



GK-12 REGIONAL CONFERENCE

**Michigan State University/Kellogg Biological Station
Hickory Corners, MI**

Ecological Literacy in the K-12 Classrooms of Rural Michigan

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The Kellogg Biological Station (KBS) GK-12 program (www.kbs.msu.edu/k12/gk12program/) is part of a larger KBS K-12 Partnership for Science Literacy, a joint effort among KBS scientists, Michigan State University education faculty, and science teachers and administrators in 11 rural school districts in southwest Michigan. The GK-12 Program, begun in 2006, teams KBS graduate students pursuing advanced degrees in ecology with K-12 science teachers in these rural districts near KBS. The program aims to enrich K-12 science instruction by promoting inquiry-based science teaching, and at the same time improve fellows' teaching and science communication skills. Major elements of the KBS program are: 1. Classroom partnerships in which a GK-12 fellow works with one or more teachers for approximately 10-12 hours per week. Fellows co-teach and additionally help teachers introduce inquiry activities related to ecological literacy into their classrooms and districts, 2. A one week summer teaching institute for fellows and teachers, led by MSU College of Education faculty, that focuses on providing inquiry-based approaches to learning for understanding and educational leadership, and 3. Four school-year workshops comprised of science inquiry and teaching components designed to support classroom efforts to incorporate inquiry-based learning. This year, we will cover such topics as 'Evolution in Action', 'Anthropogenic Influences on Wildlife', 'Winter Ecology', and 'The Role of Field Stations in Promoting Ecological Literacy'. Workshop topics are chosen for their relevance to the Michigan Core Curriculum and High School Science Content Expectations. Teachers suggest topics to be covered, and workshops often cover subjects that are difficult for students and cut across the biological, physical, and earth sciences. Workshops also provide time for teachers to work across school districts (within grade levels) to share inquiry-based teaching strategies, and within districts (across grade levels) to coordinate delivery of the district's science curriculum.

