



Featured Site:

Diamond Fork Youth Forest

As one of ten pilot sites for the Hands on the Land program, the Diamond Fork Youth Forest at the Uinta National Forest (DFYF) excels in bringing students to the natural world and collaborating with several regional and national partners. The goal and objective of the DFYF is to create an enjoyable and challenging learning environment where youth can discover, gain an awareness and understanding of our natural resources, and have the opportunity to participate in managing those resources; provide opportunity for students to be involved, provide different levels of experiences so that all can participate, provide opportunities for the public to participate and opportunities for students with communication, planning, data gathering skills, and research with natural resources.

The DFYF worked with over 2000 students, teachers, and volunteers to accomplish activities in the youth forest in the 2005/2006 school year. Participating in 20 field exploration days provided them with the opportunity to complete data collection, neo-tropical and Bald Eagle surveys, prescribed burn monitoring projects, GPS trail segments, and study in the natural environment. The ultimate goal for students and teachers involved with the DFYF was to design and construct a student-centered discovery trail to inform forest users about habitats, forest health and multiple use management. In over 1000 hours of work, students engineered unique bug benches, a teepee and life-size beaver lodge as stations along the trail. The youth forest coordinator worked directly with students to create the first of several brochures that accompany the discovery trail informing users of the different habitats they experience along the trail.



Students learn about adaptations on the DFYF.



Through hands-on activities, students interact with the natural world at DFYF.

Staff at the DFYF encourage students to participate in various field work projects including monitoring flora and fauna, prescribed burn monitoring and cultural heritage projects. For example, students participated in a cultural heritage project at the Red Ledges area in the youth forest. The area is frequently vandalized and graffiti removal is needed. In helping to remove the graffiti, students learn the importance of preserving historic rock art.

Visitors enjoy coming to the DFYF for its varied resources and programs. The youth forest provides nature walks and campfire programs through an intern program in the summer months. The DFYF partners collectively organize a National Public Lands Day event where the students and partners invite members of their families and the public to volunteer for a variety of trail projects.

In order to offer such a diverse array of programming, the DFYF receives support through public and private grants. Partners include: local schools, USEE, EPA, UDWR, USFWS, Tread Lightly!, LNT, Search and Rescue, MCM, National Wildlife Turkey Federation, Alcoa, and Neways. For additional information about the Diamond Fork Youth Forest visit: http://www.handsontheland.org/profiles/profile_detail.cfm?sitecode=uint or contact Sarah Flinders, Site Manager, sflinders@fs.fed.us or 801-798-3571.

Member News

Legacy Day at the Empire Ranch

On May 3, 2006 the Empire Ranch Foundation hosted pupils from the Elgin, AZ School District at its eagerly anticipated Legacy Day - a definitely "not your average" school day. Our "classroom" is 44,000 acres and represents the best of mergers between academics and real-life experiences. Legacy Day is inspiration day.

The Elgin School sixth, seventh, and eighth graders attended classes that had a hands-on curriculum covering:

- Range-management and grassland survival in drought times, taught by a professor from the University of Arizona;
- The art of roping livestock, taught by a cowboy/educator in our area;
- The making of adobe bricks, with students actually using the ancient methods that were used to make adobe bricks for the buildings on the Empire Ranch;
- A live demonstration of birds of prey presented by the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum "Raptor Free Flight" program;
- The making of Native-American pottery, taught by noted potter Susan Folwell; and
- Lunch was made using Dutch ovens much like the methods used on ranch roundups throughout the West.

The Empire Ranch - which is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places - hosted as much fun and new learning experiences as in past years, as the annual Legacy Day has grown from a pilot project into a local institution.

Looking beyond Legacy Day, plans are underway for a new pilot education program for local youths. Selected students will be able to attend a hands-on education program this summer in coordination with the BLM. The program is planned for a five-day schedule at the Empire Ranch headquarters. An educational grant, applied for through the BLM, will provide partial financial support. To learn more, visit the Empire Ranch site profile:

http://www.handsontheland.org/profiles/profile_details.cfm?sitecode=emra

Or contact Karla Cafarelli at info@empireranchfoundation.org.



Adobe brick making at the Empire Ranch.

Upcoming Events

Don't forget to sign up your site to participate in **National Public Lands Day**, September 30, 2006. For information on how to get involved visit www.npld.com or contact Robb Hampton 202-261-6462 or hampton@neetf.org.

Web Corner

Helpful Evaluation Tools

As the school year approaches, it may be the right time to consider designing or updating your site's educational program evaluations. Gathering evaluation data on your site's education programming can help to raise funds, enhance programs, and better direct student learning. Teachers especially appreciate evaluations as confirmation that the trip to your site was more than just a visit!

Hands on the Land has several helpful evaluation resources. The newest addition links users to the **MEERA** (My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant) homepage that is a web-based tool for planning and learning about environmental education evaluation. Also on the HOL website are links to the **University of Wisconsin Stevens Point**, the **Council for Environmental Education** and the **Digital Library for Earth System Education**.

If you have any additional resources you'd like to see posted to the HOL website, please contact us. Happy evaluating!