

Eco Adventure Project

(Canoes on Wheels Program)

Status Report for September 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 (and their students) to attend a free indoor/water-side workshop to help them understand how to safely manage canoe outings.

Introduction

We have listened to the teachers who have participated in the Canoes on Wheels program over the past four 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 “turnkey” lesson modules that could be modified as needed. The Eco Adventure Project for **middle school** teachers is our response to that request. Note: “lesson modules” has replaced the term “curriculum guide” used in the June Eco Adventure Project status report.

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. A set of lesson modules is selected by the teacher for a given paddle.

The Eco Adventure Project (**EAP**) (http://canoesonwheels.org/?page_id=350) includes the funding, development, pilot, and deployment of lesson modules compliant to Wisconsin Department of Public academic standards. In 2012 we are developing and piloting an initial set of lesson modules. In 2013 we plan to finalize the lesson modules, deploy them through a teacher workshop (perhaps in March 2013 in Spooner), and support several additional school paddles on the Namekagon River 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, lesson module development, pilot, and a 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 lesson modules, a September 2012 pilot paddle, and a portion of the 2013 Eco Adventure Project deployment workshop expenses.

Status: 2013 lesson module development and workshop funding are not complete, and funds for 2013 paddles have not yet been found for participating schools.

Curriculum Guide Development

Our goal is to have the 2012 lesson modules and a good start at the 2013 lesson modules completed by 12-31-12. We are currently working with Cindy Dillenschneider, Professor of Outdoor Education, at Northland College, along with 10 of her students. It is expected that we will also be able to identify additional teachers who are interested in joining this effort.

Status: An initial set of lesson plans was developed and piloted during a September 10-11 paddle on the Namekagon River.

EAP Lesson Modules with starting dates – 2013 modules listed are those under consideration.

- Safe River Paddling – 2012
- Water Quality (water temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, water clarity) – 2012
- Aquatic Plant Identification – 2012
- Macroinvertebrate Identification – 2012
- Student Nature Journal – 2012
- Eco Adventure Lab (culminating activity) – 2012
- Citizen River/Stream Monitoring (UW-Ex Water Action Volunteer Program) – 2013
- Poetry and Art – 2013*
- Advanced Photography – 2013*
- Mussel Identification – 2013*
- Damsel and Dragonfly Identification – 2013*
- Fishing and Fish Biology – 2013*
- River History (including historical maps) – 2013*
- Native American Traditions – 2013*
- Fly Fishing and Web of Life – 2013*
- Watershed Conservation and Habitat – 2013*
- River Science (Morphology) – 2013*
- Forestry & Tree Lab – 2013*
- Map Reading & Compass & GPS – 2013*
- iPad publications for iBook2 – 2013*

Associated Demonstrations/Presentations

- Paddle-end program at the National Park Service Trego Visitor Center – 2012
- Campfire Program “Namekagon River of Time” – 2012
- Cane Pole to Tenkara Fishing – 2012
- River Life – Aquascope and Snorkling – 2013*
- Bird Banding (mist netting) – 2013*
- Fish Identification (fyke netting) – 2013*
- Geocaching – 2013*

*Dependent on funding and identification of participating subject-matter experts

Pilot Paddle

Status: Ten NorthStar Community Charter School middle-school students participated 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. A 2-page document with images can be found at: <http://canoesonwheels.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Eco-Adventure-Pilot-Paddle-2-Page-Images.pdf>

2013 Deployment Workshop and paddles

Status: Planning for a 2013 teacher workshop has started; planning for 2013 paddles has not started. The teacher workshop will likely be held in Spooner in March 2013. The focus will be on middle-school teachers in northwestern Wisconsin, although attendance will not be restricted. If you would like to participate in the workshop planning process, an e-mail address is listed at the bottom of the page. The 2013 paddles will likely be scheduled on the Namekagon River, given the excellent support provided to this project by the National Park Service.

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, Northland College, and Friends of the St. Croix Headwaters.

Pilot Paddle Partners

Eau Claire Lakes Area Property Owners Association, 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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