

Bitterroot National Forest Conservation Education Program

Mission Statement: To connect people to the land by working with partners to provide the public with the tools, experiences and information they need to understand the natural world and in turn, make informed actions and decisions related to sustaining the natural and cultural resources.

Conservation Education Themes:

- ❖ Sustainability of natural and cultural resources through out the Bitterroot Valley in forest, grassland, and aquatic ecosystems.
- ❖ Awareness and understanding of the interrelationships in natural systems and between people and the land in the Bitterroot Valley.

Programs

Bitterroot National Forest (BNF) Conservation Education Lending Library

The BNF has a fully functioning lending library of educational materials, field studies equipment, programs and workshops to be used or attended by educators, students, valley residents, and USFS staff.

Educational Learning Trunks

The Bitterroot NF has several educational trunks, which contain materials (curriculum, videos, books, props, etc) to instruct students on the following topics: Wilderness, Wolves, Aquatic Resources, Fire, and the Value of Snags. The trunks can be checked out to be used in a classroom free of charge.

Community Projects

The Conservation Education coordinator will assist schools/clubs with the design, development, and implementation of class/club projects that relate to USFS opportunities and activities.

Educational Speakers Bureau for Field Trips or Classroom/Club Presentations

The USFS has a list of resource specialists who would be interested in coming to a classroom or accompanying a group on a field trip on the Bitterroot NF. The speakers can present a range of topics from fire ecology, forest management activities, plant ecology, wildlife ecology, aquatic ecosystem ecology.

Event Displays

The forest has developed several folding displays that can be utilized at community/school events that address issues such as: defensible space, the fires of 2000, mushroom harvesting, history of fire in the Bitterroot Valley, and community partnerships, etc.

Wilderness Skills Trail Program

USFS staff promotes an awareness, understanding, and appreciation for the wilderness through a guided 20-station walk of each spring on a trail located in the Bass Creek area.

Adopt-A-Site for Monitoring or Restoration Program

School groups or service groups can "adopt-a-site" to do long term monitoring of the forest/aquatic ecosystem conditions and/or restore an area on the Bitterroot NF that has been impacted by the Fires of 2000.

Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl Mascots and Programs

Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl can visit your class/club to discuss wildfire prevention and "lend a hand care for the land" programs, respectively. Handouts and activities book are available for distribution, as well.

Brochures and Pamphlets

Brochures and pamphlets provide information about the forest, fire, ecology, botany, wildlife, birds, safety, fisheries, recreation, management activities, and weeds. These items are available for use and distribution in classrooms and at community programs.

