



BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS FOUNDATION
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COCEEC - Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium Ecosystem Education Mini-Grant FALL 2008 Application Form Amount Requested = \$750 (or partial funding)

Describe the program or project for which this funding would be used and how it promotes understanding and/or conservation within the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem:

About the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation

The Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation (BMWF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to restoring and preserving the trail system and wilderness values in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex. We accomplish our mission through cooperation with the US Forest Service, partner groups, individual volunteers and generous donors. The BMWF recruits volunteers through community outreach and coordinates all trail project logistics including pack support, menu planning and shopping, group camping gear, safety gear and tools, and post-project reporting to the Forest Service and partners.

These efforts culminate in a wilderness experience for hundreds of volunteers each summer on a "volunteer vacation" into The Bob. Volunteers in the field include youth and youth-at-risk (some of which have never spent a single night in the forest), local and out-of-state adults, members from national groups such as Wilderness Volunteers and American Hiking Society, local advocacy groups (Montana Wilderness Association), and volunteer packers (primarily The Backcountry Horsemen).

Promoting Understanding and/or Conservation within the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem

Contact with this diverse group of volunteers provides an excellent opportunity for education and understanding about Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex as a piece of The Crown of the Continent ecosystem. Volunteers for the BMWF are a captive audience already interested in preservation and/or conservation on some level demonstrated by their desire to donate their time and energy on the trails of The Bob. In most cases, personal interaction with the landscape and an enhanced understanding of this vast ecosystem promotes a stronger interest in its preservation and healthy future.

Armed with natural history basics, presentation tools and field resources, BMWF Wilderness Crew Leaders (WCLs) will be able offer more education than just how to use a crosscut on the trail. They will also have the skills to introduce both youth and adults to the natural world around them and to teach them about the importance of protecting our natural treasures while balancing the role of humans in the Crown of the Continent ecosystem.

Outdoor Education Training for Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation Staff

In 2008, the BMWF launched its first-ever natural history and outdoor education training program. The goal was to develop an annual training program for BMWF staff that would teach these leaders how to present natural history lessons about the areas in which they work. Together with local education and outdoor specialists, the BMWF created a "train the trainer" program for three days. Education Coordinators and Naturalists from The Boone & Crocket Club and The Nature Conservancy's Pine Butte Guest Ranch worked with the BMWF Program Director to develop field lessons and corresponding materials for the following study areas: Ecosystems Overview, Plant & Animal Communities, Fire Ecology, Geology, History of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (native peoples and homesteading), and Wilderness 101 (history and current issues).



Additionally, BMWF staff had the opportunity to "shadow" an interpretive hike with a Naturalist at TNC's Pine Butte Guest Ranch to observe a model of outdoor education in practice.

The BMWF intends to continue this Outdoor Education training for subsequent years. Costs include use of the Boone & Crocket Club facility, food and transportation, educational resources (field guides, books, journals, etc.), administrative needs (printing/copying services), staff planning, programming hours, and volunteer speaker recognition.



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What is the timeline for this project?

BMWF Outdoor Education training will take place May 16th to May 19th, 2009.

Describe how other COCEEC participant groups and individuals would benefit from helping to fund this request.

COCEEC participants in 2008 included Flathead National Forest, Lewis & Clark National Forest, The Nature Conservancy of Montana, The Boone & Crocket Club, Montana Wilderness Association, Montana Fish, Parks & Wildlife, Swan Ecosystem Center and Lex Blood.

COCEEC participant groups and individuals will be invited to play a role in future BMWF trainings. Last year, presentations by COCEEC participants to BMWF staff ultimately trickled down to educate 431 volunteers that worked with the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation. Working with the BMWF staff is a great way to exponentially extend one afternoon worth's of teaching five BMWF staff members and to reach a varied and wide-reaching audience of users and supporters of open spaces.

To the degree applicable, describe how this project involves or encourages collaboration between different groups and/or individuals (agencies, schools, teachers, scientists?):

Collaboration and input from various organizations presents a large-scale view of the complex and diverse elements that need to be evaluated to maintain a healthy and intact ecosystem. While COCEEC participants are encouraged to be involved in BMWF training efforts, other community contributors will be requested to share their expertise for a wide cross-section of the ecosystem and concerns. In 2008, other groups and individuals included: John W. Rappold (5th generation "front range" rancher), Roy Jacobs (Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front), Steve Wirt (retired Spotted Bear Fire Management Officer and botanist guru), and Yve Bardwell (Teton County Weed Roundtable). These individuals and groups will be invited back to build our training program.



If applicable, please describe any other sources and amounts of funding for this project.

The BMWF is currently seeking additional sources of funding for this project from The Cadeau Foundation, the Sustainability Fund and Flathead Community Foundation. At this time, there are no funds secured for this educational effort in 2009. If no funds are obtained, monies from the BMWF operations budget will be appropriated. Projected costs are approximately \$5000.

Submit by mail to:
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Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation Volunteers