



FOR RELEASE: November 8, 2011

CONTACT:

Allison Dyer Inman, Marketing & PR Coordinator
adinman@ncarboretum.org
(828) 665-2492 x204

Arboretum Educator Receives North Carolina Science Teachers Association Award

ASHEVILLE, NC – Jonathan Marchal, Youth Education Coordinator for The North Carolina Arboretum, is the recipient of the North Carolina Science Teachers Association (NCSTA) Distinguished Service in Science Education Award. Marchal is being recognized for his contribution to science education in North Carolina in a non-school setting.

Nominees for Distinguished Service awards are judged on criteria including leadership, contributions to improvements in science education, length of service, and excellence in field. Marchal has worked in youth education for The North Carolina Arboretum for more than five years. Among his accomplishments to date, Marchal has developed all curriculum used in Arboretum field trips and outreach, planned the format of the organization's Wee Naturalist program for toddlers, and designed the Arboretum's youth education classroom, EcoLab. Marchal is responsible for growing school programs from 2,000 to 12,000 attendees annually, and for overseeing the Arboretum's summer camp program from its inception seven years ago to its most recent enrollment of more than 400 campers.

"I feel very fortunate to serve as Youth Education Coordinator at the Arboretum," said Marchal. "Not only do I have the privilege of spending each day outdoors in our beautiful mountains, I am also part of a dynamic and growing educational program that provides enriching experiences for children."

Marchal's love for the outdoors was instilled at an early age during family trips to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. He nurtured his interest through scouting, earning the rank of Eagle Scout, and later spending summers working at Boy Scout camps. Marchal received a bachelor's degree in ecology from Brevard College, and spent time working for Trout Unlimited, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Gorges State Park prior to the Arboretum.

When asked his philosophy on the importance of environmental education for children, Marchal's passion shines. "I believe it is essential for all children to have access to safe, natural places on a regular basis. The physical, emotional, and developmental benefits of outdoor exploration and play engage all senses of the child, and challenge their motor and critical thinking skills in an environment where creativity is their greatest asset. The programs I have developed at the Arboretum are based on a three-tiered strategy, in which outdoor adventure activities serve to excite students to become engaged in outdoor learning, inviting them to explore their environment and learn about the world around them. By doing so, children grow to become adults who are aware of their surroundings and the impact they have on their world."

For information about youth education programs at the Arboretum, visit www.ncarboretum.org, or call (828) 665-2492, Ext. 228. The central mission of The North Carolina Arboretum, an affiliate institution of the 17-campus University of North Carolina system, is to cultivate connections between people and plants.

###

The NC Arboretum is located next to the Blue Ridge Parkway entrance at Milepost 393. From I-26, take Exit 33 and follow Blue Ridge Parkway signs for two miles to the entrance ramp. Visit www.ncarboretum.org plan-a-visit for parking fees, property hours and building hours. For general information call (828) 665-2492 or visit www.ncarboretum.org.