

Natural Connections Academy, Inc.

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Website: naturalconnectionsacademy.net

We are on the Web!
www.naturalconnectionsacademy.net



Natural Connections Academy, Inc. (NCA) is a private, non-profit outdoor school. We provide a nature-based educational experience for students in 3rd through 5th grades in Kootenai, Benewah, and Spokane Counties.

In order to learn about their world, students are immersed in the natural environment through their own inquiries and wonder. Students solve real-world problems through hands-on learning opportunities. The goal is to reconnect students with nature so that they can be good stewards of their local environment.

Natural Connections Academy, Inc. (NCA) mission is to connect children's learning to the environment. Building connections between nature and academics, we want students to learn responsibility, accountability, and ownership of their education. Through these connections, they will solidify their role in their local communities and become environmentally focused leaders.

Volunteer Opportunities

As our school grows, we will be looking for volunteers to assist us in various areas.

If you are interested in helping, please call 208-428-6224

- Trail Preparation
- Grant Writing
- Marketing Associate
- Sign Creation
- Social Media Manager

Other ways to help:

We are searching for:

- Bird bath, bird feeders
- Picnic Table
- Square patio stones (100)
- Mulch
- Fold up tables (2)
- Book Cases
- Chairs



September 2022

Volume 1, Issue 6

Our Educational Partners:

- Birds of Prey Northwest
- Stimson Lumber
- Idaho Forest Products Commission
- Project Learning Tree Idaho
- Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission
- Kootenai Shoshone Soil & Water Conservation District
- Coeur D'Alene Tribe Dept. of Education
- Project WET
- IDAH₂O
- Kootenai County Noxious Weed Dept.

Current fundraising total:



Amount needed to provide the education to students as envisioned:



Natural Connections Academy, Inc.



Updates and News:

Two weeks of our school year have come and gone with energetic excitement! Our plans went smoothly, with some slight changes due to time constraints, hot weather, and only having one student. But one student is better than none, even if it wasn't our original plan. So, the curriculum will be adapted to best prepare the student for sixth grade, targeting skills that he needs, and focusing on topics that really interest him. We still will utilize our units but adapt the scope (how much or how deep we cover a topic) based on his current level of knowledge. In addition, we will take into account his interests. As an example, he is really interested in birds, and so this will be incorporated into the plans.

To give you a sense of our typical day, let me walk you through some of the things we did over the previous two weeks. We started off our day completing some housekeeping tasks (practice cursive, hand in work, etc) and getting our packs ready for a day out in Heyburn State Park. We then jumped on the shuttle with our trusty school dog, Jack, and headed to the parking area by the Trail of the Coeur D'Alene, right off of lake Chatcollet. We utilized the Pavilion – playground area to discuss specific Leave No Trace Principles,

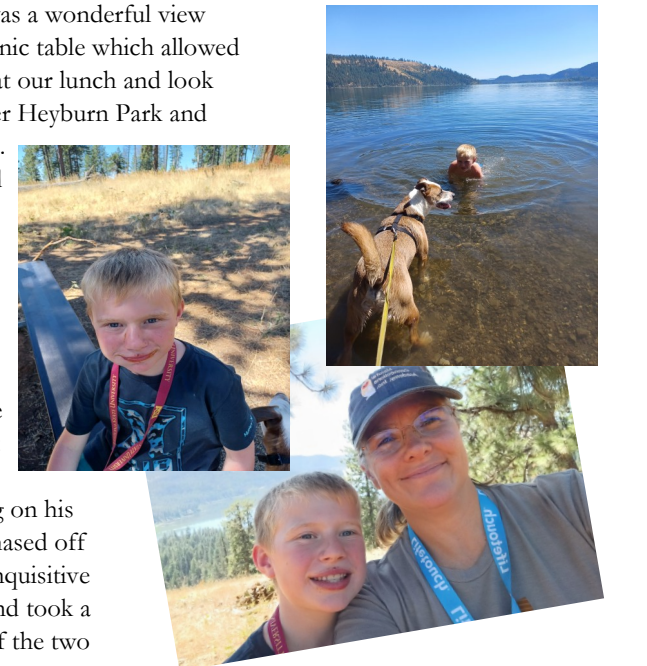
played a game related to that, completed the "mystery bag" activity that focused on using our 5 senses to observe items, and then headed to the Indian Cliff Trail. We then loaded on our backpacks and hit the trail. As we walked along the trail, we discussed observation versus inference, and worked on vocabulary / definitions as it pertained to the topic (qualitative vs. quantitative). We stopped at a bench on the trail and read about observation and inference, then continued on the hike asking the student to create observation and inference statements based on what we were seeing on the trail.

When we reached the top, there was a wonderful view and picnic table which allowed us to eat our lunch and look out over Heyburn Park and beyond.

We had some chuckles about the sauce that the student was wearing on his face, chased off some inquisitive bees, and took a selfie of the two

of us to show off our beautiful location. We then proceeded to head down the trail continuing the repetition on vocab and concepts.

As the week was forecasted to be hot, the student had brought his swim trunks and a towel just in case we could squeeze in a refreshing dip in the lake. So, our next stop was back to the pavilion area and a small spot on the shore of Chatcollet where Jack and our student were able to swim, splash, and cool off. We then headed back to the learning area and did some independent reading and ended our day sharing what was interesting, what we learned, and what questions were had. Overall, a great day learning outside!



Educational
Partner
Spotlight

IDAHO RANGELAND Resources Commission

OUR MISSION

Foster understanding by creating collaborative partnerships to sustain healthy rangelands.

Nearly half of Idaho is classified as rangeland. Eighty percent of rangelands are managed by either a federal or state agency. It is essential for the citizens of Idaho to have a good understanding of the ecology and management of these lands. IRRRC's role is to create programs and materials to increase public understanding of the ecology of Idaho's rangelands and how they are managed.

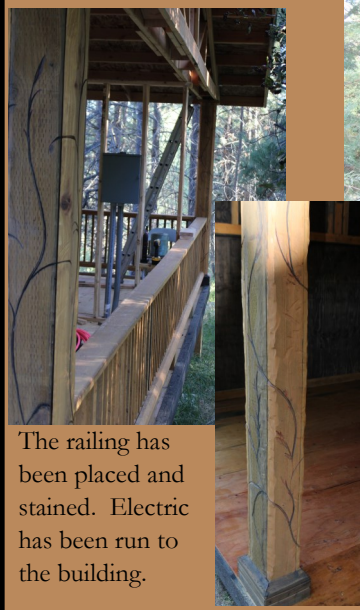
OUR GOALS

- To increase public understanding that Idaho's rangelands are a renewable source of important consumer products and environmental values.
- To provide, coordinate, and disseminate factual information about the economic and environmental aspects of grazing management practices.
- To promote public support for Idaho's livestock industry.
- To help achieve and maintain a healthy livestock industry through responsible rangeland stewardship.
- To advocate balanced use of rangeland resources.

IRRRC conducts periodic public opinion polls to understand the what the public perceptions are on rangeland issues.

The Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission is prohibited by law from advocating specific legislation or political candidates. It is a state agency with an educational mission. The IRRRC is not a regulatory agency.

The Pavilion...



The railing has been placed and stained. Electric has been run to the building.



Mr. Masters is putting in some cool accents, like the posts!



Six Ways Nature Helps Children Learn

BY MING KUO
JUNE 7, 2019

Continued from last month....

By doing so, we won't only be benefitting our kids' psychological well-being—though that's reason enough! We will likely help them perform better in school, too. And, as a connection to nature breeds more care for nature, we may also be inspiring the future stewards of our natural world.

Humans evolved to grow and thrive in natural environments, and research is showing the costs of indoor childhoods. It's time to cure "nature deficit disorder" in our kids by giving "nature time"—not just studying and extracurricular time—the importance it deserves.

About the Author...

Ming Kuo, Ph.D., leads the Landscape and Human Health Laboratory at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research convincingly links healthy urban ecosystems to stronger, safer neighborhoods, lower crime, reduced AD/HD symptoms, reduced aggression, and an array of other mental and physical health indicators. Dr. Kuo's work has spurred increased urban forestry efforts in Wales, Germany, the Netherlands, the Caribbean, and the United States, and, in 2018, she was awarded the Heinz Award for the Environment.

From the Board...

Why did I join the board of Natural Connections Academy Inc?

I have three different areas that come to mind when I answer this question. First, my own learning experience, second my father's learning experience and lastly my experience with the founder of Natural Connections Academy Inc, Tammi Masters.

I have a degree as a doctor of veterinary medicine which I earned in the traditional way of attending a public high school followed by 7 years in a state university. For me, that way of learning was fine. I was able to learn in a classroom setting that was traditional. However, I also found that I really excelled in the hands-on type of learning in labs. I received my BS in Animal Science and I, by far, excelled in my lab classes. Similarly, in veterinary school, I performed best in the clinical

setting rather than in the classroom. I think I was likely a mixed learner, I could excel in the classroom, but did my best work in labs or hands on learning.

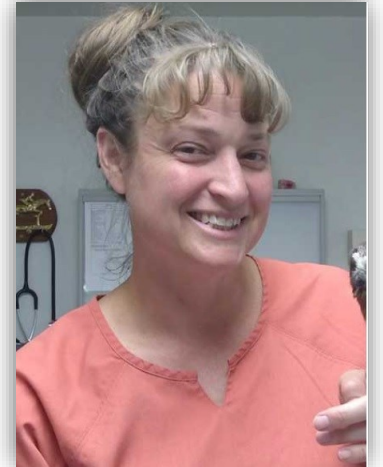
I never realized, until I was older, that my dad had dyslexia. He was told he would never go to college because he was too stupid. But my dad persevered and really excelled when he attended Paul Smiths college in upstate New York. Paul Smiths is known for having about 70% of class outside. When I once visited the campus, I saw groups of students led by a professor moving around the campus, stopping and doing a lab type activity, or a short lecture with the subject of the lecture right there. This really showed me the difference between how I had learned and how these students were learning. It accentuated the different type of learning that made my dad so

successful. He was recently honored into the Paul Smiths Hall of Fame for his accomplishments. I can not imagine how much society would have missed out on if he had not had the opportunity to learn at this outdoor based college.

I first met Tammi Masters when she was Tammi Prete. She was attending Flathead Valley Community College, and I was attending Washington State University. We met at a logger sports competition and went on to not only be fierce rivals for top competitor, but good friends and partners who eventually won World Championships in team sawing together. Tammi has always impressed me with her knowledge, ideas, vision, and determination. She pushed me to become a top athlete and when she asked for me to

join the board of NCA Inc, I knew she would be successful in providing a better educational experience to her students. Everything that drew me to her as a friend, partner, and rival will translate into her success with Natural Connections Academy, Inc.

Dr. Christine Ramsey



Interested in Donating?

Choose what of our learning topics or projects you would like to support with your donation.

- Gardening
 - Math Outdoor Lab
 - Weather Monitoring and Data Collection Materials
 - Bird and Pond Native Plant Garden
 - Environmental Study and Testing Materials
 - Silviculture Study Materials
 - Reading Books (supplemental and for independent reading)
 - General Use Donation
- Total Donation: _____

Method of Payment

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Credit Card # _____ CID _____ Exp. date _____

Signature _____

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Shout Out and Thank You!

To Mr. John Floyd and Mr. Rick Osterback for helping us to procure logs for our outside desks!

