THE BWCA WILDERNESS KIT

WELCOME

WHAT IS THE BWCA WILDERNESS KIT?

This curriculum is a joint project of the Boundary Waters Wilderness Foundation and the United States Forest Service-Superior National Forest. The Kit is designed to teach about the uniqueness and complexities of wilderness, specifically the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). Located along the Minnesota-Canadian border, this pristine land has been set aside as a national treasure. It is rich in natural, historical, and cultural value, and is one of the most heavily used wilderness areas in the country. In order for the BWCAW to continue to exist in its naturally balanced state, modern visitors need to be aware of this delicate and unique area, and understand how people played and continue to play a role in managing and protecting the wilderness.

WHO CAN USE THE BWCA WILDERNESS KIT?

Teachers, educators, facilitators, youth group leaders, church group leaders, and others are the intended users. You do not need to be a wilderness "expert" to teach these units effectively. The BWCA Wilderness Kit is created for both formal and non-formal educators. The units and activities are aimed at middle school grade levels (5-8) for approximately 5-30 participants. However, each lesson is flexible enough to tailor the content to a younger or older audience.

HOW DO I USE THE BWCA WILDERNESS KIT?

The BWCA Wilderness Kit contains five units. Each can be used independently, to focus on a particular topic, or used sequentially. The time frame for one unit is approximately 50 minutes but can vary depending on the individual class or group. Time guidelines are given in each unit and exist merely as suggestions. Feel free to extend or shorten an activity as it is appropriate with a particular group. All materials, props and game pieces are included in the Kit. Some activities require photocopying prior to teaching the unit. The BWCA Wilderness Kit may be used in a classroom or gathering space. Rooms with moveable desks and chairs or large open spaces are preferred.

We are excited that you have chosen this curriculum. It is an engaging and educational compilation of units focusing on the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in northern Minnesota.

We hope that you enjoy using this curriculum. As with any educational material, this Kit is dynamic. We encourage you and your group to send us comments and suggestions explaining how this Kit was effective or how it could be improved.

Thank you for using the BWCA Wilderness Kit. By increasing awareness and training people to use the wilderness responsibly, we hope to ensure the continued presence of the BWCAW and its availability for decades to come.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

The BWCA Wilderness Kit was jointly produced by the Boundary Waters Wilderness Foundation and the United States Forest Service-Superior National Forest. Both are available to answer questions regarding content, instruction, and materials of the kit.

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The BWCA Wilderness Kit is carefully designed to include a variety of teaching methods to increase a participant's motivation as well as to affect the learning atmosphere. We recognize that all people learn differently. Consequently we have tried to create a curriculum that presents materials in multiple ways. Be prepared for a high level of activity, movement and discussion in each unit.

WHEN DO I USE THE BWCA WILDERNESS KIT?

Wilderness is an interdisciplinary topic; the Kit is not limited to science or environmental education teachers. Use the Kit to complement a unit on forests, Minnesota history, ecology, nature writing, federal legislation, or before you lead a trip to the BWCAW. Look through the "Skills," "Concepts," and "Objectives" sections of each unit to determine when each particular unit would best fit into your class or group schedule.

WHO FUNDED AND CREATED THE BWCA WILDERNESS KIT?

The Kit was developed in 1994 with grants from the Boundary Waters Wilderness Foundation, Superior National Forest, Dell Trust Fund, and the Boundary Waters Education Consortium. Additional funding was provided through grants from the WM Foundation and REI.

Original authors include: Julie Madsen Bates; Tim Bates; Ken Gilbertson; Katharine Johnson; Lisa Mostrom; and Sally Rauschenfels. Original contributors include: Carrie Anderson; Ellen Hawkins; Rachel Hefte; Peter Mostrom; and Maria Thompson.

The Kit's curriculum was revised in 2002 by Julie Flotten and its appearance redesigned by Don Farleo Advertising and Design Company. Contributors include: Christina Boston; Mary Hanney; Ellen Hawkins; Melissa Lindsay; Kris Reichenbach; Sarah Strommen; and Sean Wherley.

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OVERVIEW OF EACH UNIT

UNIT ONE: WHAT IS WILDERNESS?

This unit focuses on what makes a place a "wilderness." Participants discuss or vote on what particular objects, sounds, and images belong in a wilderness. They are introduced to the National Wilderness Preservation System and the Wilderness Act of 1964. Participants then determine how the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness fits into the criteria of a federally-designated wilderness area.

UNIT TWO: HOW DIVERSE IS BIODIVERSE?

This unit explores the concept of ecosystems. Using teams, participants decide what species survive and thrive in the five ecosystems of the BWCAW. Participants combine their ideas and analyze patterns they notice. The final discussion relates these connections to the importance of diversity within an ecosystem.

UNIT THREE: THE CHANGING FOREST

This unit concentrates on how forests in the BWCAW change over time. Through role-playing and games, participants learn the idea of forest succession and the importance of different disturbances impacting a forest.

UNIT FOUR: PEOPLE OF THE BOUNDARY WATERS

Participants form teams to become "experts" on a particular user group of the Boundary Waters: the Ojibwe; the Voyageur; the Logger; and the Modern Visitor. Teams learn about their specific character's use of, and impact on, the Boundary Waters. Participants then"test" their knowledge in the Paddler's Game!

UNIT FIVE: LEAVE NO TRACE

Participants learn how their actions and choices can impact the wilderness as they take an imaginary trip to the BWCAW. After discussing high and low impact choices, participants apply and categorize their decisions in relation to the seven Leave No Trace principles.

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ANATOMY OF A UNIT

CONCEPTS AND KEY IDEAS:
The main concepts and key ideas presented in each unit.

GOALS:
The knowledge participants will attain upon completion of the unit.

SKILLS:
A list of skills the participants use to complete the unit.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
A list of the materials the instructor will need in order to teach the unit and each activity. Some materials may need to be copied prior to teaching. You may make copies from the master in the manual or by using the electronic files on the CD provided.

BACKGROUND:
Information provided for the instructor in order to become familiar with the content before teaching the unit.

PREPARATION AND INTRODUCTION:
Outlines the materials and steps necessary to prepare the classroom or area for teaching the unit. Also, outlines discussion questions to use to introduce participants to the unit topic.

SIDEBARS:
Facts for the instructor to share during the unit, tips for teaching the unit, helpful definitions, further background information.

ACTIVITIES:
Explanations and instructions for conducting games and discussions. Each activity correlates to the unit concepts and key ideas. Each activity includes specific activity objectives, instructions and a suggested time frame. These time suggestions represent the optimum amount of time to make a particular activity most effective.

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ANATOMY OF A UNIT

OBJECTIVES:
The tasks participants will accomplish by the end of the activity.

INSTRUCTIONS:
Rules and directions for completing the activity.

UNIT CLOSING:
A review of concepts introduced in unit activities. Concepts are then applied to answer related questions.

WILDERNESS PASSPORT:
An activity or activities that assess what the participants have learned during the unit. You can copy the Passport for each participant or simply write the questions on a chalkboard or piece of paper. A stamp for each unit is included in the materials. Stamp each participant's passport when he or she has completed the question or activity. The time it takes to complete the Passport is NOT included in the 50 minutes allocated for the unit. It is important to take the time to complete the Passport either as homework or as a follow up to the unit. These questions and/or activities reinforce the concepts taught during the unit.The Passport is designed to be assembled with the cover sheet (found in appendix) upon completion of all units.

EXTENSIONS:
Activities or projects to extend the topics covered in the unit. It is strongly recommended that classes or groups complete one or more of these extensions.

Each extensions list begins with a reference to the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center's "Wilderness and Land Ethic Curriculum." This is a national wilderness curriculum developed jointly by the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the four agencies responsible for the management of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Wilderness Box and Land Ethic Curriculum is an excellent