

The IGLO Toolkit:

One-Stop Shopping for Climate Change Science

By Charlie Trautmann

The IGLO Toolkit is being developed as a versatile series of ready-to-use resources that can support science centers worldwide as they work to inform the public about the causes and effects of global warming and suggest ways that people, individually and collectively, can get involved. Museum staff will be able to access the resources online and download materials or instructions free.

The project is being coordinated by the IGLO Education Committee, an international volunteer group composed of senior science center staff. Our goal is to disseminate current and accurate information on the science while minimizing the need for staff to research basic content or develop educational resources themselves.

Each toolkit element will be cross-referenced by type and target audience, so that users can select an audience and choose the most appropriate way to reach it. Elements now under consideration include hands-on activities, exhibits, demonstrations, contests,

media, teacher resources, workshops, lectures, events, and science fairs. Target audiences include children in various age groups, adults, the general public, teachers, community groups, museum professionals, the press, program sponsors, and scientists.

Suppose, for example, your center decides to develop global warming programs for three target audiences: "general public," "adults," and "teachers." You might select a type of resource for each of those audiences, such as "Hands-on Activity," "Lectures," and "Teacher Resources," respectively. Within each of these categories, you could then choose from one or more items in the toolkit, download the resources free of charge, and prepare the activities for delivery to the target audience at your museum.

At the time of this writing (September 2006), the IGLO Toolkit was under active development. Earlier this year, the IGLO Education Committee held brainstorming meetings in

Barcelona, Spain, and Washington, D.C., and assembled a list of more than 100 potential resources to include from various sources. (For a sampling, see the sidebar below.) The project is scheduled for 75 percent completion by the start of the International Polar Year in March 2007 and will be augmented as new resources are contributed.

To that end, we are actively seeking additional contributions for the toolkit, with a particular emphasis on items that support learning among a broad range of cultures. We invite anyone with potential resources to review the brief descriptions already posted on the IGLO web site, www.astc.org/iglo. New items directed to project director Walter Staveloz (wstaveloz@astc.org) will be added to the list as they are received and reviewed. ■

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Sample IGLO Toolkit Resources

Global Warming Discovery Kit: A Family Activity

Designed by Claire Pillsbury and other members of the IGLO Education Committee, the portable kit contains six simple, self-guided discovery activities on the science behind global warming that families visiting a museum can do together on-site. Examples include harnessing solar energy with a photovoltaic cell to power a motor, solving a "Carbon Cycle" puzzle, or comparing the temperature rise of thermometers placed beneath white and black paper in sunlight or under a heat lamp. The kit, which uses hardware-store-type materials, can be easily replenished by staff or volunteers as needed. A free download on the IGLO web site provides a list of materials, ready-to-laminate visitor instructions, and a guide for museum educators on how to assemble the activities and package them for self-guided visitor use.

Climate Change, Here and Now: Adult Programming

This interactive program, intended primarily for adults in an auditorium or amphitheater setting, consists of a 10- to 15-minute educator presentation, followed by a guided discussion. The presentation, developed by members of the IGLO Education Committee in collaboration with climate researchers, draws on current scientific data to provide background on the history and science of global warming and to stimulate discussion around public policy issues and personal actions.

Citizen Debate: Adult Programming

In the tradition of the European DeCiDe project (www.playdecide.org), which addresses controversial science topics through low-tech, game-like activities for