

FOREST SERVICE CONSERVATION EDUCATION



The Conservation Education (CE) program supports education of teachers, students and adults of all ages. In FY 99 CE reached over 2.2 million people with 755,000 of those direct face-to-face contacts. In FY 2000, CE reached over 32 million people, directly and indirectly, including over 8 million students and 3 million educators. The program emphasizes delivery of conservation education to underserved youth, urban populations and forest visitors.

In 1999, a Conservation Education staff was established within the State and Private Deputy area to better support Forest Service efforts in conservation education, including use of the Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl symbols. The CE staff is providing agency-wide leadership for a renewed focus on conservation education reflecting themes of sustainability of natural and cultural resources in forest, grassland, and aquatic ecosystems, and awareness and understanding of interrelationships in natural systems and between people and the land.

Program focus:

A major CE program focus is supporting a wide variety of local and regional conservation education programs. One example is the Urban Treehouse program (currently established in Atlanta, GA, Milwaukee, WI, Washington, DC, and Portland, OR). Urban Treehouses, managed by local partnerships, provide places for delivery of conservation education to urban youth.

In addition, with Forest Service leadership support, an annual fund of one million dollars has been established for competitive funding of CE field projects supporting Forest Service education priorities. In FY 2000, 2001 and 2002, over 200 field conservation education projects reaching underserved youth, and forest visitors, and delivering educational messages on sustainable forestry, invasive species, water and watersheds and wildlife were funded through this program.

CE has been aggressive in establishing partnerships and cooperative ventures with private industry, non-profit organizations, local, State, and Federal government agencies. Partners in Resource Education, a partnership of the Forest Service, Department of the Interior agencies, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Environmental Protection Agency, is an example of using a collaborative and networking approach to enhance our delivery of conservation education programs and activities.

Examples of other on-going activities:

- Development of Forest Service CE standards and guidelines for materials and activities.
- Development of an interactive clearinghouse of CE resources and CE website.
- Research to evaluate outcomes resulting from educational efforts.
- Building partnerships with others to expand and leverage CE programs and messages.