

## 2010 Finton Outdoor Educator of the Year Award

# Bart Merrick

The winner of the 2010 Finton Outdoor Educator of the Year Award is Bart Merrick of Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Program. Bart became the Education Coordinator at the Reserve in 2006, a position Bob Finton held and set the bar in, 5 short years ago. In his role as the Education Coordinator Bart has strived to make learning outside about estuaries a fun and memorable learning experience. Bart has worked in partnership with educators from the Reserve components (Otter Pt. Creek, Jug Bay and Monie Bay), DNR, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, NOAA and others to bring environmental science education alive for both students and teachers by integrating the use of technology and research in the field experiences.

“Bart is relaxed, and he effortlessly puts teachers and students at ease. But he "knows his stuff" and he shares it in an entirely engaging, non-threatening way that motivates teachers and students to crank up their brains and seek answers to their questions.”

An outdoor educator since 1994, Bart began his career by leading education programs for students and visitors on an island in Boston Harbor. Convinced by a fellow outdoor educator that the sea was an awesome wilderness, Bart moved to Maryland in 1997 to work with Living Classrooms Foundation, where he like so many other was wooed by the Bay, its beauty, the people along its shores, and the need for kids to get outside and learn about the world we all share. Since moving to Maryland Bart has worked with Living Classrooms in both Baltimore and Washington DC, and with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in Baltimore. Bart attributes his success as an outdoor educator, and even his jokes, to all the amazing educators he has had the pleasure of working with throughout his career.

While not at work Bart spends his time playing outside with his wife and 3 year old son. This winter they were on a quest for the best sledding hill in Baltimore (a tossup between Patterson Park and the Baltimore County Department of Education). Bart also enjoys playing music and on any given evening he can be found playing “really loud” music in a friend’s basement or picking old time music with his band the Left Handed Capricorns.