

# Natural Connections Academy, Inc.

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Worley, ID 83876

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Email: [info@naturalconnectionsacademy.net](mailto:info@naturalconnectionsacademy.net)  
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We are on the Web!  
[www.naturalconnectionsacademy.net](http://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
- Seat covers for our shuttle bus



June 2022

Volume 1, Issue 3

### 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
- IDAH<sub>2</sub>O
- Kootenai County Noxious Weed Dept.

Current fundraising total:

\$26,060.24

Amount needed to provide the education to students as envisioned:

\$82,000

Natural Connections Academy, Inc.



### Updates and News:

Over \$1500 was raised through the IdahoGives campaign, which helped get us a little closer to being able to buy the supplies and equipment for the students. Thank you to all who donated.

As we continue to get everything ready, another month has flown by. Our focus now is on enrollment, and you may see an ad running digitally on KHQ Television Station out of Spokane.

On June 10th, we will be



participating in Family Day in Coeur D'Alene. The event will be held in the Coeur D'Alene City Park. In addition to promoting the school, we also will have cookies available (Thanks to Krafty Kookies 406!) for

purchase with a donation. Come check it out!

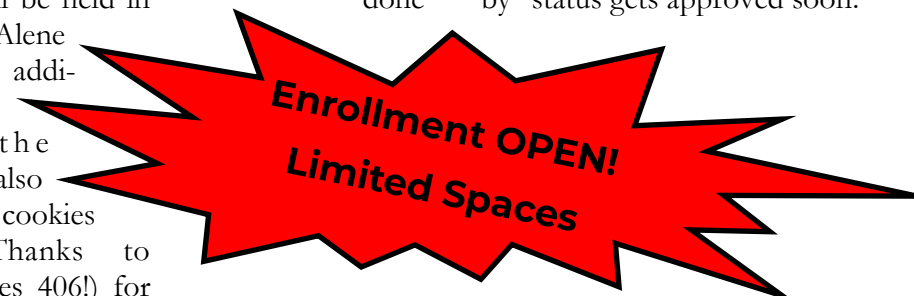
We have secured a location for our "home base" for the school. We are very thankful that the City of Worley has offered the use of the room at the city hall! Parents will be able to drop off and pick up their students here. Then we will be transporting to our various learning locations each day.

We continue to work on site preparation at one of the privately owned learning locations. We received more cedar mulch from Stimson, which we are placing on the trail that runs through the property. Work on the pavilion continues but is going slower than expected due to lack of volunteers to assist and the cost of materials. It is assured to be done by

our start date.

We are excited to be offering a camp in July that will explore our local Heyburn State Park. We will be diving into the forest and water habitat that are evident at the park as well as hiking many of their great trails. For more information, please see page 2.

Fundraising and grant applications continue to be a big focus for us as we still have a long way to go to reach the level of funding we were hoping to get. We have not been able to reach out to businesses for support yet as our IRS Exemption still has not come through. We continue to work with our fiscal sponsor (Institute for Education, Research and Scholarships) to be able to receive donations but we are keeping our fingers crossed that the 501(3)c status gets approved soon.





### Educational Partner Spotlight :



## Project Learning Tree Idaho & Idaho Forest Products



Would you like to know more about Idaho's trees, forests and the rest of the environment? Do you want to get young people outside exploring and learning about their Idaho back yard? That's what Natural Connections Academy does – and IFPC and PLT are happy to help.

**Idaho Forest Products Commission (IFPC)** helps the people of Idaho better understand and support the state's public and private forests and the forest products industry. IFPC works with many partners to assure bal-

anced and sustained timber, wildlife, recreation and scenic beauty for the welfare of Idaho's citizens. Education is at the heart of IFPC's mission.

The cornerstone of IFPC's education program is **Project Learning Tree (PLT)**, a program of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. PLT provides professional development and award-winning hands-on, minds-on environmental education materials for educators, parents, and community leaders working with youth from preschool through grade 12. Through PLT, educators engage Idaho students in exploring their surroundings, prepare them to be informed decision-makers, and

motivate them to pursue work and play related to Idaho's forests and other natural resources. PLT teaches *how to think, not what to think* about complex environmental issues. PLT is hands-on, multi-disciplinary, relevant and current. PLT materials are aligned with Idaho academic standards in numerous content areas. Follow @idahopl on Facebook and Twitter.

To enhance PLT, IFPC provides a comprehensive website - <https://idahoforests.org>, free printed materials, tours of forests and facilities, newsletters, hands-on educational kits, grants, a media lending library, and contests for students (essay, photo & video) Contact [plt@idahoforests.org](mailto:plt@idahoforests.org) if you'd like to be on the emailing list.



### Summer Camps...

Do you want your student to explore the outdoors and find an activity to do this summer? Then enroll your child to come with us as we explore and learn about the forest and water features in Heyburn State Park. Heyburn State Park is the oldest park in Idaho. Located between St. Maries, Plummer, and Worley Idaho, the park has some of the oldest trees and includes the beautiful Lake Chatcollet which is part of the Coeur D'Alene Lake.

We will be offering two—one

week camps with each focusing on a different aspect of the park. The first camp will run from July 18th through July 22nd and focus on the Forest. The second camp will run from July 25th through July 29th. Students will need to be dropped off and picked up from the Heyburn State Park Headquarter's parking lot. Students should bring a snack, lunch, and water bottle.

Camps are \$250 each or \$300 for both.

Head to our website to sign up.

### Choose the Exploration..

**The Forest**  
Learn about the forest and the plants that reside in Heyburn.



July 18th through July 22nd

**The Water**  
Investigate the water that runs through the park including Chatcolet Lake



July 25th through July 29th

### Six Ways Nature Helps Children Learn

BY MING KUO  
JUNE 7, 2019

Continued from last month....

#### Nature helps children develop more self-discipline

Many children—particularly those with ADHD—have trouble with impulse control, which can get in the way of school learning. My colleagues and I have found that green space near kids' homes helps them to have more self-discipline and concentrate better—especially girls. Also, parents of kids with ADHD report that when their kids participate in activities outdoors versus indoors, it reduces their ADHD symptoms. Since self-discipline and impulse control are tied to academic success, it's perhaps no surprise that...

#### Outdoor instruction makes students more engaged and interested.

Kids seem to like classes outdoors. Unfortunately, many teachers fear bringing kids outside to learn, worrying that they'll be "bouncing off the walls" afterward and less engaged in the next (indoor) lesson. Luckily, research seems to suggest that kids are more engaged in learning not only during outdoor classes but also upon returning to their classroom afterward—even if the subject they return to is not nature-related.

More next month

### From the Board of Directors...

Outdoor and life adventures began very early in my life. Starting as a Cub Scout we began making things of leather and learning about nature.

Moving onto Boy Scouts , we backpacked once a month year round . In summer we would pack for two weeks surviving on what we carried. Before many kids had even camped, I had many hundreds of miles behind me, including nearly a third of the Pacific Crest Trail.

Pushing my first car home

at age14 , my life was destined to always be a hands on, learn as you go, adventure.

Brick and Mortar schooling never really worked into my cerebral fitness. Therefore I graduated school early - joined the Navy and life's adventure began.

Natural Connections Academy will fit the many, many children that want to learn, but get trapped / bored / unmotivated by not having a hands on approach to not only learning what is necessary BUT ALSO what

makes this Planet tick.

Dirty fingers, the occasional scrape...using your hands in conjunction with your mind, has sadly become a rare thing for young folk.

Life is outside, not in, the feeling of accomplishment, by doing, is becoming a thing of the past.

NCA can and will guide/teach young minds.

How wonderful and complex our Planet is along with how fulfilling a " I can do that " approach to life should be.

Eric Olson



### 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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Signature \_\_\_\_\_



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## Shout Out and Thank You!

*We would like to thank those donors who supported us during IdahoGives.*

**Arden and Kristy Cogar**

**Ashley Schwader on behalf of Two Suns Consulting**

**David Rose**

**Debbie Wnukowski**

**Don and Peggy Paulus, in memory of Juniper Rose**

**James and Gayle Prete**

**Linda Tollesfrud**

**Mark and Jeanie Lowry**

**Mary and Peter Dalbis, in honor of Tammi Masters**