



April 27, 2011

Friends of the St. Croix Headwaters, and
Canoes-on-Wheels Project Supporters

Greetings;

I am writing to endorse the "Canoes on Wheels" program sponsored by the Friends of the St. Croix Headwaters. This innovative project is a great opportunity for schools and groups to spend time together on our rivers, streams and lakes without the impediment of securing boats and gear. The Friends group is to be commended for their foresight and community service in making this trailer of red canoes available to students in our area, as well as providing canoe safety training to teachers.

As an educational tool, Canoes on Wheels can put students *on the water* for real-life experience rather than "dry exposure" to the natural world solely through lab, internet, or classroom work. While all of these are valuable tools for learning, seeing water creatures and plants in their own habitat, and observing the connections between the dragonfly nymph and the rushes (for example), gives a much more holistic lesson in water ecology. Traveling under your own power by canoe also helps the students acquire personal confidence; a healthy, outdoor life-skill; and lessons in stewardship of our precious water resources.

It is truly rewarding to be able to provide canoeing experience to children, young people, and adults that might not otherwise get this opportunity. The Department applauds your success in reaching more people with outdoor skills experience and environmental learning. I hope you are able to continue and even expand the program in future years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads 'Kathy Bartilson'.

Kathy Bartilson
St. Croix Basin Watershed Supervisor