

Natural Connections Academy, Inc.

5827 W. Conkling Rd.
Worley, ID 83876

Phone: 208-428-6224 (NCAI)
Email: info@naturalconnectionsacademy.net
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
- Sign Creation
- Grant Writing
- Curriculum Creation
- Office Manager (July)
- Camp Aid (July)
- Social Media Manager

Other ways to help:

We are searching for:

- **large rounds of wood** to create desks in our outdoor learning area. Rounds need to be 2' high with a diameter of 20".
- **Bird bath, bird feeders**
- **Square patio stones** (100)
- **Fold up tables** (2)
- **Chairs**



July 2022

Volume 1, Issue 4

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:



\$30,000

Amount needed to provide the education to students as envisioned:



\$80,000

Natural Connections Academy, Inc.



Updates and News:

There was a lot going on in June! To raise awareness about Natural Connections Academy and what we are trying to accomplish, we have been attending a number of different events. We have participated in the St. Maries Farmers Market, the St. Maries Summer Sunset Concert Series, and the Community Festival held by the North Idaho Sports Commission which took place during the Ironman Competition in Coeur D'Alene. Our booth included newsletters, brochures, camp pamphlets, and examples of curriculum materials. Additionally, we had a children's activity that included making a pinecone bird feeder and a water cycle bracelet. We accepted donations and distributed free donated cookies from Krafty Kookies 406.

Work on the trail, pavilion, and shuttle has been ongoing. Mulch is covering 3/4 of the trail on the private acreage, and we are waiting to procure

some

donated material that will serve as a barrier on the remaining 1/4. Our volunteers developed a retaining fence around a drainage ditch next to the trail, brought a wooden bridge (for crossing the culverts), and built a bench for the private acreage's learning area. Pavilion construction continues, and the roof is now being added. Placement of the garage door / windows will come next. Our shuttle has been equipped with a white board, which will function as both a teaching station and a backdrop for the projector which has been mounted on the ceiling.

Grants and enrollment remain NCA's top priorities. Our roster currently has one student for the upcoming school year and one for our Forest Camp. Unfortunately, we will need to cancel the camp if we cannot secure 4 more students. Our fingers are crossed, and we are working

to inform people that we are enrolling students. Our digital marketing campaign with KHQ out of Spokane has increased traffic to our website but has not resulted in any enrollment inquiries yet.

The curriculum remains an important focus of the outdoor educator's time - making sure that pupils receive the correct instruction in science, mathematics, and reading. We acquired a watershed / water testing kit this month, as well as books about trees, Leave No Trace, and other curriculum resources.

The IRS has now certified us as a 501(c)(3) organization! Woo hoo! As a result, we have additional opportunities, including tax reductions, grant opportunities, and volunteer opportunities. Furthermore, we are pleased to have received Kootenai Electric's Round Up Grant, which will help us purchase books for independent reading and curriculum supplements.

We are excited for the future and hope that we can attract more students to learn with us, outdoors.



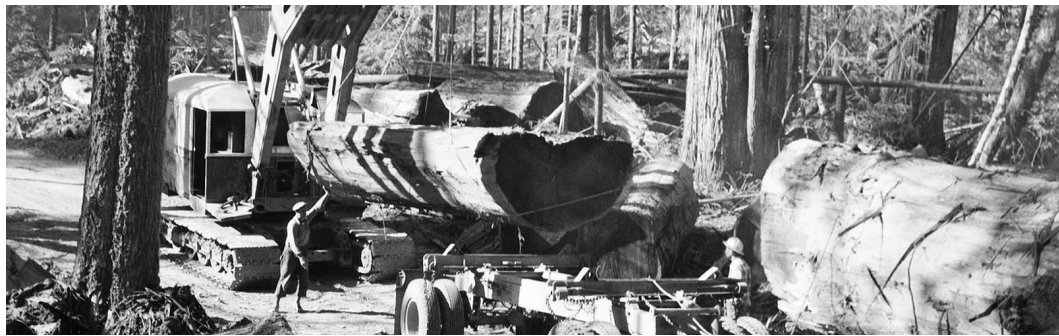
Educational Partner Spotlight :



Stimson Lumber's story began more than 160 years ago, when a young T.D. Stimson felled his first tree. Through hard work, persistence and fortitude, T.D. and six generations of his family succeeded in building one of the oldest, continuously operating integrated wood products companies in the United States.

Today, Stimson Lumber Company stretches across Oregon, Idaho and Montana. They employ more than 650 people; operate seven mills in Oregon and Idaho; and own and sustainably manage over 500,000 acres of forest land in the western United States. Stimson Lumber is proud to be active partners in the communities where we live and do business.

At Stimson, they believe in being a good partner and neighbor in the communities where we live and work. As a company — and as employees — they are proud to actively contribute to our communities. They donate their time and resources, open their land for recreation, and serve as a valued partner to businesses and residents.



The Pavilion...

We will be using several different locations for our field experience that will take place each day. One such place is a 5 acre piece of private land located in Worley.

The owners of the property are currently working to build a pavilion that Natural Connections Academy will be using as a shelter and work area while out exploring the various sites.

The pavilion will have the capabilities to be heated and will have electricity. We are excited to see the progress!



Six Ways Nature Helps Children Learn

BY MING KUO
JUNE 7, 2019

Continued from last month....

Time outdoors may increase physical fitness

While physical fitness is important for children for many reasons, one that may not immediately come to mind is the role it plays in learning. In particular, cardiorespiratory fitness seems to support efficient cognitive processing, and kids with higher fitness levels do better academically. Though it's not clear that nature affects physical fitness directly, it is true that the more time kids spend in nature, the better their cardiorespiratory fitness. Having access to nature may encourage children to be more physically active and keep in shape longer as they age.

More next month

From the Board of Directors...

I learned about the joy of being outside as a youngster. When I was between 5 and 7, after our family's evening meal, my brothers and I would join the other children in our neighborhood at a vacant lot, with many tall weeds and grasses, and spend the early evening chasing fireflies, scooping them up in glass jars with metal lids, running and playing with our friends. We learned about insects, indigenous grasses and flowers, trees and their leaves, and made our own paths and forts to explore and share. We stayed until nightfall and my mom would call us home to go to bed, ringing a bell from my grandmother's farm. As a pre-teen, my family took weekend trips to various

State Parks in Illinois and Indiana. Starved Rock was always a favorite, where we would hike, rock climb, and search for Indian arrowheads at the edges of the creeks and streams. This provided the excitement of finding something rich in historical significance, and a learning opportunity from our dad about what it meant.

As a 40+ year old, my husband introduced me to Montana, and the cabin that we now consider home in the Flathead Valley. We hike in Glacier National Park and the Flathead National Forest, pick wild strawberries and huckleberries in the summer, marvel at the changing colors of the Larch

trees in Fall, snowshoe or cross-country ski in the National Forest in winter, and clear our lot of fallen trees which we split to use as firewood, enjoy the rainy season and the vivid fresh green of the new forest floor in the Spring, etc.

Being outside with friends and family is a theme that leaves me with glorious memories and photos. It also kept me in reasonably good physical conditions as I age, allowing me to manage my blood pressure, stress from life with minor amounts of medication and sleep well. I can't imagine a world without the ability to take a walk outside in the woods frequently. I serve

on the Board of Natural Connections Academy as I believe outdoor education is critical to a good life, rich with nature experiences that lead to a curious and creative mind and a healthy body.

Gayle Prete, President



Shout Out and Thank You!

Thanks to **Krafty Kookies 406** for donating cookies to be given away at local events we are attending!

We are excited to have received the **Round Up Grant** from **Kootenai Electric Trust!** The grant will be used to purchase trade, curriculum, and independent reading books for our students!

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

- Check
- Bill Me
- Visa
- MasterCard
- American Express

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Credit Card # _____ CID _____ Exp. date _____

Signature _____

Natural Connections Academy, Inc.

5827 W. Conkling Rd.
Worley, ID 83876

Phone: 208-428-6224 (N.C.A.I.)
Email: info@naturalconnectionsacademy.net
Website: naturalconnectionsacademy.net