

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
- Social Media Manager
- Grant Writing
- Marketing Associate

Other ways to help:

We are searching for:

- Bird bath, bird feeders
- Square patio stones (100)
- Chairs
- Picnic Table
- Wooden desk
- Mulch
- Science Equipment
 - Microscope
 - Binoculars
 - Etc.



October 2022

Volume 1, Issue 7

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.



The OWL Connection

Updates and News:

The month of September whizzed by like a fast-moving train! In order to navigate changing temperatures, daylight hours, precipitation, and interesting/engaging subjects, we continue to refine our schedule and our plans. Our class has been learning about the different coniferous trees that live in our area: Ponderosa Pine, Western White Pine, Western Larch, Grand Fir, Subalpine Fir, and Douglas Fir. Also looked at deciduous trees: Black Cottonwood, Western Red Cedar, and Rocky Mountain Maple. Among the plants we have encountered are Ninebark, Service Berry, Ocean Spray, Snow Berry, Tansy, St. John's Wort, and Yarrow. By observing leaf margins, arrangement, shape, and venation, we have been able to classify and work through a dichotomous key.

We have hiked multiple trails in Heyburn State Park and Mary McCroskey State Park. The trails have included: Lakeshore Loop, Doug's Trail,



Trail of the Coeur D'Alene, Plummer Creek Trail, Plummer Creek Fire Trail, Mullen Road Trail, Hidden Lake Trail, Lazy T Trail, CCC Nature Trail, Indian Cliff Trail, and part of the Whitetail Loop Trail. In our travels, we have encountered



Whitetail Deer, Moose, Chipmunks, Squirrels, Garter Snakes, Wild Turkeys, and occasional piles of coyote and bear scat.

In our learning exploration, we have focused on trees/plants and the weather. Our discussion included the water cycle, evaporation, condensation, as well as how warm water and cold wa-



ter behave differently due to the energy changes. We have identified and explored leaves / needles of our local fauna. Experiments were conducted to find out what plants' most important needs are. During the transpiration process, we observed celery and lettuce as the veins moved

colored water through the leaves, causing changes in the leaves' colors.

While we are busy learning, the Pavilion continues to change and improve around us. There have been vinyl sides installed



that can be lowered during inclement weather, an electric heater installed, shelving units, and a sink is coming soon. On the property, we have a "desk" set up for morning work that gets students outside right away. There will soon be seat covers being installed on the shuttle, and the trail is also undergoing additional work, including the laying of some thick material and the covering of the trail with mulch, which has been carried out with the help of a volunteer.

In October, we will create fall wreaths and baked goods using zucchini and apples harvested from our school's property. Currently, we are looking at recipes and preparing to make applesauce, apple butter, and apple zucchini bread. Your donation to our school will allow you to choose from these items. Keep an eye on the website, Facebook, and Instagram for updates and more information.

Educational Partner Spotlight

Noxious Weed Department



The mission of Kootenai County Noxious Weed Control is to assist landowners in controlling the spread of terrestrial noxious weeds across Kootenai County in accordance with Idaho Code 22-2405.

We accomplish this by:

- Inspecting all unincorporated lands in the county
- Educating landowners on which noxious weeds they have and the best methods to control them
- Mapping infestations of noxious weeds and reporting data to Idaho State Department of Agriculture
- Loaning out treatment equipment free of charge

The Kootenai County Noxious Weed Control Department assists the public and government agencies with identification and control methods for noxious weeds.

Natural Connection Academy will be working with the Noxious Weed Department when students are learning about our native plants, invasive species, and noxious weeds.

Our Experiences So Far...



Why Kids Need to Spend Time in Nature

Writer: Danielle Cohen

In the early 1980s, a Harvard University biologist named Edward O. Wilson proposed a theory called biophilia: that humans are instinctively drawn towards their natural surroundings. Many 21st century parents, however, would question this theory, as they watch their kids express a clear preference for sitting on a couch in front of a screen over playing outside.

The national panic about kids spending too much time indoors has become so extreme that the crisis has a name: Nature deficit disorder.

While calling it a disorder might be merely rhetorical, it's clear kids spend significantly more time inside than outside. This shift is largely due to technology: The average American child is said to spend 4 to 7 minutes a day in unstructured play outdoors, and over 7 hours a day in front of a screen.

Richard Louv, author of the book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder*, tells the story of interviewing a child who told him that he liked playing indoors more than outdoors "cause that's where all the electrical outlets are."

Increasing parental fears about diseases and dangers of playing outside—despite evidence to the contrary—are another big factor.

More next month.....

From the Board...

Natural Connections Academy (NCA) serves children from grade 3 to 5, with a unique approach to learning. An approach founded on the recognition that children respond to the traditional school environment in a highly individualistic way. Having a setting where the educator can shape the curriculum and environment to the child's needs and interests is the core objective of NCA.

NCA utilizes a curriculum and teaching environment conceived by an educator / administra-

tor, with practical hands-on experience of the pros and cons of today's educational methodologies.

Having myself been "educated" in a Catholic elementary school, which used corporal punishment to address poor classroom performance and behavior, I learned the facts required to avoid the punishment to avoid the punishment that a proper education can illuminate. NCA's students are taught with a profound appreciation of the web of connections in all sub-

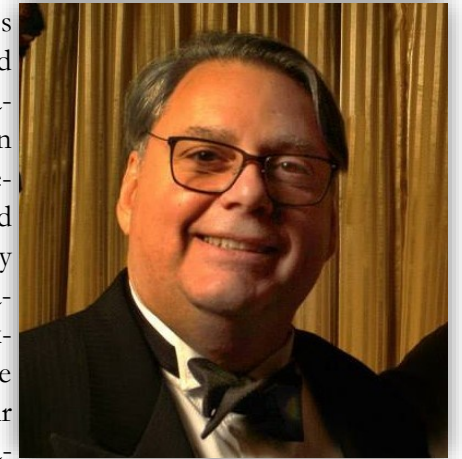
jects: math and science applied to biology and art, while also learning in a web of natural environments.

Each child's needs are unique, finding the "Natural Connections" method takes time and attention and this is the primary reason that I believe in NCA. Children deserve to be educated in the highest quality environments available to them, these experiences set the foundation of their entire education ca-

reer, whether they go to work right out of High School or they go on to be a Post Doc., our children deserve this choice.

James Prete

Director, Treasurer



Shout Out and Thank You!

Donors:

Mr. Mike Prete

In Kind Donation:

Gail and Steve Kozlowski

Mark and Jean Lowry

Aaron Masters

Volunteer:

Gavin Nelson

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 (NCAI)

Email:
info@naturalconnectionsacademy.net

Website: naturalconnectionsacademy.net