

There are so many existing non profits in this space; the EERC should prioritize reaching out to these groups before creating new programs.

As we explore program options, it’s important not to lose sight of the importance of protecting the forest.
The EERC needs to find an ally or supporter who can provide funding, human resources and program support to serve as a foothold in the near-term. This could be school districts? Community?