

Eco Adventure Project

(Canoes on Wheels Program)

Status Report for June 30, 2012

Background

The canoe-based Eco Adventure Project is an extension of the Canoes on Wheels (COW) program (<http://canoesonwheels.org/>) that works with middle and high school-aged students in northwestern Wisconsin through their schools and youth organizations. The COW program provides for the use of a canoe trailer, eight canoes suited for river or lake use, and canoe gear such as paddles and life vests on a no-cost basis. The program also provides logistical support when requested, and an invitation to teachers to attend a free workshop to help them understand how to safely manage canoe outings, and how they might integrate paddling activities into their curriculums.

Introduction

We have listened to the teachers who have participated in the Canoes on Wheels program over the past three years. Some have told us that developing their own educational materials to incorporate canoeing activities into their curriculums can be a difficult and time consuming task. They asked if we could provide a “turnkey” curriculum guide that could be modified as needed. The Eco Adventure Project is our response to that request.

Our Eco Adventure can be described as middle-school students on the river in canoes with planned educational modules for two days with an overnight camping experience. Also included: a school-based pre-paddle session, paddle training for students and teachers, and a school-based post-paddle assessment. Education modules are selected for a given paddle.

The Eco Adventure Project (**EAP**) (http://canoesonwheels.org/?page_id=350) includes the funding, development, pilot, and deployment of a curriculum guide compliant to Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction standards. In 2012 we plan to secure funding, and develop and pilot a draft curriculum. In 2013 we plan to finalize the curriculum, deploy it through a teacher workshop, and support several additional school paddles in northwestern Wisconsin.

This status report should give you an idea of what we are doing at the moment and what still needs to be done. There are four main components to this Project: funding, curriculum guide development, pilot paddle, and 2013 deployment workshop to introduce teachers to the Project. Note: it is understood that participating schools cannot afford to pay project expenses.

Funding

Funding has been found for the development of the 2012 curriculum (\$1,000), the 2012 pilot paddle, including one-time equipment expenses (\$4,000), and a portion of the 2013 Eco Adventure Project deployment workshop expenses (\$1,000).

Status: 2012 funding looks good. 2013 curriculum guide development and workshop funding is not complete, and funds for 2013 paddles have not yet been found for participating schools.

Curriculum Guide Development

Our goal is to have the draft 2012 curriculum guide completed by 7-31-12.

Status: An initial pass at 2012 draft curriculum guide has been completed except for pre- and post-paddle activities.

Planned EAP Modules (with starting dates)

- River Safety (2012)
- Water Quality (2012): temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, water clarity
- Aquatic Plant Identification (2012)
- Macroinvertebrate Identification (2012)
- Nature Journal (2012)
- Scavenger Hunt (2012)
- Camp Night Stories (2012)
- Paddle-end Celebration at National Park Service Trego Visitor Center (2012)
- Poetry and Art (2013*)
- Advanced Photography (2013*)
- River Life – Aquascope and Snorkling (2013*)
- River History (2013*)
- Fly Fishing – Web of Life (2013*)
- River Science - Morphology (2013*)
- Forestry – Tree Lab (2013*)
- Map Reading – Map & Compass (2013*)

*Dependent on funding and finding subject-matter experts

Pilot Paddle

Status: NorthStar middle-school students will participate in a pilot paddle on September 10-11, 2012, along with National Park Service staff, on a section of the Namekagon River upstream from Trego.

2013 Deployment Workshop and paddles

Status: Planning for 2013 workshop and 2013 paddles has not started. .

Thank You to all those who are helping us to make this happen.

A special acknowledgement should be made for previous middle-school curriculum work done by the Education Committee of the Eau Claire Lakes Area Property Owners Association and the Water Action Volunteers program. EAP is adapting portions of these efforts for our use.

Funding Partners

Friends of the St. Croix Headwaters, Namekagon River Partnership, St. Croix River Association, St. Croix River Fund of the St. Croix Valley Foundation, and the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board.

Curriculum Guide Development Partners

Eau Claire Lakes Area Property Owners Association and Friends of the St. Croix Headwaters.

Pilot Paddle Partners

Friends of the St. Croix Headwaters, Namekagon River Partnership, National Park Service/St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, NorthStar Community Charter School (Minong).

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