

This developing plan content is under construction and is being shared as a snapshot of thinking. Additional changes based on Forest Service and public input are expected.

Forest-wide Conservation Education Plan Components

Background

There is a need for the forest plan to promote conservation education opportunities and to connect people with nature through volunteers and partners. Increasing public understanding of underlying issues is crucial to successful public policy, and environmental education is an investment to promote sustainable use of natural resources and to prevent costly environmental disasters. The guiding principle is that Conservation Education and Interpretation will be integrated as a component in all program areas around the theme of sustainability.

Desired Conditions

- Conservation education and interpretation is integrated as a component in all program areas.
- Interpretation and conservation education opportunities connect people with nature and enhance the public understanding and appreciation for the natural, cultural, tribal history, and the multiple-use mission of the Forest.
- Through a variety of interpretive efforts, people learn about biodiversity, botanical communities, wildlife and aquatic species, ecosystems, geology, and heritage site etiquette; resulting in a motivation to practice careful stewardship. Education themes include sustainability, safety and user ethics.
- Interpretation emphasizes a land ethic that informs how to reduce impacts on ecosystems and support the Forests' efforts to protect natural resources.
- Low impact recreation principles, such as "Leave No Trace" and "Tread Lightly" are promoted and widely used by the public.
- Partners assist the forest in delivering interpretation and education that instills and promotes conservation and stewardship.
- Communication and interpretive message show respect for diverse backgrounds and needs of visitors.

Management Approaches

- Address visitor safety through education and management actions.
- When promoting conservation education, encourage participation by urban and rural communities, Tribes, youth, minority, and low income populations.
- Subject matter pertaining to Tribes is collaboratively developed and, in appropriate cases, is also in Tribal language.
- Initiate and facilitate the cooperation of local resources in developing and implementing education relating to use and/or prevention of fire.

- Build and maintain working relationships with other Federal and State agencies with a conservation mission, public and private schools and universities, non-profit organizations and professional resource management, and educational associations.
- Manage the conservation education and interpretive services programs to avoid duplication with other providers whether in public or private sector.
- Provide information kiosks which minimize visual clutter by concentrating messages and eliminating the need for multiple signs.
- Consider use of both emerging and traditional technologies to reach target audiences efficiently and effectively.

See also: Community Connections, Experimental Forests and Research Natural Areas

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