

Press Release

Sacramento Educators Begin Habitat Restoration Projects

In July, 5 Sacramento teachers, 2 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees, a representative from The Center For Land-based Learning, and a representative from Soil Born Farms traveled to Madison, Wisconsin to participate in a native habitat restoration course at the University of Madison, Wisconsin Arboretum. The team represented California and joined other teams from Oklahoma, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Puerto Rico, and Wisconsin. Each team was supported financially through a National Environmental Education grant the U.S Environmental Protection Agency awarded to the University of Wisconsin- Madison Arboretum, as well as funds from the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service.

The 10-day training was conducted by The Earth Partnership for Schools which focuses on ecological restoration as a way of establishing a positive relationship between people and the land. The vision of the "Restoration-Education, Science Training, and Outreach for Regional Educators" (RESTORE) initiative is to replicate EPS restoration education in other states, leading to improved teacher preparedness in the classroom, local-community partnerships, and effective use of schoolyard ecological restoration sites as living laboratories to enhance student learning.

The training taught teachers and non-formal educators strategies for implementing native habitat restoration projects at schoolyards by using hands-on, standards-based academic lessons and techniques. As a result the participating teachers and team members will begin to take steps towards completing a restoration project at their school site using the curriculum they received at the training.

In addition, the training taught participants how to set-up and lead their own restoration training. During the summer of 2010, the Sacramento based team will offer a 5-day training hosted at Soil Born Farms at the American River Ranch in Rancho Cordova, CA (www.soilborn.org) and the Center for Land-Based Learning in Winters, CA (www.landbasedlearning.org). The goal is to recruit 2-3 teachers from 10 schools who will attend the training and make strides to create their own schoolyard habitat at their respective sites. Summer 2010 participants will receive excellent curriculum resources and materials, ongoing support from the trainers, and professional development hours or college units for attending the course. The participating schools will be eligible to receive funding for a habitat restoration projects through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Schoolyard Habitat Program.

To learn more about the Summer 2010 EPS training being held in Sacramento, contact Guy Galante, Education Director, Soil Born Farms: ggalante@soilborn.org or Karleen Vollherbst, Schoolyard Habitat Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: karleen_vollherbst@fws.gov.