

**Metro Environmental Education Grant**  
**Final Report**  
**The Nature Awareness Project (January 2002 - January 2003)**

Grant Number: 923606  
Grant Sponsors: Metro and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Grant Recipient: Cascadia Wild!

**1. Summary of Grant Activities**

This Metro Environmental Education Grant funded the Nature Awareness Project, a long-term mentoring project that supports teachers and their classes as they explore the language of nature. The Project uses awareness games, songs and stories, and the practice of naturalist studies. Classes are primarily composed of low-income students in the Portland area.

*Number of students participating in the program:*

Clear Creek Middle School:	36 students
Dexter McCarty Middle School:	12 students
Fircrest Elementary School, Evergreen School District:	25 students
Franklin High School; Portland Public School District	56 students
James John Elementary, Portland Public School District:	60 students
Madison High School, Portland Public School District:	20 students
Reynolds Learning Center, Reynolds School District:	20 students
Portland Waldorf School:	56 students
Riverside Elementary, Milwaukee School District:	73 students
Sitton Elementary, Portland Public School District	40 students
Sunnyside Family Co-op, Portland Public School District:	71 students
Trillium Charter School, Portland Public School District:	27 students
<u>Total Students:</u>	<u>496 students</u>

*List of schools and teachers who participated in program funded by this grant:*

Clear Creek Middle School, Mae Cha, after school program supervisor  
Dexter McCarty Middle School, Wendy Salvesson, after school program supervisor  
Fircrest Elementary School; Ann Rangos  
Franklin, High School; Hyung Nam  
James John Elementary; Nancy Johnson, Susan Webb  
Madison High School; Julie Howland and Jeremy Cat  
Portland Waldorf School; Nancy Pierce  
Reynolds Learning Center; Giovanna Joffre  
Riverside Elementary; Genevieve Baues and Leesa Jacobsen  
Sitton Elementary; Dennis Poklikuhas  
Sunnyside Family Co-op School; Barb Bagg, Liz Draper, Zack Post  
Trillium Charter School, Portland Public Schools; Zach Post

*List of field trips funded by this grant:*

Dexter McCarthy: 1 field trip (local green space)

Fircrest Elementary School: 6 field trips (1 Oxbow Park trip, 1 Mt. Hood trip, 4 local green spaces trips)  
 James John Elementary: 8 field trips (2 Oxbow Park trips, 6 local green spaces)  
 Madison High School: 9 field trips (1 Oxbow Park, 3 Johnson Lake, 1 Mt. Hood National Forest, 4 local Greenspaces)  
 Portland Waldorf School: 7 field trips (2 Oxbow Park trips, 1 Mt. Hood National Forest, 4 local green spaces)  
 Reynolds Learning Center: 3 field trips to Oxbow Park  
 Riverside Elementary: 15 field trips (1 Jackson Bottom wetlands, 1 Oaks Bottom Park, 3 Oxbow Park, 10 local green spaces)  
 Sitton Elementary: 4 field trips  
 Sunnyside Family Co-op School: 8 field trips (2 Oxbow Park, 6 local green spaces)  
 Trillium Charter School: 4 field trips (1 Oxbow Park, 3 local green spaces)  
Total: 69

*Total Volunteer Hours:* 4,223 Hours

4,223 Volunteer hours were contributed to the Project grant activities.

These hours are valued at \$27,449.50, based on \$6.50 per hour.

*A copy of the total grant budget is attached, with grant-funded items and in-kind matching contributions identified.*

## **2. Evaluation**

*List of project accomplishments/summary of benchmarks completed:*

Cascadia Wild! continued long-term mentoring with elementary, middle school and high school students in many of the same classrooms as the prior grant period. Students participated in exercises that emphasize awareness and connection to nature in a different way with each classroom visit or fieldtrip. The instruction includes core naturalist routines. Cascadia Wild! led students on multiple visits (4-9 visits per classroom) over four months to the classroom to develop knowledge of patterns in the natural world in a positive, long-term manner. Students received tracking instruction followed by instructional tracking field trips to Oxbow Regional Park, Mt. Hood National Forest and trips to local green spaces.

Participating students learned the basics of animal tracking (definitions of track components, track measurement skills, recording accurate data, preparing plaster casts of animal tracks, basic mammal track identification, basic mammal gait pattern identification), proficiency in understanding of bird language (knowledge of four common passerine bird alarm calls, grasp of the importance of call intensity, knowing the five voices of birds (alarm, song, male-to-male aggression, feeding young and companion call), proficiency in nature awareness skills (using all the sense using fox walking, owl vision, deer ears, raccoon hands), and knowledge of native plants and trees, including utilitarian uses for these plants.

Participation by volunteers greatly exceeded our expectations during the Project. We

had expected to have two volunteers during the grant period. Thirteen individuals volunteered a significant number of hours during the grand period. This greatly enhanced the experience for our students.

*Overall evaluation of program with reactions from participants:*

Cascadia Wild! increased our after-school program from one school to two schools during the grant period. This program continued in 2003 with the SUN program at Clear Creek Middle School and Dexter McCarty Middle School.

In the spring of 2002, Cascadia Wild! served ten schools with a total of twelve classes in those schools. In the fall of 2002, Cascadia Wild! served seven schools with a total of nine classes in those schools. The number of schools we served in the fall of 2002 was due to several factors. We lost program support from other funding sources, which we believed was a result of the general national economic downturn at the time, and an overall increase in the competition for grant awards and donations.

In addition, we were managing a significant increase in volunteers while operating the program and did not want to overwhelm the volunteers and risk losing trained and skilled volunteer staff. In addition, teachers participating in the Project in fall 2002 were asked to commit to a week-long training in the summer and to complete an extensive application describing their plans to incorporate the Project curriculum in their classroom. The increased commitment from the seven teachers participating in the fall of 2002 more effectively integrated the Project into the classroom experience and enhanced the lessons learned in our Project.

Student response to Project curriculum during the grant period was enthusiastic. During the spring of 2002, Riverside Elementary students were inspired to re-establish native plant communities in a local wetland, just off school property. They worked with Cascadia Wild! and Friends of Trees to plant 80 trees and shrubs. The students shared their experience with the entire school at a year-end assembly and created the beginning of a naturalist mentoring program in their school. In this program, fifth graders pass on their knowledge to first graders and ask them to be caretakers of the trees and shrubs they plant. In addition, Reynolds Learning Center presented Cascadia Wild! with a framed picture of a heron bearing the slogan "Never Give Up".

We sought evaluations from participating teachers and Cascadia Wild! Staff and volunteers at the end of the school year. It was often difficult to obtain reviews at the end of the year, and given the length of the program, we now seek to obtain program evaluations from teachers before, during, and after the school year. We will conduct random student evaluations in writing, when appropriate based on grade level. And we will have staff and volunteers complete an assessment form after each visit.

**3. Photo Documentation**

Attached are two sets of color photographs taken during field trips to Oxbow Park funded by this grant. Participating schools are the Sunnyside Family Cooperative,

Fircrest Elementary School, and Reynolds Learning Center.

**4. Maintenance Plan for Restoration/enhancement**

This section is not applicable.

**5. Acreage Affected in Restoration/enhancement**

This section is not applicable.

**6. Products of the Grant Project**

*Curriculum:*

Classes are visited at least once a month with a new curriculum topic each visit. Students and teachers are given various portable activities to use throughout the month that pertain to the month's topic. Support time is provided to explore, practice, and learn ways to create a classroom culture that fosters a student-centered learning environment.

January/February Visit:	Animal Tracking
February/March Visit:	Survival Skills and The Order of Four (Shelter, Water, Fire, and Food)
March/April Visit:	Skills Round (Cordage, Bow drill/Fire making, etc...)
April/May Visit:	Plants/Ecology
May/June Visit:	Year-end celebration of skills
October Visit:	Core Routines (Secret Spot, Thanksgiving Address, Animal Forms and Awareness Journaling)
November Visit:	Scout Game (field trip to Oxbow Regional Park)
December Visit:	Bird Language

Attached is a lesson plan from a visit to Johnson Lake with Madison High School.

Submitted by:



Dave Shapiro  
Cascadia Wild!

Madison HS  
At Johnson Lake

Imagining society as we know it has collapsed. It is up to you to use all you know and can know about the natural world in order to survive. You will have three opportunities to explore this situation. You need clean water to drink, medicinal and edible plants for nutrition. You may need meat to eat and you need to be aware of dangers that could threaten your life.

**Awareness Station - Introducing the concept of awareness**

The following topics will be presented in the Awareness activities:

Taking away the power of names

Wandering

The Sit

Relaxation - the sacred silence

Sensory exercises -

Sight

Hearing

Touch

Taste and Smell

Varied vision - moving in and out from tunnel focus to wide-angle vision

Wide-angle vision - peripheral vision

Automatic vision - seeing dictated by prominent structures in the landscape.

Fox walking - balanced walking that allows for owl vision

Stalking - imperceptible movement forward toward a goal

10 min.

1. Six animal forms - Practice the routines of raccoon hands, owl eyes, fox walking, deer ears, lizard tongue and coyote nose.

2. Fox and the Rabbit -

Level 1: Students in the middle will practice using varied and wide-angle vision, moving out of their *automatic* vision. Students on the outer ring will practice stalking

Level 2: Students in the middle are blindfolded and will use hearing noticing far and close noises. Students in the outer ring will practice fox-walking

10 min.

3. Wander and Secret Spot - on their own loop, using all senses, students notice and describe disturbances, broken branches, leaves, scuffed ground, chews, wear marks, etc., Finding a spot to sit, sit and feel release of any agenda, being another part of the forest. Return back to group at the crow call.

Follow-up

Students journal and discuss the following questions:

1. How did the awareness activities, (animal forms; sit spot, wandering, fox and the rabbit) help you to notice more as a tracker?
2. How do these activities work as tools for seeing animal tracks and sign?
3. What was your experience focusing on your awareness at Johnson Lake?
4. Draw a map of your sit spot and things you noticed around it.

Cascadia wild!

12/28/02

Grant #923606

Volunteer labor / In-kind donations

Volunteer hours from 1/01/02 through 12/31/02

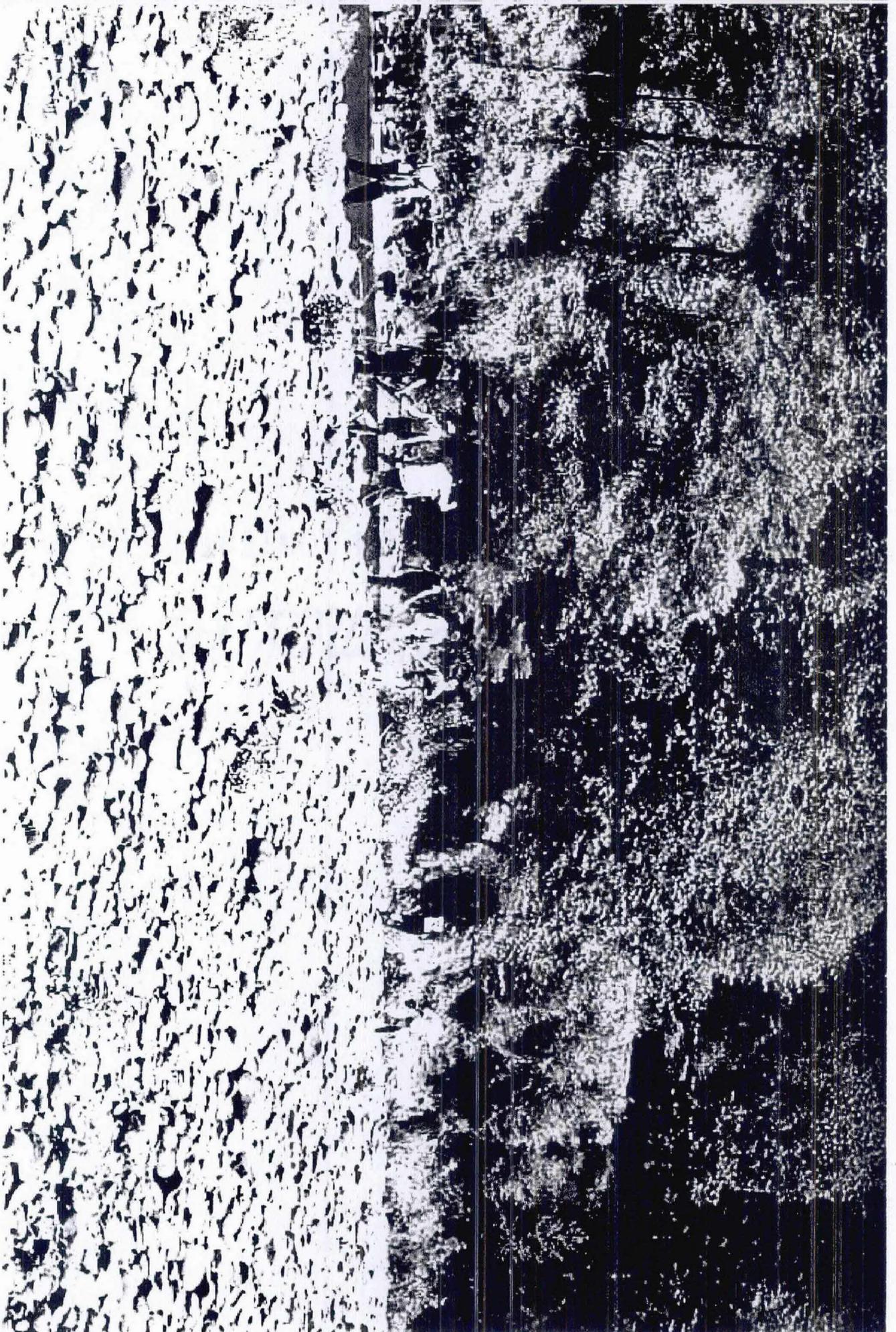
Volunteer	# of hours	Labor value (hours x \$6.50)
Ian Abraham	542	\$3,523.00
Heather Stevens	861	\$5,596.50
Dave Shannon	679	\$4,413.50
Willem Larsen	321	\$2,086.50
Garth Olson	437	\$2,840.50
Wendy Stevens	218	\$1,417.00
Amelia VanderHoff	207	\$1,345.50
Marion Warfield	265	\$1,722.50
Julie Cramer	479	\$3,113.50
Sandra West	33	\$214.50
Sonia Reese	68	\$442.00
Carla Davis	57	\$370.50
Rebecca Feeder	86	\$559.00
Total	4,223	\$27,449.50

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Keynolds Learning Center at Arrow Park



Sunnyside Family Co-op at Oxbow Park



Fircrest Elementary at Oxbow Park

