



Featured Site

Tobacco Valley Educational Forest

The Hands on the Land "Tobacco Valley Educational Forest" project is situated in the northwest corner of Montana in Lincoln County. The Forest is used for a variety of outdoor educational activities and covers over 2,000 acres of forested land in which about half is old growth, two lakes with combined acreage of over 1,000 acres, and the Ant Flat Historical Site and Educational Center.

Programs are designed to be interdisciplinary – covering topics in Forestry, Hydrology, Fisheries, Wildlife (mammals and birds), and Soils – for students in grades K-12. Year round accessibility provides students from three local school districts opportunities to supplement classroom work with hands on activities in the field. Coordination with local agencies – Forest Service (Fortine Ranger District), Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the Soil Conservation Service, Back Country Horsemen, and the CanAm Search and Rescue – provides students with information and insight into their course of studies.



Fortine and Trego students participate in a map reading exercise inside the classroom of the Historic Ant Flat Ranger Station.

Educational programs for students in grades K-8 have included visits from portrayed characters such as Critter Man, Meriwether Lewis, Fred Herring (the first District Ranger at Ant Flat -1904), Mountain Men, and from the USFS pack string of horses and mules.



'Meriwether Lewis' teaches students from Trego, Fortine and Eureka Schools about hunting and trapping on the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Since the site is in a popular hunting area, planned activities will resume after the end of the hunting season at the end of November. With snow cover, planned activities include big game census, track identification, and snowshoeing. When the ice on Murphy Lake is sufficient the Montana FWP will do a fish population/tagging study with students in cooperation with the Fortine Ranger District.

For additional information about the Tobacco Valley Educational Forest visit the HOL website or contact Betty Holder, bholder@fs.fed.us, 406-882-4451.

Member News

Tongass National Forest

Located in the southeastern reaches of Alaska, the Tongass National Forest is an emerald jewel with over two thousand islands and miles of coastline and is the largest National Forest in the system. Tongass has just recently become a member site of Hands on the Land and already has plans for three specific projects to make use of the HOL website.

On Prince of Wales Island students and community members are participating in ongoing archaeological research and are now examining artifacts and microfossil samples that were excavated this summer from site near Coffman Cove. At Revillagigedo Island, the earth science class at the Charter School is investigating how to use National Forest sites to demonstrate concepts like energy, motion, gravity, and mass. And another project on Prince of Wales Island incorporates an "Ecovan" that brings a mobile field laboratory to locations within select watersheds where river and stream health is monitored. Fisheries are assessed and the release of coho salmon, raised in the classroom at the Thorne Bay School, are tracked. (See photo at right.) Students are looking forward to sharing the results of their work with others on the HOL site.

To learn more, keep an eye on the emerging profile of the Tongass National Forest on HOL as a portal on the web for discovering more about the largest contiguous temperate rainforest on public lands in the world. HOL site profile at http://www.handsontheland.org/profiles/profile_details.cfm?sitecode=tong or contact Faith Duncan at fduncan@fs.fed.us.

Web Corner

Hot Topics

There are a few topics that are pressing and current at nearly every Hands On The Land member site: Invasive Species, Fire Ecology, Watersheds and Forest Health. The "Hot Topics" link on the HOL homepage (see arrow and circle above) provides valuable links and resources about these four issues.



Furthermore, an additional link provides a quick list of all HOL member-posted educator resources that related to each of the four Hot Topics. If your site has resources or educational materials on any of these environmental issues, you can add it to the HOL database for other educators to utilize. To post your relevant lesson plan or activities, log in to the Admin Hub or contact HOL webmaster Dave Zelenka at davez@interactive-earth.com or Ellen Reid.

Observing, catching, and identifying aquatic insects at different stream reaches is all part of monitoring stream health. Here, students examine the aquatic insects from their catch.



Upcoming Events

National Association for Interpretation 2006 National Interpreters Workshop

Join over 1000 interpreters from around the country at the annual workshop to be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico **November 7-11, 2006**. With keynote speaker Richard Louv, author of seven books, including most recently, "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder," the workshop is one not to be missed. It isn't too late to register! For more information, visit the NAI website:

<http://www.interpnet.com/conferences/index.shtml>

Balancing Nature and Commerce in Communities that Neighbor Public Lands

January 29-February 1, 2007

This training, held at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV, focuses on the economics, natural resources and community character of your local area while teaching valuable partnership building skills. At the end of the four days, teams will leave with a specific action plan for implementing a collaborative project in their community. For additional information or to register, visit:

<http://www.conservationfund.org/?article=2483&back=true> Deadline to register is December 15, 2006.