



Program and Activities in Review

In March, Ravenwood was honored to receive “Business of the Year” honors from the Montana Environmental Educators Association at their annual conference in Helena.

Spring saw another increase in our school camp enrollment as well as our first full time staff member. Jill Jolly joined founder, Brett Holmquist, in delivering our popular blend of field science, wilderness skills, naturalist training, and cultural and community enrichment.

Our summer programs also saw record enrollment. Fledgies, our nature connection preschool program, had a waiting list. Wilderness Kids Club, our weekly summer series saw a nearly 100% return rate on Thursdays and our Wednesday session was the largest and most diverse to date. Highlights from the summer included a day in the presence of a bald eagle family (two fledglings included) on the north shore of Flathead lake, the collection and construction of a cattail reed chair, cattail pollen, serviceberry, and huckleberry ash cakes, testing our tracking skills, building a traditional hand pump drill and using it to make a popular native toy called a wuzee wheel, and a successful swim across Loon Lake after exploring an abandoned beaver lodge.

In collaboration with Clark Fork School from Missoula, Ravenwood hosted a family camp in July. It was the first family camping for some participants and the program highlights included a primitive bow making workshop, edible and medicinal plant walk, wilderness cooking techniques, and lots of great community time with a total of eight families plus our staff and families. SO MUCH FUN!

August brought another fantastic collaboration with montanabliss yoga, art, and nature camp with 30 campers and lots of great fun playing, stretching, creating, and learning about our place. We also extended our August day camp to 5 days as we feasted on an abundant thimbleberry crop, learned about the sacred order of survival and its applications, visited our sit spots, played games of skill and stamina, explored beaver runs in a wetland, ate roasted cattail roots, did a traditional clay pot firing, witnessed an indescribable insect hatch (WOW), and tracked the source of a freshwater spring deep in cedar forest.

And finally, we just wrapped up our annual teacher and mentor training weekend, looking deep into the mind of the mentor as we examined time honored techniques for cultivating nature connection for our students, while honoring and nurturing their unique gifts and talents.

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