

The concept for a share-a-thon was born in 1984 when the first NESTA President, Jan Woerner challenged the first President-elect, Sharon Stroud, to come up with some type of session that NESTA could do at NSTA Annual Conventions(conferences) to promote Earth Science education.

The answer to the challenge was an Earth Science Share-a-thon.

In a share-a-thon, an educator presenter was to bring copies of a favorite Earth Science lab/activity to share with participants. The participants would move from presenter to presenter; hear a brief description or see a demonstration about the activity; and then receive a copy of it.

The first Earth Science Share-a-thon was held in 1985 at the NSTA Annual convention in Cincinnati. There were about 8 presenters and 50-60 participants. Share-a-thons have been held at every NSTA Annual Convention (Conference) since. Before the end of Stroud's term of office as president, NESTA was sponsoring a Meteorology, Astronomy, Oceanography, and Earth Science Share-a-thon, at the NSTA Annual meeting. The subject area share-a-thons lasted for quite a few years and then became general Earth Science share-a-thons with 4 sessions being presented at a conference. Also, before the end of Stroud's term of office, general Earth Science Share-a-thons were set up at each NSTA Area (regional) conventions(conferences).

Sharon Stroud organized and attended all NESTA national Share-a-thons from 1985 till 2006. Stroud also organized all NESTA share-a-thons for regional(area) NSTA meetings till the Fall of 2005. Share-a-thons for many years were not organized by using email. Telephone calls and mail was the method available.

Michelle Harris of????? has been in charge of organizing all of the Share-a-thons since 2006. The Share-a-thons at the National meetings have gone back to being subject specific. The share-a-thons of course could not be successful without presenters. Many presenters have faithfully presented at share-a-thons at national and area meetings for up to twenty years. Besides donating their time, presenters donate hundreds of copies of their activities for each Share-a-thon.

In trying to encourage people to present, copies of everyone's activities were promised to them. At first, copies were collected and NESTA tried to mail them to the presenters. This quickly proved to not work. The problem was solved by collecting copies of the activities from presenters before the session began. Then volunteers would put together packets of activities and hand them back before the end of the session. At NESTA National share-a-thons many individuals helped over the years but by far the most consistent volunteers were Harold Stonehouse (Stoney) and Kelly and Wilene Rigsby for the first twenty years.

Share-a-thons have proved to be a very popular type of session. After NESTA started doing them, many other organizations also adopted the name and started did their own versions of share-a-thons.