

# Education in Glacier 2009-2010



## Accomplishments

Thanks to support from our park partners, the Glacier Education Program continues to grow to meet the demands of the ever-expanding school requests, despite a reduction in federal funds available for education. As 2010 is the centennial year for Glacier National Park, there has been increased interest in ranger-led activities and field trip requests. Fortunately, the park received grants from the Glacier National Park Fund to support on-going efforts to connect the park resources with school children, local educators and families.

## Projects Supported by the Glacier National Park Fund

- “Support for Winter Interns” - Enabled the park to provide winter ecology snowshoe lessons for K-12 local classrooms visiting the park in winter. Two interns led school programs on the west side of the park and new this year, an intern assisted with programs on the east side of the park. The winter ecology field trip is one of our most popular programs and is mostly attended by local children and families. In 2009-2010, funding from the Glacier National Park Fund allowed the 1913 Ranger Station cabin rehabilitation to be completed. This provided our east side schools from the Blackfeet Reservation and the Rocky Mountain Front with an indoor space to use before and after their snowshoe hikes. The number of classrooms and students participating in the east side program more than tripled from this investment!”
- “History of Glacier” - Allowed the park to develop a cultural resource lesson during our centennial year about the history and people in Glacier National Park. The park then provided education rangers to conduct the lesson at over 40 area 4th grade schools (90 classrooms). This is the first in a series of lessons/activities/resources the park is working on toward as part of our “Legacy” projects to ensure that information about Glacier’s cultural resources are available to educators.
- “Reconnecting Children with Nature” - Park education staff presented educator and family workshops for the 2nd year to combat the growing incidence of children and families “disconnect” from nature. One workshop was in West Glacier for local youth group leaders and informal educators and 2 other workshops were at the NW Montana Headstart Centers with Flathead Valley families.

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- “Travel Grants” - For the 2nd year now, the Glacier National Park Fund has provided bus funding for schools who apply for a grant. In 2009-2010, \$5,000 was available for grants and 26 teachers applied and were awarded grants (using all of the available funds). This is an increasing need for many of our local schools who have had their field trip transportation budgets cut.
- “Land of Many Stories: People and History of Glacier National Park” Educational Footlocker - As part of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe donation to the Glacier Fund, the Montana Historical Society completed 2 copies of a footlocker for 4th grade teachers in conjunction with the Glacier exhibit at the museum in Helena. One of the footlockers will be housed in Glacier and made available to local teachers.

## Education Program Highlights

- The park continues to conduct field trip programs aligned to Montana’s Science Content and Performance Standards. Throughout the park, 510 (up from 286 in FY09!) educational programs for 12,549 (6,974 in FY09) students/chaperones in the 2009-2010 school year were conducted. This includes students from 68 different schools.
- Conducted 4 teacher workshops (Climate Change Trunk, Land of Many Stories Trunk, Wolf Trunk, and Flathead CORE Trunk Workshop) to improve teachers knowledge of educational resources from the park.
- Increased use of our educational trunks - now available for free to teachers who can pick up and drop-off the trunks: climate change; song birds; skulls kit; wolf; bear; noxious weeds, and the new people & history footlocker.
- The “For Teachers” and “For Kids” links on our website were updated and improved to continue to provide teachers with updates and information about our education programs.
- Participated in four region-wide education events with the Flathead CORE (Community of Resource Educators) - Winter Trails Day, Earth Day - “Kalispell Clean and Green”, Education Trunk Workshop, and Winter Staff Training.
- Continue monthly education ranger visits to West Glacier, Babb and East Glacier Schools.
- Selected Sha Riordan and Angela Mele as our Artists in Residence. Sha wrote a script for a play about the people and history of Glacier suitable for elementary schools to perform. Angela created 13 drawings for our fire ecology program.

