

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

The Conservation Education Program links *education, interpretive and information services*. Recognizing the uniqueness of all three, the conservation education program aims to help integrate efforts to better utilize resources and improve our effectiveness.

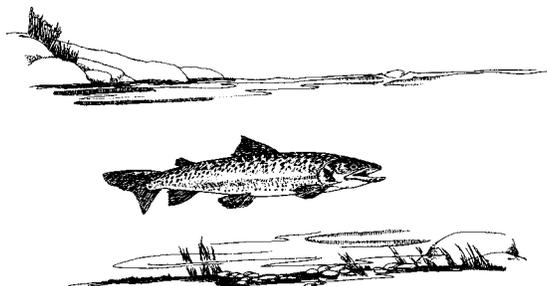
MISSION

The Flathead National Forest Conservation Education Program provides opportunities for our visitors, employees and local communities to explore, discover and learn about:

- the cultural and natural resources found in forest and aquatic ecosystems;
- the inter-relationships in natural systems and between people and the land.

Through our educational, interpretive and information programs:

- we encourage people to connect with their environment and work together to help sustain our nation's cultural and natural resources;
- we strive for increasing cooperative partnerships, improved customer service and emphasizing the unique and special resources found on the Flathead National Forest.



VISION -- where we want to be

Education and interpretive efforts and activities support forest and community goals for sustainability and land stewardship, blending social and economic needs of people with ecological processes.

A forest wide commitment exists at all levels and functions for education and interpretation, as a recognized, valued and effective means to support forest goals and objectives.

Education and interpretation efforts and activities are integrated into Forest and Land Management Plans and project planning process. Education and interpretive program(s) are coordinated with operations and management activities.

Individual education and interpretive programs and projects are coordinated, provide consistent messages and quality products and services.

Flathead National Forest provides leadership in education/interpretive services and encourages and supports quality programs in the community and region. We actively support cooperative partnerships and coordination with individuals, organizations and agencies involved in education and interpretive activities.

The Conservation Education program is supported by multi-forest functions with individuals in all program areas and on districts carrying out education efforts. A full-time Conservation Education Coordinator position, located in the Resources Staff Unit in the Supervisor's Office, provides support, leadership and coordination to resource program leaders/staff, public affairs, front desk operations and districts in the planning, development and implementation of education, interpretive and information projects.

Three areas define the coordinator's program of work: Program Support, Coordination and Program Development and Management.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Program Support Goals

- Assist resource managers in meeting resource mgmt. goals and objectives.
- Promote visitor, community and employee understanding of:
 - ◆ natural resources and issues;
 - ◆ the Forest Service and the National Forest System;
 - ◆ natural and cultural history principles and their relation to land mgmt. techniques.

Meet program goals through participation in the following activities/program areas:

<p>Wilderness Education and Leave No Trace Program Assist with and do school and community presentations. Promote use of the wilderness box. Support R1 Wilderness Box program and BMWC Education Strategy.</p>
<p>Forestry Expo* Attend planning meetings, participate on education committee. On-site participation. Conservation Education grant administration.</p>
<p>Big Mountain Environmental Education Center* On-site staffing assistance, when needed -- off-site assistance with programming, center promotion & support Naturewatch Fee Demo Program</p>
<p>Botany -- Support Celebrating Wildflowers activities; planning for potential Water Howellia interp. site in the Swan Valley</p>
<p>Miller Creek and Coram Experimental Forest Under MOU, Forest representative to the Western Montana Ecosystem Mgmt. Learning Ctr. Program; promote use of existing education materials for the areas and education opportunities at the two sites.</p>
<p>Summer Naturalist Program* Develop and implement partnership agreement(s); project planning and implementation.</p>
<p>Wildlife and TES Assist with Food Storage Order public education efforts; develop strategy to address access issues; provide input and assistance on partnership project with Glacier Institute, development of "Responsible Living & Recreating in Bear Country" video*.</p>
<p>Aquatics/Fisheries Support Natl. Fishing Week activities -- and other efforts as requested.</p>
<p>NW Montana Fair/Kalispell Xmas & July 4th parades/Earth Day events Planning and organization; parade and booth presentations.</p>
<p>Support Services/front desk operations Assist with brochure/publications coordination -- Smokey/Woodsy requests -- front office displays -- education trunks</p>
<p>Provide conservation education material for the Flathead Web Page</p>
<p>Living with Fire Complete the FireWorks, fire ecology education trunk; promote its use with teachers and employees; offer inservice training for teachers.</p>
<p>School and community presentation requests</p>
<p>Big Creek, Historic Walking Tour* Continue partnership project started in FY 99 with the Glacier Institute -- project planning/implementation.</p>

Forest Stewardship Teacher Workshop* Planning and implementation of August training for educators. Done in partnership with the Glacier Institute, Plum Creek and others.
Forestry Stewardship Trunk* Provide input and assistance with trunk development, partnership project with the Swan Ecosystem Center.
Barber Creek Interp Site Planning for potential interpretive/education opportunities at rehabilitated area in Barber Creek in the Swan Valley – work with Liz Hill/Swan Ecosystem Center

*Partnership projects with Forest Service WO/RO Conservation Ed funding and/or partner cash match.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Program Coordination Goals and Objectives

- Enlist cooperation of institutions and organizations in developing broad public understanding of and support for the management and use of forest resources.
 - Maintain regular and active contact with employees involved in conservation education activities
- Maintain and facilitate a forest-wide conservation education working group with representatives from different units.
- Organize and facilitate an annual meeting.
- Maintain e-mail network.
- Coordinate with external partners and participate in local and regional agency and community education efforts.
- Attendance at appropriate meetings
- Provide assistance and participation in selected events.

Facilitation of the NW Montana Environmental Education Core Group

Oversee agreement with the Glacier Institute

FNF representative to the Program Committee – Work with group to renew agreement.

Forest representative to the Glacier Natural History Association

Coordinate annual donation requests; submit annual report

Participation in the R1 Natural Resources Conservation Education Council

Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium

Montana Environmental Education Assoc.

Swan Ecosystem Center

Program Development and Management Objectives

- Assist individual program areas in the development of conservation education action plans.
- Track and report on annual education accomplishments, including the required NatureWatch accomplishments in the Gordzilla report.
- Assist all units in applying for a variety of education related grants, other funding opportunities and partnerships to support conservation education efforts. Conservation Education Field Funding grant coordination.

FY01 Program of Work -- Wenum

- Participate in EAWS planning efforts.
- Provide program leadership at the Forest and Regional level (budget, program planning, implementation and promotion).