

Forest Service Conservation Education



Strategic Plan to Advance Environmental Literacy



2007-2012

Since its establishment in 1905, the Forest Service has recognized a role and responsibility to educate people about management and conservation of our Nation's forests and grasslands.

Increasing youth and adult knowledge of—and environmental literacy about—forests and natural resources continues to be **critical to the long-term accomplishment of the Forest Service mission today.**

How we provide environmental literacy as an agency: The Forest Service provides expertise in science, land management and outdoor experiences as the foundation for environmental literacy efforts. There are a variety of venues for these efforts.

".....conservation education focused on youth is imperative to developing a stewardship ethic, an understanding and connection to natural resources, and, ultimately, to conservation of the nation's natural resources."

—Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth, 2005

The agency provides many Conservation Education activities and programs through State and Private Forestry, Research and Development and National Forest System programs. These efforts reach and educate people of a variety of ages. Private landowners, local community leaders, elected officials, forest visitors, and students are among the audiences.



About the Conservation Education Program: The Forest Service Conservation Education Program focuses its specific educational efforts on children (pre-kindergarten through 12th grade) and their educators in both classroom and informal settings. However, it also coordinates with other Forest Service educational programs directed toward adults to ensure continuity and consistency of education materials from childhood to adulthood.

The Conservation Education program connects children with the natural world.



Conservation Education Program staff work with many internal and external partners to coordinate, develop, and deliver educational materials and programs. These partners include in-house programs plus State, Tribal, and local agencies, non-profit organizations, and the interagency Service First aligned services partnership between Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, among many others.

This Conservation Education strategic plan to advance environmental literacy was developed with assistance from those internal and external partners, who collectively have over a thousand years of experience in Conservation Education.

The plan is consistent with Forest Service national strategic goals and objectives. It identifies specific goals, objectives, means and strategies to guide the Conservation Education Program through 2012.

The Forest Service plays an effective role in developing an environmentally literate citizenry to sustain our Nation's forests and grasslands, public or private, for future generations, and develop the next generation of conservation leaders.

Vision for the Conservation Education Program

In fostering environmental literacy about forests, grasslands and related natural resources, the Conservation Education program:

- * **Recognizes** that ecosystems are dynamic, that humans are an integral part of ecosystems and that human activity has both positive and negative consequences;
- * **Aligns** with Forest Service mission and long-term strategic goals;
- * **Coordinates** and supports delivery of conservation education programs with internal and external partners;
- * **Reaches** a broad range of students and formal and informal educators in rural, urban, traditional, and underserved populations;
- * **Employs** best educational practices based on science and technology research and established educational guidelines;
- * **Uses** the Nation's forests, and grasslands, and experimental forests as opportunities for outdoor education to teach fundamental environmental processes across many disciplines, and encourages place-based education;
- * **Encourages** consumer behaviors that sustain natural resources and minimize negative consequences to the environment; and
- * **Incorporates** Forest Service science in conservation education programs and products.

Environmental Literacy: A person is environmentally literate when they have the knowledge of environmental processes and issues needed to make informed decisions and participate in civic affairs. Environmental literacy includes a fundamental understanding of the relationships, interactions, and systematic functioning among parts of the environment, and the ability to deal with problems that involve scientific evidence, uncertainty, and economic, aesthetic, and ethical considerations.

National Environmental Education and Training Foundation and Environmental Literacy Council

The Conservation Education Program works with partners to coordinate development and delivery of high quality, science-based education about forests, grasslands, and related natural resources to pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students and their educators, in formal and informal settings.

Mission of the Conservation Education Program

Goals of the Strategic Plan

The goals of the our *Strategic Plan to Advance Environmental Literacy* are:

1. Coordinate development and delivery of high-quality conservation education programs and materials.
2. Provide strong leadership to and management of the Forest Service Conservation Education Program.
3. Maximize partnerships to ensure mission success.



The Framework

This strategic plan sets the framework for the Forest Service's national Conservation Education Program, and for development of conservation work plans at the national and field levels.

The focus of this work is on children in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and their educators. However, the Conservation Education Program also focuses on coordinating with agency efforts to educate adults, including forest landowners, homeowners, recreationists, and others.

Agency Branch Contributions to Environmental Literacy: Conservation education programs are delivered internally and externally at every level of the organization through the State and Private Forestry, National Forest System, Research and Development branches.

They work in concert with Office of Communications and public affairs staffs, operations programs such as Human Capital Management and Civil Rights, and internal and external partners.

(See Appendix 2 for Roles and Responsibilities: Branch Contributions to Environmental Literacy)

To facilitate effective communication among the varied conservation education efforts and activities in Forest Service branches, and to foster the value of conservation education, this strategic plan establishes an internal Environmental Literacy Council.

A Forest Service interpreter in Juneau, Alaska introduces the temperate rain forest ecosystem to visiting students.



Goals and Objectives; Means and Strategies

Goal 1: Coordinate the development and delivery of high-quality conservation education materials and programs.

Objective 1.1: Ensure the availability and distribution of high-quality conservation education materials and programs about forest and grassland ecosystems and their management and conservation to pre-kindergarten through 12th grade youth and educators in formal and informal settings.

Means and Strategies

1.1.1 Catalog and analyze current conservation education materials/programs used by USFS personnel.

1.1.2 Ensure that educational materials and programs developed or certified by the Forest Service incorporate the best scientific knowledge, are interdisciplinary, unbiased, support the USFS mission, and are correlated with appropriate national, state, and agency guidelines.

1.1.3 Support training and professional development in conservation education for USFS personnel, volunteers, informal educators, and teachers.

1.1.4 Support professional development in conservation education for future educators through partnerships with institutions of higher education.

1.1.5 Identify and support service learning opportunities for educators and classes.

1.1.6 Infuse Forest Service-based educational resources (curricula, materials, websites, etc.) into professional development programs for educators/teachers that are offered by the agency and its partners.

Goal 1—
Development
and Delivery of
CE Materials and
Programs

“Reducing that deficit—healing the broken bond between our young and nature—is in our self interest, not only because aesthetics or justice demands it, but also because our mental, physical, and spiritual health depends upon it. The health of the earth is at stake as well.”

Richard Louv—“Last Child in the Woods— Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder”

Goal 1—
Development
and Delivery of
CE Materials and
Programs

Objective 1.2: Improve access to Forest Service resources and information.

Means and Strategies

1.2.1 Disseminate Forest Service educational materials and information through educational and scientific organizations.

1.2.2 Renew and update Forest Service conservation education websites to ensure customer service, including links to partners.

1.2.3 Use accessible community outreach, mass media, public programming, Spanish and other language media, the Internet, and other new technologies to increase access to Forest Service educational resources by students and educators, including underserved audiences.

Objective 1.3: Ensure that the Conservation Education Program supports and enhances the ability of Forest Service employees to achieve excellence in conservation education.

Means and Strategies

"...our most significant challenges and opportunities are to serve as a between traditional visitors and the new faces of America—offering experiences that better appeal to a diversity of values and cultures!"

—Joel Holtrup, 2006—

1.3.1 Identify basic competencies appropriate at each level and PD and develop a comprehensive conservation education training program for Forest Service employees.

1.3.2 Provide long-term professional development opportunities for conservation education staff within the Forest Service.

1.3.3 Develop tools to improve communications and networking among Conservation Education staff and all branches and levels of the Forest Service.

Goal 2: Provide strong leadership and management of the Forest Service Conservation Education program.

Goal 2—Provide Strong Leadership and Management of CE Program

Objective 2.1: Elevate conservation education to mission-critical management status in the Forest Service.

Means and Strategies

2.1.1 Achieve clear, coordinated message about the role of Conservation Education in achieving the agency mission.

2.1.2 Demonstrate leadership support for conservation education by participation by the Chief and other agency leaders in high-profile Conservation Education efforts such as Project Learning Tree events, Canon Envirothon, or Head Start Hispanic Institute.

2.1.3 Charter a Conservation Education Council of members from all branches of the Forest Service to facilitate effective communication among the agency's various environmental literacy programs and activities, and assist in fostering the value of Conservation Education within the agency.

2.1.4 Include Conservation Education performance elements in the Forest Service strategic plan.

2.1.5 Develop peer-to-peer leader champions who demonstrate how Conservation Education improves program outcomes and helps achieve the agency's mission.



Students at the Junior Forest Ranger rollout in May 2006 learn compass and orienteering skills.

Goal 2—Provide
Strong Leadership
and Management
of CE Program

Objective 2.2: Ensure adequate resources and operational integrity to accomplish an effective and efficient Conservation Education program at all levels of the agency.

Means and Strategies

2.2.1 Develop and implement a staffing strategy (position descriptions, careers ladders, employee development, etc.) for Washington Office Conservation Education staff.

2.2.2 Identify staffing needs and roles, and develop standardized position descriptions for professional education specialists at all levels of the agency.

2.2.3 Identify resource needs and potential sources, including grants and partnerships, to deliver a more effective CE program

2.2.4 Advocate incorporation of Conservation Education into program direction at the Station, Area, and Regional levels of the agency branches and into NFS Forest planning efforts.

Objective 2.3: Improve accountability systems and program evaluation for Conservation Education in the Forest Service.

Means and Strategies

2.3.1 Identify practical output and outcome evaluation models to measure program results, and provide support to increase their use at all levels of the agency.

2.3.2 Coordinate reporting system revision and data entry with internal partners (NatureWatch, Interpretive Services, etc.).

2.3.3 Provide examples of Forest Service employee performance evaluation in Conservation Education for use in appropriate line and staff work plans.

2.3.4 Engage scientists and educational experts to develop assessment and evaluation tools for conservation education programs and materials.

Goal 3: Maximize partnerships to ensure mission success.

Objective 3.1: Pursue new—and improve existing—partnerships with State and federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the education community.

Means and Strategies

- 3.1.1** Develop criteria for selecting appropriate partnerships that can assist in the achievement of the Conservation Education Strategic Plan (programs, materials, funding, and so on).
- 3.1.2** Establish new and strengthen existing linkages with external partners working with underserved groups.
- 3.1.3** Ensure that funds are identified for the development of new partnerships and/or improvement or enhancement of existing ones at all levels of the agency.
- 3.1.4** Facilitate delivery of tools and training to develop appropriate agreement instruments, such as Memoranda of Understanding or Participating Agreements, for Conservation Education programs.
- 3.1.5** Participate in development and distribution of partner programs and materials.
- 3.1.6** Support conservation education research efforts of partners.
- 3.1.7** Work closely with the Forest Service’s National Partnership Office to leverage expertise, resources, and partnerships for conservation education programs and materials.
- 3.1.8** Work closely with National Association of State Foresters, Project Learning Tree, and National Environmental Education and Training Foundation to enhance delivery of programs.



Colorado State Park Rangers work with children at a city park in Denver, Colorado.

Community Programs: Off-site programs provided by site staff to community audiences, such as clubs, church groups, ElderHostels, or Scouts. (Source: Adapted from National Park Service Strategic Plan definitions for interpretation programs.)

Environmental Education is a process which promotes the analysis and understanding of environmental issues and questions as the basis for effective education, problem-solving, policy-making and management.

The purpose of environmental education is to foster the education of skilled individuals able to understand environmental problems and possessing the expertise to devise effective solutions to them. In the broader context, environmental education's purpose is to assist in the development of a citizenry conscious of the scope and complexity of current and emerging environmental problems, and supportive of solutions and policies which are ecologically sound. (Source: North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Constitution)

Environmental literacy: An individual is environmentally literate when they have knowledge of environmental processes and issues necessary for that person to make informed decisions and participate in civic affairs. Environmental literacy requires a fundamental understanding of the relationships and interactions between the living and non-living environment, their functions as systems across multiple scales, and the ability to deal with problems that involve scientific evidence, uncertainty, and economic, aesthetic, and ethical considerations. (Source: National Environmental Education and Training Foundation and Environmental Literacy Council definitions)

Forest Service Conservation Education: The Forest Service Conservation Education Program carries out environmental education to help ensure the environmental literacy of youth - from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade—and their educators through formal and informal educational means, in concert with our many partners.

Interpretation: A communication process that forges intellectual and emotional connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource. (Source: National Association for Interpretation)

Interpretive Services: The Forest Service's Interpretive Services Program is a program aimed to help solve and aid in the management of the national forest resources by increasing visitor knowledge about 1) National Forests, research projects, and State and Private Forestry locations and resources; 2) the role of conservation in the development of the Nation's heritage and culture; 3) recreation opportunities and facilities; and 4) helping visitors know and experience natural environments. (Source: Forest Service Manual 2390)

Non-formal educators (informal educators): Teach in informal settings such as parks, zoos, nature centers, community centers, or youth camps, rather than in a classroom or school. (Source: Adapted from NAAEE)

Appendix 2—Roles and Responsibilities

Conservation education programs are delivered internally and externally at every level of the organization through the State and Private Forestry, National Forest System, Research and Development branches of the agency, in concert with partners.

State and Private Forestry (SPF) educates and coordinates with landowners, federal, Tribal, State and local land management agencies, as well as educational institutions and local officials. It also houses the national Conservation Education Program, which focuses on pre-K through 12th grade youth and their educators.

National Forest System (NFS) provides national forests and grasslands as places for hands-on conservation education, and direct ties with local communities.

Nationally, programs like Interpretive Services and NatureWatch, and cultural and Heritage Resources educate forest visitors and have responsibilities closely linked to conservation education. In addition, operations programs such as Human Capital Management and Civil Rights offer many venues for students to experience the Forest Service through work, study, or special events.

Regionally, programs like Urban Connections in the Eastern Region and Urban National Forest outreach activities around the country enhance agency relationships with urban and underserved populations, and provide direct conservation education opportunities.

Locally, festivals and events bring conservation education awareness and access to curricula to communities and schools.

Research and Development (R&D) provides the science and scientific expertise for conservation education programs and activities, with direct ties to universities.

Efforts like the *Natural Inquirer* and Urban Treehouse have close ties with the national Conservation Education Program.

Office of Communication and the agency's public affairs staffs in Regions, Stations and Areas provide agency-wide internal information and develop external outreach to constituents and stakeholders. They provide public affairs counsel and planning to decision-makers, and also provide products that inform and support these decisions. These offices often house or directly support Conservation Education programs or coordinators at the national, regional, area, Station, Forest, or District level.

Agency Branch
Contributions to
Environmental
Literacy



Means and Strategies	Measurable Outputs	Explanation of Output Impact (as needed)
<i>In order to address our problem or asset these Means and Strategies will be used:</i>	<i>We expect that once the Means and Strategies are put into operation that these Outputs may be used as evaluation measures:</i>	<i>We expect that if accomplished these activities will lead to the following changes:</i>
Goal 1: Coordinate the development and delivery of high-quality conservation education materials and programs.		
Objective 1.1: Ensure the availability and distribution of high-quality conservation education materials and programs about forest and grassland ecosystems and their management and conservation to pre-kindergarten through 12th grade youth and educators in formal and informal settings.		
1.1.1 Catalog and analyze current conservation education materials/programs utilized by USFS personnel.	➤ Searchable online resource directory of effective programs with analysis of needs.	➤ Materials and programs developed will fill gaps identified.
1.1.2 Ensure that educational materials and programs developed or certified by the Forest Service incorporate the best scientific knowledge, are interdisciplinary, unbiased, support the USFS mission, and are correlated with appropriate national, state, and agency guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Internal review process developed and accepted. ➤ Training program for CE program review certifiers. ➤ A set of trained certifiers for CE material review. ➤ Documentation of review on the resource directory webpage. ➤ Establishment of agency standards for CE by and with consideration of other professional organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review process established and first set of CE certifiers for FSCE selected and trained. ➤ Identify the best of overlapping materials and retire redundant materials.
1.1.3 Support training and professional development in conservation education for USFS personnel, volunteers, informal educators, and teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Basic competencies for CE established for different levels of USFS personnel, ranging from field staff who may conduct occasional programs to CE personnel. ➤ Implement training program. ➤ Number of educators/teachers that report improved environmental knowledge and meaningful connections with identified natural resources. ➤ Percentages of educators/teachers that participate in FS supported training that report improved ability to teach CE. 	➤ Selected/developed training modules that include resource management professionals in education programs.

<p>1.1.4 Support professional development in conservation education for future educators through partnerships with institutions of higher education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Development of needed materials appropriate for teacher training. ➤ Number of university faculty and students that work cooperatively with FS in CE activities/programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased training and increased use of USFS materials.
<p>1.1.5 Identify and support service learning opportunities for educators and classes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lists of service opportunities by location developed and publicized. ➤ Service-learning training workshops developed and conducted for USFS personnel and educators/teachers. ➤ Working relationships established between National Forests and teacher training institutions and institutes. ➤ Available CE materials for teachers training identified and provided to teacher training institutions and institutes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop internal support at all levels (area, regional, forest) for service-learning opportunities for students.
<p>1.1.6 Infuse Forest Service-based educational resources (curricula, materials, and web sites, etc.) into professional development programs for educators/teachers that are offered by the agency and its partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop and promote list of resources provided. ➤ Increased dissemination and use of Forest Service materials for training programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More teachers use FS lands in the future – asset for all people. ➤ Teachers come to FS for forestry/grasslands education training and materials.

Goal 1: Coordinate the development and delivery of high-quality conservation education materials and programs.		
Objective 1.2: Improve access to Forest Service resources and information.		
Means and Strategies	Measurable Outputs	Explanation of Output Impact
1.2.1 Disseminate Forest Service educational materials and information through educational and scientific organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A list of materials. ➤ List of materials distributed by quantity (2.1.1 to be completed first). ➤ Number of FS resources distributed and used by educational and scientific organizations. ➤ Number of organizations that distribute FS educational materials. ➤ Identification of major educational and scientific institutions to disseminate FS education materials and information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adequate materials available for distribution on a timely basis. ➤ Linkage of materials.
1.2.2 Renew and update Forest Service Conservation Education websites to ensure customer service, including links to partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consolidate or link websites at WO level. ➤ Provide educational materials and training. ➤ Provide regular maintenance and updating of website. ➤ The website is established as a first point of contact for CE information on the web. 	
1.2.3 Use accessible community outreach, mass media, public programming, Spanish and other language media, the Internet, and other new technologies to increase access to Forest Service educational resources by students and educators, including underserved audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment of what is needed/completed in each media to address multiple audiences. ➤ Increased percentage in development of appropriate multilingual/multicultural products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased outreach in each arena: community outreach, mass media, public programming, and technology.

Goal 1: Coordinate the development and delivery of high-quality conservation education materials and programs.

Objective 1.3: Ensure that the Conservation Education Program supports and enhances the ability of Forest Service employees to achieve excellence in conservation education.

Means and Strategies	Measurable Outputs	Explanation of Output Impact
<p>1.3.1 Identify basic competencies appropriate at each level and PD and develop a comprehensive conservation education training program for Forest Service employees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incentives for researchers/employees to be involved. ➤ A team constructed to identify core competencies with various levels of competencies for various resource professionals identified. ➤ Training for FS employees developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased number of trained personnel at various identified levels.
<p>1.3.2 Provide long-term professional development opportunities for conservation education staff within the Forest Services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A hierarchy of training modules established. ➤ Creation of professional PDs and career ladders for CE educators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Trained, competent personnel are available for job placement and advancement in CE. ➤ Specialized personnel in the profession of CE because there is a clear career path.
<p>1.3.3 Develop tools to improve communications and networking among Conservation Education staff and all branches and levels of the Forest Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use CE listserve and newsletter about CE to enhance diffusion of important information throughout ranks of agency. ➤ Identify champions for CE to tell FS stories. ➤ CE practitioners receive information in an appropriate and timely manner. 	

Goal 2: Provide strong leadership and management of the Forest Service Conservation Education program.

Objective 2.1: Elevate conservation education to mission-critical management status in the Forest Service.

Means and Strategies	Measurable Outputs	Explanation of Output Impact
<p>2.1.1 Achieve a clear, coordinated message about the role of Conservation Education in achieving the agency mission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased agency funding for Conservation Education. ➤ Increased partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved ability of FS employees to articulate the agency’s role in increasing environmental literacy and the role it has in meeting the agency’s mission.
<p>2.1.2 Demonstrate leadership support for conservation education by participation by the Chief and other agency leaders in high-profile Conservation Education efforts such as Project Learning Tree events, Canon Envirothon, or Head Start Hispanic Institute.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased marketing and publicity efforts. ➤ CE incorporated into program direction at the Station, Area, and Regional levels of the agency branches. ➤ Number of leaders that participate in high profile CE efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased participation by leadership should increase understanding of how CE helps achieve the agency’s mission. ➤ Improved marketing and PR efforts. ➤ Lead to CE incorporation into program direction at Station, Area and Regional levels.
<p>2.1.3 Charter a Conservation Education Council of members from all branches of the Forest Service to facilitate effective communication among the agency’s various environmental literacy programs and activities, and assist in fostering the value of Conservation Education within the agency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Charter from the Chief. ➤ Establish make-up. ➤ Define the mission of the council in its role of integration of CE across all disciplines and levels of the agency. 	
<p>2.1.4 Include Conservation Education performance elements in the Forest Service strategic plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CE included in the master strategic plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CE remains as Objective 5.1 in the draft FS strategic plan.
<p>2.1.5 Develop peer-to-peer leader champions who demonstrate how</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify anecdotal examples of CE aiding management. 	

<p>Conservation Education improves program outcomes and helps achieve the agency's mission.</p>	<p>➤ Use identified outcomes to identify leaders.</p>	
<p>Goal 2: Provide strong leadership and management of the Forest Service Conservation Education program.</p> <p>Objective 2.2: Ensure adequate resources and operational integrity to accomplish an effective and efficient Conservation Education program at all levels of the agency.</p>		
<p>Means and Strategies</p>	<p>Measurable Outputs</p>	<p>Explanation of Output Impact</p>
<p>2.2.1 Develop and implement a staffing strategy (position descriptions, careers ladders, employee development, etc.) for WO Conservation Education staff.</p>	<p>➤ Staffing strategy developed and implemented for WO with organizational chart of the position descriptions.</p>	
<p>2.2.2 Identify staffing needs and roles, and develop standardized position descriptions and career ladders for professional education specialists at all levels of the agency.</p>	<p>➤ Standardized PDs developed at seasonal, field, and higher levels that allow for career ladder opportunities and identify roles, responsibilities, and expectations at WO, Regional, Forest, and District levels.</p> <p>➤ An agency staffing strategy is developed and implemented at all levels of the agency to meet the needs of CE delivery.</p>	<p>➤ FS Manual direction for CE (1620-3) should be reviewed and revised as appropriate.</p>
<p>2.2.3 Identify resource needs and potential sources, including grants and partnerships, to deliver a more effective CE program.</p>	<p>➤ Design hierarchy of positions and funding needs to deliver CE in alignment with new strategic plan (Objective 5.1).</p>	
<p>2.2.4 Advocate incorporation of Conservation Education into program direction at the Station, Area and Regional levels of the agency branches and into NFS Forest planning efforts</p>	<p>➤ Planning guidance and CE planning templates are developed for various levels of the agency to assist field planning efforts.</p>	<p>➤ Direction for CE is included in Program direction and in Forest planning efforts.</p>

Goal 2: Provide strong leadership and management of the Forest Service Conservation Education program.

Objective 2.3: Improve accountability systems and program evaluation for Conservation Education in the Forest Service.

Means and Strategies	Measurable Outputs	Explanation of Output Impact
<p>2.3.1 Identify practical output and outcome evaluation models to measure program results, and provide support to increase their use at all levels of the agency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluation models are identified and used. ➤ Practitioners doing evaluation are coordinated. ➤ Research efforts with university partners are a priority. ➤ Develop coordination among evaluation models (NPS, USFWS for examples) to improve reporting, organization and management (clearing house of evaluation methods). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluation results are used for program improvement, seeking funds, partnerships, sharing information, marketing, and program validation.
<p>2.3.2 Coordinate reporting system revision and data entry with internal partners (NatureWatch, Interpretive Services, and so on).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Team established to address data reporting systems coordination. ➤ Integrated reporting system is in place. ➤ Consistent definitions of education/science applications for use within the reporting system. ➤ Develop a user manual for the integrated reporting system and provide staff training and support. 	
<p>2.3.3 Provide examples of Forest Service employee performance evaluation in Conservation Education for use in appropriate line and staff work plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Employee performance evaluation examples are developed and provided to appropriate line and staff. ➤ Examples provide are incorporated into employee performance plans. 	
<p>2.3.4 Engage scientists and educational experts to develop assessment and evaluation tools for conservation education programs and materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Research is funded to develop and assess evaluation methodologies and tools. 	

Goal 3: Maximize partnerships to ensure mission success.

Objective 3.1: Pursue new—and improve existing—partnerships with State and federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the education community.

Means and Strategies	Measurable Outputs	Explanation of Output Impact
<p>3.1.1 Develop criteria for selecting appropriate partnerships that can assist in the achievement of the Conservation Education Strategic Plan (programs, materials, funding, and so on).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Critical needs that partners can meet are identified. ➤ Criteria are developed for the selection of partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Partnerships are more focused on the strategic plan. ➤ Local partnerships are strategically planned and tiered to a national criterion.
<p>3.1.2 Establish new and strengthen existing linkages with external partners working with underserved groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of new partnerships that target underserved populations. 	
<p>3.1.3 Ensure that funds are identified for the development of new partnerships and/or improvement or enhancement of existing ones at all levels of the agency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Funds are identified and allocated for partnership development and enhancement. ➤ Strategy to link with the National Partnership Office is identified. 	
<p>3.1.4 Facilitate delivery of tools and training to develop a Memorandum of Understanding or Partnership Agreement for Conservation Education programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Existing MOUs identified and a master list published on the web. ➤ Training provided to employees and partners on developing MOUs and agreements. 	

<p>3.1.5 Participate in development and distribution of partner programs and materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of employees that participate in partner programs (e.g. reviewing materials for scientific accuracy, teacher, workshops, assisting in communications and marketing, etc.). ➤ Materials identified by “Reviewed by Conservation Education Office of the Forest Service.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Less duplication, more cost effectiveness. ➤ Consistent messaging between agencies. ➤ Increased incorporation of FS information and materials into partner programs.
<p>3.1.6 Support conservation education research efforts of partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of partner research efforts supported by FS. ➤ Number of FS employees on partnership research teams. ➤ List developed of research needs for CE that the FS would be interested in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Research partners have improved access to FS data on CE. ➤ Increased quality and quantity of research on CE.
<p>3.1.7 Work closely with the Forest Service’s National Partnership Office to leverage expertise, resources, and partnerships for conservation education programs and materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of employees that participate in partnership training. ➤ CE Coordinator participates in partnership network calls. 	
<p>3.1.8 Work closely with National Association of State Foresters, Project Learning Tree, and National Environmental Education and Training Foundation to enhance delivery of programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number of partner programs that can assist in the achievement of the CE strategic plan. ➤ Number of FS employees in leadership positions in PLT. ➤ Increased use of Smokey Bear and other symbols at PLT workshops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased recognition of Forest Service as a national partner. ➤ Increased recognition of Forest Service as a provider of CE.